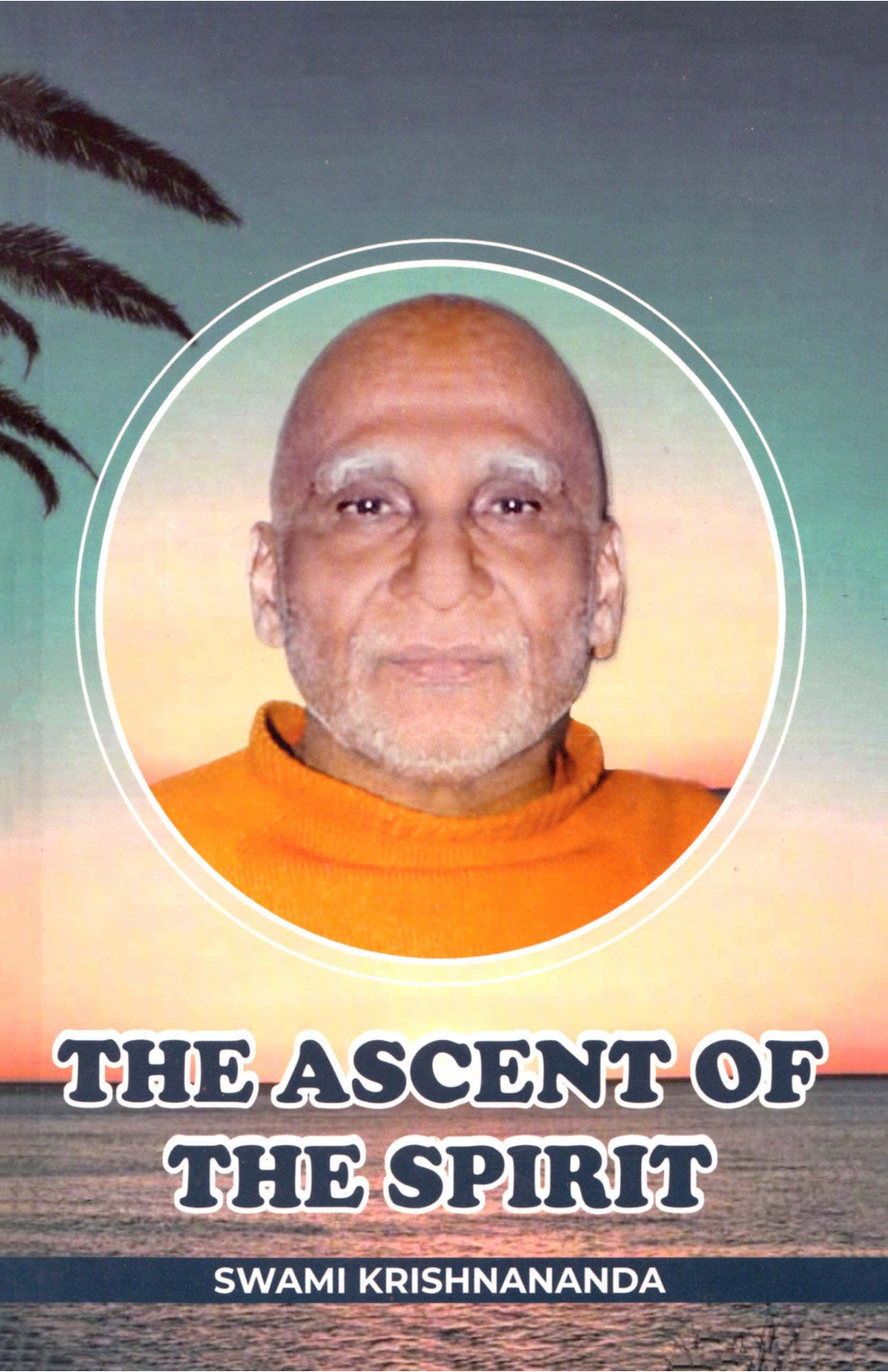

THE ASCENT OF THE SPIRIT

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INTRODUCTION

The ideal of humanity is spiritual. This is a thesis which cannot be set aside by any observant mind. Even where it appears to be the opposite for all practical observations, even in crass materialistic approaches of life, the movements are not really bereft of the spiritual sense, if we are to be psycho-analytically observant of the motive forces behind attitudes to life. Even the worst of men have a spiritual element hiddenly present, and the vicious movements which we observe in humanity in many a circle may sometimes confound us into a doubt as to whether the Spirit which is held to be Omnipresent can be the motive force behind these perpetrations. Yes, is the answer. Even the least of events has a hidden purpose and motive, though not visible outside but covertly present—the motive, which rightly or wrongly, by various types of meanderings in the desert of life, directs itself towards awakening into the consciousness of what it is really seeking. The errors of mankind are really the products of ignorance, and an ignorance of a fact cannot be equated with a denial of that fact. The absence of a palpable consciousness of the ideal of human life cannot be regarded as a violation of it root and branch, or a complete absence of it.

The movements of human nature in the world of space and time, in the society of people, and in the process of history, are motivated by subtle, deep impulses, and the target which they generally aim at may be physical, material, economic or social, quite the other side of what one would regard as Spirit, or the spiritual. But this

apparent contradiction does not defeat the purpose. There is only a winding intricate process of human nature in its struggle to awaken itself to a consciousness of what its real needs are, and these processes of the various forms of struggle are the history of mankind right from creation up to this day. Whatever we have heard about mankind's efforts and moves, whatever we regard as desirable or otherwise, whatever has caused us joy or pain—everything, excluding nothing, can be comprehended within the motivation which is a Single Universal Impulse.

The Universal Urge is really the Spiritual Impetus, and we need not use the word 'spiritual' to designate it, if we so wish. But an all-consuming impulse towards a Common Aim is what may be regarded as the spiritual aspiration or the basic urge of the individual nature. It may not be visible in the proper intensity or proportion at certain given levels of experience. But that an expected percentage of it is not visible on the surface is not a reason why one should not give it the credit it deserves. All that we are inside does not come to the surface of our conscious life, as we all very well know; yet we are that which is there ready to come to the surface of our mind one day or the other as the motivating force of our lives, whether in this life or in the lives to come. The urges of human nature are really universal in their comprehension; they are not individual, they are not even social in the sense in which we try to define society. Whatever be the desires of mankind, they are universal in their sweep because they are present in every being—in me, in you and even in the inorganic levels of manifestation, in different forms and expression.

There is a struggle of every individual structure or pattern to communicate itself with other such centres of force, and it is this tendency within the individual patterns or structures to melt into the being of others that is the beginning of all spiritual aspiration. What is gravitation if not a spiritual urge? What is this force that pulls the earth round the sun if it is not spiritual? We may wonder how the force of gravitation can be spiritual, because it is known to be a physical phenomenon. But, it is all a question of nomenclature. We may call it physical, psychological, social, ethical, moral, or spiritual, as we like. The point is, what is it essentially? Why is there any pull at all—the pull of moral force, the pull of psychic contents, the pull of love and affection? What is it that pulls one thing towards another? Why is it that anything should gravitate towards some centre? What is the intention, what is the purpose, what is the motive and what is the secret behind this urge? If we dispassionately analyse the springs behind human nature, and the tendencies of anything and everything in the world, even in inorganic levels, we will find that there is a 'feeling', sometimes consciously manifest and at other times unconsciously present, for coming in contact with that which lies outside oneself and to appreciate the feelings and points of view of others, so that there is a desire for the commingling of points of view, and this urge, aspiration or feeling will not cease unless the Universal Point-of-View is reached. Whether this is known today or not, it is a different matter; because all human beings are not in the same stage of evolution. It is, therefore, unfair and pointless to expect everyone to be on the same level of

understanding. If certain sections of humanity do not appear to be spiritual, it does not mean that they do not want spirituality. They are just unable to grasp the meaning behind their own aspirations, activities and motives in life. That they cannot understand what is the motive behind their activity or expectation is a point which need not be equated with what is regarded as the opposite of the spiritual need. There cannot be two ideals for mankind, ultimately. Whether one is in China or Peru, the basic ingredients of human nature do not change or differ. The ideal of mankind, the ideal of all beings, even subhuman or superhuman, cannot be other than one, and it is the restlessness characterised by the presence of this urge that is the cause for all enterprises in life. The factory-goer, the labourer, the officer, whatever he is, people who sweat and toil for various apparently diversified motives in life, are all working for a common purpose—a purpose which is not clear to their minds at present. When we come to a level of understanding which is adequate to the purpose, we will be able to visualise the commonness that is present behind every attitude of every human being, even in an apparent disparity of purpose.

Human nature is variegated. It is not all men and women that are fully human beings. We have animal nature in human nature mixed up sometimes, or oftentimes, and it gets rarefied as evolution rises higher and higher. So we may safely say that even among human beings we have animal-men, even as we have selfish men, ordinary men, good men, saintly men and God-men. We cannot say that all are of the same type or grade, and it is impossible

therefore for every human being to entertain the same attitude towards life or put forth the same kind of effort. What is the ideal of life of a cat or a mouse or a buffalo? Well, one may think they have no aims. It is just munching food and chewing the cud, and they have no other aim except to yield to the instincts which preponderate in them. But, nevertheless, the Spirit is not absent there in its essentiality; it is a sleeping condition of the Spirit. Often we have heard it said that the Spirit sleeps in matter, dreams in plants, thinks in animals and understands in human beings. But it has not fully awakened itself to a comprehensive self-awareness even in the human nature. There is a gamut of ascent further up from the human level, about which we are told much in such scriptures as the Upanishads. There is no end to the aspiration of a human being and no one can rest peacefully, whatever be the wealth one has or the power one wields in life, until the Universal Point of View becomes a part and parcel of one's practical life. This Point of View is called the Spiritual Outlook of Life.

Now, the Universal Point of View that we are concerned with here need not necessarily be God's Point-of-View, because the Highest Cosmic Spirit may not manifest itself immediately in an individual's life, but the ideal cannot be ignored. The essence of spiritual life, or spirituality, is the ability on the part of a person to keep before the mind's eye the ideal of universal harmony and universal existence, though it has not fully become a part of one's life now. We may not be God-men, God-realisation might not have come as yet, but the ideal cannot be missed. The judgment of lower values and the meaning of practical

existence in terms of the requirements of the higher spiritual ideals can also be regarded as a step towards spiritual life.

A spiritual life is that conduct or way of living and mode of thinking and understanding which enables one to interpret every situation in life—physical, social, ethical, political or psychological—from the point of view of the ideal that is above and is yet to be reached, notwithstanding the fact that it is a remote ideal in the future. The inability to interpret the practical affairs of life and the present state of existence in terms of the higher ideal immediately succeeding would make us incomplete human beings and keep us unhappy. It is only the animal nature that is incapacitated in this respect. The animals, and even human beings who have the animal nature preponderating in them cannot interpret present situations from the point of view of the ideal that is transcendent to the present state. And once we are awakened to the capacity of being able to understand and interpret the lower in the light of the higher, then it is that we can be called real humans, for the superiority of humans over animals lies just in this special endowment. Merely because one walks with two legs, one need not necessarily be regarded as truly human. Unless there is the human nature, human character manifest in a person, there would not be any meaning in holding that person to be entirely human. Such persons may have the physical characters of humanity and one may include them, thus, in humanity, but psychologically they are still lower—anger, jealousy and violence are sufficient evidences. It is these people who cause frictions, tensions, battles and wars

in the human world. The psychological awakening of the individual into what is called humanity or human nature is really the beginning of spiritual aspiration.

To conclude, I would like to point out that there cannot be anything wholly unspiritual anywhere, and there are no out-and-out non-spiritual beings in the world, and even those who hold, apparently, the opposite of the spiritual ideal, and work for the contrary of it, are wrongly working for it;—the very same ideal. They are like blind men searching for light in the blaze of the sun. Everyone, fundamentally, struggles towards the same Goal, the same purpose, which today we call the spiritual ideal, though everyone might not have awakened himself to the status of a really aspiring humanity, and one's mind might not have reached up to the purified condition of the ability to grasp the meaningfulness of the internal relationship and the interconnectedness of all things in creation, which fact, fortunately for us today, even physical science is trying to demonstrate, and master-physicists seem to be stumbling upon the philosophical and spiritual levels by sheer force of logic and observation, which is indeed to be regarded as a ray of hope for the future of mankind. It is possible that a time may come when people will be able to recognise the real meaning behind even their errors, attachments and aversions, and the reason behind the restlessness and unhappiness that seeps into their vitals, some time or the other, a phenomenon which no one can escape experiencing in life.

Thus, the coming to an awareness of what people regard as international existence, unity of mankind, or the

brotherhood of humanity, which everyone speaks of and aspires for in various walks of life, through social welfare service, philanthropic activity, cultural conferences, and the like, should be a practicable aim, without doubt. I am sure, God is not dead, and if He is alive, it is impossible for mankind to go wrong always, though in the beginning it may appear that there is perhaps an erroneous movement of feelings on account of the insufficiency of the awakening of the Spirit which is the Ideal, which has already manifested itself fully in some, and is trying to impose itself like a healing recipe, in many ways, in everyone's life. What we call Spiritual Awakening is the inward urge and tendency and capacity of the psychological pattern of individuals which is able to comprehend and realise in its compass the universal reference and relevance that is perforce present even in the least of motives and the lowest of actions. Victory awaits us all.

Chapter 1

THE PROGRESSIVE EVOLUTION OF MAN

The human individual may be said to be in a state of psychological retardation, in the process in which he is involved at present. It needs no mention that history has ever been a process of change, encompassing within itself not only the human species but everything in creation, not exempting even the physical elements which constitute the astronomical universe. Though the analytical reason is able to observe the process of change in all Nature, a peculiar structural pattern of the psychological organs of man prevents him from being conscious of this fact and makes him feel a sense of complacency in the notion that there is something permanent even among things that change, though, often, the idea of change never occurs to the mind at all. It may be said that man's mind is in a state of illusion when it is unable to adjust itself with the requirements of the changes taking place in the universe, which we usually call evolution, and concentrates itself on a particular feature of changelessness which it regards as permanency, and due to which it attaches itself to persons and things in a bond of love or hatred, as the case may be—a situation the ancients have termed Samsara, or the entanglement of earthly existence.

Scientific opinion of a philosophical nature holds that the reason behind the inability of the mind to perceive change and transformation and its weddedness to the concept of permanency of the objects of the world—which is the cause of emotion, attachment, aversion, etc., in one's

life—is the compromise that the mind makes with a set or collocation of frequencies of Vibration and Force in an act of perception which selects for its purposes only certain aspects of the features of Force and rejects others which are not suited to its personal aims; and the fact that this act of perception is made possible only by the agreement between the frequency in the movement of the mind and in the Force constituting the objects outside presents the illusion of permanency in the midst of the transience of objects. This sort of agreement and compromise between the mind and the object of perception is seen, for instance, though in a different way altogether, in the perception of a moving cinematograph film, where the structure of the optical organs through which the mind operates at that time is under the illusion of a permanency in the moving pictures projected on the screen, though it is well known that the moving film projects at least 16 pictures every second, a fact which the mind cannot catch up due to its affiliation to the organs of the eyes and its dependence on them. Though our reason knows that no picture of the moving film is static, the eyes delude it into the belief that there is a staticity there;—and though there is a contradiction between the reason and sensory perception obvious in this phenomenon, the reason allows itself to be duped by the perception of the eyes and charges one with this duped belief, so that a person's life itself can be changed into another pattern by this unwarranted acceptance on the part of the reason. A similar circumstance would be the explanation of our perception of permanent objects in this world. The truth that the Buddha proclaimed centuries ago,

that everything is impermanent (*kshanika*), is now corroborated by the observation of the modern physical apparatus of the laboratory which sees particles and forces dancing within an apparently static object, forming its very constituents. The personality of man is not excluded from the operation of this law, and every cell of his body may be said to be changing every moment of time.

This condition of life, which comes to relief on a study of the involvements of human nature, awakens the mind to the need for a proper appraisal of the position or station which one occupies in the complex of the universe and the character of the function that one is required to perform in this set-up of things. However, this appraisal is not without the difficulty of it not being possible for man to know the nature of Reality behind phenomena, inasmuch as the understanding faculty of man is inextricably woven into the fabric of phenomena. For instance, the conditions of space, time and gravitation, which have far deeper implications than what appears on the surface, and which control the very fiber of the make-up of man's personality, as also that mysterious something which we usually call causation or causal necessity in the framework of things, restrict the freedom of the understanding. This difficulty does not merely end with itself, with no hopes beyond it, for while it indeed presents an apparently insoluble problem, it also, at the same time, directs the mind to a more fundamental presupposition, namely, that phenomena cannot be, if there is no Reality behind them as their support.

This analysis and finding results in two discoveries: (1) that there ought to be something of a permanent nature

behind the vicissitudes of the surface-existence of things, and (2) that the very fact of it having been possible for the mind to come to the conclusion of there being a Reality behind phenomena is enough proof that the mind, though it is involved in phenomena, is also rooted in Reality; else, it could not have come to any conclusion at all even as to the very existence of such a thing as Reality. Man is, thus, both phenomenal and noumenal. He is at once mortal and immortal. As a philosopher humorously put it, man is God and brute crossed at one point.

We seem to have a ray of hope that we can achieve our ends, since, in spite of our frailties incumbent upon our involvement in phenomena, we have affinities with Reality and, perhaps, we can reach God, the Absolute, in as much a nearness to ourselves as it can be in relation to anything in this world, perhaps more intensely and definitely, since we seem to be rooted in Reality, fixed in its very bosom; otherwise, how can we entertain in our minds the concept of Reality?

This is the beginning of scientific adventure, philosophic enterprise and spiritual enlightenment. We proceed from science to philosophy and from philosophy to spirituality, which may be said to be broadly the stages of our ascent in the process of evolution. And this evolution is progressive, normally, though there can be occasional set-backs or retrogressions due to errors of notion and blindness of vision, which can, though rarely, confront and oppose man's endeavour in his search for Reality.

The scientific approach, which is the first phase, takes into consideration man's external relationships; first of all,

over and above the other features of his personality, and studies the physical, chemical, biological, psychological, social, political and cultural connotations of life as the foundations of human progress and achievement. Physical science discovers that the universe is a material arrangement of inorganic substance, which is spread throughout the unending space, as the basis of the elements of earth, water, fire and air, as the substance of the whole solar system and the nebular dust—sun, moon, stars, the Milky Way. The Newtonian physics held that space acts as a kind of receptacle to material substances such as the sun, planets, etc., and there is a force operating mutually among these material objects, named gravitation, which holds the objects in position and in their orbits. Not only this; it also, to some extent, determined their character and perhaps their constitution. Subsequent to Newton, physical discoveries began to announce the operation of facts quite different from and transcending the Newtonian concepts, stating that space is not a receptacle of things unconnected with it but may be regarded as a kind of an infinite electromagnetic field which entered into the very structure and function of all material objects. This discovery further led itself to more complicated theories of quantum mechanics, wave mechanics, etc., and finally to the Theory of Relativity, whereby we are informed that not only are things interconnected among themselves as forces in an electromagnetic field but that even the concept of force or energy is inadequate to a proper comprehension of the real nature of the universe. We are told that there are no things but only events, no objects but only processes, so that we

are in a fluid universe of a four-dimensional Space-Time wherein relativity reigns supreme. The principle of relativity reduces everything into an interdependence of all structural patterns and Space-Time events, so that the universe is more of an organic living Whole, in which the idea of causality, as it is usually understood, is ruled out; because in an organic structure the parts are so related to one another in an internal affinity and connection that every part is as much a cause as an effect, for everything here determines everything else. We may even say that everything is everywhere. We need not go into further details of this great scientific doctrine, for we may suggest, with profit, to the students of philosophy and spiritual life an inquisitive reading of such texts as the Yoga Vasishtha, to bring out the practical implications of what are called relativity phenomena.

Though science in its advanced physical observations brought out its conclusions in the form of such tremendous truths revealed by the Theory of Relativity, it could not shake itself free from the notion that the universe is physical, notwithstanding that a few of the later geniuses in science actually stumbled upon the acceptance of there being a Universal Mind or Consciousness as the Substratum or, what may be called the 'Observer', of all relativistic phenomena. The physical universe is regarded as the basis from which evolution begins. Indian philosophy, though it rose to the heights of recognising a conscious Creator of the universe, transcending phenomena, and its Vedanta system concluded that in the end the Creative Principle is non-different from the created universe, did

not rule out the fact of evolution of life from the stage of inorganic matter. Evolution was taken as valid in the empirical realm of experience, though the purpose of evolution is the realisation of the Supreme Aim of life, namely, the unity of the Absolute, which is the Existence of the Intelligence of the Creative Principle in its inseparable relationship with the universe. Life is above Matter, Mind is above Life, and Intellect is above Mind. An interesting and absorbing exposition of the modern scientific notion of the process of evolution can be found in Samuel Alexander's *'Space, Time and Deity',* in which he argues out the theory of evolution on the basis of the physical Theory of Relativity, according to which Space-Time as a continuum is the matrix of all phenomena. Space-Time produces motion and matter, which grossens itself into the physical elements that we see and feel with our senses. Physical substances thus evolved from Space-Time-Motion are endowed with what are known as Primary Qualities such as dimension, weight, etc. They are assumed to be characterised by secondary qualities later on, such as colour, sound, etc., which are the product of the perceptual process emanating from the subjective consciousness of individual observers or experiencers of them.

Above Matter is Life. The characteristic of Life is organisation of individuality, a seeking of self-completeness in the centre of one's being and a tendency to what we may call 'awareness', which is not observable in inorganic matter. The vegetable kingdom is the standing example of mere life above matter but bereft of the thinking faculty which is the function of the mind. Mind is above Life.

Animals exhibit the presence of mind in them in addition to life that has been inherited from the lower level. But animal thinking is 'indeterminate' and does not have the power of logical judgment; the capacity for decision and rational understanding. This latter feature is observable in the intellect which is the prerogative of man. The highest human faculty is the intellect, the reason, which makes him superior to the animal and the vegetable kingdom, not to speak of inorganic substances. Alexander's analysis posits a deity higher than the level of the human intellect, a stage which is yet to be. In fact, every succeeding stage is regarded as the deity of the preceding one. But Alexander's concept of deity is inadequate to the deep aspirations of man, which are more satisfactorily provided in the Upanishads, wherein, in the context of the statement of the gradations of Bliss, the Upanishad hints at larger and more inclusive levels than the human. There seem to be several intermediate stages between the intellect and the Ultimate Reality. According to the Upanishad, higher than the level of man is that of the Gandharva; beyond the Gandharva are the levels of the Pitri, the Deva, Indra, Brihaspati, Prajapati and Brahman. It will be noticed that the higher one evolves beyond the human level, the more intense does become the consciousness possessed and the bliss experienced by the individual. Not only this; the individuality becomes more and more transparent as it rises higher and higher, more inclusive, capable of greater interpenetration, until evolution reaches the stage of Brahman, the Absolute, wherein individuality coalesces with universality. Alexander's Deity is a future possibility, but, since it is an

effect of evolution, its original cause, viz., Space-Time, must have already contained it in an inseparability of being.

According to Hegel, the renowned German philosopher, the lowest level is of brute consciousness, which is inseparable from sheer material existence. The second stage, above this, is nature-reactive self-preservative consciousness, observable is plant life. The third stage is of a crude seeking of oneself in others, expressed in the presence of a psychological want, a need and a love which specifically concentrates itself in the reproductive consciousness. The fourth is the stage of self-consciousness which is the special faculty of man, beyond the level of the mere animal satisfaction of self-preservation and self-reproduction in the form of reaction to external stimuli. Yet, human life here is incipient and not fully developed. Even among human beings we have various grades: there is the animal man, the selfish man, the good man, the saintly man and the God-man. The fourth stage mentioned here may be said to correspond to the lowest type of men. The fifth stage is where one becomes conscious of one's being independent of objects outside and attributes all change to objects rather than to oneself. This is the stage where one finds fault only with others and not with oneself, so that the object becomes a hindrance to one's comfortable life and one cannot tolerate the presence of objects non-conducive to one's satisfaction. The hidden unity of things, however, asserts itself and cannot brook such a selfish attitude of an utter isolation of the subject and the object. Thus, the selfish sense of isolatedness manifest in the fifth stage recoils upon the sense of unity by distorting it in the form

of love for others, a craving for exercising authority over others, etc. This is the sixth stage. In the seventh, there is a consciousness of this negative dependence of oneself upon others in the form of love and the need to exercise power, etc., and one seeks to obviate this sense of slavish dependence either by intense attachment or by intense hatred. In attachment there is desire to unite the object with oneself so that oneself may live alone, and in hatred there is a desire to destroy the object, so that, here again, there is a chance of oneself living alone. For, 'aloneness', which is the nature of Reality, asserts itself, somehow, by hook or crook, by fair or foul means. In the eighth stage one realises that it is impossible to live with this law of the fish and the law of the jungle, for each one here appears to be a threat to another's existence, so that no one can be secure. The need for 'living', 'somehow', and the necessity for security in life compels man to live a life of cooperation and mutual sacrifice, without which he fears that his end would not be very far. This is the consciousness of cooperative living, of humanitarian ideals, of society as one harmonious organisation. This is the eighth stage.

But, this cooperation and mutual sacrifice is ultimately based on selfishness, a desire to maintain oneself, and, hence, even in cooperative life there are seen occasional disruptions and breaches of agreement, which is only a sign that the basis of this apparent humanitarian ideal is really not humanitarian but founded on a lower level of life. The studies in psychology and psychoanalysis will reveal that most of man's efforts are not above his biological urges such as the pressure of hunger, sex, sleep and fear from

external forces, all which get surcharged with a desire to dominate over others and exercise authority, to spread one's name and fame, by affirmation of one's superiority, and a greed for wealth, etc.

All this is the result of the empirical approach of human understanding to the problems of life. This is really no solution to the problems, and humanity finds itself today in the same complex and quandary and insecurity as it was centuries back, all because the human approach to things has not changed in its quality and character, though the passage of history has traversed thousands of years during the course of time. The ancient Masters have seen through this vexing situation of life in general and found out the only remedy for it, namely, to develop the *Vision Integral*, rather than confine oneself to mere perception empirical. This integral approach requires man to conceive life as one whole, inseparable in its parts, and the well-known classification of Human Values or Aims of Life into *dharma,* the pursuit of moral value; *artha*, the pursuit of economic value; *kama,* the pursuit of vital value; and *moksha,* the pursuit of infinite value, may be said to form the rock-foundation to base one's right perspective of life. All these four values have to be blended in a proper proportion to constitute a single compound and not merely a mixture of a set of separable ingredients. This means to say that every function one might perform, every thought, word and deed of a person, should manifest this singleness of purpose, namely, a focused blend of *dharma, artha*, *kama* and *moksha,* all at once. This is indeed a hard job for uninitiated and untrained minds. But spirituality is not a

joke, and calls for greater education and discipline than one would expect in an ordinary educational academy or institution of the world. It is this blend of the four Aims of Life in a single act that has necessitated the introduction of the cooperative social groups known usually under the name *varna;*—the classes wielding spiritual power, political power, economic power and man-power, which constitute a complete organisation of human aspiration and function. This view of life has also called for the recognition of four stages in one's life known as *ashrama;—a* life *of* continence and study, a life of restrained satisfaction and discharge of duties in accordance with one's station in life, a life of non-attachment to all perishable, values, and, finally, a life of concentration on the only permanent value discoverable in the end, namely, the Ultimate Reality.

A life of yoga is the answer. And yoga is union with Reality, in the various stages of its graded intensity of manifestation, internally in one's own personality and externally in one's social relations and public life. The range of yoga is a little complicated for the novice to understand. To obviate the difficulty of a sudden grasp of this truth, adepts in yoga have advised a more restrained approach to the Great Goal, by a recognition of the objective *(adhibhuta),* the subjective *(adhyatma)* and the supernormal Deity-aspect of Reality, superintending over both the objective and the subjective sides of experience *(adhidaiva).* This threefold resort to yoga would facilitate a still higher recourse to the larger realities, known in the language of the technical Vedanta, as Virat, Hiranyagarbha,

Isvara and Brahman, connoting the fourfold aspect of the Absolute, conceived as helpful in one's meditations.

Chapter 2

PRINCIPLES FOR A RECONSTRUCTION OF HUMAN ASPIRATION

The suggestion, then, is that the aim of evolution is ultimately spiritual and the sense of the spiritual has to be comprehended in its proper significance. It is to be realised that there has to be a unifying blend of the fourfold Aim of Human Existence, viz., *dharma, artha, kama* and *moksha;*—a coming together of the moral, the economic, the vital and the Infinite values in a concentrated focus of thought, speech and action. It is not infrequently that spirituality is regarded as 'a phase' of life, an aspect of human pursuits, and even an other-worldly aim, to be thought of at the fag-end of one's life. Nothing can be a greater travesty of truth than this sort of erroneous thinking and evaluation. How can the Infinite value be relegated to an aspect, a phase of life, or an other-worldly concern? Does not the Infinite include all things—the other-worldly as well as the this-worldly, the transcendent as well as the temporal? Else, how could it be the Infinite? How, then, if spirituality is the process of the pursuit of the Infinite, can it be a segmented aspect of life? Would it not then embrace the whole of life within itself, and would not life itself be impossible without it? Yes; the spiritual value is not 'a value' but 'the value' of 'all life', without which life would lose its very meaning and be turned into an essenceless phantom.

It also follows from the concept of the Infinite that, if the Infinite value has to include the moral, the economic, and the vital values within itself, so that *dharma, artha* and

kama get subsumed under *moksha;* then, the pursuit of morality, wealth and personal satisfaction in life has perforce to get included in the pursuit of *moksha* or liberation from the thraldom of life, i.e., the *spiritual* includes the temporal. The complaint of our communist friends and social-welfare workers against religion and spirituality, if there is any, is thus without any basis; for, it is founded on a misconception of the spiritual as well as the religious, which, latter, in fact, is but the outward expression of the spiritual. As it was pointed out, the human mind is *not* constituted in such a way as to enable it to comprehend this tremendous truth behind the drama of life, so that the human mind always complains against existing conditions and distrusts even the logically deducible consequences that could be reasonably inferred from the observation of the phenomenon called life. The great tragedy of human life has been the unwarranted isolation of the spiritual from the temporal and the consequent clinging to an over-emphasis of the material needs of this world, or to a supposed religious ideal confined to the other-world. It is due to a thorough-going misrepresentation of truth that we have among us materialists, atheists and hedonists on one side and the theoretically-idealistic religionists, priests and pontiffs on the other side, one contending with and opposed to the other and creating a scene of conflict in the world. There should be no wonder if either side gets frustrated in its pursuit because the demand of both the sides seems similar to the point involved in the humorous effort to keep half a hen for cooking and half for laying eggs.

Would people realise, at least today, that existence in the world cannot be bifurcated from the existence of the Central Aim of Life? Gathering the outcome of our thoughts expressed earlier, we may proceed further to the art and the enterprise of blending *dharma, artha, kama* and *moksha* into a single body of human aspiration. As was indicated, this is a difficult job, for the mind is not accustomed to think in such an integral fashion. But it has to be done, and one cannot escape it, if life is to have any meaning and not be a mere desultory drifting from one objective to another, every moment of time.

Artha, or the material object of one's pursuit, may be considered first, since it is this that seems to be the primary centre of life's attraction in the immediately visible and tangible field of experience. The object is naturally the physical something that presents itself before a sense-organ—seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling or touching. It is impossible to have a proper notion of an object unless we have a correct apprehension of the structure of the senses themselves. Normally, it is supposed that the objects of the senses are variegatedly spread out in space and each sense grasps a particular object. It is also believed that the object is 'outside' the particular sense which apprehends it. Thus, two conceptions are involved in sense-perception, namely, that the objects are differently distributed outside in space, and that they are external to the senses perceiving them. Without this twofold notion, sense-contact and sense-satisfaction will lose their proper significance. It is on this stated assumption that the senses seem to be asking for their own respective comforts and pleasures. But their

needs and askings of this kind automatically get grouped under what may be called the 'vulgar view of life', if it can be shown that the objects are neither variegated nor are they really external to the senses. Any satisfaction rooted in a misconception about it cannot continue for long, nor can it be considered a real necessity of life. A final investigation into the structure of things would not be within the range of the 'vulgar thinking' which goes hand-in-hand with the untutored assumption of the senses, but the purified reason coupled with a more acute observation will reveal that the truth of things is far removed from the sensory notions of the uneducated mind. We may say that our knowledge of things cannot be regarded as ultimately valid unless it becomes scientific in the correct sense of the term. It should be noted that an object is a concentrated group of characters brought together by factors with a universal implication. An object is only an outer form of the inner concrescence of forces which tie themselves into knots, as it were, into what we call as objects in space and time, and it is only the outer form that the senses can perceive, not the inner implication of this subtler activity that is going on within the structure of things, beyond the ken of the senses. Physicists prefer to call objects as fields of force, rather than things or substances, by which what is meant is that an object is co-extensive with other objects, as a ripple in the ocean is substantially co-extensive with the entire body of the ocean. This fact is brought out in a more prominent manner in a famous verse of the Bhagavadgita where, in connection with a description of the way in which senses come in contact with objects, it declares that 'properties'

move among 'properties' *(gunah guneshu vartante)*. What this yoga text means hereby is that the 'properties' or '*gunas*' of the Mother of all material formations, known as *prakriti*, are equally present in the senses and their objects; or, in other words, the very same *prakriti* constituted of the forces of equilibrium, kinetics and dynamics (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) is present in the senses as well as the objects. What the substance is of the structure of the senses is also the substance of the structure of the objects, so that it cannot be said that the objects are external to the senses, just as there is no point in saying that the ocean is external to the waves upon it, though we may imagine that the waves have every right of imagining that the ocean is outside them. But how far this is from truth needs no iteration.

Moreover, it is not difficult to notice that everything in this world is made up of the five elements—Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether—in a variety of permutations and combinations, wherein are included the objects of senses as well as our own bodies, which are the receptacles of the senses. Even crudely speaking, what separates one object from another is space, and space, unfortunately, enters into the constitution of every object including our bodies. Where then comes externality of objects, the outsideness of things? If things are not outside, how can one pursue or long for them? *Kama,* which is desire for objects, loses its ground when the structure of the objects is known to be inextricably woven into the pattern of one's body and senses. That all this is not a part of the curriculum of our education in our institutions will only be an additional

credit to the glory of our educational system, which leaves a student at sea the moment he comes out of his *alma mater,* in flying colours. Life begins to stare hard on one's face when the educational course is completed. Truly, education seems to begin only then! The significance of *artha* and *kama,* the objects and the desire for them, needs no large commentary to explain them in the light of the foregoing analysis. The objects and the desire for them, *artha* and *kama,* then seem to harass us only until we do not know *dharma,* or the Law of Truth.

Dharma, which is the name for the righteousness that is rooted in the make-up of all things in the universe, is the ruling factor that determines the significance and validity of both the existence of objects and one's longing for them. This is why, perhaps, Bhagavan Sri Krishna mentions in the Gita that He, as the All-Pervading Presence, is *kama* or desire which is not opposed to *dharma* or righteousness. But that desire cannot be regarded as being in consonance with righteousness or the rule of Nature, which regards objects as sheerly 'external' to the senses, a proposition which has been ruled out in the Bhagavadgita itself while it announced that 'properties' move among 'properties'. The Bhagavadgita also mentions, in its 18th Chapter, that the notion which regards a particular thing as if it is everything is to be considered as the worst type of understanding, or knowledge. Every form of desire is usually of this character in the sense that desire clings to a particular object, taking it for the whole value of life, or sometimes a group of objects, regarding them as the entire aim of existence. Such a desire, which is associated with the lowest type of understanding,

is what usually goes by the name of *kamna,* or longing for *artha* or object. This is definitely not in agreement with the principle of *dharma,* which is rightly defined as that which holds all things together as a sort of universal gravitational centre *(dharanat dharma iti ahuh).*

It is hard to give a dictionary-definition of *dharma* or find an apt synonym for it in the English language; for, *dharma* is that all-pervasive cohesive principle which keeps all things in a harmonious state of integration. Now, this harmony and integration is discoverable in every level of life. Physically, it is the energy which holds one's body in unison and does not allow it to disintegrate; vitally, it is the force which keeps the *prana* moving in harmony with the body; mentally, it is the power which maintains the sanity of thought and keeps the psychological apparatus working in an orderly fashion and not allow it to run riot in a haphazard manner; morally, it is the urge which recognises as much value in others as in one's own self and regards in them the proper status which they are occupying in their own places; intellectually, it is the logical principle of coherence of judgment and correspondence of idea with fact. In the external universe, it acts as the force of gravitation, physically; as mutual reaction, chemically; as the principle of growth and sustenance, biologically; as cooperative enterprise, socially. Finally, it is the principle of the unity of the Self, spiritually.

If the Divine Being can be found present in a desire that is in consonance with *dharma,* as the Bhagavadgita puts it in its 7th Chapter, then, naturally, no ordinary desire for objects of sense can be regarded as divine, for, it obtains

the sanction of Divinity only when it is in agreement with the principle of *dharma* which, as we have seen, is so vast and comprehensive that, when it becomes the divinely acceptable feature in the human being, it ceases to be an over-mastering passion as in the case of mortal desires but becomes a suggestion for the recognition of the Infinite in all finite values of life.

