ESSAYS IN LIFE AND ETERNITY

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

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PREFACE

The publication of Essays in Life and Eternity by the well known author who needs no introduction is a veritable hallmark stamped on the various writings come from the same source dealing with such themes of study and enquiry as perhaps do not leave anything pertaining to human life unsaid or unexplained. The value of this new treatise can be assessed only by an actual reading of it with the requisite concentration. The subject of the thesis has been arranged systematically in an order of ascent and relatedness comparable with the order of the manifestation of life as could be gathered through an investigation of the structure of Nature and the obvious processes of the universe.

Here is something absorbing which seeks to fulfil the longings of both the individual in society and the spirit that is eternal.

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INTRODUCTION

This is an attempt to present in a sequential order certain ideas that may be said to appertain to an outlook of life which would adequately comprehend within itself the process of the envisagement of values that are supposed to form the structure of the general pattern of our existence. It is fairly obvious that we do not start thinking without a basis on which it has to found itself, an acceptance of what may be called indubitable and certain for all practical purposes. Usually, such a sheet-anchor of human enterprise goes by the name of a philosophy of life, a general concept of what things are, or what they ought to be, in the scheme of the universe. Not only do we not think in a vacuum and do have some substantiating factor remaining always there at the back of thoughts and actions, but also we conduct our life processes from what is considered as more primary and unavoidable to what is secondary or what follows from the original requirement as a corollary from a theorem. Effects follow causes, even as causes precede effects. While the effects are important enough to require necessary consideration, the causes have a precedence and determine all such considerations. The effects are often the visible and tangible things; the causes are not always direct objects of perception.

It is common knowledge that we occupy ourselves principally with visible phenomena, inasmuch as the immediate impact of the world is on our sensations, and even our thoughts seem to become operative after the senses receive impressions of things outside as cast in the moulds of their own individual areas of organisation.

Rarely do we think before we see or hear; we seem to be mentally active after sensations stimulate psychic functions. This is an aspect of our life which has been excessively taken advantage of by the empiricist schools of philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics and politics, though it, indeed, remains as a valid segment of the way in which we acquire knowledge. There is, however, the other side of the story, namely, that knowledge is not a mere unsolicited import from a foreign land, and that there is an inner need that decides the nature of the product arising as the outcome of sense impressions. But the vehemence of sensory activity is often so impetuous and aggressive that there is mostly an acquiescence on the part of everyone in the belief that events take place only in the 'outer' world and human history is caused by the behaviour of 'other' people. That there has been latterly a gradual trend of thought along these lines in modern times does not need an explanation. Only it would show that humanity is drifting downwards into the more exteriorised, mechanised and devitalised forms of existence than what should be expected from an essentially self-conscious human individual whose very self cannot be other than an indivisible consciousness, a fact which all types of empiricism seem to be ignoring entirely. The rationalist emphasis, too, may not always be able to avoid the erroneous judgment of confining consciousness merely to intellectual activity, not paying sufficient attention to the nature of reality which sweeps over a much larger area than logic and reason.

The arrangement of thought in these essays can be viewed either from the point of view of the cause

manifesting itself as its natural effects, or the effect evolving gradually into the substance of the cause. Perhaps the former impression may be created in the mind of a reader when the book is studied from the beginning to the end in the order of succession, and it may have the feature of the latter if the chapters are read in the reverse order especially from Chapter XVIII backwards, concluding with the themes of the initial chapters. Though the presentation has endeavoured to touch the furthermost and a kind of superlative externalisation of aims and values as one could see in the present-day world, such as the thoroughgoing artificial organisations of life as pure political expediency and involvement in a thoroughgoing visage of man's dependence on material and economic phenomena, the thesis, in its vision of the origin of things, does not start with any difficult assumptions such as what may be regarded as the logical grounding of the very way of thinking and the rationalistic foundation of any view of life, notwithstanding that a view of life which should reasonably be considered as acceptable on universal foundations has been portrayed in the essays in as much clarity and detail as could be possible. The position adopted is somewhat like the epic style of introducing the mind to what it may be able to receive even at the outset as something not only interesting but even exciting.

The wonder of creation is what generally stimulates the highest possible reaches of thought and feeling. The 'objective' universe, remaining, nevertheless, as a universal inclusiveness, encounters us as an intelligent and purposive operation motivated by a central aim arising from the very

heart of all things. Such a fundamental essence has been called God in theological terms, as the Absolute in philosophy, as the very Substance that transcends even space and time. The manner in which the universal scheme presents itself to human understanding is the cosmology of creation, through which process the One becomes the many, and the indivisible reveals itself as the manifold variety. Yet, in all this multifariousness, there is the undying immanence of that unitary principle which holds together the infinite parts of creation in a single grasp of eternal cohesiveness. This pervading influence through the manifold is the manifestation of the well-known gods of religion, the divinities in heaven, the angels that see things from the high skies. The space-time complex, the electromagnetic background of matter, and the very substance of physicality are the components of creation.

The dramatic picture of life rises into the perceptive process when perception itself is not accountable without the perceiver being in a way segregated from the perceived world. The entire astronomical universe as viewed by the astronomer looks like an outside something, though the astronomer himself could not exist without his being substantially involved in the organism of the universe. The structure of the psyche in the individual of any species seems to be so oriented that the individualised mind in any of its stages of development cannot but assume the externality of the world and arrogate to its own self a subjectivity and conscious independence which it denies to the world of perception. Here commences the psychology of individual nature to which the world of physics,

sociology and religion and everything of kindred nature, the world as a whole, stands apart as the obvious field of Nature and humanity, all which the mind attempts to study in a purely empirical fashion. It is here that the vitals of life seem to be rent asunder, and man lives in the world more like a moving corpse than anything that is vitally connected with the world. All things that proceed further, all activities of humanity, education, culture, politics, and every blessed thing, remain like ghosts presenting their last dance before they collapse dead, bereft of a living relation with the universal principle.

The centrality of the human consciousness as deciding everything that it knows or even what it feels it cannot know suggests an implication within itself that, when we find it impossible to avoid the conclusion of an absolute state of things, it is itself an indication of the Absolute. The nature of the world as it appears to the senses of perception and as it is cognised by the mind, has always been, invariably, taken to be the manner in which it has managed to present itself to human understanding. One of the features in which the world presents itself to conscious appreciation is the scheme of the degrees of manifestation, or the evolution of forms in levels of density, concretisation and expression. The only way in which this phenomenon can be explained is to follow the lead of reason in the manifestation of name and form.

Since whatever is the Absolute would not permit of even such basic essentials of creation as space and time to interfere with its indivisibility, the space-time complex which is the foundation for the very meaning of creation is

necessarily forced into the process of knowledge. Space-time also becomes the field of vibration, motion and force, which is how the ancient teachers describe the coming of the temporal world from Eternal Being. A ubiquitous action of force is supposed to take place to evolve the potentials of forthcoming forms, the quantum of energy necessary to manifest the type of world that it is. The field of gases, liquids and solids, of light and heat, is the obvious form capable of sense contact arisen out of the supersensible potentials of force existing as the background of all sense data.

It is never possible to ignore the element of consciousness in any enthusiasm over the complexity of the world and the variegatedness of forms. There is, consequently, the indwelling presence of this consciousness in the variety. The different forms in which this consciousness is so manifest are actually the denizens of heaven, which religions adore, the gods whom devotees worship in ritual and prayer. The manyness of the gods is explained by the manifold way in which the universal consciousness is revealed through the degrees of reality. The One appears as the many, itself indwelling in everyone of them.

The cosmic structure is all great and grand. But the factor of there being an observer of the cosmos reduces this secure magnificence to an insecure bifurcation of the observer and the observed, the seer and the seen, the knower and the known. Who is it that knows the existence of a world outside? The answer implies the existence of something which is not itself the world of observation. It

also suggests that the term does not include everything that exists, since the inclusiveness of the world would include also the knower thereof, in which latter case there would be no knower 'of' the world. The very fact of perception seems to involve a falsification of values, the creation of a situation which cannot be logically accounted for, and which cannot be regarded, in the end, as a tenable position. Yet, the world goes on in this way, and we seem to be living in such a world, in such a manner.

The subjective side which is the inscrutable unavoidable in all acts of knowledge is for all practical purposes of study the human individual. It is this location of the subjectivity of perspective that is the seat of psychological operations and psychoanalytical investigations. The subject's isolation from the world of perception is indeed a strange occurrence, since such a thing is not either permissible or feasible in a world whose structure cannot exclude that of its so-called perceiver, not even the existence of such a thing. The persistence of an apparently self-contradictory position assumed by the subject in its attempt to contact a world that is outside may well be a proof of the futility of human effort towards a knowledge of reality. Nevertheless, a phenomenal reality of a 'perceived' world is presented before the individualised consciousness which takes such a world as this to be a world of true values, precipitating finally to a negation in consciousness of there being anything at all beyond possible empirical perception. The worlds of science and psychology are such a relative construct obtaining between a reaction produced by the real world so wrongly externalised and the individual

perceiving subject whose very existence is worse than precariously relative. Thus far is the field of what we may, with our available knowledge, designate as the world of 'existence'.

But we have also a world of 'values' which we with this conditioned knowledge visualise as objective reality construed in such a way, values which mostly get identified with what are today known as the 'humanities'. The values include the concept of the aim of existence as the very foundation of any further thought along this line. To the materialistic eye value might centre round physical existence, physical comfort and physical security, with a daub of psychic needs reluctantly conceded as an upstart in a mechanistic set-up, in a soulless world of computations and measurements, at best. To the pragmatic utilitarian, we live in a world with which we have to get on, getting on being the end-result of every impulse towards thought and action. If the present condition of things corresponds to the present condition of the mind, and vice-versa, the world should be considered as good enough; but if any one of these two sides tilts heavily on one side of the balance, either the world would appear heartless, even meaningless, or man may look unfitted to live in the world in which he finds himself. But the world has also seen people who could see it with the eye that has also a simultaneous vision of a transcendent element pervading it, who it is that have assured us all value being an offshoot of the eternal longing of the human spirit for utter freedom in a grasp of the Infinite, which factor it is that has to determine and condition the other values such as the material, the

emotional, the aesthetic and the religious. Divested of this inner aspiration life's values pale into insignificance, however lofty one may consider them to be. The consistent determination of the eternal value in respect of every earthly value is the law of righteousness and justice, goodness and charitableness. There is, thus, a wholesomeness at the back of even a multiplicity of values conceived by the mind, hinting evidently at the truth that the world has only one value before its eye,—its purposiveness and evolution. Truth, goodness and beauty are the logical, ethical and aesthetic values that the mind recognises when it beholds the world through a set of differing faculties such as reason, volition and feeling. Values, then, may, at least to some extent, appear as a necessary reaction set up by the world of reality in respect of the available faculties of human knowledge, which would only mean that our concepts of truth, morality and beauty are relative to the position we occupy in the environment of the world.

Justice would consist not only in conformity to the way the world is made but also the manner in which the deepest self within one would endeavour to recognise itself in other persons also in the requisite degree. Ethical goodness and social harmony are based on this necessary perspective which everyone has to entertain if one is to be regarded as truly educated or cultured. Culture is the refinement of personality consequent upon a vision of the permanent values of life. Education is the progressive development of the human individual through the material, vital, mental, intellectual and social levels to the apprehension of the

spiritual reality of life. Civic duty is to love one's neighbour as one's own self, with a proper understanding of who one's neighbour is. 'To do unto others as one would be done by' may well be a standard that we may adopt for the welfare of all. To share with others what we have, as we would wish others to share with us what they have, in the necessary quantity and quality, would be a safe guiding principle. Simple living and high thinking is the motto of the wise one. Here is also the foundation for a proper economy of life. The administration of the political organisation is based on the justice of the law and not merely in its legality. The constitution of the government is actually the voice of the needs of people not only for their material welfare but also for their spiritual progress. The administrator, as the head making decisions, has to stand above himself in decision-making and identify himself with the spirit of the whole nation, and the welfare of all humanity. History is not merely the doings of people but the workings of Nature as a whole whose instruments people are and which in itself is a visible form of the system and action of the eternal order of existence.

Dissatisfaction with the existing condition of things is the beginning of philosophical investigation. On a careful scrutiny it could be observed that nothing can satisfy as long as man's relation to the universe remains a mystery and there is a paltry understanding of the nature and purpose of life. Life is an adjustment of personality with the environment and can assume a meaning only when there is a conscious appreciation of what kind of adjustment it is that is required in order that one may live a meaningful life.

It would be seen, as in the case of a definition attempted of one's true brother or neighbour, the environment around one's existence recedes as the horizon when its boundaries are sought to be fixed. The atmosphere in which man lives is actually the endless universe whose features demand a variety of adaptation of personality on the part of man. As the universe is an all-round existence, the required adjustment, too, is an all-round one. The world is neither fractional nor partial, it is a living wholesome entity, one's reaction to which has to be exactly similar in order that one may find oneself in a friendly environment.

Philosophy is the rational foundation of religion, and religion is the practice of philosophy. The development of the religious consciousness in the human individual is the enhancement of dimension in experience achieved through the series of the degrees in which man adjusts himself with the universe. The centrality of this consciousness which occupies the position of the Soul of the Universe may be said to be a reasonable concept of the Almighty God. One's most intense longing, when it reaches its maximum, may well also be regarded as a symptom of God calling through one of His operations in creation. The universe is a total action, and entirely individual actions may not fit into its structure. Here is evidently the central message of the Bhagavad Gita.

The way to salvation is proclaimed as a fourfold endeavour through work, devotion, concentration and knowledge,—cognition, emotion, volition and reason, which are the principal operating faculties of human nature, corresponding to the manner in which religious

exercise and spiritual practice in a sense of man's endeavouring to rise above himself towards Godhead takes place. Spiritual life is not, as wrongly supposed, different from secular life, nor are the so-called secular needs divested of their spiritual meaning. The well-known classification of life's aims into Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, that is to say, the ordering and regularisation of the material and emotional needs of the person in the light of the ultimate freedom to be attained in eternal life, is the first statement of insight which ancient sages made of the blend of spiritual aspiration and secular demand. As the body and the spirit in the human individual are not isolated departments of activity but are a fusion of physical need with that of one's spiritual aim, the world and God are not contradictory phases but constitute the Form and the Spirit of the Universe.

The outward cooperation and harmony in social life made secure by the institutions of a blending classification of the human community into the directing and the guiding (Brahmana), the administrative and the military or defending (Kshatriya), the trading and the commercial (Vaisya), and the manual and working (Sudra), has been the ancient wisdom behind the survival and stability of the social structure, so that everything is what it is and is not other than what it is. But the further progress towards the real from matter to life, mind, reason and spirit is ensured through the inner transformation of personality by the ascending stages of discipline, study and education (Brahmacharya), keeping oneself abreast with the hard facts of life in their various phases (Garhasthya), non-attachment

to things which are not commensurate with an internal progress of the spirit (Vanaprastha), and a total dedication of oneself to the affirmation of the Absolute (Samnyasa). Man rises from his physical individuality to family, community, nation, world and a universal perspective by stages of cultural advancement.

The book is rounded up with the eternal import of the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita presented interpretatively in an intelligible form.

PART I – METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS

I—THE ABSOLUTE AND THE RELATIVE

The comedy of the soul's eternally communing itself in the Glory of the Kingdom of God, Brahmaloka, is well known to have turned itself into an apparently tragic circumstance of the soul dissociating itself from that Universal Glory by means of an inscrutable tendency to self-affirmation alienating the soul from its organic integratedness with the Universal Life. This situation has been traditionally declared as an epic fall of the soul headlong in a topsy-turvy way into the vast sea of the turmoil of it being necessary at that time to visualise the universal existence as an external world of perception and to consider every other soul as a socially disconnected entity.

This fall from Eternity to temporality is characterised by three tortuous features, namely,

1. The immediate cutting off of the soul from the Universal Sustaining Force;
2. The consequent fear gripping the soul with hunger, thirst, and a constant apprehension of all-round insecurity;
3. A permanent involvement of the soul in a perpetually unreliable and suspicious relationship with the outer society of similar souls. It looks as if death yawns with its open jaws, dread in tooth and claw.

In this threefold blow dealt at the soul simultaneously from three different directions, which is virtually from every direction, the soul loses itself practically in entirety. Added to this, there is, perhaps, a fourth factor of the external world looking a mightier vastness than the localised individual and it becoming incumbent an every individual to depend in

abject servitude on every bit of thing of which the external world consists.

This sorrow of life is attempted to be avoided or at least mitigated by the erroneous effort of the soul to patch up the finitude of its individuality by accumulating and adding accretions from the outer world in terms of material property, social power and aesthetic enjoyment through pleasurable sensations generated by the contact of sense organs with their corresponding objects in the world. The entire effort ends in utter failure to accomplish anything at all worth the while by this means of an upside-down arrangement to place oneself in a condition of security, power and happiness. This totally mistaken meandering of the soul in a world of such agonising tribulations has naturally to end in its defeat by the realities of life landing the soul in a helpless cyclic movement, as if it is mounted on a circulating wheel, through an almost endless series of repeated births and deaths. This is a veritable drama of the soul's movement from sorrow to sorrow in a more and more intensifying manner.

Mankind, today, with all its appurtenances of knowledge and experience gained through the historical movement in several thousands of years on this earth, can be said to have learned no lesson at all as to where its true blessedness lies or what are the mistakes that it is daily committing in its life at every moment of time. Humanity's blunders in its entirely empirical-oriented sense-ground perception of the values of life are as it has been briefly outlined above. If the human individual persists in this kind of thinking and acting inwardly as well as outwardly, such a life of the human individual cannot but be designated as a cauldron of hell-

fire—which, unfortunately, to the bound individual, appears to be a highly satisfactory state of affairs, because of its dictum, as the poet well said in this context, that 'It is better to reign in hell than serve in heaven'.

The hope of mankind is not going to be in the continuance of this state of affairs even though it may go on through millions of years of human history. The only way of true freedom and final beatitude is to bring about a transvaluation of values and for the soul to stand erect in right perspective instead of viewing things as through a mirror of reflection or with head below and legs up. The whole situation has to be reconstructed in one's own consciousness, firstly by not imagining that human society is really external to oneself, that the world is truly outside the process of perception, or that Eternity is removed from temporality by spatial distance. This is so because the perception of an external multitude of society consisting of human and other living beings arises on account of the said topsy-turvy perception caused by one's alienation from the totality of the Absolute. The establishment of oneself in a state of consciousness which stabilises one's being in a non-externalised Universal Pure Subjectivity of Selfhood is the final panacea for the sorrow of mortal existence. This is the great meditation in which every soul has to engage itself throughout its career in life. This is the final duty inseparable from man's aspiration, nay, the only duty in life.

II—THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULAR

Since Spirit is universal—because non-universality would make it perishable—the presence of the Spirit in anything is, in fact, the Universal Existence being immanent in the particular. Spirituality, or religion, a designation that has generally been applied to signify the higher values of life, consists, then, in the measure of awareness of the extent to which the Universal Principle inhabits locations of any kind. The human body, the family, the community, the province, the nation, or the world as a whole stands before us as an example of the operation of the Universal in different degrees of particularity. Human individuality, physically speaking, is all anatomy and physiology, a combination of physical and chemical properties cohering into the pattern of a whole, vitality pervading the whole system, so that the human being is not just bone and flesh and it transcends the diversity of the physical limbs. This is common knowledge, and it becomes clear when one investigates into the fact of man remaining a whole as a self-identical entity even if some limbs of the body are to be taken away by medical operation. Here is an immediately available instance of the consciousness of oneself transcending the particulars of the bodily limbs as a basic element of the universal rising above particularised parts. So is the case with the family, which is a name that is used to indicate an integrating awareness of a total whole of which the members of the family are inseparable parts. But the family can remain a whole even if some member thereof is to die. The family is a whole, whether the members are larger in number or smaller. The quantity of the particulars

does not affect the quantitative integration of the whole. Thus also is the case with the wholeness and particularising aspects associated with a community, a part of a country or the nation as a whole. The national unity, which is a cultural inclusiveness, can stand by itself as an unaffected whole even if individual members constituting the whole are to increase or decrease by way of some special circumstance. Institutions, organisations, governments, are all, then, principles existing as a state of consciousness, an ideology above individualities, transcending them altogether in everything and even disregarding, often, the existence or non-existence of individuals. The Universal can exist even if none of the particulars exists. This is so because the Universal is an ideal and a consciousness that acts as an integrating cohesive force among particulars and itself does not need for its existence the existence of the particulars. We come back here to our earlier illustration, that the wholeness of a human individual can continue to be there even if some fifty per cent of the physical limbs of the body were not to be there. This unconsciously lands us, in the end, in the conviction that the Absolute can exist without the relative, and God can exist even if the world of creation were not to exist.

Philosophers, many a time, have found it difficult to imagine the existence of a universal independent of particulars. This difficulty arises because it is wrongly assumed that the universal is an abstraction, a conceptual generalisation arising from some common features seen in particulars, such as the universal principle of horseness seen to be present in each individual case of a horse. But the

universal need not be a quality depending upon an isolated individual as a substance. The Universal is not like the greenness seen in all leaves or the redness seen in roses. That is to say, the universal is not a quality of a substance other than itself. Such a nominalism of outlook in the definition of the universal can arise only if one is completely oblivious of the fact that even the awareness of there being such things as particulars would not be possible unless there is a prior element of consciousness-grasp which knows all the particulars in a single act of attention, proving thereby that such a consciousness is larger in dimension than the particulars, is immanent in them, by which immanence it knows them, and is also transcendent to them due to which it is none of the particulars.

Our observations made above will suffice to illustrate the priority and antecedence of the universal to particulars of any kind. Here is a hint that any sort of exclusive interest in the particulars alone would be violative of the requirements of the health of the organism which is the whole, and this rule will apply to every level or degree of the manifestation of the universal through the entire series of the evolutionary ascent, right from the individual to the highest universal, namely, the Absolute.

The meditation of life, then, is the gradual establishment of wholeness in the midst of particulars, in every level, in every stage, in every degree of evolution. Grandly has it been proclaimed by the Bhagavadgita, in a majestic epic fashion, that the Universal, designated as Brahman, has hands and feet everywhere, has eyes, faces and heads everywhere, and it exists enveloping everything.

It is the illuminator of all the sense-organs, but in itself it is none of them. It is the support behind all diversity, but it cannot be identified with anyone of these. It is the reality behind appearances. Being above substances and qualities, relations and modifications, it cannot be said to have any attributes; though no quality or attribute can subsist without it being there as the basic substratum. It is inside and outside all things; but it has itself no inside and outside. Being the foundation for all movement and activity, it cannot be characterised by any movement or activity. Being the very Seer and Knower, as the basic Subject, it cannot be seen, heard or even thought by the mind. Being endless and infinite, it is everywhere like a limitless expanse, but as the Self of everything nothing can be nearer than its presence. Among beings that are divided it may look divided as their substratum, but by itself it is not divided, as it is the very awareness behind all possible division. Everything is absorbed into it, everything is consumed into it, as it were, and it stands unparalleled as a blend of Eternity and infinity, as the Light of all lights, glorying in its radiance beyond the darkness of ignorance.

III—THE COSMOLOGICAL DESCENT

As we have in the field of modern astronomy and physics the theories of the "Big Bang" and related descriptions of the cause of the universe, the scriptures delineate the process in which one can consider the universe as having evolved from the state of an original ubiquitous continuum, into greater and greater diversified forms and more and more externalised shapes. The affirmation mostly centres round the enunciation that the Supreme Being was engaged in Tapas, which is the original concentration of the Universal Consciousness in a cosmic act of willing and deciding to be something logically differentiated from its own pure being. Unless there is space to create, there cannot be creation, and unless there is time to create, there would not be creation even then. The beginning of creation implies, therefore, the projection of space and time in a blend of instantaneous, co-eval and co-eternal mutual participation. Space-time is the fundamental base, the matrix of creation. The Will of the Absolute becomes an intensely powerful vibration into which the space-time complex reduces itself, that is to say, what is known as space-time is itself an unending sea of omnipresent vibration. This pressure leads to motion and there is then an incipient tendency created towards the manifestation of what are usually known as primary qualities arising out of the basic potential of a three-dimensional pattern given rise to by the otherwise non dimensional infinite force. The fact of motion causing this fundamental primary quality of distance and duration working as the three-dimensional presentation, manages to

further diversify the three-dimensional spatio-temporal manifestation into the governing principles of what are externally known to us as sound, touch, colour, taste and smell. The created universe at present only in a state of vibration, concretises itself into a fivefold categorisation, dividing the cosmos into a fivefold perceptible object. In Sanskrit traditional terminology, the five sense-data mentioned are known as Sabda, Sparsa, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha. These are the potentials which concretise themselves further into the grosser visible universe of gases, liquids and solids, of Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. The entire universe has these potentials and forms as its original building bricks, of which it is made and from which it is inseparable.

This physical cosmos undergoes, again, an intense activity of gyration due to which it arranges itself into the logical order of both ascent and descent, known as the fourteen realms of being, or fourteen worlds, so to say, the seven upper realms commencing from the earth constituting a more and more liberating tendency and expansion of dimension, and the seven below the level of the earth constituting a sequential order of descent into greater and greater negativity of perception grossness of characterisation and more and more distant from the centre of the universe. Common sense theology and very often scriptural pronouncements make out that the upper seven realms are degrees towards the Highest Heaven, and the lower seven, forming the opposite counterpart, are the regions of hell, the netherworlds of darkness, passion and activity. Thank God, we are here on earth at this moment.

The further sub-division of the universe of the total fourteen realms is its tripartite division into the perceiver, the perceived and an intermediary link relating the perceiver and the perceived. The perceived remains as the external world of earth, water, fire, air and sky, that is, the obvious material universe, just matter, nothing more, and nothing leas. Those who are able to see only this externalised form of the universe go by the name of the classical materialists metaphysically, and realists epistemologically. But, such a conclusion would defeat the very meaning of the perception of a world of matter, because matter, being the perceived, cannot be the perceiver of itself. There has to be a perceiver other than the perceived, and the perceiver has to be endowed with a consciousness of something being there, without which there would be no perception, nay, there would be none to know that the world exists at all. Even to say that the world can exist though there may not be any perceiver of it is just another way of admitting a consciousness of it being possible for the world to exist independently by itself without a perceiver.

The threefold division into which creation now casts itself includes the independent perceiver, the individual being encountering the world outside as an object of perception. Yet, the individual is not a totally isolated perceiver of the world, because there is a necessity for there being a connecting link between the perceiver and the perceived. This link cannot be a part of the material world, since matter cannot evoke a consciousness of perception. It cannot also belong entirely to the individual perceiver, for,

otherwise, it would be limited to the location of the individual and there would be no connection between the perceiver and the perceived. This link, therefore, has to be transcendent both to the perceiver and the perceived, clubbing together both the perceiver and the perceived, and yet ranging above them as belonging to neither of them, though immanently present in each of them. This invisible link is known as Adhidaiva, while the perceiver is called Adhyatma, and the perceived, the Adhibhuta.

This transcendent link is, verily,—the divinity of the universe operating in and through all things and existing as a hierarchy of connections between the many degrees of subject-object relation in the evolutionary process of the universe. These degrees in the divine connecting links between the subjects and objects in an ascending and descending order of expansion and involvement are the well-known angels and gods worshipped in the religions of the world.

IV—THE GODS AND THE CELESTIAL HEAVEN

The tripartite arrangement of the Universal Being into the subjective, objective and the principle of an intermediary consciousness, namely, Adhyatma, Adhibhuta and Adhidaiva, raises also the question of the whole range of theological enunciations, since the Adhidaiva is the divinity that controls the subjective and the objective sides of experience—Adhyatma and Adhibhuta—and at the same time rises above them in an instantaneous act of transcendence by not belonging either to the subjective or the objective side, though immanently present in both the sides, without which there cannot be a conscious relation between the subject and the object.

The descent, or may we say ascent, of the hierarchy of subject-object relations in the history of the creation of the universe, may be said to be constituted of an infinite series of degrees of lesser and larger dimensions, the relation becoming grosser and more inscrutable as the degrees come downwards in descent and enlarging in greater and greater perspicuity and transcendence as the degrees ascend towards the Absolute. Inasmuch as these degrees of ascent and descent are spread out everywhere in the universe, differing in quantity and quality in accordance with the corresponding degree of inclusiveness and transparency obtaining between the subjective and objective sides, it appears that these Adhidaiva divinities are countless in number and these are, in fact, the many gods of popular religious worship.

Are there really many gods? The answer is yes, and no. There are many gods, because there are many degrees of the

subject-object relation obtaining successively in a sequential order of the manifestation of the universe, and these being transcendentally operative powers beyond the subject and the object, they are verily gods, the shining ones, the conscious relation without which perception or knowledge would be impossible. But, in fact, the gods are not many, since their manifoldness is just a nomenclature designating the levels of consciousness through which the Absolute descends in terms of several subject-object relations in the story of creation.

The Indian religious perspective visualises, adores and worships many a god, the god of the house or the family, the god of the village or the community, the god of the town, the god of the nation, the god of war, and the god of peace, and as on, because these concepts of many divinities follow automatically from the concept of there being many superphysical causes behind the multitudinous variety of events and occurrences in the world of Nature. For anything that happens there is a god behind it, just because nothing can happen unless it is caused by something which itself is not the happening. Millions are, therefore, the gods in number, but there are no million gods, even as the million rays of the sun cannot be regarded as anything but a single projection of the omni-faced solar beam. The Indian religious system adores such gods as Sri Ganesa, or Ganapati; Devi in the form of Durga, Lakshmi and Sarasvati; Siva, known also as Rudra; Vishnu, called also Narayana; Surya or the divinity in the Sun; and Skanda, or Kartikeya or Kumara, the second son of Siva. The sections of people that devote themselves to one or the other of

these gods are supposed to form a specific pattern of religious approach, these being six as mentioned, related to the six gods of worship (Shanmata). The philosopher Acharya Sankara is credited by tradition with the work of having established these six ways of divine worship (Shanmata-Sthapanacharya). These six modes of worship form the six systems of spiritual approach, known as Ganapatya, Sakta, Saiva, Vaishnava, Saura, and Kaumara religious traditions.

The worship of these divinities is carried on either privately in one's house, or openly in public temples. In either case the method of worship is the same, namely, the procedure usually adopted in inviting and adoring a king, or a royal personage, with all the paraphernalia of gorgeous and detailed hospitality commencing from the initial salutation, or prostration or greeting, on the coming of the guest, till he is given a loving farewell after he is treated to every kind of satisfaction, such as being offered a seat, bathed, dressed, garlanded, offered delicious food, given wafer for washing, consecrated with the waving of beautifully decorated flames lamps, offered a suitable gift, and permitted to leave with the dignity and honour of the ruler or the royal patron. The procedure adopted in public temples is more detailed, including periodical festivals, especially the most important one known as the car-festival (Rathotsava), during which special occasion the deity is installed in a chariot looking like a moving temple, pulled with ropes by thousands of devotees gathered to participate in the celebration.

However, the greatest gods of the central religion of India are Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, with their various Avataras, or incarnations, elaborately eulogised in the eighteen Puranas, each god being glorified through a set of six specified texts out of these eighteen cosmic histories. With these Divinities are associated also their Powers, or Saktis, namely, Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Durga or Parvati, respectively.

This is the popular religion of the masses, which overwhelms public life in India even today, irrespective of the basic religion being founded on the hymns of the Veda-Samhitas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad-Gita. Humanity, and with it religious history, seems to have found it necessary, through the march of time, to accommodate itself to more and more emotional, aesthetic and epic forms of the envisagement of reality than the pure sublimity of the metaphysical and universal characterisations of the highest spiritual aim.

The propulsion to posit gods and divinities in a realm beyond the earth, a heaven of light and peace, is to be seen in every system of religious thinking and worship, only the designations, visualisations, etc., differing in accordance with the ethnic, geographical and cultural background of the people. 'A higher than oneself' is an imperative need for anyone to survive in a state of assured protection and fulfilment of one's eternal hopes and longings.

V—THE HUMAN INDIVIDUAL

While the psychology of the human personality is important for both personal and social life in the world, it also follows that, for purposes of psychology, the individual stands segregated from the world of perception. Viewed in this light, the human individual can be studied as a composite structure of different layers of the constitutional makeup, these layers being, broadly speaking, the well-known physical, vital, sensory, mental, intellectual, causal, and spiritual realms of inclusiveness and intensity. The physical body is the outermost crust, we may say, of the person, and it is constituted of the very same stuff as the earth, water, fire, air and ether of the physical world. The chemical components of which the body is made are just proportionate mixtures, permutations and combinations of these elements that are entirely physical in nature. There is nothing in the body except elements of solid matter, liquid, gas and heat, with space providing the volume of the body. The intake of diet maintains this body, fattens it by energising it with the subtle forces generated through the digestion of food, which permeate the entire body in its various systems like the circulatory, respiratory, alimentary, etc.

But, there is something inside, within the physical body, which gives and meaning to the body, namely, the vital system, known as the operation of the Prana, which is an energy quantum distributed equally throughout the body, giving it strength as if by the passing of an electric current through every pore and cell of the system. In fact, the life of the body is just the life imparted to it by the Prana. That

part of the body which the Prana does not touch gets paralysed and is virtually dead. This means that the physical body by itself has no life, the life principle being the Prana, entirely. The Prana is said to function in five ways, and according to this fivefold function, the total energy of the Prana goes by the names of Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana. Prana is the force that ejects the breath out in exhalation. Apana is what pulls the breath within in inhalation. Vyana is the circulatory force which causes the equidistribution of blood through the blood vessels spread out through the body. Samana is the energy of heat that digests food in the stomach. Udana takes one to the state of deep sleep and also is said to cause the separation of the true person from the body at the time of death.

But, what causes the Prana to act in this manner in relation to the physical body? The answer is, the action of the mind working through the sense organs, namely, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling. The mind performs four functions, as Manas, or indeterminate thinking; Buddhi, or determinate and discriminative thinking; Chitta, or memory and remembrance; and Ahamkara, or the ego principle which asserts and arrogates to itself the self-identity of human individuality through all its layers, right from the physical to the causal. The necessity and the desire of the mind working through the sense-organs to dwell in the physical body for fulfilling its own purposes causes a tremendous pressure exerted on the whole body, this pressure being called the Prana. The Prana, thus, is a sort of link between the physical body and the internal organ, the psyche. The faculties of feeling and

emotion in all their variety are characteristic of the mind-stuff, the psychic organ.

The ratiocinating, discriminating, deciding, and logically, judging faculty is at the higher level and is known as the Buddhi, or the pure understanding. It is this faculty that draws conclusions on a consideration of pros and cons of situations, by inference, either deductively or inductively. This is the realm of reason which has a dual aspect, namely, the lower and the higher. The lower reason, which is the one that mostly operates in all human individuals, is that operation which just collects the reports and evidences supplied by the mind through the sense organs, arranges them into a pattern of wholeness and passes a judgment on the nature of these sensory evidences. This would mean that the judgment of the lower reason is not qualitatively different from the reports of the sense organs, and its judgment is virtually the judgment of the sense organs arranged into a system of apparent collectivity, totality uniqueness and unity. But, the higher reason is something like an ambassador operating between the consciousness of human individuality and the possibilities ranging beyond the individual and its operations. This superior reason can infer the existence of wider realities of an infinite nature by various observations, like the necessity to posit a cause behind all effects, the need to accept a limitless state of existence on the perception of limitation and finitude in one's life, the need to posit an Architect of the universe on the basis of the fact of the system, method and precision as well as symmetrical action observable in the working of nature, and the like. These are some of the ways which the

higher reason adopts necessarily on account of its very constitution in creating an aspiration in the individual to rise from the consciousness of particularity to that of Universal Being. The higher reason is the true philosopher and repository of the wisdom of life.

The intermediary sheath between the intellect and the fundamental self-consciousness is constituted of an unconscious layer containing all the potentials of future experiences through a repetition of dream and waking lives, the well-known cycle of metempsychosis. This causal layer of potential future experience is the seed that can germinate into varieties of individualised experiences through continuous births and deaths. What are known as the conscious mind and the subconscious level, etc., form just a fraction of the storehouse of potentials which constitute the stuff of the unconscious. Since even the intelligence of the intellect and the mind is only that quality of knowledge which is permitted by the unconscious realm to pass through its own special modification as the intellect, it would be perhaps very true to say that all worldly knowledge which is intellectual, mental and sensory is a form of ignorance.

VI—THE EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The individualities of created beings vary according to the several species or genera into whose mould the individualities are cast. According to the traditional Indian concept, these created species of beings run to eighty-four lakhs (8,400,000) in number, in which series the human being is said to occupy the topmost position, almost completing the purpose of Nature in its scheme of evolution. The general arrangement of things in the evolutionary process is considered to be a gradual ascent from mineral to plant, from plant to animal, and from animal to man. This does not, however, mean that there are five categories separated as if in watertight compartments, for there is a countless variety even in this fivefold classification—varieties in the mineral constitution, varieties in the plant and vegetable kingdom, varieties in the animal kingdom and in the different kinds of subhuman species, and varieties even at the human level. The number, eighty-four lakhs, perhaps, would give a good picture of the tremendous specifications in almost unthinkable types of differentiation in the structure of individuality. From mineral to the Absolute is indeed a great sequential procedure of graduated ascent, involving millions of mutations, transformations, births and deaths through numberless ages, till the supreme Unity is reached in actual experience. It is believed that up to the level of the animal, penultimate to the human stage, the process of the ascending series of evolution is spontaneous, without the lower, species having to exert on its part or put forth any special effort to evolve into the higher level. The reason for

this seems to be that Nature in its all-inclusiveness works automatically, of its own accord, in the case of the species in which the egoism of self-consciousness has not properly manifested itself. But, from man onwards a consciousness of effort on one's part appears to be inseparable from natural evolution though the universal working of Nature cannot be said to have ceased its functions even then—indeed Nature's work is not complete until the Absolute is realised in a state of Universal Selfhood.

Nevertheless, the factor of self-effort has to be explained adequately. Is there, really, such a thing as free will in the individual? The determinism of the purpose of Nature cannot easily be defied by any effort on the part of a segregated individual; else, individual effort standing on its own legs, may even work contrary to the intentions of Nature, because, if such a possibility is not to be associated with freedom of choice, it would be a limited freedom and not an absolute one, in which case, again, the pre-determinism of Nature would be restraining the freedom of the individual. Anyway, the egoism of man assumes a special prerogative of its own and does not care to pay any attention to there being a chance of any kind of restraint on its behaviour and operations. Man believes that his freedom of action is ultimate; that, verily, he can conquer Nature itself. An investigation into the subtle potentials of human nature and the underlying basis of human history would, however, reveal that human freedom is, after all, an ego's boast, and all activity is, in the end, a universal activity, and there is no such thing as an individual doing anything by itself. This is so also because of the interconnectedness of

things in the universe, one thing depending on another thing even for its very existence, and there is no room whatsoever for the survival of an imagined total activity or total freedom of any individual. While all this is necessarily true, the consciousness of effort remains as a factor integral to the human ego, and the consciousness of effort follows as a natural corollary of there being such a thing as the ego at all. The assumed freedom of choice of the individual can have some meaning attributable to it only if the consciousness of effort is intelligently harmonised with the consciousness that the universal intention rules everything, even the individual ego, and commands the direction of its activity, in which case alone can effort lead to success and without which no effort can lead to the expected attainment. The epic illustration of Krishna being at the back of every action of Arjuna brings out the unavoidable situation of the Absolute being there at all times as the directing power behind every event in creation and every action appearing to proceed from the individual nature of the various species of living beings.

The evolution of consciousness does not end with man, really. Man may be described as the image of God only figuratively but not truly, for there has to be a further ascent in the process of evolution from man to superman, a stage which acts as a link between man and the ultimate Godhead. Indications of the higher category of levels of life, beyond the human state, are available in the positive statements recorded in the Upanishads to the effect that above even the best of human beings there are the levels of the realms of the Pitrs, Gandharvas, Devas, the higher gods

of the heavens, the perfected ones almost converging in the stages of Virat, Hiranyagarbha, Ishvara and Brahman. That is to say, man has to evolve further on and he at present occupies a place somewhat midway between god and brute crossed at one point. The restlessness, the finitude, the consciousness of limitation from every side, the incessant and resistless longings for expansion of one's suzerainty in larger dimensions of space and endless life in time, nay, even the compulsions of being born and dying, announce in loud voice that man is far from the expected perfection to be reached in Nature's scheme of evolution, and there is a long way higher up, from man to Godman, and from Godman to God Himself.

VII—THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL PREDICAMENT

Now comes the great question of the individual perception of the world outside, its judgments, epistemological, ethical as well as aesthetic,—we may add here even the aspiration for the religious. How does man know that there is a world at all? Sense-perception is regarded as the main means of a knowledge of the world. This is usually known as right perception, that is to say, a factual correspondence being there between the consciousness of there being something outside and the actual reality and structure of the thing perceived. If knowledge of a thing does not correspond to the nature of the thing concerned, that would not be right knowledge. When perception apprehends an object in a manner disharmonious with the actual nature of the object, that knowledge would be the result of a wrong perception. This is the well-known correspondence theory of knowledge.

