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THE QUEST OF THE INFINITE



INDIA

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THE QUEST OF THE INFINITE

ॐ

सच्चिदानन्दमद्वयं ब्रह्म ।

Brahman is Ever-existing, Ever-conscious, Blissful and Immortal.

PRAYER

O Lord, O eternal consciousness divine, immaculate and boundless, the manifest OM with the crescent and the spot, the source of all celestial bliss, beauty and music, Eternity Thyself ! Deign to give me the penetrating vision for the destruction of the shackles of *Karma*—birth, death, re-birth and re-death. Remove the yearning of my soul. I bow down to Thee once and again.

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THE QUEST OF THE INFINITE

अनन्त-शास्त्रं बहुवेदितव्यम् ।
आयुश्च स्वल्पं बहवश्च विघ्नाः ॥
सारं ततो ग्राह्यं अपास्य फल्गु ।
हंसैर्यथा क्षीरमिवाम्बुमध्यात् ॥

Ars longa, vita brevis—Art is long, life short. Moreover things to be known are manifold and there are many obstacles in life. So we should assimilate the essence and reject the non-essentials like the Swan taking milk out of water.

BY

KAVIRAJ A. P. ROY.

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APOLOGIA

A certain hitherto unknown power has urged me to take up this work and I have taken it up in the ecstasy of my heart. This is my maiden work in English, and I am afraid there may be lapses in the matter presented as well as in the manner of presentation. In spite of my best endeavour, perhaps, the language of the book has not been as lucid as I desired. This may be partly due to the fact that the subject dealt herein is solemn. I must tender apology to the readers for my acts of omission and commission.

Some people earnestly desire to know what *Yogic* acts are. But due to the dearth of competent teachers and also to the lack of good literature on this subject their desire is nipped in the bud. My book, "*The Quest of the Infinite*" is an attempt to remove this want. If on reading the same even a single soul can get glimpses of light of the unknown, I shall consider my labour amply rewarded.

I feel I have not the requisite scholarship to show the light of knowledge to other men nor do I dare illumine the path to any one. This book is written only with the idea of attracting the minds of materialistically inclined men and women afflicted by the world to the path of religion and the spiritual treasures of the land. An abridged edition of this book under the title *Asimer Anveşan* has already been published in Bengali. The reception accorded to my book by the educated class and also by the newspapers of Bengal has encouraged me to bring out an enlarged edition in English, especially for my non-Bengali brethren.

It is a matter of deep regret that western civilization has disturbed the mental quietude of the youth of our country. But the boys and girls are not to be condemned out-right.

The God-less system of education is responsible for this tragedy.

Instead of imparting education through our own ancient system, education is being given through an alien method and as a result thereof the modern youth suffer from lack of self-restraint. In the circumstances, we should get to the source of the great tradition and talent of yore. Despite the influence of foreign system of education, it is by dint of this talent alone that the Indians have defeated our erstwhile rulers of the country in many spheres of life. Western scientists and their votaries are often found to sneer at our ancient Vedic system of education and culture. In this book, I have endeavoured to show at many places that the Aryan sages of yore traversed beyond Nature, the source of material creation; and made excursion to the infinite realm of consciousness transcending the limits of knowledge, and their endeavours were fully crowned with success. It is necessary to mention here that Western science has not yet been able to unravel the deepest mysteries of nature. The references to atom, planes, mortal weapons found scattered in the *Mahabharat* and other philosophical treatises of ancient India clearly testify that researches on such things did actually take place and discoveries in this line were made in India several centuries before the birth of Christ. It is quite possible that after the bloody *Bhārat War* at *Kurukṣetra* the great thinkers of the then India realised the baneful effects of these deadly weapons and renounced the cultivation of this science. May I hope that the Western world will follow in the foot-steps of India and desist from invention of atom or hydrogen bombs to prevent the possibility of a third and the last terrible war which will mean nothing but complete destruction of the world at large.

In the Universities of ancient India the students were taught religious lessons; they were taught the practice of

Prāṇāyāma and *Yoga*; as a result whereof their moral character was built on a rock. They shut their eyes to the allurements of the world; they were deaf to the songs of the siren; they steadfastly kept their object in view.

I submit for the consideration of the intelligentsia of the country that along with other subjects in our school syllabus the lives of religious preceptors be taught from class VI, *Prāṇāyāma* from class VIII and *Yoga* from class X. I firmly believe that this education instead of being a sheer waste of time and energy would go a long way to calm down the restlessness of the student's minds, make them more attentive to their study and rehabilitate the youth of our country to its prestine glory.

I have freely quoted the sayings of the great teachers of the world and also the opinions of others. I acknowledge my debt of gratitude to them and the publishers of their books. Let me express my sincere gratitude to all those wise and noble-hearted friends who have helped me in various ways in writing this book and but for whose invaluable help it would not have been possible for me to publish it.

Readers will kindly point out the short-comings of the book, and suggestions, if any, for its further improvement will be thankfully received.

The *Nation* writes : The book under review is written on a certain purpose which has high value for the present day. The writer seeks light from the early history of Hindu culture up to the present-day theories to envisage the search for the Infinite. He echoes the light which was in vogue in Indian culture to enlighten the mind of the modern youth.

... ...

The *Dainik Basumati* writes: It bears the essence of religion and demonstrates the path of Yoga. It is not burdened with superstition, bigotry and vanity of learning rather it is an attempt at the revelation of the eternal truth acquired in ages in a new light. The author has successfully been able to establish the union of the scientific truth and the spiritual realisation in a simple, easy and impressive way. The minutest details with which he has described the Yogic path show the close intimacy of the author with the path and undoubtedly satisfy the religious-minded men in their quest of the Infinite. We wish wide circulation of the book.

... ...

The *Jagajjyoti* writes : This book will not only be helpful to the people interested in Yoga-philosophy but also do a great good to the people following other paths.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* writes : *Asmer Anveşan* by Kaviraj Sj. Abhayapada Roy published in Bengali, is a treatise dealing with spiritualism and Yoga. In it have been described in simple and pleasing Bengali, the subtleties of the path of knowledge and the Yogic processes. The author has sought to point out the easiest way to the realisation of God and the attainment of His mercy. The simple and charming manner in which the austere and secret processes of devotion have been dealt with will naturally rouse in many desire to follow the prescribed path. Many, at present, ardently bent upon following the Yogic processes, have to go with their desire unfulfillied for want of proper guides and relevant books composed in their own vernacular. The language is easy and simple. The volume deserves to have numerous admirers". (R. 6195) Dt. 30. 4. 50.

... ...

The *Yugantar* writes : It is an effective publication to impart a through idea of Yoga and to draw the attention of the people towarde its practical side. It is not a mere narration of the religious text but it bears the message of direct realisation of an experienced yogin. All the youths desirous of physical, mental and spiritual upliftment should follow his directions with devotion and inspire the author to publish the mysteries of Yoga in more details.

... ...

The *Anandabazar Patrika* writes : It is a book on spiritualism. It deals mainly with Yoga and demonstrates the easy way to Yoga-practice. The language is simple, easy and appealing. Instructions are lucid, attractive and reflections of a liberal mind.

... ...

CONTENTS

PART I

	PAGE
The Urge	1
The Brahman and the Creation	11
Māyā and The World	95
Human body, Mind and Soul	146
Evils of Passion	213
Pairs of Opposite	243
Free Will	259
The Law of *Karma*	273
True Happiness	287
Human Perfection	324
The Philosophy of the East and West ...	340
Light beyond light	382
Religion	413
God Exists	458
Trinity	489
Incarnation	513
True Worship	523
Scripture, Preceptor and Disciple	566
Power of *Mantra*	576
Three Paths	597
Devotion, Service and Sacrifice	627
The Mystery of *Rās-Lilā*	655
Ideal and its Attainment	673

PART II

	PAGE
An Introduction to Yoga-Practice for the beginners	687
Perception from different levels of consciousness	733
Kundalini or the Energy Potential in Man ...	754
S'uddhi or Purification of Body and Mind ...	768
Āsana and *Mudrā* : Posture and Sign	771
Prāṇāyāma or The Practice of Breath-Control ...	781
The Practice of Yoga	804
Lack of Harmony	875
The Power of Yoga	888
Yogic Experience	902
Conclusion	922

DEDICATED

To the lotus feet of my Preceptor

Thakur Śri Śri Baba Sitaramdasji Omkarnath,

as a token of deep love and

sincere reverence.

THE QUEST OF THE INFINITE

तदेजति तन्नैजति तद्दूरे तद्वन्तिके ।
असीमो नाम लोकः प्रकाशते भूवन्तिके ॥

That is dynamic ; That is static,
Shining both far and near.
On the verge of this finite world,
The Infinite doth appear.

———o———

"To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
To hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour".

—*Blake.*

THE URGE

How varied is the fascinating, illimitable space above us decorated with the sun, the moon and the stars and this beautiful earth at our feet, so full of rivers, mountains, cities and villages ! No less a fact to wonder at is that this earth, according to astronomers, is like a speck of sand in the whole Universe. Besides these, there exist millions and millions of stars, planets and planetoids like Neptune, Jupiter and Venus in the solar system and in the space beyond that in their variety and impalpable mystery. Science has pointed out that "each star is a sun and as such is the centre of a solar system." The Vedānta declares : "Parallel to this universe, there shine infinite crores of other universes similar to this one.[1]"

1. "अस्य ब्रह्माण्डस्य समन्ततः
एतादृशान्यनन्तकोटिब्रह्माण्डानि ज्वलन्ति"—The Vedānta.

Sir James Jeans, the world famous scientist, has written in his book '*Mysterious Universe*' that there are many such gigantic stars in the vast space above that may easily accommodate hundreds and thousands of globes with a circumference of 25,000 miles like the one we inhabit. The number of stars in eternal space, he adds, may be as large as the number of sand particles that lie scattered on the shores of the mighty oceans of the earth. He echoes the Vedāntic views. The Vedānta states that it is rather possible to count the particles of dust on the surface of this earth than to count the number of universes created by God[1]

The vast and varied manifestations of this visible world have ever been tempting and inspiring mankind to converge their attention on the Creator or Infinity. The result has been that human society has been moving onwards for ages together in response to the call of the distant, in search of the invisible, in search of light, and in quest of the Great Truth ; the bride—the human soul thirsting to meet her beloved Lord—the Supreme Soul.

Just try to comprehend the mode of living of the naked cavemen of the primitive age. But for the difference in appearance they were nothing but beasts so far as food and conditions of life are concerned. Frightened and terrified by natural calamities like earth-quake, floods etc., they fervently appealed to these natural calamities to quiet down, and under the impression that they would be pacified with offers of fruits and flowers, they made these offers. This was the beginning of religious life in primitive men. Religion, philosophy and science —all originated in the search for means to remove human sorrows and sufferings. Like Aristotle, the modern scientists also admit this truth.

---

1. "संख्या चेद् रजसामस्ति विश्वानां न कदाचन ।"—The Upaniṣad.

The ruddy rising sun, the full moon bathed in her own light, the sky-kissing mountain-ranges and vast expanses of water extending to the horizon have from times immemorial been creating in the human heart feelings of wonder and admiration. "Who can be the source of all these varied and wondrous creations[1] ?" This perennial question has been haunting the human mind from the time of his very advent on earth. Taken aback and inspired by the gigantic, wonderful and beautiful manifestations of the creation, human society has been trying to acquire knowledge of the Creator and Regulator of those things. From the dawn of civilization man has been feeling an irrepressible attraction for the unknown and the Infinite. That is why man for ages together in search of the infinite has been worshipping the sun, the moon, the river, the mountain, the heaven and the fire. But whatever we may do, our hunger for the Absolute can never cease. Our hunger for the Infinite cannot be satisfied with a finite world like the one we inhabit and whose varied manifestations are changing and passing away every moment. "What is that good to us which will not bring to us perfect peace, true happiness and immortality ?"—said Maitreyi to her husband, the Rishi Yājñavalkya.[2]

In course of time, some amount of intellect developed in the primitive men and they arrived at the conclusion that behind all these natural facts and phenomena, there must have been One who created them all and who has been directing them all. He must have been infinitely more powerful than man, they believed, and possibly He lived in the sky. This shows a gradual development in the religious life of man and unfolding of his thinking power. In the world of nature as well as in the physical and moral life of

1. "कुत इयं विसृष्टि: ?"—The Sveta Upaniṣad.
2. "येनाहं नामृता स्यां किमहं तेन कुर्याम् ।"—The Bṛ Ār Upaniṣad II. 4.3.

man and in his conduct, evolution has been taking place in a methodical way at the direction of an invisible power. Millions of years have run out for humanity to reach the present stage and in the religious belief of man, there has been progress through evolution step by step. It has acted as a force behind religion, carrying it forward, and has promoted the growth of society, raising us from animal life to the excellence of humanity.