This majestic vision of life is manifest in human society as the order of *varna* and *ashrama*, two terms as difficult to understand as the word *dharma*. Usually, *varna* and *ashrama* are translated as the 'caste system' and the tradition of the 'four orders' of life. This forthright and offhand definition has led to many misconceptions about the significance of these phases of the methodology of life, so that *varna*, according to this interpretation, becomes a disrupting factor in life, most undesirable and pernicious, and *ashrama* a meaningless grandmother's superstition of an antediluvian type. But, not so is the truth of the matter.

Varna does not mean 'colour' referring to the Aryan or the Dravidian difference of skin, nor indicating anything like the superior and the inferior in the social organisation of human beings. To think so would be a total misconstruing of fact. *Varna* is not a 'colour' visible to the eyes but a 'degree' conceivable by the mind; which means to say that by the term *varna* we are to understand the degrees of expression of *dharma* in human society in such a way that their coming together or coordination will sustain human society and existence. Though life is a continuous and single whole enshrining in its bosom knowledge, power, richness and energy, all together, it cannot be

manifest in any particular human individual in such a comprehensive fashion unless he is a Superman (*ati-manava*). In ordinary human beings, such a blending of the four factors is impossible. There is always a preponderance of either understanding, will, emotion or action, practically corresponding to these four factors contributory to the essential necessities of life, which cannot ignore any of these four aspects. Inasmuch as these factors of life's growth and sustenance are diversely found preponderating in different individuals, it has been found necessary to cause a coordination of the different groups of individuals in whom there is a pre-eminence of these factors, separately. Just as the head cannot do the work of the legs, the eyes cannot hear and the ears cannot see, and so on, so that the perfection of the organism is maintained by a co-ordination of these limbs and organs of the body, human society is held together as a single growing and prospering organism by a coordination of those individuals in whom there is a predominant manifestation of the mentioned factors, severally. The question of 'superior' and 'inferior' among the individuals does not arise here, since the purpose is to help the growth of each and everyone towards a complete view of life and an achievement of the total value of life by each person, enabling each one, in this way, to participate in all the four values, the blending together of which alone can be regarded as complete fulfilment. The absence of any one of these factors or values would point to a serious defect in the organism of human society and the individual. And happiness is nowhere to be found where perfection is absent. The psychic and spiritual personality of an

individual seeks growth and expansion in the process of evolution, and this growing and intensifying process of life assumes a marked emphasis at a certain stage, in which condition the individual's attitude to life puts on a distinct form of thought and conduct. These stages are what are known as the *ashramas*, and they are mainly four: the stage of the exuberance and energy of adolescence, which needs training and discipline and seeks learning and knowledge; the stage of outer activity and social relationship, wherein one fulfils the normal human desires and performs the expected duties as a unit of the wider society of people; the stage of greater maturity of thought, in which one detects the evanescence of temporal values and material possessions, and aspires to delve into the truth behind phenomena; the stage of illumination in which one lives a life of at-one-ment with the Ultimate Reality. The 'stages' are the 'orders of life' necessitated by the progressive emphasis which it receives in outward evolution.

Yoga has been defined as union with Reality, in its different degrees of manifestation, both within and without. Thus, by the fulfilment of one's functions in life through the laws and disciplines of *vama* and *ashrama,* one moves gradually from the outer to the inner—from the external forms to the deeper meaning of things—and rises upward, from the gross to the subtle, and from the subtle to the ultimate essence of existence. The concepts of the four *purusharthas—dharma, artha, kama* and *moksha;* of the four *varnas*, —the classes of society wielding spiritual, political, economic and manual power; of the four *ashramas*—the stages of study and discipline; performance

of duty, individually as well as socially; withdrawal from attachment to perishable things; and communion with the Supreme Reality;—these sum up the total structure of life in its integrality, excluding nothing, and including everything in its most comprehensive gamut.

It was pointed out that this all-encompassing picture of life is difficult to visualise, at one stroke, and so the ancient adepts have instituted a threefold approach to this truth of life, viz., the envisagement of life through the concepts of the objective *(adhibhuta),* the subjective *(adhyatma)* and the super-normal Deity-aspect of Reality *(adhidaiva)* transcending both the objective and the subjective aspects of experience. Here, again, the proper way would be to move from the outward to the inward and then go to the upward; which means that we have to take into consideration, first of all, the physical and social reality outside, then study and discipline our individual life and personality, and finally go upward to the higher superintending controlling Power which would point to an ascent to one's final Goal. In our capacity as contents of the physical world and parts of human society we would do well, initially, to conduct ourselves in such a way that we do not violate the laws of Nature outside and the rules of the community and society in which we live. The laws of health and hygiene and of ethics and morality in society are, thus, preliminary requisites in this grand evolutionary process of human aspiration. The five elements—Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether—have their own laws and principles of action which restrict our lives to their ways of working and demand of us an obedience to their constitutional

functions. Purity of food, water and air, among other things, is called for in the maintenance of health. The alleviation of hunger and thirst and heat and cold, and protection from the excesses of Nature's forces are the 'creature comforts' that anyone would need to live a life of reasonable ease. Without this minimum of aid, the very basis of one's physical existence might become insecure. Over and above these minimum requisites, there is the call of society upon the individual, namely, loyalty and allegiance to its customs, manners and traditions, apart from a human behaviour and conduct in respect of others around oneself. Herein, the requirements of *varna* and *ashrama* get included, and, in addition, there is the need to observe the canons of not hurting others, being truthful with others, not appropriating the belongings of others, non-indulgence in the cravings of the senses beyond the limits permitted by the rules of health, and absence of greed in general. While these may be regarded as disciplines pertaining to one's life in the 'objective' world *(adhibhautika-prapancha),* they have some relevance to one's 'subjective' *(adhyatmika)* life, as well, since these outward disciplines of conduct greatly influence and reveal one's inner character. Study of exalting literature, such as the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita, and such other powerful revelations of higher wisdom, a life of simple living and high thinking, of servicefulness and austerity in one's demeanour, are further regulative trainings in one's personal or subjective life. Beyond the objective and the subjective levels, there is the transcendent *(adhidaivika)* Control exerted by the Omnipresent

Almighty Being, through its 'manifestations', which are usually called 'gods' in religious parlance. These 'gods' have a hierarchy of their own, and they differ in their degree of the Almighty Power which they express through their forms of manifestation. To give a rough idea of what such a hierarchy would mean, we have, as we have already noted earlier, the gradations mentioned in the Taittiriya Upanishad, the realms of the Gandharva, Pitri, Deva, Indra, Brihaspati and Prajapati. These are names of wider and wider revelations of Reality in gradually increasing intensity, in its successive stages. The highest cosmical manifestations, however, are called Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Isvara, meaning its physical, subtle and causal conditions. The Aim, ultimate, is the Absolute—Brahman.

Chapter 3

STEPS IN EDUCATIONAL METHODS

The fact that the human individual always visualises the world as an object outside himself, and feels almost helplessly dependent on it in a multitude of ways, obliges him to study it, and investigate its structure or constitution and know his relation to it. The subject *(adhyatma)* faces the object *(adhibhuta)* as an unintelligible expanse which sometimes entertains him by supplying his needs and fulfilling his cravings and at other times threatens him with dire consequences if he does not abide by the laws according to which it operates. This precarious situation of man in the world has forced him into a study of the world in all its manifestations. This is what we usually call the educational process.

And what do we do when we enter an organisation or an institution of education? Right from the initial stages of childhood up to what we may regard as the full maturity of the mind, the student is introduced into a series of studies and investigations by a gradational method in an ascending order of complexity and profundity of the subjects which are tabulated as the curricula of education. Generally, even before the child is put into the school, the parents commence its education at home by informing it of the much grosser forms of the knowledge of the world, in its immediate social implications and in its relevance to the daily routines at home—such as the names of the seven days in a week, the connection of the days with the seven planets presiding over the days, the names of the twelve months of the year and a smattering knowledge of the

customs of the family, its traditions, its connections with the neighbours in the village or the town, etc. More orthodox circles brought up in a fairly religious tradition tell the child that there are gods ruling the world to whom everyone has to offer prayers everyday for material benefits—food, clothing, shelter, health, long life and protection from troubles and calamities in life. A daily prayer, a chanting of a formula or a hymn, either in the classical language of one's land, or in one's own mother tongue, to be recited everyday at appointed times of the day, are features which the child learns at certain homes even before it enters the school. More secular-minded persons with a modernistic attitude bring up the child in a purely material atmosphere of comfort and social manners and etiquette conducive to a life of pleasure and prestige in human society, divested of other elements which may not have a direct relation to physical comfort and satisfaction, or social dignity or approbation.

At the kindergarten stage and in the infant standards, there are what are known as the Three-R's—reading, writing and arithmetic, in the most preliminary form of introduction: learning to write letters of the alphabet, coupled with their pronunciation side by side, simple addition and subtraction with methods of multiplication and division added on a little later. This practice may continue for one or two years, or even three years, as the case may be. Then the child-student is introduced to pictorial illustrations of historical personalities as well as geographical conditions of the nearest circumference of one's habitation, say, one's own district or even a smaller

part of this division. The system grows slowly into interesting and catching stories of persons who are by common consent regarded as great ones either because of their deeds, or their character and conduct, or their knowledge and power in any conspicuous manner, which would stimulate the inquisitiveness of the child and draw out its instincts for seeking pleasures in those things which either stir up the normal seekings of its senses or the delights of its incipient personality which is to grow later on into what we call the ego. Songs and rhymes, plays and dramatic performances in the school contribute to accentuate these methods of teaching by giving them a more concrete form of visibility and appreciation.

In slightly higher classes, the method grows into an introduction to the study of preliminary grammar of one's own language, sometimes coupled with such study of another language, as is usually done these days when the initial studies in one's mother tongue are made to go hand in hand with an elementary introduction to the Sanskrit or the English language. Perhaps, in countries outside India, the substitutes may be Latin or French, as is the predilection, custom or interest of the country. However, the grammar of the language, though in its most elementary form, is usually regarded as a necessity. And grammar can go side by side with elementary 'Readers' in the language, beginning with single words and later on leading to groups of words and sentences. Sentences can develop into passages, may be of some anecdotes, stories or descriptions of familiar conditions of social life. Such reading can develop into writing the same, committing it to

memory as far as it is regarded as a necessity. Simple arithmetic, of course, becomes an unavoidable item in any class of study. These are really the seeds of those subjects which grow and develop into outlines of language, history, geography and mathematics. Up to this level, the whole structure may be regarded as primary education imparted in what we know as primary schools.

In the higher stages of education, there are at present four grades known as the Lower Secondary, the Higher Secondary, the College and the University grades. In the first of these educational procedures, above the primary school level, there is usually a continuance of the preliminary methods with only a more intensive emphasis on the very same themes introduced in the primary level. The subjects do not change, generally speaking. There is only a supply of additional details and a slight take-over into a little more advance in the study of the subjects earlier mentioned. Grammar of the language, composition of sentences and easy narratives, stories which serve the double purpose of literary grace and historical information suited to this level, are the subjects in which training is imparted to the students. The basic subjects are, thus, language with its grammatical and literary sides, history, geography, arithmetic and elementary natural science dealing with the basic principles of botany, zoology and physiology, which may cover the bare outlines of plant life, animal life and human life. In the second stage above the primary school level, there is a further advancement made over the earlier methods of teaching and study, and the real foundation for what is known as education proper is laid

here. The subjects covered are the same as those mentioned under the earlier level, with the added themes of outlines of the civic, social and political relationships of the human individual in relevance to a particular nationality, and morals and ethics as are applicable to the immediate concerns of the personal and social life. The subject of geography may touch relevant aspects of astronomy, such as the solar and planetary systems and their influence upon the earth as a planet and on life in the world as a whole. This is usually called mathematical or astronomical geography. Natural science advances into the study of the basic principles of physics, chemistry and biology in their proper connotation. Up to this stage of education, the latter stage does not exclude the studies of the earlier ones, but, while including all of them, makes an advance in detail as well as depth of information by degrees.

It is at the college and university levels that an entirely new shift is given to education by reducing the number of subjects into three, two or one, by stages, and the system of specialisation in the chosen subjects is introduced. The studies cover the major subjects known to the human mind: literature, mathematics, astronomy, geology and geography, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology (including psychoanalysis), aesthetics, economics, ethics, sociology, politics, world-history and world-culture. These are purely empirical studies. Students of philosophy take to an intensive pursuit of logic, epistemology, metaphysics, religion and mysticism, the last two including also the theory and practice of the techniques known as yoga. It is not that one takes up all these subjects at once for the

purpose of study, but directs one's attention to not more than one or two of these at a time, the study getting pin-pointed to one subject alone in the end. This is the final touch of specialisation, thesis-writing, etc. Special training in management, technology, industry, engineering, commerce, agriculture, military science, etc., may form the interest of those whose aptitude is particularly suited for the same. This is to mention only the items of human enterprise in general in the career called education today. It is difficult to conceive anything else as a part of education in the modern definition of the term.

Now comes the occasion for us to ponder a while on what has happened to the educated man, meaning by education a knowledge of these tremendous subjects humanly conceivable. What is one to do with this knowledge? This is a difficult question to answer. And this is the difficulty of every modern educated person. What is one to do after coming out of the college or the university with all the qualifications that mankind may regard as the towering achievements of an academic career? The immediate answer to the question would be: search for a job or an employment, establish or at least join an industry or an economically productive occupation, or take to teaching. Even supposing that these ambitions are fulfilled, can anyone imagine that life is complete with these achievements or is there anything left out of the scheme, due to which one may remain unhappy in spite of one's educational qualifications? The central query is: Is the educated man happy? It is difficult to believe that we would get an answer in the affirmative. To demonstrate this truth,

we have only to pick up a representative educated person and enquire into the state of the happiness in his life. We would be taken aback by surprise at the condition of the modern educated person. There are questions which will not be easy for anyone to answer, and these questions will persist in presenting themselves before the human mind even after the acquisition of the highest of the educational qualifications. The problems are something like these: We do not know how many desires and ambitions we have, and even if we could decipher a few of them, it does not look that they all can be satisfied in the set-up of this world. This makes one dejected and unhappy. It does not appear that a desire or ambition subsides even after its fulfilment; it gets rather more excited and asks for greater satisfaction, proving thereby that it has not been satisfied. On an analysis it will be found that this psychological circumstance will never come to an end. A day comes almost in everyone's life when it becomes incumbent on one to believe that there are no real friends in this world and any union can result in separation at the least touch at a weak spot in one's personality, and suddenly there is a disillusionment of the entire perspective of life, and here one's educational training does not come to help. The objects which appear to bring satisfaction to the senses are realised later on to involve one in inescapable complexities and one finds oneself thrown into a mire from which there is no easy extrication. And there is a persistent pressure from anxiety, tension and a repeated sense of insecurity in one's life visible from all sides. There is, lastly, the threat of death which will not exempt from the operation of its laws

even the greatest genius in the world. And one does not know when the call would come.

It is emphatically said that *knowledge is power*. It is also held that *knowledge is virtue*. And Indian metaphysics, in its last reaches, proclaims that *knowledge is bliss*. Now, does education mean acquisition of knowledge? Any sensible person would not deny that it is so. And what is the condition of the educated man of the world today? Has he *power*? Is he *virtuous*? Is he *blissful?* We would, on an enquiry, discover that our men of knowledge are not really men of power. They need not necessarily be virtuous persons, too. And bliss, of course, is far from their reach. If education is the process of the acquisition of knowledge, that is, if education is the same as knowledge, and if knowledge is defined in the above-mentioned manner, how is it that there is a gulf between education and its expected fruits? We find that the men of power are either the political leaders or the possessors of enormous wealth. The men of virtue are generally materially poor, whether this poverty is voluntarily embraced in the case of some or forced upon by circumstances as in the case of many. We may call them saints, ascetics, and what not. And these are not people who wield any kind of power in human society, at least in the sense power is usually understood in common parlance. Many of the good people are those who are harassed by outward conditions, the apathy of society and the ignorance of the public, all which would not endow a virtuous person with power that can be exercised in any manner. And who are the happy people, or those who enjoy bliss within themselves? Perhaps no one can lay claim to

this coveted position. It is useless to say that some men are contented and happy and that they themselves accept this fact. On a scrutiny it would be found that it is not true. Here it is immaterial whether one is unhappy due to the irony of Providence, the injustice that is prevalent outside or the sorrow brought about by the feeling for unachieved ends in life. Whatever the reason be, the fact remains the same.

All this, in conclusion, would show that a serious catastrophe has befallen the educational process unless we are prepared to decide that education is not knowledge and that the educational process is not the way to its acquisition. But to hold that knowledge can be had by any means other than education would be to go at a tangent. For, how else can anyone acquire knowledge?

The predominant view is that knowledge is a means to an end. In the case of some, this end is economic welfare and gaining of wealth in the form of money, particularly, or power in society. This is the reason why educationally qualified persons seek employments in institutes, organisations, firms, the government, etc. This 'end' which is in view clubs within itself a subtle notion of a simultaneous acquisition of prestige and authority in society. A person in some socially valued employment would at the same time be regarded as a 'valuable' person, whether the nature of this value is clear to anyone's mind or not. Why should an employed person be a person of prestige and dignity? The notion is very vague. Evidently, there is, underlying it, a feeling that such a person can be utilised as a 'means' to some other 'ends' covertly creeping

within the minds of people. Also, prestige itself is something very nebulous and cannot stand scrutiny. It cannot stand scrutiny because it is a form of the vanity characteristic of the ego of man, whose constitution itself cannot bear scrutiny. Self-esteem is at the background of the notion of the general form of esteem which goes by the name of prestige. And this is one of the 'ends' sought through knowledge by education.

Why does one wish to be educated? Why is education valued? If we go to the root of the matter in answering these posers, we are caught up in a jigsaw puzzle, a vicious circle or, perhaps, we find ourselves in a fool's paradise. We seem to be seeking something without knowing what it is, and what for it is sought. Are we merely following the herd-instinct, the emotion of the mob, or the gregarious urge which has no rational foundation behind it? Are we in a position to find a little time and leisure to delve deep into this most interesting subject for our consideration?

Before we attempt a reasonably satisfactory answer to this problem, we may do well to place before ourselves the woe which the great savant Narada represented in the presence of the mighty Sanatkumara, as we have it stated in the Seventh Section of the Chhandogya Upanishad:

"O Sire, please teach me!"—with this request Narada came to Sanatkumara. And to him, Sanatkumara replied: "Tell me what you already know; then I shall speak to you further." Narada recounted his vast learning when he said, "Great One! I have mastered the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda, the Atharva-Veda, Ancient History and Religion, Grammar, the Art of propitiating the departed

ones, Mathematics, Divination and Augury, Chronology, Logic, Polity, the Science of the Celestials, the Science of the Sacred Knowledge of the Supernatural Realms, Demonology and Physical Science, the Science of Political Administration and Militarism, Astronomy and Astrology, the Science of Snake-charming, and all the Fine Arts. Sire, I know all these.

"Such a one am I, O Noble One, knowing all these Arts and Sciences, I know not the Truth! It has been heard by me from those who are like you, O Great One, that he who knows the Truth crosses over sorrow. Such a sorrowing one am I, O Noble One! Condescend, O Sire, to teach me, who am such a sorrowing one, to cross over to the other side of sorrow."

And to him, the great Sanatkumara replied: "Verily, whatever you have learnt is indeed mere words, only name."

But, how are all these learnings, all these Arts and Sciences, to be regarded as a matter of words, a mere name? Is there any explanation? Perhaps, here, we have some hint at the solution of the sorrow of mankind.

Chapter 4

THE ADVENTURE OF KNOWLEDGE

The problem of human existence and activity is really the problem of the human consciousness. Or, to put it more precisely, the problem is that man is not able to realise that this is the problem. Knowledge and activity are the fruits of education. But neither knowledge nor activity is unconcerned with an object outside. This would mean that our relationship with external things is the deciding factor in judging the worth of our knowledge and the value of our activities. This, again, suggests that the worth and value of our education lies in the meaning attached to our relationship with the objects of our study. The whole question is one of subject-object relation. There is no such thing as either knowledge or effort unrelated to an aim or objective. If this aim is to be missed, if the purpose is to go out of one's mind, if the object is to be separated from the subject, if the content of consciousness is to be cut off from consciousness, then, the result is obvious. And this is exactly what has happened to our educational methods, to the entire process of education today. When knowledge is devoid of content, what do we call it? Mere name? Only words? Objectless knowledge would be tantamount to an aimless activity. How would knowledge of this kind, activity of this character, contribute to human weal—bring real *knowledge, power* and *happiness,* which are the ultimate aims of humanity?

It is impossible to avoid reference to fundamental principles in the solution of ultimate problems. This is to say that one cannot entirely free oneself from the need to

judge things philosophically and be under the cozy and misconceived notion that philosophy is a lyrical theory and errand of unpractical thinking, for, philosophy is not an 'arm-chair' affair, as the wise old man is usually dubbed by the inexperienced younger blood, but forms the science of laying the very foundation of human society and life in general.

Things in the world are not so simple as they appear on the surface. That some people are friends and some are enemies, some things are good and some bad, some beautiful and some otherwise, is the outcome of the credulous thinking of an illiterate mind. Such judgments as these imply a wrong assessment of the relation of the subject with the object, of consciousness with its content. At this stage it would not be proper to delve into this matter without, first of all, getting ourselves acquainted with the state of affairs in which mankind as a whole is placed, an outline of which is pictoriously depicted in the Aitareya Upanishad. To paraphrase this description in a language intelligible to us:

The One Being that was from eternity, outside which there was nothing, willed to materialise itself in the form of creation. It concretised itself, through this Universal Will, into the Presiding Person of the whole universe. It grossened itself into the density of the material worlds (which are constituted of the five elements: ether, air, fire, water and earth).

The process of manifestation of the worlds, originally as the object of subjective experience, was something like this: From the Mouth of this Universal Person Speech came out,

and from Speech Fire. From His Nostrils Breath came out and from Breath Air. From His Eyes Light came out and from Light Sight. From His Ears Sound came out and from Sound the Quarters or the Directions. From His Skin Hairs came out and from Hairs Plants and Trees. From His Heart Mind came out and from Mind the Moon. From His Navel the Out-going Breath came out and from the Out-going Breath the principle of Death. From His Virile Member Vital Force came out and from Vital Force Waters.

This description of the origin of cosmic differentiation is intended to give an idea of the state of consciousness in which the human being particularly finds himself at the present moment. Though it is difficult to make a complete analysis of consciousness from this narration given by the Upanishad, there is, no doubt, in it a hint at the method of the type of analysis that has to be conducted for the purpose of acquiring a correct knowledge of the exact position of man in the universe. But the Upanishad takes us by a greater surprise when it does not end the story with this description alone, and goes further, and makes it a little more difficult for us to understand what has actually happened to us in the state in which we are today. The individuation of the Cosmic Being is not merely the separation of a part from the Whole, as a simple reduction or subtraction of a quantity from a larger measure, so that we cannot say that we as individuals are small gods, because we are little bits of that very same Supreme Cosmic Person. We are not small chips of this larger mass of gold, but something worse has happened to us, so that we have ceased to be the gold that we were once. In fact, there is

nothing in this world that can act as a comparison to what has actually happened to us. Metaphors, images, examples and similes of every kind fail here. The condition in which we are is something quite different from what any language can explain. This is the reason, perhaps, why we cannot understand either ourselves or others, properly. To baffle us, as it were, with a greater mystery, the Upanishad goes on:

When the individual was separated from the Whole, Fire became the speech and entered the mouth of the individual; Air became breath and entered the nostrils; Sun became sight and entered the eyes; The Quarters became sound and entered the ears; Plants and Trees became hairs and entered the skin; Moon became the mind and entered the heart; Death became the out-going breath and entered the navel; Waters became the vital force and entered the virile member.

We should be careful to observe the tremendous reversal of process that has taken place in the functions of the principles originally at the time of cosmic individuation, and subsequently at the time of the commencement of the individual's functions, *independently*. Let us take only one of the functions mentioned above: When there was the first isolation of the individual from the Cosmic Being, we are told that from the Mouth of the Universal Person Speech came out and from Speech, Fire. But, when it becomes the question of the individual's function, we are told that Fire became speech and entered the mouth of the individual. What operated as the cause primarily during the origination of things

becomes the effect in the individual, so that, we may say, while the power that we call Speech is the effect of the location called the Mouth in the Universal Person and the principle of Fire is the effect of the power of Speech, the reverse is the case with the individual; that is, Fire, which was the last effect originally, becomes now the first cause and engenders the force of speech in the individual and restricts the operation of the vocal organs in the mouth. To take the instance of another function: Nostrils, breath and air act as cause and effect successively, originally, but now, in the individual, the process is reversed so that Air, breath and nostrils form the order of succession in a cause-and-effect relationship. And so on, with the other functions.

From a consideration of the above description of the evolution of the individual from the Cosmic, we have only to conclude that a great woe has come upon man, so that he has not got a direct means of easily contacting the Cosmic through the faculties or powers with which he is immediately endowed. For, in the 'reversal-process' of the functions, described above, the 'original' function operating as an 'effect' turns back upon the individual as the 'cause' of its functions, as it happens in reflections, wherein the features either become topsy-turvy or inversed in some way. And how does a reflection contact its original? There is a *partial* similarity of this position with the attempt of the reflection of the sun in water to come in contact with the original sun. In this comparison, the similarity is that the reflection truly pictures the original even as man is supposed to be made in the image of God. Now, how can a reflection catch the original or become the original? What

is its relation to the original? Apparently there is no relation, for the two are far removed by the absence of any real contact, mutually. Yet, there is a relation; else, the original will not appear in the reflection. The analogy of the reflection of the sun in water, though it presents the context of the similarity between the original and the reflection, is, at the same time, partial; it does not represent the whole truth. This is because the reflection of the sun is spatially removed from the original by a great physical distance, while, in the case of the Cosmic Being and the individual, no physical distance can be introduced between the original and the reflection. The two overlap each other, as it were, which is the reason why the whole circumstance becomes difficult to investigate and even to understand.

The reversal of the process of the functions in the descent of the Cosmic to the individual can be explained by another analogy, namely, the reflection of our own face seen through a mirror in which the right becomes left and the left becomes the right: What exists as the effect in the Cosmic becomes the cause in the individual. In the terminology of the Vedanta philosophy, the process of the Universal Being passes through the stages of Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat, which are the cosmic levels of the Absolute itself. Here, the latter stage is the effect of the former. But in the individual these cosmic levels are reversed in the form of the experiences known as *visva* (waking condition), *taijasa* (dreaming condition) and *prajna* (sleep condition). While the Virat is the lowest effect in the cosmic procession of descent, *visva is* the highest cause in the individual, so that we may say, at least in some

sense, that the connecting link between the individual and the Cosmic, that is, between *visva* and Virat, is the waking consciousness of the individual. But, beware! The waking individual is not an exact quantitative part of the Virat, for the former is also a reflection at the same time, so that it does not and cannot partake the characters of the original, such as omniscience and omnipotence, to mention only two of the prominent characteristics of the Universal.

The whole case has been laid bare. Without entering into further investigative comments, we may leave the reader here with the power of his own thought and imagination for deeper contemplation on this dramatic event.

However, a clue for this onward research may be given here: The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (I. 3) says that every individual function is smitten with death, that is, with the principle of change and destruction, and that when these functions are freed from the clutches of death they revert to the original from which they came. So, how can the reflection become the original, the part become the whole, the effect become the cause? The answer is: by freeing the reflection or the part from the conditions which make it a reflection or a part. And what are these conditions? The principles which cause change and destruction, which are the constituent factors of individuality on account of which it is that the individual is said to be mortal, while the Cosmic Being is immortal. This Upanishad says that speech, when it is freed from the principle of death, becomes Fire. Similarly, breath, when it is freed from the principle of death becomes Air. The eyes, when they are

freed from death, become the Sun; and likewise with the other functions. The meaning here seems to be that the reversal process of functions referred to above is the principle of death in the individual and the individual becomes the Universal when the former is freed from the principle of death or destruction. *Becoming* has to revert to *Being*.

And, death or destruction does not mean annihilation but a tendency to move from the effect to the cause, a change that is necessitated by the urge within the part to become the whole, for the latter contains the former, in fact, in an organic oneness. What we call evolution in a vast sense is nothing but this: the struggle of the universe to evolve from the lower to the higher, in which process the individual's tendency for the Universal is included. The whole universe is busy with the activity of re-arranging its constituents for a self-realisation of itself in the Absolute. Evolution is a movement of the not-self to the Self, by deepening as well as expanding its jurisdiction, inwardly in quality and outwardly in quantity, until the Supreme State is reached, wherein quality and quantity merge into the single Being of the Infinite Self. For an interesting and majestic discourse on the relation of the Absolute to the individual, one is referred to the 4th Section of the First Chapter of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. As our present concern is the educational process, we shall not touch this subject here to any extent more than necessary for our present need for clarification.

There can be no real meaning in education if it is not a systematised art of contacting reality by graduated stages.

And reality is inseparable from our own life, our very existence—anything unconnected with our existence is not reality for us. From the above-quoted description of man's position in the universe, provided to us in the Upanishad, it appears that reality, to us, is *an approximation of experience, by degrees, to larger dimensions of universality.* Thus, the educational process also has to be a gradual rise of experience, by degrees, through the different stages which connect our existence with reality.

A consideration of the true educational process, then, obliges us to take the immediate facts of experience as the basic truths of education. This means to say that no experience whatsoever can be outside reality, for every experience is a part of it, as it is revealed in some degree, and every degree is a degree of reality. Education, then, is a universal movement of the mind towards self-recognition in the highest state of Reality, though it takes its stand in and commences from the most initial and primitive stage of experience. It ranges from a child's simplest notion of the external world to the loftiest concept of the scientist and the philosopher. If, from this point of view, we are only to name the themes that may have to be gathered by the studies to be comprehended in the educational process, we may tentatively list them thus: the kindergarten stage and the Montessori methods of approach; reading, writing and arithmetic in their most basic forms; elementary geography and history in the form of stories and inspiring narratives; simple dramatic portrayals; grammar, language and literature through stages of increasing width and intensity; mathematics, natural science, botany, zoology and

physiology; ethics, civics, sociology and political relationship; astronomy, physics, chemistry and biology in their more developed form; psychology, aesthetics, economics, the philosophy of history, and world-culture. This enumeration of subjects practically covers all that is taught today in our colleges and universities, perhaps the only things that are taught to us in these institutions under the impression that these subjects exhaust all possible studies. But this is a sad mistake. The study of reality is not complete merely with a sojourn into these empirical extensions of the human mind in the visible world of sense-perception. To detect why these studies are incomplete in themselves, we have to go back to the evolutionary details supplied to us in the Upanishad as observed in the earlier paragraphs. At best, all these studies are the worst forms of knowledge that we can hope to gain, for these are only *notions* gathered *subjectively* concerning the *objects* of the outside world which manages to retain its own independence over the individual experiencing subject. But, how is the world so independent and unmanageable? For an answer we have only to go back to the Upanishad. The world of the elements-earth, water, fire, air and ether—has unfortunately become the *cause* of our experiences which are the *effects* produced by our sensations of them. This is only the knowledge which the reflection has of the original, far removed from truth *due to the reversal process* mentioned in the Upanishad. If the reflection can be regarded as the original, our present-day educational career also can be regarded as the final shot in man's pursuits. No wonder that Sage Sanatkumara considered all this

knowledge as only a name, because it has estranged itself from the original which is supposed to be its object. Yet, Sanatkumara regarded 'Name' as the first step in the investigation of reality; the 'name' points to what is 'named', though it is no more than a mere 'pointer'. So, too, is the need and the extent of value of our empirical sciences and arts. But, if knowledge is isolated from its object, how can knowledge bring happiness? How can knowledge be equated with power? How can knowledge be the same as virtue? For, happiness, power and virtue are associated with reality, and when knowledge is unconnected with reality—because it is only a symbol, a pointer, a reflection, and not the original, —it remains only a name, though in the sense of the lowest degree of reality. It becomes a pretension to progress, growth and culture if it usurps the status of the original by exceeding the limits of a 'pointer'; a 'hint' or a 'reflection'. We have to investigate into the principles of real knowledge more deeply and courageously. What is real knowledge? What should be the *aims* and *methods* of education? What should be the nature of a comprehensive *curriculum*?

Chapter 5

RENDER UNTO CAESAR THE THINGS WHICH ARE CAESAR'S, AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S

It needs no mention that the striving for knowledge by means of education has a double function to perform, namely, to take note of the empirical facts and experiences of life on the one hand, and to be consistent with the demands of the absolute values on the other. Since the temporal values are inseparable from the metempirical, the laws of every realm have to be paid their due. "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Though appearance cannot be identified with reality, it needs no saying that appearance bears some relation to reality. Thus, though all programmes and enterprises in life seem to be involved in the phenomena of transiency, it cannot be gainsaid that our efforts bear a relevance to the truth that we are aspiring for. The very acceptance of phenomenal experience simultaneously calls for the recognition of there being such a thing as reality. Our whims and fancies, hopes and aspirations, struggles and achievements must bear a connection, though remotely, to reality. The reflection is not the original, but the reflection indicates what the original would be like, even as a shadow is, after all, cast by a substance that is there. The human mind need not be in despair that its struggles are a mere pursuit of the will-o'-the-wisp. Our education, our knowledge, is wholly empirical, no doubt; but it cannot end with the mere

empirical, it has a function to perform beyond itself, like the medicine administered to cure a disease.

The basic psychology behind education should be "not to disturb the degree of reality involved in any state of experience." The Bhagavadgita exhorts: "The faith of the ignorant is not to be shaken" while the wise one performs the function of imparting knowledge to the ignorant. The standpoint of the student in any stage of education cannot be ignored, though it may be regarded as an inadequate standpoint in comparison with a higher level of knowledge. Education is similar to the artistic process of the blossoming of a flower-bud, gradually and beautifully. The bud is not to be opened suddenly by exerting any undue force; else, it would not be a blossom, but a broken structure serving no purpose. The teacher is always to be hidden behind the student, though he is with the student at all times. He is not to come to the forefront, either as a superior or an unpleasant ingredient among the constituents that go to form the feelings, aspirations and needs of the student at any particular level. The task of the teacher is indeed a very difficult one to perform. One who is untrained in the art of thinking through the minds of students would not be a successful teacher. The most immediate of realities is always to become the first concern, whether in the social, educational or philosophic field. The visible objects are concrete things, and they are the only realities for the child. Hence comes the need for the kindergarten stage where object-lessons are imparted by the presentation of concrete examples. If these examples are pleasant forms of vision and audition, they would add to

the success of the process of education. A discipline or training need not necessarily be bitter or unpleasant. It can also be sweet, lovable and delighting. The method of teaching is more a subject of psychology than anything else. For, it involves on the part of the teacher a knowledge of not only the purpose of education in its different stages but also of the differing methods that have to be applied in teaching in these varying stages. It may be said that, for all practical purposes, no stage of experience can be regarded as wholly false or utterly wrong but that it holds a particular degree of reality in its bosom. Every child is dear to its own mother, whoever she be and in whatever conditions she may find herself at any time.

From this consideration it would follow that the syllabi of studies chalked out in the present-day curricula of education are not totally out of point, for they bear relation to some stage or other of reality; but their mistake is that these stages are wholly confined to the field of sensory experience and do not touch even the fringe of what is beyond the empirical level. Though a lesser truth is also a necessary feature of truth, it should never be regarded as the whole truth. The subjects that are taught in the educational fields today are no doubt truths in their own limited ambits—in fact, every experience based on every perception is a phase of truth which cannot be denied at the time of its experience or perception—but since they are not the whole truth, they present unforeseen problems in the long run, which are at the background of the restlessness and the sense of insecurity crawling through the veins of the modern educated individual. The stress on the need for

the lower truth should not mean either an ignorance or the neglect of the higher.

This investigation and study of the position of the human individual in the universe should direct him to the correct way of approach in launching upon the methodology of education. And what is life but a continuous process of educational training? One would realise oneself to be always a student if only there is to be an honest self-enquiry in the interest of the pursuit of truth, for truth alone triumphs. The present system of teaching adopted by the modern educational psychology is quite good, so far as it goes, *but only so far as it goes*. It is necessary, as we have observed, that the more stringent manifestations of reality should be taken into consideration first of all, with immediate priority. The social and the physical structure of one's environment is obviously the foremost of such manifestations. One feels, by the very circumstances of the environment, that there is a world outside, there are mountains and rivers; sun, moon and stars; summer and winter and rains, which come periodically as seasons in the year; men and animals, people connected with us as relatives and those not so connected, etc. This is to give a crude picture of one's notions concerning the astronomical world, the geographical features and the social relations with which one seems to be associated in some way, though not very distinctly present in one's active consciousness. As these things are the immediately observed facts, their features would be naturally the first of subjects that have to be introduced into one's studies, though in a very moderate form of a mere

outline of information. We may call these the seeds of *Astronomy, Geography, Sociology* and *Civics*. These may include as a necessary consequence one's moral obligations to the society of human beings and animals. And so, we enter the field of *Ethics* as an inseparable part of the studies, for the ethical rules cannot be isolated from social obligations in which one's life is intertwined. There is then the natural development of the consciousness of one's material needs and the ways of procuring the same, taking notice at the same time of such needs of other people also around oneself. Here we sow the seeds of *Economics* in its very basic formation. Up to this level of concern and procedure of studies, we may regard one's education as *fundamental* and *primary*.