But how can one be sure that perception compares favourably with the nature of the object of perception? Who can know the real nature of the object except as presented to the sense-organs and the mind? Where, then, comes the question of the real nature of the object, if, for all the knowledge obtained by perception, there can be nothing real except what is presented through perception? Some thinkers have held that there is a thing-in-itself apart from the thing as perceived. The perceived world is a phenomenon, because it need not always be the thing that it is, while the thing-in-itself, the thing as it is in itself, is the realm of the noumenon, that the world of reality. But the question is, again: how does one know that there is a world

of the thing in-itself, if there is no means of perceiving it, all perception being limited to phenomena? Unless the perception of the world also involves within itself, simultaneously, a consciousness that all perception is just phenomenal, there would be no way of positing the presence of a world of reality outside phenomena. Are we unconsciously attributing to knowledge obtained through perception a consciousness of its own relativity and phenomenality? How could a phenomenon know that it is a phenomenon? Change itself cannot know change, process cannot know process, and movement cannot know movement, unless such an assumed knowledge is a characteristic of something which is not itself a part of the process of perception. But, how would such a thing be possible? Evidently, here lies a subtle secret, that at the very back and as the very foundation of all process of perception there is a thing-in-itself; —the world of reality hidden beneath the very fact of individuality. They call it the Atman, the true selfhood of the individual.

Knowledge is not always derived through sense-perception alone in the manner of a correspondence between the perception and the object. There has to be a sort of coherence of the different particulars connected with the knowledge process, and utility is not always the test of right knowledge. Pragmatism is not a workable doctrine in realms of human aspiration and philosophical deduction, which may not see the utilitarian theory as fitting well with the immutability characteristic of right knowledge. Utility does not bring out well the organic structure of knowledge, which is not just a linear

relationship temporarily obtaining as an external relation between the subject and the object. Knowledge rises as a whole, as an inclusiveness, and not as a spatio-temporal 'otherness' of the object in its relation to the subject of perception. If the object is a reality alien to the subjective consciousness, there would be no knowledge of the object in an integral fashion. Knowledge and its object cannot be dovetailed as two different things in an artificial way. There has to be a vital unity between the two, so that the object may become the real content of knowledge; else it would remain outside of knowledge as a disconnected reality, spatially and temporally sundered from the organism which is actually the essential constitution of the consciousness that endeavours to know the object. This defect of 'externality', vitiating the relationship between the subject and the object, is unavoidable either in the Pragmatic theory of knowledge or the correspondence theory of knowledge. The coherence theory alone satisfactorily accounts for a meaningful knowledge of there being such a thing as an object; here coherence meaning the very process of knowledge of the object constituting a living organism absorbing within itself the nature of the object, the process of knowing and the object itself. There is, then, a transcendent element in a correct perception of the object, a significance that we have noticed earlier in a previous analysis.

The other way in which one gains knowledge in this world is through inference from given premises. For instance, we might infer that there must have been rains uphill, when we see muddy water in the flowing river. We

infer the presence of fire if we see smoke rising up somewhere. We infer that some changeless existence has to be accepted as accounting for the very knowledge we have of the transitoriness of things, the fluctuations of the historical process, and the instability involved in the movement of all life. This is another way, through logical induction and deduction, of knowing that something has to be there even if it is not visible to the senses of direct perception. Mostly, logical knowledge of every kind, and even far-reaching conclusions in the field of physical science, would amount to inferences that follow automatically as a veritable certainty reasoned out through the examination of prevalent conditions which are a certainty to all possible observation. Rational philosophy, metaphysical affirmations, and the like, are the work of the pure reason which deduces by sequential arguments the presence of things and orders of life which range beyond human perception.

The third way of valid knowledge is scriptural testimony, which is considered as a reliable record left by masters and sages and prophets who are known to have delved into the realms of reality, of heaven, hell, and even God Himself. There is the scriptural authority claiming to confirm the longings of the pure reason that such things are really there, and the regard and respect with which people rely on the word of the scripture are too well-known to require any description. The assertions of people with knowledge obtained through a direct realisation of truth are considered as reliable sources of knowledge, call them

verbal knowledge, or scriptural knowledge, or knowledge come through authority.

The above are mainly the state in which human knowledge finds itself in its epistemological predicament, a way of knowing things on account of a dissociation of the individual from the organic structure of the universe and the world of perception being considered as something 'out there'. The wrong assumption of an externality associated with the world of perception reduces all possibility of epistemological knowledge to being reliable only to that extent, as a feeble indication and suggestion, and not as direct knowledge of the realities of life.

VIII—THE WORLD OF SCIENCE

The effect, in the end, of the process of knowledge which posits an external world is, that for all practical purposes, the world and the individual are independent entities, a position that is affirmed by sense-perception and corroborated by a judgment of the mind. To live in a world which is not vitally connected with oneself may involve a curious moment-to-moment adjustment to suit the moods and the vagaries of the world, which has its seasons, its winds and storms, its rains and droughts, its quakes and tornadoes rising from the sea which covers the whole earth as a belt, and several other inscrutable behaviours of Nature, with which the individual has to put up, somehow. The insecurity consequent upon having to live in a world standing outside the knowledge and capacity of the individual keeps everyone restless, wonderstruck and curious as to how the physical world behaves in the manner it does. What is it that motivates the changes in Nature, the precise movements of the solar and stellar systems, the wide galaxies and the endless space with an endless time attached to it? Here comes the effort of the individual to make a scientifically calculated study of Nature and its ways.

Common sense has it that the world is just a large mass of earth-stuff with water, air and heat as well as light coming from the sun. Originally, it was thought that the earth was flat and the sun moved round it in a circular fashion. If the earth had been really flat like a pancake, the rise of the sun at one end of the world would have illumined the entire world in one instant. But, the sun does not illumine the earth that way. The fact that the mornings

and the noons and the evenings of some part of the world need not be such to certain other parts of the world, would be enough to tell us that the earth is perhaps round in its shape and is not flat. Ancient astronomers in India like Aryabhata and Copernicus in the West maintained that the sun does not go round the earth, but that it is the earth that goes round the sun. Indications to this effect can be found even in the mass of literature known as the Vedas with their Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads.

Even advanced scientists like Newton held the view that space is like a vast receptacle in which the entire material world is contained, with no living connection between the content and the container. Objects in the world were considered to attract each other with a pull known as gravitation with reference to their mass and distance. It took a long time to discover through the further history of science that the material world is not just contained in space as in a cup but there is an inseparable relation between matter on one hand and space and time on the other. It was observed that space and the world of earth, water, fire and air are internally related and the whole thing constitutes an endless electromagnetic force, as it were, with more or less pressure in different parts of this field which has its undulations like waves, causing concentration of substance in different areas, gradually concretising itself as gas, heat, liquid and solid. We may notice here, perhaps, the first step in the world of science to visualise a universal continuum, man himself not standing outside it but included in it, thus the entire Nature being a self-contained whole.

Also, matter was originally said to be constituted of minute particles called molecules which are chemical in their nature, differing from one another because of their chemical composition. Researchers held that the molecules are made up of a minuter body of stuff called atoms, which, in turn, were noticed to be tiny centres of force rather than things in themselves, gyrating with velocity, with a nucleus within and wavelike particles moving around, known as electrons. The solar system with the sun in the centre and the planets revolving round the sun can be compared to the structure of the atom, wherein the sun would be the nucleus of this larger 'atom' of the solar system and the planets would be in the position of electrons, thereby indicating, again, that even the bodies of planets may not be the large bundles of heavy material as they appear to ordinary perception, but are immensely large packets of force concentrated in varying extensions of the pressure of force. This sub-atomic substance became the object of more and more concentrated investigations as to its true nature. The quantum theory of physics proclaimed that matter is a series of wave patterns or particles of light which behave like waves, and matter is convertible into light and energy. It may be that light and energy, too, can be converted into matter as it seems to have happened when gases became liquids and liquids became solid substances with heat involved in the process of motion and friction. The world stood before the scientist as a gigantic miracle of power and radiance, rather than as a stuff looking like dead matter and unintelligent crudity.

It is the Theory of Relativity that actually shook the world of science from its very roots, which, while it accepted that matter and energy are interconvertible ($E=mc^2$), ruse up to the necessity to investigate the very structure of Space and Time in its relation to Gravitation. The Relativity position is difficult to explain in a few words, but suffice it to say that it discovered that Space is not like a sheet spread out in a three-dimensional fashion, and Time is not just linear motion. Space and Time go together to constitute what may be called Space-Time and form a four-dimensional continuum, very uncomfortably breaking down all the rules, laws and regulations of the three-dimensional world of common perception. Even the Space-Time continuum should not be regarded as a substance somewhat like a tangible something. Rather, the Space-Time of Relativity is a conceptual field of mathematical point-events, reducing staggeringly the whole world to the nature of a universal mind-stuff. "The stuff of the world is consciousness," said Arthur Eddington, and "God is a cosmic mathematical Thought," said James Jeans. We have gone too far from the rural conception of a farmer's field of harvest and plantation to the field of universal relativity, which looks more like God thinking His own Thought, rather than anything else, if we could be permitted to employ this phrase which we cannot avoid one day or the other.

The interconnectedness of phenomena in the so-called events of the world taking place not in Space or in Time, but in a four-dimensional Space-Time continuum, was taken up with its more advanced implications for

consideration by Alfred North Whitehead. In his philosophy of the 'Organism', Whitehead arrived at the conclusion that there are no set causes producing set effects, but anything can be an effect or a cause in a symmetrical manner of action and reaction, since the world as it is discovered by the Theory of Relativity is an organism with its parts integrally related to it. Cause and effect are continuous, the absence of which continuity would sever any possible relation between cause and effect. Things in the world are called 'actual occasions', the potential concentrated points of force whose very existence as well as structure are conditioned by the existence and structure of other 'actual occasions' which fill the cosmos as its constituents. The world is not a solid substance but is more like a field of law and order, an idea of total inclusiveness, a system of internal give-and-take policy obtaining among the individualities known as 'actual occasions', transforming the location of individuals into a fluid movement of a liquefied connection, as it were, with everything else also in the world. Super-individual intentions, known as 'eternal objects', in the language of Whitehead, like the 'Ideas' of Plato, 'ingress' into the body of the 'actual occasions' and make them appear to be what they are. Even the God of religion, according to Whitehead, exists as a determining factor of the determination of 'actual occasions' by the 'eternal objects', and He Himself stands, therefore, determined in a way by the prehensive and apprehensive activities of the 'actual occasions', thus bringing about a mutual action and reaction process between God and the individuals. The far-reaching thought

of Whitehead would not forbid the conclusion that God has, at the same time, to be transcendent to the world of the 'actual occasions', though they are there just because He Himself is.

The specially religious import of modern physical science is highlighted also in the system of Samuel Alexander, which he purports to explain in his book entitled "Space, Time and Deity". According to Alexander, Space-Time is the matrix of all things, the very substance of the universe, a clue that he gathers from the Theory of Relativity. The Space-Time matrix causes motion and force, and brings about the three-dimensional picture of what are known as primary qualities, like length, breadth and height, substance, volume and content. The perception of these primary qualities happens to be through the secondary qualities arising as a sort of action-reaction process obtaining between the object of perception, namely, a primary quality and the perceiving mind. To cite an instance, a leaf looks green in colour not because there is such a thing called greenness in Nature itself, but because of an abstraction of properties automatically taking place in the internal structure of the leaf excluding all other characteristics in Nature apart from what looks like green. So is the case with other colours and forms of objects. Sensations of every kind form, again, a set of secondary qualities, that is to say, no one can know what the world is in itself as a set of primary qualities. Mind, intellect and reason are the further manifestations or evolutes of the Space-Time continuum or matrix, which point to the manifestation of a controlling principle called Deity, and

every succeeding stage can be regarded as a Deity to the preceding stage. According to Alexander, the final Deity is yet to be manifested completely, which, when achieved, will be the end of the cosmic process. Perhaps, here, Alexander intends to say, which he actually does not, that the end of the cosmic process of evolution is the attainment of God. Also, a God who is yet to be will not have the character of Eternity, and God, then, would cease to be God.

IX—PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

The systems of thought that have studied the workings of the psyche or the mind-stuff are the psychologies, the researches conducted into the process of thinking, feeling, willing and understanding. In the Eastern circles of such studies, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali are foremost as highly advanced analyses of the structure and function of the human psyche. Eastern thought has always superseded even the modern Gestalt theory of psychology, concluding that the mind always acts as a whole and not in bits or fractions. As a matter of fact, the apparently fractional thinking that is observed in people when they lay special emphasis on certain aspects of their psyche to the exclusion of others under certain given conditions does not sever the mind into parts capable of making any of its functions independent of others. The fractional emphasis is superficial in the sense that ignored aspects of psychic function are not actually standing there isolated literally, but only the emphasised function attracts the attention of consciousness more than the other functions. To give an example, when we take a meal and are concerned only with a few limited functions of the body, the other functions remain nevertheless connected though unattended by direct awareness due to its preoccupation with some particular function.

The Upanishads hold that the waking consciousness is a whole by itself and constitutes a transparent activity of the mind, as contrasted with the states of dream and sleep. To the Upanishads, the mind by itself is not self-conscious and it is illumined by the true self within, the Atman, which is

the only thing that is finally conscious; verily, the Atman is consciousness itself. Its consciousness permeates the entire physical system in the waking condition and even the body then appears to be conscious, as we can feel a sensation of awareness, in waking, when we touch the body, or when we experience ourselves as a whole body in that state. The waking state of consciousness is occupied with perception of objects and storing within itself impressions of the forms of perception. These impressions remain, like the repeated impressions created on the same receiving film of a photographic camera, as impressions piled one over the other as a large mass of chaotic accumulation of potentialities of perception which are driven into the subconscious level when active perception takes place through waking consciousness. In dream, into which the mind enters due to various reasons, direct perception as in waking ceases and the potentials remaining as impressions of earlier perceptions begin to act as the media of the perception of objects in dream. In the state of deep sleep even the subconscious operations cease on account of consciousness getting dissociated entirely from the body and the mind, and the individual then resting not vitally connected to either the body or the mind. But the large accumulated potential of psychic impressions created earlier acts like a thick cloud which prevents the consciousness in sleep from being self-conscious. Thus, in sleep there is no consciousness of its dissociation from body and mind or of the fact of consciousness alone being there in that state. The thickened potentials causing unconsciousness in sleep are the larger storehouse created,

something like a sea of latent impressions, from which impressions capable of being projected out alone rise into action in dream and waking. The waking, dreaming and deep sleep states are herein explained as conditions of the mind-stuff, the psyche proper beyond which is the transcendental Atman-consciousness though this transcendental becomes immanently pervasive in terms of the three states mentioned, to give them a meaning for purpose of experience.

The psychic potentials can be classified into two groups: those which are studied in general psychology and the ones that are the subject of abnormal psychology, the former remaining as the general media of common perception, such as just being aware of the fact that certain things are there out in the world of space, and the latter causing emotional disturbance with joy and sorrow attending, such as when the perception is of something which is either loved or hated. The former are called Aklishta-Vrittis (non-painful psychoses), and the latter Klishta-Vrittis (painful psychoses): Direct perception of things through the sense-organs and inferences drawn from perceived hypotheses, as well as knowledge gained through instruction and information gathered from external sources, constitute, broadly, the field of normal psychological operations. But, seeing things topsy-turvy with a prejudiced camouflage projected on objects, which happens in loves and hatreds, comes under abnormal conditions of the pain-giving type. These painful psychoses or Vrittis have a damaging effect on the individual right from the beginning in that they create the erroneous impression that objects are galvanized

by one's own feelings and are really there as so presented to one's emotions. Egotism, which is the self-assertive tendency in the individual, causes this bifurcated way of thinking and feeling, as likes and dislikes, dividing the world into two camps, namely, the desirable and the undesirable. Apart from this psychological travesty into which the individual is dragged by the painful Vrittis, they also have the power to cause a metaphysical distortion in their perception of things, as for instance, when one persistently feels that the world and its objects are a permanent stuff standing out there, though it is well known that the world is transient and is in the process of evolution; that the body which is just a conglomeration of skin and flesh, bone and marrow and blood, is seen as an attractive source of beauty; that the nervous titillations caused by the sense-organs when they come in contact with their respective objects are real forms of happiness; or that the world is a totally external something, though in fact it is involved in the very structure of the individual who perceives it.

Western theories of psychology, while studying the operations of the individual in perception, inference and in its various other activities, have latterly developed a form of study known as psychoanalysis, which does not merely make a bare observation of mind's functions but goes into the very depths of the evaluation of life itself. The impulses of the appetites such as hunger, self-regard and sex condition the individual's outlook of life to such an extent that one would very much doubt if there is such a thing as right perception at all. One can assess the values of things

either in terms of one's material needs or in terms of the self-regard that one attaches to oneself, or the various forms of sexual pressure exerted on oneself, whether in natural forms of expression or in their repressed or retrograde movements caused by frustration. These impulses can blind the eye of the person so intensely that one would be able to see the world of persons and things only as one would like to see them, with a preconceived notion, since objective evaluations would become impossible as the mind works only in terms of subjective conditionings. It is clear that this is an unhealthy state of affairs supervening in the human psyche, from which one can free oneself through philosophical analysis, self-study or by a gradual weaning of the mind from such obsessions by an educative method adopted through fulfilment and sublimation as if one is undergoing a medical treatment. Psychology and psychoanalysis are complementary to each other, that is, the one concerning itself with what generally goes by the name of normalcy in life, and the other concentrating itself on the deviations from the normal, as illness is a departure in an important sense from the health of the organism.

X—AESTHETICS AND THE FIELD OF BEAUTY

The human individual is ostensibly concerned with the true nature of things, it loves the world of truth as distinct from the realm of untruth—stages of which have been briefly noticed in our earlier findings, but there is also the love of system, symmetry, order, pattern and beauty which satisfies the mind deeply. While truth attracts our admiration, awe and wonder, beauty evokes a sense of composure, sobriety and inner delight. All kinds of art come under the study of aesthetics. There are indeed many arts: kinds of expertness in methodical presentation to the point of perfection. Good writing is an art, good administration is an art, maintenance of good health is an art, being always happy within is an art, to live harmoniously with one's atmosphere or environment is an art, to think logically is an art, to be truly good is an art. All things that 'satisfy' are embodied in art. The greatest arts, supreme objects of aesthetic enjoyment are, to state them in an ascending order of importance, architecture and sculpture; drawing and painting; music, dance and drama; and, above all, literature.

Arts which require for their presentation heavy external material are lowest in the category of aesthetic evaluation. Architecture requires the largest quantity of weighty material. Sculpture also needs material but in a lesser quantity. Drawing and painting require the least of materials, just canvas and ink. Music and its attendant forms of aesthesis require no physical material at all, not even ink and pen. What is needed here is just a methodical production of sound. Art is either visual, audible or

intellectual. Architecture, sculpture, painting and drawing are examples of visual beauty; music is auditory, dance and drama are both visual and auditory; while literature is purely ideational, intellectual, an act of pure understanding and feeling. The higher we go in the order of ascent in the scheme of the presentation of beauty, the more enjoyable does the object become, so that powerful literature can shake the whole world in an instant. While the other arts have only a local importance and do not produce such a permanent effect on the mind as literature does.

In the perception of art, there are, again, two phases as stated, namely, that which attracts by its beauty and that which attracts by its sublimity. The towering Himalaya Mountains, the astounding expanse of the blue sky with its wondrous stellar kingdom, the majestic tumult of the ocean, and even the grand personality of the elephant evokes our sense of wonder and awe, partly because their largeness of quantum and unapproachableness makes us feel small in our own selves. The ego is pressed down to its minimal level and there it is in the absence of an egoistic affirmation of ourselves that we appreciate in wonderment the power and greatness of things which are above us and seem to defy us with all our assumed importance. The other aspect of aesthetic perception is the attraction caused by beautiful things such as the blossoming of a healthy flower, the charming face of the full moon in a clear sky, as also the healthy shape presented in a symmetrically ordered body, whether of a substance a plant, an animal or a human being. Apart from the beauty of health and symmetry in the case of a human personality, there is also the factor of

youthfulness which adds to the charm of vigour, vitality and symmetry of the physical presentation.

But what is it that makes anything look beautiful? Philosophically, we may say that the proportion in which the Infinite, or the Absolute, as the highest universal, is visualised in any particular thing will decide the extent of beauty which that thing evokes. It is the universality involved in the particular that is the source of beauty and the sense of perception. In the perception of beauty, the processes involved are the perceiving mind, the act of perception and the object itself. The question arises, whether the object can be considered to be beautiful even if there is no one to perceive it. We may perhaps, in a way, concede that beauty and perfection do not require somebody to know them, since the flower and the moon and the charming face of a child can remain beautiful even if there is no one to see them. Our commonsense understanding would like to assert that this is true, but is this really true? Does the flower know that it is beautiful? Is the moon beautiful to itself? That is, does beauty really from part of the beautiful object? Here we seem to be in a doubtful position, and it does not look that, in the end, beauty can justify itself apart from the process of its being perceived. If being perceived is what gives beauty to an object, it would mean that beauty is in the perceiving mind rather than in the object. It has been well said that beauty is in the beholder. But here, again, is a question: can the mind perceive beauty if there is nothing to be perceived at all? Does the mind know that it is the source of beauty even if it has nothing to conceive or think of?

This position lands us in an unavoidable conclusion that beauty is not the entire prerogative of the object called beautiful; nor can it be said that it is enough to have a mind alone and there need be no abject to apprehend beauty. Beauty, then, comes out as a consequence immediately following a reaction taking place between the perceiving subject and the structure of the perceived object. As there is a sort of beauty in a square rod getting itself fixed into a square hole of the corresponding size, or a round rod getting fixed in a round hole, and there is no beauty in a square rod being thrust into a round hole, there is also the feature of the presence of the object getting properly fixed into the prevailing mood or the condition of the mind of the perceiving individual. A grieved mind can see no beauty in anything, as a sick body can see no taste even in the best articles of diet. The need of the perceiving mind determines the extent of the perfection that it can behold in its object, for beauty is a form of perfection. There are several lacunae or imperfections in the human mind, which differ from individual to individual, and which will decide the kind of thing that the mind of the individual needs to make it experience a sense of fulfilment and perfection. That is, the object should be constituted in such a way that it will reveal characteristics which the perceiving individual does not possess. If the mind of the individual perceiving has all the qualities which an object presented before it has, such a mind will not get attracted to that object, but the attraction will immediately summon itself forth if the contour or the structure of the object satisfies the kind of lack that the perceiving individual feels within. Thus, it would appear

that beauty is entirely relative to the conditions prevailing in a given form of interaction between the subject and the object. Beauty, then, would belong neither to the subject nor to the object. It is not something existing by itself. It is a state of consciousness that suddenly erupts in between the subject and the object, but not belonging either to the subject or the object, a transcendent inclusiveness which oversteps the limitations of the subject and the object and brings them into a state of harmony and mutually cooperative association to make good what each lacks in oneself but can be found in the other, so that the union between the two characters engenders a consciousness of self-transcendence, which is endearing beauty and great grandeur.

PART II – THE SOCIAL SCENE

XI—THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIETY

The word 'society', for all outward look, would just mean nothing more than a group of people come together on account of their common ideology, cultural values, religious outlook and kindred characteristics which unite them as a bond commonly linking them into the pattern of a whole. The question is: Does society consist of individual personalities, as human beings, or does it consist of the bond mentioned, which is ideational? A society of people can be there even if their constituent members happen to live geographically away from one another, but even a group of people sitting in a single room may not form a society if among them there is nothing to call a common cause. Actually, the common cause is what can be called society, and not merely the persons. A large number of people travelling in a railway compartment do not necessarily form a society.

What then is society? A society can constitute itself into an administrative organisation, such as a government, and frame laws and rules to restrain and order the life and conduct of people. Who makes the law to administer whom? It is clear that people make the law to administer people. Here a second question arises: How could law restrain people since its very source is the people whom it is expected to restrain? If law is something totally man-made, it cannot, obviously, have a restraining influence on the very man who made it. Do we see laws being made by people in such rostrums as a parliament? Are they not making rules to bind themselves at the same time, since the

lawmaker, at least in a democratic sense of values, makes the law applicable to himself also? Does this sound like a quandary, that the maker of law is bound by the very law he makes? The enforcement of law seems to be associated also with physical force, without which there would be no means of seeing that it is implemented by people. But, where is the source of this power that enforces law? It will very uncomfortably appear to be hinging upon the appurtenances of exercising power, the methodology of which is a matter of common knowledge, all which will point to the interesting conclusion that even right cannot be established without might. This, however, would reduce the principles of law to a dependence entirely upon non-conceptual means of action, such as physical force, though law itself cannot be identified with anything which is physical, material or tangible.

The above observation only highlights the difficulty in understanding society and law, but it does not answer the question: What exactly is the law of society? May be that the difficulty itself will open up a window for us to behold, a beam of light that can shed its rays on the inner meaning of law, order and society. An example, further, we may find helpful: Suppose that the supreme law-making body of a country, known as the Parliament, consists of six hundred members, and suppose that five hundred of them unanimously decide that something has to be done. This decision becomes an Act of Parliament, since it is an opinion of a majority. But, if the very same majority goes for a picnic in some remote village and then makes the same decision, that would not be an Act of Parliament. But

why should it be so, if an Act requires nothing more than the will or the wish of the majority? It may be said that it is not enough if the majority says something; it has to say it in a particular place, in a particular circumstance in a particular manner, and so on. But, place, time and circumstance are not persons, these are not members of the Parliament. The situation boils itself down to the Parliamentary Act being an organisation of several conceptual and ideological principles operating in the minds of people and not the people themselves. The Parliament, then, would be riot a body of people but a body of ideas.

Is the Idea prior to man, or is man prior to the Idea? Nominalists are fond of affirming that there cannot be an idea without a person having the idea, as there cannot be a quality without a substance. But, great philosophers of the East and thinkers like Plato in the West have held that Ideas are prior to their embodied forms; verily, they have held that Ideas are super-physical realities and form a sort of eternal pattern of the structure of the universe. An idea is not something that is projected by the mind of a person, but it is, rather, something which is there requiring to be embodied in form as mind and body. If this were not to be so, a law that is an Idea cannot have any influence upon people, if people are the originators of the Idea. People are afraid of law though there should be no reason for this fear if the maker of law can also unmake it to his own advantage, since he is the maker of law. There seems to be some super-personal cause, super-individual and super-physical, which is the reason why it becomes necessary for

people to conceive such a thing as law and order. The acceptance of the fact of a regulating law that supersedes the individualities of persons is a spontaneous acceptance of the source of law being a kind of a universal requirement beyond personalities. Do we not hear that even the final form of the universal continuum is not anything physically measurable or conceivable, and the universe seems to be more an organisation of law and order than a material conglomeration of physical particulars? The philosophy of law will reduce law in the end to the operation of an Absolute Idea. This would incidentally negate any final value to be attached to the individualities of persons, even to the visible form of the world itself, lifting Principle above every personal or material consideration.

The administrative system, therefore, would be, if it is to be true to the ultimate principle of law, a replica of the way in which Nature as a whole works, or the Universal works in its entirety. Civil and criminal laws have to bear relevance to the purpose of the life of each individual and the purpose of even the group of individuals. People do not live for nothing. The life of an individual is a link in the longer process of the development of the soul from its present condition to its larger possibilities in a higher Selfhood. The government of a nation would not complete its duty to its citizens if it merely protects it from external attack and internal social disorder, but at the same time does not provide for the needs of the inner development of the individuals in their ascent towards the higher achievements of life, culturally and spiritually. The administrator, call him a king if you so like, is declared by

the ancient law-givers of India to be a representation of Divinity (navishnuh prithivipatih), in the sense that the administrator is an organisation in himself, the significance of which provides the whole country with a rule like the universal principle of God being immanent in creation. The administrator is not merely a protector of people and their caretaker but has to be endowed with a capacity to enter into the very spirit which is embodied in people—the country is the large body of the Administrating Principle, which is no more a person but a pervading law of cohesion and integration.

XII—AXIOLOGY: THE AIMS OF EXISTENCE

What are the needs of people? One may say that they are social, economic and political security. But, this would be to look at things only from the peripheral level. Ancient Indian thought, recorded in the scriptural texts, such as the Smritis, Epics and Puranas, which have gone into great detail in this field of investigation, has classified the basic requirement in terms of what are known as Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Here is a standing example of the great intuition of the early seers into the essentials of human life.

The four aims stated exhaust the entire area of human aspiration and performance. The term, Moksha, describes the final aim of all things. The resistless asking, characterising all living beings in a variety of ways, has to end somewhere, sometime. There cannot be only asking without the chance of fulfilling it. An endless asking for wider dimensions which can be seen working vigorously in every living being, and most perspicaciously in human nature, has to have its origin nowhere except in the very consciousness and the very life principle of all beings. This is a suggestion that the endless fulfilment, comprehending infinitude, has its incipient roots in the consciousness of the life principle from which arises this perennial impulse to overstep all boundaries and achieve a limitless state of existence. Do we not see Nature working actively through the process of evolution to provide higher and more adequate forms of life, aiming evidently at superhuman possibilities which can end only in the state of absolute unrelatedness? This is the eternal state of being whose attainment is the principal preoccupation of all activity

through universal history. Universal freedom is Moksha. This is the summum bonum of life and the meaning of all existence. This is the highest Purushartha, the pinnacle of all possible aspiration.

Man lives, finally, to strive towards the attainment of Moksha. Nevertheless, the aspiring human individual involved in the shackle of body and mind has to pay some attention to what exactly is to be done while actually involved in this manner. The physical body has its material needs and the mind has its emotional calls. The working for Moksha is also to take into account these lesser psychophysical requirements. The physical needs come under the realm of Artha, including material possessions necessary for the survival of the physical body. Food, clothing and shelter are the barest minimum necessary for the continuance of life. Everyone has the right to live, even as everyone has a duty to achieve ultimate freedom. Further, a phenomenon presented as a content of experience should be considered as real enough to call for concerted attention. That the body is not the soul does not preclude the necessity to pay due attention to the demands of the body, for even a phenomenon not finally real assumes a reality to the extent it is received and accepted into the constitution of consciousness. The laws regulating properties and rights are complicated enough and one cannot decide offhand what are exactly the physical needs of a person, since such things as security and health also come within the purview of physical needs. The system of social organisation and the policy of governmental administration have direct relevance to not only the

quantum of material facility required by an individual but also the means of acquiring it without being detrimental to the similar needs of other individuals and the welfare of the State.

The emotional needs of people coming under what is known as Kama are equally important. This is a field of psychic activity that is concerned with the perception of beauty and the aesthetic excitement that such a perception evokes in the individual. Even if every kind of material comfort is assured to a person, the peculiar inner longing for a satisfaction appearing to be even superior to the pleasures of physical ease cannot be ruled out of consideration. People can die for the sake of imagined joys even sacrificing all wealth and position in society. The workings of the mind have their arms reaching regions deeper than the physical body and its needs. The stimulation generated by the experience of even the height of physical security and concomitant appurtenances can be overshadowed by the stimulus generated by artistic and aesthetic enjoyment. The faculty of feeling is not in any way weaker, perhaps it is very much stronger, than the preoccupations of intellect and volition. This is an area of desire in its subtler aspects apart from the grosser asking for food and the like, which includes the power exerted on the mind especially by the higher forms of fine art and the romantic pressures working incessantly in the individual, including all forms of the impulse to reproduce replica of one's species.

The rule of life which is a methodology of the soul's ascent to the Absolute accepts the pull of Artha and Kama

in human life, and the proportion in which they are allowed to participate in the onward progression of the individual, though the aspect of greed lying in ambush as a sting behind the normally permissible physical comforts and the excess of a passionate form which may be assumed by the healthy providing of emotional needs, may vitiate into a harmful opposite of the otherwise positive growth of the human personality by means of the contributory assistance accorded by Artha and Kama, which psychoanalysts would dub as food and sex, but which, however, is suggestive of a profounder need stressing the call for a proper adjustment of parts to the whole.

Dharma is the law that grants freedom and also restrains freedom at the same time. While it is necessary to give freedom to everyone, it is also necessary to limit everyone's freedom to the extent to which everyone else also needs freedom equally. Society has to cohere into a harmonious blending of all its parts in the requisite proportion of emphasis on each particular part. Since unity appears to be the law of all things, there has to be some principle of action that insists on its introduction, in the manner necessary, amidst the diversity of isolated things and human beings apparently divided among themselves. Physical gravitation, chemical coherence, physiological health, mental sanity, emotional balance, and logical consistency, are various forms of the working of the unity of all life. This principle, this rule of the cohesion of divided parts into the pattern of perfection, is Dharma, which inexorably works everywhere, and, at all times. Dharma, in fact, is God in action, the Absolute revealing itself in and

through its manifestations by degrees of concrescence and division. Nothing worth the while, political solidarity, social peace or personal happiness, can be achieved without the sanction of Dharma, which is an impersonal law of equity and justice, not to be confused with any form of cult, creed, faith or religion.

XIII—THE NOMATIVE FEATURES OF ETHICS AND MORALITY

The character of selfhood, or the self-identical affirmation in feeling and consciousness, asserting each individual to be what it is, and not anything other than what it is in itself, would be a good foundation to assess the relation that one individual evidently maintains in respect of others. The primary identity that everything maintains in regard to itself and the fact that nothing would brook an interference by others into its self-identity and specific individuality must show that no one, nay, nothing, would wish to be in any way subservient to what it is not essentially. Everyone regards himself as an end to be achieved and not a means to the achievement of some other end dissociated from oneself. In this sense, the world would reveal itself as a 'Kingdom of Ends', and nothing in the world is a means to somebody else. The first principle of ethics and morality seems to be, then, the great law that no one can be used as an instrument for one's own purposes. No one is a means to an end, but everyone is an end in itself. Exploitation of any kind, that is, the utilisation of anyone as a tool or an instrument, is ruled out in a universe of self-complete ends in themselves. Such ethical standards as implied in statements like 'Do unto others as you would be done by', 'Do not mete out to others what you would not like to be meted out to yourself', are pronouncements of this basic truth of everything being a centre of common aspiration.

It was held by thinkers like Immanuel Kant that there is also another way in which we can ascertain what is right or

proper. Assume, for awhile, if you would like everyone in the world to behave in the same way as you, and watch the consequences of such a proposition. Would a thief like that everyone in the world should also be a thief? In that case, theft would lose its meaning, because the significance of theft is in that there are some people in the world who are not thieves. If everyone tells only untruth, it would lose its purpose. Untruth seems to succeed because there are some persons in the world who speak the truth. If everyone is equally violent in respect of everyone else, the purpose of violence would be defeated. When a conduct, behaviour or intention cannot be permitted to be adopted by everyone in the world, such a policy should be regarded as contrary to the expected norms of ethics and morality. Kant also held a third principle as important in this case, namely, the 'imperative' character of the impulsion in people to do what is right and just and an inward abhorrence automatically arising in oneself to do what is improper and unjust. That is to say, no one is spontaneously, from the bottom of one's heart, impelled to do the wrong: perhaps the one who does a wrong is aware that he is doing a wrong. The awareness of the wrongness of one's action should indicate that the roots of human nature are disharmonious with wrong and wickedness, especially as every wrong action, though deliberately done, brings with it the trail of remorse, insecurity and unhappiness. Man's conscience in its essentiality is not an accomplice of harm and injury being done to anyone. It is necessary for the evil one intending to destroy others to destroy his own conscience first. The self

of the killer is killed much before the act of killing takes place.

Since human conduct is necessarily directed to the survival of the human individual, no one would be so insensible as to violate this same instinct in others, inasmuch as the existence and activity of others is a limitation on one's own conduct. One cannot have that kind of freedom that is a denial of the same in the case of other people. Ethical norms centre round the need to accept the existence of other people than oneself and the compulsion to accede and grant to others the very same freedom that one would like to be granted to oneself. Morality is a principle that restrains human behaviour, firstly on account of the necessity to concede these values as associated with other people, and, secondly, due to the greater need to see that one's outlook and behaviour does not contravene the need of the soul to progress upwards towards a larger expansion of its immortal essence.

Another insistence of Kant is that the very structure of reason, which is rationality, requires the universe to be a presentation of order, method and harmony, and nothing that can be regarded as an irrational element can be permitted to be operating within this structure. The nature of reason is harmony and a self-adjustment of its parts in such a way that it would not allow an irreconcilable something to be present somewhere outside its domain. The universal reason is an all-enveloping adjustment of parts, so that reason becomes a non-exclusive wholeness, in which case alone can reason be what reason ought to be. The rationality of the universe is reason's vision of its own

perfection and anything that reason would regard as unreasonable, unjust or wrong cannot be present in the world of reason. Reason would stultify itself and reduce itself to unreason if its pervasive character does not include everyone and everything, in the absence of which the very existence of others would be unreasonable. Reason's supreme stand is akin to the position assumed by the Judge of the Cosmos to whose presence none is barred entry and whose impartial judgment would not be detrimental to the aim of the existence of anyone. This superior reason declares that equity has to be the mode of dealing with and evaluating persons and things; this, again, because the world, as stated, is a 'Kingdom of Ends'.

The basic principles of ethics and morality have been stated to be harmlessness extended to all beings, truthfulness in one's behaviour with other people, and self-restraint in regard to one's own self (Ahimsa, Satya, Brahmacharya), since the character of self-integration highlighting one's own person is going to determine the purposefulness and progressive welfare of the world.

The hedonistic and utilitarian doctrines of ethics which make out that the quantum and kind of happiness available to the largest number of persons is the principle of ethical goodness, or that the extent of utility in life is what determines conduct, have a flaw in their doctrines. What does one mean by saying that the largest number of people should have the greatest happiness? How many people are we to include within this largest number? Perhaps, the entirety of the human species in the world. But is it possible to imagine a state of affairs where every human being in the

world is equally happy? Secondly, what is the meaning of 'the greatest happiness'? Where does one reach its limit? It is clear that the happiness of the mind is superior to the pleasures of the body, an obvious fact which does not require an explanation. But, is not the joy of the spirit greater than even mental satisfaction? Where do we actually land ourselves in our computation of the greatest form of happiness? It is the famous opinion of the Upanishad that, supposing there is a ruler of the whole earth, uncontested by anyone, youthful, healthy, educated and cultured, good and loved by all people,—if such a person can be imagined to be existing at any time,—the happiness of such a person would be one unit of happiness. A hundred times mare than the happiness of such an emperor is the happiness of the denizens of the higher regions known as the Pitrs (forefathers). A hundred times the happiness of the Pitrs is the happiness of the Gandharvas (celestial musicians). A hundred times the happiness of the Gandharvas is the happiness of the celestials, or the gods in heaven, who have earned that state by their meritorious deeds. A hundred times the happiness of these gods is the happiness of the gods who are gods right from the time of creation. A hundred times the happiness of these perpetual gods is the happiness of the ruler of the gods, Indra. A hundred times the happiness of Indra is the happiness of the preceptor of the gods, Brihaspati. A hundred times the happiness of Brihspati is the happiness of Prajapati, the Creative Principle. Beyond all this is the Absolute, Brahman, whose happiness cannot be calculated by arithmetical multiplication. It is also to be added here that the increase

of happiness by a hundred times at every higher stage mentioned is an increase not only in quantity but also in the quality of happiness. Here we have a grand concept of what 'the greatest happiness' can be. That utility is the test of true happiness is something to be set aside as a reliable principle, since what is considered to be of utility now need not be useful tomorrow, and what we thought as useful when we were little children is not so when we become mature of age. The whole doctrine smacks of sensationalism, empiricism gone to a dangerous precipice.

XIV—CIVIC AND SOCIAL DUTY

The well-known programme revolving round the dictum, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', has far-reaching implications. Why should one love one's neighbour? The Vedanta philosophy would give the answer: 'Because thy neighbour is thy own self'. The responsibility of a person to another person, who is here called the neighbour, depends on the extent to which one recognises in the person of another the essence of one's own self. Those who render the greatest service to mankind are people who do not merely behold in front of them a multitude of persons and feel a social obligation or a political necessity to be considerate and serviceful to them, but those in whom a deeper impulse is welling up to see their own selves in all. The spiritual leaders of mankind alone can render the greatest service to people in terms of their very souls, while the common social-welfare projects can touch only the fringe of humanity's needs. To serve the body with food, clothing, shelter and medical attention is indeed good, but a better service would be to educate people and make them confident in themselves with the recognition of the dignity of man as an emblem of divinity. To work for the salvation of the soul is the greatest of all services. The saints and sages, with their powerful thoughts and concentrated feelings, render a service which cannot be seen with the physical eyes. These masters descend on earth for a while, think a few thoughts that will vibrate for all time to come, and leave the world unnoticed. These are the greatest geniuses of the world, not the kings, the wealthy magnates and marshals of war.

The civic duty of man is a basic commonsense consideration that one should have to the environment of people and the world, and it is good to be always friendly with the community around. Not only that; it would be better to be kind and serviceful to persons in the vicinity. If charity begins at home, love and service also start in the immediate neighbourhood. Goodness of behaviour is more a quality of outlook than a quantitative reach of one's actions to distant corners of the world. To be qualitatively good in respect of even one person would speak more gloriously of that source of service than to be just quantitatively philanthropic to a large number of individuals. Goodness does not require any announcement in public, it does not seek recognition, not even a word of thanks, for, "Is not the least one in this world going to be recognised as the first in the kingdom of God?"