"Shy yearning of the savage,
Unfolding thought by thought,
To holy lives are lifted,
To visions fair are wrought :
The races rise and cluster,
The evils fade and fall,
Till chaos blooms to beauty,
Thy purpose crowning all."

With the advancement of knowledge, man, in his impatience, to see God face to face has seemed to be helpless and being utterly desperate asked that unseen Being direct :

"What art thou, then, my God ? Highest, best, most potent (*i.e.* dynamic), most omnipotent (*i.e.* transcendent), most merciful and most just, most deeply hid yet most near. Fairest yet strongest, steadfast yet unsiezable, unchangeable yet changing all things ; never new, yet never old. Ever busy yet ever at rest, gathering yet needing not : bearing, filling, guarding, creating, nourishing and perfecting, seeking, though Thou hast no wants. What can I say, my God, my life, my holy joy ? Or what can one say who speaks of Thee ?"

—Confessions, Book I, Ch. iv.

Human history has thus been replete with the worship of the illimitable and the attempt to acquire knowledge of the Being who is beyond sense-perception. Mankind has carried on a ceaseless search through various paths to know, to realise and to comprehend the true nature of all those things that are

shrouded in mystery. And verily this has resulted in the creation of different creeds. This is the cause of the founding of "as many paths as there are opinions,"—so ably pointed out by the world preceptor Sree Sree Ram Krishna Deva. Mahātmā Gāndhi, the greatest man of the twentieth century, held the view that different paths of religions are but different means to reach the same goal. In order to reach the goal, he added, there is no harm in following any one of them. Men, according to different tastes follow different paths straight or complex. As streams and rivers run through different localities, and finally unite with the sea, so do men pursue different means to attain the same ultimate goal.[1] "O, Arjun ! all men following different tracts will surely reach Me in the end,"—said Lord Sree Krishna to Arjun.[2] Truth has always been universal. The paths extending to the Infinite from the lowest fetishism to the absolute Monism are but the attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite. "The different paths are but the different beautiful flowers forming a charming bouquet of worship for the Supreme."

The opening verse of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad reads thus : "Is it the Brahman who is the cause of creation ? From whom are we born[3] ?" For the solution of these momentous questions the Sages of the old entered into deep Samādhi when this truth was revealed before their inward eye that the Brahma-Śakti or the energy of the Brahman is the cause acting behind all creation[4]. They realised the energy of One who is the regulator and director of all causes, ranging from

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1. रुचीनां वैचित्र्यादृजु कुटील नाना पथजुषां नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव"
—The Upaniṣad : Mahimna Stotra.
2. "मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्व्वशः"—The Gitā, 4. 11.
3. किं कारणं ब्रह्म कुतः स्म जाताः ?"—Sveta Up. I. 1.
4. "ते ध्यानयोगानुगता अपश्यन् ।
देवात्मशक्तिं स्वगुणैर्निगूढाम् ॥"—Sveta Up I. 3.

the imperishable Ātman to the fleeting time. Brahman by His own nature transcends all causes, efficient or material. The causes are due to His attributes. The attributes that He assumed in creating the universes were the cause of creation. The Sages beheld in their meditative vision the energy of the Brahman, the incomprehensible *Prakriti* or *Māyā* being the cause. The *Brahma-Purāṇa* observes that *Māyā* is the Parā-Prakriti or divine nature of the Godhead, the Supreme Brahman[1]. The Brahman animates the inert Prakriti, and *She is impelled to the work of* evolving Herself[2].

The ancient sages of India who were seers, thus lit up the path of real truth by comprehending that unseen Supreme Being, the creator and regulator of the Universe as the ever-existing, ever-conscious, blissful and immortal. In the religious life of man, there has been evolution through various stages which culminate, according to the Aryan Rishis, in belief in one God. Mr. J. T. Sunderland has rightly observed : "From diversity it has moved slowly to that which was less and less limited, until at last it reached thought of God as omnipotent and omniscient. From many gods it has moved ever towards unity, that is from gods many it has moved steadily towards the thought of God as one, over all, through all and in all."

Religion of truth is only one ; it has no second version. The genuine religion of truth can be appreciated only through spiritual knowledge. It is in this path of Truth that the spirit of man has gradually found full expression in the persons of Sri Krishna, Buddha, Christ and others. Whatever are noble in the moral life of man—kindness, affection, humility, culture, character, trustworthiness—qualities with the help of which a man can claim the trust and respect of others have

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1. "माया परापक्रतिस्तत् समुत्था ।"—The Brahma-Purāṇa.
2. Vide the Gitā, IX. 9 & 10. Also do IV. 6.
   Vide also Sveta Up. VI. 8.

all appeared through the evolution of religion. The perfection of these qualities is symbolised in the lives of the great and favourite sons of God who appear in our midst and guide us. Certainly in human life there shall come a day when this world of ours will turn into God's kingdom, both in name and nature. If we decide to follow the path of virtue and develop the good qualities aforesaid, the evil propensities, innate in our character, shall disappear and then we shall find every inhabitant of this earth to be as perfect as Sri Krishna, Buddha, Chaitanya, Christ and Mohammad. "They are the citizens of the Nirmal Chaitanya Loka or the stainless world of Brahman, who are free from all sorts of mental impurities like the egotism, crookedness, falsehood and deception"—states the Praśna Upaniṣad, Verse I. 16.

According to the philosopher, Kant, to worship God with a hundred rituals is extreme folly and is the proof of superstition. Schilior Mechor holds the view that unqualified self-surrender is the sign of religious life. But again, in the opinion of Hegel, if that kind of self-surrender with the sacrifice of individuality were the signs of religious life, a loyal member of the canine species would be regarded as more religious. In the Western countries, different thinkers are thus found to subscribe to different views. But the most important thing that we learn from Vedānta about true religion is the unity in diversity, to realise which are necessary unfailing self-confidence and universal love. True religion begins where philosophy ends.

The basis of all religions current in this world is devotion, reverence and implicit faith in the Almighty. Such unflinching faith originates only from the direct realisation of the Supreme Being. Direct realisation is the clear perception or appreciation of the Infinite by the inner self. If He were not directly seen, or if the entity of God and His endless mercy were not directly perceived by human feelings, would it be

possible for us to place absolute reliance on that invisible power or to surrender the self completely ? With a view to removing all shades of doubts and misgivings from the human mind and to encouraging and inspiring man to turn towards God, the Upaniṣads say :

"Listen, O you, sons of immortality living on earth or in heaven : I have realised that supreme Being who is beyond the realm of darkness and out of the region of darkness have found a way to that light and knowledge"[1]

"Lead me from unreal to reality—lead me from darkness to light, from death to immortality"—this has been the perpetual appeal of man to the supreme Being for light and knowledge and for the realisation of the self.[2] Man in darkness cries for light ; man in feeble light prays for illumination. Let light and illumination lift the veil of darkness of ignorance born of *Avidyā* or nescience from the human mind, and truth of life be revealed to him.

The omniscient sages with profound scholarship in things spiritual have declared : "The truth which we ourselves have directly realised is now given unto all men for their common benefit." Jesus, the father of the Christian religion, said, "I have seen God." Buddha said in his sermon : "If Ye follow me, ye shall even in the present life realise the Truth itself and see the Truth face to face." Thus every religion current in the world has its firm foundation on the direct realisation of God.

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1. "शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्राः ।
आ ये धामानि दिव्यानि तस्थुः ॥—The Sveta Up, II. 5.
वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तम् ।
आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥"—The Sveta Up, VI. 8.

2. "असतो मा सद्गमय, तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय,
मृत्योर्मा अमृतंगमय"—Bṛ Ār. Up. I. 3. 28.

About the effects of the realisation of God the Srimad Bhāgvad enjoins:—"The sight of that supreme Being removes the illusions, the pretensions, the impurities and the doubts of mind about everything. The distressing effects of life and birth produced by action (*Karma*) are dissolved.[1]" "The desires born of ignorance or false ego are the ties of the mind"—Says Mu Up II. 2. 8. Practice (Sādhanā) loosens these ties of the mind and then comes a spirit of renunciation, when the devout worshipper turns apathetic to all kinds of work, good or bad. Men like Bharat after attaining inner knowledge lived in as indifferent a state as wood or stone with a view to avoiding the evils of social contact. Evil company destroys all good properties of the mind, i.e., truthfulness, purity, kindness, reserve, intelligence, humility, forgiveness, tranquility, self-control, asceticism and other divine attributes of like virtue. Mu Up III. 2. 8 states : "Only the illumined personages who have transcended the tyranny of names and forms, go to the Person who is greater than the Great."

The Upaniṣads observe :

"To know the final Being is to attain the stage which is beyond the pangs of life and death ; there is no other way to salvation.[2]" Reverence (*Bhakti*) without motive is the means to salvation. Our attitude should be : I do not know any one but you, I love you for the sake of love, and I do not want any thing in return. "The true mystic claims no promises and makes no demand..... only with the annihilation of selfhood comes the fulfilment of

1. "भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थि श्छिद्यन्ते सर्व्वसंशया:।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्म्माणि दृष्ट एवात्मनीश्वरे॥"—The Bhāgvat 1. 2. 21.
Also compare Mu. Up. II. 2. 8 & Katha Up. II. 3. 14-15.

2. "तमेव विदित्वातिमृत्युमेति
नान्य: पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय॥"—Sukla Yajurveda.
Also Vide Sveta Up. VI. 15.

love."—says St. Katharine of Genoa. The way to reach the vicinity of God is to love Him, to regard Him and to obliterate the self entirely in Him. The best way to know God is to establish a close relationship with Him.[1] Try to engross Him through love and devotion, for without love it is not possible to have divine perception. The root of everything is loyalty and through it comes complete emancipation, as was pointed out by Sree Ram Prosad Sen, the poet and staunch worshipper of the goddess Kāli, the Mother of the Universe. Love and action are the only intermediaries through which perfect knowledge can be attained. Faith in the Perfect builds path for the Perfect. The five chief processes of spiritual exercise as prescribed in Chaitanya Charitāmrita are : Good company, study of sacred texts, the worship of Lord Krishna, chanting of the name of God and living in a holy place.[2] Even if a little of any one of these five methods be acted upon by an individual, then that good soul individual has the awakening of love for Lord Krishna. In the Srimad Bhāgvad Gitā Lord Śri Krishna declares :

"Knowledge, action, the practice of Yoga, performance of religious rites and study of the Śāstras—nothing is effective without selfless devotion to me." Love is the royal road that reaches up to the Infinite. "There is no other path to go"—says Sveta Up, VI. 15.

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1. "आदौ सम्बन्धस्थापनम् ।"—Bhakti-Sutra.
2. "कीर्त्तणादेव कृष्णस्य मुक्तबन्धः परमं व्रजेत् ।"

THE BRAHMAN AND THE CREATION

अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो
रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।
एकस्तथा सर्व्वभूतान्तरात्मा
रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥—*Katha Up.* II. 2. 9.