A more advanced outlook of life takes one to its involvements in its immediate connections with what is elaborately called the *Political Structure* of the country. One becomes conscious of the enforcers of law, visible as certain personalities considered as heads of the immediate environment of the community, the village, the district and even the still wider jurisdiction of the province. This knowledge and the relevance of this knowledge to one's personal and social life combines in itself the elementary principles of the *civic* and *political* atmosphere in which one lives. This raises the question of the necessity to be properly informed about the nature of the *Laws* and regulations that govern one's day-to-day existence, though these are not immediately visible in everyday life. Nonetheless, their influence upon one's life may be tremendous like that of the rise of the sun every day, though people are not always

conscious that the sun rises and sets daily. Further on, there comes also the need to know the manner in which these traditions have come down from the past by the exigencies of the time's process and the nature of the events that have occurred in relation to people's lives lived before us many years back, and this is the study of *History*. All these items of one's basic education come together to form the *Culture* of the human nature in general, which is variedly to reveal itself in its manifestations as human thought, feeling and action. Here we come to the second stage of education; all which may be regarded as still elementary, meaning whereby not what is 'inadequate' but 'fundamental' as the most essential rock-bottom of the grand edifice of education.

Now we are to enter the third stage wherein we begin to feel the need also for certain other aspects of study, which present themselves as essentials in their own way, though they are not so essential as the unavoidable phases of education, detailed above, which were organically connected with one's creature-existence itself. These needs of the third stage are sometimes called 'diversions' or 'pleasures' which are sought by the 'emotions' of human nature. These are the *fine arts* which contribute to bring a new type of delight to one's personality through the visualisation of beauty. Beauty is something difficult to explain, but something which everyone knows and feels by actual perception of it in physical and mental life. Objects that are beautiful attract one's attention and give a satisfaction even by their mere proximity, let alone the actual possession and enjoyment of them personally.

Usually, beauty is regarded as a kind of perception evoked by a certain pattern of the arrangement in the form of the object which is called beautiful. Though the same object may not appear beautiful to all persons under the same conditions, and there is thus a subjective projection of beauty upon the objects of perception, there is nonetheless a general form of beauty which is acceptable and perceivable to every human being. These general forms of beauty may be categorised particularly under what are known as *architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance, drama* and *literature.* An acquaintance with these sources of beauty would call for a study of these subjects, a branch of knowledge designated as *Aesthetics.*

With all this, we would be in a state of ignorance if we are not in a position to go further down into the causative factors requiring of us an investigation into and a study of subjects like aesthetics, together with all those things that precede such a need felt within. The love of beauty, whether visible as in architecture, sculpture and painting, audible as in music, or intelligible as in literature, is basically found to be an expression of a reaction set up by the human mind to the conditions of the world outside in terms of the peculiar relation it bears with these conditions. The human mind as the subject and the world outside as its object form the correlative counterparts complementary to each other, and we may say in a sense that when a round rod finds a round hole fitted to its insertion into it, there is the perception of beauty. Beauty, then, is the experience roused in oneself of a sense of completeness on the recognition of one's exact counterpart in the outer world, whether this perception is

sensory or intellectual. The perception of beauty turns out to be a psycho-physical condition subtly brought about by factors deeply underlying the correlation between the human mind as the subject and the world outside as the object. This interesting psychological truth would be seen to be the basis of even such apparently altruistic activities of human nature as the pursuit of human culture, the interest in the field of study as history, the need for law and regulation in society and the institutions—civic, social and political governance, etc. Man himself is the basis and the cause of all that he does, all that he needs and all that he thinks are the necessary values of life. In a word, man sees himself outside and studies himself, looking at himself as in a mirror under the erroneous notion that he is studying something thoroughly external and unconnected with himself, which misconception is the cause of the failure of modern educational systems in the realisation of the final aim of life.

Man, thus, comes to realise that a study of the scientific principles of *Psycho-analysis* becomes a further development in the curriculum of a true system of education that could be adopted with good as its result. The study of Psycho-analysis is fundamentally a study of the *intrinsic urges* of human nature, which, to a large extent, condition even the functioning of man's rational powers. Western Psycho-analysts have thought that the basic urges of human nature are those of the instinct for food, the instinct for sex and the instinct for power. When these urges get defeated or frustrated by opposing forces, either due to the inadequacy of the proper means to fulfil them or

due to the operation of the laws and rules framed by outer society, the mind sets up protective reactions known as 'defense mechanisms' and tries to fulfil itself either directly by obtaining the necessary 'means' even by unlawful ways, or by defying the operating rules and regulations outside by subtle devices of cunning, or indirectly by *regression* to the lower levels of satisfaction, by seeking the next best thing available immediately below the level of what is the main objective. If even the next best is not available, the mind can go down to the third level below, and so on, until, if all forms of approach become futile, the urges react upon themselves seeking satisfaction in their own selves, which condition is called mania or a psychopathic condition—a state of mental illness where one enjoys merely by imagination. The study of Psycho-analysis is very important since it is an ignorance of the workings of the human mind that is mostly responsible for the anxieties, worries and tensions that harass people everywhere. It is this ignorance that is at the background of people often projecting their own feelings upon other persons and things and, *vice versa,* assuming the character of other persons and things in themselves, all which cannot be regarded as a healthy state of mind. The Upanishads make mention of what they call *'eshanas',* or instinctive cravings, namely, those of wealth, sex and fame, which may be said to correspond to the urges of self-preservation of the physical organism, of self-reproduction and the preservation of the ego, respectively. In the West, Jung, Freud and Adler have exclusively devoted themselves to the study of these primary drives of human nature. It is imperative that

students of psychology and seekers on the spiritual path should be well-versed in the diagnosis of these natural urges of the human nature, in order not only to obviate the chances of getting subjugated by them but also to channelise them for a higher and more constructive purpose, as is the case with the rushing waters of the river which can be allowed to damage towns and villages or can be diverted ably for purposes of irrigation and agriculture, and such other useful ends. Human activities are not so impersonal and altruistic as they are made to appear, for a careful study of man reveals that all that he does is an outward manifestation of the needs he feels within due to the very nature of the manner in which his mind and body are made as a complex living organism. Though a person may think that he *wills* freely of his own choice, he cannot know why he wills at all in that particular way. This would cut the ground from under the feet of human freedom and open the gates to the existence of a Power which seems to be directing even the will of the individual.

The studies in Psycho-analysis are not complete in themselves in spite of the fact that they give the clue to the operation of subtle personal factors behind the vast objective activities of mankind; for, the reason behind the state of affairs which seems to be compelling man to work as well as evaluate things in terms of the direction and colour given by his own instincts, is something subtler and more pervasive than the workings of the instincts themselves. It is unfortunate that the Western psychological studies have not gone beyond what they call Depth-psychology, meaning thereby the psycho-analytic

researches heralded by Freud, Adler and Jung, and propounded by their disciples and admirers. It is in the Upanishads and the Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali that we have a profound discovery made, pointing out the rationale behind the manner in which the human instincts and urges act in the person as well as in the outer world. Behind Psycho-analysis is *Psychology*, which covers a wider field than that envisaged by the former.

A very succinct and aphoristic maxim on the essentials of *General Psychology* has been given by Patanjali in the first chapter of his Yoga-Sutras, wherein he states that right knowledge, wrong knowledge, doubt, sleep and memory are the 'non-painful psychoses' *(aklishta-vrittis)* of the mind, meaning thereby that these processes of the psychological organ are something unnatural to its essential nature. *The nature of human perception is the cause of the way in which the human instincts operate,* and what human perception is, is indicated in the aphorism stated above. The point involved here is that affections and emotions, loves, hatreds and all evaluations of life in general are relative to the conditions of one's consciousness of objects. To take only the first part of this aphoristic enunciation of Patanjali, the process of man's perception and inferential knowledge of objects is the consequence of a reciprocal action on the part of the subject and the object of knowledge. The instincts and urges, though they may be regarded as the subtle inner causative factors behind most of human actions and dispositions, have thus a still further cause behind them. And this deeper cause is the very structure of the knowledge-process itself. Inasmuch as this

knowledge-process is a consequent product of a reciprocity obtaining between the subject and the object, it may be said that there is behind the operation of the urges and instincts of human nature, the power of the whole universe—a reason, perhaps, why the urges appear so involuntary, uncontrollable and impetuous in their functions—for the object of knowledge is nothing but the universe itself. The implication of the suggestion of Patanjali is to be had in greater detail in the vaster researches of the Vedanta philosophy. Patanjali is very short and does not explain what he seeks to indicate. The idea is that the whole mental process in its conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious levels is a complex involvement in the characteristics of both the subject and the object of knowledge, so that the studies in General Psychology extend beyond the mere conscious-operations of the mind. Conditions of loss of consciousness, such as sleep, are also included in these psychological studies. As a matter of fact, even psycho-pathology and parapsychology are not outside the purview of General Psychology in its proper meaning.

Chapter 6

HUMAN INDIVIDUALITY AND ITS FUNCTIONAL FEATURES

The psychological structure of the human being is responsible for the instinctive urges, loves, passions, etc., manifest in the personality. Here, however, it has to be remembered that the mind-stuff, which is the repository of all psychological functions, does not work absolutely independent of the physical conditions of the body through which it operates. The physical, chemical and vital processes which determine the existence and function of the bodily organism have a great influence upon the workings of the mind, or the mind-stuff. That is, the studies of *Biology* have some relevance to those in the field of Psychology. Setting apart for the time being the extravagant demands of the Behaviourist school that psychological functions are only the effects of the exudations from the brain cells and the nervous structure of the body—a rank materialist approach to things—we may safely agree that the bodily functions have something to say in the matter of the functions of the mind. It is not unknown that serious physiological disorders can affect mental functions, even as excesses or deformities in the mental functions can affect bodily conditions. Biology and psychology are in a way sister sciences, one contributing to the other in a considerable measure. Enthusiastic zealots of the biological principles have gone to the extent of denying all originality to mind and consciousness and attributing all reality to the vital process alone, an *elan vital.* This, again, seems to be an extravagance of human enthusiasm, for a life process, even

the *elan vital,* cannot produce mind or consciousness as its effect, for consciousness is never seen to be an effect of anything. In order that consciousness may be regarded as an effect, its cause must have consciousness present in itself implicitly, which would mean that the cause is potential consciousness, and it would then be pointless to say that the consciousness is an effect. Unconscious causes cannot produce conscious results, unless these unconscious causes themselves are hidden forms of consciousness. *Biology* is contributory to the higher studies in the progress of the evolution of life and is not a water-tight compartment holding all reality within itself alone. *Botany* or the study of plant life, *zoology* or the study of animal life, and *anatomy* and *physiology* or the study of the human organism, are comprehended in the science of *Biology*. The instincts for self-preservation and self-reproduction are the most insistent of the urges that manifest themselves in the plant, animal and human kingdoms. It is not without some truth that it is said that life sleeps in inorganic mater, breathes in plants, dreams in animals and wakes up in human beings. The study of biology cannot be completely separated from a knowledge of the basic principles of psychology, because the human organism has always behaved as a complex psycho-physical substance, with a mutual action and reaction between the bodily functions and the operations of the mental faculties. The theory of the Behaviourists that psychic functions are motivated by physiological reflexes and activities cannot be accepted since it is difficult for anyone to conclude that thought can evolve from matter. It is also not acceptable that body and mind are two entirely

distinct realms of being with no interaction between them. Utter dualism hopelessly fails. Also, the theory of parallelism of movement and action by the mind and the body is also unintelligible, since parallels are not known to meet, at least in any empirical experience of the kind in geometry, and so, then, there would be no correspondence between the mind and the body, between thought and the physiological functions. It has never been an easy question for anyone to answer, as to what sort of relation there is between the mind and the body.

Biology and psychology are united in modern medical science for the reason that the behaviours of the body and the mind have not been found to be capable of being distinguished on scientific grounds. Rather, it was easily discoverable that the one tells upon the other in a certain manner and in a given type of intensity. We thus hear these days of what are known as psychosomatic conditions requiring a similar technique of handling them. The body-mind-complex is usually regarded as a single phase of human life, and biology and psychology again come out as two aspects of a single subject of study.

The solution to the problem of the relation between the mind and the body is perhaps to be sought in a deeper study of the sources of the human organism itself. Investigations in the field of astrophysics and the science of life at the biological level have revealed that the human individual is a developed form of what was originally a united substance, call it an atom or cell. In this primordial condition of existence it would be impossible to draw line between matter and consciousness, between body and

mind, for here existence appears to be at the stage of an indistinguishable and subtle mass of mystery. Is it not a wonder that poetic genius, scientific acumen and philosophic wisdom which shake the world of mankind with their force of impact and power of conviction, should be hidden latently in a microscopic cellular form of sperm or gene or chromosome? How could one explain the presence of a mighty and wide-spreading banyan tree in an insignificantly small seed thereof? Could the origin of thought and the origin of the body be identical in its structure and formation? Would it be that the body and the mind are only two facets of the same crystal of an original reality, the two eyes of a single observing individual? How else is one to conceive reasonably that eluding relation between the mind and the body, which should make one hesitate even to use the term 'and' between them? This is precisely the answer we would get, whether we follow the scientist and accept his theory that from the nebular cosmic dust the galaxies, the solar systems, the earth, plant, animal and men are formed, or whether we listen to the doctrine of the Vedanta that from the Universal Compound of Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat, in which there was no distinction between matter and consciousness, body and mind, everything down to the blade of grass and the grain of sand on the ocean's shore has been made manifest.

The *Chemistry* of elements and of a living body, known as inorganic and organic chemistry, also may be said to be closely associated with biological functions. This fact is brought to high relief in the effects produced by the administering of chemically manufactured drugs into the

human system and the chemical effect of organic substances introduced into the body of a human being. Here again we have revealed before us the mystery of the inter-relationship obtaining among chemical, biological and psychological functions. The bifurcation of these sciences into independent subjects unconnected with one another would thus be not proper. Chemistry is the study of the character of the molecular substances constituting the building bricks of all substances—earth, water, fire and air—whether these are studied in the external world or through the individual bodies they form by different permutations and combinations. Chemistry is also the science of the mutual reactions produced by substances when they are combined in a given proportion. Though the science of life does not appear to feel the necessity to pay any appreciable attention to the subject of chemical action and reaction of substances, whether inorganic or organic, it is hard to believe that the chemistry of the body has no relevance to its biological functions and incidentally to the psychological factors in an individual. As we go further and deeper, we would realise that every subject of study is connected with every other, all which are equally indispensable from one point of view or the other.

In the context of the psychological development of the human individual, in its relation to its biological features, it is essential to review those significant processes through which the individual passes in his evolutionary development and which may be regarded as inseparable from the human individual himself, basically. The biological life may be said to commence immediately from

the seeds provided by the physical features and characteristics of the individual, so that the earliest stage of biological life, as far as the human being is concerned, is a sort of 'brute consciousness' scarcely separable from a kind of inanimate existence with premonitions of the dawn of a coming age of living and moving in the organic world. In this condition, consciousness may be said to be buried so deep in the material vesture that it would be practically impossible to decipher even its very existence. May we compare it to a state of sleep where consciousness is incipient? Perhaps, so. Like the huge banyan tree subtly lying latent in the tiny seed, the entire complexity of human existence lies potentially in the seed of future development.

A further ascent of life, in the next stage, is characterised by an instinctive capacity to react to external stimuli for the purpose of self-preservation, as may be usually seen in plant life or in the lower species of living bodies, such as the insect or the earthworm, whose life can with difficulty be called a life of consciousness at all in the proper sense of the term. A further push of the urge of life manifests itself as a deliberate tendency to self-preservation, which may be said to be the crudest form of personal selfishness, whose intention is merely to preserve oneself as a physical individual even at the cost of other such individuals, even if it may mean the death of others for the preservation of one's own life. Rudimentary forms of this tendency can be seen in the vegetable kingdom and in the wild life of animals.

Life's urge is incomplete without the pressure towards self-reproduction which goes hand in hand with the desire

to preserve one's individuality. The great drama of empirical life, in any level of its manifestation in the phenomenal realms, may be summed up in the impetuous activity of the twin forces of self-preservation and self-reproduction. Like the right hand and the left hand of a single person, these two forces press forward parallelly to fulfil the great purpose of the diversifying nature. In man, the crowning phase of the evolving species, self-consciousness, intellect and reason reveal themselves.

But, man is also an animal, though a social one, and he cannot be said to be free from the urges of the lower biological stages through which he has passed to come to the human level. Strictly speaking, human nature, as distinguished from the animal, in its pure and simple form, should be regarded as that special prerogative and character which considers other individuals as equivalent to one's own self, both in weakness and in strength, in one's present needs and future aspirations—a character that may be called humane. But the man of the world does not represent in himself this form of unadulterated *humanity,* as might be expected from his being the much esteemed *homo sapiens.* Human nature, as it is revealed in personal life and public activity, is mixed up with the features of the lower levels. This is the glory of man as well as his foible. An analysis of the biological and psychological structure of the human individual would show that he can sleep like a brute, be selfish like a beast, yield to passions with demoniacal pleasure, and assert his ego in as intolerable a manner as could be conceived. Not only this, there is that dangerous operative faculty in man called the intellect which can act as

a double-edged sword, cutting both ways. It is this strange feature of the human understanding that employs a weapon as its trump card in the form of a 'rationalisation' of the passions, urges and instincts of the lower nature. For instance: "If I get angry, I do it for a righteous cause. If I exhibit an inordinate love or attachment to anyone, it is a 'Platonic' sympathy of love that I manifest in a divine manner. If I wreak revenge on someone, it is in the interest of justice and fair play, for the purpose of social peace and common good. If I attack another, it is for self-defense, which is obviously a justifiable reason. The defective, the ugly and the erroneous are engendered by factors outside, beyond one's control, while one honestly tries to be reasonable, just, serviceful and good in a harmonious manner." Apart from these blatant forms of self-justification and rationalisation of instincts, there are several other generalised shapes of the 'defence mechanisms' of the mind, employed for the preservation of the psycho-physical organism and for its perpetuation through the species.

The 'self-consciousness of man' is the principle of the ego and individuality. Researches in psychology have revealed that living beings below the human level lack self-consciousness in the intensity in which it blossoms itself in man. It is this specific reason which explains the incapacity of the sub-human species to conduct logical processes of induction and deduction in daily affairs, remember the past and anticipate the future in a mathematical and logical form, as man does. But, this special endowment raising man above the subhuman level, also at the same time, acts

as a serious obstacle to leading a harmonious life with other people, especially. For, self-consciousness is often blended with egoism of an autocratic nature, which refuses to give due credit to people around and delights in affirming its supremacy over others. Metaphysicians explain that egoism is an unfortunate product of a mutual superimposition between consciousness and the principle of individuality, which on the one side lifts up the banner of the indisputable supremacy of consciousness, and the separatist tendency of individuality on the other.

The psycho-biological organism is afflicted with hunger and thirst, heat and cold, fatigue and sleep. These concomitants of the organic individuality persist in all living beings, right up to the human level, so that, in respect of these characteristics of the organism, man is one with the lower species. The cause of these instinctive reactions of the body-mind-complex is obviously a type of self-consciousness, latent or patent, which cuts off the individual from the cosmic forces of Nature. It should follow from this understanding of the reason behind these natural sufferings of the individual that the greater the intensity of one's self-consciousness the more also is the suffering and the pain, and the lesser the intensity thereof the greater is the sense of freedom from the pain of dependence on externals. The psycho-physical nature of man as an individual or an isolated unit would be enough explanation of the nature of the 'original sin' due to which the angelic Adam was exiled from the Garden of Eden. This is the story of the 'Paradise Lost', that fateful epic of the

'primordial fall' occasioned by the soul's revolt against the Absolute.

The greed for name, fame, power and authority is an essential part of the ego of man, such that these may be regarded as the ingredients of human nature in general. The urge of the ego for standing above others in all possible aspects is a subtle artifice contrived by the distorted consciousness in affirming its universal subjectivity and lordship through the media of space, time and objectivity. Hence, the ego, with its craze for fame, power and authority, may be rightly regarded as a disease of consciousness which struggles under the delirium of an illusion that it is pursuing a praiseworthy end while, in fact, in the manifestation of such desires, it is only exhibiting a headlong rush towards the precipice of bondage and sorrow. Side by side, the phenomenon of death pursues the individual like a shadow, and freedom from this unfortunate end-result of all human endeavour does not become possible until individuality itself is retrieved from the basic error of the false notion that it is even possible to conceive such a thing as one's separation from the Absolute. Death is inseparably connected with rebirth, and is a natural corollary of one's involvement in the complex of space-time-objectivity. It is the fear of death that compels one to protect oneself against external attack, internal disharmony and the insecurity characteristic of the unknown future that is awaiting everyone in the history of evolution.

Self-consciousness does not end with itself as a final achievement in the evolutionary process but manifests

difficulties of an unforeseen nature. The affirmation of individuality is simultaneous with the perception of other persons and things as objects to oneself. And this phenomenon is perhaps the most difficult one to understand; for, the perception of an object by a subject is not merely a bare 'awareness' of something outside the subject but it involves a positive 'judgment' which the subject passes upon the object. This judgment is always a decree proclaimed under the auspices of the fundamental laws framed by the constitution of the subject itself, according to its own structure, aims and objects. This judgment would imply that all change and error, disharmony and discrepancy should be attributed to the object rather than the subject, because the subject cannot see these defects in itself, it being the vehicle of that supernal consciousness which can brook no rival, disorder, ugliness or defect of any kind. Thus, the very act of the perception of an object implies an opposition with the object, explaining perhaps why two persons cannot be friends for all time to come. For permanent friendship between two persons would require an unchangeable affinity of character between the subject and the object, which should be an utter impossibility, for the subject can never become the object, nor the object the subject. This 'cold war' between the perceiving centre and the perceived form outside remains in a state of imperceptible ebullition of condition until it breaks out into an actual war wherein the subject decides upon the destruction of the object; for the existence of the object is a perpetual violation of and a

threat to the independence and supremacy of the subject. Humanity does not need a better commentary on itself.

But how is this possible? Can anyone harbour in one's bosom a desire to annihilate the other and be at peace with oneself? Naturally, the answer is a 'no'. But, then, what happens to the impossibility of the subject to tolerate the presence of the object, for reasons well-known? The subject strikes a *via media* and reconciles itself with the only possible course left: destroy not the 'object' itself, but the 'independence' of the object, by making it either a part of the very being of the subject, as in love, or subservient to the subject, as in the exercise of power and authority. Where this cultured attitude of a psychological compromise which calls for a shrewd adjustment of oneself with others is lacking in individuals of a baser nature, in whom the lower levels of life have still an upper hand, the intolerance of the presence of the object which defies one's personal cravings may even precipitate into a desire for the physical destruction of the object. Here we have the true 'phenomenon of man', wherein are hidden the seeds of mankind's strife and of human restlessness, so glaringly seen in present-day society.

Chapter 7

THE CRISIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS-I

One can conceive anything but the finitude of consciousness. It is impossible to imagine that consciousness can be limited by anything external to it. In fact, the concept of there being something external to consciousness is itself an unwarranted intervention of a total impossibility, for that which is external to consciousness has also to become a content of consciousness; else, there could not be even a consciousness that there is something external to consciousness. It is also not possible that what is alien to consciousness in character can be its content, for the content of consciousness has to be related to consciousness in order to become its content at all. Now, this relation between the content and consciousness is again a questionable proposition, inasmuch as any relation between consciousness and its content should again be related to consciousness in some way or the other. It is impossible to hold the notion of anything which is unrelated to consciousness, also what is not a content of consciousness or what is dissimilar to consciousness in character. That which is dissimilar to consciousness would be an 'external' to consciousness, which means to say that this so-called 'external' has to be brought in relation to consciousness in order that it may become a content of consciousness. The outcome of this analysis would naturally be that (1) the content of consciousness should be similar to consciousness in character in order that it may bear some sort of a relation to consciousness; (2) the relation of the content to

consciousness should also have some sort of a connection to consciousness, that is, the relation itself should be related to consciousness. If this relation is regarded as external to consciousness, the initial problem would once again crop up, namely, the problem of the relation of an external to consciousness. Under these circumstances, it would be untenable to hold that anything that consciousness knows can either be unrelated to it or be dissimilar to it in character. Inasmuch as anything perceivable or conceivable has to become a content of consciousness, it would mean that the comprehensiveness of consciousness would be so vast that it should include within its gamut the whole of existence. Is existence, then, a content of consciousness? If so, this content, namely, existence, would have to be related to consciousness in a similarity of character. Existence must be consciousness and consciousness must be existence. *(Sattaiva bodho, bodha eva cha satta.)*

If existence and consciousness have to be one and the same, how do we explain the anxiety of consciousness to desire objects which have an existence of their own? If the objects of the world have no existence of their own, it would be impossible for consciousness to desire them. On the other hand, if they have an existence of their own, what is the relation of this existence to the existence of consciousness which desires them? Are these objects external to consciousness, or are they involved in the very constitution of consciousness? On the second alternative, it would follow that it would be meaningless for consciousness to desire objects, because they are supposed to be already involved in its very structure. But, if they are

not so involved, the desire of consciousness for the objects would be understandable. And if the existence of objects is not involved in consciousness, it would also mean that this existence is bereft of all consciousness; not only that, this existence would be an external to consciousness. But we have already seen that a total externality to consciousness is inconceivable, and is an indefensible position. Hence it has to be concluded that the desire of consciousness for objects outside is a peculiar kind of error that seems to have crept into it, and there would be no justification for consciousness in desiring objects at all.

Though this is the logical analysis of the whole position, the involvement of consciousness in a desire for objects is so much taken for granted that it may be said, for all practical purposes, that the desire of consciousness is inseparable from the desiring consciousness. Desire, in fact, is a mode of consciousness itself, a mode characterised by what may be called a spatio-temporal externalisation, notwithstanding the fact that such an externalisation is ruled out on logical grounds, as we have already seen.

The practical involvement of consciousness in a desire for objects is the problem of man, in spite of the logical grounds which do not permit the possibility of consciousness desiring anything at all. The cosmological theories of the Upanishads as well as those propounded in the standard philosophies in the world make out that though consciousness cannot be regarded as finite—that is, it has to be infinite—the notion of finitude has entered it by a mystery—a mystery to consciousness itself. In this mysterious descent of consciousness from infinitude to

finitude, an awful catastrophe might be said to have taken place. And it is this. Since consciousness has to be accepted to be infinite, the existence of objects external to it would be conceivable only on the acceptance of there having taken place a division of consciousness within itself, though this dividing factor itself cannot be outside consciousness. Nonetheless, the concession to this division is the explanation of human life in everyone of its aspects, for life's processes cannot be explained without such division between the subject and the object. These processes of life have therefore to be 'conditions' of consciousness, processes within itself—a veritable history of consciousness.

The processes of life are, broadly speaking, those which are studied in the fields of politics, world-history, sociology, ethics, economics, aesthetics, psychology, biology, chemistry, physics and astronomy. Everything connected with man can be said to be comprehended within this outline of the framework of life's activity. But all this has to be 'related' to consciousness; else, they would not exist even as subjects of study or objects of experience. The problem of man is therefore the problem of consciousness. The study of man is the study of consciousness.

Since it is impossible to conceive a real division of consciousness within itself, it is also not possible to imagine that there can be real 'objects' of consciousness. If there are no such real 'objects', the whole of life would be a drama played by consciousness within itself in the realm of its infinite compass. The alienation of the Infinite into the form of the universe is originally conceivable as the physical realm that is studied in the field of astronomy—namely, the

five elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth, simultaneously with the conception of the elemental constituents of molecules, atoms, electrons and the like, leading up to the 'relativity' of the cosmos as a space-time-continuum. This is the world studied in astro-physics as well as sub-atomic physics. Life is supposed to have manifested itself from this inorganic level gradually through the more organised levels of cellular formations, the various stages of the development of the plant kingdom, which are supposed to lead on further to the level of the animal and the human being. In a sense it is hardly possible for one to accept that the rise of man from the animal, the animal from the plant, and the plant from the mineral kingdom is really an advance in the process of evolution, unless we regard a evolution as a tendency towards greater and greater diversification and disintegration of consciousness. For, to mention only one instance, the instinct of the animal is nearer to reality than the intellect of man, in which case it would be difficult to imagine that the human intellect is superior to animal instinct, notwithstanding that the intellect is supposed to be endowed with the power of logical judgment not discoverable in the animal. But it is doubtful if the so-called logical faculty of man is an improvement upon instinct, which is more akin to reality in its function. However, the fact that involuntary urges become more uncontrollable as life proceeds further on along this diversifying process should show that man is more distant from reality in his present level than life's processes are in the preceding stages. Man has become more and more a foreigner to

Nature so that he has now begun to feel that he has to 'conquer' Nature rather than be friendly with it by adjusting his life in harmony with its operative laws.

The rudimentary urge towards diversification, the tendency to the appearance of the One as the many, should be regarded as subtly present in the formations of the world of matter itself. Else, how could the plant kingdom be said to have been given rise to from the level of the mineral kingdom? And simultaneously with this urge for multiplication of the One into the many, there has to be accepted a parallel urge towards 'self-integration' and 'self-perpetuation'. Why should this be so? Because, the diversification of the Infinite into the several individualities that are the subjects of empirical experience implies on the part of these individuals a simultaneous loss of connection with the Infinite, for consciousness of individuality and relationship with the Infinite are irreconcilable positions. Thus, it should follow that right from the imperceptible urge for self-multiplication incipiently working as a latent force in the world of inorganic matter, up to its final form reached through the various intermediary stages of self-multiplication, there is a double activity of consciousness taking place at the same time, side by sid,e in the form of the irresistible urge to self-maintenance as an individual, and also the equally uncontrollable urge to recover what has been lost by it by means of its alienation from the Infinite. What is the advantage that accrues to the individual by its self-affirmation? The advantage is a simple satisfaction of an assertion of 'existence' as identical with its 'consciousness'. For, there cannot be a greater joy than the

identification of existence and consciousness. In fact every act of any individual anywhere is an attempt to progress covertly or overtly towards the achievement of an identity of existence and consciousness which is the same as the experience of an immense delight. Now, does the individual achieve the desired satisfaction by identifying individual existence with individual consciousness? Yes, and no. Yes, because a modicum of existence identified with an iota of consciousness must bring some sort of a satisfaction, for the identity of existence and consciousness is joy. Hence it is that personality-worship, self-respect, social status, praise, name, fame and the like—all forms of adoration of individuality—bring such happiness to the individual that one would even sacrifice one's life and stake one's all for the sake of achieving this satisfaction, in short, what is crudely called as self-prestige of the individuality. But has this prestige any substance in it? No; because it is divested of relationship with the Infinite, and all substantiality is an approximation to the Infinite in some degree. Hence, the acquisition of the satisfaction by prestige, name, etc., or by means of any type of self-affirmation, is not going to be for the 'good' of the individual, for that which is good is approximation to the Infinite, though a mere act of self-affirmation may bring a pleasant sense and a mood of having achieved one's aim. But the pleasant is different from the good (*preyas* is contradistinguished from *sreyas*).

It is this tension obtaining between the urge for self-affirmation on the one side and the longing to establish connection with the Infinite on the other that goes by the name of *samsara* or worldly existence. And this

circumstance commences right from the rudimentary evolution of life from the plant kingdom itself, nay, we should say even much earlier in the stage of the very seed-urge potential at the mineral level. The tension continues, becomes worse as life evolves into more and more complex forms of greater types of diversification of the One into the many. But the drama is more beautiful to witness than to act. The individual, being involved in the *dramatis personae* in the cosmic enactment, cannot enjoy the act as a whole but suffers it as pressed into a confinement of itself into the partite consciousness of self-limitation into the mere part that it isolatedly plays in the universal drama. Even individualised living organisms are said to have been originally uni-cellular, and therefore uni-sexual, there being not in them that further travesty of affairs in the form of the bi-sexual urge seen in organisms more advanced in the process of self-diversification. The uni-cell splits itself into the bi-cell and struggles to reproduce itself by contact of its two parts with each other, thus showing that the sex-urge does not originate either from the male or the female but from the single totality which is prior to the division of the single cell into the two parts. Can we say that this is the reason why sex-urge is the most powerful of all the instincts in the individual? Perhaps it is so? There is a transcendent pressure exerted upon the male and the female which does not belong either to the male or the female independently. We seem to have come too far from the infinitude of consciousness which is inseparable from the infinitude of existence.

But we have to revert to another point from where we have to take our steps gradually through the historical process of evolution.

Chapter 8

THE CRISIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS-II

The self-affirmative urge in the individual is too crafty to be contented merely with a simple act of affirmation itself. It manipulates itself and works its ways through a personal concrescence of form as well as a social relationship of attitude. The self-affirmative urge, usually called the ego, can assume demoniacal shapes when it gets into a frenzy of passion for fulfilling its cravings to affirm itself as vehemently as possible, in its own person as well as through its social relationships. People can become very indecent even in human society when it comes to a question of what they call their prestige or status, which is another name for the demand for recognition of oneself by others. When this recognition is not forthcoming, there is a violent reaction either by way of condemnation of others' virtue and reputation or by a loud proclamation of one's achievement and importance. Criticism of others is obviously a form of self-affirmation, a kind of worship of oneself as an individual segregated from others. To this fire fuel is added when one positively praises oneself and announces one's position and importance in the face of the existence of other individuals like one's own self. The love of name and fame; status and prestige, adulation and worship, is a devilish passion which can become more virulent than the sex-urge when it is given a long rope. But social ethics, a convenient creation of man by which he condemns what can be conveniently avoided and sanctions what he cannot avoid, naming it the code of morality and giving it even a touch of the divine ordinance of the Creator

Himself, seems to have permitted the rapacious movements of the forms of self-adoration which, as has been pointed out, has the two sides of justifying oneself and condemning others. Self-justification and belittling others need not always take that open shape of any visible act of the individual; it works better by subtle inner attitudes which have become socially permissible as tact in dealing, etiquette of society, shrewdness of conduct and culture of behaviour. The devil becomes all the more powerful when it puts on the attire of a god, for here it is mistaken for what it is not. The extent of the immortality that is behind self-assertion of any kind, though it may not be visible to the eyes of the credulous populace, can be imagined by the intensity of the nature of the alienation of oneself from the Infinite that this attitude implies.

The self-affirmative urge originates in the causal body of the individual, operates through the subtle body and manifests itself through the gross body, so that the urge is a finished product of expert intelligence. This complex self-affirmation which is the psycho-physical individuality of the human being is not a simple isolated unit, merrily affirming itself in seclusion, in the closed room of self-complacency. Self-affirmation is vitally connected with the social instinct of the desire to receive approbation from outside, so that the act of self-affirmation is the immediate effect of a double productive process of personal aggrandisement of both the mind and the body to the greatest extent possible and, at the same time, a compulsive demand to receive confirmation of this assumed self-grandeur from other people in society. It has again many

forms: to think that one's thoughts, feelings and decisions are right and cannot be wrong; that those who contradict these thoughts, feelings and decisions are in the wrong; that the lofty feelings one has of one's own self are logically justifiable and socially necessary; that one's requirement of recognition from others is an obligatory act of justice due to oneself from society; that the various forms that self-affirmation may put on are really not acts of egoistic self-affirmation but virtuous activities contributory to one's spiritual progress and to the unselfish service of others from oneself; and that the world has totally mistaken oneself and judged oneself wrongly in its disapproval of one's conduct and action. How mysterious is human personality!

The Upanishad tells us that the immediate consequence of a fall from the Infinite is the finite feeling and the intense hunger within itself due to which it is said to have cried loudly that it needs sustenance. This hunger is nothing but that wondrously elusive instinct of 'self-preservation'. The process of self-preservation does not simply mean an asking for physical food to appease the appetite of the stomach or water to quench the thirst of the throat: the urge for self-preservation is the asking for all the facilities necessary to maintain the psycho-physical organism, which includes the body, the mind and the ego. We have already considered adequately some of the characteristics of the human ego, especially. This is the function of the psychic part of the organism. The physical part asks for material food and drink. But the intention of it all is obviously a seeking for contributory factors to the sustenance of the

individuality as a whole—in traditional language, of the entire complex of the *panchakosas* or the five vestures of the individuality, namely, the causal, intellectual, mental, vital and physical. This 'total urge' towards self-preservation is the cry of the individual for making good the loss that it has incurred in cutting itself off from the vital energy of the Infinite Substance. It struggles, weeps and tries to find ways and means of freedom from this unexpected agony that has befallen it suddenly, as it were, as a bolt from the blue. What can it do? It cannot return to the Infinite, though it is its deep and intense desire. It cannot so return, because this fall from the Infinite is supposed to be preceded by an ignorance of what has actually happened. Hence, there is no chance of knowing the way back to that from which one has fallen. Else, there would have been a right-about-turn of the finite to the Infinite. This is made impossible by the ignorance that is mysteriously antecedent to all conscious effort. Hence, the finite cannot return to the Infinite. It cannot, however, return to the true Infinite; it therefore finds a way to identify itself with a false infinite which it creates out of its own miscalculation and erroneous judgment. This false infinite is the asking for the largest magnitude of material possessions and for self-perpetuation in an infinite variety of efforts.