Civic obligations arise from human nature itself. They spring from the very needs of human make-up which has connections with different kinds of facility that is expected to be received from the world. If we accept the theory of the cave-man, the hunter and the tribal as the initial stages of human effort towards preservation of life and maintenance of security and read through the following stages of the development of the human mind, it would become obvious that there was a developing tendency of individuals to form themselves into small groups for the purpose of facilitating the acquisition of the common needs of life, as also to protect the group from rival communities. Perhaps, here is the crude beginning of the formation of principalities and such regional associations with a common cause, and with

a leader, mostly of a warrior type, to become later a local suzerain, a royalty, the traditional king occupied with the protection of his jurisdiction and always cautious to ward off interference from other ambitious guardians of people living in different localities, which could very easily be proclaimed as the beginnings of kingdoms, investing their leaders even with a kind of superhuman divinity. This so-called 'divine right of kings,' thus originated and proclaimed by certain rulers, is a mixture of supposed human power and angelic superintendence over communities recognised as superphysical glories enhancing the status and recognition of the earthly potentates.

It is the specific contribution of Hegel in his studies of the phenomenology of mind that the original form of life was just identical with brute consciousness, which is a state of sleeping consciousness, gradually opening itself out into the vegetable type, animal type and human type of consciousness, self-consciousness becoming aware of itself only at the human level. The brute man, the vegetable man, the animal man and the truly human man are classifications possible even at the human level. At the lowest level, man concerns himself only with himself, with his physical needs, and would regard everyone else as his objects, either as things for his consumption or those that are to be feared and guarded against. The selfishness of man manifests itself in love and hatred towards others. In love one attempts to destroy the object by absorbing it into one's own person and in hatred one tries to abolish the object physically. Both in love and hatred the intention of the lover or the hater is to annihilate the isolated existence

of the object so that, whether in love or in hatred, the ego asserts itself as supreme and would not permit a separate existence of another ego beside itself. The developing consciousness gradually realises that such selfishness cannot succeed in the end, and it is not difficult to see that, even in the attempt of the individual to abolish the individualities of others in love and hatred, there is a dependence of the individual on others through the impulses of various likes and dislikes. It now becomes clear to the more enlightened consciousness that it is not possible to annihilate the individualities of others, because of its dependence on them somehow or other, and it becomes necessary for every individual to recognise the existence of other individuals as unavoidables in life. Thus arises a necessity to create a situation where the existence of other individuals has to be accepted and yet the desire of the ego not to be dependent on others is simultaneously taken care of, a circumstance where sufficient importance is conceded to other individuals without diminishing one's own importance in any way. This is the beginning of the community-consciousness or social consciousness, where the acceptance of the value of others is co-existent with the value that one attaches to oneself. Social organisations crop up in this manner, where everyone is cooperative with every other, for, without such a cooperation, no one's individual existence can be free from the threat of self-annihilation.

In civic body or society it is obligatory that everyone should contribute something to the survival and welfare of that body, and no one can remain idle, doing nothing.

Work everyone must. The participation of the person in the form of service to society is naturally graded according to the station in which the person is placed in society. The circumstances of one's life, one's knowledge and capacity, will decide the quality and the extent to which such a service would be expected by the society to which one belongs. Society lives by the mutual coordination of its constituents, as a fabric of cloth is what it is because of the threads that go to form it. Since no single individual can be said to have the ability to contribute individually everything that the society would need, the ancient system of law has laid down that each one should share with the social set-up the highest possibility of which one is capable. Analysing the requirements of society as consisting of the necessary ways and means of maintaining and administering society, the law-givers in terms of the social order spelt out such needs as the fourfold blend of directing power, executive power, commercial power and manpower, known in Sanskrit as Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra, representing wisdom, administration, trade and work, respectively. As a large machine is, so is human society, only differing from a machine in the purposiveness and aspiration of its existence. As every little bit of a mechanical body intended to raise a particular output is equally important, so also the people belonging to these categories by their knowledge and ability form a family integrated internally, living and serving on the basis of the dignity and the divinity of every labour or work. It is necessary to be humane before one becomes human.

Civic duties also include ecological considerations and the obligation to protect Nature in its originality and purity. Let mountains stand, let rivers flow, let trees grow, let fresh air blow, and let no one interfere with their freedom, freshness and innocence. Polluting air with smoke and dust, vitiating water by dumping waste and dirt on it, destroying living trees which are responsible for the strength of the ground on which they stand and are also responsible for rainfall in the suitable season, are civic offences on the part of man. Throwing garbage on open ground is prohibitory to commonweal and health of people. Is not Nature the first and immediate neighbour whom one has to love as one's own self?

XV—THE ECONOMY OF LIFE

Life survives by the principle of economy it maintains in itself. Life is a system of harmony without excess in any of its features. Economic conditions do not exhaust themselves merely in gold and silver, land and property. Economy is the principle of the conservation of life and energy, the proper maintenance of balance in its internally adjusted parts. As the body requires physical exercise, food, water and air as well as light and heat for its healthy continuance, the mind of man, which is more than his body in value, has its own system of economy and balancing of operations. As more than the normal or less than the normal needs of the body may turn it sick and make it droop in weakness, so can the mind lose its power and become ill by either excessive activity or inactivity. The functions of the mind and the workings of the body have to go together not only parallel to one another but as a living and organised focussing of the individual towards its given purpose in life. Mental excess may take the form of passion, greed and anger and its negative aspects may appear as torpidity, sloth, sluggishness and inactivity, including moodiness, despondency and melancholy. Economy is the proper use of the forces of life and the mentioned aberrations constitute their abuse or misuse. Physical and mental economy contributes to physical and mental health and it is impossible to isolate one from the other. This is to state briefly the vital economy and mental health and vigour which the individual has to maintain for the keeping up of its own expected norms in personal life.

But the life of the individual is directly connected with the economy of social existence. The social behaviour of the individual is naturally the expression of the inner make-up of the individual psychologically and sometimes even physically. Internal excesses and weaknesses become and social lacunae in individual behaviour. This applies equally to group behaviour and to the well-known gregarious instinct common among people. To check abuses of social conduct, the ethical mandates applicable to the human individual are specially stressed as supremely important, to which we have already made reference earlier as the great qualities of harmlessness, truthfulness and self-restraint expected from each individual as its great conditioning qualities. Violence, untruth and incontinence of the mind and the senses which are the primary individual evils are also the sources of all public evil and social disharmony. Apart from these three great vows of abstinence and positive conduct emphasised again and again, ancient teachers of the economics of life have further added that no one can appropriate to oneself what does not belong to oneself by rightful means, and also one cannot accumulate belongings more than what is necessary or a reasonably comfortable and healthy way of living. Living a life of luxury is overstepping the limits of the normal requirements of life and is violative of not only the principle of goodness in one's own person but contrary to the consideration that one should have for the welfare of people other than oneself. Excess in the form of hoarding is considered as equivalent to theft, since theft is nothing but depriving others of what should truly belong to them.

Profiteering and black-marketing which often become the very objective of certain enterprises would not only deal a death blow to one's own health, peace and security but also cause social restlessness and all the sorrows engendered by absence of equity in dealing with people, all which goes by the name of corruption whose forms are many and often very subtle. There are people who make it their occupation to cleverly manipulate ways and means to break very law whenever it is enacted. To them law is intended to be disobeyed and opposed. The Sutra of Patanjali, while giving the highest importance to Ahimsa, Satya and Brahmacharya, mentions the need also to observe the principles of Asteya and Aparigrah; that is, non-stealing and non-acceptance of luxuries or excessive comforts. These fivefold norms laid down by Patanjali in his Yoga-Sutras sum up the law of the economy of life, individually as well as socially, indicating thereby that no one can aspire for perfection who does not strive for the maintenance of internal harmony in one's own thoughts, feelings and volitions, and external harmony through contributions towards peace by trying to give everyone what each one is truly due, and not exploit anyone even covertly by secret commercial means or harm anyone's right to live and let live. This is the duty of each and everyone in human society, and meticulously performed duties are automatically followed by the requisite privileges which come as blessings on everyone as a result of one's good behaviour.

It is the gospel of the Bhagavad Gita that has lifted the dignity of labour and social welfare work above its ordinary

meaning generally limited to the physical and empirical circumference of society. While the Bhagavad Gita emphasises the need to work as an obligatory call on each and every person, it also enlightens us as to why we should work at all. The reason is not just the material comforts of social existence but a higher demand from the spiritual side of human nature which in a state of insight beholds the one soul permeating all life and the need to present oneself before others in the light of a presence in others of that which is present in oneself also. Work, then, becomes a larger requirement on the part of man than merely a social necessity. The Gita exhorts us to work and serve as a Superman does, nay, as God Himself operates in creation. We are told that the Creator projected beings together with a compulsion for sacrifice (Sahayajna), an impulse to share with others what one has, even as one would wish to share for oneself something of what others have, in a mutual give-and-take system of cooperation, inasmuch as everyone may have something which may be the need of another and no one can have all things that one may require in life. The Gita provides to mankind the basic principles of the highest programme for civic and social harmony to be maintained by an internal adjustment of people among themselves, not only for their survival, but much more, their onward progress towards spiritual realisation which is the goal of the individual as well as of society. The Cosmic Form which is described in the Eleventh Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita illustrates, while demonstrating the unity of all existence, the moderation which should form the rule of the internal character and outer conduct of the individual as well as of

society, highlighting thereby the law of the economy of life in its grandest and moat glorious form.

XVI—POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Greek philosopher, Plato, classified political rule into the systems of monarchy, aristocracy, plutocracy, democracy and tyranny, which he stated in a descending order of importance. Plato held the opinion that only philosophers can be kings and kings should be philosophers. The danger of investing all power in a single individual is so obvious that this fear can be mellowed down, if not obliterated sometimes, by requiring the ruling head to be educated in the philosophy of life. It is only the philosopher that can have real consideration for the welfare of others, because he alone can have the Vision of the Good as operating in all things. The king is a repository of power, and knowing that 'power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely', the institution of monarchy, which was the earliest conception in human history of the highest ruling power, was simultaneously and cautiously blended with the highest form of education in the art of living, which required the makers of law to constitute a programme of education for true enlightenment which alone can prevent abuse of power and chalk out channels of its proper use in the interest of people. The monarchial system of government prevailed as the earliest institution of political leadership, and the king was worshipped as a veritable god, because his knowledge as well as power excelled those of others in his jurisdiction. The Manu-Smriti, which is the original code of law respected as a great authority in India, has detailed prescriptions for the conduct of the king, his education, his duties as well as restraints.

That even the king may have to be restrained by a conditioning law would only be proof enough of the fact that no one who is human can be invested with absolute power. The education of the ruler in the science of the highest realities of life may not always transform him into the embodiment of superhuman goodness and ability, though the intention behind the instituting of this process of rigorous philosophical education is to raise the status of the ruling head above the frailties and ambitions of the common man. As time passes, the general observation is that there has been a decadence of the human understanding leading to conduct, which contravenes the expectations from efficiency and responsibility.

In some kinds of national set-up the difficulty and even the impossibility of getting on with the monarchial system of government was deeply felt and the only solution that could then be envisaged was to transfer authority from a single person to a body of select representatives of the intelligentsia of the land. That is, a group of persons regarded by common consensus of opinion as being really cultured, good in nature and mature in experience was held as a proper substitute for a single man's kingship. The idea behind this proposal is that a large number of persons thinking and working together is less likely to commit mistakes than a single person invested with every responsibility and authority. The term aristocracy, though it suggests the rule of the well-to-do or the rich, is actually expected to connote a body of ruling force which consists of a collaboration of the highest intelligences of the country. Rarely has this system of administration seen to function

except in a very few countries or states, and that too not for a long time. The general difficulty that the aristocracy is likely to face is in the employing of methods by which the administration can keep close contact with the general public. In ancient times really able and good monarchs used to have a widespread system of maintaining a living relationship with their subjects, often the king himself moving out of his palace to know the minds and the needs of the people, sometimes even disguising himse1f to obtain correct information. The body of persons in aristocracy cannot easily resolve this unintelligible relation between the body and the public. They cannot choose any one of them as their leader, because, then, that chosen person is likely to behave as a king. There is, however, a great and appreciable point behind the institution of aristocracy as the proper form of government, since it is supposed to represent the most capable intellectuals of the country. But, here, apart from the difficulties stated, there is also the other delicate issue of choosing the best of people in the land. Who would make this choice and what is the standard applied in the choice of a suitable member of the aristocracy?

The system of plutocracy does not fare better, where we have a body of the economically wealthy, though not of the intelligent and the wise, necessarily. The difference between insight and money power is too obvious to need comment, though it is true that intelligence has to go hand in hand with economic power in a state of harmony. While sheer knowledge without power is not of much utility, power without knowledge can be mischievous and fearful. The

philosophers of political science have wavered between monarchy and democracy as the best form of government.

Democracy is considered as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. The idea is that every citizen in the country is made to feel a responsibility in regard to the well-being of the nation, and everyone has the choice and the right to choose the best among themselves for the purpose of being placed at the helm of affairs. Democracy has been regarded latterly as the most suitable form of government, since it deprives a single person or even a group of people of the authority to lord over others, and the authority is invested with the citizens as a whole. It is a government of common consensus of the public in general, so that no one can complain as to the nature and the form of the working of the governmental machinery. However, Plato considers democracy as the worst form of government, because it invests the mob with power and treats the wise and the fool on equal terms. In the system of voting, democracy has one vote for a genius and one vote for the illiterate and the ignorant. The quantitative assessment of the value of administration does not pay attention to the quality that is necessary for managing the affairs of the State. For instance, the person chosen by ten great masters of understanding and experience may be defeated in election by a person chosen by several hundreds of the common masses, who are empowered by the system of democracy with an equal value as that which one would associate with men of true knowledge and experience. Further, the democratic system has no foolproof method of avoiding such forms of

corruption in election as coercion, intimidation and even purchase, when the voters are not always people who are properly educated in the meaning of democracy and a democratic organisation of government. Democracy, perhaps, expects almost impossible qualities from the general public as the wisdom to know what is right and wrong, as if everyone equally is capable of that kind of achievement. Else, the quality of efficiency would be sacrificed at the altar of a chaotic mass of the quantity in the form of a mere counting of heads. Plato feels that one day or the other people are likely to get fed up with the system of democratic government, for, in this system, people are made to feel that they have the power of choice, while, in fact, they have no such power, for reasons already mentioned earlier. Above all this, there is the well-nigh possibility of the person chosen democratically as the leader turning a despot and a veritable king by himself. Wherever we turn, we seem to be striking our head against the unavoidability of someone being there as the centre of authority, which is just the meaning of monarchy, though the head of the State may not wear a crown, or be seated on a throne. The centring of all authority in one person is the principle of monarchy, and this fearsome possibility seems to be insinuating itself into every form of the political set-up, since, in the end, it is difficult to conceive two persons having equal authority.

Being tired of the diluted and essence-less system of a nebulous democracy of people,—and everyone's responsibility can turn into no one's responsibility,—the people may choose to have, again, a single person as the

ruling power, as the last alternative, but this time the ruler being a likely tyrant. It goes without saying that tyranny is the darkest phase into which the administrative system can descend, wherein the ruling authority has the least concern over the feelings of others and is mindful only of the meticulous discharge of his own will, whim and fancy. As truth is said to triumph finally, and concentration of power in some corner exclusively is not the policy of Nature, despotism, autocracy or tyranny have their fall not very far from the date of their rising to the surface of the political field. All told, it may follow that, for whatever reason, the present-day humanity cannot choose any other form of government than a well-constituted democracy, since, while it may have certain characteristics which are bad, the other systems have characteristics which are worse.

XVII—THE PROCESS OF HISTORY

Ancient Indian historical tradition traces the beginning of all things to God, the Universal Being. This Original Centre becomes a Creative Principle known as Brahma (in the masculine gender), from which inexhaustible Source emanated the first four Kumaras, the eternal divines known as Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara. They are said to have refused to obey the order of Brahma, when he asked them to help him in creation, telling him that they are not interested in such work, as they would like to be established in the Supreme Reality. This evoked the anger of Brahma with the intention to curse them, but his wrath could not be directed against them because of their divine power. But anger risen has to be expressed in some way as it cannot be withdrawn, which burst out through the forehead of Brahma as the wrathful Rudra, known also as Siva. Siva, however, though apparently born of Brahma, was not in any way subsidiary to Brahma, but equally great, if not greater, as stories in the Puranas would make out amply.

Subsequently, Brahma thought of continuing the work of creation and projected ten subsidiary creative powers or progenitors of future history, known as Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Bhrigu, Vasishtha, Daksha and Narada. These names correspond also to the great Rishis or Sages, endowed with cosmic capacity. From Brahma arose also the First Manu, the father of humanity. This created 'Inclusive Person' is separated into the first male and the first female, called in the language of the Puranas, as Manu and Satarupa. The Srimad Bhagavat says

that this couple had two sons and three daughters, whose internal relationship as well as relationship with the first progeny of Brahma mentioned above became the cause of the further diversification of the creative forces. The Ninth Book of the Bhagavata states that there is also another secondary form of creation, as we may say, arising from the Sun, on the one hand, with whom begins the Solar Dynasty, and the Moon, on the other hand, who is the source of the Lunar Dynasty, which twin line is said to reach up to the latest personages in recorded history. F. Pargitor, a western scholar who has made a special study of pre-historic Indian tradition, has taken pains to write an illuminating book on this ancient sacred genealogy.

Indian tradition holds a cyclic vision of history, as do also certain philosophers of history in the West. A particular packet of the Time Process is divided into the four Ages, known as Yugas—Krita, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali, in their descending order of spiritual experience, knowledge, power and virtue. The worst of the Ages is Kali, in which we are living today, and it is supposed to have commenced in the year 3101 B.C., the year when Krishna is said to have left this earth. The duration of the Kali Age is 4,32,000 years, the duration of the Dvapara is twice this number, the duration of the Treta is thrice and the duration of Krita is four times. The four Ages run for 43,20,000 years. When this Four-Age cycle takes place one thousand times, it is one day of Brahma, the Creator. So long also is his night. Brahma lives for one hundred years with days and nights of this length. At the close of the Age of Brahma, lasting one hundred cosmic years, the universe, with

Brahma, is dissolved and is absorbed into the Supreme Being. After a hundred year long night following this day, equal to the life-time of Brahma, there is a new creation taking place in the same way as it happened earlier (Yatha-purvam-akalpayat). This is said to be the play of God (Lokavat tu lila-kaivalyam).

An astounding doctrine of the process of history is what is promulgated by the German philosopher, Hegel, whose objective is to interpret everything metaphysically, in the end. The Absolute is the Supreme Idea, or Reason, which is universal and self-contained, and exists by itself. Since the Idea has a content, without which the Idea would be a featureless abstraction, it becomes necessary for the Idea to behold itself as Nature, as if it becomes its own content. But Nature is an 'otherness' which cannot be in harmony with the absoluteness of the Idea, since anything that has an 'other' before it cannot be the Absolute. To complete the consciousness of the Idea as the Absolute, Nature has to return to its Source. When Nature unites itself with the Idea, the content of consciousness becomes consciousness itself, now, in its completed state, known not as Idea but Spirit.

Mechanical causation is the work of Nature but Spirit returns to itself in spiritual evolution which takes place through the process of Subjective Spirit, Objective Spirit and Absolute Spirit. The Subjective Spirit passes through the stages of the psychological modifications to which we have made reference in our earlier essay. The Spirit, when it overcomes the limitation of pure subjectivity, as the individualised Spirit, it becomes Objective Spirit

manifesting itself as social law, governmental procedure and world history. The history of the world is a manifestation of the Absolute Spirit endeavouring to recognise itself in more and more adequate forms, the ups and downs in the historical process being the reactions set up by the Absolute to the limitations, fortes and foibles of human nature and all things finite. War is the wrath of the Spirit calling up the reprisal necessary for the education and further evolution of finite natures unable to embody in themselves the universality of the Absolute. History finally moves to God in a cosmic sweep compelling natural man, by transcending himself, to become a diviner man capable of embodying in himself a larger dimension of the Supreme reason. Everything tends finally to the Absolute, all history in every form of its best and worst, pleasant and unpleasant contours.

The Absolute Spirit, says Hegel, gradually reveals itself in Art, Religion and Philosophy. Art is the sensuous representation of the Absolute in different forms of beauty. Religion is the Absolute appearing as a universal 'other', a supreme object of worship and adoration, a transcendent power evoking love and admiration and every form of religious fervour. Philosophy, to Hegel, is the Absolute knowing itself, not as an 'other' to itself, but as it is in itself, above Art and Religion, contemplating itself in itself, Reason returning to Reason, God merging Himself in Himself, the Absolute remaining as what it is.

The philosophy of dialectical materialism taught by Karl Marx is said to be Hegel standing upside down. While Marx accepts the dialectical process leading to the Absolute

as taught by Hegel, he converts it into a dialectics of materialism leading to an absolute of economic forces. Marx maintains that, originally, in the beginnings of mankind, there was a sort of primitive communism among people when they lived a collective life with a common property, in which they participated by mutual sharing. Later on, there appeared a system of ownership of property with an introduction of the slave system and private ownership with its evils, as Marx says, of the stronger suppressing the weaker, the minority exploiting the majority. The next stage is the military feudal system controlling serfs and the feudal nobles having absolute ownership over the surplus of production. This leads to the well-known capitalist system of production and distribution having absolute sway over the means of production as well as over the working class. Factories create industrial capitalism, often denying the bare minimum of requirement of the working classes. This stage leads to the next one of control of production by the working classes, which is the first stage of communism, initially landing in the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the aim of communism is much more, namely, the abolition of the ruling classes and the creation of a 'classless society'. This is the vision of human history as Marx would present it. Critics of Marx have held that there cannot be a classless society unless the people constituting such a society are very gods come from heaven. It appears that in this last word of Marx he is jumping over his own skin and unconsciously finding himself in a universal classlessness,

which is not very far from the principles of Hegel's doctrine, when properly understood in its profundity.

The latest researches in the philosophy and process of history are to be found in the twelve-volume work of Arnold Toynbee, designated as 'A Study of History.' Toynbee thinks that the chief danger to man is man himself, and he cannot be free from this source of fear unless he regenerates himself into characters that are truly human. History has to be studied as an entire process of values engendered in the consciousness of man and not as fractions of the political histories of nations or countries. The failures of nations and the fall of empires are due to the diminishing and virtual absence of creative power in the administration, the absence of a religious consciousness as the guiding principle in administration and, worst of all, the deification of the State as if it is a final reality in itself. Examples are the events one can read in Greek and Roman history. We may find them also present in the histories of earlier kingdoms, Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian. Edward Gibbon, in his classic study of the later days of Roman history, traces its decline and fall to the very same evils which Toynbee points out in his study. The need, then, for a human survival, is the need for a revival of true religious awareness for the continuance of civilisation, the working out of a constitutional cooperative system of a possible world government, and generating workable compromises of the economic system providing means for personal enterprise together with contributing towards a socialistic pattern of equity and justice. Lastly, the need is for the secular structure to base itself on a strong religious

foundation, religion meaning a perpetual consciousness of the universal values in life, ranging beyond all parochial and empirical considerations.

XVIII—EDUCATION AND CULTURE

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 or persons, which, when selected and studied in their isolated capacity, are known as individuals and, when taken in groups, their 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 then obtain a pass or a degree after a course of learning how to add, subtract, multiply, divide or measure factors of computation in arithmetic, algebra and geometry, how things behave on observation of their bodies, how they act and react on one another—in short, what is the result of 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 in the light 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 and 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, nonpurposive and an altruistic camouflage of a basically selfish intention of every individual. To put it more plainly, the 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; gain of name, fame and power, and the like—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 would be easily discovered that it is only an extension of these circumstances of the psychophysical 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.

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 clearly put, would appear to be that we live in a world of love and cooperation that 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 that is not demanded by the essential nature of things. This is modern education in its plain colour, when its foundations are probed adequately.

As 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 electromagnetic core of atoms, which, science tells us, are the building bricks of the cosmos. If science is right in its proclamation of such results based entirely on the association of dissimilar entities forming 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 aspiration 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 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 relation, of men and things is proved by the very existence and irrepressibility of aspiration. And, that the educational process has to be re-oriented and transformed into a process o vital evolution of a soulful aim of every individual come naturally to high relief. There is in life a divine core of basically spiritual reality, hiddenly present in all things.

That the universe is primarily a 'Kingdom of Ends', wherein every individual unit is an essence of selfhood rather than a means of utility or exploitation for 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 essential 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 finally toward the realisation of a Universal Selfhood; that material amenities and economic needs and the satisfaction of one's emotional side are permissible only so long as this law and order of this eternal

truth of the liberation of the Self in universality of being regulates their 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 in 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. The educational process, therefore, has to begin with the external world of observation, Nature and society; then go deeper inward into the conditioning factors of mind and consciousness in the observation of the outer world; leading, in the end, to an enlightenment in the universal purpose ranging beyond and determining both the world and the individual.

PART III – THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

XIX—THE INKLINGS AND STAGES OF A HIGHER PRESENCE

The religious consciousness has its meaning in a sense of completeness that one seeks to achieve in life. Difficulties of every kind that one confronts in life, one's helplessness in several things that one has to face almost every day, one's inability to understand why anything around one happens in the way it does, and what are the causes that prevent everyone from attaining in practical existence what one would like to have as things which could remove several inscrutable types of lacunae which one feels in oneself from time to time, raise the basic questions of true religion. Human feeling seems to be made in such a way that one cannot help concluding that there must be some causes behind the workings of Nature. The movement of seasons, the rise of the sun and the moon, the appearance of stars in the sky, the winds and the rains, and several such phenomena that excite a curiosity in man to know more than what he actually knows at present in a state of ignorance of such mysterious factors as those which must be at the back of all things happening in the world, stir the religious impulse within. The seeking of causes of observed effects is ingrained in the very constitution of the human mind. Though some may say that this inherent eagerness of the human mind to find causes of effects is itself an effect of a peculiar structure of its own self, to whose boundaries it is wholly confined, and the very nature of Space and Time which determine the world and all the things that the world

contains, yet, it does follow that even within the limits of the mind's operations confining it to a mere observation of phenomena, it is certain that the mind has also, simultaneously, the knowledge that it is limited, without which there would be no sense of limitation at all in one's life. It is this continuous apprehension of the inherent limits within which confined framework the mind has to work that is the reason behind the mind's parallel awareness that these limitations must have been brought about by certain things which must be controlling phenomena and causing phenomena to behave in the way they appear. The sense of a 'higher than oneself' is this incessantly operative compelling power in man, making him feel unhappy all the while and seek ways and means of delving into the realm of the unseen.

The primary impulse coming as a response to these queries arising from the human mind takes the shape of positing a diffused power or influence particularly manifest in unusual and exciting phenomena. Events evoking the perception of some excellence and superior power demand an explanation as to their occurrence, and it lies in the way of the working of some invisible force behind things and events. The stage of religious awareness which is generally known as Animism regards Nature as inwardly filled with certain intelligent spirits, thus making every part of Nature a living act of some hidden purpose and intention. Nothing in Nature is dead or bereft of life. These spirits may be said to be souls embodied in all natural phenomena, countless in number, as the events in Nature are innumerable, defying human understanding. The awe and fear that

almost always follow immediately from the recognition of spirits indwelling Nature summon a corresponding feeling of respect and adoration that one feels in regard to these angelic causes working behind Nature. The initial form in which this respect for the 'above' is manifest, in practice is ritual, characteristic of every religious behaviour. There is the need for extending gestures of prayer and worship, which is the shape of all ritual, the details of which vary slightly in accordance with the social patterns and geographical conditions in and through which types of religious adoration arise.

Features known as taboo, totem and fetishism, are generally associated with the earliest forms of religious awakening, taboo meaning the prohibition to go near or come in contact with anything that one regards as endowed with a repelling power or unholy influence, totem being usually an animal connected with a community of people, or even an object so connected, determining the welfare of the community, such as the cow, the peepul tree, or a sacred stone, which are said to be endowed with powers of this kind, and fetish being an object considered as an abode of a superior spirit or power.

The stage which is known as Spiritism considers these indwelling spirits behind Nature as not just lodged in things and phenomena but having the ability to move about and work according to their will, doing good when they are pleased and harm if they are displeased. This stage effloresces into the acceptance of there being many gods in the heavenly world, a stage which historians of religion call Polytheism, in which condition of the religiously oriented

mind the spirits behind the different workings of Nature are adored as the powerful gods inhabiting a celestial kingdom above the world superintending directly the phenomena of all creation. In the Veda Samhitas we find Mantras for prayers addressed to different gods. In the Vedas, however, we can find representations of every stage of religion from the initial natural adorations to the highest conceptions of the Absolute. The multitude of gods follows from the fact of the many-sidedness and manifold workings of Nature, each performance or event in Nature being controlled by a soul-force within it, a god working through its embodied form. Many things require many controllers, and they are gods because they are not in this world, their abode being in heaven. The exploits of these gods become the sources of mythology and epics connected with an important stage in the development of religious consciousness. Mankind, even today, is in this stage of religion and we will find no religion in the world without its mythological stories and its epics glorifying vigorously the power and knowledge of its angels and gods. The human mind might feel stifled and find itself in a state of barrenness if mythology and epic are to be removed from the field of religion. Primarily, it is emotion that takes the upper hand in religious practice, and it is this that explains the need for mythology and epic literature. The more you love a thing, the more would you like to glorify it in as many ways as possible. Mythology is the preceding stage of Theology, some features of which we have endeavoured to study earlier.

In a stage which historians call Henotheism, a particular god is considered as the highest god, raised above all other gods in the hierarchy of the pantheon. There is also the grouping of gods (Visvedevas) into a single body of divine power.

Theism is the affirmation of the One God as the transcendent and immanent creator of the universe. The necessity for affirming the Supreme God arises on account of it being necessary to bring the multiple gods into a harmonious relation among them, without which internal coordination the gods would remain as isolated localities of unrelated essences, not excluding even a contending and superseding tendency among them. Since the universe cannot be regarded as consisting of segregated bits of matter and spirit, the need for a universal connecting link arises. The gods cannot be really many, they have to be phases of the operation of the One God. This Great God is proclaimed in ecstatic language of poetry in the Purusha-Sukta, Hiranyagarbha-Sukta, Visvakarma-Sukta, Skambha-Sukta, and Varuna-Sukta of the Veda-Samhitas. The Nasadiya-Sukta of the Rig-Veda affirms an absolute beginning of things, the origin of the universe as being beyond the concepts of even existence and non-existence. Religion is the reaction of the total man to the total reality. There can be only one such Supreme Reality, in which every individual soul, and everything, has to find itself wholly.

The highest form of religion is known as Monism, which overcomes some of the limitations involved in the concept of God as the Supreme Person, which is the way in

which Theism defines God. Monism is the affirmation of the Absolute which is above the Personality concept because the concept of the Person cannot be dissociated from the concept of limitation as if in a universe of Space and Time. The Absolute can only be designated as That Which Is. Here the religious consciousness reaches its highest peak of attainment.

XX—THE EXPLORATION OF REALITY

The earliest records of spiritual research are to be found in the Rig-Veda Samhita, which consists of hymns, or Mantras, addressed to gods, or Devas, who are considered as deities or divinities capable of controlling the destinies of people. The history of the growth of the religious consciousness from its incipiency to its mightiest comprehension can be read between the lines of these sacred prayers, the Mantras of the Veda. The trend of beholding the manifold as expressions of the One, and the One as revealing itself in the many, is unmistakably traceable to the hymns of the Rig-Veda. Through a succession of this unfolding movement of religious visualisation, the Veda-Samhita proclaims its final word on the nature of Reality. The Purusha-Sukta, or the hymn of the Cosmic Person, embodies in itself the most magnificent description of the spiritual unity of the cosmos. In the spirit of a great attainment the Seers of the Veda explored the majesty of the universe as an embodiment of a Supreme Intelligence and Power hiddenly present everywhere and controlling all things as the Soul, the very Self of everything. From the recognition of an other-than-the world location of numberless deities, the vision moves to the glorious presence of scintillating gods animating all creation, who are, further, beheld as the twinkling eyes and thoughts of a boundless God in whom they are all comprehended in a single instantaneous and divisionless entirety. In the Purusha-Sukta is given, perhaps, the earliest complete presentation of the nature of the Ultimate Reality as both transcendent and immanent. The all-encompassing

Purusha, who is portrayed as all heads, all eyes and all limbs, everywhere, envelopes and permeates creation from all sides and stands above it as the glorious immortal. The Purusha is all that was, is, and shall be. The universe is a small fraction of Him, for He ranges above it in the infinitude of His glory. From Him proceeds the original creative Will, later identified with Brahma, Hiranyagarbha, or Prajapati, by which this vast universe was projected in space and time. The Purusha-Sukta proclaims once and for all the oneness of God, the universality of religion, the organic inseparability of the constituents of social structure, and the utter imperative of it being not only possible but necessary for everyone to realise in direct experience the Supreme Being, the Infinite Person, in an act of inner awakening. The Seer of the Veda loved humanity and creation as much as he loved the Almighty God.

The Nasadiya-Sukta of the Rig-Veda proclaims, for the first time, intimations of the Seer's sounding the depths of being. The astounding vision of the Transcendent by the relative is the apparent theme of this famous hymn. The Ultimate State is here depicted as not capable of being designated either as existence or as non-existence, for there was none, then, to perceive it, before the manifestation of the heaven and the earth. There was only an indescribable stillness as it were, deep in its content and defying approach to it by anyone. The Sukta says that there was neither death nor immortality, for there was no differentiation whatsoever. Naturally, there was neither day nor night. There was only That One Presence, throbbing in all splendour and glory but appearing as darkness to the eye

that would like to behold it. There was nothing second to it; It alone was. From It creation arose. However, how it all happened no one can say, for everyone came after creation. This is the central point of the Nasadiya Hymn, varied forms of the development of which lead to many ramifications of philosophic and religious meditations, in the Upanishads and the later established forms of religion. In a famous Mantra, the Rig-Veda declares that "Existence (or Reality) is One, though the wise ones call It by various epithets like Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, Yama, Vayu", thus unifying all the gods in a singleness of Being.

The Rudra Adhyaya, or the Satarudriya, a hymn of the Yajur Veda, is a thrilling invocation of the Supreme Being as Rudra-Siva, wherein He is addressed in all the visible and conceivable forms in creation. The Almighty Lord is the big and the small, the gross and the subtle, the low and the high, the distant and the near, the visible and the invisible, what is and what is not. Every type of individuality, form and action, every category of living species, everything that is animate or inanimate, all that is gracious and all that is frightening, and every deed that man is capable of doing, all things through which nature works and is revealed, are adored as the forms of Siva, or Rudra, presenting an impossible method of approach to the Impossible God of the Universe.

The quintessence of the Veda Samhitas, and their hidden purport is said to be codified in the Upanishads, which unveil Truth without the embellishments and formative features through which it was seen in the Samhitas. The Upanishads hold that the pleasures of the

senses are ephemeral, as they wear away one's energies and tend to one's destruction. Even the longest life with the greatest pleasure is worth nothing. The only desirable aim in this world is the knowledge of the Self, the Atman. The pleasant is one thing and the good is another. Both these come to a man together for acceptance. The wise one discriminates between the two and chooses the good rather than the pleasant. The foolish one chooses the pleasant and falls into the net of widespread death. By knowing It Reality, everything is known at once. One who knows It becomes It. Reality transcends the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. It is the cessation of all phenomena, the peaceful, the blessed, the non-dual. It is Truth, Knowledge, Infinity. One possesses all things simultaneously and becomes all things at once, and enjoys all things instantaneously, who realises Brahman as identical with one's own being.

The Infinite alone is bliss, there is no bliss in the small and the finite. Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else—that is the Infinite. Where one sees something else, hears something else, understands something else—that is the finite. The Infinite is the immortal. The finite is the mortal. The Infinite is in front, behind, to the right, to the left, above, below and everywhere. It is all this at the same time. For one who knows this, everything springs from his very Self. The universe, manifest as well as unmanifest, arises for him spontaneously from his Self and serves him without limitation of time or place.

No one loves an object for its own sake. All love is an inspiration come finally from love of the Universal Self. Things are dear because of the Infinite that peeps through them. The Infinite summons the Infinite in the perception of the beloved. Persons and things are not dear for their own sake. Though all love has a selfish origin in the world, it has a transcendent meaning above the phase of the seer and the seen. Anyone who, by an error, regards anything as being outside oneself, shall lose that thing, whatever it may be.

Where there is duality, as it were, there one sees the other, smells the other, speaks to the other, tastes the other, touches the other, thinks the other, understands the other. But, where the One alone is, who can see what, and by what, who can hear, smell, speak, taste, touch, think and understand what by what? How can one know that by which alone one knows all these things? How can one know the knower? This is the great admonition, this is the treasure-house of knowledge. If one were to give the whole earth as a gift for the sake of this knowledge, one should regard this knowledge as greater than that. Lo, this is greater than all things. Whosoever has his Self awakened within himself commensurate with all things, he is verily equivalent to the Creator of the universe, he becomes the doer of all things; this universe is his, nay, he himself is the universe.

The sacred lore of the Veda consists of the body of hymns known as Samhitas; expository texts on the rituals and methods of sacrifice known as Brahmanas; sylvan texts for contemplation in retreat known as Aranyakas, and

mystical meditations known as the Upanishads. The Vedic knowledge is a blend of the highest kind of education of the inner man, through which one is enabled to possess in practical life and experience not only the glories and joys of the world in their fullest measure, but also to transform oneself into an embodiment of the highest form of righteousness and justice, and a moving representation, as it were, of God, the Almighty.

XXI—THE EPICS AND PURANAS

There is a passage in the Mahabharata that the Veda is afraid of one who tries to approach it without having been properly trained in the meaning of the Epics and Puranas, the idea being that the subtle and intricate significance hidden beneath the Vedic lore cannot be properly comprehended without the illustrative, expository and feelingful narrations in the Epic and Purana treatises.

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the great Indian Epics, written in magnificent heroic poetry, the first by Valmiki, and the second by Vyasa. The Ramayana excels in its depiction of its superb heroes—the divine majesty and power of Rama, the indomitable strength and chivalry of Lakshmana, the heart-rending goodness and sacrifice of Bharata, the astounding energy and invincibility of Hanuman, the touching simplicity, honesty and straightforwardness of Sita, with a common loyalty and togetherness of all these personages in a grand consummation of achievement humanly conceivable. Lyrical mellifluousness and a subtle inwardly moving force are the characteristics of the poetry of Valmiki. Its beauty may be compared to a flowering rose or lotus in the morning and its irresistible force of conviction to the unshakeable Himalayas. The Mahabharata of Vyasa, on the other hand, is a virile tumult of the waves of stupendous thoughts that drown the reader and at once lift him up to the surface to dash him on its own body, which it does at the same time, in an attempt to energetically portray the frailties of human nature and the irresistible power of God, continuously operating, winklessly awake, in the universe.

The heroes of Vyasa are: Krishna, who, as the incarnation of God in this world, moves the earth and the heaven simultaneously with his resistless will and knowledge; Yudhishthira, who embodies righteousness gone to the extreme and virtue breaking with its own weight; Bhima, the iron man who could pound tens of elephants with the blows of his hand, irascible and quick in action; Arjuna, the Indian Achilles, with his ambidexterous archery, who knows not what is missing an aim, the ideal man as the friend of the ideal divinity Krishna; and Draupadi, the vigorous lady in whom one finds an incomparable expression of womanly feeling and comforting grace as well as a manly relentlessness in undertaking and action.

What do these Epics tell us? The art of teaching here is supremely psychological and just fitted to appeal to the emotion and the reason at the same time, together with a power to stimulate the longings of the deepest soul, the self of everyone. If the Veda glories in its peak of sublimity looking on all things down on earth with a condescending concern for even the lowest to enable it to rise to the requirements of the highest attainment, the Epics speak to man as a father would admonish or as a mother would instruct, as a friend would advise or a beloved would coerce. They comprehend in one grasp the needs of people as souls seeking a ray of light from the horizon of life, as verily Heirs-apparent to the throne of Immortality. The seven books of the Ramayana and the eighteen books of the Mahabharata may be said to represent the seven stages in the life of man and the eighteen steps in the effort towards perfection. The innocent childhood of the Pandava

brothers in a state of ignorance of their future destiny, as described in the First Book of the Mahabharata; the sudden fortune which befalls them as a windfall in the Second Book; the quick fall of face and ruin of fortune in an exile into wilderness and helpless aloneness as well as an immediate reaction from the protective forces of heaven and earth coming for consideration and rescue, in the Third Book; the life incognito and the precarious existence of the brothers in the Fourth Book; the sudden turning of the tables round and a seeing of God's hand working unmistakably when the sure support of the reliable Krishna comes unasked in the Fifth Book; the battle with fate and the world at large in the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Books; the inscrutable and ununderstandable phases that rock between victory and glory in the Tenth and Eleventh Books; the coming face-to-face with the relief of a total annihilation of every opposition and the readiness to be installed in the fearless possession of mastery and rulership in the Twelfth Book; these are some of the basic features of the story of the Mahabharata. The remaining Books, from the Thirteenth to the Eighteenth, form a sequel to the whole dramatic enactment picturesquely portrayed in the first twelve Books, something like an appendix giving details of the way of an anticlimax and pathos into which the joys and exultations of earthly life sink in a dissociation from all things and a bereavement that cuts off man from every association and tells him that he is to stand alone unbefriended in the world, when Nature's illusions cast him out as an exhausted instrument. The Mahabharata is the grand tale of the rise and fall of the human empire.