As the same fire coming in contact with diverse combustible objects of the world takes different appearances, so does the one universal soul entering into different bodies assumes diverse forms. He also transcends them all and exists outside. The great Brahman, through His own *Māyā*, assumes the world-appearence and He exists in various forms. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, III. 3—4 observe : "From the radiant sun to the tiny blade of grass all are projected from the effulgent Brahman". It is the light of His Self that illumines the three worlds and it is His life force that infuses life into the animal world. The glory of the propitious supreme Lord is resplendent everywhere—in heaven, on earth and in the welkin. In the creation and protection of the three worlds we feel the touch of the same auspicious hands of the Architect of the Universe. Who can determine the ever growing countless worlds that are being created everywhere for the rise of numberless stars, planets and comets out of the unlimited gaseous matter in the atmosphere ? In the ethereal sky there are thirty-one moons of which only one is visible, the other thirty being hidden and unseen.

Quite an infinite number of universes are moving about in the infinite space above us like countless swarms of fish swiming in the water of the seas[1]. There are numberless Brahmās, Viṣṇus, and Maheśwaras as presiding deties of such innumerable universes. Parameśwara or the Supreme Godhead

1. "महाजलीव मत्स्य बुद्बुदानन्तसंघवत् भमति"—The Upaniṣad.

is the supreme Lord of all this infinite number of Brahmāndas or universes. The Viśvarupa of Para-Brahman or the Brahman manifest is the sum total of infinite number of such universes. It is this Viśvarupa that was shown to Arjuna by Lord Krishna in the battle field of Kurukshetra. Being much alarmed and bewildered at the sight of Lord's *Viśvarupa*, Arjun entreated Krishna to conceal it and assume His human form. When Krishna returned to His gentle form, Arjun became much consoled and said. "O, Janārdana! now I come to myself, my fear is gone, I feel much composed." Whereupon Krishna reminded Arjun that His universal aspect which was shown to him could be beheld neither by the practice of austerity, nor by gift, nor by sacrifice. Arjun was the friend of Krishna, so the latter opened former's divine eye so that Arjun might realise His Lordly grace.[1]

Just as countless particles of dust pass through an opening, similarly an infinite number of Brahmāndas move about this way and that through the hair follicles of the all pervading Brahman. As infinite number of bubbles appears and disappears on the bosom of the sea, similarly infinite number of universes appears and disappears in Brahman[2].

It is stated in *Purāṇa* that once upon a time the fourfaced Brahmā, the Ruler of our universe came to Dwārakā to visit Lord Krishna. When his arrival was announced in the court, Krishna enquired of the gate-keeper as to the identity of Brahmā. But the gate-keeper failed to answer to the query of his master and went back to the visitor and informed him what his master had said. At last when Brahmā was brought

1. Vide Gitā, Verses 11. 51—53.

2. "तस्मिन्नेव लयं यान्ति बुद्बुदाः सागरे यथा।
नश्यन्ते व्यक्तितां भूयो जायन्ते बुद्बुदाइव॥"—Chulika.

Also—"तदक्षराद् विविधाः सौम्यभावाः।
प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापि यन्ति॥"—Mu. Up. II. 1. 1.

before Krishna he made reverential obeisance to his Lordship and said to Him respectfully: "Why did your Lordship enquire about my identity? Is there any other Brahmā in the creation except me?" Whereupon Bhagwān Sri Krishna smiled a little and then became absorbed in deep meditation. Invoked by Lord Krishna there appeared ten-faced, hundred-faced, million-faced Brahmās, the countless rulers of innumerable universes. In their presence the four-faced Brahmā, the ruler of our universe appeared as if a rabbit in the midst of a big herd of elephants. He was much ashamed of his insignificance and stood with his face bent downwards. Then Lord Krishna said: "you have seen only one-fourth of my revealed glory, the remaining three-fourths of my transcendental power are unmanifest." The four-faced Brahmā then begged apology of his Lordship for his ignorance and vanity, saying: "How great is your Lordship! I am so small, only one universe is my body; whereas, countless universes are entering in and coming out of the hair follicles of your body every moment! Endless is your greatness." In the Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa and Chaitanya Charitāmrita, Lord Krishna has been described as the the ruler of infinite crores of universes. He is the Purṇa Brahman.—The Supreme God in His divine fullness.[2]

It is said that about 2,000,000,000 years ago a big-sized star while travelling in the sky came up very close to the sun. This caused violent waves in the solar region and metallic substances were ejected from the sun to the spheres. That metallic substance emitted by the sun gradually cooled down and turned into solid matter now called the earth. Thrown off the sun in the beginning of creation, this earth was something like a huge mass of gaseous matter as hot as the sun. Later on with the gradual decrease of its heat this gaseous mass

1. "ब्रह्मेदं हविताकारं हृहृदृहृदवस्थितं"—The Vedānta.
2. "एते चांशकला पुंसः कृष्णस्तु भगवान् स्वयम्।"—Srimad Bhāgvad. 1. 3. 28.

has been separated into water, earth and ether and has been fit for the habitation of living beings.

Like sunrise and sunset destruction follows creation and creation follows destruction—thus flows an endless, eternal cycle of the Universe. The present and the future are nothing but repetitions of the past.

There is a large number of stars in the infinite space, many times bigger than the sun, the rays of which have not yet reached our planet, the earth. Most of them are now in the state of luminous nebulae and so the conditions there are not favourable to the growth and development of life. Only the moon and the mars are excluded from this category. Of the two, the moon is the land of eternal snow and the extreme region of cold. So the lunar sphere is inimical to the growth of life, although the existence of the cavities of extinct volcanoes and a kind of thorny shrubs have been detected. Mars is the only planet where the existence of living beings, has been observed. Human beings, quadrupeds and several kinds of reptiles there, have come to the telescopic vision of the astronomers. The signs of cultivation, canal system and the like show some amount of intellectual development in mars.

From the time the powers of thought and intellect have been active in man he has started thinking about the Creator of the universe and about His varied creation. The result has been that in all the books of different religions of the world an enquiry into the nature of creation has occupied a distinct place. Before creation there was nothing—all was dark and all was vacant—this view is supported by all religious codes of the world.

It is written in the Rig-Veda. X. 129, the most ancient religious book of India : "There was then neither the earth nor the limitless sky ; there was then neither death nor immortality ; there was then no difference between day and night. It was only He who existed as the soul ; there was nothing else

The state before creation

but He." In the 5th sloka of the first Chapter of Manu Saṃhitā we get the same suggestion : "The entire universe was in the beginning covered by deep darkness. That condition is not within the purview of argument, sight or conjecture. At that time the universe was, as it were, fast asleep.[1]"

It is given in the Brihad Dharma Purāṇa : "This universe was in the beginning vacant and enveloped in darkness. There was no matter, movable or immovable, nothing like the sun, the moon, the planets or the stars. There were only two entities—*Prakriti*, the nature or the passive (female) principle of creation and the active (male) principle of creation, the *Puruṣa*. There was no third entity." Thus according to the Śāstras, in the beginning of creation there was nothing—all was void, all was darkness. The *Prakriti* or *Māyā* was the only consort of Brahman at the time of creation. Through *Māyā* i.e., His own creative power, the great Brahman as a magician has spread a net of deceptive appearance of the world.

The Rigveda states that the world has been created out of nothing. This cryptic statement (Ex nihilo nihil fit) has been interpreted to mean that this world-being is evolved out of the *Asat* or not-being. Instead of accepting the said interpretation it will be proper to accept the interpretation that the unmanifest world has become manifest—what was latent has become patent. By this interpretation alone the real import of Vedic utterance can be maintained. The epithet *Asat* or 'non-existent' does not here mean 'nothingness' but it means 'latent'. The implicit world is made explicit, for creation is not just creation, it is an emergence.

'*Asat*' does not imply non-existent

"All beings at the end of a *Kalpa* enters into my *Prakriti* (Nature) and when the next *Kalpa* begins I bring them forth

1. "आसीदिदं तमोभूतं अप्रतर्क्यमविज्ञेयं प्रसुप्तमिव सर्व्वतः।"—Manu. I. 5.

from the womb of *Prakriti* again"—this saying of Lord Krishna in the Gita, Verse 9.7, clearly suggests that creation is an act of emergence. Just as Avyakta or latent does not mean exhaustion' but does mean "being made implicit" so also *Asat* or "non-existent" does not imply "nothingness" but does mean the "indefinable" condition of the universe before creation.

The world-being is unmanifest in both the ends—before creation and on dissolution; but manifest in between the two[1]. An entity coming into existence gradually takes gross form and while merging into its cause, it goes on reducing itself into subtler and subtlest form. An entity in formation first takes the form of an atom, then a molecule, then a visible element out of which an article like a pot is made. While merging into the cause, the pot is reduced into dust and then successively passing through molecular and atomic stages finally merges into Prakriti. This is merging of an effect into cause. So the science observes : "nothing of the creation is destroyed or lost." The unmanifest Prakriti rests one with the Brahman. So the Supreme Brahman who is the receptacle of all, in whom everything returns, cannot be non-existent like the horns of a hare, like a flower budding in the sky or like the son of a barren woman. The merging into cause does not imply total annihilation of a thing. Existence preceeds creation. The existence of our being depends upon the existence of our Creator. If we deny His existence, our own existence becomes extinct. No one can deny his own existence as a human being.

The Buddhists take 'not-being' as *Sunya*. This view is correct, provided *Sunya* means Ādi-Buddha and not a mere cypher. The Upaniṣad asserts that not a single thing can be

1. Vide the Gitā. II. 28.

created out of nothing.[1] The something that existed behind the unmanifest condition of creation was the great Brahman whose creative desire unfolded all creation[2]. Since that something is beyond the reach of sense-perceptions, including mind and intellect, it has been described in the Vedās as *Asat* or not-being or nothing. But the fact is that, He existed before creation, He is immanent in creation, and it is He who shall exist after dissolution ; otherwise who shall in future bring out the world from the womb of *Māyā*, the parental darkness.

The verses 9.7-8 of the Gitā clearly indicate that creation is a manifestation of the unmanifest Prakriti or nature of the Brahman. In *Sāmkhya Tattva Kaumudi*, it is pointed out that *Vivarta* or manifestation is possible only of an existent entity ; that which does not exist can never bring anything into existence[3]. That the creation is a phenomenal evolution and not actual transformation of the Supreme Brahman is evident from the verse, 9.4 of the Gitā[4]. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa asks : "Is there anything in the world as beginningless and endless and that remains the same in all the times ? The Brahman is the only Being who never undergoes any transformation as an worldly object does. He is divested of all material properties ; the material objects exist in mind alone." According to Saṃkar, anything which is eternal

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1. "ना सतो विद्यते भावो ना भावो विद्यते सतः ।"—The Gitā, 2. 16.
   Again : "नासतो सज्जायते"—The Upaniṣad.
   Also—"आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्त्तमानेऽपि तत् तथा ।
   वितथैः सदृशाः सन्तोऽवितथा इव खचिताः ॥"—Mā. Up. IV. 31.
2. "सदेव सोमेदमग्रमासीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम्"—Ṛgveda.
   Again—"एकोऽहं बहुस्याम प्रजायये"—The Upaniṣad.
3. "एकस्य सतो विवर्त्तः कार्य्यजातं ना वस्तु सत् ।"
   —Sāṃkhya Tattva Kaumudi.
4. "मत्स्थानि सर्व्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ।"—The Gitā Verse 9. 4.

cannot ever be produced. He views that beyond the cause there exists nothing. The cause manifests itself as the effect, assuming name and form. The name and form belong to the effect ; they are its own properties. But the effect with name and form owe its existence to the Brahman. The world-appearance is an effect to the cause—Brahman. Independent of Brahman, the world has, therefore, no existence and from the standpoint of Brahman, the world is unreal.

"All beings exist in Me but I exist outside them"—this saying of the Lord Krishna in the Gitā disavows the substantiality of the world-being. All these go to prove that creation is a phenomenal evolution of an existent entity who is the Eternal Brahman. As a result of such creation, the Brahman, according to the Vedānta, neither undergoes any change in His person nor suffers any loss of His immutability. "The Brahman has manifested Himself through His own Prakriti called the *Māyā*"—states the Gitā, verse, 4.6. This furnishes the materials of the doctrine of both *Vivartavād* and *Māyāvād*, the latter being the corolary to the former. In fact Saṃkar's theory of illusory creation rests on *Vivartavād*.