To clinch the whole position: the history of man's fall is contained microscopically in the deep-rooted urge for hunger, self-assertion and sex. The first two are only phases of a single posture adopted towards self-preservation, the third one being an independent twist given to self-

preservation through posterity by perpetuation of one's species. As we have already noted above, the sex-urge is really a misnomer for what is really a super-individualistic pressure felt by the split parts of a single cell towards unification and self-perpetuation. Perhaps there is something still deeper in all this. The individual regards the whole universe as its object in a general way and, hence, it is quite understandable that the universe exerts a tremendous pressure on the individual calling for a unification of the universe and the individual. But this pressure is misunderstood and misinterpreted. It is regarded as a spatio-temporal intention to perpetuate the psycho-physical individuality, for it is easy to mistake this self-perpetuating urge for an achievement of objective immortality of the continuance of oneself through eternity. The eternal or the immortal is the same as consciousness, for consciousness alone can be such; it recovers itself now and then into a blinded feeling towards the necessity for manifesting eternity in its life and this blinded urge is what is known as sex-urge. The eternal, which is the infinitude of existence inseparable from the infinitude of consciousness, gets distorted through the individual which seeks an infinitude of one's own forms through the procreation of children and a perpetuation of oneself through the false eternity of time by this very act. The hunger-urge, the self-affirmative urge and the sex-urge are the three ostensible fierce forms of an obstinate clinging to empirical life, for which the individual involved in empiricality cannot find a solution. The love of sex is not really a love between male and female, as it is usually supposed to be, but a camouflage

of the urge for parenthood which necessitates self-expression through union of sexes.

The beauty that the sexes feel between each other is the glamour projected by this super-individual urge in the form of the sexes so that it may be safely said that sexual beauty, which is visible to the male in the female and to the female in the male, is the form of that lost identity of uni-sexuality which preceded the subsequent manifestation of the bi-sexual individuals. Then, what is sexual beauty? Does it really exist? Yes, it does, and it does not. It exists because it is seen; it does not exist because what is seen is not beauty but something else which is mistaken for what is known as beauty. The beauty of the sexes that is visible is the consequence of a similarity of vibration that takes place in the vital and physical organisms of the personality which gets pulled magnetically towards the opposite sex, since it sees in the opposite sex not merely a person like oneself but a strange 'meaning' which is read into the body of the person, this meaning being the cause for the perception of beauty more than the person as such. This is very clearly observable in the fact that a youth is not sexually attracted towards a newly born baby or a centenarian. In fact the youth seeks only a youth and not anything else, because youth is the meaning that is sought by youth and beauty is mostly inseparable from youth. This would be a diagnosis of the cause whereby we discover that the sexual urge is the pressure of the species which is an ulterior motive behind the apparent attraction of the sexes, just as we say these days that students are made tools of revolutionary activities intended by tactful politicians whose purposes get fulfilled

by the utilisation of students as stooges. This analysis of the sex-instinct does not, however, diminish the vehemency of its expression in personal life because while the analysis is 'rational', its expression is 'affective' working through the feelings which ordinarily do not go hand in hand with the understanding. Sexual characters are of two kinds: primary and secondary. The primary ones are respected mostly in primitive tribal life, whereas modern civilisation goes after the secondary characters. The primary characters are those connected directly with the procreational act, which is the main intention of the urge, and which was naively given the primary importance in primitive civilisation. But modern man is more sophisticated, and intentionally tries to hide the primary purpose of one's sexual life, and gives importance to the secondary sexual characters of the physical personality, which are only external indications of the primary productive capacity of the individual in connection with procreation. This has made modern life more artificial, more removed from reality and so more unhappy, too. How could one hide fact and be at ease with oneself?

Self-preservation and self-reproduction are the spatio-temporal forms taken by the absolute character of the eternity of Consciousness. The 'fall' is a single act with the threefold downward pressure of psychic self-affirmation, physical self-affirmation and the urge for self-perpetuation. The threefold instinct acts simultaneously, only manifesting a particular phase at a particular time, attended with favourable circumstances, so that the psycho-physical affirmation and the sex-urge, though they are present in the

individual at all times hiddenly or expressedly, assume special emphasis under given conditions alone, even as a seed thrown into the soil germinates only when the conditions suited to its sprouting manifest themselves in course of time. Here is a crucial point which has to be taken notice of particularly by those who have dedicated their lives to tread the 'path of return' to the Absolute, on which subject a little dilation of understanding is called for.

The consciousness that has split itself into the knowing subject and the known object is linked together in its parts by a mediating feature which is known as the presiding deity (*Devata*) superintending over the individual's functions in relation to their corresponding objects in the external world. Seekers of Truth, or students of yoga, have their own human weaknesses by which they quickly revert to giving an unjustifiable importance to the subjective feature of their personalities, not being able at the same time to keep a watch over the fact that their subjective personalities are inextricably interwoven with their objects as well as with the 'presiding' principles connecting them with the objects. This natural foible of human nature, to be seen markedly even in advanced seekers and Yogis, becomes a cause for their fall from the aim which they have set before themselves originally, no doubt with a pious intention. But piety alone will not succeed in a world of impersonal forces. Good intentions are of course good enough, but the world is made up of such stuff that noble intentions alone will not cut ice with it. The world is not a friend of anyone in the sense of a father or a mother who would be expected to pardon even grave faults of their

children, though sometimes it looks as if the world is often capable of being too lenient upon the behaviour of its contents. But this apparent affection of the world for its citizens is a mistaken view that one may take of the more sublime attitude of justice and fair play, not excluding the intention of goodness and kindness, which is discoverable in the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Which is more honourable: the mother's love for her child or the judge's love for his client? Has not the world relentlessly cast aside the sentimental affections of the public audience which craved the great men of history to be spared the pains of receiving its orders of exit from the grand scene of the role they were playing in the beautiful drama of human history? Where is an instance that one can cite in which the forces of cosmic history have showed sentimental pity over even the greatest of geniuses and the most beautiful souls that the world would like to adore in its heart? Why should there be this travestied end of the magnificent performances of the heroes in the different fields of life? Is life a tragedy after all? Is there any such thing as love, friendship and perpetual cooperation between persons? Can history stand witness to any of these coveted ambitions of human emotion?

The answer seems to be simple enough. The universe is a vast arena of the work of powers which have the single aim of fulfilling the integrality of the structure of all creation: the ultimate indivisibility of the Absolute. The seeker of the Absolute, if he contents himself to remain merely in the human level of value-assessments, would prove himself to be an awful failure in his otherwise noble

pursuits and praiseworthy attempts. The universe is not made up of personalities—men, women and children—or of things in the sense of objects that we would like to possess or avoid. The universe is differently made. It is not constituted of things or objects but of an urge or a tendency towards self-unification in the all-comprehensive infinitude of existence. More properly, we should say that the universe is a law that is operating rather than a thing that exists. And this law is like that of a State, which does dot regard its citizens as brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, but as subjects to its operation impersonally. Seekers who are endeavouring to direct their consciousness to the Absolute may miss this point and even, in sufficiently advanced stages of practice, the subjective aspect of their being can gain an upper hand and put the cart before the horse, thus stultifying the main purpose in view. It is humanly impossible for anyone to bear in mind always the correlatedness of oneself with the outer atmosphere of the so-called persons and things around; it is always believed by instinct that the objects, whether persons or things, are to be 'dealt with' in some manner, that is, one always regards oneself as a totally isolated subject, and thus it is that one comes a cropper in one's attempt in any direction in one's life. There seems to be failure everywhere, without a hope of success anywhere, all because there is a basic misconstruing and misinterpretation of one's relation to the objective world.

The subjective assessment of oneself is at the root of all troubles. One always refers to oneself as the 'I' and acts as such in all dealings. Unfortunately for this 'I', it does not

really exist, for it is an upstart that has unwarrantedly arisen out of the confusion of characters between the subject and the object, just as a 'nobody' may suddenly become a leader of people when a state of anarchy prevails in the country. But the 'I' is merely a notion, it is not an existent something. It is a notion of there being some such a thing as a partitioned consciousness, the impossibility of which position has been already pointed out. But this false notion works by means of an artifice, and enters the hearts of even Yogis, saints and sages, so that not even a celestial can be said to be free from the notion of the 'I', the engenderer of all consequent errors and problems of life.

The notion of the 'I' not only posits an object of contemplation before itself but connects with this idea all the other corollaries that follow from this position, once it gains acceptance as validly established. The phenomenal urges of hunger, fame and sex can easily gain entry into this newly built mansion of even the 'seeking' soul which has somehow reconciled itself with the very view which it was originally its purpose to obviate and transcend. Consciousness which refuses itself to be segmented into parts of any kind sought freedom from the consequences of this fragmentation which it suffered from by means of resort to the practice of yoga and meditation on the Supreme Reality. But the fragmented consciousness does not so easily get freed from its basic notions which have originated from the accepted fact of there being such a fragmentation of itself. This interesting feature of the otherwise pious efforts of consciousness does not part company even with honestly dedicated seekers, this feature

getting identified with their honesty itself! Thus it is that the love of name, fame and social recognition can become an organic part of the honesty of belief in one's being really engaged in yoga and meditation of the great spiritual Reality, so that, that which is sought to be avoided has very intelligently managed to worm itself into the very aim that one is after. This is the manner in which other impulses also get themselves associated inseparably with the consciousness of the aspiration for ultimate freedom from the trammels and sufferings given rise to by a division in the divisionless consciousness. The impulses are many but, as we have observed above, they can be boiled down to the physical urge of hunger, the psychic urge for name and fame, and the vital urge for sex. It is usually held that the desire for wealth is also a primary impulse. But on a careful examination of this question it will be seen that no one seeks wealth for its own sake; it is sought as an instrument of utilitarian value for the fulfilment of the major urges of hunger, social recognition and sex. One may feel surprised that such an enormous value of life as wealth should be suddenly reduced to the status of a simple working device of only three instincts. Yes; it will be seen that much of the importance that we give to the so-called valuable assets of the world is a child born of no parents but pretending to be an emperor's heir-apparent. We can safely set aside the special significance of material wealth in the light of the fact that it has no meaning where society does not exist, that is, where the need for the mechanism of give-and-take does not arise. Even supposing that society is a self-existing something independent of the individual, its existence gets

suffused into that of the individual since social values cannot be different from those associated with the needs of the human individual. And what are these needs? The instincts, the urges.

Chapter 9

THE CRISIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS-III

The role of instincts in human life is a little difficult to understand, since the instincts do not remain outside life's processes. It is precisely the inseparability of instinctive action or desire from one's conduct and activity that makes all effort at investigation into their origin and function hard for even a good psychologist to conduct. It is almost commonplace among men to presume that they are rational, by which they unconsciously assert the superiority of their character, conduct and action over the undignified promptings from within, known as instincts. For purpose of study and analysis we may take into consideration the distinction that is usually made between personal instinct and social instinct. While people would be ready to accept that they are, at one time or the other, dominated by instinctive urges even in the altruistic movements of their nature, they would not be so easily ready to concede that there is such a thing called social instinct, for social life has always been regarded as a refined and glorified corrective to the selfish cravings of personal instinct. Thus it is that social activity, especially what is known as service, is almost deified as a sublime human ideal unrelated to and absolutely removed from the inglorious desires of personal instincts. But psychological analysis, when it is expected to be scientifically conducted, will not take any assumption for granted, though such an assumption might have been held in high esteem as one's primary duty in life, through the tradition of time immemorial.

As it was observed, an instinct is not something outside human nature; it is only a name that is given to a non-rational pressure of the mind towards a particular end in view, this pressure being an unreasoned and often unpremeditated course of action taken by the individual towards the end pointed out by the instinct. Leaving aside the detail of this question for the time being, we may bestow a little thought upon the relationship between the individual and society. It is true that society is an appellation given to a group of individuals kindred in character, who live and move together for the purpose of fulfilling a common interest. This fact would imply that human society does not contain anything which is not discoverable in the individual, and the latter is only an exact part or portion of the former. From this it would also follow that society cannot be free from the foibles of human nature, though many individuals may sit together and deliberate over the necessity for and the ways and means of steering the course of life for public good and free from the selfish characters pertinent to the individual alone and not conducive to social good. This theory has, of course, many things to be said in its favour, since from a purely pragmatic observation of human nature it is found that even collective interest cannot be totally free from saturation in the demands of the private interest of the individual. This is the reason why, perhaps, throughout the passage of human history running through the ages, human weakness has not been otherwise than what it can be at any time, and the causes of man's fall are found to be the same today as they have been centuries ago. This is to put the

finger on the seamy-side of human character and activity in general, an emphasis upon which would obviously lead to the conclusion that man is essentially an automaton driven by unconscious urges beyond his control, a tool in the hands of desires and passions, selfish to the core, and untrustworthy in the end. And this, unfortunately, happens to be the picture presented by man in the common movements of his usual routine of life.

If this is the whole truth of the matter, life would turn out to be a terrible scene of perpetual anxiety and fear, perhaps not even worth living, ultimately. But, human beings do not seem to be entertaining this matter-of-fact view of their psychological constitution and the part it plays in human society. Psychologists have found it necessary to draw a line between individual psychology and social psychology, which two are treated as different subjects with a characteristic difference in their structure and function. This distinction is attributable to a new qualitative feature that is visible in what is known as 'society' as different from its being merely a quantitative total of the individuals which are its constituents. The difference between quantity and quality is important enough to give a place to social values in life, transcending the realm of individual instincts which are no doubt inseparable from even a 'total' of individuals. Though psychoanalysis, particularly of the Freudian type, will insist that there is nothing qualitatively different in human society from its being merely a quantitative total of whatever inner urges there are in the individuals, an acceptance of this view in its entirety would rule out the very existence of such a thing as morality, ethics and

unselfish conduct. Psychoanalysis confirms, of course, that this is the whole truth, and this is the unveiled reality behind human nature. But, is this all, and is there nothing more, is a question which human values thus ostracised would be obliged to pose before themselves.

Before we try to answer this question in any satisfactory manner, we would do well to revert to a point in relevance to which reference has already been made above, and that is the reason why a sense of anxiety and insecurity persists in human society in spite of repeated collective efforts that have been made by people towards the achievement of social good and international peace of a universal character. There is a very clear and persistent cause behind this unpleasant phenomenon. And it is this. The principles of education are based on the concept of life and the aim of existence directed by the nature of its structure and the prevailing conditions of the environment in which we live. It is taken for granted, usually, on the basis of observation and experiment conducted through the methods of empirical science, that the universe is formed of physical, biological and psychological units, called things, entities and persons—which, when selected and studied in their isolated capacity are known as individuals, and, when taken in groups with kindred characters, go by the name of society. The educational process has normally been a series of techniques in studying and gathering information on the objects of sensory perception and mental cognition, which are supposed to constitute the environment of man.

On the supposition that the units forming the human environment are outside the subject of perception and

cognition, educational institutions have been including in the curriculum of studies such themes as mathematics, astronomy and physics; chemistry, biology and psychology; sociology, civics and economics; geography, history and politics. To these primary subjects of study were dovetailed certain accepted doctrines of ethics, philosophy, religion and aesthetics, founded on the assumption that persons and things are independent units contained in the cup of the universe, almost like pebbles filled in a bottle, heaped together in mechanical contacts with one another but individually enjoying absolute independence, each for itself. This vision of the universe is practically the basis of modern educational philosophy and psychology and its implementation in the teaching field of institutions. We, thus, hear students being asked to choose a group of subjects among the several enumerated above, and they obtain a pass or a degree after a course of learning how to add, subtract, multiply or divide factors of computation in arithmetic, algebra and geometry, how things behave on observation of their bodies, how they act and react among one another—in short, what is the result on an empirical investigation of the visible structure and behaviour of perceived objects.

The whole system of present-day education may be called mechanistic in the sense that it takes the relationship of things among themselves as one of physical contact of a permutation and combination of essentially dissimilar characters brought together into action by chance movements of things or by a pressure exerted by factors which are wholly external to their individual make or

constitution. All this naturally implies that we do not live in a world of any inner bond of friendly relationships but are basically formed of elements, characters and aims foreign to one another, which cannot ultimately be united into a real, vital fraternity of mutual relationship. We seem to be living in a billiard ball universe where things are scattered at random in space and they appear to be working in reciprocal contact, collaboration or cooperation either by mere accident or due to sheer selfishness which needs a certain kind of assistance from others for the fulfilment of their objectives. Whether the world is ruled by chance or by the selfishness of its essential nature, it does not, on this supposition, appear to be anything more than a medley of soulless activities of ultimately purposeless motions of mindless forces with an unintelligible intention that seems to be lurking and struggling behind the deepest core of each individual unit, whether inorganic or organic, physical, biological or psychological.

This would be, naturally, the picture of the universe with which modern science provides us, and an educational system rooted in the perspective of such a scientific analysis and deduction would obviously be mechanistic, soulless, non-purposive, and an altruistic camouflage of a basically selfish intention of every individual. To put it more plainly, this form of the educational career can carry with it no other purpose in the end than to perpetuate a physically and egoistically comfortable existence,—to wit, the acquisition of food, clothing and shelter, physically; of sex-satisfaction, vitally; gain of name, fame and power, psychologically; these being the manifest pattern of the

psycho-physical organism—and where the purpose of education has been recognised to cover such fields as the welfare and protection of other persons than one's own self, it could be easily discovered that it is only a tactful extension of these aims of the psycho-physical individual, for an interest in others is seen to be conducive to an intensification of the satisfaction of these urges as well as to furnish better chances of their fulfilment, as they cannot be fulfilled adequately if there is no cooperation from others and from external factors of various kinds, which fact the personal ego knows well by a subtle insight deeper than sensory or intellectual apprehension.

This is really the unpleasant secret that comes to the surface of one's observation behind the so-called noble efforts of man, based on this educational wisdom, born of this view of the universe. This should also explain why man has always been feeling insecure in an unfriendly environment, irrespective of a love for others and a sense of brotherhood which he has been demonstrating and apparently working for externally, for these otherwise noble virtues are based on false values and cannot hold water for long. An outward form of cooperation and friendly relationship founded on an essentially self-assertive and unfriendly attitude cannot be regarded as having any meaning, ultimately. The truth, when it is bluntly put, would appear to be that we live in a world of love and cooperation which arise from an internal dislike for and irreconcilability with others! Such is the world, such is life, and such is man's fate, when such is the structure and aim of our general attitude and our education. One cannot

expect students and teachers to behave in a way which is not demanded by the essential nature of things. This is modern education in its plain colour.

As genuine interest, love and cooperation are characteristics of the soul, these qualities cannot be expected from any soulless system of education based merely on the mechanics of a physical observation and study of inorganic matter, even if it be the study of the solar and stellar systems and the electro-magnetic core of atoms, which, science tells us, are the building bricks of the cosmos. If science is right in its proclamation of such results as the ultimate fact of creation, man can never hope for peace, or gain freedom worth the name.

But is this true? The untiring hopes and aspirations of man are a standing refutation of these deductions devolving from a reliance on materialistic science and behaviourist psychology. Human longing has always been for the achievement of absolute freedom and perpetual peace, with a consciousness of this achievement, which implies that consciousness must be capable of reaching a state of absoluteness, which must at once be one of immortality and non-exclusive universality. Minus these profounder implications of the aims of life, which are amply manifested by every man in his everyday life, human endeavour would be a blatant futility, at best a perpetual self-deception, heading towards one's own doom. That a unitive, non-mechanistic, universal purpose is at work behind the mechanised urges and relations of men and things is proved by the very existence and irrepressibility of aspiration. And, that the educational process has to be

reoriented and transformed into a process of the vital evolution of a soulful subjective aim of every individual comes naturally to high relief. There is in life a divine core of a basically spiritual reality, hiddenly present in all things.

That the universe is primarily a 'kingdom of ends', wherein every individual or unit is an essence of selfhood rather than a means of exploitation by other individuals; that this aim of a collective organisation of 'ends' and 'selves' is the basic ideal of all pursuit of knowledge; that education is a systematised process of unfolding gradually this eternal fact of all life; that it calls for a parallel advancement along the lines of greater and greater unselfishness and inclusive consciousness of existence tending towards the realisation of an universal Selfhood; that material amenities and economic needs *(artha)* and the satisfaction of one's emotional side *(kama)* are permissible only so long as this law *(dharma)* of this eternal truth of the liberation of the self in universality of being *(moksha)* regulates its fulfilment; and that, thus, the whole of the life of an individual is one of studentship and learning in the light of broader and broader outlooks of life which lie ahead of oneself at every stage, are to constitute the vitality and meaning of the educational process. Education is the creative evolution of the total man towards the realisation of his cosmic significance, passing through his personality, the society and the world.

Chapter 10

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SOCIETY: THE PHILOSOPHY OF LAW

We may take a resume of our *prima facie* observations. Human enterprise of every type is vitally concerned with social relationship. Principally, the relation of the individual with human society is psychological and ethical, though it has its other important aspects, such as the economic, the legal and the political, among many others with connected values. However, the psychological relationship tops the list, and everything seems to follow from this important foundation of all human functions, personal and social. On a cursory observation, it appears that there is no such thing as society apart from the individuals that constitute it, so that, from this point of view, it could be logically concluded that whatever obtains in the individual obtains also in society. Social values seem to be merely a total of individual values, differing only in magnitude but not in quality. If this is to be the truth of the substance of human society, it would be futile to imagine that social laws and regulations can exert any kind of influence over the individual. This would, of course, rule out all ultimate significance in social etiquette, social tradition and even social morality.

The whole subject calls for a thorough investigation not only in its form of appearance in the surface but also in what it seems to imply at a level deeper than the surface. In practical life, it is, no doubt, seen that the innate structure of the human mind, with all its prejudices consequent upon its desires following as a corollary from its structure, is at

the background of even the so-called cultured relationships and ethical conducts in society, which would mean that even the apparently acceptable social good is a covert form of the individual's private urges and longings. We can cite several instances to prove this point: It is said that mutual cooperation and sacrifice are the hallmark of cultured social relationship, which makes it appear that such cooperation and sacrifice are a qualitatively higher form of human behaviour than the way in which one would conduct oneself in a strictly individual capacity. But what is cooperation and sacrifice except a subtle safeguard of the private interests of each individual, whose intentions and purposes would be defeated if there is no such cooperation and sacrifice? Is it not true that social sacrifice is unthinkable if it is to end in an utter abolition of the private longings of the individual? Would anyone do any sacrifice for the welfare of others if the outcome of the sacrifice were to be the destruction of the sacrificer himself? Would anyone serve a society which is ready to stone the sacrificer to death for reasons of its own? Has not the society been ungrateful in most cases to those who dedicated their lives for its happiness and welfare? How would it be possible for anyone to love the society by negating oneself entirely?

But these doubts may be rebutted by the citation of the great examples of martyrs who sacrificed their lives either for social or religious causes, in the interest of the public good. How could one deliberately court death for the welfare of the society if it had not been for the love which one had for the society, excelling the love for one's own self? Here, again, the situation needs a further investigation.

And, on a careful analysis, it would be found that even martyrdom would be impossible and inconceivable if it were not to be engendered by a hope of satisfaction to oneself through such a sacrifice. The courting of death voluntarily for whatever reason should be the urge of a satisfaction that is behind even the extinction of personality through death. Though death is usually regarded as the most intense form of pain conceivable, no one could be thought to be ready to embrace it if it were not to be stirred by a feeling of joyous enthusiasm caused by secret inner factors, though these factors may be invisible and unimaginable to others, in outer society. Even suicide, an act of voluntary self-annihilation, can be explicable only by a hope of a total extinction of the pain which has urged the commission of such an act, a hope which is obviously inseparable from the hope for peace and joy as its ultimate outcome, whatever be the extent of the error involved in anyone's holding such an opinion about this catastrophic abolition of life. No thought and no action can, in the end, be either generated by or directed to a final suffering of the individual. The struggle for an ultimate joy is the inviolable law of life. Cooperation with others and sacrifice for others cannot obliterate the operation of this law. On the other hand, cooperation and sacrifice are entered into only when they promise an enhancement of personal joy, more intense than that which would have accrued to oneself without such a regard for others. Here we have perhaps the psychological secret behind all human conduct.

The ethical consideration of the individual for the society does not seem to point to any fact far different from

what is indicated by a psychological analysis. What the society regards as a moral or an ethical act, or a proper thing to do, cannot finally afford to vitiate the secret desires and urges and the longing of pleasure inherent in every individual. It will be seen that social morality is mostly a kind of legalisation, by mutual agreement, of the private interests of the individual. The desire for food, clothing and shelter; name, fame and power; wealth, sex and aesthetic enjoyment; are the ruling principles which condition every activity of humanity, whether it takes the form of a moral rule, an ethical necessity or a legal mandate. Here again, social morality seems to go hand-in-hand with the psychological secret operating behind human nature and conduct, as observed above. It is unthinkable that there could be any ethical rule acceptable to the society which would devastate or even diminish the satisfactions of the individual. It may be asked: Why, then, does social morality seem to restrict and put a check upon the extravagant greed of the individual for personal pleasure of every kind? Does this not prove that social law is antagonistic to, more powerful than, and intended to correct the individual's desire and greed? How can it be said that social ethics is only a legal regularisation of the individual's cravings? These questions are easily answered. The checks which the society imposes upon the individual's personal conduct do not prove that it is against the individual or that it thereby diminishes the pleasures of the individual. What it proves is simply the open secret that every individual seeks the greatest amount of pleasure and freedom of the highest possible quality and no individual would reasonably

tolerate anyone else coming in the way of the fulfilment of these longings. If social ethics and law were not to operate, the result would be a mutual war among individuals, almost like the lawless attacks of the animals of the forest among themselves, a state of affairs which would place everyone in continuous and perpetual insecurity as to the very chance of fulfilling even a single desire or a scope of enjoyment of any pleasure. A mutual agreement among individuals, which is the social law, cannot, therefore, be regarded as an unwarranted intrusion of external restriction into the individual's freedom to live and to enjoy, for it, on the other hand, is voluntarily agreed upon mutually by individuals for ensuring security for themselves, which is virtually an assurance of the possibility of the expression of personal freedom to live and to enjoy without infringing the similar rights of others for the same. Social rules, whether they pertain to material possessions, personal prestige and power or sexual relationship, have this aim and objective before them, which cannot be gainsaid by any kind of intellectual sophistication or veneer of logic.

This much of incisive enquiry into the relationship between the individual and the society would be adequate for the purposes of discovering the roots of human behaviour, their intentions and purposes. Thorough-going psychoanalysts, who are out-and-out matter-of-fact in their diagnosis of human nature, would, evidently, have nothing more to say than these naked features of human duty which appears in the form of the complicated network of social culture, ethics, morality and law.

While all this may perforce have to be accepted as an inescapable truth of human life in general, it cannot be said that this is its whole truth. Psychoanalysis takes a mechanistic view of life considering the mutual relationship of individuals in the form of society as some sort of movement of a machine, whose independent parts they are, and in whose lifeless operation by the collaborative action of its limbs they participate with no teleological initiative except the individual motions characteristic of their location as different parts of the machine. But here comes a poignant query arisen from the observation of certain intriguing phenomena of human life. Is social relationship a necessity artificially arisen on account of the individual's need to maintain personal security and ensure personal freedom and enjoyment? And, if mutual love and sacrifice are virtues of real value, if human life is really sacred and worthy of regard and protection in every way, how does it happen that human justice, which cannot be separated from human love and sacrifice, sanctions execution of individuals in jails and war of one nation with another, and no one considers the Judge of a court who has passed a death-sentence or a Field-Marshal who has won a victory in war after the destruction of the enemies as an unrighteous person or one infected with hatred for others? If death inflicted upon a person by the order of a court and mass destruction brought about by a triumphant Field-Marshal can be regarded as perfectly consistent with human love and justice, there should certainly be something strange about the inner operative formulae which guide human thought and action. How, on earth, can imprisonment and

execution of a person in the gaol be a form of altruistic love and universal justice? If the worst pain and sorrow of man cannot go beyond the torturing process of death, and if this punishment legally meted out to an individual cannot be regarded as inconsistent with love, justice and service, these terms of altruistic significance may find themselves in an urgent need of an amendment in the common notion that people have of human affection, human goodness and legal justice. Else, how would courts of law who are held in high esteem by the best brains of the world and Commanders-in-Chief of armies who have won world-famous laurels be free from the stigma of vindictiveness, cruelty, violence, tyranny and viciousness, which are the worst crimes and sins conceivable? Truly, the study of man and his relations is a marvel, a mystery and an enigma. There appears to be something behind the screen which manages to attract the attention of the human individual throughout his life. And no one seems to die with a satisfaction that the secrets of life have been unravelled.

The whole circumstance of the issue can be clinched with the central question in this regard: Is man prior to Law or is Law prior to man? This crucial difference of viewpoint in ultimate matters is the point of distinction between the Contract Theory of State propounded by Thomas Hobbes and the Logical Theory of State advocated by G.W.F. Hegel in the West. The Contract Theory holds that man was originally in a state of nature and was ruled by the law of the fish (the larger swallows the smaller) and the law of the jungle (might is right), and this could be the height of any conceivable insecure condition of things. If anyone could

do anything to any other at any time under any circumstance, life would be in a state of perpetual threat and itself become impossible in the end. To obviate this sort of perpetual fear endangering the lives of everyone, people came to an agreement among themselves and framed a system of laws and of governance, vesting the power of rule in a single person (monarchy) or a body of persons (oligarchy or bureaucracy) or an assembly of chosen ones by periodical election (democracy). Here the law of the society and of political government is created by man by mutual consent or agreement to suit the circumstances or conditions under which he lives at any given time. When the circumstances of life change, the laws also can be and have to be changed by mutual understanding. Thus, it would appear that there is no such thing as law unless man wills that it should be there. It is the creation of his needs and environment of life. Law does not exist by itself. Man can do or undo it by a majority of votes (since it is unlikely that everyone would always consent to everything unanimously), and sometimes by the exercise of physical force even by a quantitative minority (as it has happened rarely in the history of the world, though unfortunately for the many in the majority)—a situation which implies that man makes laws either by understanding, which would be to the satisfaction of many, or by physical force, which can be to the sorrow of many. Anyway, according to this point of view of the of social law and political government, man is the law-maker, and this is the essence of the Theory of Contract in the science of politics. From this it also follows that even the sense of justice can turn out to be a mere

crotchet or a whim in the minds of the ruling powers, because it is hard for the dispensation of justice to stand isolated from the operation of law. On a very close examination of the subject, the implications of the Contract Theory would seem to be inseparable from the psychological background of society studied by psychoanalysis. Man is no better now because he can make laws, for he can also unmake the very same laws by the very principles of contract, and rational justice would be a mere word without any substantial meaning.

Though it may be conceded that the Contract Theory is perhaps the truth of the *historical* origin of human law and government, even this manner of the origin of law must have itself originated from a principle which ought to have a *logical* priority over the historical accident of the origin of law according to the Contract Theory. Here we come to a very subtle philosophical point which would not ordinarily occur to the mind of the common man. Why does there come about a necessity for man to frame a law at all by mutual consent? The answer to this question is the logical ground which explains the meaning of law and the necessity for law. The principle which is prior to the human effort of mutual agreement in respect of the framing of the law is itself the central law, conditioning and regulating all the laws that man makes subsequently by agreement, election, etc. This is the point which Hegel endeavours to win over Hobbes. It cannot be that man is the sole maker of law; if that had been the case, it would be difficult to understand why at all man felt a need to make law. This need felt by him is the conditioning factor behind man-

made laws and is the main law, the universal law, which regulates temporal laws of the terrestrial State. If the law arrests a person, imprisons him and even executes him, it is not because of the operation of the man-made law (else, man could suddenly change his law and abolish such a thing as legal punishment) but the reaction set up by a wider law which is superior even to the totality of the individuals in society and the members in the State. And what is this law?

Here we turn to the metaphysical background of law, which is also its logical explanation and justification. The relationship between man and man is not the outcome of a mere quixotic agreement but a rational necessity dictated by the structure of the universe. Human relationship cannot be made or unmade according to fancy, for it is rooted in a fixed pattern of structural behaviour which is harmonious with the nature of the universe as a whole. The necessity for law arises on account of a need felt to rise and grow into a higher degree of reality than the one in which one finds oneself at a given moment of time. The growth into a higher reality is both quantitative and qualitative in a measure in which the two aspects cannot be distinguished one from the other. Is not the youth a higher degree of reality than the baby, both in the quantity of power and the quality of understanding? And, can we distinguish between this quantity and quality in the conduct and activity of the youth? This would, of course, be a commonplace example to substantiate the issue on hand. A higher degree of reality is much more in its grandeur and significance than this illustration would be able to suggest. The higher degree of

reality implies and connotes not only a larger inclusiveness of quantitative measure but also a deeper profundity of knowledge and wisdom, or an insight into the nature of things. We may take another example for purpose of clarification: In what way does the degree of reality manifest in the waking world transcend that experienced in the dream world? It is the quality of the degree of reality in waking that would make a person consent to remain rather a beggar in the waking world than be a king in the dream world? The quantitative transcendence and inclusiveness in waking needs no mention, as it is obvious. To give a third example: Is not man more than a mere total or an assemblage of the different limbs of the body? All the parts of the body of a man, even when viewed together, cannot be regarded as the man himself, for what we mean by man is a significant *meaning* or a transcendent *essence* vitalising and animating the body and the personality rather than the body or the personality by itself. Man is a *significance,* a *connotation,* a *suggestiveness,* the state of an *integrated consciousness,* and not merely a physical body, a psychological unit or a social personality.

So is law. It is a transcendent, connotative significance or force which demands a gradational integration of consciousness, both in quantity and quality simultaneously, until it reaches its culmination, which is known as the Absolute. Law is, thus, an operation of the system of the Absolute, in different evolutionary degrees of comprehensiveness and perfection, right from the Ultimate Causality of the universe down to the revolution of an atom or the vibration of an electron. Social laws and political

systems of administration cannot, therefore, be separated from the requisitions necessitated by the law of the Absolute. It is just this Universal Transcendent Principle that either rewards or punishes individuals by its gradational actions and reactions, and it is this, again, that is the basis of all human behaviour, looking so inscrutable, and this is the explanation as to why individuals strive for mutual love and cooperation, and, at the same time, keep themselves ready with a knife hidden in their armpits. Here we have, perhaps, the foundation of the philosophy of law. Ethics and morality have, thus, a necessary value. Law has a meaning, and it points to a truth beyond itself.

Chapter 11

A STUDY OF THE LOGICAL BASIS OF LEGAL AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

An understanding of the foundational principles behind different controlling systems of law would require an enquiry into the nature of that intriguing something, known as 'relationship' among things. In a way it can be said that the various philosophical systems of the world are only the laboured edifices raised by minds who have struggled hard to investigate into the true meaning of this apparently invisible but very substantially real permeating essence termed 'relation'. We almost take it for granted that the relation of one thing to another is something very clear and so obvious that it is pointless to spend time in trying to understand what it is. But, on a careful study of the situation, it will be found that it is a hard nut to crack, and it has defied the grasp of even the best thinkers of all times. It is because of this difficulty that man *simultaneously* entertains a hope for a higher and higher type of unification and a greater bond of togetherness among people—he can never give up the expectation that such a thing is perhaps possible, and, at the same time, he has never achieved it up to this time—and is always in a state of unmanifest war with his brothers subtly lurking within himself, quite in contradistinction to the hope for a higher tie of oneness which he is longing for and which everyone seems to be working for everywhere in human society. This double-edged ambivalent attitude and disposition of man towards life has been his joy as well as his sorrow. Is this possibly the

reason why life has managed to remain an unsolved mystery?

This enigmatic state of affairs is explicable only by the inscrutable nature of human 'relationship'. This is also the reason why the basic principles of law and ethics are even today the subjects for newer and newer research, the end of which has not yet been reached. Human relationship is a tantalising necessity, a grandeur and beauty, due to which reason it has been always the theme of magnificent intellectual deliberations and conferences as well as the ever-beckoning objective, though one never realised fully, of philanthropists, social welfare circles and even religious idealists. At the same time, human relationship has also been an unclear spectre which keeps people perpetually in a state of insecurity due to the suspicious character of its essential nature and a doubt it often evokes in the minds of everyone that it is not always a trustworthy friend capable of being relied upon entirely on its face value. Thus it is that we have two kinds of geniuses in the world: one group which holds that life is a superb manifestation of universal harmony and a cosmic equality of everything with everything else in a profundity of love, sacrificing goodness and organic oneness towards which everyone and everything is tending and must tend; and the other which regards life as a scene of devastating suffering brought about by the irreconcilability of the psychological structures of different human individuals, holding, consequently, that social solidarity and perhaps individual satisfaction cannot be had unless there is the operation of the mighty machine of legalistic and moral control exercised upon individuals

by a ruling authority, whether it be a single person or a body of persons, a Government or a Scripture. But, are we anywhere near the finale of human effort and aspiration if we remain content with a life of anxiety and tense nerves engendered by an eternal conflict of these two opposing camps of human idea and action?