The Pranas are chronicles containing ancient history, mythology and longer or shorter discourses in religion, philosophy, Yoga, mystical attainment and spiritual realisation, and several other kindred subjects. Large sections of the Puranas, which are eighteen in number, are devoted to a glorification of the exploits of the great Divinities; Vishnu, Siva, Brahma, Devi, Ganesa and Skanda; either in their original forms or through their manifestations. Also, Surya and Vayu occupy prominent places in the Puranas, and receive great attention. The Puranas also describe at length such other subjects as medicine, art, rhetoric and literary appreciation, grammar, ethics, politics, ritual, social laws of the classes and the stages of life, pilgrimage to holy places, religious vows and observances, exposition on the value of charitable gifts, and the philosophy of Samkhya Yoga and Vedanta, in a variety of ways. They also embody vivid biographies of sages, saints, kings and stalwarts who lived and moved in this world as paragons of wisdom, power and moral toughness. Of the eighteen Puranas, six are devoted to Brahma, six to Vishnu and six to Siva. From the point of view of their essential content, philosophical profundity and religious impressiveness, the most important among them are the Vishnu Purana and the Srimad Bhagavata Purana. The Bhagavata, in particular, deals with practically everything that a standard Purana may be expected to propound in religion, philosophy and theology. The cosmography of the Puranas includes descriptions of the astronomical universe, the solar system and the fourteen worlds or realms of creation. The physical plane itself is said to consist of seven

continents and seven oceans, all concentric in their arrangement, every succeeding continent and ocean being double the preceding one in extent. There is also a calculation which states that among the five elements—Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether—every succeeding element is ten times the preceding one in largeness.

The philosophy of the Epics and Puranas is essentially the pre-scholastic Vedanta, in which the higher aspects of Samkhya and Yoga become amplified. The metaphysical side of the Mahabharata is a popular exposition of the wisdom of the Upanishads, Brahman getting identified with Narayana as the Supreme Being. The Prakriti and the Purusha of the Samkhya are accepted as working hypotheses, however not existing independently by themselves but as dependent on God, forming His very body. The Yoga system is accepted entirely in its practical aspects. The philosophical portions of the Mahabharata are, the Sanatsujatiya, Bhagavadgita, Moksha Dharma, and Anu Gita, which embody in their togetherness almost everything that one can learn in the field of higher educational instruction.

XXII—THE ROLE OF MYTHOLOGY IN RELIGION

Myths and legends have a speciality of embellishment as well as a spiritedness which raises human feeling into a visualisation of a blend of glory and power associated with the nature of human instincts as well as the finer aspirations. There is an idealisation of a perception of things as they ought to be, as far as the basic longings of man are concerned, in which internalised ideal perception the mind seems to come in direct contact with a kingdom of values, a world of heroes and divinities, wherein idea finds its fulfilment. Take for instance the grand descriptions of personages in the epics of both the East and the West. In every one of them the authors make it their avowed objective to stimulate human feeling and imagination to a point of perfection where the visualisation of the ideas so portrayed lifts human thought from the frailties and limitations of earthly possibilities and enables the mind to rove freely in that pictured world of expected attainment. The gigantic strength of Rama which could with the power of the toe of the feet lift and throw off the mountainous skeleton of a dead demon, or his superhuman archery that could fell down seven trees simultaneously with one arrow, apart from its diviner side of being able to reach up even to the heavens by its flaming march; the intelligence-motivated action of the discus of Krishna which could rush from Dvaraka to Varanasi and return to Dvaraka after setting the city to flames, or his feat of demonstrating the whole cosmos within himself several times during his life; the wielding by Arjuna of such weapons as embody the invincibility of gods as Brahma and Rudra; Homer's

description of the charge of the Greek heroes under the blessings of their Olympian gods in the Trojan war, and the mystifying exploits of Ulysses during the Odyssey of his return home; the bright and poignant descriptions of heaven and hell in Milton's Paradise Lost; the journey through the three worlds of Inferno, Purgatory and Paradise adumbrated by Dante; all illustrative of the epic magnificence rooting itself in historical grounds and rising above the circumstances of the earth to regions of the ruling gods, are not mythology in the sense of substanceless conceptualisations, but portrayals of the deep possibilities and profundities of which the human soul is capable and which height of majesty and power and chivalry the soul is able to attain during its sojourn in the region between the lowest earth and the highest kingdom of heaven.

Superhuman picturisations which are the content of epic and heroic poetry transmute and transform for the time being the consciousness of man into the very substance of the vision that is presented through the saga of such elevating poetry. Man is just what he thinks and no thought of his can be merely a flight of empty imagination. There is no thought or aspiration which cannot be fulfilled if only it is sincere and strong enough, and the mythological glories of the epic personalities are intended to foreshadow man's ascending achievements in the process of the higher evolution of consciousness to the full expression of its inherent potentialities. The myths of religion, therefore, constitute active meditations of the religious consciousness on the higher realities of life, and even fables and fairy tales which we enjoy in leisurely readings cannot be considered

as empty of some realistic content, because vacuous ideas cannot arise from the mind, all ideas being ultimately rooted in a vivid or faint expression of some degree or percentage of reality. This is the reason why stories with superphysical significance and epic marches of gods on earth charge our feelings, pull them out from the cave of their hibernation and cast them up into the empyrean of ecstatic appreciation, creating deeper and deeper empathies and unknown longings in the mind. The more these exploits are read or heard, the more do they thrill. Their repeated narrations, which form the festive pride of the nations where they have originated, have the power to rebuild vigorously the national spirit of countries and reinforce the love of their culture, as if epic, history and drama are the very diet of the hungering spirit of mankind. Cultures would die if their heroes were not to live before them as paragons not only of an eternal past but also of an eternal future and a glorious present.

Ideas move the world. Thought precedes every action. Events take place first in the realms above physical phenomena and descend gradually through the layers of space-time to the earth of human history, even as outer projects are manifestations of inner contemplations and basic needs essential to human nature. Religion is a comprehensive grasp of all reality in all its forms, degrees and stages effectively bridging the gulf between man and Nature, and between Nature and God.

XXIII—THE ECSTASY OF GOD-LOVE

While the Srutis, as the Vedas and the Upanishads are called, lift the principle of Godhead above the region of creation and make it shine gloriously in the firmament of utter perfection beyond the dust of the earth, and create a sense of veneration and fearsome devotion to the Eternal Potentate, the Epics and Puranas joyfully endeavour to bring the Judge of the universe to a homely relation, of a friend, philosopher and guide to humanity in turmoil. God, while He is the powerful parent and ruler over all things, to whom everything is subject as dependent and servant, He is also the friend of man, as in the symbol of the concept of Narayana and Nara, God never separable from man's welfare, Krishna never forsaking Arjuna, and coming to his succour and help even unasked and unsolicited. Many a time, man himself does not know that he needs help from God, but God knows it even beforehand. This is the intimacy and compassion which characterises God as highlighted in the Epic and Purana texts. The comradeship of God and man is the special touching feature which is promulgated here as distinguished from the transcendent majesty of the Brahman proclaimed in the Upanishads, or the gods adored in the Samhitas. It is the purport of these specialised teachings to make religion not only easy of practice but also a pleasant and enjoyable means of concourse with God, who is with us at all times, and is ever wary of the needs of devotees. The relation between man and God is now the apotheosis of the emotions and feelings, loves and aspirations of man, and human longings are concentratedly focussed on the form of God. While the

Krishna-Arjuna relation is one of dignity and wonderment, as the cosmic and the individual working in unison, the most intimate relation of man with God, according to the Bhagavata Purana, is to be found reaching its heights in the love of the Gopis of Vrindavana. While the father-son relation, the master-servant relation, the friend-and-friend relation, and the mother-child relation are indeed masterpieces of human relation, the romance of the soul in its ecstasy of God-vision is considered as the highest point which love and devotion can reach. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the intimacy and ecstasy of the union of the soul with the Absolute is compared to the self-transcendence felt in the communion of the lover and the beloved in an act of fast embrace. Rarely does the soul rise to total action in life. Mostly, what works in the daily occupations of man is the pressure and vehemence of intellect, mind and senses. The soul is supposed to rise to the surface of direct action, pulling up the whole personality without exception, in hunger, sleep and sex. The totality which one experiences in these states is a feeble apology for the entirety of merger which one experiences in God-union. God is not merely the awesome justice of the universe but a source of beauty and attraction capable of enchanting the whole world, surpassing every form of beauty and lovableness conceivable anywhere, melting the hearts of things at the very sight and even a thought of that Glorious Beauty. Beauty of beauties is God (*Sakshat manmatha-manmathah*).

Religion pales into a dreary occupation when it becomes a muddle of rules and regulations and a

Procrustean bed of regimented practices, and is bereft of the thrill that one feels in the presence of the beloved. Religion is not merely discipline but also love and grace. The instance of the Gopis is, on the one hand, an illustration of the superindividual and supersocial nature of the soul's asking for God, and, on the other hand, the way in which God can dissolve His parliament and council of enactments and rules, and run to the devotee personally without the use of secondary means of assistance. The twenty-second verse of the Ninth Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is a promise of God that He shall personally take care of His devotees when they are undividedly united with Him. Spiritual ecstasy is the subject of the five chapters delineating the Rasa-Lila of Krishna in the Tenth Book of the Bhagavata. Here devotion reaches a pitch to the point of breaking and collapsing as the individual is melting down into the blissful menstruum of the sea of God. Devotion of this kind, known as Ragatmika-Bhakti, or the devotion of ecstasy, as different from Gauna-Bhakti, or formalistic and disciplined form of devotion, commences with a kind of agitation of the soul within, a stimulation it feels in itself, not through the intellect, mind and senses, but verily as it is in itself, when the devotee attempts firstly to cry for God in a state of bereavement from Him; secondly becomes temporarily unconscious through exhaustion caused by the intensity of longing; and thirdly enters into a rapturous impulsion to imitate God, His features and actions, and dances in the spirit of a possession, as if that which one imitates has actually entered the person so imitating. The best actors in a dramatic performance are those who

virtually become the very part they are playing and lose their personal identity. The Gopis were in this penultimate state of actual union with God, which, further on, led them to a state of tearing down all the empirical shackles of personality-consciousness and external relation in a verily maddening reach of giddy heights where it is not merely the devotee that runs after God, but God Himself running to the devotee, God wanting man much more than man wants God. It is not enough if the devotee wants God; the highest devotion is where God loves the devotee and behaves as if He is a very servant of the one who loves Him. The lives of the saints who lived such a life of God-possession are examples practically to be seen in the history of religious thought and practice.

XXIV—THE AGAMA SASTRA

A complete diversion from the traditionally accepted ways of religious conduct and worship, as are the well-known ways of the Vedas, Upanishads, Epics and Puranas, is to be found in the body of teachings known as the Agamas and Tantras. The lore of the Vedas and the Upanishads comes as a father's pronouncement, in the manner of a mandate issued from a court of law in regard to what is true and false, what is proper and improper, what is to be done and is not to be done in life. Such a commandment arising as if from a ruling authority comes under a system of teaching known as Prabhu-Sammita, the order that is there just to be obeyed with nothing that anyone has to say about it, in any way. The Epics and Puranas are friendly treatises which persuade man to follow the right path by way of illustrative analogies and examples, and even making it necessary for God to descend on earth and into the very closest of relations with human nature, a type of educational method known as Suhrit-Sammita.

But love and informality being the special features of the most intimate of relations, the religious approach felt a further need to transform the relation between world and God into a non-legalistic, non-customary and non-formalistic coming together, rising above the defects of social relation and even affectionate comradeship. The law and order of the world of humanly conceived dictates melts into a nearer-still connection between man, world and God. The principal Agamas are the Vaishnava, Saiva and Sakta, centring round the concept of the Divinities Vishnu, Siva and Sakti. There are also the Agama and Tantra ways of

worship of the other gods, as Ganesa, Surya and Skanda. The Vaishnava theology of the Agama type is especially propounded in treatises like the Pancharatra and kindred works: The devotee of Vishnu perform worship of Vishnu as the Supreme Being conceived in five ways: Para, or transcendent form; Vyuha, or the categorised form as Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, representing Krishna, his elder brother, his son and his grandson, respectively, who are brought together in worship and adoration as a complete body of divine power; Vibhava, or the incarnation of God, as are the several occasions of God's descent into the world as enumerated in the Bhagavata Purana; Archa, or the form of God worshipped in an image or an idol symbolising the Universal as pointedly present in the particular; and Antaryamin, or the indwelling immanent form of God as present throughout in creation. The devotion with which the seeker of God tries to commune himself inwardly takes the shape of outer worship in the beginning with its usual traditions and regulations, requiring materials of worship such as flowers and offerings. Subsequently the external appurtenances diminish and gradually become unnecessary when a higher mode of worship through the mind alone suffices as surpassing visible forms of worship. The peak of Vaishnava devotion is to be found recorded in the Tenth Book of the Bhagavata Purana, and the four thousand Tamil verses of the Vaishnava saints called Alvars, especially the thousand songs known as Tiruvaimozhi of Nammalvar. The ecstasy of the Gopi-type of God-love rises into an exhilarating pitch of a kind of God-madness in

Nammalvar's poetic compositions. The devotee is immersed in the sole awareness of God.

The formalities of Vaishnava devotion, which have initially an element of orthodoxy, separatism and aloofness, give way to the wider inclusiveness of divine devotion in its ecstatic forms when it breaks the boundaries of caste; creed, cult, colour, sex, and differences of faith and religious attitude. A secret mode of inner communion in the Vaishnava method is the guarded and very rarely known attitude called Sahaja-Marga, wherein one becomes 'natural' (Sahaja) in one's relation to persons, things and the world as a whole, free from the cloaks of every kind of behaviour and requirement that separates one thing from another thing. This hidden path is similar to the mystical inwardness of certain forms of Tantra Sadhana, that is, the practice of communion with Reality in its degrees, on the dictum 'like attracts like', and 'dissimilarities repel'. The repulsions of the world are the artificial creations of the human ego, and the sameness of essence is an essential characteristic of man and Nature, and, in the end, God.

The Saiva Agama method of the worship of God is less formal than the way of the Vaishnava, less restrained and less accustomed to social forms of regulations. Siva is the Supreme God of the Saiva system, who is called Pati, or Lord over all creatures, the latter being known as Pasu, the literal meaning of which is animal or the beastly nature. Physically bound by the encasement of the body, man is verily indistinguishable from the animal species. The Pasu, or the individual, is bound by the noose of Maya, which is the veil cast by God on all things. The dirt that vitiates the

mind of the individual is called Anava, that is, an atomic obscuration of consciousness in respect of the universal God. We know that a little finger placed over the eyes can blot out the powerful light of the large body of the sun in the sky. In some such way, the Jiva, or the individual, is caught in the snare of world-existence and attachment to objects. The grace of God is the way of the liberation of the individual.

The worship of Saiva is graded in a fourfold way: Charya, or the external service rendered by the devotee, such as collecting flowers for worship in the temple, ringing the bell, cleaning the premises of the shrine, and the like; Kriya, or the internal service, such as assisting the worshipper in the 'holy of holies', and doing actual worship as well as its preparations; Yoga, or the devotee becoming the worshipper himself in a state of attunement of the limbs of his own personality with the limbs of the Body of God, in a process of placement known as Nyasa, in which case articles of worship become redundant and the mind of the devotee is itself the supreme offering to God, external worship becoming internal inseparableness in an act of intense concentration and meditation; Jnana, or the way of wisdom and realisation of God as He is, in which condition the devotee rises above even the state of Yoga at-one-ment, and the soul unites itself with God-Being. The great Saiva saints, Appar, Sundarar, Jnanasambandar and Manikyavachagar, are said to represent, respectively, these four grades of devotion to the Great God, Siva. The four saints are known as Samaya-Kuravargal, or the progenitors

of the standard ways of approaching God in the superb reaches of divine devotion.

The lives of the Saiva saints, sixty-three in number, are glorified in the Tamil work called Periya Puranam. The incomprehensible ways of these devotees, making them often appear as even unsocial or antisocial, is the last blow that the world deals on its unwanted citizen so that God may receive the devotee in the nakedness of his spirit.

The Sakta Agama is known especially as the Tantra way of the worship of Sakti, the Universal Divine Power.

XXV—TANTRA SADHANA

The system called Tantra has always been regarded as an esoteric and secret way of spiritual practice, not supposed to be accessible to the untrained minds of the masses. The secrecy about the practice consists in the novel outlook of life which the Tantra requires the seeker to entertain, a way of looking at things different from the one in which people are accustomed to see, interpret and evaluate things. The teachers of the Tantra hold that a seeker on this path has to outgrow the usual human outlook and develop a superhuman and divine attitude in respect of the world. Since this would be too much to expect from the common man, Tantra is supposed to be a closed secret, whose gates can be opened only on conditions of specialised training in the mastery of one's mind and senses.

The philosophy of Tantra is based on the concept of a dual nature of everything,—duality based on unity. Nothing is single, but everything is bipolar. The so-called unity of things is only a form taken by a particular manner of the coming together of two forces, the subjective and the objective, designated as Siva and Sakta, the positive and the negative poles of experience. Scriptures dealing with a subject of this kind state that in the beginning there was a universal Uni-Cell, as it were, known as the Brahmanda, the Cosmic Egg, which split into two, one part of which was the Cosmic Man and the other part the Cosmic Woman. Modern science is corroborating this view when it concludes that in the beginning the universe was like a single Atom, which divided itself into two and then into the

multiplicity of the present state of the universe. Since the two parts and their subsequent sub-divisions actually belong to the whole, there is a natural pull exerted by each on the other, both at the cosmic level and its lower multiple forms of descent, even down to the minute atom. The behaviour of the two parts of any single organism is a sort of double attitude of the consciousness of duality and unity at the same time. There cannot be attraction between the positive and the negative unless they form two poles, and not a single something, and, yet, at 'the same time, there cannot be an attraction if they are absolutely two different things with no internal relation. Attraction and repulsion, love and hate; are such phenomena as defy logical understanding.

At the individual level love and hate seen to be warring with each other, though, in fact, the two form complementary aspects of a single attitude, basically. At the lower human level the bipolar unity assumes a multiplicity of forms, so that one bipolar unit cannot tolerate the interference or sometimes even the presence of another bipolar unit for fear of losing its isolatedness. This subtle operation can be seen manifest in its grosser forms when one family group finds it difficult to appreciate another family group, when one organisation cannot align itself with another organisation, one community cannot look upon another without some suspicion and reservation, though humanity constitutes a uniform species with common psycho-physical demands.

According to the Tantra, the sorrows of life are caused by a bipolar existence, a split of the one into two, because

the truth of things is oneness and not the apparent dual form of the existence of anything. The dual form creates an ambivalent attitude of like and dislike at the same time between one pole and another, love getting suppressed when hate supervenes and hate being driven under ground when love gains the upper hand, while the fact is that both these attitudes are simultaneously present in an individual hiddenly, and only one of the aspects comes to the surface as and when the occasion demands. Human nature, thus, is in a state of perpetual conflict; it is never in state of balance between its two compulsive attitudes. To get back from duality to real unity is the process of Tantra Sadhana.

A speciality of practice through Tantra is that there is no specific injunction towards a rejection of the outer for the sake of the inner, the material for the sake of the spiritual, or a considering of every joy in life as an evil to be eradicated wholesale. To the Tantra, the things of the world, the material forms of perception, are not really obstacles, and the desire for them cannot be overcome by rejecting the desire itself. Everything in the world, the world itself in its entirety, is a passage to perfection when its manifestations are viewed in their proper context and spirit. The visible is a way to the invisible. Human desires arise on account of the unintelligent attitude that man develops towards any desire, and there is a fear of desire since its pressure seems to be mastering him rather than himself being its controller and director. The fact that the object is inseparably related to the subject, because the object is just the other pole of which the subject is one phase, is highlighted in Tantric forms of meditation. Every

experience is a subject-object relation, and therefore no one can even think of overcoming the consciousness of there being such a thing as an object, except by a relation already established with the object through a means that transcends both the subject and the object. The naive attempt to subjugate the object would involve one in a vicious circle. No effort in the direction of getting rid of the object is feasible, since there is already a consciousness of the presence of the object in this very attempt. Thus comes the great dictum of the Tantra, that desire can be overcome only by desire, even as the object can be overcome only by the object. The other aspect of this principle held by the Tantra is that 'that by which one falls is also that by which one rises' (*Yaireva patanam dravyaih, siddhistatireva*).

The teachers of Tantra know that there is a great difficulty in inculcating this doctrine and practising it. Hence, the art of Sadhana along this path is considered to be a graduated movement through different ascending stages of understanding and disentanglement of the subject from involvement of the object, by a rising to a condition transcending the very relation between the subject and the object. Seven stages of the progressive movement are mentioned, known as the Vedachara, Vaishnavachara, Saivachara, Dakshanachara, Vamachara, Siddhantachara, and lastly, Kaulachara. Of these stages, the first three are intended for the lower category of students on the path, known as Pasu (persons in whom the animal nature is predominant), the next two for the Vira (persons in whom the normal human instinct is predominant), and the last two for the Divya (persons in whom the divine element is

predominant). It is believed that the first three stand for work, devotion and knowledge respectively, the Veda standing for ritual, Vaishnava for devotion, and Saiva for knowledge. The fourth stage attempts to conserve the positive results (Dakshina, or the right) achieved through the practice of the first three stages. Up to this level the movement is almost linear and a straight one, practically. But at the stage of Vamachara there is a strange difference in outlook, for this term implies the commencement of the 'return current' of the soul's movement towards Reality. 'Vama' does not mean 'left', as most people seem to think, but the 'reverse process', Nivritti, or returning, as distinguished from Pravritti or flowing onward along the natural current of the senses. Here is the beginning of the secret practice or the esoteric aspect of Tantra Sadhana, where objects of attraction as well as repulsion, whatever be their nature, are regarded as necessary instruments to be assimilated into and made part and parcel of one's own being, with the sole intention of overcoming the consciousness that they are outside oneself as a sort of opposing object or an external something.

The greatest obstacles to spiritual perfection are wealth, power and sex, and it is these that the Tantra intends to harness and overcome by the very means by which an untrained mind may head towards a fall. The Pasu, Vira and Divya attitudes, corresponding to the animal, human and the divine natures, take into consideration the gross, the subtle and the divine aspects of things. Every object has a gross form, a subtle form and a divine form, and every seeker has to pass through all these stages. The Tantra

insists that no stage can be overstepped but has to be traversed personally. An unknown thing, an object of fear, cannot come under one's control.

The Tantra holds that the impure, the ugly and the unholy things of life, the very things called evil, are things which have been wrongly seen out of their context, and, from their own particular positions as true subjects, they are neither good nor bad and have no special character of their own, which are foisted on them by the perceiving subject from its own standpoint. The negativities of life are suggestions given by the mind from the standpoint of the particular interest which refuses to take into consideration that there can be other interests than one's own. The universe is a multi-point-of-view, and not a single point of view merely; from the lower standpoint one has to rise to the higher, by a systematic and progressive movement of the whole of one's being through the gross, subtle and divine compositions of being. In the beginning, one contacts the object as the thing outside. Next, one merely thinks it in the mind. Lastly, one visualises it as a point of stress in the universal reality. All desire arises on account of the false notion that the universe of objects is outside the knowing consciousness.

XXVI—THE YOGA-VASISHTHA

Philosophical mysticism reaches its culmination in an especially elaborate literature of the Agama type of esotericism, known as the Yoga-Vasishtha. It is a book of thirty-two thousand verses divided into six parts designated as Vairagya, or Renunciation; Mumukshutva, or Aspiration for Liberation; Utpatti, or Creation; Sthiti, or Preservation; Upasama, or Dissolution; and Nirvana, or Salvation. The method of teaching adopted by the text is story, anecdote, illustration and image, which it considers as a better way of instruction than logical argument or reasoning.

The teaching emphasises that when there is perception of an object by the seer or observer, there has to be presupposed the existence of a consciousness between the subject and the object. If this conscious connecting link were not to be, there would be no perception of existence. There cannot be a consciousness of relation between two things unless there is a consciousness relating the two terms and yet standing above them. The study of the perceptional situation discloses the fact that the subject and the object are phases of a universal consciousness.

Creation is twofold—objective and subjective. The objective side of creation consists in the world created by Brahma, or the Original Will that projected the substance of the world as well as everything contained in it. The subjective world is the nature of the object as conceived by the mind of the perceiver, differing according to the species of the individual perceiving, such as the celestial, human, etc., and the inner constitution of the mind itself, and the different pressures and moods such as love and hatred, or

like and dislike. The Yoga-Vasishtha accepts that there is 'externally' something in the form of the creation of Brahma, though the way of experience of this objective world by the individuals is limited and conditioned by their own psychic structures and modifications.

Ultimately, even the world of Brahma is relative and does not have absolute existence by itself, since space and time do not have any absolute meaning, being relative to the standpoints of the observing individual. Inasmuch as there can be infinite points-of-view of a conscious envisagement of the world by the experiencing individuals, there can be an infinite number of worlds, one penetrating through the other and yet none being affected by the existence of the other. The relativity of space and time makes distance or measurement in terms of three dimensions as well as duration of time relative to the state of consciousness wherein they are experienced. A large universe can be within a particle of sand and aeons can pass within the fraction of a minute. Past, present and future have no relevance by themselves, but are interchangeable according to the nature of their relative structure, so that one can be, the other also under different conditions of consciousness. These astounding facts regarding the inner structure of the universe are propounded through illustrative stories. Space is the relation of the co-existence of ideas and Time is the relation of the succession of ideas. Since existence and succession are themselves ideas, the world has no existence independent of the mind. Though the Yoga-Vasishtha, in its mental theory of the creation of the world, may appear to land one in the doctrine of

extreme subjectivism, this predicament is avoided by a simultaneous pronouncement that the individual mind is essentially inseparable from the Cosmic Mind. The relativity of the cosmos is in the end capable of being traced to the working of the Cosmic Mind itself, Brahma dreaming the world, as it were. The universe is regarded as a cosmic dream distinguishable from the individual dreams only by way of the length of their duration. But even this difference in length is just a relative concept, as can be observed in the long years through which one can live in a dream though the dream lasted for only a few minutes from the standard of the waking consciousness. As the dream world vanishes in waking, the waking world vanishes in the experience of the Absolute.

The relativity of the cosmos implies the existence of worlds within worlds and worlds interpenetrating one another without the one necessarily being conscious of the existence of the other. The different worlds are constituted differently. Some of them may be almost similar in their nature, but mostly they differ and may be inhabited by different kinds of individuals ranging from the highest gods down to the lowest denizens of the nether regions. The evolution of the world goes on due to the impetus it has received from the mind of Brahma, and the process of creation continues secondarily even through the individuals.

It is impossible to correctly describe the nature of Reality, for all descriptions are determinations into form, and all such determinations mean the creation of separation or duality which does not obtain in It. In every

definition of the Absolute, Brahman, it is falsely objectified or externalised into an 'other' to the knowing consciousness. There is, thus, no such thing as 'knowing' the Absolute in the sense of anything that the relative mind can conceive. Brahman is undifferentiated existence, consciousness, bliss. Though it is everywhere, it cannot be seen, as it is not an object. It exists as the essential Seer, or the Self, in everything.

There are seven stages by which the spiritual seeker rises progressively. The first one is Subhecha, or the good intention to pursue the right path of knowledge and virtue. The second is Vicharana, or an investigation into the ways and means of acquiring true knowledge. The third is Tanumanasi, or the attenuation of the mind due to the subtlety attained by it in the practice of deep concentration. The fourth is Sattvapatti, or the realisation of spiritual equilibrium wherein the light of Brahman splashes forth like lightning in one's experience. The fifth is Asamsakti; or non-attachment to anything that is external on account of attaining the vision of universality. The sixth is Padartha-Abhavana, or the non-perception of materiality and the perception of radiance filling the whole universe, as if the entire existence is lit up with endless light. The seventh is Turiya, or the ultimate state of experience of identity with the Absolute.

The last of the stages mentioned is one of actual realisation and is known as Jivanmukti, that is, liberation while living. When the body drops, one attains Videhamukti, or disembodied salvation. The liberated sage is a master and a Superman. His actions are universal

(Mahakarta), his enjoyments are universal (Mahabhokta), and his renunciation, too, is universal (Mahatyagi).

Spiritual practice consists mainly in three processes: (1) The affirmation of the universality of Brahman in one's own consciousness, thinking only of That, speaking only about That, discoursing among one another only on That, and depending on That alone, known as Brahma-Abhyasa; (2) The restraint of the mind by eliminating its desires one by one gradually, adopting as many ways as would be necessary in accordance with the nature of the desires, known as Mano-Nigraha; and (3) The restraint of the Prana. by the well-known method of Pranayama, called Prana-Nirodha. The Prana, the mind and the spirit form the degrees of ascent as well as descent and one can start the practice from above downwards or from below upwards, according to one's temperament and predominating inclination. The most potent way, however, is Brahma-Abhyasa, which is the affirmation of Brahman in life, continuously, at all times, and in all conditions, as one's sole occupation, purpose and duty. This is the principal method of meditation, which restrains the mind and the Prana simultaneously. The Yoga-Vasishtha abounds in a large number of illustrative stories which bring out vividly its philosophical position and its practical suggestions.

XXVII—PHILOSOPHICAL PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The foundations of religion are in the concepts of God, the world and the individual, and all its other phases arise from a consideration of the relationship obtaining among these three metaphysical principles. The Vedas, Upanishads, Epics, Puranas and Agamas establish themselves on the avowed acceptance of this threefold reality, whose existence is taken for granted as an article of unquestionable faith or direct intuition and experience. The history of humanity has, however, been showing indications of its drifting more and more through the process of time away from the ability to know things by direct insight or experience, and the observation has been that psychological history is moving towards a greater dependence on sense and reason as the only faculties available by which anything can be known at all. Scriptural authority gives place to logical enquiry and philosophical investigation. While the existence of the individual person is a matter of empirical experience in everyday life, and the perception of a world outside also follows as a necessary corollary of the fact of the individual having an environment around, the available faculties of knowledge segregated from the possibility of insight and immediate experience find themselves at a loss when confronting such a problem as the existence of God.

Philosophers have mostly been rational expounders of the validity of religious values, though we have also among philosophers those who are atheists, agnostics, empiricists, sceptics and materialists. The major trend, however, of

philosophical disquisitions has been along the line of a common acceptance of there being such a thing as a reality transcending the world, whose nature requires to be known and established on firm grounds. Plato, in the West, was constrained to land himself in a world of 'Ideas' ruled by the 'Idea of the Good,' above the empirical world of sense-perception, the latter being just a shadow cast by the arrangement of the eternal 'Ideas'. To Aristotle, God is the Unmoved Mover, towards whom everything gravitates as if pulled by a powerful magnet, and all the variety and the material shapes of things tend gradually to unfold an essential form which enlarges itself in an ascending series of the evolution of form, until Pure Form, which is God, is reached as the ultimate discovery of logical philosophy. Kant denied the possibility of knowing God through understanding and reason, holding that the reality in itself cannot be contacted through the rational faculties of man, which are limited in their operation to the phenomena of space, time and the psychological categories of quantity, quality, relation and modality. But he inadvertently seems to be admitting the existence of a super-phenomenal reality, a thing-in-itself, when he denies the possibility of knowing it. Hegel took up the cause of reason and propounded it as a universally pervasive principle, which, by positive, negative and synthesising processes rises gradually to higher and higher forms of the synthesis of knowledge until the Ultimate Synthesis, the Absolute, is reached.

The existence of God has been an intriguing theme that occupied the minds of the philosophers throughout the ages:

It has been held that the concept of God implies at the same time the concept of the infinite, and such a concept cannot arise in the mind of anyone unless the infinite really exists. Thoughts cannot arise from a vacuum. Consciousness cannot have a location; its realm is infinitude. The concept of God as the perfect being should be regarded as proof enough, ontologically, of the existence of a reality which is God.

Further it is seen that in the world everything is a manifestation of some cause behind it, so that we may hold that the world in its entirety, which discloses the nature of an effect on account of its transiency and urge for onward evolution, can be explained only in terms of a cause behind it, which itself cannot be transient or subject to evolutionary process. Evolution is a tendency to outgrow oneself in a higher state of affairs and evolution itself would be meaningless if it is not to end in an achievement which is its purpose. Cosmic evolution is accountable only on the existence of a cosmic God who Himself is not caused by anything prior to Him. God is timeless Eternity.

The precision and method with which the world is seen to be working with its sun and moon and galaxies can only be the work of an Architect who designs and fashions this perfectly ordered way of the working of things, Whose existence should be as certain as the artistic workings of Nature as a whole.

The finitude of every form of individuality implies a consciousness of one's finitude, and the consciousness of finitude spontaneously suggests a consciousness of that which is not finite. What is not finite is infinite, which is exactly the description of God.

There is also a tendency in people to ask for more and more of things, and such an asking would have no significance if it cannot be granted or fulfilled. The 'more' has to culminate in a possibility of its utter attainment in a state of perfection, where the 'more' melts into the 'most', the superlative endlessness, where the sense of more reaches its finale.

Further, our moral sense, which commands us to do good and not bad, expects a corresponding reward for such a behaviour of discipline, but for which there would be no incentive to be good or do good. The dispenser of justice behind good and bad deed has to be someone beyond the world of good and bad, and such a one, obviously, has to be an infinite being.

Since the consciousness of anything defies divisibility, the consciousness of division itself requiring an abolition of the consciousness of division, consciousness ever manages to remain divisionless, that is, infinite. This infinitude is the nature of true existence,—God.

There cannot be a consciousness of the object by the subject, unless there is a transcendent conscious principle relating the subject and the object, and yet, by itself, transcending subject-object relation, which would be the veritable Infinite. We call it God.

XXVIII—EMPIRICAL SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

At the outset, philosophical thought hinges on sense-perception, later it rises to rational considerations, and finally roots itself in spiritual experience. The Nyaya and the Vaiseshika systems base themselves mainly on the logic of inference and consider, principally, perception, inference and verbal testimony as the valid means of acquiring right knowledge. Perception and inference conclude that the entire creation is composed of nine substances, namely, Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether, Time, Space, Soul and Mind, though all the elements enumerated, except Mind and Soul, can be regarded as objects of direct perception through the senses. Mind and Soul could also be regarded as existence through inferential knowledge. The gross elements, namely, Earth, Water, Fire and Air, are reducible to atoms that combine themselves into the very objects in creation. Apart from one of the five elements, i.e., Ether, the principles of Space and Time are to be regarded as abstract realities to make any sense out of the process of creation as a reality at all. Mind and Soul give meaning to individuality, or the very existence of the person.

How could atoms combine themselves into forms unless there is an arranger of atoms into the requisite forms? The existence of God as the fashioner of all creation has logically to be accepted, without which position the creation of the world cannot be adequately accounted for, and also there would be no ground for the dispensation of justice in respect of the good and the bad deeds of individuals. For this reason, and many others of this kind, the existence of God is to be accepted. God, as the fashioner

of all things of which the world consists, has naturally to be outside creation, extra-cosmic in nature, since one who is involved in the very substance of creation cannot be regarded as its creator. Further, from the point of view of the individuals, it is to be concluded that knowledge arises by the contact of the soul with mind in perception, and such knowledge will not be present when 'the mind is dissociated from the soul, as in the state of salvation achieved through freedom from desire and unselfish action.

The Samkhya system examines the Nyaya and the Vaiseshika position and feels that it is not possible to categorise the substance of creation into neat packets with no internal relation among them, because an internal coherence of the parts of a whole is implied in the organic and unified manner in which the world works. An extra-cosmic God would not solve this problem, since that which is outside the cosmos cannot touch the cosmos and such a God cannot even be regarded as having a hand in creation. God's extra-cosmic position would prevent his hands from reaching creation. The Samkhya posits only two realities, namely, Prakriti and Purusha, in place of the categories of the Nyaya and Vaiseshika, which stand for matter and spirit in their general connotation. There are only two things that are seen to be operating everywhere, that is, a consciousness that knows and matter that is known. We cannot think of a third element anywhere other than these two eternal principles. The process of knowledge is an interaction between consciousness and matter, Purusha and Prakriti.

Prakriti is constituted of three properties that are also its very substance, namely, Sattva or equilibrated transparency, Rajas or distraction and multiplicity, and Tamas or stability or fixity. The dynamics and statics of the scientist's world correspond to Rajas and Tamas, as two of the essences of Prakriti. The world of perception is not accustomed to visualise or experience Sattva, since all individual experience is dominated mainly by Rajas and Tamas. In rare moments of the cessation of the distraction of desire in the mind; Sattva manifests itself as a joyous experience. Sattva is both intelligence and bliss, which do not reveal themselves in a world of desire and action.

Prakriti manifests itself as several evolutes constituting the whole of creation. Purusha is infinite consciousness, and its action on Prakriti by a peculiar juxtaposition of itself with the ubiquitous Prakriti, stirs the properties of Prakriti, that is, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, which are known as Gunas in the Samkhya terminology. The stimulation of the universal Sattva-Guna enables the Purusha to reflect itself on this Sattva which appears as Mahat, or Cosmic Intelligence. Mahat concretises itself into a Universal Self-awareness known as Ahankara. From Ahamkara proceed the five potentials of objectivity called Tanmatras, namely, Sound, Touch, Colour, Taste and Smell, in their Cosmic electromagnetic nature, which are concretised into the visible and solid substances of Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. These five gross elements constitute the entire physical universe. So much is the objective universe.

Subjectively, the subtle potentials, such as sound and the like, while operating in the individual, in their

essentiality as Sattva, become the causes of the sense powers of hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling. As the compositions of the Rajas aspect of these potentials the active senses of speaking or vocal articulation, grasping, with hands, locomotion with feet, generation through the genitals and excretion through the anus are produced. The total of the Sattva elements of the potentials mentioned constitute the mind. These are the twenty-four principles of the Samkhya philosophy, beginning with Prakriti, and Purusha standing apart as Universal Consciousness. Prakriti and Purusha are both eternal and totally different from each other. Their coming together is the bondage of life through the sense of externality and individuality assumed by Purusha, which is otherwise universal, by an apparent contact of itself with Prakriti. The bondage of life in every one of its forms is due to the mixing up of the Purusha consciousness with the material evolutes of Prakriti. The separation of Purusha from Prakriti by knowledge and by the practice of Yoga is the liberation of the Purusha from entanglement in the processes of Prakriti and all its material and subtle expressions.

Among Western circles of philosophic thought, certain early Greek thinkers, and the famous expounders like Locke, Berkeley and Hume, as well as Bacon and Mill propound the philosophy of pure empiricism, holding that all value is externally placed and all knowledge is imported from outside, with no inherent or intrinsic a priors knowledge or final reality in the set-up of the individual. Even the Pragmatism made famous by William James is empirical in its approach and in its conclusions, together

with its doctrine of utility being the test of truth. Sensory knowledge is of primary importance and all judgments, logical or rational, are based on information gained through sense-perception. The mind by itself has no knowledge of its own, it is like a clean slate on which is written sense-conditioned knowledge which is included in all that we know in science, psychology or psychoanalysis, aesthetics, education or morality, and all that is of any value in any way, such as religion and the code of ethics of human society.

Against this view is the rationalism of Plato and Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, Bradley and Bosanquet, who emphasised that all knowledge is not empirical and that there is an inherent reason and spirit whose knowledge is a priori, and not a posteriori as the empiricists hold. Kant and Hegel, however, rose above the extremes of rationalism and empiricism and developed a transcendental philosophy blending together all that is true in the reports of the senses and all that is there in the mind and reason as inherent knowledge.

The empirical trend in terms of an acute psychological analysis by observation of the presence of suffering and sorrow caused by the linkage of 'Dependent Origination' (*Pratitya-samutpada*) in the working of the human psyche is to be found in the doctrine of the Buddha, and Buddhism. While this is one side of the matter, there is in this teaching a tremendous rational investigation not only delving into the ultimate causes of suffering but also into the possibility of there being a sure way out of suffering in the practice of the Eight Noble Virtues, whose elucidation is

intensely spiritual, ending up in the transcendent recognition of the eternal state of Nirvana, or absolute blessedness, as the goal of all life.

The Mimamsa system of Vedic ritualism also falls into the category of empirical thinking in its insistence on certain types of semantic interpretation on the scriptural texts of the Veda and the very conception of the meaning of life as being not above the desire for happiness in a heavenly world of a multiplicity of gods.

XXIX—THE MIMAMSA DOCTRINE OF WORKS

The Mimamsa is a system of enquiry and interpretation of meaning, rather the meaning of meaning. The Mimamsa is especially known as Purvamimamsa, or the earlier Mimamsa, to distinguish it from the Uttaramimamsa or the later Mimamsa, known also as the Vedanta.

The Mimamsa establishes the authority of the Veda, and makes out that its purport is ritual, on account of which it is also known as Karma-mimamsa. The system bases itself on the Brahmana portion of the Vedas which interprets the scripture ritualistically, as also on the Srauta Sutras which expatiate on the methods of ritual. Philosophically, in its essential outlook of life, the doctrine is similar to the Nyaya and the Vaiseshika empiricism. The Brahmanas are texts which are attached to each of the four Vedas, and they rationalise the ritualistic trend in religious performance.