According to the Vedānta, the world is a *Māyik* creation and it has no ontological existence. Kant admits this, but Hegel holds a somewhat different view. According to the latter the world is not an illusory creation ; it is actually created out of the Divine Energy which is incomprehensible. In his opinion Godhead is knowable, because He has manifested Himself as the world. But the actual manifestation of a Being, who is transcendent and one without a second, is not possible. Brahman is the original synthetic unity ; His actual transformation is impossible. He is the supra-logical unity and not the logical unity of Hegel who argues : "There is no unity without plurality." But the sense of plurality is a proof of

The contrary views on the theory of creation.

ne-science. Bṛ. Ār Up. Verse IV. 4. 25, asserts : "There is no diversity in Brahman." Evidently Hegel's Godhead is not the Absolute but a manifested God.

From the standpoint of the world and with the help of intellect the best we can conceive is only an aspect of the Absolute Brahman. The transcendental nature of Godhead is unknowable to the intellect[1] ; what is knowable to human intellect is His universal aspect and not the transcendental one. Hegel does not admit the existence of the transcendental nature of Godhead. So his Absolute is the *Saguṇa* Iśvara of the Vedānta. Falckenberg views Hegelian philosophy as follows : "Hegel seeks out the universal without particular, but in it. It should not find the infinite beyond the finite, nor the Absolute at an unattainable distance above the world, nor the essence hidden behind the phenomena, but manifesting therein." In the light of divine knowledge everything is Brahman, but such a knowledge is subject to direct experience. When the sense of identity between the Brahman and the world is intuited in pure consciousness, the knower can boldly assert : "The world is Brahman and I am also the Brahman[2]"—and not before the realisation of the Truth. The Kena Upaniṣad, II. 5. observes : "The wise seeing the Brahman in every object of creation, depart from this world as the Immortal Brahman." So in this point Hegel is correct, provided the source of his assertion is direct intuition.

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1. Vide Kena Up. 1. 3 : "न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति, न वाग् गच्छति नो मनः ।" Also Vide Kāṭha II. 3. 12 and Taitt Up. 24. 1.

2. 'सर्व्वंब्रह्ममयं जगत् अहं ब्रह्म', 'ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम्'—Mu. Up.II.2.12. Also : 'सर्व्वञ्चैतद् ब्रह्मायमात्मा ब्रह्म ।'—Mu. Up., Agamaprakaraṇa, 2.

"भूतेषु भूतेषु विचित्य धीराः ।
प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥"—Kena Up II. 5.

Vide also Taitt Up 1. 28. "ब्रह्मविद् आप्नोति परम् ।"

The Gitā says : "ज्ञानीत्व आत्मैव मे मतम् ।"

Remember the word of warning uttered by the Kathopaniṣad[1] : "My dear ! the divine knowledge that you have gained, cannot be acquired by logical argument and one must not try to remove it logically as well." The knowledge which is beyond sense-perception should not be made a subject for logic. The science of the ultimate as propounded by the Vedās and the Upaniṣads is to be learnt from the lips of a capable preceptor and the knowledge thus acquired must be intuited and verified in one's own self in *Samādhi*. Logical argument far from increasing the little self-knowledge, a man has, decreases it and ultimately makes him an atheist. When an identity between the Brahman and the world is established, there remains nothing unknown. So for the want of knowable objects the logic chopping faculty ceases to function *i.e.* the intellect becomes inactive. Saṃkar comments thus on the said verse of the Kathopaniṣad. "He is truly wise who can withdraw his mind and senses from sense-objects as a tortoise withdraws its limbs inside"—Says Lord Krishna in the Gitā, verse 2.58. "The senses, mind and intellect" says He "are the seats of desire. Desire envelopes knowledge and the jivas are deluded[2]." The Chhā Up forbids, therefore, all sorts of speculation on the issue whose scope is Infinite[3].

Regarding the other point *i.e.* theory of Creation, the Vedāntic view is that the Brahman created the world through His own *Māyā* and the creation is an evolution, a *vivarta* of His energy which is *Māyā*. The modern philosophers and the scientists of the West seem to lean upon *vivartavād*. When the efficient cause of creation is *Māyā* or illusion, the created world cannot be real ; it is merely an appearance like the serpent in a rope. So by such illusory creation,

1. Vide the Kathopaniṣad, verse 1. 2. 9.
2. Vide the Gita, verse 3.40.
3. Vide the Chhāndyogya Upaniṣad, verse II. 9.

the Brahman loses nothing of His unitary nature. The *Māyāvād* of Saṃkar does not admit the existence of the world, independent of Brahman. This is the difference between the Hegelian philosophy and the philosophy of Saṃkar on creation.

Ramanuja deviates a little from the general tradition of the Indian philosophy. He says that jiva is created out of the body of Brahman. This view is refuted on the ground that a body, which is insentient, cannot produce any sentient being. His Godhead is also a manifested God like that of Hegel. Ramanuja accepted his Personal God as the Highest to establish his own doctrine of *Viśiṣṭhādvaitavād*[1] and thus ignored the Impersonal aspect of Brahman to suit his own ends. He fails to explain the difference between the *Nirguṇa* and the *Saguṇa* Brahman—the Higher and the Lower. As his attention was mainly fixed upon his own system, called *Viśiṣṭhādvaitavād*, Ramanuja is alleged to have misinterpreted certain verses to support his own views. Saṃkar on the other hand managed to interpret very skilfully the heterogeneous complexities appearing in the texts by introducing the doctrine of *Māyā*, and in so doing, he did not fall from the tradition. As Nirguṇa Brahman is inactive, *Hiraṇyagarbha Iśvara* (A Logos of the Christian doctrine) was introduced for the purpose of creation. His *Māyāvād* is a great help for the solution of the problems raised by conflicting views.

In the *Brahma-Sutra*, Maharṣi Vedavyās says that the Brahman is known in two aspects : (1) in His transcendental nature and (2) in His relation to others.[2] His transcendental aspect as nirguṇa Brahman is beyond sense-perception. When

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1. According to Ramanuja's *Viśiṣṭhādvaitavād*, the Godhead consists of intelligence and matter. This doctrine approaches Dr. Bain's monism : vide his 'Body and Mind'.

2. स्वरूपलक्षण' तथा तटस्थलक्षण' ।

some virtue, quality or attribute is imposed upon Him, the intellect gets a faint idea about the supreme Brahman. As from a distance, we show a river to our companion by pointing out a tree on its bank, so in the second case we try to know the Brahman supreme in relation to others. When the acts of creation, preservation and destruction are imposed upon the unique Brahman, His universal aspect becomes intelligible to us. The Brahma-Śakti, which the *Sāmkhya* calls *Prakriti*, is made up of *Triguṇas* or three qualities—*Sattva* (purity). *Rajas* (activity) and *Tamas* (darkness or ignorance).[1] The supreme Brahman is *nirguṇa* i.e., without any quality or *guṇa*. In creation, the Brahman manifests Himself through *Māyā* and becomes the support of the said qualities. The *guṇas* are nothing without support ; they must have some support to function and for their very existence. Free from *Māyā*, the Brahman is *nirguṇa* or attributeless. He is indivisible, incomprehensible and Infinite—He is the truth and knowledge Himself. Associated with *Māyā* i.e., in the realm of time and space, He is Saguṇa or a *Māyik* Lord. Saguṇa Brahman is sportive, graceful, loving and so savoury. He is merciful, friend to all, Lord of His devotees and refuge to the fallen. The wise in the path of knowledge attain the *nirguṇa* unitary Brahman, whereas in the path of love and devotion, others try to reach their personal God—the *Saguṇa* Brahman so that they may live in the company of their Beloved and serve Him.

Though *nirguṇa*, the Brahman takes attributes of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* in His person for the purpose of creation with the help of *Māyā*..[2] These three qualities or attributes associate Brahman with *Avidyā* and this association is the

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1. "सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणा प्रकृतिसम्भवा ।"—Says Vyās.
2. Srimad Bhāgavad II. 5. 18

cause of His bondage and coming into being as jiva and the world. To think of *jiva* as *Ātman* it is eternal ; as body, it is transient, and as Brahman, it transcends both eternal and transient.[1] *Trigunas* confine *Nirguṇa Ātman* within the body[2]. Ātman or Brahman takes different attributes like body, mind, *Prāṇa* and senses through its own *Māyā*. This *Māyā* keeps Ātman enthralled as it were.[3] It is He who is creating, conserving and destroying the whole universe, welcomes bondage, out of his sportive spirit. Yet, He is never attached to anything worldly ; He transcends them all. The One who is second to none, remains in His unitary nature as the supreme Being—the *Purāṇ Puruṣa* (the Ancient of the day).

Nothing in this world can be said to be eternal so long as *Avidyā* or *Māyā* prevails. Everything is unreal because of its illusory origin. Again the total annihilation of anything in creation is impossible owing to the existence of spiritual self in all objects.[4] The temporal world is a shadow or reflection of the eternal Reality. "These Brāhmins and the Kshatriyas, these spheres and the gods, these jivas and the world—all are identical to the Brahman who is the Supreme Self[5]"—states Bṛ. Ār. Up. 11. 4. 6. Lord Viṣṇu told Nārada that he had been seeing Him through His own Māyā, otherwise He could not be seen as He was devoid of all attributes and elements.

Both the gross and subtle creations owe their origin and existence to name, form and action ; besides these the worlds are *Asat i.e.*, non-existent. Individually the said three factors are complementary to one another. The Brahman who is

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1. Srimad Bhāgavad 1. 13. 43
2. Srimad Bhāgavad, II, 5. 19. Also vide the Gita 14. 5.
3. Mā Up II. 19.
4. Vide Mā Up IV. 57.
5. "इदं ब्रह्मेदं क्षत्रमिमे लोका इमे देवा इमानि भूतानीदं सर्व्वं यदयमात्मा ।"
—Bṛ. Ār. Up II. 4. 6.

second to none, becomes many when He attaches Himself with them. The Brahman without attribute is unknowable to us but with attribute when He is related to something else, apart from Himself, becomes intelligible as *Adhyātma* (*i.e.*, related to body), *Adhibhuta* (related to the five elements) and *Adhidvaivata* (in relation to the gods). Mr. Herbert Spencer was right when he observed : "The objective agency, the noumenal power, the absolute force, declared as unknowable, is known after all, to exist, to persist and cause our subjective affections and phenomena, yet not to think or to will". The Brahman being the only knower in all the existences, cannot be an object of sense-perception. Since He is knowledge Himself, worldly knowledge acquired by mind and senses is not sufficient for the realisation of One who is the thinker and feeler Himself—nay, the thought and feeling itself.[1] The mind, eyes and ears, thinks, see and hear because there are worldly objects to be thought of, seen and heard. The objects disappear when the senses are inoperative and vice versa. In the state of *Samādhi*, owing to the descent of a higher power, which is pure consciousness, the material instruments of mind and senses faint away, as it were, and the world disappears from view. In this blissful state, all the specific knowledge merge into the generic one and the world itself appears as the Brahman ; it is then only the Absolute Brahman shines as the boundless ocean of pure consciousness.

Vāyu or air and *Ākāśa* or ether are His invisible forms.[2] Fire, water and earth are His visible forms and these are

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1. "येनेदं सर्व्वं विजानाति तं केन विजानीयात्,
विज्ञातरमरे केन विजानीयात् ।"—Bṛ. Ār. II. 4. 14.
Also Vide Sveta Up III. 19.

2. "द्वे वाव ब्रह्मणो रूपे मूर्त्तञ्चैवामूर्त्तञ्च मर्त्तञ्चामृतञ्च स्थितञ्च यञ्च सच्च त्यञ्च ।"
—Bṛ. Ār. Up. II, 3. 1.

changeable and perishable. So long as the world exists, the latter three entities also exist. So from the relative standpoint they are existent. *'Yat'* in the Sutra of the Bṛ. Ār. Up. II. 3. 1. stands for air and ether. Whatever exists in creation is denoted by *'Yat'*, because ether is the synthetic unity of the aforesaid three entities—fire, water and earth which again are the constituents of all worldly objects. The *'Yat'* is identified with *Hiraṇyagarbha Iśvara* or the Cosmic *Prāṇa*. Air and ether evolved out of the unmanifest Prakriti so that the subtle body of the *Hiraṇyagarbha* might be formed. *'Tyat'* in the Sutra points to His transcendental aspect which is said to be non-existent from the relative standpoint of the world. He is so said because nothing worldly can reveal Him. *'Tyat'* or the Brahman supreme is unknowable to the intellect. According to the Bṛ. Ār. Up. 11. 3. 6, He becomes known when every idea or thought is negated from mind. *Hiraṇyagarbha* is truth, but the Brahman supreme is the Truth of all truths.[1] "He is the quintessence of all"—says Katha Up. I. 3. 11.