We may try to go a little deeper. The crucial point seems to be a necessity to consider why there should have been these two viewpoints at all of life and its meaning. The reason appears to be that two constitutive factors have gone to make up what is known as human life: the factor of unity and the factor of diversity. Both seem to be playing a uniform role of equal intensity in the present state of human evolution, though it may be conceded that in a past or a future stage of evolution one or the other of these two factors may be predominant in varying proportions. Man is happy and unhappy at the same time, every day, indicating that he has within himself an irresistible urge for a realisation of oneness of himself with all creation and also a simultaneous pressure of his ego-ridden psycho-physical individuality which speaks in the language of selfishness and difference; physical pleasure and egoistic self-assertion which ceaselessly come in conflict with similar features characterising every other human being also. The world is both a Dharmakshetra and a Kurukshetra, a field of the righteousness emanating from the unitary Absolute existing as the only reality; and at once also a field of activity and struggle against the heavy odds that one has to confront daily in the teeth of heavy opposition from other people than one's own self, each one of whom enshrines an

unconquerable passion for affirming the satisfaction of the body and the pleasure of the ego.

But these are the two major acts in the drama of universal life, and unless we are able to witness the two scenes in their mutual connectedness aiming at presenting an ordered completeness of the total picture of the whole drama, we can neither live life nor have a moment's peace of mind. And what is the solution? In the East, Acharya Sankara and Gautama the Buddha; and in the West, G.W.F Hegel and Arthur Schopenhauer tended to emphasise the unity-aspect and the diversity-aspect, respectively, in their own novel fashion of presenting the ultimate metaphysical and psychological aspects of life's significance. There is, doubtless, a need to bring these two aspects together, which we may call the integration of life, a herculean task indeed.

Here, we also find the basic suggestiveness of social law and order, as well as of ethical and moral mandates. The political theory of Hobbes is perfectly consistent with the empirical, the psychological and the seamy-side of human relationship, but the other side, which is not in any way less important, is the ultimate ontological status of life, which was the particular specialisation of Hegel's genius. The Social Contract Theory of human relationship and political organisation will call for a strict State-control by way of enforcement, legal legislation and imposition of external authority in order to prevent the extravagant behaviour of human selfishness which can go amuck with its predisposition to giving a long rope to its uncontrolled passions and prejudices. Without such a firm control, human society may easily turn out to be a painful scene of

chaos and disaster which cannot be regarded as the honest intention or aim of any human heart. While this is perfectly true and entirely justifiable on the nature of the circumstances of the case and the prevailing conditions of things, an acceptance of this methodology of steering the course of human life as the whole truth and nothing but the truth would convert the human individual into a miserable puppet, crushed under the weight of an alien force, secretly sorrowing and dying with its hope for unrestricted freedom and joy hopelessly unrealised. But this seems to be at least fifty per cent of the truth of the human predicament; and why should it be so?

We may perhaps try to explain the human plight by a commonplace example. A magnetic field of compelling electrical force may hold thousands of minute iron filings in a powerful tie of unison so that as long as this magnetic force, though totally external to the internal structure of the filings, exerts its influence upon the filings, they cannot be scattered helter-skelter and are bound to keep to their positions in accordance with the determining force operating upon them from outside. But, notwithstanding the fact that they are so held together in a bond of inseparable relationship by the working of that power, they are essentially isolated individuals by themselves and cannot be said to have attained to a state of real unity among themselves, in the sense of a real merger of their individualities into a common existence. Likewise, while a political control of individuals by legal legislation may act as an apparent solvent of their private idiosyncrasies, personal greed and egoistic passions ready to pounce upon

others' liberty to manifest a similar freedom, and thus bring about a tentative state of peace among themselves by sheer subjection of their selfish tendencies to a proportionately equalising pressure exerted by social and political rule, the individuals cannot be said to have lost their individualities, or to have given up their selfish predilections in spite of the fact that they are held in check for a given period of time. Sleeping dogs and coiled-up snakes do not cease to be what they are merely because of their inactivity at that time. True happiness and real peace cannot be had by merely chaining the devil which is up in arms to devour us. This pious hope can become a practical realisation only when there is a sublimation of the individual's prejudice and predilection into a more universal harmony of the nature of an indivisible compound and not merely an artificial complex of essentially differing characters. Legal legislations, therefore, have to be enlivened by the charge of the ultimate spiritual unity of existence. The absence of this essential knowledge in administrative fields of whatever nature has been the one cause of the downfall of empires, of the cracking of social structures, the failure of ethical rules in human society, and the perishing of the otherwise honest efforts of even great leaders of mankind.

The morals of human society have mostly been legalistic in their tone, and so there has been a very understandable revolt against them from the deepest spirit in man, which seeks untrammelled freedom. But man's folly in assuring himself of this freedom he seeks has been his historical violence of the similar privilege which other individuals are also trying to exercise, very justifiably.

Truly, man is God and brute crossed at one point. The divine spark in him urges him towards absolute freedom, but the devil that he is at the same time makes him come in conflict with his brother and wage a war with mankind, a task he perpetrates due to his ignorance of the fact that absolute freedom is impossible until and unless he takes into consideration, with due respect, the aspirations, the strengths as well as the weaknesses of others also around him in the vast atmosphere of humanity, because there cannot be a separate 'absolute' for each individual, and there can be only a single Absolute in which the existences and longings of all individuals are subsumed and transcended in an oceanic expanse of supreme perfection. Man, in order to have social and political peace, including the personal, may require a World-Government which will fuse into its administrative organisation the need for considering the conditions of raising human nature into its aspired goal of the Universal Absolute, which can only be an utter Spiritual Essence into which the matter of the universe melts in a Cosmic Subjectivity, and the necessity to render legal and legislative control of individual behaviour and action healthily contributory, by degrees of positive expansion and profundity, to this Great Goal of life. How grand! But, is this practicable?

Yes, is the answer. This is the golden picture of the Age of Truth, or the Satya-yuga of noble Indian tradition, which is supposed to have materialised itself on the earth long, long ago, and which tradition expects to recur and repeat itself periodically after, or at the beginning of, every Age Cycle. This is the Destiny of Man, for which he is striving

through the glorious periods of constructive history as well as the ugly scenes of destructive warfare. May we call these the light of day and the night of darkness in the successive revolutions of the human cycle, lit brilliantly by the Eternal Sun of the Almighty Absolute? There is no use merely shouting anthems of parochial nationalism or enforcing tyrannical pressure of legal commandments or even trying for social good and human peace if this ultimate and basic meaning of human nature and human history is lost sight of in the busy tension of life's struggle, caused by this inevitable friction between the downward and diversifying pull of man's empirical personality and the upward and unifying urge of his higher spiritual nature. Thus, administrative genius is neither merely legal, ethical or secular, as divested of the spiritual significance of the structure of the universe, nor a mere religiosity or spiritualism of the formality-ridden, tradition-bound Pandit type or an asceticism-oriented attitude bereft of the realistic approach to life which demands a due consideration for a continuous need for law, morality and a humane regard towards all mankind. Unfortunately, man has been section-bound and has proved himself to be incapable of such comprehensive thinking and action, and that should explain why man is what he is and the world has been what it is seen to be.

The leadership of a tremendous genius and capacity for mustering in universal forces is called for. And these forces are neither material ones minus the spiritual nor the spiritual minus the material. Truth is a fusion of both spirit and matter, of divinity and humanity, of God and the

world. Will man be able to awaken this vision of himself? Then, there is hope for him, and then there can be peace, not only on earth but also in heaven and everywhere. Else, the object sought for is far to seek, and difficult to find. The world needs the leadership of a Superman, whose eyes can see God and world at the same time, whose personality will be at once the sacred temple of the Almighty and the active thoroughfare of human business. The world did see the realisation of such an ideal in the personality of Sri Krishna, who was an outstanding specimen of the world's greatest statesman in the sense we have defined above as an urgent need for the welfare of mankind. There have been also occasions for the manifestation of such Supermen in other periods of human history, which it is difficult for us to recount here in an essay. But this is the need of the hour, and here rests the ultimate hope for humanity, if hope at all it can ever cherish in its grief-stricken heart struggling to catch a straw in the rushing stream of the evolution of all creation to its awe-inspiring Destination.

Social security and friendship cannot be assured as long as social relationship remains merely an 'external' connection operating independent of the individuals so connected, and not intrinsic to the nature of the individuals themselves. A relationship between two persons has to enter into the very substance of which the two persons are made; it is only then that the relationship between them becomes friendly, secure and permanent. But if this relationship is only a form taken by a pressure exerted by something else upon the individuals appearing to be related, then the individuals so related by an extrinsic

power foreign to their own nature can fly at the throats of each other the moment this extrinsic pressure is lifted. This is what happens if the State enforcing the laws of the society is a machinery rather than an organism. With Hobbes we may think the State cannot be anything more than a machine externally operating upon the individual, whatever be the necessity felt to operate this machine. For Hegel, the State is an organism which reflects the law of the Absolute and is a vital principle wider and more real than the individual, not a 'collective' force but an 'indivisible' law ultimately inseparable from the internal wills of the individuals themselves. The much abused and distorted tradition of the divine descent or the divine right of the ruling authority so much respected in ancient times is perhaps explicable on the background of the Hegelian logic of the organic structure of the State as a temporal manifestation of the eternal law of the universe. But it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the common mind to understand the implications of Hegel's philosophy of the State, a misunderstanding and a misconstruing of which has led to the economic philosophy of materialism which has appropriated into its doctrines Hegel's dialectical logic of process, while missing its spiritual content. Greek Sparta and Nazi Germany have been examples of an apotheosis of the State-supremacy without its spiritual vitality and power, converting the State, thus, into a Titanic machine rolling heavily on the individuals like a bulldozer and crushing them under its weight. The political systems of ancient Athens and modern France gave an equal status to individual freedom and State machinery: The State was

with them a machinery still, but not going to the extent of crushing individual freedom. It was England, however, which held the doctrine of individual freedom as superior to the structure of the State which exists for the good and growth of the individual and which has no other purpose to serve independent of the individual. The immediate reaction of a judicious observer of these three doctrines of the State would be that the first is wholly wrong and inconsistent with truth, the second is pragmatic and conciliatory with the empirical view of things, and the third is perhaps the best. But even this best cannot be regarded as really the best as long as it considers the individual and the State as exclusive of each other, one existing outside the other but mutually connected by an inscrutable link understandable neither to the individual nor to the State independently. Thus it is that no political system has been a complete success for all times or under all conditions. The systems have been changing now and then to suit changing circumstances outside and the needs of individuals with the march of time; but these changes, while they are logically sanctioned by the exigencies of conditions beyond human control, have not as yet come to discover a stabilising anchor to which the need for change may be referred as a permanent standard, for man does not seem to have found time to hit upon such a sheet-anchor as a standard of reference. God, the world, the individual and the society have been wrongly thought to be four distinct realities: unfortunately, they are not. They are the four facets of the shining crystal of a single Reality towards which everything

gravitates, and for which realisation all things are tirelessly busy.

Chapter 12

THE CLOISTER AND THE HEARTH

There has been through the history of times a visible irreconcilability, though looking apparent, between the values spiritual and the values temporal. This psychological gulf that has been persistently managing to interfere with the practical life of the individual has many forms which are partly personal and partly social. But, whatever be the nature of this insistent feeling subconsciously operating in the minds of people, it has, obviously, far-reaching consequences. The usual demarcation that is traditionally made between the life religious and the life secular is an outstanding example of the roots of this phenomenon which has manifested itself not only in the private lives of individuals but also in the social and political levels of life. It is this feature inextricably wound up in the thought of man that makes him feel occasionally the rise of a fervour of a renunciation of earthly values for those that are religious, or even spiritual in the sense that he is able to comprehend within the limitations of his own psychological being.

Not only this; the phenomenon mentioned has also its negative sides which have created a rift in the layers of personal feeling, as also in the mode of living necessitated by one's relationship with the social structure in the external world. The result of this historical distinction that has been repeatedly made by everyone through the centuries cannot be regarded as ultimately healthy, because this result has always been equivalent with some sort of a

discontent, an unhappiness which perforce attends upon such a necessity of thinking in human nature. We may take into consideration only one among the several forms in which this psychological phenomenon has created a tension in the individual and the society; and it is the comparative worth of emphasising and working upon the demands of the religious sense and those of the secular calls of practical life.

The call of renunciation and the call of work may be said to be the ostensible contours of this twofold pull exerted on human nature—the pressing urge of the cloister and the comforting warmth of the hearth. Some of the doubts that can insinuate themselves into the hearts of people are: Does religion enjoin renunciation of the pleasures of life, and, if this is true, will it not amount to a sadistic mandate for a torture of the otherwise healthy life of the individual? Does the insistence on religion imply a relinquishment of works, especially of what should be regarded as one's inviolable duty such as service of the family, service of the country, service of humanity, service of the poor and the downtrodden? Is not the religious inclination a tendency towards self-centredness, a selfish callousness towards life's realities, a running away from the hard facts of existence, a morbid antipathy towards a positive approach to life, apart from its being a culpable ego-centricity of attitude seeking one's personal salvation from the pains of the world in a transcendent God, while the ignorant and hungry and poor brethren on this earth are suffering the agonies inflicted on them by a cruel fate?

Before we try to find an answer to these piercing doubts and incisive objections, we may do well to listen to the arguments of the defending counsel in his prefatory remarks to the nature of the whole case: Is it true entirely that the plea of the social sense is born of wholly pious motives right from the bottom? Will not a thoroughgoing psychoanalysis reveal a covert egoism behind even the irresistible sentiment to be of service to others? It is doubtful if totally unfavourable circumstances threatening to cause a damaging effect upon an individual whether by loss of material possessions, public opprobrium and open censure of hidden motive, or even the pain of death and destruction, would induce him to embark upon this dangerous adventure which is capable of producing such repercussions of a hurting nature. It is quite detectable that the whole of human nature does not rise to the field of action and those levels of the psychological personality which are deeper than the conscious and the external lie buried invisibly, so that it is impossible to conclude that the activities of the human individual are sprung into movement by the total individual, for the whole of the individual is not exhausted by the conscious level. The subconscious and the unconscious layers effectively tell upon the nature of conscious activity and inasmuch as all the logical pros and cons considered as well as the arguments adduced in favour of the justifiability of one's thought, speech or action proceed from the conscious level alone, it is difficult to believe that the logic of human conduct usually projected as a defense of personal behaviour is ultimately tenable. The freedom of the

individual and the alternative of choice in making a decision which is really the forte of all human effort is thus founded on quicksand.

The social consciousness is an interesting feature for study and observation, for it is the peculiar turn which the individual consciousness takes in the assessment of values by an extension of itself into a field which cannot be really regarded as its normal jurisdiction of operation. This is noticed by an observation of the intriguing phenomenon that, when an excessive pressure is exerted on the individual by social circumstances, the individual reverts to its original state and withdraws itself into the cocoon of those conscious and instinctive activities which are directly concerned with the fulfilment of the fundamental urges of its psycho-physical structure. But, then, if a powerful psychoanalytical investigation applied to human nature reveals a basically individualistic inclination of action as the residual minimum of human nature to which one is obliged to resort in the end as the last refuge available and even conceivable, why is there such an insistent and wide-spread trend in everyone to embrace a social form of life, such as the family, the community, the nation, or mankind as a whole? The psychoanalyst answer is plain-spoken and calls a spade a spade, and according to it man is essentially selfish, and unselfishness is not his true nature. If there are seen such unselfish movements of the human mind as service of others and love of others than one's own self, it is because social relationship and collaboration has always proved to be conducive to the enhancement of personal comfort by way of the fulfilment of one's desires as well as

to protection of oneself from possible attacks from outside. This social attitude, psychoanalysis says, cannot be regarded as genuinely unselfish, for though social relationship has the appearance of unselfishness by an exceeding of the limits of one's individuality, its intention is really selfish, the motive not so pious as it is made to look from its outer cloak.

This analysis would no doubt be revolting to the social form which the individual mind takes in its daily life, a blasphemy and an outrage on the essential goodness behind the motive force of social relationship, altruistic conduct and philanthropic behaviour, but psychoanalysis would retort that this resentment of the scientific analysis of a patent fact would only be an added proof of the egoism of human nature.

Now, taking up the doubts and queries that the social mind is prone to raise against its elder brother, religion, we may tentatively concede that the formalistic religions of the world have always advocated an austerity of life, a subjugation of the senses and a renunciation of earthly joys. The reason behind this religious injunction seems to be that the eternal is regarded as different from the temporal, and the characteristic values of earthly life are held to have no relevance to the values attached to life eternal. As regards the question, whether religion is justified in enjoining an abandoning of all work and activity in preference to a life of inward contemplation or meditation on God, the answer is that this insistence of religion, at least its suggestion, is a natural outcome of the traditional distinction made between the temporal and the eternal. If the visible is the

transient and the eternal is invisible, it becomes an automatic conclusion that every value that is worth the while in the realm of the transient has to be cast out with effort in order that the mind may fix itself on that which is true and permanent. A quick resort is found in such admonitions as the one we find in the Mahabharata: "For the good of the family, an individual may be abandoned; for the good of the village, a family may be abandoned; for the good of the country, a village may be abandoned; for the sake of the Universal Self, the world may be abandoned."

While this *prima facie* point of view of religion may be regarded as the immediately available answer of the traditional religion to the matter-of-fact, or rather secular, objection raised against the entire religious attitude, as cited above, it is necessary to conduct a deeper investigation into the validity of these off-hand replies which the organised religious approach to life may trot out as its main defense. The defect of the traditional religion, which is perhaps the only religion we find active in the world today, is that it is susceptible to making an unwarranted distinction between the temporal and the eternal values of life. What is usually known as the attitude of renunciation, austerity, sense-control, a hermit life or a sequestration in monastic atmosphere is, on the very face of it, pregnant with a possibility of laying an undue emphasis on the evanescence and sorrow of life on earth and the entertaining of a nebulous hope for a future joy in eternal life, implying thereby that the eternal is 'external to' or 'outside' the temporal and bears no vital relation to temporal life. If a large section of mankind is today inclined to look upon

with obloquy the church-goer, the religious man, the renunciate or the monk, the cause thereof has to be attributed to the natural reaction which the neglected temporal values set up against the camouflage of eternal values which masquerade in the form of hibernating religious sentiments which have proudly erected the decorated edifices of the so-called religions of the world. It is strange that the traditional religions forget to learn the lesson that the eternal would cease to be eternal the moment it is 'isolated' or cut off from any other existent value, notwithstanding the fact that this value might be tentative or temporal. The spiritual culture of India, at least, unmistakably stresses the important truth that Reality is also immanent in the Universe, and not merely transcendent. The unnecessary and erroneous obsession for the transcendent alone, which consequently denies any reality or value to the universe of temporal events, is the untenable side-tracked attitude of the popular religion of the masses, which has unfortunately been dubbed as the only meaning of religion even by the elite or the intelligentsia of modern human society. The true religious spirit, no doubt, regards *moksha* or salvation from relativistic bondage as the ultimate aim of life, but it is at the same time cautious to take note of and, give due credit to *artha* or the material and economic value as well as to *kama* or the vital and aesthetic value involved in temporal life, not as a morbid concession to or a disease characteristic of all life but a transitional necessity relevant to the growth of the individual to the Universal Reality, by the gradual inclusive transcendence of the lower in the

higher. The connecting link between *moksha* on the one hand and *artha* and *kama* on the other, or, rather, the force that blends these three aspects, into an organic completeness, is known as *dharma,* or the law of life.

It will, thus, be seen that there cannot be a gulf between the cloister and the hearth, the monk in the monastery and the public in the street, the *sannyasin* and the *grihastha*, if the organic relationship that exists between the temporal and the eternal is always borne in mind. It is wrong to think that religion is otherworldly, ignoring entirely the significances and the suggestive implications of temporal life. The other-worldliness ostensible in many of the popular religions is really unfortunate, and it is this wrong notion and incorrect attitude that must be regarded as responsible for the several reactionary movements in human society so menacingly rampant in the present day. A line has to be drawn between the necessary and unnecessary values of life at any given stage of the evolution of the individual to the Higher Life, and no value can be regarded as a false value meant to be rejected or abandoned as long as it is felt to be an indispensable necessity at that particular level of the evolution of the individual. That a particular value is likely to be subject to transcendence in a higher stage of evolution does not justify the abrogation of the former at that stage with which it is inextricably connected. The philosophy of the Vedanta rightly recognises the value of *vyavaharika-satta* or empirical reality at the stage where it is experienced as an inviolable reality, though it might be that it is going to be subsumed, absorbed or transcended in the *paramarthik-satta* or

absolute reality. The philosophy of a particular religious technique known as *tantra-sadhana* is tirelessly insistent on the necessity of conceding and including, rather than denying and excluding, the visible values of life in an alchemic transmutation of the total organism of life's extensive structure for the purpose of the realisation of the Absolute.

From the above observations it can be concluded that any association of sadism, masochism or mortification of the flesh with religion is wholly unjustified and is based on a woeful ignorance of the purpose and meaning of religion. Religion, as the supreme science and art of the integration of social values, individual values, natural values and spiritual values, all at once, is the gravitating movement of the whole universe to the Absolute which is its real Self—at once the Self of all beings, in a magnificent comprehensiveness with which the human mind at present is not acquainted and which it, therefore, cannot, at present, either understand or appreciate. Religion does not set aside the value of actions or works in the life of the world; else, what can be the point in proclaiming so loudly the gospel of divine action, known as Karma-Yoga, which is the central theme of those eternal teachings embodied in the Bhagavadgita? If there has been occasionally an over-emphasis on the monastic phase of religion, with a wrong interpretation of its suggestiveness that it implies a contempt for work or action of every kind, this, again, has to be regarded as an unfortunate outcome of a misunderstanding of religion. No great saint or sage has

committed or would ever commit such a blunder as what this miscalculated view of religion would implicate.

Simultaneously we should urgently point out that the secularist disregard of religion in its entirety is an unfounded and unjustifiable kink in human attitude, for the religious demand for self-transcendence in the progressive evolution of the individual to the Absolute, though it includes by sublimation and absorption the lower relative values, thus, at the same time, has its justification in the rather incomprehensible nature of the Ultimate Reality which overcomes relationships as well as contradictions characteristic of all types of empirical consciousness, a truth, again, which anyone wholly caught up in the web of empirical relativity will not be able to understand. The requirement of religion to renounce the pleasures of life is somewhat akin to the advice of the science of hygiene and medicine that an aspiration for health implies also an effort to eradicate the disease present in the system of the body, for, after all, what are the pleasures of life if not a mitigation of the irritation of the senses and the itching of the ego by means of pampering which cannot in any way be regarded as a cure to their sickly restlessness caused by factors far removed from those which are usually considered as instrumental in satisfying the cravings of the senses and the clamourings of the ego? Spiritual practice, which is a synthesis of service to others, devotion to God, and meditation on the Absolute, is an all-round panacea for every form taken by the ills of life, and a healthy educational procedure of not only guarding oneself from unwarily being involved in the defects and torturous errors

inseparable from all relative life but also infusing into life the toning power which rises into potent action by a comprehending and living of the true and ultimate significance of all existence.

Chapter 13

THE DIFFICULTIES OF A SPIRITUAL SEEKER

The spiritual way of life is perhaps the most intriguing and enigmatic of all arts and sciences. The reason behind this difficulty in understanding and living the life spiritual is that this arduous adventure on the part of an individual is connected with so many subtle factors and calls for such dexterous adjustments from moment to moment that the entire process or effort is practically beyond the reach of the common man who is used to what we may call a happy-go-lucky attitude of total abandon to instincts, prejudices, routines and movements along beaten tracks of stereotyped conduct and behaviour in his personal and social life. It is by a rare good fortune, we should say, that a person gets fired up with the spiritual ideal, sometimes by causes which are immediately visible and at other times for reasons not clearly intelligible even to one's own self. Broadly speaking, a spiritual aspiration may be stirred up in the heart of a person by frequent association with spiritual Adepts or Masters, continued study of spiritual literature for a long time, or even a sudden awakening to facts brought about by the perception of blatant contradictions, sufferings and sorrows in life, as well as an unexpected shot of an insight arisen into the transiency and ultimate vanity of everything earthly and phenomenal. These may be regarded as some of the visible causes of the rise of a spurt of spiritual aspiration in the mind of a person, though these visible features have deeper unseen causes extending outside the ken of the powers of the conscious human level. But the fructification

of intense virtuous deeds performed in the previous lives and the right efforts put forth in such earlier incarnations of the soul may act as invisible causes of the manifestation of profounder spiritual urges even in an early age in one's present life.

The pressure of a spiritual sense of values can take one by surprise and lead one to such personal and social attitudes which may startle people around and force them into a conviction that 'something is rotten in the state of Denmark'. This may lead to a kind of social tension between oneself and others, though only for a short period of time, initially, and drive one to an adoption of such a gospel of life as may set oneself in a sort of disharmony with the atmosphere prevailing outside, if not entirely put upside down the accepted etiquette and ethics of the society into which one is born and in which one has been brought up. The spur of the spirit from within can for a time face the strongest forces of the world and blow like a whirlwind uprooting trees which stood firmly on the ground so long and casting out roofs of houses and temples which have been held so dear and sacred. It may even break the walls and ramparts of affection towards those who cannot but be regarded as indispensable relations of oneself, near and dear as one's own skin. In this sense, the upsurge of the spirit from within is a sort of revolutionary violence sprung upon everything around which is normally regarded as morally good, socially necessary and traditionally inviolable. This force of the spirit rising from within may even look like a terror to the sacredness of earthly formalities, a fire of doom that has come upon all the

lovable values of life. When such a spirit takes possession of the individual, there can arise a feeling that nothing in the world is worth anything and the only thing worth the while is the realisation and the experience of the Supreme Being. It is under such conditions that a person hurries forward to places of seclusion, to temples, churches, monasteries, nunneries, ashrams or convents, with the hope that here, perhaps, are chances available for obtaining facilities in leading a contemplative spiritual life. And we have, thus, the spiritual seeker in a holy cloister.

The Mahabharata and the Bhagavadgita are the grand epic illustrations of the problems of a spiritual seeker and of the ways of confronting them and solving them once and for all. The Adi-Parva of the Mahabharata represents the condition of the seed in which form the spiritual tendencies and powers lie latent and, having sprung up from the seed, remain like tender children requiring great protection, care and nurturing. The children grow up in a nebulous atmosphere of hope and insecurity mixed up in a confused proportion, and they are not quite confident of the nature of their surroundings and the precise character of their future. In the Sabha-Parva the aspect of hope seems to be in a condition of jubilant fulfilment, and everything looks secure, fine and grand. This is exactly the stage of the spiritual seeker and the condition of tremendous enthusiasm and positivity, when he enters the sylvan surroundings of holy seclusion or the rigorous atmosphere of a monastery in which he expects to live the sublime life of contemplation on God. But there is a sting attached to the end of the Sabha-Parva which turns all the glory of

initial enthusiasm into an anti-climax of utter suffering, and we find the Pandava brothers getting into the clutches of a deceptive dice game and being banished into the woods to find their fate in a wretchedness which would beggar description. And here we are in the Aranya-Parva. Such is the sorry state of affairs now that even at the end of the period of exile there is a need to live incognito for a time, lest the unfriendly forces should wreak vengeance upon the audacious goodness of a noble aspiration which is so offensive to the philistine world of social hypocrisy. So goes the Virata-Parva. But truth triumphs, goodness ultimately succeeds, and the power of virtue commands the admiration and attracts the attention of even the gods. There is a turn of events suddenly, and in the midst of the worst of sufferings promises come from mighty potentialities of the divine government, that things are not so bad as they have appeared up to this time. Great energies get gathered up, and sympathy and support come from all sides. Not only such celestials as Indra but invincible heroes like Sri Krishna offer to join the forces of virtue and aspiration in their battle against the opposing elements of egoism, greed, lust and wrath, the powers earthly and the instincts undivine. The Udyoga-Parva describes the assembly of powerful and undaunted friends of the Pandavas deliberating over the courses of future action. This is the most complex among the eighteen Sections of the Mahabharata, wherein we have a portrayal of colourful dramatic scenes that are enacted prior to the commencement of the sanguinary war with the forces of Nature which, in the vehemence of their asserting the

beauty and joy of a real diversity of values and the meaningfulness seen in sensory contact and the physical possession of earthly goods, attempt to destroy the diviner powers that are struggling to tend towards an ultimate unity of life. It is here that there is the picture of a beautiful blend of human effort and divine grace, and the rising of a confidence that success is perhaps a possibility. God himself takes the responsibility of seeing that the needful is done in the matter of the protection of the forces of divine aspiration and virtue, and we have in the Udyoga-Parva a description of the majestic event of such a superhuman character as Sri Krishna himself undertaking the task of going on a peace mission to the assembly of the Kauravas. Not only that; the dread power of God is visibly demonstrated as being there behind the powers of goodness, virtue and aspiration, when the occasion arose for Sri Krishna to exhibit his cosmic form. The actual battle, however, commences in the Bhishma-Parva, where, at the very beginning of the battle that was to ensue, there is a surprising description of an astonishing attitude which Arjuna reveals, quite contrary to the heroic preparations made earlier for the fierce battle that was regarded as unavoidable.

This condition is precisely the initial stage of actual spiritual practice—a sudden dampening of fervour, a mixing up of emotions and a totally unexpected persistence of the seeker in misconstruing all values and putting the cart before the horse, thus attempting to turn upside down all the logic and ethics of that earlier occasion when it was thought with great wisdom that there was an inescapable

significance and meaning in embarking upon the adventure of a war. What follows is the gospel of the Bhagavadgita pronounced in eighteen Chapters representing the stages of the ascent of the soul in its spiral movement towards the Absolute. In the war of the spirit it is not merely the forces of obvious evil, such as Duryodhana and his henchmen that are to be faced and overcome, but also traditional law and ethics embodied in Bhishma, though the oldest and the most venerable for everyone equally; efficiency and learning going hand in hand with unscrupulousness adumbrated in the personality of Drona, though extremely powerful and helpful; and misdirected friendship and fraternal feeling as pictured in the figure of *karna*, though immensely cooperative and a dependable source of awful strength. All these good things, dear things, valuable things and sacred things have to be sacrificed at the flaming altar of soul's allegiance with and surrender to the cause of the ultimate Goal of life. And in this awe-inspiring, heart-rending and terrific war of the Spirit waged for the establishment of Truth and Righteousness, the silent helping hand of God is seen to be vigorously active right till the end, when the war is finally won, all which are some of the beautiful scenes painted through the Chapters of the Mahabharata.

The seeker's entering a monastery or a place of holy seclusion is really the beginning of his troubles. The austerities personally volunteered and the disciplines externally imposed by the surroundings or the atmosphere of this life try to dig up the gold and the treasure that is hidden in the mine of the seeker's inner substance. But the

digging also raises a lot of dust which can even blind one's eyes, and hard stones and pricking thorns may not infrequently be found side by side with the treasure that is buried in the deeps. The spiritual urge can suddenly wane, being beclouded by the dust and dirt which may be kicked up by the forces insisting on an attachment to diversity, which may for a time eclipse even the brilliance of the sun of the Supreme Spirit planted in the heart of man as his very Self and beckoning him from outside as the illimitable Infinite. A lethargic condition, one of torpidity, callousness, hunger and sleep may be the stage immediately following the upsurge of religious enthusiasm and longing for spiritual liberation, with which the seeker may enter a monastery or find a place in the vicinity of a Master. A falling back upon the principle of least resistance and least action can be the outcome of this state of mind. The spiritual urge gets pressed down at once by the cumulative effect of a dark and cloudy reaction set up by the powers of desire, otherwise normal to a human individual, which have been relegated to the limbo all the while when the spiritual urge was predominant, though for a short period. The sense and the ego are like the devil and the deep sea, between which the seeking individual is likely to get caught, and whichever of the two ways one moves, one's fate is sure to be destruction.

After a lull of inertia and sleep for a few years, there can arise an irresistible desire for sense-enjoyment, the very thing which looked undesirable years ago when a fit of renunciation drove the seeker to the hermitage or the monastery. The usual form of desire is actively sensory and

herein it is that one may become prone to yield to the pressure of the subhuman side of passions that insist on having their fill. These are the impetuous instincts of the animal world, the savage nature, which have no regard for the good of the individual concerned, because their objective is only physical satisfaction. This is the immoral nature, so much condemned in the science of ethics, since it has no concern with the welfare of others. The seeker may become neurotic and eccentric when the outlets for his feelings and urges are blocked by the regulated atmosphere outside. The greatest enemies of the spiritual aspirant are wealth, sex, fame and anger. A craving for silly satisfaction through even the pettiest objects of sense, of play and diversion, may rise to the surface and press for fulfilment. There is always an interplay of inertia (*tamas*) and craving (*rajas*) in the mind of the seeker who is still on the path of struggle and is groping in darkness. The achievement, if at all there has been any, up to this stage, is a suppression of desire simultaneously consequent upon the burning of the fire of renunciation and love for God, which showed its head in an earlier stage. It is something like an ocean sweeping over dustbins and locations of drainage and sewage, flooding them with its overwhelming rush and force and submerging them for a while, but not actually transmuting them into purer substances. The initial spiritual urge of the jubilant enthusiast, our youthful hero on the path, is of this nature. The dust and dirt and rubbish are all there when the oceanic waves recede and when the daylight of sense activity falls upon them, reverting them to their original form of rot and stink. Spiritual seekers,

beware! It is not all rose-bed or milk and honey that is the path you are treading. A razor's edge, verily, it is!

Any healthy advice not conducive to the fulfilment of desire may be looked upon with resentment. And any overexerted pressure of the cloister may force the seeker back to the condition of sleep, an unsocial behaviour (rarely it can even be anti-social), a sense of hopelessness, a melancholy mood and an air of dispiritedness. Then there can come rising up the hissing snake of ire against all spiritual effort, even against the very faith in the existence of God, and a longing to listen to the call of a return to worldly life, the very condition from where the soul once struggled to soar above in a flaming aspiration. How mysterious is the way spiritual! Many students of yoga who once demanded nothing short of the realisation of God in this very life were forced later on to go back to the old routines of the work-a-day world of sense and ego. There is a very strange reaction produced by the desires suppressed for long, and that is the vehemence and ferocity with which they can strike back on centres of indulgence with redoubled force, making the moral condition of a person much worse than what it would have been even under an accepted normal state of worldly life. Prolonged celibacy of a repressed character may urge one to an impulse towards leading the life of a householder or even of seeking physical satisfactions at lower levels by a psychological regression into earlier instinctive stages of what modern psychoanalysts call the 'libido'. Disturbing dreams and erratic thoughts of self-fulfilment in a variety of ways may become a common feature. There can even be a return to

such gross levels as business and shopkeeping as the result of a kick received from those desires which were not allowed a free hand by the action of an overwhelming influence exerted by that spiritual enthusiasm which once had risen up to the surface long ago. An itching for frequent outings, trips and journeys can become one of the innocuous avenues for the escape of energy which was kept bottled up but not harnessed by sublimation. A thoroughgoing repulsion to circumstances requiring one to live alone and a panicky love for company of others at any cost, even if it be in a street or market place, can become an easy solution the horrors pictured before the senses and the ego by the relentless hands of the call spiritual. Grammar and literature, art and music may assume the role of not only harmless accessories to living the ideal of one's life but even forms of spiritual practice by themselves. And so our hero does go his way, undaunted by what the world may say from outside or what the conscience may speak from within.

The almost incurable trait of finding fault with others, whether by way of philosophical doctrine, technique of practice or personal attainment, may become a source of negative satisfaction when one does not possess anything that is positive. To cavil at great men and noble souls is perhaps the easiest way of becoming great oneself. Sisupala suddenly became important due to his cheek in casting aspersions on the Lord Sri Krishna. To many this is the chief source of acquiring social status and gaining certificates and encomiums from the unwary public, to exploit whose ignorance through these deceptive means of

vainglorious complacency is a covetable ideal to get on comfortably in life. But Nature's wrath and the nemesis of divine law is something which cannot be foreseen by the eyes of this astounding stupidity discoverable in human behaviour. The finding of fault with others runs, of course, hand-in-hand with the habit of self justification and self-assertion which loudly proclaims that its viewpoints and the ways of its working are infallible.