The supreme authority for the Mimamsa is verbal testimony (Sabda-Pramana) on the basis of which principle the Veda is regarded as without any human author (Apaurusheya) and as eternal by itself. The Eternity of the Veda is proved by the semantic relation obtaining between a word and its meaning, which relation is said to be a permanent one. The letters which form a word are impartite compounds and, hence, imperishable. A letter as uttered or articulated is different from the mode of its utterance. Here comes in the speciality of the Veda Mantra which cannot be pronounced as one likes, and its meaning consists in the mode or the tone (Svara) in which it is uttered or chanted. A word is an aggregate of letters with a

location of their linguistic position in a sentence, but the meanings expressed by the words are universal in their nature. The relation between the word and its meaning, thus, is eternal.

However, it does not follow from the above that all literature is also eternal. The speciality of the Veda is that the sequence or order in which the words are arranged is permanent and unchangeable and cannot be modified by any human agent. That is, the Veda cannot be edited or improved upon by anyone, since it is by itself an eternally established body of knowledge requiring no emendation. The Veda has intrinsic validity and is not based on extrinsic factors; that is, it is unconditioned. The knowledge of the Veda is faultless and is free from the defects which may enter into ordinary speech or language. The sphere of the Veda is a super-sensible realm of realities, while the process of perception, etc., has as its field empirical reality. The Mimamsa system has an elaborate technique of determining the definite rules that are to be followed in the correct interpretation of the Veda, so that its real meaning may be ascertained.

The Veda teaches Dharma, which the Mimamsa defines as religious duty in the form of do's and don'ts in the field of action or duty. There are permanent obligations (Nitya Karmas), occasional obligations (Naimittika Karmas), optional performances (Kamya Karmas) and prohibited actions (Nishiddha Karmas). While the first two kinds of action are imperative and are incumbent upon everyone as duty in the proper sense of the term, they do not bring any merit, but their non-performance brings demerit. The third

category does bring merit when performed but does not bring demerit when not performed. It is the fourth variety that does not come under duty. Prohibited actions are those that bring ruin to a person and, to society, incidentally.

The Mimamsa takes this pain of explanation and interpretation to establish finally the validity of the performance of sacrifices according to the injunctions of the Brahmana texts, in order that the performer may reach heaven. But, how can sacrifice which has an end take one to heaven after death? The Mimamsa establishes a relation between the sacrifice and the joys of heaven by the proposition that the sacrificial action produces an invisible and subtle potency which does not perish with the deed but continues to exist as a potential force, known as Apurva, until its fruit is reaped. The Apurva, thus, acts as a bridge between the sacrifice performed here and the experience of heaven afterwards. The aim of the Mimamsa is attainment of heaven (Svarga), the abode of the gods who are eulogised through the Veda Mantras and propitiated through sacrifices performed by the application of the requisite Mantras or formulae for the invocation of the divinities.

The purpose of the Mimamsa is to prescribe details of what is yet to be achieved in the future through performance of works, and not to assert what already exists. Here the Mimamsa and the Vedanta are poles apart.

XXX—THE GOSPEL OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

The Bhagavad Gita, known as the 'Song of the Blessed Lord', occurs in the Mahabharata, and purports to be a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. It is believed that the Gita furnishes in a novel way the quintessence of the Upanishads, providing a teaching on the proper relationship obtaining among God, the world and the individual. Here is, in this teaching, an interesting blend and proportion, the coming together of the call of duty, a harmony of human relation, a consciousness of a higher agency operating behind man and society, the interrelatedness of all the things in the world, and the supremacy of Godhead above everything. Humanity as a whole is represented in the personality of Arjuna, and God in the Incarnation of Krishna.

The Bhagavad Gita commences with a picture of the human predicament in a conflict of duty, of what is proper and improper, in an arena of the vast world which appears to the human individual as a field of opposing forces, where the good and the evil seem to be warring with each other. There is tension at every step, and man's life has been a ceaseless effort at self-adjustment with the changing contours of the world and human society. This situation converts the human being into a kind of movement towards what ought to be, or is yet to be, rather than something that is, independently by itself. This is the phase in human life which manifests itself as a series of perpetual types of restlessness, helplessness, dejection and despair.

But there is in man, at the same time, an inner stuff which defies movement, change and caprice and asserts its

permanency characterised by an unending longing for deathless values. This dual facet of human individuality is accountable by its involvement partly in the world of name, form and process and partly in Eternity that masquerades in the midst of the name-form complex and space-time process. The soul of man is immortal, his body is perishable. The noumenal and the phenomenal join hands in the formation of the human personality.

As the world includes the individual as a content of itself, it is the duty of everyone to participate in a wholesome manner and unselfishly in the evolutionary process of the world which ranges from the visible formation of matter, life, mind and intellect to the higher realms of the several ways in which God reveals Himself in creation. Life in the world is not all, the destiny of man is above this world. World-experience is a preparation for God-experience. The individual is a passage to the Absolute. Work becomes a compulsive duty as it is an expression of the way in which the individual can be conscious of its harmonious relation with the world, and finally with God. Since God is immanent in the world, work done in the world becomes also a worship of God. Since the forces of the world constitute an organic network of intrinsic relation, no one can be free from the obligation of duty, not only in the form of cooperation with other living beings but also with Nature as a whole and with God in the light of His eternal order in the form of creation. Action binds when it is thought to be done for one's own benefit. Action does not bind when it is done as a cooperative participation in the universal activity of creation and in the

fulfilment of the Will of God who is the central Agent of all process, action and creative movement, everywhere.

The sources of conflict are mainly fourfold; that between the higher and the lower nature in one's own self; that between oneself and other people; that between oneself and the world of Nature; and that between oneself and God. The Bhagavad Gita endeavours to prescribe methods of resolving this fourfold conflict in an ascending series of methodology, right from the lowest concept of things to their highest universality. The inner schism which one feels within oneself as a psychological conflict is on account of one's fall from the status of God-consciousness, which consequently becomes the cause of a gulf between man and man, and between man and the world. No one who is not established in God as an entirety of existence can feel a kinship with Nature or even a sense of brotherhood with others, let alone have peace of mind within one's own self. Unselfish dedicated work for the welfare of all (Sarvabhutahite ratah) and constant devotion to God as the universality inseparable from one's true being are marks of perfection (Sthitaprajna).

The Yoga way of meditation prepares one for the higher identification of oneself with the world as a whole, Nature in its comprehensiveness, and God as the All-Being. The Bhagavad Gita is designated as Brahma-Vidya, or the science of the Absolute; Yoga-Sastra, or the art of meditation; and Krishna-Arjuna Samvada, or the union of God and man. The first definition makes out that the Bhagavad Gita provides a metaphysical foundation for life as a whole, the second aspect points out that it is a guideline

for self-discipline and self-integration, and the third portrayal declares that the teaching is centred on the journey of man to God, and his final union with God. The great promise that God bequeaths to man in the Bhagavad Gita is in the proclamation that He is ready to grant all the needs of the devotee when he unquestioningly and undividedly centres his consciousness in God-Being. The concluding verse of the Bhagavad Gita announces that prosperity, victory, happiness and established polity will reign supreme wherever Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and Arjuna, the bowman of action, move forward seated in a single chariot, implying thereby that perfection is possible and is attainable when the Universal and the particular commingle in a state of harmony and balance in the world as well as in the individual. Here is a recipe for the blessedness of all. The God of the Bhagavad Gita presented in the eleventh chapter is, verily, the God of universal religion, not of a religion, but religion as such, religion as it is, and as it ought to be.

XXXI—THE PATH OF DIVINE DEVOTION

Religion, in fact, is the way in which we daily establish our relation with God. The manner in which we contact God in our life is our practical religion. Mostly, our love for God keeps us in a state of reverence and awe and creates in us a particular type of devotion, known as Aisvaryapradhana-Bhakti, i.e., the love of God and adoration of God as Creator, Father and Sovereign Supreme, as Ishvara, or the Master of Creation. But there is another type of internal contact that the devotee establishes with God, more intimate, we may say, in a sense, an attitude of affection for God, which goes by the name of Madhuryapradhana-Bhakti. Here, intellectuality, ratiocination and analytical approach cease, and the soul speaks to God in its own language of unquestioned rapture. It contacts God in the vitality of being, rather than the words which the tongue speaks. Love needs no philosophy, nor does devotion to God.

We hear of saints like Narada travelling to all the worlds including Vaikuntha, Satyalokha and Kailasa. These analogies of Divine Masters penetrating through the realms of the cosmos, contacting God on one side and meeting men and even demons on the other side, is a representation of the significance of divine devotion, the extent to which it can have an impact on everyone and everything, especially as we have it portrayed in the Epics and the Puranas. Creation is said to be constituted of different realms, or Lokas, as they are called; and to make the relevance of God to creation interesting, catching and vibrating to the soul, to stir the personality and make one's hair stand on end

even by listening to the glories of God, these notable scriptures employ a technique of presenting God as a Personality, not entirely dissimilar to our own. God also lives in a realm as we do, though His region is all-inclusive, while ours is localised. God is the repository of supreme compassion, pity and mercy. He is not merely a judge who is only mathematically precise, regardless of our representations. God is concerned not only with law, but also justice. Dharma is not merely law, it is also due dispensation of justice. If there are five hundred witnesses manipulating against an innocent person, he can be penalised with even capital punishment, because there is evidence. This is law working. But it is not justice. God is justice, it is true, not merely law; but God has also a tender feeling towards His creation, to man and to all creatures. To know that we love God and that God loves us is certainly a greater satisfaction than any other consolation that we may have in terms of legal protection or judicial security.

The special emphasis of the Epics and the Puranas is that God can hear us and speak to us, and we can speak to God. The stories, analogies and symbols that these scriptures employ for describing man's relation with God, and vice versa, signify that God is nearer to us than we imagine; and He will help us even if we are unconscious of His presence. It is not that God thinks of us only if we think of Him. Our relation to God is not a bargain or compromise; it is not a give-and-take covenant. God is portrayed not merely as Grandfather (Pitamaha) or Father (Pita) but also as Mother (Mata) and Supporter (Dhata). The Lord proclaims in the Bhagavad Gita that He is the

Saviour, the Protector, the Generator, the Withdrawer, the Sustainer, the Onlooker, the Supervisor, and many other things of that nature, which make out that God is all and is everything.

It should follow, therefore, that it is easier to contact God than anything else in this world. Some purely rationalistic texts of a logical character may argue that God is difficult of approach, more difficult than anything in the world; but here we are told that other things are more difficult to approach than God. The point is that things in the world are not so near to us as we imagine; they maintain a spatial distance from us, and are away from us, but God is nearer to us than anything else, for God is not in space. The inclusiveness of God keeps us always non-separate from Him. God is nearer to us than parent, wife or children, all which relation will break down when one is in real difficulty, but God's help comes instantaneously. Our human relations may help us when we maintain a requisite relationship with them, but our relation to God is not conditioned in any manner. It is told, again and again, that God loves us more than we seem to love Him.

An interesting incident is recorded in the Drona-Parva of the Mahabharata, the mere listening to which would strike us with wonder and make us sob for the love that God has for man. Towards the end of this Book, Arjuna is speaking to Bhagavan Vedavyasa and exclaims: "Master, can you explain to me one interesting thing? Whenever I was up in arms in battle, I used to see some mysterious figure moving in front of me, which I could not decipher properly, something visible sometimes, sometimes

invisible, but not touching the ground. I saw a figure like that of a human being, now coming out of the mist as it were, making himself slightly visible to my eyes, now going into the background of the misty atmosphere of the war field. He was doing nothing, looking this way and that way, moving to this corner and that corner. The only speciality that I observed in his appearance was that he had a trident in his hand, a knot-of hair on his head, and I saw some snakes round his neck. I could not understand who it was or what it was and what was the meaning behind it."

Sage Vyasa smiled and replied: "Arjuna, it is good that you have spoken to me about this mystery which you could not understand, nor can anyone understand. Do you know who fought this war and who it was that is bringing you victory? Who can stand before valiant warriors like Bhishma and Drona? Is there a man in all the world who can face them in war? But who defeated them? Someone else has worked this miracle in your favour but remained always in the background. Do you know whom you saw? It was Lord Siva. You are indeed blessed. He knew the predicament in which you all were since your opponents were indomitable. Lord Siva knew this and He was moving in the midst of the forces in war sucking the energy of the Kaurava regiments by His mere presence, but not taking any direct action. Oh, who could stand before Him if He were really to take up arms? Blessed art thou that you could see Him."

God works like this. And there are other instances to the same effect, as on occasions when Bhishma spoke to Duryodhana in plain words. Duryodhana used to feel

diffident and despondent as he could not see during the regime of Bhishma in the war any symptom of victory being on his side. Angered and upset, Duryodhana used to meet Bhishma frequently in the evening and cry out: "What is this? What is happening, grandsire? Thousands of my people are being slain every day and you are yet alive, the invincible commander-in-chief." Bhishma would reply, "My dear child, do not tease me and taunt me every day. You are under the wrong impression that I am only pretending to fight and have not done my work well. But it is not so. I would have pounded all the Pandava forces in a single day but for the presence of that inscrutable person who is sitting there as the charioteer of Arjuna. But for His subtle intervention from moment to moment, the Pandava regiments would not have been there on the first day itself. I could have single-handedly uprooted the Pandava army. You do not know my strength. I have told you several times that you should not engage yourself in a conflict with those whom Krishna is helping. But you would not listen to me. And now you come and speak to me unpleasant words which are unbecoming on your part." Bhishma indeed did his best. He went to the extreme of his ferocity. Like blazing fire he began to burn the opposing forces. Thousands were massacred by the arrows that Bhishma shot. But not a single Pandava could be killed. Again Duryodhana wept at night: "What is all this, Master; you could not kill even a single Pandava? And I have depended on you for my security. After so many days of battle you could not bring down even a single Pandava." Again it was the same reply which Bhishma gave. "My dear boy, I do not want to get

angry with you though you often irritate me with these words. But I shall tell you the truth once again. You cannot win this war as long as Krishna is on the other side." "Well, this is the old story again," said Duryodhana. "I am not here depending on you senile people. I have stalwarts like Karna." There could have been a cutting reply from Bhishma to this unwarranted verbal attack from Duryodhana, but Bhishma held his tongue, because there was no use frowning on the stupid man who would not listen to sage advice.

And how does God help? Asvatthama's role in the Mahabharata, again, is a case in point. After a lot of importunity Asvatthama obtained from his father Drona the knowledge of an invincible missile known as Narayana-Astra. After repeated pressure from the son, the father initiated him into this terrific mystery, saying, "All right, come here, I shall give you something now. But beware, I am giving you fire in your hands by which you can burn the world, but, my child, do not use it against devotees of God. "It will not work against those who are protected by Narayana. I am warning you in this regard, lest you should yourself be in danger if you misuse it." Yet, Drona was cautious. He would not tell him how to withdraw the missile, because if it could be withdrawn, it could be used again several times. Knowing the immaturity and lack of understanding from which Asvatthama suffered and his eagerness to use it one day or the other, Drona taught him its use once only and never told him how to use it a second time.

And we know how the occasion came for it. When Drona left his mortal coil, the fury of Asvatthama knew no bounds. He yelled out, "My father has given me some power; and today there shall be none remaining on the Pandava side." Saying this, Asvatthama let off the Narayana-Astra. Then what happened? Not even thousands of atomic bombs can work that devastation which Narayana-Astra is capable of. The Astra multiplied itself millionfold, the whole sky was filled with burning missiles; there was no sky, no stars, no sun and no moon; it was all fire. When Arjuna, who was not initiated into this Astra by Drona on account of his partiality for his son, saw it, he queried Krishna, "Lord, what is it that is coming? This is something new which I have not had the occasion to see before." Krishna replied: "I know what it is, and there is no remedy for this. No one can stand up against this Astra of Narayana, which has emanated from my own being. There is no one who can face it, not even the greatest of warriors. The best thing for you all would be now to stop fighting, throw down your arms and offer obeisance to this Astra with folded hands, because this weapon will not attack anyone who is not its enemy. Therefore, prostrate yourselves before it, and all shall be well." On hearing the words of Krishna, Arjuna ordered the entire army to throw down its weapons, shouting loudly: "Prostrate yourselves before this great fire that is coming. That is the only way of saving yourselves." And all did so, except Bhima, who retorted: "I am not a coward. I shall not bend before anyone. I shall see to it." Saying thus, Bhima took up his mace and began brandishing it against the Astra. Arjuna

and Krishna argued with Bhima, "This is not the time to show your valour. Come down from your chariot and throw down your mace. They pulled him down to the ground. And, well, the Astra, beholding no one against it, extinguished itself. The Astra entered the body of Krishna himself, for he was Narayana standing there far the welfare of the righteous and the devout.

Asvatthama was gazing from the top of a tree, to see the ashes of the Pandavas. But no such thing happened. No ashes and no fire. The Pandavas were up in arms once again as if nothing had happened. Asvatthama left the field cursing all including even his father, saying that he was duped by his father's false initiation which was really of no utility to him. "These days even parents tell lies." Thus he cried and went out. On the way he met Vyasa, who explained to him that his father had not told him a lie and had initiated him properly. The only difficulty was, the Narayana-Astra was used against Narayana Himself. That was the reason why it did not work. We should not use our power against God. Human effort cannot contradict Divine Majesty.

The wondrous way in which the great Incarnation Krishna furnished divine robes to Draupadi, the way in which He invisibly fed the Sage Durvasa and his thousands of disciples on prayer from Draupadi, the stunning drama of His going as an ambassador to the court of the Kauravas on behalf of the Pandavas, His revelation of the Cosmic Form in that assembly, His mighty role as divinity incarnate, in the Bhishma, Drona and Karna Parvas in the

Mahabharata, are all too grand and glorious to be put in any word or language.

Again, we have instances like the release of the Sudarsana-Chakra of Narayana on the predicament of Ambarisha who became the target of Durvasa's anger, as we have it recorded in the Srimad Bhagavata.

The point is that such miraculous divine occurrences, the subtle workings of God, above the ken of the human mind, bring out the fact that God is always conscious of what our needs are and takes immediate steps to redress the sorrows of the devotees. In fact, God works His miracles every moment. Every incident in the life of the world is a divine miracle. The tales in the Epics and Puranas highlight the ways in which God can be loved and encountered. God is adored in the affectionate personifications as Father, Friend, Master, Child, or one's Beloved. God is also adored as the immensely compassionate Mother. We call it devotion when we run after God. What do we call it when God is running after us and wants us perennially? In fact, this latter mystery is the pinnacle that divine devotion can reach. It is not just enough if we want God; His wanting us is, indeed, the supreme attainment. The Lord's promise in the Bhagavad Gita is well known: "Those who contemplate on Me undividedly and worship Me as the All, to them, who are ever united with Me, I provide what they need, and protect what they have."

XXXII—THE INTEGRAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE VEDANTA

The Samkhya doctrine of the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti leaves an unbridged gulf between consciousness and matter, the seer and the seen. The question that remains unsolved is the way in which consciousness and matter, which are dissimilar in character, come in contact with each other to produce experience. Also, it is a point to consider how knowledge, according to the Samkhya and Vaiseshika, is a product of the contact of the soul and mind, in which case the soul separated from mind in liberation will remain in an unconscious state. The analogy of crystal and colour adumbrated by the Samkhya to explain the contact of Purusha and Prakriti is inadequate, since, in that case, all experience would be in the end unrealistic and the duality between the two principles would still remain untouched by the point made out by the illustration. Consciousness cannot contact matter unless there is something akin to consciousness in the relation of such a contact, without which experience would be impossible. The link between consciousness and matter cannot be something connected with matter itself, since matter is devoid of consciousness. If the link between consciousness and matter has somehow to be a state of consciousness, that link would require another link of a similar nature to relate it to matter. There would be no end to these regresses of argument, proving thereby a falsified attempt involved in trying to relate the conscious self to unconscious matter. The fact that consciousness knows the existence of matter in experience should unavoidably stumble upon there being

something in matter itself akin to consciousness without which objective knowledge would not be feasible. The position that matter should have a character of consciousness inherent in it would automatically land one in the conclusion that matter is also a state of consciousness, though incipient and not actually manifest openly. The Vedanta philosophy concludes that matter also is a phase of consciousness and objects of knowledge embody in themselves a hidden potential of consciousness which is also the Self of the perceiving subject, enabling experience in the subject. The subject-consciousness (Vishayi-chaitanya) is in a larger dimension of its own being as universality and all-pervadingness beholds itself in the object-consciousness (Vishaya-chaitanya), thereby reducing all possible experience to a degree of universal consciousness. Experience is neither purely subjective nor entirely objective; experience is caused by the universal element inherent in both the subject and the object, linking the two terms of the relation together and yet transcending both the subject and the object because of its universality. Here the Vedanta scores a point over both empiricism and rationalism, and, taking stock of the position maintained by the two schools, it rises above them in a transcendent integration of both the subjective and objective sides. In spite of this apparent similarity of the Vedanta doctrine with the conclusions of Kant and Hegel, there is a vast difference in that while the Kantian position precludes knowledge of reality even by way of its transcendental idealism on account of all thought being limited to phenomena, the Vedanta affirms the absolute reality of

Brahman as the very source of even the apprehension of phenomena by the knowing subject; and while Hegel makes his Absolute a dynamic process of a continuous internal relation of synthesis behind thesis and antithesis, unconsciously marring the very Eternity of the Absolute by involving it in the dialectical process of an evolution and movement of Idea, Nature and Spirit, the Vedanta affirms the indivisibility of consciousness which is the Absolute, since the introduction of any dialectic or evolutionary process within the Absolute would render it divisible and, consequently, a perishable finite.

The Self is pure consciousness whose existence cannot be denied or even doubted since it is never seen that anyone doubts one's own existence, and even the denial of the Self would have at its background the consciousness of having denied it. This consciousness is the indubitable Self of everyone, which asserts itself always as the 'I' in every form of experience. Even the ideas of birth and death, the coming and going of things, even the creation and dissolution of the universe, are processes involved in consciousness itself. Time cannot destroy consciousness, while time destroys all things, because the process of destruction has meaning only when it is a content of consciousness. Thus, consciousness can have neither birth nor death; it is beyond the concepts of space and time. Being above time it is eternal, and being above space it is infinite. This is the true Self whose essence is consciousness, hidden within every individual and in everything. Consciousness is absolute existence and absolute freedom (Sat-Chit-Ananda).

The three states of waking, dream and sleep, through which we pass in our daily experience, differ from one another, and yet a single consciousness connects them, enabling the individual to experience an identity even in the otherwise differentiatedness of these states. Since consciousness links the three states into a singleness of experience, it is immanent in them and yet transcends them, not capable of identity with any of them. Since it is none of the three states it is regarded as the fourth state (Turiya). We may add here that while the three states relate to a three-dimensional form of empirical experience, consciousness, which is called the Atman, is the four-dimensional reality, or, it is dimensionless existence. The deepest consciousness in man, the Atman, is, therefore, the same as the universal Brahman since consciousness is the nature of Brahman which is present in the individual as the Atman.

If the Platonic, Kantian and Hegelian positions have to be given their due credibility, this the Vedanta would do in its wide sweep of an inclusiveness of outlook in the doctrine of the relative reality of the world (Vyavaharika-satta) as distinguished from Absolute reality (Paramarthika-satta). From the point of view of the observations of an individualised consciousness placing itself in the context of an onlooker of the drama of the universe, there is creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, there are degrees of reality, there is positive goodness and negative evil, there is birth and death, bondage and liberation. As the individual cannot comprehend the Absolute, the Vedanta would agree with Kant. But when knowledge plumbs into

the universal depths of the Atman, it is at once a direct experience of reality transcending phenomena. Here the Vedanta differs from Kant. While Hegel's dialectic of the thesis, antithesis and synthesis, and the degrees in the process of evolution of consciousness to the Absolute is corroborated by the Vedanta as the story of creation, evolution and involution, it disagrees with Hegel in holding that in the ultimate state of things, in reality as it is in itself, in the supreme Absolute, there is no such process, since, the Absolute is processless Eternity.

Through unselfish action in the service of people (Karma), through devotion to God as the Creator of the universe (Bhakti), and through the wisdom of the Absolute as the sole reality (Jnana), the soul attains salvation. Scriptures declare that the will of God (Ishvara) is the source of creation, and His creation ranges from His will onwards down to His immanence in all created forms of every species. Up to this level creation is a state of cosmic experience which is God's omniscience. But, subsequently, the created individuals assume in themselves a vainglorious independence from God's universal creation and behold it as an object of sense-perception. Matter is Spirit discerned through the senses. When the isolation of the individual from cosmic inclusiveness takes place, the individualised consciousness falls headlong, as it were, into the empirical states of sleep, dream and waking, entangling itself thereby in the compulsive urges of desire and action whose impressions involve it in cycles of transmigratory life. Freedom from this turmoil of individual existence is attained when the individual (Jiva), in a state of meditation

through Yoga, withdraws its sense powers from objectivised forms and centres its consciousness in the unitariness of its identity with the Absolute. This is the merging of the individual in Brahman (Brahma-Sakshatkara).

The above is basically the position maintained by Acharya Sankara in his interpretation of the Vedanta, but other thinkers like Ramanuja and Madhva hold a different view. According to Ramanuja, consciousness is not the essence of the Self but is only a quality of the Self (Dharmabhuta-Jnana). Here Ramanuja would land us in a difficulty of reducing the Self to a state of essential unconsciousness independent of its quality. The relation between the individual and Brahman is not one of complete identity but relatedness, as the body is related to the soul, but is not identical with the soul. The universe is the body (Sarira) of God, who is called Vishnu, or Narayana, who is the embodied (Saririn). The way to God is devotion (Bhakti) and not knowledge (Jnana) in the sense Sankara would define it. Therefore, the consciousness of the Jiva cannot be identified with the consciousness of Brahman. Here we may recall our observations made in connection with the Vaishnava Agama method of the visualisation of God, and the worship of God, on which Ramanuja mostly depends. He also draws sustenance from the devotional Tamil songs of the Alvar saints as well as the Epics and Puranas, while Sankara seems to be attempting to see a harmony of monistic thought throughout, mainly in the light of the Upanishads. While Sankara's thesis is called Absolute Monism (Kevala-Advaita) holding Brahman as the only reality, second to which there can be nothing, that

of Ramanuja is known as Qualified Monism (Visishta-Advaita), as he holds that Brahman is qualified by the realities of the world and the individuals.

Madhva departs radically from both Sankara and Ramanuja. His doctrine is that Vishnu is the ultimate reality, the world is real, the individuals differ from one another in the various scales of bondage and freedom, the individuals are servants of God as totally different from God, and also from the world of matter. The Veda is the ultimate authority through which alone Vishnu, or Narayana, can be attained, which is salvation possible through devotion (Bhakti). In salvation, the individual does not unite itself with God in an 'intrinsic' fashion as Ramanuja holds. Madhva emphasises five kinds of difference, namely, that between God and the individual, between God and the world, between the world and the individual, between one individual and another, and between one part of the world and another. There are thinkers who hold that liberation according to Sankara is like water mixing with water or milk mixing with milk; according to Ramanuja it is like water mixing with milk, according to Madhva it is like rice particles mixing with sesame. Other theologians like Vallabha, Nimbarka and Chaitanya hold views which are variations of the doctrines of Ramanuja and Madhva in the spirit of true Vaishnava devotion. The term Vedanta is a name given to any system of thought which recognises the attainment of God as the supreme aim of life, in one way or other.

XXXIII—FUNDAMENTALS OF THE SPIRITUAL ASCENT

Humanity may, in a very important sense, be regarded as a wholly brainwashed species, indoctrinated from childhood into the prejudices of nationality, groupism, colour-bar, family and language clingings, and the like, of different types. The strange notions of the social norms of communities, the politically dichotomised law and regulations, the credal rules of convenient ideas of rectitude, the civil and criminal systems of parochial judicature, all cut off man from man, nation from nation, group from group, ideology from ideology, and introduce disturbing interpretations of the relation of man to man in the world, though none of these innovations may have any relevance to the ultimate nature of things. The selfishness of man wishes to get rid of all its obstacles either by personal onslaught on another's welfare, or by a legalised massacre of his brethren through its religious and political codes of judging persons from its own avowed notions of propriety, righteousness and ethics of living.

It is evidently necessary to draw a distinction between 'getting rid of' and 'freeing oneself from.' Political revolutions, generally, try to 'get rid of' their opponents by any means, even the most drastic and inhuman, but these methods cannot 'free' people from their real opponents. Opposition does not really come from physical personalities and things which are attempted to be 'got rid of,' but from certain historical motive forces unleashed by Nature under its cosmic scheme of achieving a specific purpose. Even the death of an enemy as a physical

embodiment cannot be equated with the annihilation of the inimical impulse, which is indeed superphysical, and which will persist till the cause of the opposition is finally resolved in the light of the higher purposes of the workings of Nature. Wars will continue even if only two persons are going to be alive in the world. The reason must, now, be obvious.

The logic of Nature, when it is lost sight of due to ignorance, becomes the cause of failure in life, even in the case of honest and sincere seekers of Truth. To the seekers of this kind, the oppositions are generally regarded to be family relations, material possessions, love of self-respect and of social position, and the urge of sex, all going with the basic instinct for psychophysical survival. In rare cases the love of higher learning and knowledge predominates, in the exceptionally intellectual, scientific and rational types of individuals.

Mostly, seekers try to get rid of these mentioned types of impulses and urges of the human constitution by running away, geographically, by unnecessary fastings and vigils exercised by the force of will, by abstinence purely of a repressive nature, without knowing why the impulses occur at all, and what is the motivating cause behind them in the general scheme of creation. Religious scholarship and traditional dogmatics tries to brush aside these subtle difficulties by some commercial jargon of society, which really explains nothing, except as the way a physician who is ignorant of the real illness of the patient gets rid of the cause by a harmless and useless 'add aqua' recipe. No one can be truly religious or spiritual who adopts such self-

deceptive methods of appearing to be holy and good, or religious and spiritual, merely in a social or communal sense, or from the public mob point of view. Spirituality, or true religion, is the ascent of the mind by every stage of the evolutionary pattern of things, even what human society, in its inadequate comprehensions, calls evil, ugly, or abhorrent, by a dextrous adjustment of consciousness with the reality behind these so-called evils, for, if these phenomena were unreal phantoms not intended to exist at all, there would be no reason why one should be constrained to hate them. Hatred and dislike imply a secret acceptance of the reality of things disliked and hated; for what is real cannot be destroyed, and what is unreal need not engage one's attention. Man, today, requires proper education more than anything else.

All the present-day systems of spiritual exercise, or Yogas, are mostly human ways of encountering superhuman issues. This is naturally a contradiction in approach, for it stands to reason that the superhuman can be approached only by superhuman techniques, which have to be learnt from a competent master, and cannot be acquired through printed books which can only appease the psychological and social idiosyncrasies of the masses.

One of the boldest attempts ever made to overcome human empiricality entirely by way of the practice of true religion, is the scientific method of a supersocial nature, which the purely socially conditioned mind, ridden over by traditions of community, cannot comprehend. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (I.4) proclaims that the Absolute 'I-am-I,' or 'I-am-the-All,' contemplated itself as

such, and was there by itself, as One alone without a second. It had no second to it, the very idea of the second being contrary to the All-in-All. The consciousness of 'a second' is the true evil which it destroyed by being the All. One who knows this truth, says the Upanishad, destroys all the 'non-I's,' or anything second to oneself, and no external can exist before such a one, the external being burnt up by the inclusiveness of the All-Being. This is the first stage of Being, which is the prius to creation. In the second stage, the All-One alienates itself into a cosmic 'another,' the cosmic subject has before it a cosmic object, the cosmic positive beholds the cosmic negative, spirit encounters matter, man sees the woman, male the female. In that non-personalised superhuman contemplative bipolarity of existence, these universal bipolar phases exist as one and two at the same time, inseparable and separable simultaneously, the knower and the known in an act of inscrutable embrace, as it were, the union of the one in two and the two in one. This is the second stage, which explains the cosmic background of the three basic instincts of self-regard (Lokaishana), possession of wealth (Vittaishana), and sexual integration (Daraishana), as the strings operating behind every species of created being, as the Upanishad specially reiterates (I.4.17). But, beware, whoever feels that the thing which one needs is outside oneself shall lose it, as it will flee away from the one who regards it as an 'other' (II.4.6). It is in the third stage that the group of the five Cosmic Elements, or rather the Cosmic Force-Continuum, emanates as an embodied form of this Cosmic Dual-nature potential in all things, so that in

creation everything is one and not one, at the same time. No one can be entirely alone to oneself without the consciousness of some relation to another. This is the mystifying secret of the manifested universe where everything is and is not at the same time, satisfied and unsatisfied, happy and unhappy, complete and incomplete, wanting nothing and wanting everything, the universal life and universal death warring with each other.

The duals of the gods in heaven, the deities of the celestial kingdom as facets of the All-Being, are envisaged in the next stage, which is the fourth one. The one God has become the many gods who fill the universe as the one body fills all its limbs. The problem now is in the following stage, which is the fifth, where the quandary arises as to how the one can be many, the knower contact the known, or the universal can have anything which it has to face or encounter, how there can be a God with a world outside Him, and how there can be a world independent of God's existence. God seems to be the world and also the opposite of the world. The world is sunk in God as its very being, and yet is the opposite of God in every way, being an 'externalised' entity different from universality. In the sixth stage, this problem is resolved by the One, knowing that, after all, it is itself the so-called 'other,' and, so, the 'other' is one's own All-Self. In the seventh stage, the difficulty of the dual existence becomes a more complicated state of a tripartite cosmiacality of the consciousness of there being an objective world, a subjective knower of it, and an intermediary link between the two holding them in a state of balance, the three facets being known as Adhibhuta,

Adhyatma, and Adhidaiva, respectively. Here it is that we begin to know that there is a world, that we are there to behold it, and that there is a God above both the perceiver and the perceived.

The multiplicity of the perceiving individuals in a world of external perception who have no consciousness of there being a link between the perceiver and the perceived requires to be brought into the state of a harmonious community of a purposive organisation, for their very survival, which is done in the eighth stage, by an introduction of a law known as Dharma, called also Rita, which cements the apparent multiplicity of individualities by stages. This law works at the ninth stage, by the cooperative or organising principle of action, through (1) directing wisdom, (2) administrative power, (3) commercial activity, and (4) requisite labour, which go by the name of the classes of society. Added to this system of social life is also the necessity for the education of the individual, in an ascending order of (1) discipline and study, (2) interdisciplinary contact with the world by an actual experience of its constituents, (3) a consequent detachment from anything external to oneself, and, finally, (4) a self-absorption in the contemplation of the Infinite. This is achieved by the necessity of the (1) law operating to blend together the system of the cosmos with the (2) material and (3) emotional needs for the purpose of the (4) ultimate liberation of the individual in the Universal being.

As a Tenth Commandment, the Upanishad insists upon social service requiring everyone to sustain the grace of the gods, by worship, of the sages by sacred study, of the

forefathers by ritual offerings and ablutions, of the humans by charity, of the animals by loving feeding, of the plants by tending them, all as a sacrifice by which the (1) gods, (2) the sages, (3) the forefathers, (4) the humans, (5) the animals, (6) the plants and even the (7) birds and insects love the seeker as their own self, and protect him as they protect themselves.

Here will commence the art of concentration and meditation of consciousness for its gradual upward ascent towards liberation in its own universality, in terms of a 'return current' of its whole being.

XXXIV—THE ART OF MEDITATION

The human individual is a cross-section of the cosmos. The properties that constitute the stuff of creation are also the constituents of the human personality. The order of creation, as we had occasion to notice during our earlier observations, is encountered in certain stages as spiritual, spatio-temporal, causal, intellectual, mental, vital and physical. The cosmic order is reproduced in the individual. Consciousness involved in the physical has to retrieve itself from such an involvement and ascend upwards through these cosmological degrees of self-expansion, and a widening of the dimension of self-existence, until pure universality becomes the same as self-experience.

The Yoga practice, particularly according to Patanjali, is such a progressive process of self-transcendence. The student of Yoga is expected to be seated in a suitable posture for the purpose of meditation. Since the physical body is made of the same substance as the physical world, it is necessary to set in harmony the build-up of the body with the set-up of the world. This stage of Yoga is called Asana, or the aligning of the physicality of the person with that of the universe. Here the awareness of the oneness of the universe, inclusive of one's own self, greatly helps in the maintenance of 'an attitude of infinitude' (Ananta-Samapatti). This mental adjustment of universal inclusiveness stabilises the body in a fixity of posture for the purpose of preparing oneself for meditation. It is believed that if the student can sit in the posture continuously for three hours, perfection in the Yoga Asana is achieved (Asana-Jaya).

A caution should be added here that perfection in physical position of a healthy nature and robust satisfaction cannot be obtained if the student suffers from any mental pressure from within, such as emotional attachment or personal hatred, frustration caused by unachieved ends, and the like. A loving, unselfish, unattached, self-satisfied, self-complete, simple and great vision of life is to pave the ground firmly even before the Yoga postures are attempted. The prior foundations of a life of Yoga are known as Yamas, preceding the stage of the Asana posture. There is also a conditioning discipline known as Niyamas, consisting of the cleanliness of body and mind, understanding and feeling, together with the Yama technique and education prior to the Asana discipline, which actually places the Asana in the third stage of the Yoga ascent. Internal to the body are the vital forces known as Pranas, which generally work disharmoniously in the system due to desires, passions and aversions, whose regularisation constitutes the fourth stage of Yoga, achieved through harmonised breathing—inhalation, retention and exhalation, a process known as Pranayama, the fourth ascending rung in Yoga. The more difficult stages are further on, commencing from the fifth step called Pratyahara, or the student of the very activity of the sense organs. The senses persistently report that the world is outside oneself, the objects of the world are either desirable or undesirable, and the only way of establishing a relation with the world of objects is a sort of social commerce with it, as people generally do in their relation with people other than their own selves. Here the senses make one forget that

the world is organic to oneself and it is futile to endeavour to maintain a political relation or a social contract with the objects of the world. The same rule applies to one's relations with other people and things in the world. The cessation of the impetuosity of the senses cannot easily take place in an atmosphere of bewildering social relations or tense conditions of human existence. Usually the student is advised to live in a solitary place where there are fewer chances of the senses contemplating external things. This is why Yoga students mostly resort to forest and mountain areas, Ashramas, temples or monasteries, riversides or ocean shores, for the purpose of ameliorating the intensity of sense activity. This is the fifth stage in Yoga known as Pratyahara.

The actual encounter in Yoga commences with Dharana, or concentration of mind, which is the sixth stage in Yoga. The mind is herein habituated to fix itself on the noblest of objects, the greatest of purposes and the highest aim of life. In the earlier stages the concept of the object of concentration is oriented by an external location of it, since it is difficult for anyone to imagine that anything can be without a spatial position or abode. It is up to the student to choose what kind of object would be best suited for this purpose, which is done in a process called initiation from a competent Teacher. Concentration cannot be achieved in the fullest measure if the object chosen is not as satisfying to the feelings as the other things and values in the world. This is why it is said that the object should be Ishta, or beloved, since the beloved is a term used in respect of that dearer than which nothing can exist in the world. But here

the lovableness of the object is not to be compared with any kind of love that can be evinced in respect of worldly things, however glorious and attractive they may be. The reason is that things in the world are perishable in their nature, and the chance of acquiring true satisfaction from anything in the world is not only remote, but even imaginary. Nothing that is entirely outside oneself can bring permanent satisfaction. The Ishta is, therefore, a Devata, or a god, at the same time, since the concept of godliness in an object raises it above all attractions of other things in the world. The object of concentration is, therefore, known as the Ishta-Devata, the beloved god. Meditation, Dhyana, is the continuing of concentration for a prolonged period, and here one is in the seventh stage of Yoga.

Meditation is the pinnacle of the Yoga technique. In the initial stages the externality of the object of meditation is to be bestowed sufficient consideration. All things are in space and time, and even so is the great objective in Yoga. It may be a divinity, an incarnation, a god, and even the concept of the Almighty Himself. There is a spatial circumference surrounding the great object, necessitated by the very law of thought, or the working of the mind. The mind can not think anything non-spatial. This may be a natural limitation to which the mind is bound, but the limitation, when it is real, needs due respect. Erroneous notions cannot leave us when our minds are made of those notions themselves. So, this degree of reality has to be paid its due by resort to meditation on the chosen object as the Great One standing before oneself, seated, or otherwise posed

before the meditating mind. The greatness of the object pours beams of power and grace on the mind, and a sense of enhancement of vigour and strength within oneself is felt in meditation, as one may feel warmth before the sun, power and glory before a great personality, composure and satisfaction in the presence of anything whose dimensions of operation exceed one's own. People worship the deity in rituals, offer to it prayers, prostrate themselves before it, sing songs of its glory and engage themselves in ecstatic dance in its stimulating presence. But the devotional fervour in meditation is so intense that the externality of the object gradually tends to melt away in an internality of experience, due to the empathy established by the meditating thought-process. In one of his aphorisms Patanjali states that the profundity of meditation bridges the gulf between the meditator and the object in such a way that the object begins to be reflected in the meditating mind, and the mind enters into the substance of the object, so that, in the equilibrium and balancing of the subject-object relation, one cannot know whether the subject is meditating on the object, or the object is contemplating the subject. As water flows in an undisturbed and limpid manner from one tank or reservoir into another when both are on a common level, and one cannot say which one flows into which, the object of meditation and the meditating mind are in a boundless internality of harmony in which the subject and the object merge into a unitary coalescence and widened self-experience.