Nirguṇa Brahman is the only truth. The Brahman or the Ātman is free from all the worldly attributes. The assuming of a human body renders the ever-free and birthless Being bound, moving in the round of birth and death, becoming liable to the enjoyment of weal and woe and to the fruits of His actions done in worldly life. The attributes imposed upon *Jivātman* (individual soul) and *Hiraṇyagarbhātman* (the soul of the manifested God), if negated, both the *jiva* and *Hiraṇyagarbha* become identical with the Brahman. Here and there in the texts the Being residing within the subtle and even the gross body is designated as *Puruṣa*. The intention of such utterances is to identify every *jiva* with the Brahman. The bondage of the *jiva* is imaginary ; it does not really

1. "सत्यस्य सत्यम् ।"

exist. The diverse activities on the part of Ātman and its enjoyments of happiness and misery are attributal—they are only imagined in mind.

Occasionally we come across a few verses in the Gitā, the Upaniṣads and other sacred Saṃskrit texts that apparently suggest conflicting views on the same topics. This is not only the case with the verses comprised in different texts but the apparent meaning of some verses of the same text appear self-contradictory. Men of mediocre intellect are rather confounded to find the same note of discordance which sounds within the same verse. The following verses of the Gitā may be cited as examples :—

The apparently conflicting ideas of the texts explained.

Verses 6.30, 7.12, 9.4, 10.20, 13.14-15, 15.1, 15.14, 18.61.

Some of these verses state that the Brahman is immanent in the world, while a few others hold that the Brahman transcends it. To a common man, it is a riddle how the same being can be both immanent and transcendent at the same time, of which he can find no satisfactory solution. There are verses to indicate that the jivas are the part and parcel of the Brahman and that the Brahman dwells within their hearts ; whereas verses of other texts which show that jivas are mere shadows of Brahman[1] and that the Brahman is outside them, are not wanting. *Iśa* Up. Verse, IV states that the Brahman is *'Aneiat'* and He is also *'Jabian'. i.e.* He is both static and dynamic. According to the verse V of the same Text : "He is far away from us, still closer than our hands and feet ; He is both within and without ; He moves and moves not." "He sees without eyes, hears without ears and so on[2]." The last but not the least and the most amazing one is that "He is neither *Sat* nor *Asat*" i.e. He is

1. Vide Kathopaniṣad, Verse 1. 3. 1.
2. 'पश्यत्यचक्षुः शृणोत्यकर्णः'—The S'ruti.

neither existent nor non-existent ; again, "He is both *Sat* and *Asat*" ; "He transcends both *Sat* and *Asat*"[1]. Similar contradictory ideas involved in such statements encourage the designing atheists to twist these utterances to suit their own ends and preach that the contents of the Vedās and the Upaniṣads are all but 'bull and cock' stories.

The Vedic and the Upaniṣadic verses are very difficult to understand. None can penetrate into and grasp the inner significance of these verses without profound knowledge in Saṃskrit and the power of discrimination.

It is rather easier to tread over a sharp razor than acquiring knowledge about the science of the ultimate by penetrating the heart of the Vedic and Upanisadic teachings. This knowledge is essential for the realisation of the ultimate Truth[2].

So it is but natural that some amount of misgivings and misunderstandings might arise in the reader's mind, especially in the case of one with a shallow knowledge and a poor intellect. Even a Pundit like Maxmuller admitted that in the attempt to dive deep into the Upanisadic teachings and to bring out the inner meanings of the verses, the heart of an European would burst. From this clean confession one can realise what amount of patience, perseverance and discriminative knowledge is needed for having access to the depth of the Upaniṣadic teachings. The Upaniṣadic verses are not mere theories and dogmas, but living forces, and if their import be realised in their true perspective, miraculous results would follow. The Vedās and the Upaniṣads reveal the knowledge of Brahman.

To do away with all doubts and to avoid misinterpretation, one must possess a sound knowledge of Saṃskrit and learn

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1. 'अनादिमत् परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ।'—The Gita, 13. 12.

2. 'क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया ।
दुर्गं पथस्तत् कवयो वदन्ति ॥'—The Katha Up. 1. 3. 14.

from the lips of a capable Guru what the *Nirguṇa* and *Saguṇa* Brahman really means,—what is the difference between the Brahman and His *Śakti*. Most of the misunderstandings arise from the lack of this first hand knowledge regarding the First Cause. The Brahman Absolute is of the nature of pure consciousness. He is *Nirguṇa i.e.* without attribute. As Nirguṇa Brahman, He is *Saccidānanda*—the ever-existent, ever-conscious, and blissful *i.e.* He is the embodiment of *Sat* (existence), *Cit* (consciousness) and *Ānanda* (bliss). He is inactive.—He acts not, thinks not and moves nowhere. For the purpose of creation, preservation and destruction He is imagined to take attributes on His person when the names of *Brahmā*, *Viṣnu* and *Maheśwar* are imposed upon Him. The one Brahman assumes therefore triune aspects which having attributes or *guṇas* are called *Saguṇa* Brahmans. Thus the Brahman Absolute and the Brahman with attribute differ only in point of qualifying attributes ; otherwise they are identical like the Sea-water and the sea.

As a spider spreads out a net from itself and ultimately devours it, so does the Brahman spread this world of deceptive appearance from Himself through His own Prakriti or nature, and when the dissolution period comes in He withdraws the world within His own Prakriti[1]. The unmanifest Prakriti emerges out of Brahman or rather becomes isolated from Brahman for the purpose of creation. The cosmic Prāṇa, or the *Hiraṇya-garbha* is born of Prakriti. Mind evolves out of Prāṇa (The life principle). *Prāṇa* produces certain subtle elements from which the five gross elements come into existence. The elements, both gross and subtle are the constituents of different spheres like the earth and the celestial regions. In the verse 1.8-9 of the Mundak Upaniṣad, the successive steps of evolution of

1. Vide Mu Up 1.7.

Prakriti have been shown. Prakriti evolves because there is involution of Supreme Spirit *i.e.* Brahman[1].

From Hiraṇyagarbha or cosmic *Prāṇa* down to the sense-world, everything is born of the Mother Prakriti. Hiraṇya-garbha or the Brahman manifest (saguṇa Brahman) is the imperishable *Puruṣa*, but the Brahman Supreme is the Highest among the imperishables—He is the Most High—Puruṣottama[2].

The Brahman Supreme is no doubt divine, and imperishable, birthless and deathless, formless and taintless, devoid of life and mind, residing both within and without, superior to Prakriti, which is the unmanifest seed of creation.

Hiraṇyagarbha or the Kāryya-Brahman as is called in the Upaniṣads, is the Soul of the universe[3]. He resides within the jivas as the soul of the jivas. He is the seer, hearer, thinker, knower and enjoyer of their karma or action. This imperishable Puruṣa, the Saguṇa Brahman, is the Soul of the universe. The whole Creation is His body ; He overlaps everything.[4] Nothing exists independent of the Brahman.

No distinction is virtually entertained between the Absolute Brahman, *Saguṇa* Brahman and *Jivatman*, the knower of the field. The self-revealing *Paramātman* is inherent in all : "O, Bhārat, know Me as the Knower of all fields. Though indivisible, I appear to be divided among all beings"—said Lord Krishna, the Supreme Spirit[5]. "This visible universe is pervaded by Brahman, and *Ātman* is the same as Brahman"—this is the verdict of all the Upaniṣads. *Ātman* like Brahman

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1. 'मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृति सूयते ।'—The Gita, 9.10. ; also vide 8. 18 ; the Svet Up. IV. 10.
2. Vide the Gita, 15.17—18.
3. Vide Mu Up, 1. 8—9. and II. 1. 10.
4. "सर्व्वरूपेण संस्थानात् सर्व्वमस्य वपुस्तथा ।"—Chitradip, 168 ; Sveta III. 16.
5. Vide the Gitā, 13.16.

is not tainted whatsoever, though it dwells within the jivas and is connected with different states of jiva-consciousness—waking, dreaming and sleeping.

What is theory in the Vedās and the Upaniṣads, is put into practice in the Purāṇas and the Tantras. In Purāṇas and Tantras as well, no distinction has been made between the Highest Brahman and the lower deities. In *S'iva Purāṇa*, Śiva ; in Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Viṣṇu ; in Bhāgawat Purāṇa, Bhagawati ; in Gaṇeś Purāṇa, even Gaṇeś, the son of Śiva ; in Tantra, the Goddess Kāli etc. each of these divine personages has been described as the Godhead. These texts enjoin on the Hindus to worship these sectarian deities as the Supreme Brahman. The same Being pervades invisibly the whole creation by His consciousness, and in His visible form, He is perceptible as *Kāl*, the Great Eternity which is *S'iva* and is *Kāli*, the Mother of the universe[1]. Both *S'iva* and *Kāli* are identified as divine energy of the Brahman Supreme. Sri Ramkrishna identifies *Kāli* with Prakriti which is the nature of the Brahman.

The aim and end of all Hindu religious texts is to establish an identity between the higher and the lower, between the Brahman and the jiva, and even between the world and the Brahman. From the verse 1.2.6 of the Mundak Upaniṣad it can be shown that no distinction is also made between the lower celestial regions and the world of Brahman[2]. In different parts of the texts, the name of *Saguṇa* Brahman has been mentioned where the name of the *Nirgṇa* Brahman should have been more appropriate. The above verse declares that the doer of virtuous deeds go to the world of Brahman. According to the other verses of the

1. "सरूपं काल: काली च अरूपं सर्व्वं व्यापितम् ।"—Tantra.
Also : "चिन्मयं व्यापितं सर्व्वं त्रैलोक्यं यत् चराचरम् ।"
2. 'एष व: पुण्य: सुकृतो ब्रह्मलोक:'—Mu. Up. 12. 6.

Upaniṣads, Karma or action cannot lead one to the Highest Heaven[1]. The main purport of such utterances is to push jiva one step forward. It means to point out that there is higher path of *Jñāna* besides the path of Karma.

The distinction as has been drawn in *'Karmakānda' of the Vedās* between *Jivātman* and *Paramātman*—individual soul and the supreme soul, is due to difference in attributes like the body and senses that an individual assumes. This difference is secondary and not primary. In the part of the *Karmakānda* where the creation has been described, the Brahman has been indicated as distinct from attributed Brahman. Such distinction is to be taken as secondary. The intention of such Vedic utterances are to show the oneness of all : "Through *Māyā*, the Brahman appears as many. So there is no duality[2]". If the diversity had been real, the immortal Brahman would have become mortal. There are verses in the Vedās, indicative of creation, but nowhere in the texts, creation is said to be real. The utility of the verses regarding creation may be accepted to be this much that they help to understand the theory of creation and nothing more. The verse, IV. 73 of the Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad states : "The world is in reality *Asat*, its existential value is only pragmatic". Saṃkar observes : "The sense of duality is untenable because of the world's non-existential nature". There are innumerable verses to show that the world is an illusory creation. "He who sees duality in unitary Brahman, is born again and again"—in this way, the sense of difference has been decried in all the texts.

Duality and plurality are the illusory aspects of the same unitary Brahman. The truth of it is evident from the Vedic utterances : "He is one without a second"—"He created energy", and the like. In the states of *Samādhi* (trance),

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1. Vide Mu. Up. 1.2. 7., 1.2.9. & 1.2. 10. Also Vide Gitā, 9.11.
2. 'विद्यते न हि नानात्वं तेषां कञ्चन किञ्चन'—Mā. Up. IV. 91.

swoon and slumber, the sense of diversity does not persist. The falsity of diversity is proved by the Upanisadic utterances : "The Brahman is the only Reality".