There are Gurus or Masters whom it would not always be easy for a spiritual aspirant to befriend or serve. We have a classic instance of the story of the spiritual quest of Tibet's Yogi Milarepa who underwent an intolerably severe training under his Preceptor Marpa. The hardship of living with a Guru is a thing our modern curiosity-ridden students cannot understand, far less appreciate or be able to endure. But spiritual attainment exacts such a price from anyone who is really sincere in this glorious pursuit; nay, all the priceless goods of this earth cannot be regarded as equal to the value of the fruits which such a strict personal discipline and such knowledge would yield in the end. Doubts and fears unmistakably hover round even the sincere seeker like vampires ready to suck one's blood. One may doubt the worth of one's own Guns. Can this be the last stroke that Satan attempts to deal at the root of all spiritual aspiration? Perhaps not. Because, there can be something worse, and that is a disbelief in the very existence of God and a conviction about the nonsensical character of spiritual salvation which the seeker on the path is supposed to be striving for. But a type like that of Milarepa or the noble example of Nachiketas recounted to

us by the Katha Upanishad is made of a different stuff. Persistence in one's pursuit and tenacity in one's practice are the hallmarks of such heroes who are not only the salt of the earth but a dazzling credit to the immortal glory of mankind's essential function which tops the list of all its duties.

Physical disease, extreme talkativeness, loss of memory, gluttony, dullness of aspiration, doubts of different kinds, remission in the continuity of practice, laziness, a subtle desire to have sense-enjoyment, mistaking illusive perceptions for reality, inability to find the point of concentration, and instability in the practice of meditation are some of the major obstacles on the path of the seeker. A desire to mix too much with society, to raise large institutions and expand the circle of one's disciples can act as a fatal weapon to deal a death-blow at the hunger of the soul for God. History is here our best teacher. The life of Rishyasringa as we have it recorded in the Mahabharata, the life of Visvamitra given to us by Valmiki in the Ramayana, the life of Buddha told in the poem by Edwin Arnold, the 'Paradise Regained' of Milton, the life of Yogi Milarepa recorded by Evans-Wentz, the lives of the Alvars and Nayanars of Southern India, the life of St. Augustine, the writings of Thomas à Kempis, and such great examples as Rishabhadeva, Jadabharata, or Dattatreya of ancient times, the life of Sri Krishna Chaitanya-Deva, and the like would provide a stimulating and most helpful study to every student on the path of yoga.

Chapter 14

THE AIMS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE-I

The problems of a seeker of Truth can be evaluated and an attempt be made to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the same, only if it can be possible to come to a definite conclusion as to their causes, even the remote ones which may not be immediately recognisable or discoverable, but which, perhaps, are the main reasons behind every form of human problem. Just as a good physician, while conducting a medical examination, does not immediately jump into a prescription for the disease merely on the observation of certain symptoms outside but would take care to see that the causes of the illness are properly investigated, in which case it is obvious that when the cause is treated, the effect is automatically dealt with in the manner required; even so is the case with the difficulties of human life and the various facets which they present to human observation as if they are independent difficulties, while they might be, for all purposes, only diversifications of a few, or even a single major problem.

If we are to apply this scientific method of inquiry of the causes of the problems of human life, we would naturally be led into an investigation, at the same time, of the various types of phenomena in Nature which form the atmosphere or environment of the human individual or even human society as a whole. Even as the prescription of a medical recipe is preceded by a careful conduct of an examination of a case in hand, and its investigation, again, is rooted in a thorough grasp of anatomy and physiology

and the entire philosophy of medical science, an investigation into the nature of human problems and a finding out of the proper remedies for them would call for a deeper procedure of logical inquiry in a systematic manner; but this process would be guided by the principles of the philosophy of life itself. An inductive analysis of the whole of personal and natural phenomena leads us to the discovery of deeper and more inclusive principles rather than persons, objects or things, and we are led along the lines of the vision of a new world altogether, which could not be a conglomeration of isolated persons or objects but an interrelated play of powers, laws and forces which seem to come together into a fraternal embrace. This means to say that the object of investigation becomes not a single item, person or thing, or even a cluster of objects or events, but a sort of limitless expanse which may cover the entire universe itself.

But, how can all Nature be known, or anything be known at all, if there is not a witnessing or observing consciousness? How can there be anything known if there is not a knower of it? And it needs no mention that while it is possible that the known can be material or unconscious, the knower cannot be so. The knower should be conscious. Not only this; consciousness cannot be merely an attribute of the knower, but it must be the essence of the knower himself: else, consciousness would be an attribute of an unconscious base, a conclusion very absurd on the very face of it. It follows that the knower should be consciousness in substance and essence, and it is consciousness that knows phenomena.

But, again, what is the relation between consciousness and its object? The relation itself has to be conscious or be a mode of consciousness: else, the connection would be unconscious and there would be no possibility of anyone knowing anything at all. The accepted fact is that there is such a thing as knowledge, which should prove that not only is the knower a centre of consciousness but even the relation between the knower and the known has to be a process of consciousness. Further, as this relation between the knower and the known, namely, the process of knowing, has itself to be somehow connected with the object known, and its connection would be a second relation, which has now to be explained, the final conclusion would be that it is impossible to have a connection between the knower and the known unless the object also is a phenomenon of consciousness itself. Now, we come to a wonderful conclusion:—Consciousness knows consciousness through consciousness. All existence is consciousness, which is the meaning of the famous dictum of the Vedanta philosophy, that 'Sat' is 'Chit':—Existence is Consciousness. This is reality, the conclusion we arrive at by pure logical analysis.

This inductively obtained conclusion is corroborated by the Upanishads which speak of the Supreme Absolute, willing itself to become a subtle causal form of potential being. This original potential condition is termed, in the Vedanta, Isvara, or the Supreme Creator. This latent potentiality of manifestation then gets accentuated into the faint outlines of the future contingence and form of the universe, and this state of universal manifested being is

called Hiranyagarbha. There is a further process of completion of the functioning of manifestation when the outlines drawn in the earlier stage become ways for the grosser visible shape of the universe known as Virat. Here is the lowermost or the final form of universal manifestation, where the different formations, configurations or shapes do not constitute isolated or segregated points of self-affirmation or individuality but remain as the focusing points of the single Universal Being, the Virat.

But, then, the work of 'individuation' commences when these focusing points begin to assert their independence, and then they are not mere points for focusing or concentration of the universal but absolutely different forms or bodies cut off from one another by space and time, with apparently no relationship among one another, because the work of space and time is precisely that of segregation or isolation of one part from the other or one form from another form. There is, then, a sudden catastrophe, as it were, befalling every such self-assertive individual centre, and each such centre feels within its total individual being a restlessness, as if death has overtaken it, and there is the fear of impending destruction threatening from all sides, for it is quite understandable that when the individual has severed itself from the universal reality which is its sustaining Power, it should naturally feel an agony and anguish that everything is in a state of chaos and fear yawning with open jaws from everywhere in the atmosphere. To obviate this fear and get rid of this calamitous state of affairs, the individual struggles to gain back what it has lost, which is possible only by a return to

the universal form of unitedness, because the universal is inclusive of every individual in a total unity of singleness of being and the individual which has lost the consciousness of its inseparability from the universal attempts in an artificial manner to bring this universality into manifestation and active participation by struggling to come in contact with other forms or individuals. It wrongly feels that physical and psychological contact with other individuals would be a remedy to restore the lost universality and inclusiveness. For this purpose of a physical and psychological contact with every other individual, the consciousness within carefully projects the powers of sense, namely those of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching, together with the corresponding physical organs through which these powers are made to work for the purpose of the intended contact with other individuals. It also projects the psychological organs of the ego, of thinking, feeling and willing for the purpose of a psychological contact with other individuals. This method, it feels, will bring about the needed universality or unitedness with every individual or form, and with this conviction it rushes forward towards the other individuals with a vehemence and impetuosity of hope not only to contact the individuals outside but even absorb them into itself, so that there would be no externality or even existence of other individuals and there would be only a single universality of its own selfhood. This is the reason behind perception of objects, thought of objects and desire for objects through the senses and the mind. The intention of all these activities of the individual consciousness is to

restore universality in its selfhood. But, alas, this is not to be; for universality cannot be restored by sense-contact with external objects or even thought of external objects, since externality which is the special feature of space and time prevents the merger of one individual with the other, nay, even an actual contact, possession or enjoyment of the object, except merely in a stupid imagination which makes out that there is the joy of heaven prevailing even in the stink of hell.

Thus, is life. Thus is human experience and human nature. Thus is the meaning of all activity in life, whether social, personal, or psychological. This is the great sorrow of the individual, and the only panacea for this malady is to find ways and means of restoring the true universality independent of space and time with their concomitant externality and exclusiveness of things and of all existence—all objects, all persons, all things and all events. Universality is reached not by sense-contact but by an identification of consciousness with the selfhood of all things and the being of all things with the selfhood of consciousness. This is the great philosophy of yoga, the foundation of its psychology as well as the principle of its practice.

And how is all this done? What is the actual method of redeeming humanity from this grievous state of life on earth, which has come about in the manner described? The method is precisely the simple one of the reversal of the process of manifestation, the recession of the effects to their causes, step by step, and very gradually—without missing even a single link in the chain of this return process of

consciousness to its ultimate universality. For this purpose, it is essential for every person to carefully scrutinise and investigate into the causes of every experience which one passes through in one's life, and trace the effects of these experiences to their causes. The recognition of the causes will enable one to merge the effects in the causes, so that the effects cease to be and the cause alone exists. In the end, there would be no effects at all but only the final cause, namely, the Absolute Universal, the realisation of which is the Goal of life.

At the very outset, it is to be pointed out that one should learn the art of the discovery of an aim in one's life—in all activities and motives. Most people in the world live without an aim or purpose in life and drift helplessly hither and thither driven by the wind of circumstances and impelled by the stimulant of pleasure temporarily appearing to manifest itself when there is a titillation of the senses and the nerves, when the ego is scratched or the senses are stirred into stimulation. This is, truly, a pitiable state of affairs, and this condition of human life, which man regards as the height of civilisation and culture, is really the pit of downfall. Strange; man wants to rule even in hell rather than serve in heaven, but is it not high time that mankind ought to realise its mistakes, both in thought and action, and gird up its loins to find out the only remedy for the illness of mortal existence, the travail of temporal life?

Personal and social relationships are only the projection of the human mind by externalisation in space and time in respect of persons and things whom it is obliged to regard as distinct or separate from itself. The modern scientist is

prone to get convinced that there is an advancement in the process of evolution from matter to life, from life to mind and from mind to intellect. This is, indeed, an advancement, but in the same way as there is an advancement from plus one to minus one, from minus one to minus two, from minus two to minus three and from minus three to minus four, etc. Truly, minus four is far superior to plus one, richer indeed, because the figure four is there, looking bigger than one! But this gross error in the evaluation of life is not detected by the human mind and it hurries headlong into the pit of doom and suffering, not knowing that its pursuit of what is good, meaningful and valuable is really its pursuit of the ways of its own final destruction. It is surprising that even in this age of the astounding discoveries of the Theory of Relativity and its breathtaking conclusions, man should continue to be so ignorant of the nature of the physical world, of human relations and of life in general, and take appearance for reality. If, according to the findings of modern physics, the three-dimensional phenomenon of a world is an erroneous abstraction, falsely made, by the defect-ridden mind from an integrated four-dimensional or, perhaps, a multidimensional organism of the cosmos, how would it stand to reason that there can be desire for objects of sense or even any sort of dependence on the so-called external objects of the three-dimensional world of space and time, while there is only a space-time-continuum, in which no individual can ever exist as isolated from other individuals, in any manner whatsoever?

Here we are in a strange and unexpected commingling of science and metaphysics. Knowledge, after all, seems to have once again found its way to an integral intuition that it really is, rather than sensory perception or mental cognition of a spatio-temporal externality of persons and things and relations. The seeker of Truth has to reverse his process of learning, knowing and experiencing from the effects to their respective causes, in an ascending order of graduated movement.

What is the Aim of Life? It should be obvious that the answer is, now, clear. The Aim, then, is a rising of consciousness from the external to the internal, and from the internal to the Universal. First of all, it would be necessary to withdraw consciousness from 'externality' and any kind of 'relationship' with externals, with the power of that understanding that recognises once, for all, that an externalised relation is impossible in a world where a three-dimensional depth or distance cannot be a reality. From this stage of the withdrawal of consciousness from the feigned externality of relations, the next step is to go deeper into the essential necessities—not luxuries—of one's life, and live in an atmosphere and condition of the minimum necessities of life, without adding to them even a single extra item, because that extra item would not be a necessity but a luxury. While Nature would permit a necessity, it would not tolerate luxuries even in the smallest percentage. Nature provides necessities but not luxuries, and luxury is nothing but an exploitation of circumstances in which the individual ego wrongly indulges at the expense of other such egos in the world around it. The minimum needs of

human nature, in the form of food, clothing, shelter and education, as well as contact with persons and things in the world around, should be well calculated and assessed, and one should try to live only in those disciplined conditions of minimum necessity in the maintenance of the body-mind complex and human relations. This is, perhaps, the most difficult thing for anyone to do, for man is not accustomed to think logically, he always works on the basis of sentiments and emotions, the spur of feelings and the incitations of the senses. Now the time has come to turn the tables round and lead an absolutely new way of life with a thoroughly reoriented system of intellectual, moral, social and spiritual education.

There would be little need to expatiate on the further processes of the ascent of consciousness, for the whole thing would be clear from an understanding of the process of evolution described above. What is called for is merely a retracing of the steps of consciousness backwards from effects to causes, stage by stage, without missing even a single rung in the ladder of the ascent. From social relations, one comes to personal needs and from personal needs to an adjustment of one's individuality with the laws of the universe. These laws, known as '*rita*' in the Vedas, are nothing but the operational procedures and the working methodology of the Supreme Universal. The aim of life may look manifold, and it may really be so for the purpose of practical action at the lower levels, but its forms are all organically related to the Central System of the Supreme Integration that is the Absolute. Every thought, every speech, every action and every way of relationship

with persons and things in life has, thus, to be judged and worked out in the light of this constitution of the Great Reality.

Chapter 15

THE AIMS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE-II

It has been held by some leading scientific minds of the present day that the universe had its origin in a vast and incomprehensible Single Cell or Atom which split itself into parts or fragments, evidently beginning with two parts of one whole and then ramifying into innumerable individual bits of itself scattered in different directions. It is also held that millions and millions of years ago, the nucleus of the universe was an inconceivably hot boiling centre of a homogeneous primordial substance in which nothing could be distinguished either as physical elements or as molecules or atoms, etc., and that when some millions of years passed, this atrocious temperature dropped down gradually and the internal constituents of this universal mass condensed into more concrete forms, and electrons began to be emitted which revolved round a nucleus in all such innumerable centres, and thus atoms were formed. In this manner, all the elements in the universe were created long, long ago in the dim inconceivable past and the functions or roles of these elements were fixed for all future times to come. The gradual continuance of this creative and formative activity of the universe is said to finally tend towards the diffusion of substance and energy both inside the atom and in outer space. All this is supposed to indicate the coming in of a time when the energy of the universe would be equally distributed throughout its structure and then there would be no motion, no force, no activity and so no light, no warmth and no life. This is a dark and ominous future

predicted, indeed. But there are others who hold the opinion that somehow, somewhere beyond mind's understanding, the universe will rebuild itself and the diffused radiation in space will get condensed once more into electrons, atoms, molecules and material substances, which may then form themselves by their gravitational force into nebulae, stars, suns and galaxies, and thus the creation and dissolution of the universe may go on repeating themselves for eternity.

These conclusions of modern science would precipitate into the concept of a self-directed, purposeful activity of the universe through never-ending aeons of time. Geniuses in science like Albert Einstein have stumbled upon the existence of a mystical grandeur and mystery which forced them into accepting the possibility of a cosmic spiritual consciousness, hinting that there is perhaps an Infinite Spirit and Power which plays this drama of the universe not only in its large cosmic magnificence but also in all its minute details. The mysterious discovery of science known as the Unified Field Theory is said to have attempted a unification of the concepts of space, time and gravitation with those of the sub-atomic structures of matter forming the electromagnetic field, thus bringing into union the laws of outer space and time with the laws of the inner constitution of individual and material bodies under a single law which is universally applicable. This outlook should show that the whole universe is governed by a central law, and the cosmic and the individual are not separate realities; they are one: "*Tat-Tvam Asi*"—That thou art, says the Upanishad. Science, here, seems to echo the

great Upanishadic discovery that the particular and the universal are one and the same, that the gravitational and electromagnetic fields imply a deeper reality, a fundamental universal being within which these two aspects of function appear as mere conditions or states. The universe is one comprehensive whole and is declared to be indivisible, a central elemental field in which every material content, whether the blazing sun or the minute atom, is like a ripple in the four-dimensional space-time continuum. Thus the scientific discoveries of today have, after all, been obliged to accept as their final conclusion a deeper underlying unity of the universe. True knowledge is a knowledge of 'being', and every aspiration of everyone is a constructive struggle to achieve this reality in one's own experience. The reason is simple; man is limited by the conditions of his own individuality, but his finite bodily structure and mental constitution are restrained and governed by the law of the universe. It was the physicist, Niels Bohr, who is reported to have proclaimed that man is both a spectator and an actor in the drama of existence. Since man is, unfortunately for him, a part of the universe which he is trying to understand, and his body and mind are made up of the same substance as anything else in the universe of galaxies, his personality is a part of the vast phenomenon of the four-dimensional space-time continuum, he cannot understand the universe into which he has been born, because it is not 'outside' him as an object of thought and sense. Man is an inseparable part of the universe, and so it follows that he cannot know it, or know anything for the matter of that, as long as he does not know himself. Knowledge of the Self is a

knowledge of the universe. The highest wisdom, then, consists in the realisation and experience that man is organically related to the universe, so that there is no such thing as 'man' or any individual independently, for the universal organism alone is. In this universal knowledge, man transcends himself, and knows the universe in the knowledge of himself. This is the surprising conclusion of the present-day physical science.

One's duties, as well as character and conduct, are determined by the nature of the meaning that one is able to see in life, or, rather, one's aim of life which is the ultimate objective towards the achievement of which every activity in one's life is directed. This would mean that the way in which one thinks, lives and acts, the manner of one's behaviour towards others, and one's relationship with the general atmosphere around, are all fixed by the pattern of the meaning that is discoverable in life, or the final aim of one's life. Though it may appear that the ultimate goal towards which one is directing one's life is far remote somewhere in the future, it goes without saying that even the minimum step that one takes in any direction at the present moment is entirely governed by the law and the significance of the ultimate aim. Why is it that we find different people or groups of people exhibiting different types of character and modes of conduct and behaviour in their personal lives and in their relationship with human society and with things in general? It should be clear that the reason behind all this is definitely a sort of diversity and an apparent unconnectedness among the purposes for which people think they are living or the aims which they

imagine are their ultimate goal in life. Though it is doubtful if there can be different aims of life for different kinds of people, entirely disconnected from one another, it is a daily observation that people take it for granted that they have all rather different purposes to be achieved in their personal and social lives, that they have differing desires and divergent ambitions which would indicate that they have, perhaps, different aims of life not necessarily connected with the purposes or aims of others, with any significant relevance to others, let alone any organic blendedness of relation with the aims others are pursuing.

But, the analysis that we have been able to conduct earlier of the true state of affairs which are, perhaps, the leading principles determining life as a whole, and of the nature of existence in its totality, would have made it obvious that it would be very far from being true for anyone to imagine that the ultimate purposes of life can be really divergent and that the laws of existence can be different for different sets of people. Rather, it should be the conclusion accepted by thoughtful intelligences everywhere that the universe is tending and evolving towards the realisation of a single purpose or aim and that, therefore, its contents, the many persons and things forming its parts, have perforce to abide by this ubiquitous law of the universe which governs everyone equally and determines the characters and behaviours, and even the thoughts, feelings and actions of everyone, and everything ought to have a relevance of the nature of an organic connectedness with a cosmic purpose, which can be, in the end, only one and absolute.

Then, why is it that people are often seen not to recognise this secret principle of all life and take to different directions of thought, feeling, behaviour and action in their lives? The reason is that people in general are able to direct their consciousness only within a circumscribed circle of the limited area of sense-perception forming just a bit or atomic part within the vast cosmic whole, to the farthest ends of which human sense-perception cannot reach. Thus people make a mistake in thinking that their limited circles of perception constitute the whole of the reality for them and what is real and meaningful to others has nothing to do with them. This is because the smaller circles, though they are all contained within the large Circle of the Universe with its 'circumference nowhere and centre everywhere', are unfortunately segregated from one another by the intense self-assertive selfish centres known as personal egos and the limitation of consciousness to the complex structure of the body-mind individuality which, with its limited sense operations, sees reality only within its own isolated circle of perception, thought and feeling, towards the fulfilment of which it works indefatigably throughout its life. Naturally, the selfishness of these personalised centres of life can come in conflict with other such centres because of each one's inability to see beyond the limit of one's own circle, and then there can be tension among people, strife or wars among them. This is life. This, indeed, is the misfortune of mankind's present-day wisdom which it so much parades with an intolerable pride and ostentation.

It is, therefore, urgently called for that the limited centres of personalities and groups should try to see through and beyond their own circles and be able to recognise a larger interconnectedness of all circles everywhere, so that each one in this infinite number of circles would then be seen to form a phase of a single Universal Whole, or a focus of the projection of aspects of the Light of the single completeness which is the Absolute Reality. There would not then be many realities or many aims in life for different kinds of people, since it would be seen that the little purposes apparently visible are the divergent spectra of a single Universal Light passing through the prisms of the various individualities which these so-called persons and things in life appear to be. When this recognition comes, and this knowledge dawns, it becomes possible to organise persons or societies into a larger comprehensive atmosphere of a wider reality. The implementation of this knowledge in the practical affairs of life is the wisdom of life which would at once cause a living change and reorientation in the life of humanity, pointing to the fact that the rise of the vitalising, illumining and warming sun with the daylight of an insight into the real meaning of life is, after all, a possibility.

Chapter 16

THE AIMS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE-III

The secret of success is in the concept of the universal, and this is the crucial point in the adjustment of human thought. Inasmuch as Reality is a non-externalised organism with no object outside it, and also as success is obviously the outcome of consonance with the nature of Reality, it follows that to achieve success in any direction in life, it is obligatory that the endeavour for success should be always in consonance with the demands of a non-externalised structure of thinking.

Whenever one starts thinking, the thought happens to be the one of an object, whether physical or conceptual. But it is always forgotten that the object of thought is a part of the organic structure of the universe, of which, very unfortunately, the thinker himself is a part. Great wonder, indeed! How can thought function, then, under such circumstances? This is the problem. But this is also the secret of success. For, success is the name that is given to the manifestation of the nature of Reality in one's experience, whatever be the degree, extent or intensity of that manifestation. It can be mild or emphatic, partial or highly pronounced, visible or invisible, but of the form of an internal illumination or an external achievement.

And how is this success achieved, after all? By the tuning of thought with the universe, is the answer. And what does it mean? It means simply the bringing of the object of thought, whatever it be, in a togetherness which fuses its bodily structure and entire constitution with the

total being of the subject, so that one can say either that the object is thinking the object or that the subject is thinking the subject, but not that the subject is thinking the object. The former method leads to success, the latter to failure. The reason is simple, for, the object thinking the object is another name for the subject thinking the subject, since the object is a subject from its own standpoint. But the moment the object is isolated from the subject and becomes an externalised content of the subject, it flees away from the clutches of the subject, as it were, for, then, the object is wrested from the organic nature of the universe, which is also the nature of Reality.

The whole of life is an effort of the spirit within to unite itself with the universe outside. This is so because the spirit is universal in nature and cannot rest peacefully even for a moment in the locality of a personal body. This is the reason why everything, everywhere, is in a state of restlessness, and all life is a scene of intense struggle for something of which one may not be always aware. This is a truth which a lay mind cannot fully understand and it requires some sort of a specialised training of the mind to come to an appreciable knowledge of this fact.

But the spirit within cannot become one with the universe outside, though this seems to be its intention; hence the struggle without any achievement. This is so because the spirit has no outside, and it would be futile to seek for a unity with anything that is really outside, though this something that is outside may be the entire universe itself. Those who know the art of yoga are able to detect this snag in the effort of the spirit within to come in union with

anything outside by way of proximity, possession and enjoyment, all which is ultimately a meaningless wish and hope of the spirit within, for the reasons mentioned. Knowing this, adepts in yoga endeavour hard to fix the spirit within in a universality not which is without, not also which is merely within, but which it really 'is'; which means to say that the spirit ceases to be something which is within, but itself becomes the universal which it was erroneously seeking as an outside something and with which it sought to get united by means of its instruments of action, namely the body, the senses and the ego. This yoga is humanly impossible to practise, but there is no other alternative. It is something like saying with the poet, in another context: "You are not to question why; you are but to do and die."

But, and it is a difficult 'but' indeed, man is not destined to practise this kind of yoga, because the weaknesses of the body and the ego attempt to render fruitless even the first step that one may try to take in this noble and sublime direction. Then, what does the spirit within do? It cannot tread the path of true yoga mentioned above, for the reasons stated; but it also cannot rest peacefully in a localised body without coming in contact with the universal. Then it tries to search out certain milder alternatives in the form of a via media of approach in its attempt to unite itself with the universe outside. This via media or golden mean is what it attempts in trying to achieve that impossible unity with things outside, by what is known as social organisation. This achievement is something between true spirituality which is the ultimate aim of yoga and utter isolation in a bodily individuality

with which no one can rest contented, again, for the reasons already mentioned.

The initial unit of a social organisation is the family and the group of intimate blood relations. The individual spirit feels tentatively satisfied with this artificial expansion it has created by externally connecting itself with the members of the family. This is a pleasant but a humorous solution of problems which are deep-rooted in the very nature of the spirit. But one knows very well that the family cannot survive if the community threatens it, and so one becomes a member of the community larger than a family. But the nation can threaten the community and the international atmosphere can threaten the nation also, and then one has no other go than to participate in a national membership or even an international membership such as that provided in the formation of a United Nations Organisation, and the like. It is quite obvious that this is not likely to be a successful attempt in the end, because the members of a social body, however large it may be, cannot unite one with the other, since bodies are the vehicles of the ego and the essence of egoism is repulsion of other egos, though for the time being it may look that one ego agrees with the other by a certain amount of sacrifice of its nature when it feels that its wishes cannot be fulfilled without such a surrender or acquiescence in the wishes of other egos also. All this is a mischievous drama, indeed, of the ego-ridden individuality. Though the drama is beautiful to witness, it has a mischief at the back of it, namely, human selfishness which will find its way out today or tomorrow, when circumstances become favourable. This is life.

There is another peculiar feature of social organisation which makes itself felt as necessary for social welfare, social progress and even personal advantage. But, it should not be forgotten that no organisation can have any sense in it if it has not got the 'character' of an 'organisation'. Many people sitting together do not make a social body. A social body is that assemblage of individuals which represents some percentage, at least, of 'universality' in it, which is the nature of the spirit, which is indivisible being. The ability to reflect the character of the spirit, namely, symmetry of structure and perfect coordination in action, is precisely the ability to find oneself in others, when alone one can work for others. To find oneself in others does not mean getting oneself attached to the 'otherness' in others or enforcing the will of one's own personality on others, but calls for a voluntary cooperative spirit manifest in different degrees, harmoniously, at the different levels of organisation, because an organisation has not only a horizontal expansiveness but also a vertical ascending nature, which is a reflection of the degrees of Ultimate Reality. When the character of the spirit is not, in this manner, adequately reflected in the external social organisation, the spirit within comes in conflict with it, and vice versa. This is what is called social tension and personal tension.

Now, to mention a word about what this organisation means, or what it ought to mean, in order that it may be compatible with the spirit that is universal. There should neither be any element or feature in the organisation which will either contradict or try to defeat the purpose of the spirit nor any element or feature which will affirm the

reality of externals either by way of temptation or by way of opposition. Because all these elements and features are incompatible with the nature of the spirit. Such are, for example, any set of circumstances which can provide a free and easy outlet for the instincts for wealth, sex and fame, which are the main causes of personality-assertion and the disintegration of the 'organisation', quite other than the spiritual universality that is the great Aim of Life.

To allow anything to happen at any time in any manner will be to compel the seeking spirit to live in an atmosphere of uncertainty and insecurity and, because the spirit is perfect certainty and perfect security, it cannot live in peace in such an atmosphere. Here the intention behind the social body is defeated of its purpose. This purpose can be defeated by a subtle impervious individuality, nay, even egoism, that can manifest itself from the personalities that are supposed to constitute the social body. This undesirable character in the members of such a body can reveal itself not necessarily in an ostensible or clamorous way but can become a secretly annoying and irritating atmosphere to the spirit whose longings are obviously far removed from the mere formation of a social body or working through its media.

Also, it should be the wisdom of the framers of the social organisation to see that no undesirable feature of the types enumerated above is allowed to percolate into its structure even at the most initial of its stages, because small mistakes committed in the beginning can assume large proportions and become awful confrontations after some time. And not to pay any attention to these aspects of social

life, which has been accepted, after all, as only a tentative necessity, a necessary evil rather, would be to live in a fool's paradise and allow the wrath of Nature or, may we say, the wrath of God, to take its course, when other means of advice and coercion fail. May we also remember that Nature is not ethical and moral in the sense of any human sentiment, a fact which can be seen in daily life, when it can be perfectly just and in order for a court of law to pass death-sentence even on a person who may be regarded as an indispensable by social sentiments and feelings, a good nature for the matter of that, or even a genius in some field of life. Justice is impersonal, and so is the law of Nature, and the law of God. Where the requisite amount of impersonality is absent, whether in an individual or in a social body, it can turn to be a menace, a Frankenstein's monster, a creation which, instead of tending towards the universality of spirit, may become a serious handicap, a sorrow which can be worse than the condition in which one would have found oneself even without forming a social set-up of any kind.

To sum up: Firstly, social life is not the ultimate aim of life, because the spirit which is the Ultimate Aim is not a social structure but Indivisible Being. Hence, no one can be really happy in a contrived atmosphere of such an invented instrument which is not a solution but only an alternative of escape from the main problem. Secondly, even the little meaning that is possibly discoverable in social life would be absent when the nature of the spirit which is universality, freedom, spontaneity and absence of compulsion are absent in it. Thirdly, social life is not merely a means of external

security but of inward growth and expansion, and to allow elements and features to prevail in social life which would stultify the requisites for further progress into the true universality of Godhood would pain the spirit to such an extent that it would naturally recoil from such a set-up, in an agony which will perforce drive it to find the proper ways and means of functioning consciously on the way to the attainment of the only aim that there can be in life.

We may call this the story of the anguish of the spirit, or the epic of the soul's struggle to reach the Absolute.

Chapter 17

THE INDIVIDUAL NATURE

The location of the individual in the scheme of things makes it inadequate in every way. Its reactions cannot eliminate some amount of error. All individual experience is a form of error in some degree, though all error becomes an element of perfection in the Absolute. The aim of life of the individual is to overcome the urge for organic reactions in relation to external perceptible objects and to transcend itself in the all-comprehensive Absolute, which is the essential reality of all individuals. These reactions among individual natures are either unconscious or conscious. The unconscious urges are termed instincts and the conscious ones are those which constitute the rational processes in the individuals. Beyond these reactions of a twofold nature, there is the supreme integrating principle, viz., intuition and direct realisation of the highest essence of experience.

These instinctive urges are powerful, and being ingrained in the very constitution of the individual, refuse to be easily subdued. The most powerful of these involuntary unconscious urges are those of self-preservation and self-reproduction. The instinct of self-preservation is sometimes wrongly called 'food-seeking' instinct. Food is not the end that is sought by the individual; food is only a means to the fulfilment of the will-to-live or the love of life which is inherent in everyone, and which is the end. One does not desire to eat food as an end in itself; the purpose of food and drink is living as an individual personality, possessed of a body. This urge is not

within the control of the rational intellect, and it overcomes the other urges by its intensity of expression. It manifests itself in various forms, and has several ramifications, primarily connected with, as well as secondarily related to it. It tethers the individual to bodily life and thwarts all ordinary attempts at turning a deaf ear to it. This instinct, this craving for life, this love of individual personality can be overcome only in a higher understanding and feeling relating to a wider experience transcending gross physicality and distorted psychic personality. But any unwise meddling with this urge, without properly understanding its deeper meaning, may make it run riot and ruin the individual attempting to control it. Intimately connected with the self-preservative urge is the self-reproductive urge, the nature of which has to be analysed before any method of overcoming instincts may be discovered.

The self-reproductive instinct is misnamed 'sex instinct'. This urge has, really, little to do with the sexual personality, as such; the sexual personality is only a means to the propagation of the species, and it is this urge for the production of a new individual of the species that makes use of sex as a cat's paw. What becomes the object of craving is not sex, but the pleasure caused by the release of the tension brought about by the urge for being instrumental in bringing forth a new individual. Homosexual intercourse and fixation on objects which do not help actual reproduction are only cases of perversion or regression of this original urge, due either to a defect in the formation of the sex glands, or to frustration and non-

fulfilment. The aim of the urge for reproduction is not to bring pleasure to the individual; its purpose is the continuation of the species.

Those characteristics of the sexual personality which become the source of attraction for the opposite sex are merely the external indications of the development of the gonadal hormones which, through these indications, make known their maturity and readiness for the act of the production of a new individual. This attraction is not concerned with the pleasure of anyone, but is merely the process of the externalisation of cellular and nervous vibration seeking intercourse with the counterpart of the constitution of the attracted individual. It is not the external feature or the form of the opposite sex that is the source of attraction, but it is the meaning which is read in it by the individual that gives value to it and forces the individual to conform itself to that value. It is the suggestiveness and the expressiveness of the form that evokes the stimulation and vibration of the entire constitution in its counterpart. The more does something mean to one, the more is the value that one attaches to it, and the more is one concerned with it. The reading of meaning in the opposite sex is not a rational act of the individual, but it is the 'general' urge of the species that materialises itself in a specific individual as an involuntary instinct for physical action.

All stimuli set the organism in vibration, and this disturbs its equilibrium. In this process there is release of nervous energy, affecting, not merely the body, but, to a great extent, even the mind. The pleasure that is

experienced at the time of being stimulated by an 'intended' external agency is really the warmth and affection felt in yielding to an inner command of the physical nature, when motor reactions take place in the organism, on account of the magnetic properties called forth in it. What ravishes the personality and makes it leap up in ecstasy at the time of a desirable objective reaction in the physical world is the total disintegration of the parts of this organism and the peace that follows as a consequence of the cessation of this disturbance, on the fulfilment of the purpose of this reaction. All instinctive pleasure is ultimately the recognition of harmony and equilibrium and joy in consciousness on account of the banishing of disturbance in it by the fulfilment of the meaning of the instinct through the possession and utilisation of the object which plays the role of an agent in loosening and removing the nervous and psychic tension created by the expression of the instinct.

Even the urge for self-reproduction may be explained in terms of the urge for self-preservation. It is really the will-to-live of the individual of the species to be manifested in the physical universe that asserts in what is termed the self-reproductive urge. The parent becomes the medium of the self-manifestation of a new individual, which is the intention of the physical nature. The lower nature of any 'specific' individual has no control over this instinct, because it is the intention of the 'general' nature or the species which exceeds the natural powers of the former. The will-to-reproduce is only the will-to-live of the would-be member of this physical universe. The fulfilment of this

will-to-live is not really the good or the delight of any individual, but is only an execution of the orders of the lower diversified nature, the fulfilment of the purpose of the species as a whole, which is wider than any individual in comprehensiveness. The will of the race or the species supersedes all individual wills and subjects these latter to its own purposive rule. Sexual love or beauty has thus a reference to a need extending beyond the individual and so it is stronger than any other form of love known on earth. If anyone, however, is to know that the meaning of the self-reproductive urge is not the pleasure or the good of oneself, but is only a service done to a more powerful nature which makes use of everyone as its drudge, no one would indulge in the fulfilment of this urge. Hence nature covers the consciousness of the individual and steeps it in the delusion that the purpose of the urge is the pleasure of the individual, by preventing the discriminative understanding from functioning in it. This illusion is called the 'instinct for sex', and this is the pleasure derived thereby!

These self-expressing energies in individuals have a common source, an original form, and their sum is constant at all times; it never decreases or increases; only it sometimes gets distributed in unequal proportions due to disturbance of equilibrium in consciousness. This sum-total of objectified energy is the matrix of all irrational and rational urges. These externalising urges or tendencies to organic reactions are not cut off even by the death of the physical body, for they are rooted in the very principle of the psychic individuality. They cease to exist only when they are absorbed into the Universal Consciousness, by the

process of meditation on the essential Selfhood of all individuals in it.

There are certain minor instincts which are less powerful than those of self-preservation and self-reproduction, but which, nevertheless, exert a great influence on the personality and subject it to involuntary actions. The self-assertive instinct is one among these. This instinct is meant either to compensate for one's sense of inferiority, or to preserve one's thwarted power, importance and distinction (many times merely imagined), or to expand one's ego by adding to it qualifications from outside (though this addition is purely artificial). It is the inherent tendency to preserve the complex of one's psycho-physical organism. The gregarious instinct is another, which manifests itself in love of company of the group to which one 'belongs'. This is the instinct of identification of the group with one's self. Metaphysically, this appears to be an unconscious expression of one's love for one's larger social self or organism which comprises the individuals within it. But this love ceases to be a virtue when one is unconscious of the existence of such a larger self, and is merely goaded to love society independently of one's understanding and will. The protective or the parental instinct expresses itself in the biological attraction of the physical organism (influencing the mind, of course) to its own 'other self'. This attraction ceases when its purpose, viz., protection of the offspring, is fulfilled. Parental love is one of the manifestations of the biological nature of the individual, affiliated to the purpose of the propagation of the individuals of the species.