Dhyana, meditation, culminates in utter union, a melting down of the subject-object relation in a

transcendence of the duality of these perceptional phases, a state known as Samadhi, or the equilibrium of consciousness and the universe in an experience lifted above spatial separation and temporal duration. These stages we learn in the system of Patanjali.

XXXV—THE RECESSION OF EFFECTS TO CAUSES

A method of meditation prescribed in the Yoga-Vasishtha is in terms of the resolving of effects into their causes. The mind restrained, the senses subdued, settled in one's emotions, and away from the distractions of life, having had enough of the satisfaction obtainable through the senses, mind and intellect, one should seat oneself in a comfortable posture and chant the Mantra of universal vibration, OM, or Pranava. The recitation of OM in proper intonation should continue so long as the mind attains to inner peace. A few rounds of deep inhalation and exhalation of the breath for some time will assist in the settling of the mind in itself. An attempt should be made to withdraw the senses from their respective objects and place them in communion with their divinities,—the ears as the hearing organ in the vast reverberation of Space, the sense of touch in the all-pervading Air, the eyes as the senses of vision in the divinity of the Sun, the sense of taste in the deity Varuna, the sense of smell in the principle of the Earth, the organ of speech in Agni, the grasping power of the hands in Indra, the locomotion of the feet in Vishnu, the action of the genitals in Prajapati, and the function of the anus in Yama; the mind in the Moon, the subconscious and memory in Vishnu, the ego in Rudra, and the intellect in Brahma. One should deeply feel that the physical body constituted of earth, water, fire, air and ether, is dissolved in the original elements. Thus, the total individuality of the person should be set in tune with the Virat, the animating Intelligence of the Cosmos. The Virat-consciousness should then be dissolved in the universal subtle body, namely,

Hiranyagarbha, or Sutratman. Hiranyagarbha, then, should be dissolved in Ishvara, the Universal Causal Principle, in which the entire creation remains in an unmanifested state, which again, should be dissolved in Brahman, the Pure Absolute.

It should be borne in mind that the attachment of the seer for the seen is the real bondage. The distinction drawn between 'I' and 'you' in common parlance is a false proposition. Wisdom consists in the abolition of the very consciousness of the externality of things. The mind gets fattened with its egoism by the acquisition of desirable objects, by affection and attachment. When the mind is freed from contact in any form of externality, it merges into the General Consciousness (Satta-Samanya). All this world of objects, inanimate as well as animate, is a manifestation of the One Universal Self.

The mind is controlled either by the restraint of its functions, or by the perception of the One Reality everywhere. The first method is called Yoga and the second is known as Jnana. The regulation of the breath, the restraint of the functions of the mind, and the constant dwelling on the consciousness of the Universal Brahman, are the ways to the attainment of spiritual perfection. Constantly brooding over Brahman, speaking always about Brahman, awakening one another mutually on the nature of Brahman, and entirely depending on Brahman alone for one's very existence, is the highest method of meditation known as Brahman-Abhyasa.

The Katha Upanishad suggests a similar method. The consciousness of objects operating through the sense-

organs should be united with the Cosmic Reason, the Omniscient to settle in the mind which is the source and impulsion behind the operation of the senses. The mind should be withdrawn into the intellect or reason. The reason should be united with the Cosmic Reason, the Omniscient Mahat. The Universal Reason should be merged in the Unmanifest Potential of creation, called Avyakta. This last condition should be identified with the Absolute Brahman. The Manusmriti also suggests the method of the merging of effects in their causes,—Earth in Water, Water in Fire, Fire in Air, Air in Space, and Space in the Universal Being. The Samkhya, the Yoga and the Vedanta do all have a system of tracing back all the effects in creation to their causes, in the manner indicated above, until the great Cause of all causes, the Causeless Cause, is reached and consciousness is fixed on it in a state of identity. The Mandukya Upanishad is a standard statement on the method of realising the unity of the waking consciousness with the Virat-consciousness, the dream-consciousness with the Hiranyagarbha-consciousness, the causal state of sleep with the universal creative potential, Ishvara, and the fundamental Atman-consciousness with Brahman, the Absolute. The meditations of consciousness gradually get inwardised, from the physical to the vital, from the vital to the mental, from the mental to the intellectual, from the intellectual to the causal, and from the causal to the universal, as described in the Taittiriya-Upanishad, in the manner carried on by the Sage Bhrigu under the instruction of his father Varuna. So also is the way of the cosmology of the Aitareya Upanishad. The

gradual ascent of consciousness through various stages until the attainment of Bhuma, the Plenum of Being, as taught by Sage Sanatkumara to Narada, recorded in the Chhandogya Upanishad is also a way of the dissolution of the lower in the higher, the effect in the cause. The Anu-Gita of the Mahabharata goes into details as to the dissolution of the effects in their cosmological causes. The Second Book of the Srimad Bhagavata delineates the systematic ascent of the aspiring consciousness from the lowest physical level up to the highest state of the ultimate cause, Vishnu, or Virat. These suggestions in meditation are some of the most easy-to-understand techniques, since the method followed is from the known to the unknown in an evolutionary procedure of identity with the Ultimate Godhead.

XXXVI—EXPERIENCES IN MEDITATION

The preliminary effects of continuous meditation are felt in the form of a tingling sensation in the body, as if ants are creeping through the nerves, or a mild electric current is passing through the whole system. The strangeness of the experience may produce jerks and slight tremors in the body, due to the uniqueness of the mental attitude encountered by the movement of the Pranas, or vital forces, in the body. The vital energy is usually accustomed to concern itself mainly with the physical body of the person untutored in the art of negotiating with anything other than the personality of the individual. Now that the mind has adopted a new posture of exceeding the limits of its bodily encasement, it stretches itself into an area wider than that of the physical individuality, into the larger dimension of the object of meditation, to which situation the currents of the Prana also have to learn to adapt themselves in this process of a vital adjustment to the newly introduced condition. There is a mild earthquake-like feeling when the Pranas cross their earlier limits of physical individuality and endeavour to touch the borderland of the wider kingdom of the object of meditation. The process gradually transforms the individual into a super-individual, which is the reason why experts in Yoga, saints and sages, attract people towards themselves on account of their personality haying a wider inclusiveness of dimension than the limited habitat of people in general. When greatness attracts, it is the wider inclusiveness that really attracts, even as the higher pulls the lower by self-absorption.

The consciousness which earlier was locked up within the physical body begins to peep through the apertures of the localised individuality, and beholds itself in persons and things beyond the limits of the single body to which it was shackled. There is then a sense of power felt within, a feeling of control over outer conditions, and a satisfaction that one has obtained what is required to be obtained, done what is to be done, and known what is to be known. The sense organs begin to loosen their clutches over the body and, loosening themselves from their bodily locations, relate themselves to the divinities behind their operations, becoming thereby channels of the flow of superphysical forces that enter the personality of the meditating individual. The sun and the moon and the stars, the very sky, and all space and time, slowly open up the secret of their really not being situated in large physical distances and of their internal intimacy and organic connection with the very spot and the very personality of the meditating individual. It is here that subtle sensations, celestial sound or music, like the beating of kettledrums or the ringing of bells, are felt arising from spheres beyond the physical realm. Visions of flashes of lightning appear before the mind, odours of a heavenly nature begin to be smelt, the tongue begins to taste a sweetness not coming from any object, and a velvet-like touch cushions, as it were, the very personality. Distances melt down and far-off things are seen very near, the time-process breaks up and Eternity twinkles in every moment that constitutes time. The manifold objects of the world seem to get bundled up into a

cohesion of an undivided body or mass of being, and the very heavens seem to gaze at the earthly dweller.

But the experience does not last long, if it so happens that some Sattvika Karma-force happens to be still present in the individual, sustaining it but barring it from going too far into the outer space of the higher realms of being. Often one finds it difficult to maintain this spiritual poise for a long time, due to the subtle repercussions produced by the after-effects of lesser considerations bestowed on bodily individuality, social relationism, and the like. Past thoughts, feelings and actions, before they ebb away and vanish into non-existence, conjure up a cinematographic rapidity of the motions of past experiences, and present a reality of their own. It is said that Dhruva of the Epic and Purana memory saw his mother weeping in front of him while he was engaged in the rapture of meditation in a distant forest. The Buddha's experiences are said to be of a similar nature. Yasodhara, with her little child, was in front of him while he was in rapt attention on the Cosmic Truth, wailing and beseeching him to return to the palace. Impressions can assume concrete forms and present a solidity as hard as anything on earth. Illusions can be as heavy as granite. The usual obstacles that the meditator is supposed to face are a variety of the presentations of erotic beauty, celestial dance, and ambrosial offerings, which are picturesquely described by the commentator on the relevant Sutra of Patanjali's text. The coming of Indra with his retinue is not the only temptation of which one has to be cautious, especially in advanced stages of meditations. Silly things will look valuable, meaningless objects appear highly worthwhile,

and a jot of pleasure take the shape of an ocean of delight. These are the last kickbacks of the senses which have been restrained beyond their survival.

But this is not all. Pleasures are not the only temptations. Later comes the threat of self-destruction, as if everything is over, nothing is achieved, the body is breaking, and death is at the elbow. The Buddha had this experience when he crawled in his physical weakness on the very day during the night of which he had illumination. Maya, also known as Mara, call it Satan if you like, does not merely present gifts of temptation in the form of delight to the ego and the senses, but can also discharge threats of rampage and ruin if the presents are not accepted. Loves and hatreds, which were originally thought to be just psychological conditions, begin to announce that they are cosmically connected and can stir up objective powers of larger delicacies and stricter fears. The lives of the saints is here the only illustration before us, whether they are of the East or of the West. Cosmic experiences have no nationality, and they are beyond the limitations of religion or profession. What one has undergone is to be traversed through by everyone else also. The cross is on the back of all things that are born into the dust of the earth.

The tragedy later opens up into the blissful comedy of the vistas of glorious experiences further on, and, like the vanishing of the deplorable sights which Yudhishthira had to visualise in realms beyond the world, as we have it in the concluding Books of the Mahabharata, hells get converted into heavens, the very earth becomes a mass of gold, rivers stream forth with milk and honey, and divine grandeur and

glory reign supreme beyond even the farthest stretch of one's imagination. The fruit of supreme renunciation is supreme fulfilment.

XXXVII—THE YOGA SYSTEM OF PATANJALI

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali constitute a systematic teaching on a graduated technique of meditation. The procedure is associated with the categories laid down by the Samkhya Philosophy, namely, Purusha or the Infinite Consciousness; Prakriti or the Infinite Potential of Creativity; Mahat or the principle of Cosmic Impersonal Consciousness; Ahamkara or the Cosmic Self-consciousness; the five rudimentary forces of Sabda, Sparsa, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha, called Tanmatras, as the objects of the five senses of knowledge, the five organs of action, as well as the mind as their synthesising principle; the five gross elements, namely, Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. These are the metaphysical foundations on which both the Samkhya and the Yoga rest.

The senses perceive the world of objects directly, by immediate contact with the objects, (Pratyaksha), as well as by inference (Anumana), and knowledge derived from authority (Agama). The mental functions involved in knowledge are of two kinds,—non-pain-giving (Aklishta) and pain-giving (Klishta). The non-pain-giving perceptions constitute the general awareness of the existence of the world and its contents as reported by the senses, such as when one sees a distant mountain, a flowing river, the ocean, the sun, the moon, stars, the sky, and the like. These are non-pain-giving general perceptions since the awareness of objects of this kind does not evoke any specific reaction from the mind; this is in a way a perception of things as they are in themselves. But there are pain-giving perceptions causing anxiety, affection, love,

hatred and emotional disturbance, as for instance, when one perceives objects like one's own property, one's relations, one's friends or one's enemies, because here the objects of perception are also qualified with the psychological characteristic of 'one's own' or 'connected with oneself.' The connection of oneself with things is the cause of pain; things by themselves do not evoke painful reactions. It is necessary that all functions of the mind, both pain-giving and non-pain-giving, should be restrained.

The necessity for the restraint of the mind arises because of the perceiving consciousness, which is essentially a reflection of the universal consciousness of Purusha, is limited, as it were, to a sense of finitude and lack of freedom when it identifies itself with the process involved in perception, all process being external to consciousness. Process is an activity of Prakriti which causes evolution and involution through its inner constituents known as Sattva, or equilibrium and harmony; Rajas, or division and distraction; and Tamas, or fixity and immobility. The perceiving consciousness is involved either in the pain-giving functions or the non-pain-giving ones, or both, whatever the case may be. The universality of consciousness is interfered with whenever any perception takes place, because perception is just the awareness and confirmation of there being something external to consciousness. It would, thus, mean that the whole of world-perception is an error. This mistake is to be rectified by the dissociation of consciousness from all objectivity, through the eight stages of ascent in Yoga, known as Yama,

Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Yama is a discipline in terms of ethical and moral regulations by which one's conduct which is likely to affirm the reality of an external world is held in check by such restrained behaviour as causing no harm to anyone (Ahimsa), adopting no deceitful conduct or untruth (Satya), not dissipating the quantum of one's vitality and energy of consciousness by sense-indulgence (Brahmacharya), not appropriating things and values which do not honestly belong to oneself (Asteya), and refraining from living in a state of luxury beyond the actual needs of one's life (Aparigraha). This method of self-check controls one's relations with the outer world from unduly adopting positions which require the assertion of the reality of an externalised world, there by introducing some element of an 'outside' to consciousness. The Niyama system consists in purity of body and mind (Saucha), a perpetual state of inner contentment that one maintains within oneself (Santosha), austerity of the senses and the mind (Tapas), constant study of the scriptures (Svadhyaya), and devotion to God (Isvarapranidhana).

The necessity for cleanliness and purity needs no explanation; the absence of it may lead to ill-health of the body and all the undesirable traits of the mind. Contentment is satisfaction which one has through means acquired by one's own right and not asking for more than what one requires for a reasonably comfortable life without going to excesses. Austerity is the conservation of one's energy by not depleting it through sense-contact or mental

reverie; the study of scripture brings the mind of the reader into an inner contact with the great mind of the Master or the Divinity that gave the message or the gospel through the holy Text. Worship of God is the recognition in one's consciousness of there being a reality higher than the world and oneself, whose blessing and grace are necessary for advancement along the path of Yoga.

Asana is the assuming of a steady posture for the purpose of meditation, a balanced position which introduces a sort of harmony into the working of the muscles and the nerves in the organism, ending finally in bringing about a sense of en-rapport of the components of the human personality with the constituents of the world of five elements. Pranayama is the regulation of the breathing process which sets the vitality within in a state of equilibrium and symmetrical action. Pratyahara is the disentanglement of consciousness from the activity of the sense-organs in relation to their objects. Dharana is concentration of the mind on the object of Yoga. Though, in the earlier stages, any suitable object may be taken as a point of concentration of the mind, the main intention of the Yoga system is to enable the mind to concentrate itself on the fundamental principles of the Samkhya, gradually from the five elements upward till Purusha-consciousness is experienced. Dhyana is the continuity of concentration for a protracted period, wherein the mind maintains a steadiness of awareness of the object as an unbroken flow of oil. Samadhi is the union of the concentrating consciousness with the object of concentration.

Samadhi, sometimes known also as Samapatti, is attained through six or seven stages of the ascent of consciousness. The first stage is known as Savitarka, wherein there is concentration on the object (Artha) as associated with the name (Sabda), or the description attached to it, and the idea (Jnana) that one entertains in respect of it as its definition. However, it is to be borne in mind here that this concentration on the object is not the usual thought that we bestow on a thing with the association of name and an idea about it, but the absorption of consciousness in the object characterised by such qualification. In Nirvitarka, concentration is confined to the object only, dissociated from the defining characteristics of qualifying nomenclature and the idea of it. Savichara is the state where the object is the aggregate of the Tanmatras, which is concentrated upon as a thing in itself in space and time and free from any other external association. Nirvichara is the state where the pure substantiation of the object, namely, Tanmatras, is concentrated upon, divested of even its space-time association. In Sananda state the meditating consciousness experiences joy when it identifies itself with the Universal Ahamkara, or Self-consciousness. In Sasmita there is the pure Impersonal Cosmic Awareness of the Mahat principle. All these Samadhis, or unions, are considered as the lower Samadhi, known as Savikalpa Samadhi. The highest Samadhi is Nirvikalpa, in which state, which is indeed beyond all states, the concentrating consciousness does not maintain any self-consciousness or even cosmic consciousness, but remains as Pure Aloneness, Being-as-

such, Absolute-Existence, which is known as Kaivalya, or the eternal solitariness of the Infinite, the attainment of which is final liberation.

XXXVIII—LIFE AFTER DEATH

The conditions that determine the state of life of an individual after death are studied in a branch of knowledge called Eschatology. The birth of an individual into the world of space and time is the concentration of consciousness in a spatio-temporal pressure-point, which is tantamount to the universal essence of the soul delimiting itself into a focussing process of itself, whereby it is channelised into a stream-like movement along a given direction of its intention. The particular kind of physical individuality into which one is born is the direct effect of the purpose or the intention that motivates the consciousness to streamline itself into that particular area or field of operation, and the kind of experience which it is expected to have in that conditioned field of life. The process begins generally with an obliteration or screening out of the universal sense in consciousness and a simultaneous beaming out of itself through that aperture of self-willed movement in the particular condition which has been chosen for experience. The environment of the birth of an individual, the duration of its life in that form, and all its experiences through life, are determined by the original intent that is behind the very purpose of coming into embodied existence.

The blocking out of the consciousness of universality in the process projects at once the consciousness of an external atmosphere, that is, the Universal is externalised and particularised, externalised as regards the kind of world into which it is born, and particularised as regards the kind of individuality or personality into which it is born. When

birth takes place into a new form, there is, in the beginning, a practically unconscious development of the causal body into its new extensions in the form of the intellect, the mind, the sense-organs, the vital forces and the structure of the physical body. At birth the child is almost like an inanimate substance with only the body there invigorated slightly by the vital forces, as if it is like a vegetable existence with body and breathing processes becoming palpable. The instincts are manifest subsequently in the form of the sensations of heat and cold as well as hunger and thirst. The sensations of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching develop themselves gradually in more and more intensified forms and the baby begins to know itself as an individual by itself. With biological longings and fears consequent upon them, the growth of the child into adolescence and youth is the gradual strengthening and intensification of the demands of the physical body, the vital forces, the instincts and sensations, and all the idiosyncrasies characteristic of the very form of individuality. The finitude of such individual existence places the whole individuality in a precarious state of anxiety, a sense of limitation from every side, and a fear of everything. This unhappy condition is attempted to be overcome by social relations with persons and things outside oneself, in love for those which are considered conducive to one's psycho-physical security and development, and dislike for those which are either not so conducive or even totally opposed. The struggle of life now begins as that of a soldier in an active battlefield, trying to

protect oneself on the one hand and overcome others on the other.

As observed, the length of life of a person in this state can be only so long as the purposes for which one is born are fulfilled. When the purpose is accomplished, the particular body which was manufactured for the said purpose becomes a redundant burden to consciousness, and the body is shed as old unserviceable clothes are cast away. This is the death of the person. But it is the death only of the physical body, not of the vital forces, the sensations, the mind, the intellect or the causal body. The blend of these covering sheaths internal to the physical body is carried forward into the next life, the next life being the condition prepared and necessitated by the remaining portion of the original intent of being born at all, a part of which gets congealed into the production of a new body in a new environment, similar to the manner in which the earlier birth took place. This process goes on almost endlessly, since desires are endless, because the desire of a consciousness which is essentially universal cannot be limited to any computerised numbering. An infinite one can have only infinite desires. If this process continued, there would be no chance of returning to the original state of universality, except by the magical touch of the miracle-working technique called Yoga.

The condition of life into which one will be reborn is determined by the thoughts that the person entertains consistently throughout one's previous life. Though it is said that the last thought at the time of death decides the nature of the next birth, the last thought is actually not just

one thought among the many that occur to the mind of a person in one life, but it is actually a cream of all the thoughts, feelings and actions which characterised the entire life of the person. It would, then, mean that one cannot expect to have a different kind of fruit from the kind of tree of which it is the product. The way in which one lives throughout one's life in the world is the determining power of what is known as the last thought, which is the total essence sucked out of the person at the time of the subtle body extracting itself out from every pore of the physical body. The pain generally felt at death is due to the nature of the intensity of the desires with which one continued to live in the physical body. The more is the love for the Universal Being entertained in life, the less would be the pain and agony of departing from the body.

In the reincarnation process one can be reborn in any of the realms or planes of existence. Mostly, the rebirth will be in this world only in the case of those who are attached to physical desires, material needs, social status or family relations. Those who have been more unselfish in their lives and lived a life of charity, philanthropy, service and real goodness may not come back to the earth plane again, and may be reborn in better worlds in the higher order of the scheme of creation. But everyone has to be reborn somewhere or the other to undergo some experience, until the Absolute Being is realised as identical with oneself.

Heavens and hells, regions of a variety of differing experiences and such areas of conditioning the individual to specified experiences are the degrees of cosmic creation reacting precisely in accordance with the attitude

entertained, the thoughts projected and the deeds done by the individual concerned in terms of the feelings entertained in respect of the cosmic whole. No one is exempt from the consequences of any ignorance of the law embodied in creation.

The Buddhist psychology of 'Dependent Origination' highlights the process of birth in embodied-existence. Firstly, there is ignorance of the universal reality (Avidya). Secondly, there is the rise of the separate individual will or affirmation of oneself as different from others (Samskara). Thirdly, there is the urge to enter a body or formation of characters belonging to oneself alone (Vijnana). Fourthly, there is the concretisation of this will as the name-form-complex, the psycho-physical structure (Nama-rupa). Fifthly, there is the desire to go out for contact of 'others' through thinking, hearing, seeing, touching, smelling and tasting in order to gain the pleasure of sensations (Shadayatana). Sixthly, there is actual contact of the individual with the desired object by means of thinking, hearing, seeing, touching, smelling and tasting (Sparsa). Seventhly, there is emotional feeling as a response to these sensations of contact with the object (Vedana). Eighthly, there is intense craving to repeat this experience of pleasure of contact, again and again, continuously (Tanha). Ninthly, there is grasping of the object with greed and passion and a redoubling of the effort to possess the object for purpose of contact, as mentioned above, with anxiety, toil and frenzy of emotional feeling (Upadana). Tenthly, there is the seed sown for rebirth, since the heart which is boiling with craving for grasping cannot be satisfied through the

instrumentality of one body alone, which is subject to death on the exhaustion of the group of karma-forces which have created it (Bhava). Eleventhly, there is rebirth into another body, after death of the present one (Jati). Twelfthly, there is, lo, this momentum pushed on of sorrow and endless dissatisfaction through the chain of transmigration, repeated births and deaths, cycling like a wheel (Jara-marana-duhkha). Reverse is the process of attaining freedom from bondage.

XXXIX—MOKSHA: THE FINAL LIBERATION

The disentanglement of consciousness in the reverse order of its involvement in externality through the process of the cosmological descent may be regarded as the way of the return of consciousness to itself, of man to God, of the individual to the Absolute. The details of this 'return' of consciousness to its pristine state of universality, by stages, is indicated by the methods of Yoga practice, which is the art of the gradual communion of the soul with the Almighty. As the coming down by way of descent limits consciousness to greater and greater finitude in space, time and personality, the return process is a gradual unfoldment of the potential of consciousness, namely, the wider and wider attainment of the dimension of its own self, which is simultaneously a lesser and lesser limitation to spatiality, temporality and isolated individuality. The liberation of consciousness from bondage of every kind is Moksha, or ultimate freedom from the limitations of location, knowledge as well as power. The nature of the Self is absoluteness of Being (Sat), which implies the absoluteness of the consciousness of such Being (Chit), followed instantaneously by a timeless grasp of Eternity in the Bliss (Ananda) of omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence. Since outside the Universal Being nothing can be, even these ultimate definitions would fall short of what is really beyond the concepts of all-pervasiveness, all-knowledge and all-power. Mind and speech turn back in the attempt to characterise the Absolute, and Moksha is the freedom of the Absolute.

Intimations of immortality are recorded by seers and poets in ecstatic language, which the mere grammar of speech cannot adequately comprehend. The Veda-Samhita tells us that the Supreme Purusha is everything that was, is, or shall be, that the Purusha is all, every bit of creation, all grandeur and all glory. This hymn is known as the Purusha-Sukta, whose concluding line adds that there is no other way to cross the realm of mortality than the knowledge of the Purusha. The Varuna-Sukta of the Atharva Veda describes the cosmic sweep of the Great Being designated by it as Varuna, who knows the secret of interactions taking place between any two individuals or partners in performance, who counts the winkings of the eyes of everyone, and knows every movement, every thought and every deed of all things, There is none who can deceive Him. To know Him is to be free from the bondage of error and evil. To know God is life, not to know Him is death. As rivers with all their meanderings reach the ocean and attain peace, so do all beings enter into the All-Being and attain perennial peace, says the Mundaka Upanishad. The Infinite Plenum (Bhuma) which is Eternal Bliss is proclaimed in the Chhandogya Upanishad as that majestic state where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else and knows nothing else outside the One Being. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad has it that where there is duality, one sees, hears, smells, tastes and touches another, but where the One alone is, who would see or contact whom with what means;—this is the final goal; this is the greatest achievement; this is the greatest possession and dominion; this, indeed, is the greatest bliss. To know this as

the All is to truly live; not to know it is verily wretchedness. Everything accrues to him who realises in his own self the Universal Self, and everything flees away from him who beholds anything outside himself. The Upanishad further adds that he who attains to this experience is the Creator of the worlds, the Doer of all things, and the universe is his,—nay, he himself is the universe. If it is known here in this very life, then one can be said to have realised the true meaning of life; if it is not known in this life, great indeed is the loss for that person. Heroes of the spirit, beholding it in each and every being and creature, become, departing hence, immortal, says the Kena Upanishad. He who sees all things within himself and himself in all things, what sorrow, what grief is there for him, who sees oneness everywhere, says, the Isa Upanishad. Greater than the secret of the cosmic reality, greater than omniscience and universal lordship, is this mystery which Yama was not prepared to impart to Nachiketas—such is its majesty, such is its greatness, as announced in the Katha Upanishad. All the parts constituting the individuality of a person melt into the Universal Ocean, the Purusha, says the Prasna Upanishad. The heavens are His head, the sun and the moon are His eyes, the quarters of space are His ears, the Veda is His speech, the cosmic Prana is His breath, the universe is His heart, this visible creation is His footstool, says, again, the Mundaka Upanishad. Transcendent to the values attached to the waking, dreaming and sleeping states is the super-dimensional Eternity, the Self of the cosmos, says the Mandukya Upanishad. From Brahma, the Creator, down to the blade of grass, He is, verily, the One

Consciousness, says the Aitareya Upanishad. The knower of Brahman enjoys all existence simultaneously and not in temporal succession, says the Taittariya Upanishad. The stupendous inclusiveness of the Ultimate Reality as exhibited in the Bhagavad Gita (Ch. XI) is, too, well-known.

Mystics of all ages have risen above themselves in a veritable giddiness of spiritual realisation and expressed themselves in rapturous terms. Apart from the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, there are those who seem to have touched the borderland of Truth, like Plato and Plotinus, Meister Echart and Saint John of the Cross, Jacob Bohme and Ruysbrock, Wordsworth and William Law, Lao Tsu and Chuang Tzu, Jalaluddin Rumi and Al-Gazali, and many others who stood by the lamp of Truth that shone from within their hearts, and saw the world in that light. They were in this world, but they did not belong to this world, their temporal shackles did not prevent them from sharing a timeless brotherhood.

The liberation of the individual in the Universal Being is the final aim of all life. The need for the soul's salvation arises from the fact of the transitoriness of existence. The world is a complicated structure consequent upon the operation of the law of action and reaction and thought process, called Karma. Though Karma means just action, etymologically, it really implies the force by which every action produces an effect, and, verily, it is the effect itself. The bondage of Karma due to the reaction which every action produces is explained by the fact of the unitary structure of the cosmos of which individuals are

inseparable parts. Karma arises when this inseparable connection of the individual with the cosmos is lost sight of and the individual indulges in thoughts and actions with the false notion that it is an independent actor or doer, inviting thereby the nemesis of reaction. This resultant effect is the bondage of the individual, and it can be broken through only when the individual sense of doership is given up and a feeling of at-one-ment with the cosmos is developed.

An individual is born in a particular environment either because of a past wish cherished to live in such a condition or of an unknown consequence of desires beyond one's apprehension. The world is a name given to the situation or manner in which individuals experience the fruits of their own desires and actions. The universe is a shadow cast by the wishes of its contents, and it is just 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 individual sources of action can neither understand nor follow in their implications. The individual, after being born in an incarnation by the force of Karma, performs further actions in its new life, the results of which are added on to the unspent portion of the store of the impressions of earlier accumulated Karmas. This cycle of action producing results and results engendering an impulse for further action would imply that the Karma forces cannot be exhausted and the series of births and death's cannot end, until these

sources of Karma potencies are allowed to dry up by the consciousness of one's identity with the Absolute and the non-performance of further ego-ridden actions. In the series of transmigratory lives, the soul may be born in any of the realms of the universe, either with all the five sheaths of encasement, namely, the causal, the intellectual, the mental, the vital and the physical, or it may be reborn with four, three, or two sheaths only, or even just one when born in the highest degree of universal manifestation, all which is in accordance with the intensity of the Karmas to be fructified in any particular plane. In death, the sheaths are withdrawn in their ascending order of subtlety, only to become manifest again into action after rebirth in some plane. This process of metempsychosis, known as Samsara, continues until the salvation of the soul,-Moksha.

The ultimate freedom which the soul attains in Moksha is one of omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence and immortality, co-eternal with the Absolute. The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita declare that the soul, having attained liberation, does not return to mortal life. The liberated soul enters the Absolute, having been freed from spatio-temporal limitations of every kind. By restraint of the mind from indulgence in the temptations of life, by devotion to the Creator, and by knowledge that one's essential being is identical with the Universal Substance, the soul attains Moksha. This is the Supreme Blessedness.

PART IV – REGARDING JUSTICE, JUDGMENT AND HUMAN SOLIDARITY

XL—ON THE CONCEPT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE

The Universe, as the word itself suggests, is an inclusiveness of operation, in which everything, whether living or non-living, is included. The inclusiveness, which is an inviolable character of the universe, raises a question which cannot easily be answered by any attitude of life which is empirically oriented, sensorily conditioned or even psychologically delimited in any manner. The perceptional procedure of human beings, to take an example, invokes, spontaneously, a principle of exclusiveness by which it becomes necessary for the universe of observation or perception to stand outside the location of the observing intelligence, or the perceiving individual. This would imply that the universe, in order that it may become an object of perception by the mind and the senses, should shed its inclusiveness, that is, its intrinsic nature. What would follow from this predicament is that whatever is observed by the individual is, then, not a universe but an abstraction of certain features from the original nature of the universe. But there is something which is interesting about all this. The attempt of the individual to look at the universe and then make any meaning or sense out of it would be like the attempt of one to study a part of a living organism, such as a human body, by segmenting it and wrenching it out from the organism of the body of which it is an integral and vitally involved part. That is to say, a part of an organism ceases to have any character of the organism, it is no more

living, when it is placed out of the context of its vital involvement in the organism. All this would be tantamount to reducing the attempts of classical scientific projects and psychological systems based thereon to studies of a corpse in the endeavour to study a human being.

By way of a slight digression from the point at issue, it would be pertinent to mention here that, in fact, a human being cannot be studied objectively, since no living being can be considered as an object of externalised perception. It is possible to observe the body of a person or even, perhaps gather indications of the prevailing mental operations of the person concerned, but it would not be difficult to accept that the status or the value of a person is not exhausted by the anatomical or physiological structure of the person, or even the mental condition in any given situation. There is a sort of uniqueness, unity and indivisibility about living entities, and thus, it would be clear that a person is certainly more than what the body is or the present condition of the mind is. Then what is a person? What do we call a human being, if neither the physical body nor the transitions of mental process suggest anything at all about the true person? It would appear, then, that a person is more an outlook of consciousness, a centralisation of attitude, a force, an energy, than anything that could be perceived or conceived in an objectivised manner.

The above analysis of the human personality also suggests a wholeness about the person, a wholeness that precludes any attempt at a study of it by means which would convert it into an external object, that is, external to the mind, senses or the consciousness that studies it or even

knows it. This non-exclusive and non-objective nature of the basic essence of a human being would, further, reject any effort to convert it into a means leading to some other end, inasmuch as the whole that it is would cease to be such, the moment it becomes an instrument to something else, for an instrument is a tendency moving and rising beyond itself, that is to say, it cannot be a whole. Whatever is an integrality or a wholeness cannot, then, be a means to any thing else.

The above study of the essential nature of things in general would bring out two important truths of life as a whole: One, the universe as an inclusiveness and a wholeness in itself cannot be encountered as an external object; two, a living being also, having the essential characteristic of wholeness, cannot be looked upon as an external object for purpose of study, experiment and observation. If all well-known processes of life in the world, whether scientific, psychological, social or political, require that the world and people in the world are invariably externally perceived and objectively conceived things, then, the natural conclusion is obvious: The entire life process is an erroneous operation of consciousness, and no one can know anything as it is in itself. The world of perception is an appearance, not a reality.

There is a necessary and insistent urge within everyone towards what is usually known as righteousness and justice. It would be hard to find any person in the world who would regard righteousness or justice as a mere appearance: This great requirement of life is always held to be a necessity and a reality. It is known to everyone that life would annihilate

itself if it is bereft of the nobility that is attached to and the imperativeness involved in the ideal of righteousness and justice. But how could this be, if the available means of human knowledge and the conditions to which the human mind is subject reduce all life as it is lived to an appearance not related to reality.

It would be impossible to be righteous or just, under the above analysis, unless and until the personal outlook and the empirical approach of the common life of the world rises above itself to a super-personal outlook and metempirical attitude which grasps life as a whole and a totality and ceases to look upon the world or the people in the world as objects of external perception. That is, in entertaining the spirit of righteousness and justice, neither the world nor people remain as outwardly located objects of perception, but integrally involved totalities, and no judgment of any kind would be righteous or justifiable unless the source of judgment stands above both itself and that which is judged. Judgment is a transcendent operation and not something pronounced by someone on someone else or something outside. Law is an operation which is inclusive and not merely a thought or a whim that is exclusive. Law is not a person; it is a field of operation in which are included both the person that dispenses law and the one in regard to whom it is so dispensed. This also applies to scientific observation, which, in order to be correct, should include and at once transcend the location and predicament of both the observer and the observed, the seer and the seen, the judge and what is judged.

In ancient India, great masters who conceived everything in a holistic attitude, regarded human life as a whole within the universe which is the largest dimension of wholeness. Every application or duty in life was envisaged as a movement of a lesser whole towards a larger whole, and not the movement of a fraction, since not even an isolated part, for all practical purposes, is without a self-identity in itself, a personal status it maintains, forming thereby a complete entity by itself. Not only this. Even the so-called individualised operations or activities are not fractions, but emanations of a wholesome character, and every thought, feeling or attitude is a whole by itself, since it is an emanation from the individual which is a whole. In this connection it would also be necessary to state that every organisation that a 'holistic' individual forms is also a whole, invested with a soul, keeping it intact, the soul meaning what acts as the cohesive force that keeps the organisation as an integrated entity, whether social, legal, national or international. While the human being as an individual is certainly a whole, a fact which needs no further explanation, a family of individuals is also a whole, without which feature the members of the family would get dismembered and the unit called the family would cease to exist. A community is an organisation of several families, a district an organisation of several communities, a province an organisation of several districts, the national state an organisation of several provinces, and the world set-up an organisation of the entire comity of nations. In each of these levels of the organisational procedure, right from the individual to the concept of a world state, a unity is

maintained by each concerned level, each level has a soul of its own, each one forming a self-identical integrated individuality by itself and yet simultaneously forming a facet of the larger self of the next higher level of organisation, until a general universality of what we may call the cosmic organisation is attained as the state of utter perfection.

If we could carefully bear in mind the several implications of the above analysis of human situation in general, we would also realise that even the smallest of individual units, we may call them living or non-living, from the point of view of our observational capacity, and every movement, effort and attitude of such units, have in them potentially and implicitly the resources and powers, the facts and purposes, of the largest and highest organisation—the universe. If this is so, every individual is a whole, every organisation is a whole, and every impulse of every organisation, including the individual, is a wholesome endeavour to reach out to a wholesome experience in every way. This will explain why no one would tolerate oneself being regarded as an unimportant person, even second to someone, and every desire of everyone and everything is actually an asking for everything, inasmuch as what emanates from a whole cannot but be whole.

This vital fact was borne in mind by the ancient adepts in India, who brought about such a transformation in their outlook of life that they felt a necessity to introduce a system of living according to which the whole of life becomes a religious movement, a spiritual aspiration:

Religion becomes all life. This system is embodied in the concept of what is known as the Purusharthas, namely, the aims of human existence. The fourfold concept, which includes the four facets of human longing, i.e., human desire, human aspiration, human enterprise, is an attempt to bring together into a single focus of attention the aspirations of the individual towards the totality of being. Life may be defined as a kind of reaction of the individual to the whole atmosphere and environment—an environment which is at once personal, physical, social and supernatural. All the aspects of life, which are the concerns of man, would then be regarded as logical needs to be transformed into the spiritual endeavour. Whatever be one's occupation in life, that becomes a spiritual movement, it gets transformed into a worship of the universal reality. This is so because religion, spirituality, is the encounter of the total individual in regard to the total cosmos. The whole of life gets thus harnessed into the spiritual enterprise. The Purusharthas, the aims of human life, are broadly classified in terms of a fourfold asking of the individual for a fourfold fulfilment of being: These are Artha (material need), Kama (emotional and aesthetic need), Dharma (the impulse for righteousness), and Moksha (the ultimate spiritual requirement of all things).

The experience of a reaction in respect of the environment around which one seeks the fulfilment of one's material needs may be called the basic economic need of the person. Whatever is essential far physical existence, without which one cannot live a healthy and sensible life in the world, becomes an object (Artha) of life's pursuit, and

to the extent of the pressure of the need felt, one's life becomes inseparable from it. Food, clothing and shelter are some of the ostensible forms which this pressure of life takes. And this urge towards material security, is also to be transformed into a spiritual discipline, since this urge has its ultimate purpose in maintaining the individual secure for a purpose higher than the individuality itself. Here is the spirituality hidden behind even the material necessities of life. Matter itself is the first rung in the ladder of the development of the spirit towards perfection. Spirit condenses into matter and matter rarefies itself into spirit. The universe is the face of the Absolute Spirit. There can be nothing unspiritual in a world animated by the universal consciousness. The word 'secular,' if it means the 'unspiritual,' cannot exist in the dictionary of creation.

But no one can be satisfied merely with bread, clothing and a house to live in. There are other longings of the individual engendered by the fact that everyone is an intricate complex of different layers of involvement, each one knit into the other inextricably. There is the love for beauty, a desire for emotional satisfaction, and a longing for aesthetic enjoyment. The voice of this impulse is as vehement and pressing as the call for material comfort. The attraction for fine arts, music and literature, is an outer form which this inward impulse for aesthetic experience takes in every person. One loves and expects love. The tragedies of personal and social life may be mostly attributed to absence of affection that one seems to be expecting from others and one's own inability to love anything at all. Frustration is the outcome of defeated love.

Man's vital satisfactions and fulfilment of emotional needs also form part of the spiritual life, since this impulse, again, is an indication of the orderliness, symmetry, rhythm and proportion present in everything that is a whole and a completeness. The aesthetic impulse, the desire for the beautiful (Kama) is suggestive of any kind of love or longing for recognition and a fulfilment in feeling. The romantic impulse, as it is sometimes called, is the apotheosis of the aesthetic sense. As there is a necessity felt to keep one's physical body secure by means of the requisite material needs, there is a simultaneous urge to perpetuate the physical individuality through an endless continuity in the process of time, which is the final explanation of the impetuosity behind the sexual hunger of the individual. Infinity and Eternity seem to be playing the fool in the individual acts of an endless material possession and insistent sexual longing.

The impulses have their visible expressions as well as hidden forms. There was, in India, no ban imposed on the natural fulfilment of desires, contrary to the dictates of certain over-austere religious attitudes which emphasise to a point of excess a mortification of the flesh, the starvation of desires, and a hibernation of one's normal impulses by forced repression. Though appearance is not reality and the bungling of consciousness in its material and aesthetic vehemences may be said to be far removed from the ultimate reality of life, all evolution has to be from the lower to the higher, from a lesser completion to a greater one, though we would prefer to designate the lesser ones as appearances of the higher reality. This is the beauty and the

perfection, the spiritual significance, which the ancient masters envisaged in every individual attitude or movement, thus seeing and expecting everyone to see, the entire life in all its phases as a grand drama enacted by the Supreme Being in the Theatre of the Universe. This is the reason why even the ordinary daily occupations and instinctive impulses can become and should form raw materials for self-purification and an intelligent harnessing along the stages of the evolution of the spirit towards the Absolute. If God were not to call man, there would not have been desires in life. Every desire is some sort of a distorted shape of the response of man to God. A desire, while it is apparently directed towards the fulfilment of an objective satisfaction, actually arises from a need for universal experience. As everyone is placed in space and time, and the space-time complex manages to externalise even the universal, God Himself appears as an object of sense. What is everywhere looks as if it is in some place and only at some time.