The unitary aspect of the Brahman Supreme is unknowable to the intellect. "The Brahman is intelligible to us when He is associated with *Māyā*"—says *S'ruti*. To make Him intelligible and an adorable Lord, the Śruti has contrived His diverse aspects[1]. In fact there is no hard and fast distinction between Brahman, His energy and His diverse aspects. According to Goudapāda, they are one and the same[2]. He observes in his *Kārikā* : "To make the theory of creation intelligible, the same Being is imagined as triune, each with an office." The worldly beings are again imagined as the sparks of the Brahman. But the differential aspects of the unitary Brahman cannot be maintained.[3] Unfolding the mystery lying behind Nirguṇa and Saguṇa Brahman, Goudapāda composed 215 verses. He was the direct disciple of Sukdeva and Guru of Govindapada. The world-preceptor, the great Saṃkarāchāryya was the disciple of Govindapada. In his *Kārikā*, Goudapāda has proved the falsity of dual conception and has established the doctorine of non-duality on a solid foundation.

The Triune Gods, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśwar are said to be the mind-born sons of Godhead, the Brahman. They are the creations of His imagination. So the authority of all activities on the part of the attributed Brahmans, virtually go to the supreme. The power which Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśwara exercise for the work of creation, preservation and

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1. 'उपाय सोऽवतराय नास्ति भेदः कथञ्चन ।'—Goudapāda Kārikā.
2. 'घनप्रभृत्यथा प्राह्म एक एव विधा स्थितः ॥'—Goudapāda Kārikā, 1.
3. Smritī, Purāṇa and Tantra while holding the same view, observe :
'स सर्व्वा याति भगवानेक एव जगाद्गुरु', 'ब्रह्मा विष्णु शिवा ब्रह्मन् प्रधाना ब्रह्मयज्ञयः, ; 'साधकानां हितार्थाय ब्रह्मणोरूपकल्पना ।—Tantra.

destruction is also virtually the power of the Absolute Brahman. In view of their imaginary activity, the triune Gods appear slightly distinct from the supreme Brahman, but essentially they are one and the same. This view is supported by *Smṛti* in the following manner : "One God in discharging threefold duties assumes three names Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśwara". The three aspects represent only three different kinds of Brahma-Śakti or the energy of Brahman[1].

When a verse is found to describe the Brahman as both active and inactive, dynamic and static, it is to be understood that the author had in his mind both the manifest and unmanifest nature of the Brahman. He made little distinction between the twain aspects and took the son to be equally powerful as the Father. The Brahman and His energy are identical and we cannot conceive of one without thinking of the other. The energy and its possessor are the one and the same being. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśwara representing His three kinds of energy act as His agents. The attention of of the author was fixed on or rather directed more towards the process of creation than to creating a broad outline of demarcation between the *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa* Brahman, or establishing an identity between the two. So in some verses we find the unitary Brahman engaged in the work of creation (vide the Gita, 9.8). But it is also to be noted that whenever He needs doing something, He assumes a different name[2].

Prakriti which is the seed of creation, is superior to *Mahat Tattva* (Cosmic buddhi or intellect, identified as Hiraṇyagarbha) ; the Puruṣa or Ātman, who is Brahman, is

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1. 'स्वर्गस्थित्यन्तकारिणी ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवात्मिकाम् ।' 'स सञ्ज्ञां याति भगवानेक एव जनार्दनः'—Smṛti.

Also : 'शक्तयो यस्य देवस्य ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवात्मिकाः ।'—Smṛti.

2. "अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।"
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥—The Gita 15. 14.

superior to Prakriti. Since the Brahman is greater than Prakriti, Ātman has been described as both known and unknown. The verse 1.3.11. of the Kathopaniṣad declares that there is none above the Imperishable One[1]. The epithet *Akshara* or Imperishable is generally attributed to the *Hiraṇyagarbha Iśvara*, a manifested God. If there be none above the *Hiraṇyagarbha*, it proves that the Brahman Supreme and *Hiraṇyagarbha* are one and the same Being. Spinoza observed: "God is Infinite, so His attributes are endless.[2]" As we are far away from Brahman, He appears to us in different aspects. The water of the sea appears blue from a far off distance, but when we put it in our palm, we find that it is colourless. In Śveta Up., Śiva has been described as the creator of Hiraṇyagarbha, and we know from other texts that Hiraṇyagarbha is the first mind-born son of the Brahman Supreme. It follows, therefore, that both *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa* Brahman are identical and the difference is only in terms of nomenclature. In *Mārkandeya Chandi*, the goddess *Durgā* and *Kāli* have been described as the conscious energy of Supreme Brahman; so *Durgā* and *Kāli* as well are identified with Brahman.

In the Mundak Upaniṣad verse 1.6, the Brahman has been portrayed as *Avarna i.e.* He cannot be described in words and languages. Devoid of sense organs, He sees, takes, and moves with the help of His all-pervading consciousness[3]. There is no other Seer but He.

"Without eyes He seeth, without ears He hears.
Space cannot contain Him, time He is above,
All the limits that He knows are light and love.
What though the childish tongues trip ?

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1. "पुरुषान्न परं किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सा परागति।"—Katha Up. 1. 3. 11.
2 Sukla Yajurveda, 13-14, observes : "सहस्रस्य प्रतिमां विश्वरूपम्।"
3. "अपाणिपादोजवनोग्रहीता पश्यत्यचक्षुः स शृणोत्यकर्णः। स वेत्तिवेद्यं न च तस्यास्ति वेत्ता तमाहुरग्र्यं पुरुषं महान्तम्॥"—Sveta Up. III. 19.

It is the heart I see,
If it really loves me in sincerity.'"

—'Mystics & Saints of Islam' P. 154.

This is an echo of the Upaniṣads. Similar statements occur almost everywhere in our Vedānta Philosophy. Compare Sveta. Up. III. 19.

The Katha Up. 1.2.21 observes : "Resting at a place, He goes everywhere ; when inactive, He does everything" According to the Yoga-phlosophy of the Hindus, Consciousness becomes all-pervasive and all-knowing when mind with the senses is at rest, This solves the problem how the motionless and inactive Brahman can be swifter than mind and the busy creator of the world, though devoid of mind, Prāṇa and senses. It is not indispensible for one, whose consciousness pervades everything and whose essence envelopes every being, to have material senses in order to take, hear and see anything[1]. So, not even the minutest part of the creation and not a single deed done by men, however secret it might be, escape His ever-wakeful and all-pervading consciousness. A Yogin in order to have knowledge of something remote, sits calmly, closes his eyes, withdraws his senses, including mind inside and expands his consciousness far and beyond. The consciousness of the Yogin floods every creek and corner and in that white light of pure consciousness, everything comes within the range of his inward vision, when his desired object is known. If it be possible for a human being to visualise, hear and know an object at a far off distance, when his mind and senses cease to function, it would be easier still for the God Supreme to do the same without the help of material mind and senses. There is nothing material in Brahman. He is spiritual through and through. He is an Awari—the Knower of all secrets[2]. The human sight perceives Him not but He perceives

1. Sveta III. 16. 2. The Qurān, Surā, VI. 104.

man's sight. Man cannot know Him because his senses are so created as to flow outwards[1]. To know or to see Him, one must dive deep into the heart of his heart and withdraw his senses inside. In fact, the Brahman rests always at His own place and moves nowhere. The illusion in the way of His movements appears when the Brahman is imagined as possessed of mind and senses. From the above explanation, one can easily understand that there is no ambiguity in the Upaniṣadic teachings.

The life-principle or *Prāṇa* (an evolute of Prakriti), mind, senses and their objects do not exist in Brahman and this renders the Supreme Being inactive. In Nirguṇa Brahman, there is no wave of thought because there is no mind to think[2]. So in the case of a Knower of Brahman who attains this state, the spirit of distinction evaporates. For want of knowable objects, thinking faculty itself merges in Ātman as the flame of a fire enters into the fire whose fuel has been consumed.

A thing is perceived because of its relative existence ; it does not exist independent of the Brahman. So the conclusion is that everything rests in Brahman ; it is not isolated from Brahman. It exists because its existence is possessed by another Higher Existence. The specific quality of a thing is not distinct from its generic quality. During dissolution, the specific quality merges in the generic one, which is Mulā Prakriti or the primordial matter. Things exist in two states : (1) generic and (2) specific. Humanity is the generic state or the sumtotal of all men. *Brāhmins* and the *Sudras* are the specific characters of the mankind. The specific characters are included in the generic. An ocean is the generic state, while the rivers, rivulets and tanks are of specific nature.

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1. The Katha Up. II. 1.1.
2. Mā Up. III. 38

As the reflections of the sun and the moon on the bosom of water disappear and revert to the original when the water is taken away, so when the attributes or the specific characters are lost, the jivas return to their original or to the unique position as the Brahman. Attributes and specific knowledgeoriginate from ne-science. When ne-science is removed, knowledge does not arise specifically in the unlimited consciousness of the knower of the Brahman. As the moon is not affected by the loss of its reflections, so the Ātman does not incur any loss when its attributes in the way of specific knowledge are gone. Things and beings are Brahman when their attributive qualities like names, forms and actions are purged off. Ātman is omniscient—it is knowledge itself; its knowledge never gets extinct.[1] "So knowledge of the self begets knowledge of everything, even of the Brahman"[2]—says Bṛ. Ār. Up.

Bṛ. Ār. Up. 1. 3. 1 states that before creation of the world, nothing existed having name and form. The universe was enveloped, as it were, by the God of death, the Prajāpati, who desired food. A hungry person is inclined to kill animals in order to fill his belly. So hunger is the sign of death. Since *Hiraṇyagarhha* devours everything—the name *Aditi* is attributed to Him and He is personified as Death. Both the enveloper and the enveloped existed before creation. Saṃkar and Kapil hold this view. The former leans upon causality, while the latter lays more stress on effect. The *Naiyāyik* and *Vaiśeṣika* do not admit the existence of an effect before creation. "The visible world with its diverse names and forms was unmanifest before creation in the form of a seed and afterwards it came into being. The Brahman who is the

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1. "न हि द्रष्टुर्दृष्टेर्विं परिलोप विद्यते ।"—The Śruti.
2. "विज्ञानेनेदं सर्व्वं विदितं ।"—Bṛ. Ār. II. 4. 5.
Also: "यदयमात्मानेन श्रोतद सर्व्वं वेद ।"—Bṛ. Ār. Up.

ultimate cause of creation pervades every inch of it"—says Bṛ. Ār. Up. 1. 4. 7. Śruti states that this world before creation existed as Brahman. "He inheres all ; still He retains His unitary nature". "Though He moves as different beings, He is one without a second". "This Paramātman is latent in all as soul". The utterances are indicative of His non-dual nature. That the jivātman is perceived as reflection of the Brahman is due to His penetration. The realisation of worldly objects as Brahman is considered as His penetration. "The Brahman without undergoing any change in his person, manifested the world and entered into it". "He entered into diverse objects and assumed different names and forms". These utterances prove the penetration of His energy and none else. "The world is subject to creation and destruction"—this indicates world's inert nature. Nothing can be produced as an effect, if we do not admit the existence of a Being who alone can manifest the unmanifest universe. "I will manifest the world having name and form"—this saying indicates His authority in the act of creation. While the transcendental nature of Ātman or the Brahman is suggested by the following utterances : "Ātman is great. Ātman is birthless. Ātman is neither gross nor atomic. This Ātman is not like this or that".

He thought : "Well, I will enter into the three entities —fire, water and earth as soul and create different names and forms." All the utterances in the *Vedās* and the *Upaniṣads*, indicative of creation, are only to make Him intelligible. According to the Vedās, the realisation of Brahman is the end of human pursuit. "The realisation of Brahman made him all-pervading and all-knowing". "The knower of Brahman becomes the Brahman". "The knower of Brahman finally enters into the Brahman." "The knowledge of Brahman is the best of all ; it brings salvation". These sayings of the *Smṛiti* support the above view. That

the aim of Śāstric utterances regarding the creation is to establish the doctrine of non-duality is evident from their condemning the spirit of differentiation.