All urges, it is suggested, are ultimately a symptom of spirit calling spirit, under the cloak of outward bondage to forms, objects, notions and actions.

The desire to understand, or to know, is a rational urge. There are various forms of this urge, working through different channels, but aiming at the fulfilment of the desire to know. Sometimes, it is merely curiosity, and at other times, it is a necessity felt on account of problems that have arisen in life, that rouses in the individual the desire to know. At first, the knowledge that is desired is only a means to vaster and higher acquisitions, and later on, it becomes an end in itself. Except the desire for higher knowledge which is self-existent, and the instinct of self-preservation (the latter when not carried beyond the limit of real necessity), all these urges are outlets for the externalisation of energy towards objects other than what is indispensable to the individual for its self-evolution. Desire for knowledge, however, should be called a supernatural urge, though it becomes really supernatural only in the end, and involves some amount of effort and spending of energy in the beginning stages. The highest self-existent knowledge is not really an urge, but is the end of lower knowledge, and only this latter can be included among urges.

One special feature to be noted, however, in the functioning of the urge for knowledge is that it can be valid only on a dualistic basis, and so it involves, to some extent, a directing of energy to something which is external to consciousness. On account of this reason, it can be included among the several urges in the individual, though the higher knowledge which is not a means to any other end,

but is an end in itself, cannot be called an individual urge, for this latter is not directed to anything external, but is itself self-existence. What is meant by the rational urge is, therefore, not the self-existent independent absolute knowledge, but the aspiration to know, the desire to understand, the tendency to outgrow limited knowledge.

Except the longing for knowledge, all urges or instincts are to be subdued and transformed into the integrating energy of the higher consciousness, for these natural urges of the physical nature are inconsistent with the higher aspiration for the unity of consciousness in the Universal Being. The art of overcoming these instincts which are antagonistic to spiritual seeking consists, ultimately, in certain processes which are related to the essential nature of Consciousness itself. The end being the realisation of supreme oneness, the means to it has to bear an intimate relation to it.

The transmutation of the individual constitution is necessary for the experience of the Absolute, and this can be achieved by recognising the true nature of the relation existing between the individual and the Absolute, as detailed in the foregoing pages. All forms of externalisation of energy, which are called urges, instincts, etc., are ultimately movements of consciousness in the direction of the not-self. There can be no individual urge when consciousness ceases to function in this way. The way of self-control, therefore, is that of the recession of the modes of the objectified consciousness to their wider and deeper source, which finally converge and merge in the Absolute. Only a conscious endeavour on the part of the individual to

outgrow itself, to rise above particularity, can bring about this great achievement and realisation. For this, clear understanding, dispassionate feeling, longing for freedom and perseverance are necessary.

Study, reflection and meditation are the processes of the method of self-transcendence. A careful analysis and study of the nature of experience, under the guidance of an able spiritual teacher, is indispensable for meditation on the spiritual Reality. The defects involved in relative experience, and the fact of its being finally centred in and reducible to the reality of the Absolute, are to be discovered, in order that attachment to external forms of experience may be withdrawn, and all energy be focused on the supreme Self-consciousness. The nature of instinctive reactions and blind urges have to be clearly understood before any attempt to control them may be made. No practice can be of a lasting value, if it is not preceded by a correct knowledge of the inner anatomy and constitution of the meaning and method of that practice. One must act only after knowing how to act, why to act and what the act really is. Action must be based on a knowledge thereof. This knowledge, on which all spiritual practices are based, is the forerunner of dispassion for all externalisation towards things. True renunciation is not the abandonment of any 'thing', but the relinquishment of the 'thingness' in things, the 'objectness' in objects, the 'externality' in experience, the 'projectedness' in consciousness. This renunciation is the condition of the supreme fulfilment in the Absolute. There can be no hope of this ultimate realisation without the total surrender of personality and all

its concomitants to this one goal. The moment this surrender is done, attachments cease, the mind becomes calm, the senses are abstracted from forms, passions subside, consciousness gets concentrated, joy ensues, and an immense strength is felt within. All these are the results of an attunement of the individual to Reality, the coalescence of all forces with it, the dissolution in it of all distinction and objectivity. By this act the individual draws sustenance from and becomes the Universal Centre. The actual experience is possible through intense meditation on it.

Every act of one's life should become an expression of conscious contemplation on the Absolute. Unless all acts are based on this consciousness, there cannot be any ultimate value in these acts. The Absolute is the life-principle of all things, acts and thoughts, and so, without it, everything becomes lifeless and devoid of meaning. Spirituality is a state of consciousness; it is not merely certain forms of action. When consciousness is properly trained to exist in this harmony, all acts become universal processes and cease to be individual efforts directed towards a phenomenal end. It is the duty of everyone in all one's conscious states to attempt to unite oneself with the Absolute, and perform one's duties with the consciousness of this unity. Such an individual is a sage, the supremely blessed one. The very presence of this hallowed being exerts a magnetic spiritual influence on the entire environment. "This universe is his; and, indeed, he is the universe," says the Upanishad. This is the glorious consummation of life.

Chapter 18

THE SPIRIT OF SADHANA

The unselfishness of an action is to be judged by the extent to which it bears relevance to the universal set-up of things. It has, in fact, nothing to do with my thinking, your thinking, or anyone's thinking. The nature of Truth does not depend upon human thought and feeling. It has an existence of its own, and it, in its exalted supremacy and majestic universality and comprehensiveness, determines even the thoughts and the feelings of people;—not the other way round. It is curious that every human being enshrines an intrinsic habit of holding that truths are judged by human thought, or much worse, one's own individual thought. The human cannot become the divine merely because human history has passed through many centuries of temporal process. The divine is a qualitative transformation of the general attitude of consciousness and not a quantitative calculation of syllogistic conclusions. When Truth takes possession of us, we no more think it or judge it in our own way, but participate in its being, which is a different thing altogether from our definitions of truth, law and justice; goodness, virtue and rectitude.

It makes little difference whether one is a student on the path of devotion or the path of knowledge. *Sadhakas*, real as well as the so-called ones who imagine themselves to be such, often waste their time in wrangling over matters which have no concern with *sadhana* but which can beguile them into the belief that they are utilising their time most beneficially. It does not mean that there can be anyone who

is perfectly free from all faults, for everyone has some defects which can be so serious as to be impossible of eradicating in one life. For the defects may be ingrained in one's own nature and they die only when the person concerned dies. But the presence of such a defect should not discourage one in acting rightly, for to wait until the time when one would be totally free from all defects in order to commence *sadhana* would be like waiting for the cessation of the waves in the ocean in order to take a bath in it. Life is a perpetual struggle, an unending suffering, a series of vexations, agonies and anxieties, in which one thing follows even before the other has subsided. Under these circumstances, we are likely to be satisfied with the observation that everyone has defects, and we are none the worse. Many times we go one step above and feel elated and superior just because there is someone inferior to us. The very presence of the small makes us look big. And we feel contented in looking at the picture of the world which is painted dark all over by our minds which do not want to see good in anything. These are the nets in which the minds of *sadhakas* can be caught, and mostly they are actually caught, so that they pass away from this world in the same condition in which they are born, in spite of the efforts which they initially put forth when a spark of *sattva* splashed forth within them, for it can be extinguished easily by the storms that blow in the world.

The *spirit* of *sadhana* in the *Inner Path* is more important than the outward form with which most people usually busy themselves. One spends the whole day in counting beads, and thinks that his *sadhana* is over with

that. Another attends the temple, rings the bell and does some exercises, reads a few books, so that the hours of the day are all filled up, which is all enough to make him think that he is busy with his *sadhana*. Now, all this is the outward form which *sadhana* may take, and a very necessary form, and it is quite all right as far as it goes. It loses its meaning only when it is deprived of the spirit and the purpose with which it is expected to be done. It is to be remembered that *sadhana* is not any kind of bodily action that is outwardly demonstrated in the world, but a state of mind, a condition of thinking, a consciousness in which one lives. Suppose one counts ten thousand beads on a particular day, with a heart filled with rancour and an emotion in a state of a ebullition caused by frustration, prejudice or jealousy, the beads are not going to do one any good. All actions are symbols of an inward mood of mind, and when the mood is absent, the action by itself has no significance. The majority of sadhanas are lost in the wilderness of erratic thoughts and confused ideologies. This is the precise reason why, very often, there is no success in *sadhana*, despite years of routines that are being followed, perhaps with great enthusiasm but bereft of the spirit needed.

It is difficult to make one understand that the spirit of *sadhana* is determined by the extent to which one aspires for God-realisation. This is such a difficult thing to grasp that no amount of explanation, ordinarily, has any effect on the minds of *sadhakas*. We have heard the words 'God' and 'Realisation' so many times that they are likely to lose their meaning, due to their being glibly used every now and then

in life. But gold does not become cheap just because we utter its name a thousand times a day. Its value is intrinsic. Unless our routine of *sadhana* is charged with the ideal of God-realisation, it will turn out to be useless in the end, and mean nothing in substance. *Maya* works in various ways. In one it acts as a preventive against the very taking of the right step. It acts as a tremendous obstacle even at the commencement of the proposed effort. This happens when there is opposition from one's relatives, from the state of one's bodily health, or from want of creature comforts that are the minimum which one would need even to live on earth. But *maya* can also oppose the *sadhaka* by making him take the wrong step and imagine that he is moving in the right direction. The latter predicament is worse than the former. For, there, one cannot even know that one is being befooled. Most people cannot avoid falling into this pit, which *maya* has dug for everyone. But the worst form which it can take is when people mistake an ethical dogma or a traditional routine of the socialised religion for the spiritual meaning of one's approach to the Absolute.

The ideal of God-realisation which is mentioned as the background of the spirit of *sadhana* is, it is to be reiterated, incapable of being maintained throughout one's life with equanimity. Even great saints are said to have lost their patience and balance some time or the other in their, lives, in their attempts to maintain this spirit perpetually. There is no one who has been entirely free from the clutches of error, which grips one in the form of greed, anger, lust, jealousy, bewilderment, melancholy, lethargy, a subtle desire for name, fame and power, which lurks like a

creeping snake inside an ant-hill, and, above all, the worst of things—a feeling that one has achieved the desired end, and the only thing that remains now is to share one's realisation with others. Students who have honestly taken to the spiritual path in the beginning have been often misled into the ruts of a desire for such things as *tantrik siddhis* through mantras and rituals on the one side and a longing to pursue grammar and literature, or astronomy and palmistry, on the other side. It is not that there is anything intrinsically wrong with these *sadhakas*, for their trouble is that they have not found a suitable Guru to guide them in these confused conditions when they feel lost in a sea of hopelessness.

Now, let us come to the ideal of God-realisation again—that mysterious something which is extremely difficult for the mind to comprehend because it has no temptations to offer to the anxious mind of the seeker. Ordinarily, *sadhakas* are not attracted by anything that is really signified by the term 'God-realisation'. To many it is just a nebulous phrase conveying not much practical sense, and to others it is a reality of doubtful value, since it is not clear to them as to what it is really going to bring to them. Unfortunately, that God-realisation is not going to offer us anything we want in the world is the feeling of many a seeker, because, as pre-conditions of this realisation we are asked to renounce desires and want God alone. Now, how can one want God alone and nothing else that is of glory and beauty and splendour and joy in the world? What do we gain by reaching God and losing everything else which we would like to enjoy? Though theoretically, by the

argument of the intellect, we may conclude the God is the sole objective to be aspired for, the heart with its feelings that are accustomed to see and hear of the pleasures of this creation cannot reconcile itself with the arid logic that sees no good in the tasty dishes which this splendid universe with its glorious heavens is ready to offer it. These are facts which every one has to confront on the way to God-realisation, and it is not easy to get over the temptations as long as the heart is not united with the understanding. In most cases the head and the heart are like a quarrelling couple who make a hell of the family. There cannot be peace unless the two have common aims and cooperate with each other in the fulfilment of a higher ideal.

The students of both the path of devotion and the path of knowledge should remember one very important point, for it is this point which decides whether their *sadhana* is successful or not. To the *bhakta* or devotee, God is everything, and he sees God in this manifestation as the world. This does not mean that the devotee should have reached, in the very beginning itself, the state of *para-bhakti* or the devotion which sees the whole world as God shining in various forms. Even in the initial stages of *bhakti*, when such a vision of God is very far, when one is busy with the worship of an image in the temple or in one's own house, or when one is engaged in *purascharana* of a sacred mantra, or in *svadhyaya* or sacred study, the important prerequisite is exclusive devotion to one's *sadhana*, whatever be the form of the *sadhana*, even if it be in a primitive form, where one is concerned only with one's *sadhana* and not with the affairs of the world outside. This

exclusiveness of devotion saves one from falling into mental states of lust, anger, greed, jealousy, ambition, etc., for the *sadhaka* has no time to think such things. This is so even when the *sadhana* is in its beginning stages. What, then, should be the fortune of him who, in his rarefied devotion, sees God everywhere, in the high and the low alike?

To the student of knowledge, objects, as such, do not exist, for, to him, all objects or things are transformed into the status of a Universal Seer or a Totality of Subjectness, where the 'worldness' of the world vanishes, thus leaving no scope for him to get caught in the passions and ambitions which flood what we called the world. There is only a 'Seer' who is everywhere and nothing that is 'seen', for the 'seen' is also the 'Seer' himself appearing, as dream-objects are nothing but the thinking of the mind which is unified into a single whole in waking. Where, then, is a chance for prejudice, anger, craving and egotistic expressions?

This is the spirit of *sadhana*, whether in devotion *(bhakti)* or knowledge *(jnana),* which is to animate the daily routine of the *sadhaka*. It is this that gives meaning to *sadhana*. It is this, again, that decides one's success or failure in spiritual practice—to what extent and in what proportion the God-element in *sadhana* preponderates over other aims and objectives.

Chapter 19

THE SEARCH FOR THE SPIRIT

To search for the Spirit is to seek a meaning rather than a substance or an object. This is the subtle import of all spiritual seeking. We often make the mistake of thinking that, when we ask for God, we are asking for a thing, a person, an object or a substance. While our notions of God or the Spirit have some significance in our search for it, all these notions fall short of the real and the true, inasmuch as there is something deeper that we are really seeking that what comes to the surface of our minds. To give certain concrete examples of what 'meaning' is, rather than a thing or a substance: When we ask for food, for all outward purposes it looks that we are in need of some substance. When we say, 'I need some food', we may think that perhaps we need some wheat, rice, vegetables, butter, milk, etc. These are generally interpreted to be food. But there is something in this asking for food, a meaning behind this asking, which does not always become apparent to our minds. Truly speaking, it is not these articles of diet that we are asking for. We are asking for a meaning that is hidden behind these articles. They are capable of conveying a significance in our personal life, here, in this instance, our physical bodily life. If this group of articles is not to convey any significance to bodily existence, they will not be the things that we require.

Whenever we look at an object, we read a meaning into it. It *means* something. Now, this habit of reading a meaning is so familiar that we cannot think in any other

manner. We do not think first and then read the meaning afterwards. The thinking and the reading of the meaning go together. Or, to put it in a slightly psychological terminology, the understanding and the feeling work simultaneously in our perception. When we think of an object, we also feel something about it; in other words, it means the recognition of an object in terms of the significance it conveys to our lives. This signification it is that escapes our attention in our search for values in life, while it is really a set of values that we want and not objects or things.

The meaning behind the articles of diet is to appease hunger. That is what we need, and not bags of rice;—this is not what we want. It so happens that a grain called rice, in a certain quantity, when it comes in contact with our physical body in a particular manner, is in a position to appease a state of biological reaction which we call hunger. It so happens that this particular thing can act in this particular manner; otherwise it would be something else that we would need.

So, it is not any particular object that we seek. We seek only the value that is hidden in the object. So is the case with money. It is not the material stuff that we are in need of, but its capacity to provide us with purchasing power;—that is called money. It is not gold and silver or notes. That is the meaning behind cash value; and so on, and so forth, with every blessed thing in the world. There is a significance hidden behind our asking for things, a meaning behind our relationship with things, behind the way in which we talk, the way in which we conduct

ourselves in society, the way in which we think and feel and act. All these things have a hidden significance, a meaning; and it is this meaning which we are really in search of. Unfortunately, we confuse this meaning with the outer form of an object. And it looks as if we are in search of objects rather than values. Not so. When we speak even in ordinary language: "What is the spirit of the teaching?"—we make a distinction between the letter and the spirit. There is a letter of the law and the spirit of the law, for example. The words that I speak and the spirit in which I speak are different. So, even in common parlance, we use the term 'spirit' to signify a meaning rather than an outer form that a particular conduct puts on.

As is the case with ordinary life, so in the case of our cosmical relations, there is a Spirit behind our very existence as individuals, even as, in the example cited, the concrete substances like articles of diet or currency notes have a significance behind, which alone we are in need of and not the things themselves. If the meaning is absent, we will not go for it.

There is a spirit which we have lost in the midst of the clamouring particulars. And we have heard this word 'spirit' many a time uttered. Still we cannot help contemplating the 'spirit' as if it is some object. We have to learn to think a little bit impersonally when we tread the spiritual path. We have been too much wedded to personalities, things and concrete substances. So we have been taught to think only in terms of these physical entities, as it were. We cannot think impersonally. It is very difficult. It may be my person or somebody else's person; all our

thoughts are personal. The impersonal is hidden behind all personal evaluations of things. And it is the impersonal that we seek, even through persons. The 'general' is hidden in the 'particular': the impersonal is behind in all the forms. The Implicit is present in all the individualities. There is a gradual rise in our aspiration from lower particulars to higher particulars, the higher particular for the time being acting as the general and the universal for the lower particular.

Now, in the search for the Spirit of life, we do not search for any existent object. The Spirit is not an object. To come to our examples again, the spirit of law is not a thing that you can see with your eyes. Yet you know what it means. The spirit has an intangible significance which makes itself felt not to the senses, but to something which seems to have a kinship with our own being. The spirit of things cannot be seen through the senses. It is not appreciated even by the understanding, which always works in terms of the senses. We have in our own individualities something which can be said to be the meaning of our own existence. What you call as the 'you' or 'yourself' or the 'I' is the meaning hidden in what you regard yourself to be or what I regard myself to be. The same analogy can be applied to our personalities. The spirit of my being is different from my bodily existence.

When I ask for the spirit, what do I ask? 'What is spirituality?' is the moot question. Spirituality is that condition of consciousness where it asks for the spirit of things rather than the forms or bodies of things. You do not interpret things in terms of objects and persons any more.

Your evaluations of life do not then depend on persons and things. You learn to think in terms of the generals and the universals rather than the particulars and bodily existences. This would be spirituality, whatever be the degree of its expression, even the lowest.

When we learn to be spiritual, we live more and more as generals rather than as particulars, which means that we begin to comprehend other values in our own existences that we were unable to do earlier. In our present state of bodily existence our bodies are restricted to our own physical needs. My hunger, my thirst, my sleepiness, my difficulties, my problems, etc.—these engage my attention so much that I cannot exceed the limits of my bodily needs. That is the lowest aspect of human life where one's thoughts and feelings get so restricted to the bodily encasement that there is no thought and feeling beyond that. But when one becomes capable of recognising the significance of the lives of other people, in their spirit rather than the form, and learns at the same time to associate one's personal values with the values which appear to be external at present, then the self of oneself becomes enlarged. What we call the self is nothing but the Spirit behind ourselves and behind all things. When we talk of the Self, or think of the Self, we are likely to think of it as a kind of substance. Philosophers have defined the soul as a substance many a time. But it is not a substance; it is not a substance in the sense of anything that we can understand. It is not a tangible object. It is supersensible, as our scriptures are not tired of saying. Supersensible is the meaning of our personality; the meaning of all creation.

That it is supersensible means that it cannot be seen. It cannot be touched by the hand, it cannot be smelt, it cannot be heard of, it cannot be tasted, one cannot have any kind of intelligible relation with it. Such is the Spirit of things.

Now, who is to understand the Spirit? What do you mean by the spiritual aspiration at all? If Spirit would mean the meaning of life, and this meaning is so abstract, then it cannot have any value to the senses, that meaning would appear to be meaningless to the sensory operations. The Spirit of life is present in our own bodies. It is not far from us and so it is possible for us here to reach out to the Spirit of the cosmos as a whole; not through the senses and the intellect, but through something which we are. That which we are is the meaning that is in us. We convey an eternal meaning. That eternal meaning which is hidden in us is what we are. It is not the temporary meaning which we seem to exhibit in our day-to-day life that we can call our own self. These are tentative, local adjustments that we generally make, but these are not our real meaning.

If we are divested of all associations, physical and psychological, what do we remain as? That would be our true meaning. If we have no body, if we have no mind to think, what would be our condition? What would be the sort of relationship that we might establish with other existences? We may not be in a position to contemplate such a possibility. How can I exist without a body, a mind? How can it be?

This mystery is the significance of life. This is what we call the Spirit of things. One may wonder that on a careful thought bestowed on this Spirit of things, it looks like an

abstract concept, not anything substantial. It appears to be a psychological interpretation rather than a physical contact, due to our habit of coming in contact with objects, beyond whose existence we have not learnt to see. But the Spirit is not abstraction; on the other hand the so-called concrete objects are an abstraction from it. When you contact the Spirit, you do not contact an air or an empty space or a non-existent something. The mind is unable to think IT; that is why the mind reads an abstraction into it. The 'existence' of all things may be regarded as the Spirit of all things. Divest all things of their existence, and what do you see in them? When the mind tells you that Spirit is only an abstraction and the objects are more concrete, try to tell it: "My dear friend, my mind, the Spirit is the 'existence' of everything that you regard as concrete."

Minus existence, what are these concrete substances? Free all things from their existence; there is, then, only non-existence. Their concreteness vanishes. The so-called concreteness, tangibleness, hardness, substantialness, solidity, etc., is a way of sensation. It is the way in which the senses react to the Spirit. That is what you call tangibility. There is no tangible object in this world. We are deluded. We are touching the Spirit even when we are touching solid objects like a table. But it looks that we are touching some other thing altogether. That so-called thing which attracts you, and which makes you feel that you are contacting a tangible object, is the Spirit itself. And the substantiality and the solidity of the object is due to the mutual reaction of the Spirit within and the Spirit without, falsely differentiated by space and time.

The world is the drama played by space, time and causality. If these three things are not to be there, there would be no such thing as the world. There is no such thing as the world, objects, persons and things, apart from the trick played by the union of space, time and causal relation. It is not possible for the mind to understand how the world can be equated to these three; because we see again and again the solidity of things. Apart from space and time we see solidity in objects, but the solidity is due to the Spirit masquerading in space and time. And if it were not to be there, there would not be any solidity. This substantiality of the Spirit is more solid (if you could use such a term) than the most solid things. And the reason why this substance behind all substances, the meaning behind all meanings, appears as an object outside, while it is really not, is because here space, time and causal relation play havoc.

The mind is torn into two pieces—the seer and the seen. The seer is the Spirit, and the seen also is the Spirit. The Spirit sees itself in all perceptions. But it looks like the differentiated perception of an object on account of the intervention of space and time. Divest meaning of space-time value, and you will behold the Reality of the cosmos. The hardest thinker will recoil on thinking along these lines, because the mind is not taught to think by freeing itself from the relations of space and time. Vedantins and philosophers have been telling us that God alone is. The world is not! The world is nothing but God's Face. How could it be? It can only be possible if the very objects in front of us can enshrine the Spirit of God in them, even now in their sensory externality; and if God had not been so

near to us, and was not so real, it would not have been possible for us to think of Him, ask for Him or aspire for Him.

It is the nearness of God to our own being that makes it impossible for us to rest and be in peace. And our asking for Him is resistless. If God has been a distant object, we would have taken time to think of Him. We would have told: 'let us see tomorrow.' But it is such a pressing necessity that we cannot leave it until tomorrow! It is nearer to you than your own throat, and you cannot say 'tomorrow' to it: It is so immediate, an urgent concern of life that your concern with it is first and your concern with anything else is afterwards.

But in this concern of ours with the Spirit of all things, we confuse it with objectivity, and we run after the objects rather than the Spirit behind it. While our asking is genuine, our running after things is foolish. The intention is good, but the activity is deluded. This is *samsara*, and the spiritual seeker has to exert his *viveka-sakti*, with a tremendous power of will to distinguish between the Spirit and the forms of life. The forms tempt us because we are wedded to a sensory way of thinking. Unfortunately, we are born into a world of sense, which knows only how to look outward and not inward. The senses cannot see their own cause, they can only see what is external to them, in space and in time.

When the mind subsides into its own bottom, and ceases from this running through space and time, and settles down to itself, like troubled water that is allowed to settle down, then the dirt that is part of its activity will also

settle down and it will become capable of reflecting what is behind it. It is as if we are so busy with things that we do not know that we have eyes. We are so engaged with seeing things that we do not know that we have eyes! What is this seeing that you are engaged in? If you have no eyes, how can you see? But can any, one see his eyes and think that he has eyes? Unless, perhaps, you have some pain in the eyes, do you ever imagine that you have a set of eyes? You are so busy with seeing through the eyes that you get no time to think that you have the eyes. You want to exploit them fully. So is God, so is Spirit! It is through the Spirit that you do all that you are doing; it is through It that everything is seen and heard and done and, therefore, it cannot be seen and heard.

It is difficult to give a comparison of what Spirit is. Just as, without eyes, we do not see, and yet in the act of seeing we do not stop to think that we have eyes, without the Spirit behind, we cannot see anything, or even exist at all. Just as we cannot see our own back, we cannot see God's existence. There are no eyes which can look at the back. The eyes that are projected in one direction only cannot look at that which is behind them. The Spirit or the God of the Universe is so near that to see It would not take the split of a second. But you have to open your eyes to It and not look beyond It or away from It. The eyes which see in one direction have to be taught not to see in any particular direction of space but to see what is behind them, the cause that is transcendent to them. There is a light that passes through the eyes, and the eyes get so identified with the rays of light that they cannot know that it is behind them, as it

happens when sunlight falls on a mirror, which reflects the objects in front of it. The mind and the senses receive the light of the Self, the Spirit, and with the help of that light they behold the objects of the world. Yet, they do not know that there is this light. When you look at an object in daylight, you know that the object is different from the light. You see the object because of the light that is shed on the object. You see the object there because of the light, and yet you cannot make a distinction between the object and the light. The light so shines upon the object, is identified with the object in such a way, that you confuse between the object and the light and no one ever says that the light-aspect is different from the object.

So are our perceptions of things. The light of the Atman, the Spirit, is what acts upon the objects of the world and makes us feel their presence. The intelligibility of anything is due to the light of the Self that emanates through the mind and the senses. But we mix up that light with the objectivity of what we see; and just as we do not make a distinction between sunlight and the object upon which it shines, so also we do not make a distinction between the world and the light due to which we are able to cognise it. To extract this light from objectivity, to differentiate the Spirit from the letter or the externality of perception, would be to understand the essence behind the chaff.

When you try to understand things in terms of the Spirit, you will realise that all things assume a uniform meaning, even as the sunlight is equal to all objects. The sunlight makes no distinction—'I am shining on a temple,'

or 'I am shining on a latrine.' The sun will shine upon anything. Likewise is the Spirit behind things. The distinction that we make is due to an incapacity to distinguish between light and shade. But when we start thinking in terms of this generality behind objects, we will realise that objects themselves assume a uniformity of structure and meaning, and our liking or not liking a particular thing or a set of things gets diminished in intensity; we begin to enter into the Spirit of things. It is then that we realise the meaning of objects and life as a whole. And in this realisation of the kinship of our own Spirit with the objects outside, we become so enlarged in our consciousness that the only test for this enlargement is our experience of an intense satisfaction within us.

How do you know that your consciousness has expanded? When consciousness expands, the sense of freedom also gets expanded, and simultaneously your joy is enhanced. The wider is the ken of the activity of Spirit, the deeper is the sense of freedom in your life, and the more intense is the joy that you experience. How do you know that you are growing in spirituality? The test is only in terms of the freedom that you feel within, freedom from the shackles of other objective existences and a lone joy that you feel in your heart. That can only be the test of your progress in your spiritual life. When you are absolutely alone, when there are no things to contact you, no persons to see you, when you are in the solitude of your own room, if your happiness is the most intense, that would perhaps indicate your progress along the spiritual path, your inner growth. But on the other hand, if your joy seems to enhance

only by contacts, by seeing people and persons, if your joy expands the more you run about, the more you see things, the more you go about here and there, that will not be the indication of your growth in the spiritual field.

The more you are alone, the more are you near to your Spirit. This loneness of your life promises you greater satisfaction than all the contacts that you can make in your social life. The Spirit does not come in contact with anything, and its joy cannot be enhanced by contacts; on the other hand, all contacts are a restriction on its expression. Joys of the Spirit get diminished by sensory contacts; that is why we are unhappy in this world. We think that we are: going to become more happy through contact by the senses; no; we are going to become more wretched, because we are restricting the expression of the Spirit by contact with things. The Spirit is universal; do you want to tie it down to particulars? But all our attempt to come in contact with persons and things is the attempt at tying the Universal to the particular, which the Spirit would resent vehemently.

So, all people in the world are unhappy for obvious reasons. The reason is that they would like to bottle the Universal Spirit in the small objects of the world. The retreat into the Spirit is the withdrawal into the All-pervading Universal. The Spirit of life is the Universal present in all the objects of the world. This is what they call God. This is the Supreme Absolute behind things; and when we tread the path of the Spirit, therefore, we have to be cautious in seeing that we are not treading the path of the senses, while for all outward purposes it may look that

we are moving towards the Spirit. Public acclamation is not the test of progress. The whole world may proclaim you as the saviour of mankind—that would not be the test of your progress. People would not have understood you and they might be holding erroneous notions. There again is a contact that you take as a test of your achievements.

Contacts may be physical or psychic. All these are to be avoided in the search for the Spirit. As a matter of fact, psychological contacts are more dangerous than physical contacts. The mind it is that works havoc. The mind thinking a sense-object is more vicious than a physical contact of body with body. If the mind is not working, the physical contact means nothing. So, all psychic contacts with objects should be withdrawn, and in this withdrawal of the senses and the mind, if you can feel a release of all your tensions, if, in going to the bottom of your own being in the solitude of your life, you can feel a freedom and a happiness which the world knows not, then you are really living a spiritual life. If nobody sees you, and you are happy, then that would be the test of your spirituality. And if you feel like fish out of water, because nobody sees you, then that would be the contrary of it.

Because the Spirit is alone, it wants nobody, and it wants nobody's help in this world. It is so complete and full that you cannot add a cubit to its stature by multiplying the existence of the objects before it. The whole universe, before it, is zero. As, in arithmetic, you have a figure before a series of zeros, all zeros mean nothing without the figure preceding them, the figure here is the Spirit. It may be One, but if this figure One is absent, there are only zeros!

That would be this world without the Spirit. And that would also be the meaning that you assume in your life if you enter into the Spirit. So, let no spiritual seeker be despondent in his moods by the wrong notion that when he stands alone befriending the Spirit, he is perhaps losing the joys of the world. Not so. The joys of the world are again the joys of the Spirit scattered in a distorted manner. A little of the honey of the Spirit is sprinkled over the objects of sense, and then it is that we are trying to lick the objects. Even the objects look tasty because of the Spirit sprinkled there; but for that there would be nothing worthwhile in the objects—they would be corpses. When you stand alone by the Spirit, you stand by the Absolute, *That* which is universally present in all things, *That* which is the meaning behind the very objects after which you are running. You can imagine what God is, what Spirit is, and how reasonable it is that you should be happy when you are alone! This aloneness is not a physical aloneness, like one's being in a jungle. It is the loneness of consciousness, where it can contemplate itself alone, independent of all things; and this would be true spiritual independence. It is towards this end that the seeker tends his mind and bends his efforts in yoga.

Chapter 20

THE FOURTH DIMENSION IN PSYCHOLOGY

The learned are aware of the doctrine of the fourth dimension proclaimed by modern physics. But few would be aware that there can be a fourth dimension in the realm of psychology. The Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics even now rule the world of three dimensions. Man has a set way of thinking, according to which he seems to have discovered certain invariable facts, such as that 2 and 5 make 7, the three angles of a triangle make two right angles, bodies have mass and weight of a fixed nature, and there is the pull of gravitation which uniformly follows a law everywhere. We may call this an almost universal attitude of mind, with the system of three dimensions, by which we mean that we always think in terms of the length, breadth and height of things, and there is no conceivable object without these dimensions.

Now, this mode of thinking is not confined merely to the world of things. It also constitutes the framework of the system prevailing unhampered everywhere, in every field of human knowledge. It applies also to the realm of chemistry and biology, ethics, logic and metaphysics. The discoveries of the Theory of Relativity are said to have brought about a revolution in the world of mathematics and physics, whereby the systems of Euclid and of Newton have been substituted by a way of approach which it is difficult for the traditional mind of classical physics to accommodate. It becomes so difficult, because man's usual standpoint of thinking is the same always, and everyone seems to be

thinking in the same way. That there can be another way of thinking altogether different from how people everywhere think is regarded either as a wonder, or something unintelligible and suspicious. But today, somehow, a handful of the thinkers of the world seem to have stumbled upon a conviction that the world of visual perception is not as it appears to be, that the solidity of matter and the spatiality of temporal extension give way to a more significant continuum where space and time no more stand apart but become standpoints of an indivisible *something,* in which the mathematical and physical laws put on a new face altogether. We are told that parallel lines may meet under certain circumstances, the arithmetical totals of our conception may not hold good in subatomic realms, light rays do not always move in a straight line, the law of gravitation is not simply the attraction of one body by another, and the three angles of a triangle need not always amount to two right angles.

If these and such deeper truths are not to be, how can one appreciate certain similar facts and aspects of the thinking perspective as, for example, when the Bhagavadgita proclaims that resort to one thing brings everything (IX. 22), or that surrender to God destroys all sins (XVIII. 66)? We have never seen an acquisition of one thing bringing to one everything else also, and it is contrary to the laws that seem to be working in the world. We always see a manifold effort being called for when a manifold result is expected. Nor is it possible to imagine that one can violate natural laws and go unscathed and scot-free. Every action produces a reaction due to the very structure of the

cosmos. The balance of forces constituting all creation seems to be behind the operation of this law which sets up a counterpoise against every initiative. But we are also told that it is possible to break the bonds of *karma*, strange and mysterious though this may look. How could one be involved in something and yet be free from it at the same time? Our logic follows a stereotyped method, according to which some determined and expected result follows as a corollary from certain given premises. This has also reference to our belief that a particular cause should produce only a particular effect. But that this is an unfounded faith has been the opinion of certain modern thinkers like A. N. Whitehead, who hold that the doctrine of the 'simple location' of things and of the 'bifurcation of cause and effect' is a prejudice of the human mind, which does not conform to reality. Unless we keep ourselves open to the acceptance that deeper truths than our minds can think may exist, certain discoveries and observations in the field of physics, psychology and spiritual life cannot become intelligible.

The system of three dimensional thinking is at the bottom of all this complexity. We see a world outside our bodies; we see space, and know time; we observe something proceeding from something else in a cause-and-effect relationship. On the foundation of this rule is based also our arithmetic, geometry, and on this alone do many of our physical laws seem to hang. But can there be no other way of thinking than this commonplace method of the mind? Are we always bound to think in terms of spatial extension, to put it shortly? This is a moot question, which is rarely

raised, and, when raised, cannot elicit a satisfactory answer. But a little patience and analysis of implications and possibilities will open up another avenue of perception and a new vista of unknown facts will be revealed before our eyes. There is such a thing as thinking without space and knowing without objects.

This revelation cannot become apparent without a certain amount of training along new lines of approach. The mind revolts against any possibility of a non-spatial or non-objective concept. And this is exactly the revolt against the non-Euclidean geometry, the discoveries of the Great Theory of Relativity and also against the weird ethics which the statesmanship of Sri Krishna seems to have followed in the war of the Mahabharata. This also is an explanation of one's inability to understand how sins can be destroyed, the realisation of one thing can mean the realisation of everything, or, in the words of Christ, seeking the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness can add all things to oneself. But all this is as impregnable and impractical to the spatio-temporal logic and sociological ethics of the mind as the laws of Relativity or the mathematics of the world of electrons. We have here to give up the three-dimensional psychology and enter into its fourth dimension, if we are to come to any solution.