However, the permission and concession given to desires to fulfil themselves, in the manner indicated, is to be conditioned by the great rule or law, called Dharma. If Dharma, the principle of the righteousness of the law, does not regulate the operation of desires, they cease to be aids in the movement of the spirit towards its perfection. Desires, which are like flowing rivers, get dammed up when they are bottled inside and not channelised in a systematic manner to irrigate life's wholesome involvements. Dharma is law, the regulative principle, which harmonises everything with everything else. The individual has to be a self-balanced

purposiveness, integrated healthily, but not opposed to a similar need felt for self-completion and integration by the other levels of organisational procedure, namely, the family, the community, the society, the nation, and the world at large. Usually, there is an inherent urge in everyone to maintain one's own point of view even to the detriment of others, a form which desire takes when it is concentrated within the body and ignores the presence of other individuals or similar organisations. Dharma, or law, insists that desire can be fulfilled, and must be fulfilled, lest it should go amuck, but not to the disadvantage of others who also exist in the world and who too have a similar permission to fulfil their desires. There is no mutual contradiction involved in such a permission granted under the law, Rita, as the Veda would call such a universal sanction founded on perfect, impartial justice. "Do unto others as you would be done by others." "Do not do to others what you would not like to be done to yourself." For, if one wishes that everything should belong to oneself, everyone else also can entertain such a wish. Such a predicament would defeat the very purpose of the operation of any desire. Law is the principle of cooperation and sacrifice, as against competition and selfish arrogance. It is the concession which each one is expected to make in respect of everyone else, because creation, as could be seen from the above study, is a 'Kingdom of Ends,' and not a restless flow of 'means' only without any 'end' to be reached. The Veda uses the word Satya for the law of the Absolute, and Rita is the very same law operating in creation as a regulative principle, an imperative, immanent

in all things. Every law is a facet of the cosmic law which is rooted in the integrality of the universe. There is a necessity to introduce a system of coherence among the visible particulars, so that they form a harmonious whole, a hierarchy of completeness, and not a mess of jarring notes without any relation among themselves. Law exists, because the Absolute is, God rules all things. Law is the manner in which the indivisibility of the Absolute manifests itself through space and time.

The great regulative system of the administration of life, known as Varna-Ashrama Dharma, sums up the way of a perfect life. While what we may call the horizontal integration of life by means of a blend of spiritual power, political power, economic power and man power in life is ensured by the intelligent mechanism of Varna Dharma, which is not a distinction of colour, but a mutually involved differentiation of each one's capacity to participate in the fulfilment of life, the vertical ascent in the qualitative wholeness of each person is patterned in the rule of the Ashrama Dharma, representing the stages of study, discipline, conservation of energy and continence; the ordained fulfilment of the material, social and emotional requirements of life; a gradual freedom from every kind of externally oriented involvement; and the final pursuit of absolute universality. The horizontal stratification was designed by the participating phases of cooperation known as Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra; the vertical discipline and gradual perfection of the person was laid down in the well-known stages of the Brahmacharin, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sannyasin. Neither is the

Varna system a caste-oriented gradation of the superior and the inferior, nor the Ashrama pattern a social enactment. Both represent a spiritual necessity and the only way in which human society can exist and thrive in harmony, and the individual progress upward towards a gradual realisation of universality. There is no comparison in this system of stratification, but a necessary and just participation and healthy integration of social and personal life. India's culture never held that negation is the law of life; for it fulfilment is a state that has to be reached by working through the media of every disciplinary process, all which is equally important. The stages of evolution do not brook comparison. Each stage becomes as important as any other, when one finds oneself in it. Life is an inward attainment of oneself with a cosmic conditioning. The inwardness, being constituted of the different layers of personality, has to be taken into consideration in all its degrees when one attempts to live a life of perfection. The inwardness is of a graded form. There is no sudden contact of one level with the rest of reality, except through the necessary stages. The human individual is formed of several psychic vestures, each of which is to be treated well by paying its due, which is accomplished in the fourfold stratification of cooperation and the stages of life. Time is a movement towards Eternity.

The perfection that is wholeness, which characterises every stage of evolution, is also to be equally active in the administrative, political and judicial field of human management. The question of management arises practically from the very level of the individual.

Management does not necessarily mean a handling of relationship with other people. It is also a matter which concerns oneself. Self-management, or the proper handling of one's own self, will be found to be of primary importance even when considering one's relationship with other persons. The individual, as was observed, is also an organisation that needs to be managed. Any non-alignment of factors involved in personal management may land the person in a state of mental restlessness, whimsical behaviour, erratic conduct, and a bungling in the handling of any matter whatsoever. While human society is a group of human beings, it cannot be forgotten that it is human beings as individuals that constitute the society. There cannot be a factual qualitative superiority of a society whose constituent members do not possess in their own person the expected quality. But the very necessity felt to form a society, an administrative system, a government, or a judiciary should naturally be suggestive of an imperative involved in the outlook of anyone to exceed the narrow limits of a purely personal or individual concern and entertain an outlook which would not exclude from its purview the welfare or interest of any other person in the society. This is a specific requirement on the part of anyone who is placed at the helm of affairs in any organisation,—social, political or judicial. The head of such an organisation, whether he is a king or a monarch, president, minister or judge, naturally requires a specialised form of education in being able to understand his relationship to the organisation of which he is the chief, a relationship which is not a particularised connection with individual

members merely, but a superior relation to the spirit of the organisation, a welfare state, as one may designate it, which is not a person but a principle. From this it would also be clear that the head of such an organisation cannot look upon himself as a person, but the representation of a universalised principle which is the integrated welfare of the entire jurisdiction over which he has authority and responsibility. It would require some specific educational calibre and a stretch of some genius to realise that the head of a managemental system, social, political or judicial, is not a person, but a super-personal general principle. A judge in a court, for instance, does not only transcend the limitations of the clients of the cases, but transcends even himself as a person. The judge is neither anyone of the clients or advocates, nor the visible person seated on the chair. The judge is an embodied representation of law, which by itself is impersonal. Hence, the true judiciary is not visible to the eyes but can only be appreciated through reason which has a wider jurisdiction than any person or even all persons. It is in this sense that a ruler is often considered as a representation of divinity, a deity in himself. It is so because the ruler is a principle of wholeness which, in every one of its levels, enshrines perfection which is godliness, which is a name for the soul or the self-integrating principle in anything.

The above consideration would also in a way enable one to answer the question as to whether the individual is for the State or the State is for the individual. The controversy seems to be finally unfounded, arisen due to a misconception of the relationship between the individual

and the State. To bring the instance of the judiciary once again, the client, the lawyer and the judge form a single cooperative network in the act of bringing about legal and social balance in the jurisdiction of the people concerned, and the unit constitutes a whole, each member forming a necessary contributory part of the whole, and the whole in turn deciding the status of each of such participating parts. The individual exists for the State, because the individual, as a lesser whole, is a constitutive element in the larger whole which is the State. But the State exists for the individual, since the integral wholeness which is the State cannot afford to interfere with the progressive welfare of any of the lesser wholes, insofar as the lesser wholes do not contradict or clash with one another's welfare. So, both the views stand the test of tenability, for they are actually not two viewpoints but two phases of a single point of view, which is the consideration of the entire State as a final whole which is at once inclusive of all the lesser wholes within it forming its inner constituents. This also answers the other question sometimes raised, that both the State and the individual are equally important. The point, however, is that the two are not distinct entities at all.

The administrative and legal issues of life, while they essentially constitute an operation of positive and constructive remedying and equitable healing forces in the organisation, also involve a sometimes unavoidable factor known as punitive justice. Criminal laws engage themselves in this latter aspect of the management of human affairs and in the act known as punishment inflicted by law, the social welfare of the organism is supposed to be ensured.

The positive side of legal justice mainly concerns itself with the distribution of property and the question of its ownership in society: the civil rights of the people. Though, even in an act of civil dispensation of justice, an element of punishment may be said to be involved, where, for example, a landed property wrongly appropriated by a person is wrenched out from him and handed over to its rightful owner, based on the principle of equity and welfare of the entire organism of administration; yet, in what is known specially criminal procedure, the punitive aspect puts on an accentuated form as a special kind of pain inflicted on the wrong-doer. It has been held even in a free state or a democracy, where private property is conceded, that all ownership is more a kind of trusteeship and the State can have the right, and has actually the right, to own the entire property under given conditions. In fact, private ownership cannot defy or contravene public welfare or the well-being of the State as a whole. All this means that no one exists for himself alone, but everyone exists for everyone else, also. Here comes into high relief the great spiritual significance of life operating powerfully even in political and judicial administration.

While the manner in which people are entrusted with civil rights or ownership of property has been seen to vary from country to country and from nation to nation, occasioned by local conditions of people and their mentality in the regions concerned, what strikes one's eye ostensibly is the peculiarity in the administration of criminal justice as understood and enacted by the different nations. What kind of punishment is to be meted out to

what offence? Can the hand of a person who steals a pencil be amputated as a punishment equitable with the act of offence? Can a nation which forbids smoking, execute a person for committing that act under its jurisdiction? These are extreme cases which kick up basic questions of human justice, but there are others which are involved in the prejudices of the human mind. The steel frames within which are locked up, in India, the characteristics attributed to the classes of people called castes, Varnas, and the functions associated with the Ashramas in the personal life of an individual, as if they are water-tight compartments, iron cages, and not flowing streams joining the river of life, are also examples of the inveterate habit of human prejudice, ignorance and self-esteem, which raise similar questions of a thing called justice behind the rule of social law. In a region monogamy is holy and inviolable, in another polyandry is not only necessary but an act of sacred cooperation and sacrifice. One leader of the people exhorts the nation on the necessity for unconditional non-violence, but another concedes a proviso that violence is justifiable where self-defence is involved, or where one feels a need to protect the lives of people or guard the security of the nation. It needs no mention that the principle of unconditional non-violence considers that even death should be welcome if it follows as a consequence of adherence to non-violence. It follows also from this that one who does not hesitate to embrace death as an inevitable something, whatever be its causative factors, believes perhaps in a deathless immortality of a soul in man, and the welfare hereafter is a greater concern than a welfare in this

world. This strange conclusion, though it is likely automatically to follow from a strict observance of unconditional non-violence, cannot be said to be the intention of the leader of a people, who would not deny the possibility of their earthly welfare, all which would only mean that there is a difficulty in reconciling the need for the welfare of people in the world and the necessity, to be adherents of unconditional non-violence.

The processes of the study of the principles of life considered in the above paragraphs should enable one to accept that justice is neither an affirmation nor a negation of life, but a harmony of conditions that should contribute towards the manifestation of circumstances which would enable lower organisations of reality to expand their dimensions and reach up to higher levels which are the souls of the lower ones. Nature does not go to extremes, nor are law and justice extremes of act and behaviour. The meaning of principles that transcend personalities is generally hard for the mind to grasp. As action and reaction are equal and opposite, because they are based on a unitary law of a balance maintained by the forces of Nature, the rights and privileges of people as may be conceded to them, or even the punishments that are supposed to be necessary, cannot, even in a state of enthusiasm, ignore the fundamental principles of righteousness and justice which demand that the spiritual expansion of the individual and the society has to be the criterion behind all judgments, whether rights and properties, privileges and concessions, or punishments and deprivations. It is not for nothing that great thinkers have often felt that only philosophers can be

kings, and kings should be philosophers. It was Plata who proclaimed that until this condition of administration is fulfilled, the world is not going to have peace. There must be justice in conceding privileges to a person and justice in meting out punishment. The justice consists not only in the security and welfare ensured to people in general by that dispensation, but it also should, at the same time, ensure the betterment, welfare and progress of the particular individual concerned. Certainly, none but a god can be a just ruler (*navishnuh prithivipatih*). It has to be borne in mind, again, that the ruler is a principle of integration involving an element of universality in it, and not just a person among many others.

The philosophy and the rationale behind law, justice and jurisprudence would, then, raise the pertinent question: Is man prior to law or is law prior to man? This crucial difference of viewpoint in ultimate matters concerning life is virtually the point of distinction between the Contract Theory of State propounded by thinkers like Thomas Hobbes and the Logical Theory of State advocated by philosophers like 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 naturally the height of any conceivable insecure condition of things. To obviate this sort of perpetual fear endangering the lives of everyone, people are said to have made 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 considered as something 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 and agreement. This would make it appear that there is no such thing as law unless man wills, individually or in a group, that it should be there. It is the creation of human needs and the 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 origin 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 would also follow that even the sense of justice can turn out to be a whim oftentimes 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 close examination of the subject, the implications of the Contract Theory would seem to be inseparable from the psychological background of society

presented by psychoanalysis. Man can be no better because he can make laws, for he can also unmake the very same laws by the same principles of contract which made them, and rational justice would be a 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 as propounded by the Contract Theory. Here we come to a 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 1aw at a11 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 law arrests a person and inflicts on him punishment, it is not because of the operation of a man-made law merely (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 also purports to be its logical explanation and justification. The relationship between man and man is not the outcome of some 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 as manifest in the various degrees or realms of its expression. 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. The growth into a higher order of reality is both quantitative and qualitative in a measure in which the two aspects cannot be distinguished one from the other. The higher degree of reality connotes and implies not only a wider inclusiveness of quantitative measure but also a deeper profundity of knowledge and wisdom and an insight into the nature of things. To give an example: Is not man more than a mere total or an assemblage of the different limbs of his 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.

Even so is the concept of a nation, which is more a spirit than a sum or an assemblage of people and things. The meaning of this position can be appreciated if we consider for a while such phenomena as, for instance, large number of persons recruiting themselves as soldiers and even dying in a war waged in what is regarded as the interest or the welfare of the nation. Obviously, no one would ever believe that the nation for whose sake people are ready to sacrifice themselves is just the ground of the earth, mountains and rivers, for these do not require protection and they stand by themselves unconcerned with man's predicament. What seems to be in the mind of people, evidently, when they entertain the notion of the nation, is the group of people arranged into a conceptual network or pattern of wholeness governed by a uniform ideology, cultural aim or ultimate purpose. On this ground, the nation is inclusive of everyone, even the soldiers going for a battle. Even supposing that a large percentage of people as soldiers die in a battle waged in the interest of the nation, no one feels that a part of the nation is dead or that the nation is now alive only as seventy-five per cent or fifty per cent. The nation does not perish even if the majority of people cease to be for some reason, and this is so because the nation is not the person or the physical assembly of individual bodies. Even if fifty per cent of the limbs of the body of a person is to be amputated for medical reasons, the man remains still a whole and never feels that half of him has gone and that only half is alive. That the spirit is not the

same as the letter, that the invisible is a greater reality than the visible, can easily be seen on a little in-depth examination of anything.

The ethical or what are known as moral laws, also, stand by this test of spirit ruling the letter, intention standing above routine or outer form. Else, how would one explain the universally acceptable law that no one can injure or harm another on any account and yet feel justified in maintaining defence forces to avert self-annihilation? Here is a subtlety which accepts human behaviour and conduct to be regulated not by the instinct of love and hate, but by obedience to the law of the spirit transcending the isolated instincts of individuals or even a group of individuals. Here is the principle of Ahimsa, or non-injury, thrown into the crucible of a test which can be broadly categorised as utility, coherence, or self-realisation. Though the meanings hidden behind these nomenclatures of behavioural and ethical operation seem to be outwardly different one from the other, there is an undercurrent of a common significance and a uniformity of meaning in all this operational attitudes. Though, sometimes, it appears that truth cannot go counter to its utility in life, the sense of utility cannot but maintain a coherence within its structure, inasmuch as the utility has to be a feature of the common welfare of everyone and cannot be just the favourable utility of someone to the detriment of others. Here, even the idea of utility has to be governed by the principle of coherence, which latter ensures security to people in general and does not convert utility into a picture of selfishness. But what is coherence, and what is its intention, what is the purpose?

Here we are face to face with the question behind all questions.

There can be a justification in the necessity felt for the introduction of coherence among values of human utility for another reason altogether, which is neither just empirical utility nor mere logical coherence. And that is the demand for the self-realisation of Spirit. There is an inherent, unbending, unrelenting and eternally operative requirement in everyone to be in a state of self-realisation, which, in the purely physical personality, takes the form of an undividedness of feeling that one is what one is, and one cannot be other than what one is. This is the law of identity, namely, A is A, and A cannot be B. This strange persistent urge to maintain a conscious self-identity is the principle of self-realisation manifest in the lowest degree of reality, that is, the physical organism which lives and works with an intention and purpose. But, as observed above, the individual self-hood can maintain itself only precariously in the absence of its adjustment, adaptation, harmony and coherence with other people in the world, call them families, communities, or nations. These latter are the wider forms of the very same impulse for self-realisation as revealed in the world of space and time, but demanding self-identity at their own levels, and brooking no interference from anything outside that particular unit of selfhood, whatever be its degree of inclusiveness or expansiveness. There would be no necessity to dilate on this issue any further, since this appreciation of the way of things in general would automatically land itself in the recognition that a Universal Selfhood alone can explain and

account for the very meaning of the life of anything, and it is its affirmation in graded forms of inclusiveness that goes by the name of law, righteousness or justice.

The above also explains why Nature and history never care for individuals, and even the strongest of empires and the greatest of men have been reduced to the dust of the earth. Not even the best of actors is allowed a continuous and unending performance in the drama of creation. There is a coming and going of things, as required by the change of scenes which constitute the beauty of the enactment. It is not the individual, whether in the form of a person, family, community or an empire, that is of any value to the universal justice, for, what is of value is the universal intention, the universal purpose—the largest universality of selfhood with no external interference or conditioning by way of limitation. Moral virtues and ethical codes relating to the norms of non-violence, truthfulness, continence, appropriation of property and permissiveness to enjoy security, do all finally hang on this final justification to be found in every one of their normative shapes in personal and social behaviour, namely, a healthy balancing of every order of reality, right from the level of the lowest individuality, as required by the necessity to grow by a gradual ascent through degrees, to the general selfhood of the universe.

The need for norms of any kind in one's behaviour arises due to the necessity to grant the same permission as given to oneself to other people also in the world. While everyone is to be granted the highest freedom, it loses its sense when such a freedom cannot be granted, at the same

time, equally, to others also in the world. Unrestricted individual freedom granted to all would be another name for a tendency to the annihilation of all life—strange, that freedom can lead to destruction. But this is so because freedom is a universal principle and not an individual prerogative. The higher always justifies and can justify the lower, and the lower is not supposed to stand independently by itself. The aim of an action has to be justified. The reason behind the choosing of this aim has also to be justified. The means adopted to fulfil the aim is, again, to be justifiable. Finally, the consequence that may follow from the action should also be justifiable. And justice consists in the integral security of any order of reality.

Our duties, as well as character and conduct, are determined by the nature of the meaning that we are able to see in life, or, rather, the aim of life which is the ultimate objective towards the achievement of which every activity is directed. This would mean that the way in which one thinks, lives and acts, the manner of one's behaviour towards others, and ones relationship with the general atmosphere around, are all fixed by the pattern of the meaning discoverable in life—the final aim of 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 minimal step that one takes in any direction at the present moment is entirely governed by the law which is the stuff and substance of the ultimate purpose of all life. Law is, thus, an operation of the system of the Absolute in different evolutionary degrees of

comprehensiveness and perfection, right from the revolution of an atom or the vibration of an electron to the ultimate causality of the universe. Personal needs, social laws and political systems of administration cannot, therefore, be separated from the requisitions necessitated by the very nature of the final unity of all things. It is this Universal Transcendent Principle that creates, sustains, rewards or punishes individual systems and organisations by its gradational actions and reactions. Here is also the explanation as to why individual systems strive for mutual love and cooperation, and, at the same time, keep themselves ready with a knife hidden in their armpits. Life is a perpetual battle between the empirical and the transcendent, the external and the universal, time and Eternity.

XLI—IN DEFENCE OF A PROPER PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

It has been argued that the system of philosophy which is known as Vedanta, propounded by Acharya Sankara, is not a philosophical system, since it accepts the authority of the Scripture, and philosophy does not accept scriptural testimony as a test of truth. To this point of view, several answers may perhaps be appropriate. Firstly, the term 'Vedanta' as 'Advaita' need not necessarily be associated with Sankara, because it stands for a way of thinking or a doctrine which can be promulgated by a methodology of reason. Even if Sankara were not to be born, this system of human thought would remain as a way of possible logical analysis and synthesis. Perhaps it would not be difficult to see that the conclusions which are associated with Advaita can be drawn even without reference to any scripture or theological background. That historical circumstances required Acharya Sankara to consider Scripture as the final authority would not preclude the great logical acumen which is demonstrated in his writings, which can stand independently as a supreme philosophical system, even without any reference to Scripture. Hence, a true student of philosophy need not have to mix up the theological atmosphere of Sankara's times with the philosophical conclusions that he drew by pure reason alone.

Further, it is strange that philosophy should be interpreted as a position totally opposed to Scripture or irreconcilable with Scripture, if we are to consider Scripture as an accepted hypothesis which itself cannot be questioned, and not necessarily a book written by someone

or even revealed to anyone. Which scientific method or philosophic situation can be said to be free from the necessity to be finally grounded on some hypothesis on which it bases itself and on whose pedestal it raises the edifice of its system? How would science or philosophy or any thinking process at all assume a sense or meaning if it is not to found itself on some irrefutable fact which is already accepted not as something deduced from a premise, since a premise itself cannot be deduced? Indian philosophers, whether they accept the authority of Scripture or not, had also amply revealed in their expositions the great power of reason which, while it was not necessary for it to refute Scripture, could also stand on its own legs.

It is also argued that the Advaita position that Brahman 'is' consciousness is a sort of self-contradiction, for consciousness is a quality. To this, it has to be said that consciousness is certainly not a quality, nor can it be a product of the conjunction of the subject and the object as some thinkers have tried to establish. If consciousness were a quality, it would have to be a quality of something other than consciousness, but what on earth can that be which is other than consciousness? That so-called something which is other than consciousness has necessarily to be also that which is not known to consciousness, in which case it cannot be related to consciousness, and consciousness cannot be related to it. Where then comes the question of consciousness being a quality of anything at all? Secondly, it is contended that the Advaita conclusion that Brahman, the Absolute, is consciousness is not tenable, for, it is argued, the statement "Brahman is consciousness" is tautological.

The point is that if Brahman is consciousness, it would be like saying that Brahman is Brahman, and to say that Brahman is consciousness would be like an analytic judgment, not a synthetic one, adding no new information to the subject Brahman, since Brahman is already said to be consciousness. This objection arises on account of introducing the defects of linguistic grammar into a philosophic proposition, for we cannot see any tautology in the statement that Brahman is consciousness, inasmuch as the statement is intended to describe the characteristic of Brahman, or, we may say, the constituent essence of Brahman, or, rather, more precisely, what Brahman is. Hence, the statement, "Brahman is consciousness" does not introduce the conjunction 'and', so that there should be Brahman 'and' consciousness in order that Brahman may be consciousness. The grammatical copula 'is', in the statement "Brahman is consciousness", does not distinguish between Brahman and consciousness, but is only a verbal contrivance necessitated by the exigency of grammar. The spirit of the statement is the real philosophic position, and not the form of the linguistic structure of the sentence. It is well known that every sentence involves a subject and a predicate linked together by a verb. Only, in the present context, neither Brahman nor consciousness can be taken as a predicate, because one and the same thing is asserted even when two terms are used. Thus, it appears that the objection is not philosophical. The statement "Brahman is consciousness" cannot be considered as a truism, as if it is a well known fact, for it requires an elucidatory effort to come to the conclusion that the nature of Brahman is

consciousness. If a father makes a statement, "Rama is my son", it does not follow that the statement is tautological or a truism, for, while Rama and son mean one and the same person, the one term explains the intrinsic nature of that which is indicated by the other.

It has often been glibly and sarcastically opined by many a thinker that the Advaita doctrine propounds the unreality of the world, the illusoriness of all things, that nothing exists at all. While the process of an investigation into the validity of the question of the unreality of the world is a little intricate and need not be discussed here, it is not true that the Advaita crudely brushes aside the content of world-experience as a literal unreality. No content of an experience can be regarded as totally unreal as long as there is such a thing as experience, and no one with the least sense would dub an experience as unreal as long as it remains an experience. But, while it is certainly true that the very meaning of experience is that it 'is there', and no one will speak of it if it is not there, no experience can be considered as unreal, as long as it 'is' an experience, whether it is of the world or anything else. Yet, there is certainly something more to be said about this phenomenon. Would we call it an experience when it is contradicted by another experience subsequently following it? The famous analogy of the experience of a snake in the rope is before us. Is the snake real? No one would say that it is unreal, for it is a content of experience which is real. But, at the same time, there is a point which requires a more judicious consideration of the issue, since, in a different experience which is of the rope, the snake is realised to be

unreal. Who would ever regard the snake as a reality on the perception of the rope as a real experience? It appears to us that the analogy of the snake and the rope, which is so well known, is not a puerile connivance of some psychological whim, but a most apt illustration of the position of the world as a whole and of man's location in the world. It would thus be obvious how one and the same proposition can be unreal as well as real in two different contexts, while not being self-contradictory as a blending of totally opposite positions.

It may also be added here that it would not be wisdom to stretch even the weapon of logic to its breaking point, for logic is a function of reason operating on the dichotomy of the subject and the object, while at the same time feeling the necessity to bring together the two as an integral statement.

If there are no proofs that can demonstrate Brahman's reality, this need not be considered as a serious defect in the situation. Rather, it should be happily accepted as the glory of truth itself, which is also associated with Eternity. How is one to prove the eternal through noneternal means, and what eternal means are available to man in a world of temporal processes? What proof does one expect to establish the existence of Brahman, as Brahman is the basis of all proof, the indubitable existence as the very self of the one who argues and thinks in terms of proof ? How would it be proved by some other proof, and where is the point in expecting a proof at all?

The illustration of experience in the state of deep sleep sometimes advanced in the Advaita system as an evidence of the existence of an absolute being, is not without

substance. Reversing the Cartesian proposition, "I think, therefore I am", the analogy cited is an adventure in the direction of the conclusion, "I am, therefore I think". Would there be a need to bring a proof that one's own self exists? Obviously, it is not hard for one to realise that proofs proceed from the fundamental experience of there being such a thing as self, and if the self itself were to be an object of doubt, there would be no worth-the-while conclusion in life, which would be free from the defect of the same doubt. If there is anything at all that cannot be doubted, it has to have a base which itself cannot be doubted. All this would be commonplace to any sensible point of view.

Now comes the question, what happened in deep sleep? This is one of the great analyses made in the system of Advaita philosophy. While in the waking state the body seems to be the whole of the reality of oneself, in dream one's existence is proved to be possible without association with the physical body. The point that comes to relief in deep sleep is that one can and one does exist there in a condition wherein even the mind does not operate, and one's existence in the state of sleep is free from association of every kind, physical as well as psychological. It is no great feat of discovery to make much of the psychological difficulty involved in understanding the nature of the memory that remains subsequent to sleep, of one's having existed in the state of sleep. That the physical and the psychological embodiments are not the reality of a person is the essence of the discovery which is made from one's existence in sleep. Whether sleep is a biological condition,

or is brought about by this factor or that, is irrelevant for the purpose. We need not go into the details here as to how and why one enters the state of deep sleep. The Upanishad has something to say about it, while the medical man or the psychologist and the scientist may have something else to say from their own points of view. These considerations, however, do not touch the essential point made out in the study of the self in sleep, that it is impossible to set aside the conclusion that the self is basically of the stuff of consciousness. While the experience of joy in sleep is attributed to different factors and can be explained in several ways, it is impossible to believe that there can be satisfaction in a state of unconsciousness. No doubt, sleep is a state of unconsciousness and it should be a contradiction for anyone to believe that such sleep should have any value. Is it not strange that the value of sleep seems to outweigh any other value, even if it is to be considered only as a reminder, though occasional, that man is evidently something other than what he appears to be in his much-adumbrated waking activity?

It is said that the condition of sleep cannot be regarded as an experience because this condition is an 'event' and all events are not experiences. To this it us to be pointed out that it is difficult to understand what an 'event', can be if it is not existent, and what can existence mean if it is not something that is known to exist? Precisely, an experience is the knowledge of existence, it may be the existence of an event, a condition, a situation, a thing, or whatever it be. Then, why should not sleep be an experience, if it is an event? Further, the argument that in order to call an event

an experience, it must be an event of which someone is the subject, does not in any way affect the issue on hand; for, how could sleep be an experience or an event if it is not an experience to someone or an event occurring in respect of someone or something? In fact, what exists, or, precisely, is, in the state of sleep is the pure subject alone. In sleep there is an indication of subjectivity, free from traces of all objectivity, if only we are not to consider the state of unconsciousness as an object counterposed before a subject. The definition of consciousness has also to be made a little clear. Consciousness cannot be considered as something happening to someone, whether it is noticed or not. Philosophically, the term 'consciousness', when it is applied to describe the pure metaphysical subject, is to be understood as denoting something more than even what is usually called self-consciousness. It is the basic presupposition of any meaning whatsoever. Hence, such a subliminal base of the very meaning of anything, the primary being or existence of whatever can be regarded as meaningful, has to be something not only not associated to any other primary being which may be its subject, but should be not even a state of self-consciousness in the sense of one being one's own object of awareness. It is pure universality, consciousness as such, which cannot be distinguished from being as such. Thus, consciousness need not mean noticing, seeing or any kind of happening to anyone. This latter empirical characterisation of consciousness may have the utilitarian value of a grammatical subject, or sensorily conditioned individuality localised in space and time. But consciousness has to

supersede space and time, since the former knows the latter as its content. The suggested pure subject indicated by the experience of sleep is not an ego, which latter is a self-conscious, localised, embodied something, but a general state of reality which encompasses all that can be anywhere or at any time. The subject indicated in sleep is not the enjoying or suffering subject, for it is prior to every psychological condition, since, here again, psychological experiences are its contents.

Experience is not 'doing something', for the fact of doing anything would be the object of a consciousness prior to it. Thus, we find that consciousness cannot be associated with anything other than itself, neither an event nor a thing. The Advaita argument of the presence of bliss in the state of deep sleep, as evidenced by a subsequent memory thereof, cannot be just brushed aside as totally irrelevant. There is certainly a great point which the Advaita makes out here. It is logically impossible to conceive of memory or remembrance except as a conscious recollection of a previous experience. Since experience cannot be dissociated from a consciousness of it, the conclusion that consciousness is not absent in the state of sleep cannot also be ruled out. As regards the experience of happiness in sleep, it is up to anyone to prove it or disprove it. An intense subjectivity to which consciousness is driven in sleep should be considered as the explanation for the happiness mentioned. The nearer one moves to oneself, the truer one is, and, hence, freer; and, is not freedom a state of happiness? It is entanglement in objectivity that distracts the attention of consciousness by making it appear as

something other than its own self, which may safely be called a sort of metaphysical schizophrenia. The utter subjectivity which everyone craves for as an emblem of total freedom is demonstrated by man in the process of history. No one would like to be other than oneself, or involved in what one is not. Such empirical involvements are not present in sleep, and though this not-being-present is a kind of negative freedom and an entry into pure subjectivity through the back door (this, incidentally, differentiates sleep from Samadhi, or universal consciousness), there is no doubt that this apparent negativity becomes at least a suggestion of the possibility of positive subjectivity, even as the reflection of an object, which may be said to be the negative presentation of the object, indicates the nature of that object itself. In studies of this type, one may have to be dispassionate and honest, as far as one's own feelings and experiences are concerned, and not allow an empirical logic to interfere with its validity, for, as we have noted, logic is not a permanent friend of the very source of logicality. We need not identify this source entirely with the Transcendental Unity of apperception of Immanuel Kant, but here is certainly its elder brother, as it were, and the presence of it none can deny without denying the denier's existence itself. In a way, the true self is reflected in spatio-temporal involvement in the state of waking and, evidently, philosophers are right when they opine that the world is a dream, if it is true that all spatial and temporal experience is a shadow cast through the screen of objectivity by that which is the archetype transcending the space-time network. Plato's analogy of the

cave is profound and pertinent, and it is a happy augury that in a more explicit manner this truth is coming to light through the discoveries of modern physics, into whose findings we need not enter here.

XLII—CREATION AND SOME OF ITS IMPLICATIONS

On the Question of Creation of the Universe

All descriptions concerning the origin or creation of the universe are intended to clarify philosophical and psychological situations which arise due to an inborn belief that the world must have an origin, and must have a creator. This is a hypothesis which cannot itself be explained by any rational process of investigation. Why should it be necessary for the world to have a creator outside itself? Why should anyone create a problem and then try to find a solution for it? Has anyone seen God creating the world? But, how is it that people everywhere speak of the creation of the world as if they have witnessed God working at the beginning of things? The circumstance actually involves two facets, namely, (a) belief in the word of the Scripture, which narrates the story of creation by God; (b) a necessity felt by inductive logic and the natural manner of human thinking that everything that is visible must have come from somewhere and that all things must have been made by someone as a cause preceding an effect.

Taking the first issue; namely, the descriptions and explanations in the Scriptures, it is no doubt true that the Scripture of every religion, except those that do not bring in a God into the picture, speaks of God creating the world out of His own Will, not because He has a desire but it is His Nature automatically operating, as the sun shedding light without any desire to do the work of shining. Firstly, therefore, it has to be accepted that God creating the

universe does not imply an action like some human being working, because God is timeless Being, and no action is conceivable where time is absent. Hence it is fallacious to take the creation theory literally, as if God is some large man thinking and working like man only. Creation is like the four-dimensional realm of modern physics appearing as a three-dimensional world of empirical experience. And no scientist will say that the four-dimensional existence has 'created' the three-dimensional world. The electrons or the atoms do not "create" the stone of which they are the internal constituents. This would land us on the question: Is the world really there? For, if a stone is really there, it should be visible to the microscope which sees only a pressure of electromagnetic force commensurate with the entire structure of the universe. In this light, the world and God would be two names for one and the same thing, and any question regarding creation by God would fundamentally lack scientific basis.

The renowned philosopher, Acharya Sankara, says that theories of creation are not intended to describe an actual historical process of the world coming from God, as if God started manufacturing things in some ancient time, but that these stories of the procession of effects from God at the top are indicative of a higher truth that God alone is, inasmuch as the logical relationship between effect and cause negatives any difference between the two, thus merging the effect in the cause, that is to say, leaving God alone to Himself with no world whatsoever as a product externally created. The infinity and the omnipresence of God, which is accepted by everyone, precludes the possibility of a world

being there outside God. An appearance of a reality cannot be regarded as something created by reality. Hence all problems arising in respect of desire, playfulness, constraint and the like, on the part of God, get ruled out and the question contradicts itself, since the necessity for the world to have a cause outside it is a hypothesis characteristic of the three-dimensional way of human thinking in which it is shackled.

On the Question of Pain and Suffering to Created Beings

The idea of pleasure and pain is a product of what may be called parochial thinking, without the consciousness of any reference which one may have with other factors that range beyond human perception. Pleasure and pain do not exist as if they are things hanging somewhere in space. These are names given to conditions of experience undergone by a particular degree of consciousness when the atmosphere which it regards as existing external to itself in space and time is either reconcilable or irreconcilable with its present condition. It is a pain for a human being to be dipped within the bowels of the cold waters of the Ganga, but a delight to the fish swimming within it pleasantly. Man never thinks the same thought throughout his life. Today's pleasure is tomorrow's sorrow. These facts are not unknown in human history. Apart from the psychological considerations, there is a scientific and a metaphysical error in thinking that pleasure and pain are existent objects, as it were. A cool breeze in summer is pleasant, and the same thing is unpleasant in winter. A fourth or fifth cup of pleasant milk causes nausea. The rich

people of the world know the sorrow caused by their wealth. People who crave for having children know the troubles of family life and social tension. Why go so far? Since pleasure and pain are conditions of particular circumstances of individualities in relation to reality outside, any excessive harping on the tune of life's sufferings may require a more impartial adjudication.

The horror of the big fish swallowing the smaller ones and the apparent unjustifiability behind the survival of the strongest, or, we may say, the fittest, is inseparable from the basic psychological defect which Alfred North Whitehead calls "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness," which means to say that human judgments of what look like local events and occurrences do not take into consideration their vaster relationship to the universe as a whole, such that every event is a universal event, and it is not the big fish that swallows the smaller one but the evolutionary impulse of the cosmos adjusting itself in terms of its internal components for a purpose that transcends an existing situation. Evolution is not a pain, even as no one regards as pain the growth of a child into a mature genius. The whole difficulty arises because of the thought that God is outside the universe and handles things as a carpenter operates on his tools. This unfortunate weakness of human thought raises the frightful bogey of questions which have as much reality and meaning as its own intrinsic worth. Evolution is not for anybody's pain or pleasure; because, there is no 'anybody' outside the process of evolution. The Infinite seems to proceed from the Infinite, and return to the

Infinite, all which can suggest nothing more than that the Infinite is just what it is.

The Process of Action and Reaction

If we insist on finding a reason behind the sufferings of life, whatever be their nature and detail, it has to be accepted that the justice of the universe which is a single organism cannot permit illogical and, therefore, unjust occurrences within its internal constitution. Life in the world is seen to be a little complicated by the operation of the law of action and reaction. This is a principle according to which every action produces an effect with an equal force. Bondage is considered to be the reaction produced by actions which defy the fact of the unitary structure of the cosmos of which all individuals are inseparable parts. This principle of reaction to action arises only when this intrinsic inseparable connection of the individual with the cosmos is forgotten and the former indulges in attitudes or actions with the false notion that it is an independent actor or doer, consequently inviting the nemesis of reaction. The universe is the shadow cast by the wishes of its contents, and it is what these wishes are and what they sweep away from infinite existence with the winds of the forces moving towards their fulfilment. Since the acceptance of the fact of creation implies the fact of pleasure and pain in life and suggests a cause behind the effect, it would follow that there are endless causes behind endless effects moving in a cyclic fashion, which system operating in the time-bound world is called by different names by the religions of the world; and the Indian tradition calculates this cycle of an endless

revolution by its concept of the Yugas or temporal ages known as Krita, Treta, Dvapara and Kali, in the descending order of knowledge and virtue. All this would explain why no man tied down to the present cycle alone can know why anyone has any particular experience, pleasurable or miserable, since the causes behind effects visible in the present cycle can originate from earlier cycles, and therefore it cannot be said that there is an undeserved pleasure or an undeserved suffering. Nothing can come from nothing, is indeed sound logic.

On the Evolution of Life

There is no precise saying as to when a lower species evolves into the higher one. Since personal agency in action cannot be attributed to sub-human species, all evolution below the human level is supposed to be a spontaneous fulfilment of the vast purpose of Nature. The progress of the sub-human organism, or the rise from the lower condition of the soul to the higher, is considered automatic as a spontaneous action of the universal Nature in the case of all beings who are free from the egoism of personal agency in action. Personal effort comes into relief only at the human level wherein consciousness becomes self-consciousness, an individual affirmative urge, whereby this centre of affirmation is severed from the supporting hand of the universal nature and self-effort on the part of one's own individual self becomes the well-known drudgery of life. The animal Nature when it rises to the human level will, in the natural course of things, take higher births, gradually, provided right thinking harmonious with the

total universe motivates its thought and action. The sufferings of animals, as with sufferings of human beings, in whatever way they be called, are already touched upon in their essential causational circumstances, in what we have considered already above in a different context.

On the Conditions of Reincarnation

At the time of death, the individuality does not get dissolved, though the physical constituents may be separated and dissolved. What is it that takes rebirth? It cannot be the body, because it is discarded and it is dissolved into the physical elements of which it is composed. It cannot also be the Atman, because the Atman is a Universal Presence which cannot be said to be subject to transformation of any kind, such as transmigration. What else does transmigrate?

The peculiar thing called the individual is neither the body nor the Atman. It is a strange admixture of localised self-affirmation in terms of space and time, and this principle of self-affirmation is impossible to define except as a peculiar pressure-point or force which is generated by the influence of space-time upon consciousness which by itself is indivisible. This point of pressure spatio-temporally occasioned is in fact the centre of what is known as the psyche, often called the mind, sometimes known as the Chitta or the Antahkarana, in the Sanskrit language.

This pressure of consciousness causing the individual self-sense may be broadly understood as having three levels of empirical expression, viz., the conscious, the sub-conscious and the unconscious. Only the conscious level

operates when a person is awake, the sub-conscious operates in dream, and the unconscious in deep sleep. The conscious impulses and activities of the individual are limited expressions of the desires which seek to fulfil themselves by way of contact with sense objects. When the pressure of desires is too much and they cannot be easily fulfilled under conditions prevailing in the waking state, they operate as reveries in dream as a sort of satisfaction of strong. impulses incapable of operation during waking state. But the desires of an individual are so immense and complicated that their satisfaction cannot be really achieved in a single life. Such unfulfilled longings get wound up in unconscious states, a specimen of which is deep sleep. It is the power of unfulfilled desires that acts like a projectile and drives like a rocket this complex known as the individual pressure-point in the direction of manufacturing a new apparatus for their fulfilment under expected conditions, this new apparatus being called the newly formed body. Here is the interesting background of what is known as rebirth.