"The jivas are My parts"—"The jivas are the reflections of the Supreme Spirit"[1]; "I do not dwell in them"—"I live in their hearts[2]"; "My divine nature supports them all, but it itself is not like them". Though these utterances are apparently counter to one another, the real purport of this distinction is to show that the creation is a *Māyik* one *i.e.* a phenomenal evolution of the divine energy and not the actual transformation of the Supreme Brahman. Lord Krishna said in the Gita, Verse 10.41 : "Whatever is conspicuous in the creation, is born of My divine energy". The truth of it is forthcoming from the utterance *'Abhāsa eb Ca'*—which means that the world-appearance with all its beings, living and non-living is a mere reflection, a shadow of the ultimate Being. This view led Saṃkar to conclude that the world is an illusion. The shadow of a thing can neither be real like its original nor the thing-in-itself either in its fullness or in part. Lord Krishna repeatedly declares that He transcends the world and it is the *Jivas* that rest in Him. By this, He inspires jiva to look up to the transcendental nature of One who is the source of their life and light.

Owing to His extreme subtlity and invisible nature, the Brahman has been described as 'Aṇoraṇiān' *i.e.* smaller than an atom. As He assumes the biggest form like the universe and promotes the growth of everything, He is greater than the Great—'Mahatomahian'. "The root 'Bṛha' means growth.

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1. Vide the Gitā 15. 7 : ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूत सनातन: ।
   Katha Up, 2. 3. 5 : 'छायातपयोरिव'
2. The Gita 9. 4 & 10.20.

As the Supreme Being is the finality of growth, He is called the Brahman[1]".—Comments Saṃkar.

The Brahma-Sakti which is the efficient cause of creation is the very nature of Brahman called Prakriti. This *S'akti* or energy is also designated in the texts as *Māyā*. *Māyā* as the nature of Brahman unmanifest is knowledge supreme. For the purpose of creation, when *Māyā* becomes separated from the Brahman, she is reckoned with *Avidyā* or ne-science. Under the influence of this *Avidyā* when the supreme Brahman takes upon Himself some attribute, He comes to be known as the creator-Lord—Brahmā, a *Saguṇa* Brahman. Since the Supreme Lord assumes the name of Brahmā only in imagination, the latter has no existence except in the Supreme Mind. This is why we find in the Gita a controversial statement: "The Brahman is both *Sat* and *Asat*—existent and non-existent"[2]. "The Branman is both *Sat* and *Asat*, because the world has no existence independent of Brahman"—comments Saṃkar on Mu. Up. II. 2.1. The Brahman in His own nature is the only Reality. As Brahmā, He is a *Māyik* Lord having no existence at all. Now one can easily understand how the same Being becomes existent and non-existent at the same time. The knower of the above truth is not likely to be confounded by such contradictory statements. The Brahman Absolute transcends both cause and effect. His divine nature—Prakriti being the real doer, is the cause of creation. "The Brahman creates the universe neither as an agent nor through self-exertion; the agency goes to the Prakriti or His nature"—Says the Gita, verse 5.14. According to Saṃkar, the creative activity of the Brahman is a mere exuberance.

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1. Vide Kathopaniṣad, verse 1. 2. 20.
The Śruti States: 'बृंहति बृंहयति तस्माद्च्यते परं ब्रह्म।'
Also, 'बृहत्तमत्वाद् ब्रह्म।'—Comments Saṃkar on the verse, 1. 28 of Taitt Up. 2. Vide Gitā, 11. 37.

So creation is not the direct and actual manifestation of the Supreme Self. Again in the verse 9.8, it is observed : "These beings, impelled by the force of Prakriti, as it were, come again and again into the world. The inert Prakriti gets animated by the consciousness of the Supreme Self." "Know thou that all the manifestations are born of My Prakriti"—said He (vide verse 13.19). The same Brahman when inactive, is beyond both cause and effect ; in the act of self-evolving He is the efficient cause and when under the influence of '*Avidyā*, He promotes the growth of others He is the material cause[1]. Free from *Māyā*, He is the Lord Supreme and in association with *Māyā* in the realm of time and space, He is Iśvara (A Māyik Lord), jiva and the world. Pure consciousness reflected in Prakriti or *Māyā* is Iśvara, and as an attribute of Isvara, Prakriti is the efficient cause of creation. So the creation is but attributive.

Nirguṇa Brahman is inactive ; to be active, He becomes *Saguṇa* and behaves like a doer. We come to know from the Gita (verses 15.14-15) that Brahman Himself does not personally enter into beings but it is an aspect of His manifestation that inheres all. Prakriti manifests herself as the universe. Since the universe is born of His Prakriti or *Māyā*, the creation is an illusion. So Parāśar observes : "The sense of duality is born of *Māyā* ; there is neither involution nor evolution, nor the world-creation[2]."

"Before creation, the universe existed as *Sat*"—this utterance of *S'ruti* means to indicate that the universe of diversity existed as Brahman before creation. The one *Paramātman*, who is the only reality, is imagined as *Prāṇa* ; *Prāna* again is imagined as *Sat*. *Sat* is, therefore, the only reality and beneficient, and not the duality. Though the act of super-imposition

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1. 'कार्य्योपाधिरिय' जीव: कारणोपाधिरीश्वर:'
2. 'मायामात्रमिदं द्वैतं न प्रपञ्चो न संसृति'—Parāsar

is false, its effect is not negligible as a serpent perceived in a piece of rope creates fear in mind. An entity which is *Sat* can never undergo any change through birth and death because we cannot imagine duality in one unique entity. In unqualified *Ātman*, the quality of happiness and misery is imagined. In the act of super-imposition, a support is essential and *Ātman* serves the purpose of the support. *Ātman* is *Kutastha* or unchangeable and the falling off its nature is impossible. Ātman is Brahman. Paramātman is like the unlimited space and jivātman is like the finite space contained in a jar[1]. 'Aṃsa' in the texts does not imply a part, cut off an entire unit, but it is like spaces contained in different jars.

Nothing is produced out of anything *Asat* or non-existent[2]. Like the magic creation of an elephant conjured up by a magician, the world-creation has been made possible due to the existence of a cause—the Supreme Magician.[3] Even if the Brahman as *Sat* is denied, the assuming of an appearance as the universe through *Māyā*, like the appearance of a snake in a rope is not impossible. The Brahman or Ātman cannot be actually born, because in that case He undergoes certain change. Moreover as Brahman is unborn, He cannot take birth in any form. Actual transformation of One Who is unborn and one without a second is impossible. If Brahman be non-existent, He cannot be born either illusorily or really *i.e.* ontologically because a barren woman can neither truly nor illusorily give birth to a child[4]. Brahman is causeless, and there is no cause that can produce Him. It is said that the

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1. आकाशमेकं हि यथा घटादिषु पृथक् पृथक् ।
   तथात्मैकोऽप्यनेकस्थ जलाधारेष्विवांशुमान ॥—Mā. Up, 3. 3.
2. "नासतो सज्जायते ।" "सत: सद्भाव: असतश्च असद्भाव:"—Sayṣ Vātsāyan.
3. "यस्मात् मायी सृजते विश्वमेतत् ।"—Sveta Up. IV. 9.
4. Vide Mā Up, 3. 28.

First Cause *i.e.* Brahman is both *Sat* and *Asat*[1]. This view is refuted on the ground that the same entity cannot be both existent and non-existent at the same time. According to Saṃkar both *Sat* and *Asat* are baseless, because there is no difference between the two mental imaginations within and without. Things are the same both in waking state and in dream. They are only mental creations (S. B. on Mā II. 31.) The true and the best conclusion would be that nothing is born and that the Brahman transcends both *Sat* and *Asat* and He is *Ajāti* i. e. unborn[2].

Nothing is produced either of itself or caused to be produced by anything else, because actually or ephemerally nothing is born[3]. Saṃkar opines that as a pot cannot be the cause of another, so is also the effect. What is unborn cannot of itself be a cause of another's coming into being. Again because *Sat* and *Asat* being opposed to each other, neither separately nor organically, they can produce anything. If the cause be *Sat*, it cannot change its own nature into an effect either *Sat* or *Asat*. In that case, the cause itself would incur loss of its integral nature, ultimately proving itself to be non-existent. Again, if the cause be *Asat*, it fails to create some effect on account of its own non-existential nature. No cause is produced from a beginningless effect and vice versa. What is beginningless is also birthless[4]. An entity whose cause is

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1. "यदेतज्ज्ञानथ सदसद् वरेण्यम्"—Mu. Up, II. 2. 1.
2. "न कश्चिज्जायते जीवः सम्भवोऽस्य न विद्यते ।
एतत् तदुत्तमम् सत्यम् यत्र किञ्चिन्न जायते ॥"—Mā Up IV. 71.
Aiso : त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत् परं यत्—The Gita, 11. 37.
3. स्वतो परतो वापि न किञ्चिद् वस्तु जायते ।
सदसत् सदसद्वापि न किञ्चिद्वस्तु जायते ॥—Mā Up, IV. 22,
The verse IV. 40 of the same text also holds the same view.
4. Mā. Up. IV. 23.

non-existent cannot come into existence. A cause must exist so that an effect may be born. Nothing unreal exists because of its non-existential nature—as for an instance, the horns of a hare. Similar is the case with real things as well. Real things cannot come out of an unreal source. A pot cannot be produced from hare's horn. To the wise, causality proves a bagatelle. Causality operates so long as a man abides by it. But when he transcends the idea of causality, the latter loses its hold[1]. The seers determine causality as *Ajāti* or unborn. In fact, nothing is born as per causality. The thought of causality perpetuates the continuity of birth and death. The jiva does not return to the world when its notion of causality becomes extinct. The seed of life does not germinate in the case of one who does not indulge in effects, whatsoever—good or bad. A seedling does not sprout without a seed. When a jiva feels the non-essential nature of this phenomenal world, it no longer becomes attracted to it and separates itself from the world of beings so that it may be Alone.

The main object of the Upaniṣadic and vedic utterances like 'Jivas are My parts' and 'Jivas are like sparks' is to establish an identity between the Jivas and the Brahman. It is not possible for the texts to describe and explain something spiritual without taking help of something worldly. So the customary rules are followed and the Brahman who is incorporeal and attributeless is presumed to have attributes of body, mind and senses like a worldly man. Without such pre-supposition, we could not get even the faintest idea of One Who is beyond the ken of mental concept[2]. "We may, therefore, possibly feel, believe in, pre-suppose the Absolute but know it in the strictest sense we cannot. It may be an object of a

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1. यावद्धेतु फलावेशस्तावद्धेतु फलोद्भवः ।
चीणे हेतु फलावेश नास्ति हेतु फलोद्भवः ॥—Mā Up, IV. 55.
2. Kena Up, I. 3. & 1. 5.

rational faith" says Kant (vide the 'Logic of Hegel' by W. Wallace).

"The Jivas are the parts of the Brahman"—States the Brahma Sutra, verse V. 45. Saṃkar comments on it saying that 'part' is to be taken as 'part as it were' because the Brahman is indivisible. In the same way, he suggests that jiva-self is a reflection of the Paramātman, as it were—'Abhāsa eb ca,"

As the son of a king, chanced to live in a low-caste family requires an introduction regarding his royal birth which is his true identity, so *Jiva* is reminded that it is nothing but the Brahman by calling it a part or a spark of Brahman. Such vedic utterances make it alive and aware of its true identity—its divine origin. Before coming out of fire, the sparks were one with the fire and same as fire. So the texts introduce the simile of sparks to make Jiva realise that it is nothing but the Brahman ; otherwise jiva is not a part of Brahman but Brahman Himself. If it be taken as a part, the Brahman is dragged down to a worldly life. But it is not possible for one who is incorporeal and attributeless to come down to the level of a jiva full of passions and gropping in darkness.