This fourth dimension is not merely a marvel but appears to be a kind of terror to our usual ways of living and thinking. It is a wonder because we cannot understand how this could be possible at all. At the same time it is a fearsome something, since it seems to smash all our faiths and beliefs which we have been hugging all the while. Even

as the meanings of 'here and there' or 'now and then' are not absolutely valid but have only relative significance according to the Theory of Relativity, we seem to discover that what we regard as 'true and false', or 'good and bad', also, have a relative meaning and vary under different circumstances. The Yoga Vasishta has it that, within the four walls of the room of some person there could be a vast kingdom of another person; and within a period of what was only eight days for someone, another ruled an empire for 72 years. If the systems of reference of space and time can change in different levels of consciousness, those of logic and ethics also can be equally relative. We have many. intriguing forms of ethical judgment, such as the righteousness of the Pandavas standing against the wisdom of Bhishma, and the legalistic virtue of the latter vowing to stand by the greed of Duryodhana; the instruction that there was no unrighteous element in Arjuna's taking the lives of his own grandfather and teacher; that a stratagem, a lie or what may be regarded as an ungentlemanly conduct be resorted to in causing the deaths of Bhishma, Drona and Karna; that Krishna could offer active help in a subtle manner to bring about the destruction of several warriors, against his principle of non-interference. These conditions of ethical judgment are as difficult to understand as the conditions of logic judgment which wants to explain how a universal God could create a localised world, the Absolute become the relative, lifeless matter emanate from a conscious body, or even such simple processes of one thing becoming another thing be possible as, for instance, where food is converted into energy in the physiological

apparatus. Though hydrogen and oxygen are said to form water, the two gases cannot give us the comfort which water gives. Water is not merely a mathematical effect of the combination of the gases. Even as a living child cannot be equated with merely the chemical effect of the combination of sperm and ovum, there seems to be some mysterious third element in such combinations which do not constitute merely two things coming together, though it may look so apparently. The *Satarudriya* of the Yajurveda says that the great God of the universe is both the positive and negative in every conceivable vocation of life or system of thought. How could contraries be attributed to one and the same truth? This hymn identifies with God even what we usually consider as poor, low and undesirable. What is this ethics which equates the hunter and the thief, the highwayman and the thug, with the majesty of God's existence? This seems to be the very same system of ethics, according to which the Bhagavadgita holds that sins, whatever they be, get annihilated in the state of self-surrender to God.

It is also our common experience that what is depleted or lost cannot be recovered again, for example, time that is past, energy that is wasted, etc. But the yoga system is confident that the lost can be gained and even the past can become a future or a present in different frames of reference of consciousness. These may all appear startling facts, but some of them are now being corroborated by the findings and possibilities in the realm of modern physics. Relevant to this context also is the lesson of the anecdote of the three Alvar saints of Southern India, who, when they

expressed the difficulty that in the narrow space they occupied not more than three persons could even stand, were informed by some fourth being that he could be with them even if there be no space. The story refers to God's existence which needs no space or area to occupy. The sciences of mankind, its laws and rules seem to be mocked at by some stupendous truth which would stand underestimated even if it is to be called superhuman. In the words of Eddington, something is doing something; we know not what!

The works of Einstein, Jeans, Eddington and Whitehead in the field of mathematical philosophy, and the teachings of Yajnavalkya in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the Yogavasishtha and the Mahabharata among the sacred writings of the Hindus, help us a great deal in getting an insight into this mysterious truth of all truths, a truth which surpasses understanding, because it defies mathematics, ethics and logic, as known to us. It seems to have its own system of calculation, reasoning and morality, transcending human concepts and values. If it really transcends man, can he ever hope to know it?

Agnostics may despair of all this, for, according to them, Truth, even if it exists, cannot be known for obvious reasons. The obstructions of space, time and the categories of the understanding, said Kant, would prevent man from knowing the thing-in-itself. According to Yajnavalkya, there is no consciousness on the death of individuality, for one knows another only where another is. But where another is not, says the sage, who is to know what, and by what means? But the enigma of this situation itself becomes

an answer to the question it raises. Health, wealth and prosperity of every kind and freedom absolute is promised by the Upanishads to one who knows Truth. How can this be? And what is Truth?

When we say that Truth is non-relative, we have said everything about it. For, to say anything else about it would be to make it relative. And to maintain a consciousness of this non-relativity without any adjectives—for adjectives create again a sense of relativity—would be to live in Truth. This is life-absolute, which steers clear of all references to the *outside,* and stands *supreme* in the strictest sense of the term. It is this that people call God, a word whose meaning has not become clear to us, still. The magic works by a single stroke of mental effort, and this magic is the realisation of Truth. Hands and feet do not help us here, nor do the traditional modes of thinking. This transfiguring process deals a death-blow to all that man holds as dear and near in the darkness of his ignorance, for its function is to enlighten him rather than please him, to light the lamp of understanding rather than feed his passions, to wake him from sleep rather than serve him a meal in dream. This is why, according to the Kenopanishad, 'one who knows it knows it not, and one who does not know it knows it.' But the intriguing Upanishad also shows the way.

How does the law regulating and valid for dream stand contradicted in waking? This does not happen by negation or absence of anything real but by the attunement of consciousness to a different order of experience. The waking consciousness is, in some respects, the fourth dimension to the dream consciousness to which there are

length, breadth, height, solidity and a logic of thought which are invalidated in waking. We are now seeking for a fourth dimension of our waking consciousness. Just as the dreamer cannot know what waking is until he actually wakes up, we seem to be incapable of knowing the consciousness that transcends waking, because we are still in the waking state only. The psychology of this fourth dimension is supernormal, for it does not apply to man in his ordinary condition of wakefulness to a world of objects. Truth has no objects outside it. When the mind of man begins to think objectlessly, thought coalesces with being, Chit becomes Sat, consciousness is existence. This is the *sadhana* for the experience of Truth. This is the meditation towards the realisation of the Absolute.

The moment thought switches itself on to that order of experience where it is enabled to fuse objectivity into the subjectiveness of its consciousness, the bubble bursts and light seems to flash forth from every atom of space. The world seems to be flooded with suns glowing with incandescent orbs and ignorance and impotency of every kind vanish once and for all. The logic of this state, the ethics of this consciousness, or the mathematics of this awakening is the answer to the riddle of the problems posed by the possibilities faintly indicated by the Relativity-mathematics and hinted at in the Mahabharata-ethics as well as the Yoga Vasishtha-metaphysics.

The depths of this discovery in consciousness cannot become clear to one who does not endeavour to live it in a state of adjustment of thought as demanded in the meditation prescribed, wherein objects and subjects cast off

their masks and dance round the nucleus of Truth, like the *rasa* dance described in the *Srimad Bhagavata.* Everything gets mirrored in everything else, and everything is everywhere. There is neither cause nor effect, for everything is both a cause and an effect. There is neither subject nor object, for everything becomes resplendent with omniscience in the blending of infinity and eternity. The eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavadgita makes an effort to describe this apotheosis of consciousness, in a language of poetry and image, for it cannot be portrayed in any other way. Here the goal of life is reached, and here man's questions are answered forever.

Chapter 21

THE LAW THAT DETERMINES LIFE

The main question which engages one's attention almost every day is of the way to tackle what may be called the 'human situation' in the world. Man's circumstances are very much related to what he does and what he is yet to do. And it is not easy for him to decide what is the best for him. He bungles in his choice of 'his best' and suffers as a consequence. This happens because he does not feel competent to judge the various factors which go to constitute the result of an action. In short, man suffers from ignorance of the laws of life. He has 'to know' how 'to act' at any given time.

Most people come to grief due to the wrong notion that they can succeed by 'asserting' themselves. The truth is just the opposite. The false idea that self-assertion can bring success is based on the ignorance of the fact that there are also others in this world who can equally assert themselves and stand against the assertion from any particular individual or centre of action. No one has ever succeeded in life, who confronted the 'others' in the world with his ego. All egoism is met with an equally strong egoism from outside. To take always one's own standpoint, whether in an action, an argument or even in feeling, is to court 'opposition', while the law of life is 'cooperation'. Self-assertion, thus, is contrary to Nature's laws and shall stand defeated in the end. All egoistic action, whether in mind, speech or body, evokes a similar action from other centres of force in the world and to live in such a condition is fitly

called *samsara*, and experience in which perpetually warring elements react against one another and bring about restlessness and pain. The remedy against *samsara* is the art of 'appreciation' of the existence and feelings of others who also demand an equal recognition in the scheme of creation. Whenever you say or do anything, start it from the standpoint of the other who is in front of you, listens to you or is concerned with what you do. You are then more likely to succeed in life than by any other means which you may think is really effective.

But what is to be done when, for example, an enemy attacks you? Are you to assert yourself, or not? Here, again, the decision that you take should depend upon the nature of the consequences that would follow from the step that you take. The unselfishness of an action is judged from the extent to which it is conducive to the realisation of a higher value in life. To know whether a value is higher or otherwise, it has to be viewed both in its quantity and quality. Quantitatively, is it beneficial to the larger number of people possible? And qualitatively, does it tend to the realisation of the highest reality capable of being conceived as accessible? Or, to put it concisely, how far is it spiritual? The comfort of a lesser number may be sacrificed for the good of a larger number. But this is not the only standard of test. It is also to be judged from the extent of the spiritual value involved in it. For instance, the values attached to the existence of a spiritual genius, a saint or a sage, cannot be sacrificed for the vote of a large number of people against him. Here the quantitative test cannot be applied. Though there is only one Sun, its value as energy and light excels

that of a thousand fire-flies. The qualitative test is higher than the quantitative one. The Supreme Atman is more than the quantitative aggregate of the entire universe.

All these implications it is that make it a little difficult for an ordinary man to decide the nature of the action that he has to take in his daily life. It calls forth a superior type of understanding (*viveka*). If, in attacking an enemy, the quantitative and qualitative tests are both fulfilled, that step has to be regarded as right. But one cannot attack another merely because one does not like that party. That would be the usual unspiritual attitude born of personal desire and ego. The spiritual test has to be applied, and, in fact, the quantitative test is an aspect of the spiritual standard of judgment. The ultimate deciding factor is *dharma,* the spiritual law of the universe.

An action is an effort towards the achievement of an objective. Man does not simply exist. He ever tends to become something else. The impulse for action is ingrained in the constitution of one's individuality. Action, thus, is an expression of the very make-up of the individual, and one's entire life is action. Life and action have come to mean one and the same thing. The desire to possess and develop relations with external phenomena is the vital spring of all action. The desiring individual is not always clear about the nature of the object of desire. This confusion in the mind ends in the commission of unwise deeds in relation to the objects outside. Actions are one-sided in their motives, for the doer of the action has generally a constricted vision which alone is allowed by any particular course of action. This course is taken without the knowledge of all the

consequences of the action, which are wound up with the structure of the universe as a whole. Just as a good physician, while prescribing medicine for a disease, is cautious also of the reactions that the medicine may produce in addition to its curative or healing effect, an expert handling of situations in life requires the engagement of oneself in action with a knowledge of the different reactions they produce in addition to achieving the temporal desired objective, for, usually, one is oblivious of these side-effects when the mind is concentrated on the empirical result in view. The individual, when craving to fulfil a desire, has a rough idea of the nature of the effort required to fulfil it, but does not know that the source of action may disturb several other aspects of life and bring as a reaction suffering and grief in the end, though it may, for the time being, cause an enchantment into the belief that the desire is fulfilled. This is why the world is filled both with pleasure and pain—with foreseen effects of desires as well as their unforeseen results. An individual is born in a particular environment either because of a past wish cherished to live in such a condition or an unknown consequence of desires. The miseries of the world are the forms of the reactions of deluded actions performed previously by its inhabitants. The world is a name given to the situation or manner in which individuals experience the fruits of their own desires and actions. It is the shadow cast by the wishes of its contents and it is what these wishes are and what they sweep away from pure existence with the winds of the forces moving towards their, fulfilment. We are asked to perform action without regard for fruits,

because the fruits are not in our hands, they are determined by the general law of the universe which we, as individual sources of action, can neither understand nor follow.

The accumulated and cumulative effects of actions done in all the past lives of individuals are packed into a concentrated residuum of potentiality in their subtlest and innermost layer, constituting the causal world. The aggregate of all actions of the past deposited thus in a latent form, in each one's individual capacity, is called *sanchita karma* (accumulated action). This potential aggregate is carried by the *jiva* in all its incarnations and this never gets destroyed until the *jiva's* attainment of *moksha.* The determining factor of every incarnation of the Jiva is the characteristic of that portion of *sanchita karma* which is separated out as a specific allotment to be worked out in a given type of environment. This allotted portion of *sanchita karma* is called *prarabdha* (that which has begun to produce effect) *karma.* The *jiva*, after being born in an incarnation by the force of *prarabdha*, performs further actions in its new life, called *agami karma,* the results of which are added on to the unspent portion of *sanchita karma*. This implies that the *sanchita* cannot be exhausted and, consequently, the series of rebirths not ended until the Jiva ceases adding of new *karmas* to the old *sanchita*. The technique of performing actions without producing reactionary effects is called Karma Yoga. The doctrine of Karma Yoga, especially as propounded in the Bhagavadgita, is a commentary on the principle of universal action and reaction and the way to one's redemption from its bondage.

The resultant force of an action has one's future determined by it. Patanjali, in his Yoga-Sutra, says that the class of society into which one is born, the length of life which one is to live, and the nature of the experiences through which one has to pass, are all determined by the residual potency of past actions. These potencies become active in this life itself or in a life to come. A famous verse proclaims: "The nature of one's life, action, wealth, education and death are all fixed up even when one is in the womb of the mother." Human effort has a relative value and forms a part of this universal law of self-completeness, displaying the manner in which the impersonal reality behaves when it is cast in the moulds of personality and individuality. The doctrine of *karma*, therefore, is not a belief in fatalism as is often wrongly supposed, but the enunciation of a scientific law that operates inexorably and impartially everywhere in the universe, like the principle of gravitation.

Often it looks that we are constantly in need of an impetus to push forward our drooping spirits and to feed the flame with oil. But it is in the true spirit of Karma Yoga that we have to launch forth any effort, in the sense that every viewpoint that we take has also to take into consideration every possible aspect of the matter and not merely one or two sides which are visible to the eyes. The reasons behind the shortcomings of a person, a family, an institution or a nation are not always clear before one's vision, for, though these causes may be simple, one may not be willing to bring these issues into the daylight of understanding. The reason for this, again, may be

variegated; it may be an incapacity to investigate, a blind faith, a personal prejudice, or a mixture of certain factors which ordinary dispassion cannot disentangle from the massive network of which it consists. To maintain one's balance and peace of mind in this structure of God's creation is difficult. Part of our sufferings, anxieties, ambitions and dissatisfactions may be traced to this patent fact of life. In every strata of human society, the main difficulty that confronts one is the mix-up of principles with personalities. This is a sociological derivative of the famous metaphysical doctrine of '*adhyasa*', and our happiness is in proportion to the extent we succeed in extricating the principle from the personality, in whatever walk of life we may be, and wherever we are.

Swami Sivananda's views on self-effort and necessity may be stated as follows:

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

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

Sometimes, the causative factors of actions may manifest themselves, not through the consciousness of the experiencer, but through an external agency or occurrences

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

The law of *karma* does not annoy one who has succeeded in overcoming the consciousness of 'individuality' and thinks, feels and acts in terms of the constitution of the universe taken as a whole. There cannot be an effect of reaction unless there is a localised centre which can receive the reaction. The impersonal consciousness is no such centre and so the reactions of *karma* cannot find a target where this realisation takes place. This is a clue to even our daily activities in life, and we *can* remain unaffected by the reactionary forces of the environment outside, for where no self-centred thought exists, the experience of reaction, too, cannot be. This rule applies not only to the *siddha* (perfected one) but also the *sadhaka* (aspiring one), for the law of *karma* is the law of Nature, which exempts no one from its restrictions and also excludes no one from its beneficiary clauses. *Karma* is,

thus, not merely the law of individualistic action but also of the working of the cosmos in its eternal completeness.

Chapter 22

HUMAN NATURE AND ITS COMPONENTS

The life of an individual passes through various stages. And, the formation of individuality is nothing but a concrescence of the forces of the thoughts, feelings and actions entertained and implemented in execution in the several previous lives through which one has passed. A particular group of these psycho-physical forces, allocated out of a vast reservoir of them existing as the potential background of all individualised manifestations, becomes the efficient as well as the material cause of the birth of the body-mind complex, the individuality, of the person.

The individuality of a person precisely consists of tendencies and of urges which are the manifestations of forces engendered in previous incarnations. The ways in which the urges express themselves spontaneously, without being tutored by any external influence, may be called the instincts of the individual, and the conglomeration of these spontaneous urges, which either remain latent due to the presence of conditions not favourable for their expression or elbow themselves into action for the purpose of the fulfilment of their motives when conditions for the same are favourable, is what is known as the instinctive nature of the individual. These instincts are manifold in their character, the principal among them being the self-preservative instinct, the possessive instinct, the self-regarding instinct, the self-reproductive instinct and the curiosity instinct, the last in this list being an incipient stage

of the instinct for knowing more and more of things, i.e., the aspiration for knowledge.

At the very birth of the individual, as a child, it shows very little indication of the multiple character of the instincts of which it is constituted. There is then, merely, the predominance of the self-preservative instinct which begins to act first as the sensation of hunger and thirst and heat and cold, as well as sleep. Psychoanalysts tell us that a thorough deductive investigation of the behaviour of the child would reveal even then the rudimentary forms of the other instincts which have not yet fully matured into their natural activity. The child grows into a budding adolescent, and with the forceful opening of the energies of the system which have been, kept bottled up, up to this time, they endeavour to rush out into the arena of public life in the form of a vehement inclination and inducement to game and play as well as those social forms of relationship with the neighbouring individuals of the same age, which may safely be regarded as the innocuous moorings of those subtle instincts within, which are yet to flame forth in the future as the oppressive powers of self-manifestation in the form of one's very outlook of life as a whole, upon which are based the various enterprises of one's life. The desire to eat, to play and to sleep are the grossest forms of the medium. and manner in which the basic instincts allot to themselves their present function under those given conditions of childhood and adolescence. The instincts of hunger and sleep are, however, those features which persist till the end of one's life and do not brook any intervention with them or permit of any modification in their *modus*

operandi. The senses being the most powerful in their expression, at the very outset, in the life of the individual, and the ego-principle being equally dominant over every other urge even in the earliest stages of human development, the longings which spring forth initially at these moments of the dawn of one's life are mostly sensory and self-assertive. There are what the society considers as the natural desires of the human being, namely, to eat and drink dainties, clothe oneself well and appear as one invested with a sort of intrinsic importance in the midst of human society. There is simultaneously the working of the possessive instinct which keeps on egging one to accumulate for oneself the good things of life, the beautiful things, the valuable things and the rare things, the loss of which would be indeed a great sorrow to the possessor. But more things are yet to come, and they are the principal soldiers in the battle of phenomenal existence, and they will come to the forefront a little later.

And what are these? They are nothing but the emissaries or ambassadors sent by the ruling law of life, which itself is a reflection of the Nature of the Great Reality of the universe. As the Prime Minister of a State is said to be the President-in-motion, the law of the universe may equally be regarded as the Supreme Reality in operation. The characters of Reality are eternity and infinity, and it is these features that are supposed to be worked out through the law of the universe which compels the individuals in it to conform to its requirements and mandates.

The process of nutrition by means of the double activity of anabolism and catabolism is the tendency of the growth

of the body as the vehicle of the mind in and through the mutations, permutations and combinations known as life's purpose. The seeking for food, clothing and shelter, the need felt for recreation and amusement and a natural inclination to a sociable nature of oneself are all the empirical formations of these sprouting stages in the life of an individual. Up to this level of expression, the conduct of one's life is usually regarded as the normal way of living, but, unfortunately, this so-called normalcy of behaviour is not easily detected in its true colours. Its intention is something quite different, for it acts as a dynamo to produce the necessary power to drive the instincts into action. The individualistic urges are ultimately irrational cravings to perpetuate the individuality, which manifest themselves as self-assertion on the one hand and as self-expression on the other. The self-assertive instinct is the ego. Preservation of the integrity of the psycho-physical organism, compensation for inferiority feeling in society, an assertion of thwarted sense of power, status and distinction are the motives behind the activity of the building up of one's ego by adding to it qualifications from outside. The desire for name and fame, will-to-power, exaltations of the ego, self-conceit, vanity, pride, jealousy and personal ambition are the tongues of the fire of egoism.

The self-expressive urge is the force behind the self-reproductive urge, which really disintegrates the constitution of the psycho-physical organism in the process of its work towards production of a new individual of its own species. In this sense it may safely be held that the reproductive urge is katabolic, self-destructive, for it

destroys the individual by depleting its energy in the direction of the production of the individual whose birth is its aim. This force initially operates as mere self-love and then passes through the stages of love of parents, love of inanimate beings and beings who may even be sub-human, love of the best suited individuals of one's own age group and species, and finally love of those individuals who can best act as cooperative mediums in the fulfilment of this self-expressive urge. The love of progeny or one's own children is obviously a biological attraction one feels towards one's own alter-ego seen in the individual born of one's own blood and essence. This also explains one's affiliation to those related by blood or otherwise indirectly related to oneself. When this self-expressive urge finds not its proper correlative object at any particular level of its expression, it seeks to fulfil itself at the next lower level by way of regression to an earlier stage of its expression.

Any opposition effectively directed against the urges as self-preservation, self-assertion or self-expression may lead to the projection of the psychic defense mechanisms known in the fields of psycho-analysis as identification, projection, interjection, rationalisation, compensation, fantasy, repression, regression, symbolism, dissociation, condensation, displacement, conversion, testing out, dreams, etc. Fear, hatred, anger and violence of any kind, kleptomania, truancy, wandering, sleepiness, gluttony, talkativeness, excessive physical activity and sportiveness may also tern out to be, the consequences of such opposition, all which, come out for the purpose of finding an outlet for their movement in order to relieve oneself of

nervous tension and mental stress caused by factors hostile to the natural functions of the system. In fact, a behaviour or action may be covered by the following factors: (1) physical constitution, (2) internal changes, chemical or mental, (3) suppressed or opposed instincts clamouring for expression, (4) dominance of urges, unconscious or rational, (5) compensation for defect in any part of the organism, (6) company of others, (7) study of books, and the like. Psychological conditions may be brought about by physical factors, and vice versa. Chemical changes going on in the body may stir up an instinct or some instincts. Psychological states, such as joy or grief, or a state of repressed feelings or other internal forces may bring about changes in bodily conditions.

The urges of the human individual which have obvious objectives before them can, when they are not allowed free expression in the direction of their choice, divert themselves to substitutes for their main intentions. Such are, for instance, the satisfactions derived by instincts through innocuous channels. These are what go by the name of social work, political activity, vocational pursuits, philanthropic deeds, acts of service to others or any such physical or mental engagements by which the unconscious urges of one's energy are drained off. The pursuit of aesthetics along the lines of literature, music, dance, drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture and gardening may act as good substitutes providing a wide range for the roving of the instincts along channels of joy, personal or social.

The rational urges are of quite a different nature and they move in the direction of the pursuit of science and philosophy. Study of mathematics, physics, chemistry, technology, astronomy, geology, geography, biology, psychology, axiology, sociology, logic, epistemology, metaphysics and ethics are the major branches of rational learning. These subjects draw the attention of one's mind as aims in themselves, as independent values of life, though it is not difficult to discover that they are certainly means to the fulfilment of the vital needs of the individual, which work either as the calls of its physical side or the aspirations of the mental and intellectual faculties, which intend, in the end, to contribute the requisites necessary for the growth of the body or the mind in the social context of its existence.

The experience of happiness is the outcome of one's affiliation to the objects to which one is attached, whether they be animate, such as wife, children, etc., or inanimate like house, property, etc., or any other objects of gratification which are supposed to bring satisfaction by contact of the senses therewith or even contemplated by the mind merely, such as name, fame, power, authority, prestige and the like. When, through gratification of the thirst for objects by means of contactual union, the senses and the mind are calmed down and, therefore, at that particular moment of time, do not go back to the objects—that flash of a moment of cessation of sensory and mental activity attended with consciousness is the experience of happiness; while desire and restlessness are due to the thirst for such enjoyment and it is these that cause unhappiness, for the alienation of the mind and the senses from the

consciousness of Selfhood by means of their movement towards an external object is what wrenches them from establishment in the consciousness of Selfhood, which is another name for the experience of happiness. Thus, indulgence in the enjoyment of objects through the senses and the mind cannot bring about a cessation of thirst for objects, for the passion for objects increases by the application of the senses to enjoyment, and further, the impetuousness of the senses in search of such gratification gets intensified. Ignorance of the fact of happiness being the same as the experience of Selfhood is the cause of the objectification of pleasure, and beauty is nothing but pleasure objectified in an external content of sense-perception. Inasmuch as a basic error in the very conception of happiness is involved in its experience through the senses and the mind, it is indubitably concluded that the experience of pleasure or happiness by contact of any kind is another name for working in the darkness of ignorance for the purpose of a satisfaction which it cannot bring.

The perception of an object is really a simultaneous forgetfulness of the Self, for what is known as the object is nothing but a screen that covers a part of the consciousness of the Self, so that the Self which is inclusive of all being, seems to miss the presence of that particular feature in itself which is screened by the object-consciousness, just as a particular geometrical shape of a part of the sun may be obscured from one's vision if one looks at the sun by means of a glass part of which is stained with a touch of pitch or some dark substance, and the pattern of the obscuration of

the sun will be the same as that of the darkening element in the glass. This implies that the consciousness runs towards a particular object due to a loss of consciousness of a particular aspect of its being, and its running towards the external object of a corresponding character or feature is only another name for its attempt at coming in union with that part of itself which it appears to have lost due to loss of consciousness thereof. Thus, every act of object-perception is an endeavour on the part of the Self to unite itself externally with those features or aspects in itself which are obscured by non-awareness.

Thus, loss of consciousness of a particular feature or aspect of oneself, motivating object-perception of a respective character, is brought about by the predominance of certain forces of one's past *karmas*, which, due to their insistent pressure upon the self to limit its consciousness to the aperture provided by the forms of their manifestation, obscure the possibility of the self's knowing that it has also other aspects than what are permitted by the pressure of these forces of *karma*. Here is, perhaps, the anatomy of desire, sense-perception, and the experience of what is known as pleasure in this world.

Also the perception of the features of any particular object is an abstraction by consciousness of certain groups of characters from the infinite resources of Nature, by limiting the consciousness to motivation in respect of these given features alone, a process that takes place under similar conditions and caused by the same factor as in the case of the perception of an object and desire for the purpose of contactual pleasure. To cite an instance, the

perception of blue colour is an abstraction from the resources of sun-light which are far wider than mere blueness. This abstraction gets compelled upon the visual sense due to the limiting character of the structure of that basic substance which is supposed to be blue in colour, that is, the structure which absorbs by abstraction that feature called blueness and excludes every other colour or property belonging to the infinite richness of sun-light. So is every kind of object-perception an abstraction by consciousness, from the infinite resources of the Absolute, of only those characters, which go by the name of objects, due to the obscuration of aspects of consciousness brought about by the peculiar structural finitude of an individual by the forces of *karma* of the past as described above.

Chapter 23

THE INFINITE LIFE

Life is neither a history nor a science but an enigma which poses itself as a greater reality than any other value with which one is likely to identify it. The significance of life does not lie in any pattern comparable with an analogical succession of temporal events we call history, nor is it identifiable with a mathematically calculable equation or a procedural system of induction or deduction by which set effects can be said to follow from set causes. Life is nothing of this sort. It, thus, defies an assessment or judgment of its meaning by any type of traditional routine or stereotyped method of procedure, all which are obviously the outcome of a historical or a mathematical attitude which one adopts in the appreciation of the usual demands of life. The interconnectedness and the organic character of the innumerable aspects that go to constitute the significance of life make it almost impossible for an isolated individual to probe into its secrets, because any individualistic approach to life would be an attempt to subject it to the empirical or traditional notions of a three-dimensional approach to things, which is what is precisely meant by the historical or the mathematical way of thinking. It is this erroneous approach that has converted the system of living into a mechanised form of the ethics of sheer do's and don'ts, which, again, are the corollaries following from the general mechanistic attitude to life. Life is not a machine and hence any system of conduct or behaviour which fixes standard modes of thought and

action would stultify the truth of the organic character of existence, which is exactly the essence of life.

The individual finds itself in a world of space-time-relations and there is at once a jump of the individual consciousness to evaluate and interpret life's meaning in terms of the machine of a stereotyped conduct with a fixed value attached to every person and every thing, for all time to come, so that the evolution or progress of the individual through life's processes gets tethered up to the procrustean bed of the 'simple location' of all things, a fallacy according to which anything is capable of being only in one place, in one condition, at any one time, without any vital connection with other things around it and without relevance to the changing circumstances of the outer atmosphere. It is this erroneous understanding of oneself and one's external relations that has made life an inscrutable something so that it has never been approached in the manner consonant with its nature or inner structure, the result being a pursuing of the will-o'-the-wisp throughout ore's career in life, without knowing either its beginning or end towards which it is moving.

The Universe, we are told, was originally a single Infinite Atom, known to us as *Brahmanda,* or the Cosmic Egg of ancient mystical history, and It split Itself into two, the two becoming the further split parts, again and again, into the innumerable 'individuals', now called persons, things, objects. This is the reason for one part rushing for union with another, for, the parts cannot rest except as 'features' in the Whole which is 'wholly' present in and

compels recognition in and through every part. Every part seeks only the Whole.

But, this union is erroneously attempted by the parts by an 'externalised' spatio-temporal, physical-psychological contact with the 'objects', through the feelings of sense-and-ego-touch in respect of them. Nay, this cannot be, because nothing is outside the Universal Selfhood of Consciousness, and there are, therefore, no objects, each so-called object being merely a phase of this Selfhood. Thus, the longed-for union with the 'objects' can be successful only when they become the Subject itself, which longs for them; that is, in the end, the Universal Subject.

From Nature-Oneness there arises a space-distinction and time-duration, the original principle of isolation of one thing from another, the separation of individuality as a 'located' 'subject' of empirical experience, which sets off all Nature, from which it has risen, as an opposing 'external' object. Then, again, the individual sets off other such individuals as its further objects. There is, then, a reversal of the position of consciousness: the object becomes the subject, as it were, due to the transference of the latter to the former for the purpose of contacting outside what is complementary in character to the deficiencies experienced in the psycho-physical form of the latter, and the individual subject, seeing, thus, its own self in an 'other', dashes forth towards it, and struggles for union with it. For the Self can love nothing but the Self alone.

Through the grades of the bodily self, object-self, ego-self, family-self, community-self, nation-self, world-self and the Universal-Self, Consciousness endeavours to

encompass everything that it sees, touches, hears, smells, or tastes. One's nearness to the object is obviously the intention here, and hence its merger in oneself must necessarily be the final aim; the greatest happiness, then, is when the object 'becomes' the subject. Consciousness rushes out to unite itself with its content when the latter is dissociated from consciousness, and there is, then, the agonising vehemence of consciousness to perpetuate itself by reproduction of its 'form' by fusion with its isolated content. This is the tragedy of life, where the subject, instead of realising its being in all things, strives to immortalise its physical and psychical form by a sensory commingling of the temporal ingredients of mortal individuality.

The Universal Being is known as the Virat. The Virat or the Universal Body is one integrated comprehensiveness, where all 'points of view' are the glory of a Single Universal 'Point of view'; and, out of the all-grasping, all-uniting level of being which is the Virat, consciousness selects a given point of view and thus becomes the individual self. Thus arise the countless separate individuals. The content of experience at this level is grouped with reference to an individual point of view.

There is subsequently the lesser level of sensing, thinking, feeling and willing, where consciousness selects specific patterns which are worked up into the objects of perception and cognition, all which become the content of the ordinary human consciousness, or earth-consciousness. This is the level of the sense-life or the desire-life, busy preparing the food which it wishes to devour, an act which

is engaged in at the still lower level of the actual craving of the consciousness to swallow the forms physically by sense-contact and an externalised attempt to unite itself with them. The effect of diversification from Virat downwards does not end merely with the perception of individuals by individuals, for in this plurality itself is hidden the roots from which ramify the further tendencies to a more intensified hunger for physical food and thirst for sense-contact. Once the unity of the Virat-consciousness has been lost, the separated parts writhe to complete themselves by a passionate outward-turned seeking. This is the craving of individuals for self-completion, the burning thirst which drives the soul from itself to range throughout the world, seeking its food, devouring all its meats. This thirst, this craving is not merely a psychological function, taking these forms of mentation for mere attributes of the individual's urges, but it is the fibre and essence of the very constitution of the individual itself. It is this raging tempest of sense-life, this constitutional appetition of the individual that explains the terrible law of Nature by which life sustains itself by destroying life either in absorption through love or abolition through hatred. What a travesty of the truth which proclaims that the worst of tragic scenes are also a manifestation of the tendency to the unity and inseparability of all things! But here, in these frenzied shapes which life has put on under subjection to the downward pulls of outgoing passions, the individual sees not the unity within, which is after all the real cause behind every thought, feeling or action.

The Virat is not an outwardly related mechanistic system; it is an organic oneness wherein all persons and things are 'present in' rather than 'perceived by' the consciousness. It is only here, in this state of consciousness, that one can have real control over everything, and not when objects are 'perceived', for, then, they would remain 'outside' and so beyond one's sway or control. The first withdrawal is from the '*klishta-vrittis*' and the second withdrawal is from the '*aklishta-vrittis*'. While in the former there is a subdual of passion for things, in the latter there is an avoidance of even their 'perceptibility' as something external. In this, latter condition, the universe of objects does not merely stand 'related' to consciousness, for that would be mere perception—but fuses into the essential essence of consciousness, not as a union of two characters but as a 're-cognition' of the basic singleness of existence. As a matter of fact, passions, whether of the senses or of the ego, cannot cease as long as the '*aklishta-vrittis*' persist. Successful and true withdrawal is, thus, not a closing of one's eyes to existing attractions but an abolition of their very meaning in a blissful embrace of their 'being' by the consciousness in itself. This is the union of the 'Sat' of things with the 'Chit' of the experiencer, which is at once a flood of 'Ananda', not to be dreamt of by the itchings of sensation of all the worlds put together.

But this is a real torture to the pleasure-loving mind, because this requisite withdrawal looks like a real tearing oneself away from all the concentrated joy-centres, called objects. It all comes as a death-knell to the delights of sense and so no one, usually, attempts this withdrawal. Lo! the

glamour of form, the taste of the elixir of relativistic excitement and the rapture of the physical and psychical contacts in space;—all this kicks up such dust and raises such clamorous din that the 'oceanic within' is not allowed to be seen or even heard of. The splashes of the poison-mixed nectar jetting forth through the pores of the senses from the bursting abundance of bliss within keep the whole creation enchanted and spell-bound, and everyone runs out to reach up to the distant drops that have splashed forth and are sprinkled on the external forms rather than realise the 'whereabouts' of this sweetness that is mixed up with the venom of 'outwardness' in all sense-pleasures. As the snakes in the story of *'Amritamanthana'* had only their tongues split by licking the sharp-edged grass on which the pot of celestial nectar was merely placed—such was its odour which drew the soul of all the senses in one single torrent of longing, —the craving mind has only its senses jangled and mutilated, worn out and sapped of all vitality, in its search for the nectar of joy in the barbed forms of the objects of the world. A daily *'Amritamanthana'* is human struggle for the joy which one wishes to churn out of life. Alas! The demons of the senses obtain only the fuming poison of being wrenched from their pleasure-centres, their hearts writhing for a breath, for they feel like getting suffocated and killed by the agonising rush of upsurging grief as the loss of touch with the objects of their joy. Both the gods of the divine aspirations and the demons of the senses crave for nectar, the latter wanting it in the world of objects. But the nectar cannot be thus had where it is not—what the demons get is the poison of sorrow instead of the

nectar of satisfaction. The nectar cannot be imprisoned in this or that object.

For, this nectar of the Absolute does not come up filled in a pot or a vessel that can be grabbed by someone exclusively; it wells up as a universal deluge, drowning everyone and everything, devastating the dirt-ridden huts of clay-made bodies and cleansing the earth of all its sins for ever and ever! The soul's boundaries burst with the joy which it is unable to contain, it sobs, sheds tears and dances in a maddened ecstasy of Ananda. No one knows what it has seen! Lo! Who can tell what is seen here! Speech dumbed. The mind is hushed. The sun, moon and the stars fade away into this supernal Radiance. The galaxies melt and the fourteen worlds tumble into this blazing Splendour which at once transforms them all into waves of bliss which dash against one another in that joy of the meeting of soul with soul, and of all souls in the One Soul.

The majestic 'Virat' sports within Itself and makes laws of conditioning autonomy in the 'Whole' that It is. It looks at Itself with Its myriad centres, each a whole by Itself, which all act at the same time as heads and eyes and ears and hands and feet and minds and mouths and tongues, within and without all things; creating supporting, involving, distending, contracting and absorbing everything; It beholds Its own Glory without forfeiting Its Self-mastery as an Integrality which is impossible of separateness into an object which It has to contact by way of an outward coming together in a space that would never allow real union of what is really an 'other'. It exists as an eternally active Cosmic Art of dynamic Dance of

heightened bliss-infinite, which goes by the name of Creation of a universe of panoramic expressions of gorgeous beauty and a variety of experience in the indivisible delight of Self-recognition and Self-union in everything;—everything is everywhere at every time in every form:—a transporting scene of the anguish of souls to merge into the Inward Selfhood of Unlimited Being, in an experience of 'I-am-I', and nothing else! This is the Wonder of all wonders, the Wonder of 'That which is'! It is only here that all the desires are really fulfilled, and never before.