As a realised soul has no desires, it has no rebirth. Hence the passing away of an ordinary person and the disappearance of a person like Lord Krishna have nothing in common. The energies which are elemental that go to contribute to the formation of a new body in the case of an individual with unfulfilled desires do not operate in the case of a realised soul, because rebirth is caused by the magnetic pull exerted by the desiring centre of consciousness upon the physical elements, the forces of Nature outside. Such a desire being absent in realised souls, they have no rebirth.

They merge into Universal Being. The legacy which acts as the link between the here and the hereafter is desire, which causes reincarnation. The legacy so-called is a mysterious admixture of consciousness and desire, which is the causative factor behind rebirth. It is neither the physical body formed of the five elements, nor the Atman which is all-pervading. It is not true that in death the apparatus through which thinking and feeling act is destroyed; it continues in spite of the body being destroyed. The screen of the Television which projects the picture of individuality is the point of consciousness-desire, explained above, and it is not destroyed when the body is destroyed. It is true that, in a way, our waking life is also a reflection of some other anterior existence, which we do not remember now, since we are now in this world in a different space-time continuum, totally different from the space-time complex of the previous life. It has to be reiterated that death does not destroy the link between this life and the other life, because death is only of the physical body, and everyone knows well that a person is not exhausted by the physical frame only. There is something more in man than what appears to the eyes, or to any sense organ.

The modern theory of evolution from matter to plant, from plant to life, from life to mind and from mind to intellect is but a corroboration of there being a continuous link from one state of life to another. Else, there would be no evolution and there would be no meaning in any form of life at all. All this requires deep study, and a mere cursory reading of one or two textbooks may not be adequate. The

principle involves vast areas beyond the ken of the studies provided in our modern colleges and universities.

The theory of Karma, or the principle of reaction, which conditions the notions of good and bad etc., is not supposed to apply to the sub-human species since they do not have the self-consciousness of personal agency in action and are just guided by the natural forces of evolution. Suffering cannot be attributed to an individual as long as it is free from personal agency in action. The sub-human species evolve in the same way as there is rise of life from matter to the vegetable kingdom, etc., as mentioned. This is not caused by Karma, but by the very pressure of universal evolution.

If there is no transcendent meaning beyond the present life of the human being, no one would lift a finger, or do anything in this life, unless he is an idiot of the first water, knowing well that the next moment death may overtake anyone, and no one can be sure that one can be alive after a few minutes more. Who on earth will try to do anything in this world if the next moment is uncertain, unless it is to be accounted for by an unconscious pull of the transcendent 'Beyond' which speaks in the language of Eternity that there is life beyond this medley of uncertainties, anxieties and insecurities here on earth? The very point that man is to be restrained from undesirable behaviour and action can have meaning only if there is something more than the meaning seen in earthly life. Else, what is the point of being good or exhibiting good behaviour? Why should there be morality, why should there be anything at all, since everything is going to be devoured by death the next moment?

Reincarnation is demanded by the subjection of the finite to the inexhaustibility of the Infinite.

XLIII—CONCERNING INTER-PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE AND INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Since ideals rule speech and action, it stands to reason that life is moulded by one's outlook of life, as things take the shape of the crucible into which they are cast. Mutual relation among people being an indispensable factor in personal as well as social life, mutual concern follows automatically as a consequence of this unavoidable structure of humanity. To have concern for another is to be able to appreciate the circumstances of the life of the other, and to share adequately in the conditions of life in general. The determining factors of life are also the deciding issues in the survival of humanity. In a mood of historical stress it may be held for a while that economic conditions determine the lives of people, but it is also apparent that there would be no economic conditions if there are no people involved in those conditions. It would be futile to identify the human being with material forces, an offshoot of which is the economic set-up made much of many a time under the exigencies of overweight on one side of the balance of social existence, brought about sometimes by peculiar historical and political conditions. It cannot be said that these stages in human history are the permanent values of life, because they pass away, giving way to newer conditions. But man, the human being, has an element of consistency not capable of being swept away so easily as the commonly observed procedure of the temporal march of world history. It does not mean that man lives only for food and drink, clothing and shelter, and even necessary physical

security at its best, which are summed up broadly in the so-called economic conditions, though they are absolutely necessary aspects of physical existence. But is man only physical, a concatenation of material, the components of physical nature? Is mental peace identical with material possession or social status? The hopes of man do not give him rest, since the dimensions of his personality seem to cross the borders of material needs and social relations. Often his inner being seems to be looking up to the skies, the starry heavens, where he would like to seek his abode of a less articulated but more pressing satisfaction, of not only possession, but also the character of endurance. What is the length of the period of life of an economically secure person who has absolutely no complaint against prevailing conditions? The phenomenon of death is not a metaphor or a fairy-tale which well-established economic conditions can ignore and to which they can afford to pay scant respect. If 'sceptre and crown tumble down,' and king and beggar lick the same dust of the earth as the crowning glory that ends their lives, the vainglorious conclusion that military power, economic conditions and industrial advancement are the fruits of progress may have to be shed as early as possible.

The survival of humanity seems to be more in mutual understanding and feelingful appreciation than money or power, or anything of that kind. The question is: What are the conditions which would enable one person to appreciate another? Even Cain could not love Abel, and he told God that 'he is not his brother's keeper.' But if we are not our brothers' keepers, and if this analogy is a description of the fate of man, mutual love and regard

would be less real than a chimera. The whole situation is that man is not merely a brother of another man whom he can keep or reject at his will, but every man is potentially more than a brother or a friend in the social sense. The permanency of values and conditions of life in general, which everyone hopes for, cannot be attributed to conditions of the physical body, for brotherly feeling is not a relation between masses of matter. That mental conditions and psychological circumstances rule life more than other obvious factors needs no special mention. Happiness is an intriguing and not easily describable fact of life, and it is difficult to know where it actually lies. Since external conditions are subject to natural changes, nothing in the world which is wholly external to man can be said to be the source of his happiness. Even one's body is not a reliable source of satisfaction, as it can pass away as anything else can pass away. If Nature as a whole is a process of transmutation, and history is a movement of ups and downs of the governing forces of all life, if the body itself is not a permanent associate, then where does happiness lie, for the sake of which it is that everything is endeavoured to be done and the world is so busy from creation onwards ? The indubitability of the presence of something that is more permanent than the visible world of persons and things is too obvious to need reiteration.

Concepts and ideas do not always arise from external occurrences. Modern science tells us that events do not take place in space, and so, perhaps, they do not also take place in time. The modern physical theory of the quantum, especially David Bohm's and John Bell's discovery of

simultaneous action and unbroken wholeness in a non-spatial universe, has become an eye-opener recently to all dogmatism of local conditions deciding the values of life or the very meaning of existence. Ideas determine things, and they are more universal than the particular objects in the world. If our thoughts are a balance of coordinated ideas, and feelings commingle in a fraternity of mutual dependence, there would be a greater chance of our survival in the world, and better possibilities of recognising a deeper significance in our existence. We have these days Interfaith Conferences, Inter-cult Organisations, and Inter-religious dialogues undertaken and initiated by well-meaning persons with the purpose of knitting the world together into a fabric of enduring values and secure foundations. However, though cults, creeds and religions are important, and healthy international relations absolutely necessary, all these endeavours and the round-table talks thereon started with noble intentions have mostly been seen to end up with the same fears and reservations which motivated the very enterprise of the conferences. Mere intentions will not do; intentions should also yield the fructification of their purpose.

What is generally known as philosophy is the concept of the final ideal of life, which creeps through the veins of every mental mood, and it finally decides upon what one would like to say or do. There are certain questions of the following category:

1. What is one's concept of the ultimate aim of life?
2. What is the view held about the creation of the world?

3. What is the idea about the true nature of man?
4. What should be the relation between man and man?
5. To what extent is the influence exerted in life by:
    a. Reliance on scripture.
    b. Belief in theological traditions.
    c. Concepts of ethics and morality.
    d. Rituals and ceremonies, festivals, diversions and holidays among communities of people?
6. What is one's idea of a stable political government?
7. What should be the pattern of an exemplary educational system?
8. What is the influence exerted by language and the cultural background into which one is born?
9. What is one's attitude towards other religions, cultures and ways of living?
10. Why should one exist at all?

These are not merely philosophical questions, but the very bricks of the structure which one would like to build for life in the world.

Philosophy was always, and perhaps even now is, considered as being divided into the Western and the Eastern schools, so that one often speaks of Western philosophy and Eastern philosophy. It is indeed doubtful if 'the twain shall never meet'. The difference between the world views of Plato and Aristotle, between the rationalist block of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, and the empirical one of Locke, Berkeley and Hume, between Kant and Hegel, between idealism and realism, is not such an unbridgeable gap as it is unnecessarily made to appear. There can be inter-philosophical dialogue even among the

Continental a-priorists and the British a-Posteriorists. It finally amounts to a question of being able to reconcile the two phases of a single fact. Plato's idealism, lifting the region of the archetypes above the world of sense, is not in any way different from Aristotle making a distinction between form and matter. The only point that we have to understand is that the archetypes are as much immanent in the sensory realm as Plato seems to have made them look transcendent; the same is the case with Aristotle's form and matter relation, because the form, while it is potential in matter, is also transcendent, without which feature there would not be the unfolding of form from matter through evolution into pure form, which is, in the end, identical with Plato's 'Idea of the Good.' The Prime Mover of Aristotle, the Unmoved Mover, as he calls it, is the same as the Supreme Idea of Plato. The difference is one of description, epigram, and style of presentation. The dualism of matter and mind that is attributed to Descartes may get mellowed down into a more appreciable inter-relation between them, if only we can go a little deeper into his 'Cogito ergo sum': 'I think, therefore, I am'. The 'I am' is the crucial issue. It would be difficult to believe that Descartes' thought objects to the mutual dependence of the world of matter and the deeper reservoir of consciousness from which the 'I' emanates as an offshoot. The internality of the mind is dependent on the externality of the world, and the externality of the world equally depends on the internality of the cognising mind. Spinoza makes it more clear when he takes the position of matter and mind being two wings of the bird of the Ultimate Substance, the two

attributes of the Primary Existence. The windowless monads of Leibniz are saved from their concentration camps by their immortality which frees them from an apparent individualism characteristic of temporality in timeless Eternity, which alone can be immortal beyond time. Also, there would have been no Hegel but for a Kant, though they seem to be antitheses, as between agnosticism and the self-conviction of reason. The interdependence of the phenomenon and the noumenon in Kant's thought, whether known to himself or not, is the point from which Hegel raises his structure of the Absolute Reason, which is, in the end, the only noumenon, or the thing-in-itself. The consciousness of everything being phenomenal repudiates the view that one can know only phenomena. Later thinkers in the West, whether they are Hegelian idealists or Neo-realists, Pragmatists, or theologists have found it necessary to align themselves with the unavoidable necessity to find a common ground from which issues of life rise, and, if 'no man is an island,' no thought, too, can be an island. It is not just that in Carl Jung we have a blend of psychoanalytic thought overstepping the limits of Freud and Adler, but present psychoanalysis has tended to become unavoidably religious and spiritual, stepping over the subliminal layers of the mind, and even the collective unconscious or the common psychological ground of the species. Else, how does one explain the present-day tendency in the world to work for a more secure togetherness of world opinion and human value?

Insofar as the intrinsic relation between Western philosophic thought and the Eastern conception of life is

concerned, it does not require much time to note that the foundational thought of Plato, for instance, centred around a Universal Idea, easily corresponds to the Brahman of the Vedanta system, his Demiurge is the Creative Hiranyagarbha, and his World-Soul is the Virat of the Upanishad and Vedanta ideal. The manner in which Plato's world of reality informs the world of opinion, as he describes it, is the same as the all-pervading Ishvara determining and yet standing above the created beings, who become more and more a tendency to non-being as they descend downward into the realm of sense. The same analogy applies to Aristotle, with his doctrine of form as the soul of matter, which evolves into the Perfect Form, and the world is redeemed by God as things are pulled in the direction of a magnet. Aristotle's, fourfold classification of causation as the 'formal,' 'material,' 'efficient' and 'final,' 'does not in any way dissimilarly correspond to the degrees of reality corresponding to the Absolute (Paramarthika) and relative (Vyavaharika) standpoints envisaged by the philosopher Sankara. The doctrine of the universality of reason, which is the high watermark in Aristotle as well as in Plato, meets in conformity with the great reaches and the heights of rationality on which the Vedanta doctrine is founded. There is no need to go into the almost identical doctrine of Philo and Plotinus of Alexandria in the religious summits that they have reached, and in the manner Plotinus describes the vision of the One in terms of the experiences attributed to souls in Brahmaloka, where each is all and all is each, and everything is everywhere. The ontological argument of St. Anslem and Descartes, wrongly

formulated and misunderstood by Kant, is reasonably a proper result that would follow from the affirmation of the 'Cogito ergo sum' of Descartes, if only it is to be interpreted as the Vedanta affirms the indubitability of the 'I' as something which no one can deny or suspect as being there and traces its deeper implications which may not be obvious. The 'henological' argument of St. Thomas Aquinas for the existence of God is the same as the outcome of the degrees of more and more of generalities (Samanyas) supposed to reach their pinnacle in the Absolute-General of Brahman as held in the Vedanta. The other arguments for the existence of God adumbrated by St. Thomas are the same as those that one can find in the commentaries of Sankara. The epoch-making contributions of T. H. Green, F. H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet are the highest points that Western metaphysics has reached, which astoundingly embrace the Vedanta doctrine of universal existence ruling over the particulars and the specials of the world of experience, though couched specially in the philosophical logic peculiar to Western analytic thought. The trend of Western thought has been individualistic and empiricist, outwardly oriented, active, progressive, and characterised by an onward movement to more and more achievement, while Eastern thought has been considered to be universalist, idealistic, self-poised, perfectionist, emphasising being rather than becoming. This distinction often made, though not without substance, can be overcome in the same way as Continental rationalism and British empiricism can be brought together in a single forum. That geographical conditions and the impact of

climate are partly responsible for Western activism and Eastern pacificism is more secondary as a cause than an essential element differentiating Western culture from the Eastern way of life. It is also not that the East is more religious and the West can afford to manage without an inward enthusiasm. The essence of the matter is that apart from geographical and historical circumstances and racial delimitations of behaviour, there is also the accepted view of a cyclic movement of culture which presents different phases in a succession of historical movement. Culture moved from the Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian region to Greece and Rome, to Europe, England and America. It is also held that the sun of culture moves from the East to the West. From India and China, which have been the repositories of the most ancient of cultures, culture moved westward to Persia and to the further Western points gradually, culminating in the present-day economic and power blocs of the world, too materialistic, to say the least, but incapable of standing on their legs for long, if it is true that matter has an inherent tendency to overcome externality in an internal search for the universal.

As observed above, present-day Inter-religious and Inter-faith enterprises should necessarily be also Inter-philosophical because of questions of the nature of the final achievement growing out of these efforts. Firstly, the concept of the ultimate purpose of life, though its very existence has been overshadowed by social conditions, has to be accepted as the primary determinant conditioning every effort of man in the world. No one will do anything for nothing. And what is the aim? The lesser aims, such as a

comfortable life of economic and political security, may not cut ice before the more basic troubles of life which are not merely political or economic but are largely superphysical, and emanations from the very structure of the universe itself.

In all fairness and without any preconceived notion, it should be admitted that the all-embracing outlook of life, which under historical circumstances goes by the name of Hinduism, as a philosophy and religion of inclusiveness, takes into consideration life's different levels, not only the evolution of life by stages, but also the degrees of outlook in knowledge and experience. Today we have a question of the relation between science and religion, arising due to the assumption that the objectives of science and the aims of religion are irreconcilables. But Hinduism, if it is to be understood in the true spirit of its internal structure and without emphasising peripheral non-essentials, is fully awake to the levels of perception and knowledge available to the human individual. The epistemological background behind the philosophy of such a religion recognises the relative value of sense-perception and rational investigation, observation and experiment, as an acceptable avenue of knowledge, though it holds that direct intuition is the final test of absolutely valid knowledge. Science comes under the field of sense and reason, and Hinduism accepts the value and utility of the findings through these means of knowledge in practical life, provided that they do not contradict the ultimate value of all life, namely, the realisation of universality in direct experience. The manner in which this attitude of religion would affect the life of

modern man should, thus, be clear and obvious; that is, the spirit of Hinduism is so accommodating that it does not reject the matter-of-fact value or the practical effectiveness of the findings of modern science. The most interesting outcome of this general outlook of Hinduism is that, in its concept of the degrees of reality, any degree, such as the relation of scientific findings to human life, is part of the total outlook of an integrated philosophy and religion. One should say that Hinduism as a religion and a philosophy introduces a new spirit of positivity and enthusiasm even into the field of physical science, rather than look upon it as something alien to itself.

Why do people differ from one another? This, again, is due to their narrow outlooks of the very purpose of life, which is wrongly limited to body, family, community, language, cultural background, tradition, or over-insistence on the revelatory character of religion. All this adds to the problem of the relationship of the way of living in the world with the idealistic concept of the final aim of existence, because it is seen that while the ideal would be expected to be one of uniformity and freedom from struggle, the world is involved in so much of an opposite character that to bring the two positions into a state of harmony a cosmological scheme may have to be clear before the mind, which unfortunately is not available to the stages in which modern ideologies of philosophy and religion stand in the varied stations of life. Indeed, it would be futile to expect such a uniformly acceptable cosmological scheme which would happily collate the disturbances of practical life with the unitariness and harmony of the ideal to be realised at

the end. Though both in Greece and in India the supreme power of reason as a good ambassador of universal life has been recognised, since the degrees in which this reason manifests itself in man are several, one should not expect that all men should think in the same way the world over. The evolution of life is also the evolution of reason and spirit, and the multitudes, the varieties and differences which Nature spreads out in the process have shown that there are upper and lower limits of such degrees, and the world does not contain one thing only but many things. We can, therefore, have a comity of philosophies, religions, faiths, and national requirements, by a broad classification of the general groups of mankind into which they can be classified. But it cannot be that everyone in the world should be forced to think one thought only, whether in respect of the ultimate reality, the creation of the world, social customs and manners, governmental systems, ethics, morality, religion or philosophy. The greatness of man should then be in his capacity to accept that difference in viewpoint is unavoidable but that these differences are capable of being pyramid-like arranged into a structure of wholeness, even as the army will march as a single entity in spite of its being constituted of several levels of function, from the Field Marshal to the soldier on foot. The world has somehow managed to be a unity in variety due to the nature of the way of evolution. We have, perhaps, in these assurances answered the first four questions which were raised in a paragraph above. The remaining issues are such that they may suggest the following solutions:

While religion certainly relies on a scripture, a founder or a prophet, it is essential to note that it is man who has to understand the meaning of the scripture or the teachings of the prophets, for scriptures do not speak by themselves, and teachings do not drop from the skies. The teachings are articulated through the intelligence of man, and their import would be only to that extent as the extent of the inner capacity in man to contain their proclamations. A child, an untutored labourer, a trained specialist or a genius in handling the highest potentials of mind and reason would make out different meanings from the very same scripture or the dictations of the same founder or prophet; else how would we account for a score of apparently divergent understandings of the philosophy and religion of the same scripture or prophet by people, whether they are Hindu, Christian or Muslim? If the Prophet spoke a word, there are dozen different commentaries cropping up from his followers for understanding what was spoken, all which is the outcome of the basic difference in the very structure of human understanding, emotional need, and practical pressure in social life. It is said that either one behaves according to a decided opinion accepted by the majority, due to inability on one's part to decide things for oneself, or one stands above the social multitude and determines things by oneself, exceeding others, not as one person among many but as a principle of understanding capable of sifting and absorbing the views of others in a wider comprehension of the meaning of spiritual, cultural and social welfare. It is well known that man cannot survive by trying to destroy another man due to a disagreement in

ideology, because the tendency to hate can act and react upon itself, and if allowed to grow indefinitely will point to the possibility of a universal destruction of value. That hate breeds hate is not merely a moral maxim, but a principle on which Nature works, because what is known as love is the expression of the coordinating activity of the internal composition of Nature in its varied expressions, however vast they may be. It, therefore, stands to reason that love of one's own physical existence to the exclusion of others should expand itself to love of family, community, province, nation, the world, and finally the very universe, of which all the lesser degrees are integrally subsumed parts.

What is good and what is not is not just one tenet that we can expect to form as a fruit dropped from a tree, but the point is a malleable circumstantial conduct which is to be adjusted in terms of the next higher stage of achievement, under the special conditions in which such a decision has to be made. The infinite should permit, indeed, infinite ways of approach, and, like the parable of the blind men and the elephant, life reveals itself as a kaleidoscopic presentation of a numberless variety emanating from a single unit. All this applies to every form of belief,—religious, social, economic or political. These essays have been endeavouring to place before people some ideas by which one could collate principles that go to contribute in forming a sagacious system of cooperative existence in terms of its components such as education, cultural progress, economic equity, political administration, religious aspiration, and a philosophical foundation for the substantiation of one's very existence.

It is sometimes held in an over-democratic fashion that religion and politics should be kept apart, under the impression that political life is for the welfare of all and religious life may not be a uniform way of everyone's living. This conception of politics and religion is basically erroneous, because while it is true that religion interpreted wrongly as a family issue or a communal necessity may hinder the way of a peaceful life of people, it is to be remembered that this would be to call a dog a bad name and then try to hang it. Such dichotomous tendencies in a community should not be considered as a true religion, for religion is the aspiration of man for universal existence. How could political security and sound administration be possible without a universally applicable aim before the rationality at the back of the constitution of a governmental system? If politics is the body, religion is the soul of man. How would one keep the body and the soul in two different compartments? Religion is an inner directing principle of life as a whole on whose sanctions national government also have to found themselves if the country is to be not only outwardly secure but also inwardly satisfied and happy. There are no doubt national forms of government which try to make a particular form of religion the rock-bottom of political administration under compulsions of a certain militant religious leadership wanting to make the religion of an ethnic group or a geographical circumstance the religion of the whole world. Unsound as this attitude would be accepted to be even by the protagonists of such a creed, fanaticism which defies all reasonable definition assumes an ownership of wisdom denied to others who are

relegated to the realm of the uncultured or even of a lower species in creation. The results of such erupting occurrences in human history are the well-known causes of clashes and wars both in word and deed. People can sometimes co-exists in an apparent state of harmony, not because they love each other equally, but because they fear each other equally. There can be peace born of goodwill or hatred when they mature into a considerable measure of force. The state or the world today as it stands at present may not be far removed from what appears to be the expected follow-up of a misreading of the relation between religious life and political government. While it is true that religion should not interfere with politics, since interference is always obstructive, it is also true that politics has no meaning without an aim before it, which is what is known as the religious ideal. Religion is the reaction of the whole of man in respect of the whole universe. To assume at the very outset that the world and God are two different things would be to strike at the root of there being any meaning at all either in the concept of God or in the possibility of any such thing as world welfare. A life which is without God and without a world to ground itself on would, indeed, be interesting.

To imagine that political government is different from the religious outlook and yet to govern a country on the on the basis of religious traditions or revelations would be to present a view of life which is neither here nor there. How could a thing which is different from another thing influence it, guide it or determine it. Religious fundamentalism, when it becomes the framer of a

governmental constitution, may not be fully aware whether it is trying to import God into man, or man into God, drive the unseen into the realm of the seen, or take the seen to the unseen, a strange way of mixing up what is either difficult to understand or not in consonance with the needs of developing human nature. Such a view either wishes to limit the world to its view of God or limit God to its view of the world. On the other hand, a total estrangement of political life into a system of mechanised changes frequently required to be made in the nature of the national consciousness, and the consequent working out of it, would not know whereto it is moving and what it is trying to achieve.

All this is to say that life in the world is not so simple an affair as a temple-worship, a church-going or a bread-and-butter issue merely. Our eyes are not our only friends. Mostly our eyes mislead us and give us a wrong reading of things which they see with the spectacles organic to their structure. Philosophy is an endeavour to rectify the results of mere sense-perception and conclusions drawn on the basis of a mechanistic view of life that follows from the reports of the senses. Sense, reason and intuition form an ascending order in the educational process of right perception. Indian thought corroborates that scripture, reason and direct experience are mutually harmonious. The ladder of ascent from the different forms of the imperfections of the world to the perception which is the avowed aspiration of humanity should consist of elements inclusive not only of all the sides and phases of human nature, but also of the very nature of the universe. To look

outward, to behold within, and to wonder at the above are the three channels through which the complete integration that is life attempts to know itself truly.

PART V – THE PRINCIPLES Of A HIGHER ORDEIR OF LIFE

XLIV—THE IMPORT OF THE GITA'S FIRST CHAPTER

The war of life which's Gita's song
Is spread on Kurukshetra's field,
The arena that this world is,
A house disjointed, 'gainst itself.

The seer and the seen do stand
Opposed to each other, how strange!
Else how would seer run to seen
If seen is not apart, afar.

To grab, to pound, annihilate
The seen's existence out and out,
By love or hatred as the means
Is seer's purpose throughout life.

In love the seen is pulled, absorbed,
And made one's own, nay, one's own self,
So that the seen is all destroyed
And seer ever reigns supreme.

In hatred does the seer clinch
The life and substance of the seen
By abrogation, cutting off
The very soul and being seen's.

This confrontation is all life,
The good and evil are all here -

The high and low and great and small
Are all within this battlefield.

Eternal is this painful hold
Which seer exerts on the seen,
Ambivalent as love-hate grip
Of seer-seen, Bharata war.

The Pandavas and Kauravas
Descend from single family;
Dvaipayana, the divine sage,
Was source of all this warring fold.

So does the range of seer-seen
Is transcendent in origin,
For even conflict is on ground
Which's common both to contenders.

This supreme ground, the ground of grounds,
Is Gita's gospel's highest ground,
The ground of action as worship,
And ground to unite God and soul.

The warrior hates his opponents
And raises arms to tear and kill;
This is the scene where objects seen
Are treated as other than self.

But love erupts and pity wails
For warrior-chief is also friend
And brother-born to outside world

In secret connection to things.

Lo, men kill men by waging wars,
But wars are waged for peace of men -
Contradiction is life on earth,
It's hard to know what's right and wrong.

Thus Arjuna bewails his fate,
He loves and hates the Kauravas,
As all do love in zest the world,
And also cry that world is hell.

The past, present and future's men
Are represented her in one
As symbol of eternal man,
The soul that ensouled Arjuna.

Who is the generalissimo
Of impending armageddon
Now weeps in deepest affection
For what he hates on other side.

Do people love all this mankind,
For whose welfare is service done?
And yet to protect man from man
Law courts and soldiers are deployed.

This wisdom's anguish is the theme
Of first of chapters in the text,
The section first which though a wail
Is Yoga called of dejection.

It's Yoga, sure, for here, in this
Are dug up seeds of illusion
Which keeps the soul bound hard to earth
Through love as well as hate of all.

The mystery is seeker's grief,
The first condition of ascent
To freedom gain from thraldom life's
By surrender and detachment.

In supreme disillusioning
Of one's own role and world's status,
Thus humbly reached in careful search,
The path is cleared for light to dawn.

Renounce in hate or cling in love
Is not the choice in Yoga's core;
Immense and subtle is this way,
For none can live as an island.

Renunciation does not click
Since renouncer is closely linked
With renounced things and all the world,
For all creation stands as whole.

Nor has attachment any sense
For none can cling to one's own self,
And objects loved in secret bonds
Are in the heart of him who loves.

To do or not to do an act
All singly none can clearly know,
Unless the far-reaching results
Are weighed on balance carefully.

This question is equivalent
To be or not to be here;
The world is vast, creation big,
Where none is free to raise one's voice.

Interconnected are all things;
This is the reason why no one
Can safely say or do a deed
With no repercussions on things.

That is the good which clears the heart
Of tensions born of suppressed wish
By treatment method out to it
As sickness heal physicians.

In this the great enactment world's
No one approaches one-sided,
The drama is wholesomely full,
No act in it is by itself.

To throw the bow and arrows down
In resentment through confusion,
By wrenching oneself from the whole,
Is not a cure to aches of life.

XLV—THE IMPORT OF THE GITA'S SECOND CHAPTER

The highest wisdom and solace,
The Divine Song, the Gita called,
Condenses knowledge in practice,
And thrills the soul to fullness' peaks.

The Lord declares that no one dies
But forms are shed for soul's ascent,
That deathless soul pervades all space,
Immortal is the soul of man.

Many have died and gone to winds
And none is spared from ending thus;
So grief on death behoves us not
Since death is law of every life.

'Tis natural that beings die,
Unnatural they breathe and live;
For ocean's tide is life's turmoil
And not a drop fixed remains.

In such a sea of movement this,
Who can afford to stand unmoved;
All statis forms seemingly don
Illusion's fantastic joke.

All speed and transit is this world,
A flux, a wisp, a puff of wind;
But steady none is ever posed;
All things are seen removed from truth;

Becoming though is all this life
And nothing is as being's core,
Yet one is there that knows the flux
Which itself is outside the flow.

Immortal soul, the Atman, here
Permeates all, the flowing stream;
Eternal, deathless, transcendent
Is self of all this universe.

Involved in earth, in plant and mind
The soul rises to reason's form
To think and act as human will
By cycles of evolution.

Since all the seeds of variants
Are hidden well in all species,
The worst can one day best become
And none is lowly anywhere.

If this is so, there are no norms,
Either aesthetic or ethic,
In all the world at any time,
Except within a framework's fence.

By contrast and comparison
The codes behavioural thrive;
An absolutely right or wrong
No one can pinpoint forever.

The finely forms or ugly looks

Are also not by themselves there;
These are the modes of reaction
Of conditioned mention's moods.

The pains and pleasures filling life
Are also psycho-physical;
Adjustments, maladjustments made
With Nature are pleasures and pains.

Hence duty and not right is law
Since all demands are out of tune
With law integral which is world;
The world is law rather than things.

To do one's duty one has right,
But not to covet fruits of deeds;
Be not attached to ends of works,
Not also cleave to inaction.

Action incumbent reigns all worlds,
Since action is evolution
To higher goals' integration
To culminate in Godhead's reach.

Balance is health, is Yoga known,
Participation is the rule,
Attachments lose their meaning here
Where all the world is self-contained.

Desires cease for want of things
That stand outside the knower's field;

The consciousness is firmly poised
In Yoga which is attention.

Rooted in itself is the world,
Its knowledge is its being's self; To
plant oneself in such a state
Is yoga's peak where sorrow melts.

As winds hurry the boats in sea,
The senses drive the reason out;
Hence, reason balanced his remains
Who restrains senses in the self.

As world of senses which see light
Is night of darkness for the sage;
The realm of light where sages live
Is dark abyss to passion's rage.

In subdued states of Yoga's heights
Desires merge in liquid mass
As rivers lose identity
In ocean's fullness, vast and deep.

This is the state of Brahman great,
In this established no one grieves;
Fixed thus even at end of life
Brahman's beatitude attains.

XLVI—THE IMPORT OF THE GITA'S THIRD CHAPTER

Knowledge and action are the rule,
The twain which constitute the world;
These twin approaches single aimed
Are not divided as opposed.

The eye of knowledge or of deed
Is hard to see since roots of things
Are screened from human perception
Which dual envisions the world.

As waves and ocean are not two,
Action and knowledge are the same;
As sun and light, or seed and oil,
Knowledge and action are combined.

Though Brahman-all is act and science
In one compass undivided,
In lesser levels deeds proceed
From subjects confronting objects.

An action is the relation
Obtaining fluidly moving
Between the seer and the seen -
Reciprocation ensouls deeds.

As one descends to lower realms
Cutting the seer from the seen,
Actions become the binding chains
Keeping the gulf a chronic ill.

The force of deeds gets mellowed down
When seer-seen approximate
To greater friendship and union,
Till vanish they in communion.

When knowledge sees its object there
As sundered from its subjectness,
Action becomes imperative
To thought and content harmonise.

Action is that which holds intact
The subject-object relation
In harmony and perfection,
For soul of all is harmony.

The soul's universality
Compels the performance of acts
So that its law of harmony
Is manifest in daily life.

Thus action itself is knowledge
Since union is its ambition
Where deed and doer merge in one
To form the higher soul of life.

The welfare works of society
Or actions for one's well-being,
Inward or outward, all move straight
Towards the Soul universal.

When soul the soul to itself pulls,
They call it love or selfless deed;
Nothing but soul there ever is,
Which haunts the world as men and things.

No one can exist without work,
For movement is the condition
Of all relative forms of life,
Whether on earth or in heaven.

Since thought is action finally,
Physical restraint is not poise
While mind revels in thoughts of deeds
Which connect it with world of sense.

The body's actions are not deeds
When mind to body is not tied
And lofty reaches contemplates
Within to contact soul of things.

Except as Yajna, sacrifice,
All deeds are binding in this world;
But what is Yajna, know this well
By careful thought in reason's calm.

When God created fields of life
He ordained then the role of works
Which gravitate to sacrifice,
So that all deeds are Deity's home.

The doer and the end of deed
Are bound together as a whole
By glorious Deity transcendent
To both the agent and the work.

Thus none can work by oneself free
As urge to acts is well ordained
By that which holds the two in one
Unseen by both as soul awake.

As triangle doer, deed and soul,
The soul ruling from high above,
Perform the scene of experience;
And none is owner in this play.

Obligation to one's duty
Refers to stages of Selfhood,
Wherein the balance in between
The seer-seen is clear maintained.

Oneself, society, nation, world,
The universe and Being's height
Are rising levels to the Self,
Through which perfection is attained.

The higher stage to lower stands
As Deity inclusive and real;
The Yajna is the higher goal
When to it lower is offered.

The lower isolation self's

Which opposed looks to its object
Is sacrificed in Yajna high
That integrates the sundered poles.

The Deity includes and transcends
The lower cleavage of the self
From its own object, though severed
Does still belong to widened self.

By sacrifice union is reached
With higher forms of wider self;
This divine cow which yields all wish
Is here at hand with everyone.

Who worships Deity in this way
Has all the wishes quick fulfilled,
To self the Deity stands good stead
In mutual graced recognition.

He is a thief who thinks he owns
Or does by himself deeds alone;
While all the wealth is Deity's form
And Deity rules ever supreme.

Here none is owner, share-holder,
For all belongs to Brahman great
Which is the Self of universe
And owns it indivisibly.

From That which is one alone
A cosmic impulse emanates;

From this the self-alienation
And desires' rains on crops of greed.

The world and body then emerge
And so the cycle continues
Of give and take which is this life,
The wheel of empirical law.

Since all is thus with all entwined,
All action though perennial,
Is no action in truest sense;
The deed is no deed binding none.

The mendicants though well detached
Are also in this cycle bound,
For who could expect alms of good
If none there is to offer alms.

But one who grounds himself afirm
In all-pervading Self of all
Does fear none and has no needs
Nor does depend on others' grace.

He does nothing while doing all,
Nor does he gain by doing deeds;
Actions done or not done here
Affect him not, nor disturb poise.

He disturbs not the ignorant
Who have their faiths illiterate,
But follows suit with environment,

Maintaining rule of harmony.

To disrupt minds is no teaching;
The sage with child as child behaves;
His presence thus is no presence
As sugar sweet in milk dissolved.

As wave collides with wave in sea
Senses with objects commingle,
Since sense and object both are formed
Of same substance universal.

Thus actions or performances
Are all of cosmic origin,
And none can claim a single act
As one's own move or claim its fruits.

Egoism, the arch-devil,
Does wrongly show that someone acts,
While acts are Nature's purposes
Which comprehend all history.

The duty each one's in the world
Depends on one's circumstances;
And no one unfit for a work
Can render that as duty's role.

The total of capacity
Determines work as duty-bound;
The body's strength and mental make
Do proclivity works' decide.

None takes from world what one gives not;
Here Karma Yoga sums up work;
Else, social balance gets disturbed
And chain of Karma binds one hard.

The other's duty is that work
For which one is not fitted best;
And one's own duty each shall choose
To bring to life stability.

Passion and anger are the foes
Which distort duty and prevent
The basic goodness of the soul
To rule one's life for commonweal.

These fiery forces, instincts dark,
Should get subdued by force of mind,
By force of reason and of soul,
Which surpasses all puissance.

By contemplation on the Self
The reason moves the mind aright,
And senses home of urges low
Get restrained well for Yoga's way.

XLVII—THE IMPORT OF THE GITA'S FOURTH CHAPTER

The hands of God feel everywhere,
As Incarnations mighty come
To rid the earth of dissension
And free all souls from sorrow's pangs.

As four-dimensioned transcendent
In three-dimensioned forms abides,
The Supermental Infinite
Takes up the role of finitudes.

As conflagrations hide in sparks
God-Absolute as glory hails
As excellences seen in life
In great and grand and wondrous forms.

The harmonise extremes in life,
To Kingdom God's proclaim on earth,
To heal the sick and raise the low,
To trample ego God descends.

Of righteousness to plant the roots,
The universal justice fix
As forms of all performances
The Divine fingers operate.

As law unseen wakes up to work
When forms and things set up revolts,
The Arms of God are uplifted
As thunderbolt to ego's strikes.

As we approach the facts of life
So facts react to pay our dues;
However does one God adore
One reaps benefits in that way.

The social order is fitted
To enable the souls to rise
Above the finite involvements
To freedom's peak par excellence.

The wisdom's head and strength of arms,
Cooperative give and take,
And labour for life's sustenance
Sum up the pattern survival's.

As life exceeds mere survival
Reason has supreme part to play
In rooting every adventure
Firmly in Spirit's wide domain.

As social norms cannot negate
The needs of individuals,
They do arrange for gradual growth
By scales in life's experience.

To study and restrain senses,
To household keep and train passions,
To secluded as recluse live
And wisdom reach are steps levelled.

No action binds if intention

Does not connect the act with self;
And acts are done to free oneself
From impulses which compel acts.

Physical acts are no more acts
If acting mind is not attached;
And acts performed release the self
From subjection to life's instincts.

The greed for wealth and progeny
And world-renown are instincts called;
By means of them one transcends them.
This wisdom everyone should gain.

In sacrifice actions dissolve,
Whereby the self offers itself
In knowledge-fire burning all sins,
The all-inclusive Godhead's light.

Actor, action and action's goal,
Are waves in one abounding sea;
Here none does act and none fruits reaps
As all is just tumult of waves.

To adore gods, senses subdue,
Behold the One in sense-contacts,
Restrain all functions entirely,
Are some of Yoga's various ways.

To give material charity,
And offer gifts of belonging;

To fire create within oneself
By Tapas done, are Yoga's forms.

To drown oneself in scripture's lore,
To learning reach for clearing doubts,
To breath control in harmony
Are also Yoga's multi-limbs.

The highest sacrifice, Tapas,
Is union with universals,
Until the Great Universal
In meditation is attained.

By Yoga freed from action's bond,
By knowledge having dispelled doubts,
Rooted in all-pervading Self,
Forces act not on such a sage.

XLIII—THE COSMIC FORM SPEAKS

"Behold this Form that myriad-faced here radiant includes all,
With all their facets, all conditions and all times in one.

Behold the gods and all the heavens, regions and all things,
The sun and moon and all the stars and all-pervading space.

Behold the beauty, grandeur, terror and the varieties,
Which all creation holds in bosom here and now at once.

The past and present and the future and all history
Do behold with the eye integral, flesh can never know."

Then, thus declaring Yoga's Lord revealed that mighty wondrous form
With marvels untold stunning thought and passing reason's sharpest reach.

The glory passing understanding, magnificence risen high,
With faces turned in all directions, everywhere its mouths and ears.

In every speck of space its eyes did twinkle as if flames
No atom lived in all creation where it missed to dwell.

Lo, Wonder's heart in full blossom, all marvel's secrets' high relief,
That was Sri Krishna as he stood to represent the God of gods.

As million suns may rise suddenly darting forth their flooding rays,
Sri Krishna's Person rose to heights that dazzled glory eternal.

The dirt and evil, ugliness, the darkest hell that threaten life,
There in that wondrous Frame of God did shine as rays eternal sun's.

Distances flew, time took to heels and worlds got rounded into one,
In that miracle, timeless, spaceless, mind and reason glowed as flame.

No persons, things and regions there except as fiery limbs of God,
Where it did end or where began, none outside it could comprehend.

It new Itself, none else can know, It knowing-being was in one,
The hardest earth and worst of creatures melting rose to God adorn.

And every speck and particle did dance around that central core,
Which excelled beauty's beauteous heart, all eyes did gaze in rapture love's.

The death of all who lived by ego, non-relenting icy hand

To everything that stood by finite mortal's value however grand.

What was, what is and what shall be were all displayed as here and now,
In that eternal magnitude in single grasp of consciousness.

The boundless splendour of that all, who that is born can ever gauge,
The Archetype of archetypes which range transcendent beyond forms.

As acts and deeds are objects posed to consciousness which is the truth,
No act can touch or act as means to reach this glory beyond time.

The Mighty Being, Subject Sole, as all-pervading truth of truths
Can scarce be reached by acts mundane which rise from non-subjective modes.

How can the knower be the known, the All-Subject defies objects;
Thus casting knowledge empirical out of ken as shadows' fare.

Hence scriptures, works of charity, philanthropy, or sacrifice,
Austerity or study's lore, can none attain this vision's light.

When heart and reason surge in one as non-objective total soul,

The God beholds God everywhere, as no one else can behold God.

Doing all deeds for Its own sake, depending on It solely, lone,
Devoted to It in one's heart, and sundered from all attachment;

To none ever bearing ill-will, to man or beast or bird or life,
That blessed one does reach the Glory of the Absolute, the Great.