The sense of diversity originates when we attribute different names and forms to one unique entity which is Brahman. Saṃkar is of the view that if no difference is imagined between the Brahman and the *Jiva*, the vedic *Karma-kānda* that enjoins the performance of religious rites would be meaningless and the sacred texts like the Vedās and the Upaniṣads would prove unnecessary because their instructions are meant to liberate a soul in bondage. If no bondage is imagined—if the *Jivas* were taken as free souls, those instructions would be of no avail. The Vedic *Karma-Kānda* is intended for men of mediocre intellect. The Vedās and the Upaniṣads impart knowledge of the ultimate ; they are the means to the human end which is salvation.

Jivātman is a mere reflection of Paramātman. Jiva-consciousness is a reflected light of God-consciousness. This consciousness in jiva, though a shadow, is a shadow of pure consciousness which is Brahman. The shadow-consciousness is the only thread left to Jivas as the connecting link between the jivas and the Brahman. It is like the *Setu* that bridges over the gulf between the two. As a lost ship reaches a light-house with the help of a feeble light at a far off distance, so the shadow-light of jiva-consciousness is the only hope by following which we can reach the reservoir of consciosness viz. the Brahman. The elevation of jiva-consciousness to the status of God-censciousness is the only way that can unite jiva with Brahman. It is a very difficult task, no doubt, but the Yoga-Philosophy of the Hindus show the path by following which the shadow can be materialised *i.e.* made real. The practice of Yoga paves the way and assures the possibility of such transformation. When Yoga is resorted to, it carries the jiva-consciousness to the higher and higher levels, till at last the latter gets fused with the Highest. This is the way by following which a shadow is to take a concrete shape. Jivātman may be a mere reflection of the supreme light; nevertheless, it is also a light as well, though a very feeble one. When we take to Yoga, the will-power is greatly enhanced and if the tiny ray of reflected light be pursued with concentrated mind and unified will, it must one day shine like the original light illuminating the entire universe.

In verse 7. 3 of the Gita Lord Krishna promises this highest attainment to the jivas. He says that one out of thousands of men feels inclined to know Me only on account of virtuous deeds done in one's previous life. One out of a thousand such aspirants, is able to realise My true nature.

Evidently, the subject dealt in the Vedānta and the Upaniṣads is a very hard nut to crack. The divine knowledge that leads to self-realisation *i.e.* salvation is denied to the

vainglorious and for want of true knowledge, they declare to prove their own ignorance : "God is a useless and costly hypothesis, so we will do without it." According to the materialistic Cārvāk there is neither God nor soul, neither bondage nor liberation, neither heaven nor life beyond death[1]. Cārvāk advises his disciples and others to fully enjoy the cream of life, even if that cream has to be borrowed from others[2]. 'Eat, drink and be merry'—this is the philosophy of their life.

The Episode of *Yama* and *Naciketā* was contrived in the Kathopaniṣad to refute such atheistic views. As an answer to Naciketā's question, Yama, the God of death, said : "The one Existence, immortal, blissful and conscious is the only Reality and everything else is unreal. The one Brahman entering into different bodies assumes diverse forms. As the same fire passing through differently coloured glasses appears as of different colour, so does the one *Saccidānanda Puruṣa* taking different attributes upon Himself assumes the names and forms of created things and beings. In so doing, He loses nothing of His unitary nature ; He Himself remains unchanged, immutable and ever pure. He is the creator and regulator of the universe and He is also the Lord of the Gods."

Brāhma-S'akti or divine energy travels in a cyclic order like the hands of a clock. Starting from the Brahman who is supposed to be at the apex of this cyclic path, it rolls downwards till it reaches a point, diametrically opposite to the apex. In its downward motion, it goes on involving itself upto the lower point whence its upward journey begins.

Involution & Evolution

During involution, divine energy is fragmentised, as it were, and assumes the diverse names and forms of creation,

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1. "न स्वर्गो नापवर्गो वा नैवात्मा पारलौकिकः ।"—Cārvāk Darśan.
2. "यावज्जीवेद् सुखं जीवेद् ऋणं कृत्वा घृतं पिवेत् ॥"—Cārvāk Darśan.

both animate and inanimate. By this act of involution, the fragmentised parts entering into different objects become covered under veils of matter and metaphysical ignorance and thereby forget their original divine nature. The revelation of that divine entity that is Ātman from its material imprisonment, tearing assunder the veil of forgetfulness and *avidyā* or ne-science is evolution.

During descent, the world expands and the energy contracts itself; while ascending, the world contracts itself and the energy expands. The former process is called involution and the latter evolution. As by involution of the divine energy, the world comes into being, so conversely, by evolution the creation enters into the *S'akti* that evolved it. The whole course of journey is completed in one *Kalpa* (a period of 432 million Years of the mortals). Each *Kalpa* begins with creation and ends with its destruction. *Brahma-S'akti* is conscious energy and it inheres more or less every object of creation.

"Matter itself, you will one day realise, is not material, it is not substance, but a form of consciousness"—says Sri Aurobindo in his '*Yaga* and its Objects' P. 22. In his 'The Ideal of a *Karma-yogin*, P. 91-2, it is observed: "The spirit manifest as intelligence is the basis of the world. Spirit as existence, *Sat*, is one; as intelligence, it multiplies itself without ceasing to be one." The spirit or the divine consciousness goes on contracting and decreasing through fragmentation and diffusion as the energy moves downwards, being rarified in different individuals. In material creation, it is hardly perceptible. As the energy crosses the lower point and begins to ascend along the cyclic path, the world contracts itself and its inmates gain in consciousness; because, there is now returning of creation into Brahman and in consequence thereof, the inmates are nearing the reservoir of consciousness.

At the lower apex, man lives at the level of normal consciousness, subjected to the peculiarities of human life.

Jiva crosses this lower apex and begins its upward ascent by raising his consciousness by the practice of *Yoga* and he is gradually endowed with an over-mind. When by personal effort, *i.e.* by dynamic will-power, jiva-consciousness is carried to some point in the circumference above the lower hemisphere, his consciousness becomes intuitive. According to Sri Aurobindo, there are three grades of supernals above human mind: overmind, supermind and *saccidānanda*, the Highest (The Riddle of the World, P.31.) The region in the circumference above the lower hemisphere is the land of supermind. Man is more than his mind; he is endowed with divine consciousness which unfolds itself when he takes to *Yoga*. By the practice of *Yoga*, the mind becomes inactive, ego dies out, Jiva-consciousness rises to the higher and higher levels till it reaches a strata, similar to that of the *Saccidānanda*. This is the final destiny of all. Matter evolves into life, life into mind, mind into overmind, overmind into supermind and supermind ultimately merges in *Saccidānanda*. A time will come when this earth will be inhabited by a race of supermind and the kingdom of heaven will come down upon earth to fulfil Christ's dream.

The fraction of divine essence or spirituality inherent in things and beings is the guide in the process of evolution. The evolution is, in fact, the process by which the individual spirit returns to itself; it is the manifestation of less conscious thing to the highest conscious Being. This process of evolution will advance steadily until from this seed of spirituality, germinates so large a tree as its source of origin. "He is sown in weakness to be raised in power"—says the Bible. This is the purpose of creation.

Evolution takes place in the reverse order called the process of involution, i.e., the order in which the spirit came down to the earth. So the evolution will pass through the successive steps of matter, life, mind, supermind, consciousness, bliss

and existence. The final Being is *Saccidānanda*, the embodiment of Sat (existence), Cit (consciousness) and Ānanda (bliss[1]. The evolution up to this time has reached the mental plane. Man in his present status is not the goal of evolution. He has to pass beyond mind to the higher consciousness. When matter evolved, intuition was replaced by instinct and intellect to deal with the material creation. Before the evolution of matter, intuition was the only means for conception of Reality. In the subtle state of creation, the faculty for realising truth was also a subtle one—the intuition. So beyond mind, the next higher stage in the process of evolution is to be intuitive consciousness assuring mankind a far better and nobler existence than at present. When we speak of evolution in the sphere of intuition, we certainly do not mean the awakening of intuition in a particular individual the instances of which are not rare in the world ; but a general awakening of this new faculty in humanity at large creating a race of man what we call superman.

Professor Alexander is of opinion that dead matter, living matter and mind appeared successively. He suggests the existence of a further quality beyond mind which he calls deity : "All things point to the emergence of this quality and that is why science itself when it takes the wider view, will require a deity ; the being which possesses it, is God". So evidently, Professor Alexander's deity is *Cit-S'akti*—the universal conscious energy. Behind this material creation, there is an all-pervading consciousness that as life and light pulsates in every created thing and being. Dead matter is the least conscious, living being a little more ; so human consciousness still more and God is the reservoir of universal consciousness. Matter evolves only because there is involution or descent of the essential force, the sentient spirituality in it. Matter does not actually evolve ; evolution is to be assigned to the spirit latent in matter. Matter is

the means and not the cause. The real cause of evolution is spirit. As the spirit is invisible, we attribute the work of evolution to matter. In the process of evolution, as the spirit comes out more and more perfect, shedding its attributes, it makes its abode more and more beautiful. In course of evolution, when the higher light appears, not only the higher principles but also the lower ones of matter, life and mind automatically undergo radical transformation. So in the process of evolution both the higher and the lower principles advance simultaneously towards perfection. The higher consciousness not only ascends to the further higher plane but also descends into the less conscious portions of matter, life and mind and works there till the latter are raised to the level of the former. In this way, the principles of matter, life and mind become illumined and are lifted up to the status of higher consciousness. The being who possesses such super consciousness all round rises above the level of man—he becomes a superman. Such radical change in our being depends upon personal exertion in the path of *Yoga* and upon the grace of God. By the practice of *Yoga*, we prepare ourselves so that we may be fit for receiving His grace.

Creation is the result of involution of Supreme Spirit. Through involution, Para-Brahman individualises Himself ; He who was one without a second becomes many in His creation. Evolution is just the opposite of involution. The fragmentised spirits of unitary Brahman who appeared in the Universe during involution as different images of Brahman attempt to regain their fullness through the process of evolution. During their descent on earth, the individualised spirits become latent appearing more and more different from their source of origin. But in their ascent, i.e., through evolution, each of these fragmentised spirits becomes more and more patent resembling the nature of Brahman. The divine essence which is the life

and light of all worldly objects, animate or inanimate, becomes manifest through evolution for ages together.

"A firemist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell ;
A Jelly fish and a saurian,
And caves where Cavemen dwell ;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the cold,
Some call it evolution
Its deeper name is God."

Āviḥ (eve) is the time when the night meets the day i e. the later part of night. Āviḥ following night is *Brāhma-muhurta*, and break of day is the passing away of night and rise of '*Aruna*'—the sun. The rays of the sun are Brahma-tejaḥ or energy of Brahman and fire is the form in which He manifests. It has been said before that evolution is always followed by involution. It is for this reason that the Supreme Lord before being manifest through creation covered Himself in the darkness of night. This is an age of darkness. Hence Śastras say, "Asididaṃ tamobhutaṃ etc." *i.e.*, all this was enveloped in utter darkness. The effulgent Brahman is in His full glory both at the beginning of creation and at the end of dissolution. In between, He covers Himself with darkness which is a veil of ignorance. Night follows the day and day follows the night. The period for which the Jiva rests in this world is His night. Brahman in the from of a Jiva lives here under the veil of ignorance forgetting His own self and His true nature. But a time will come when this period of night will end and the complete evolution of knowledge in Jiva will take place, breaking the knots of spirit and matter like the rising sun removing the darkness of night ; and then the Jiva will be Jivanmukta or emancipated and merge in the ocean of Absolute Existence.

The processes of evolution and involution, following each other alternately, take place in every sphere of creation.

Para-Brahman was perceptible in the form of a Vindu or dot before the emanation of the sound 'OM'. So, Vindu is like Āviḥ of Nāla- i.e. 'OM'. 'OM' is Āviḥ of Ākāśa. *Praṇava* or the holy sound *'OM'* comprises A+U+M, which in a consolidated and subtle form is Vindu or dot at the top. At one end of creation, lies the seed and at the other evolution in its fullest form. The quality of *Ākāśa* or sky (etherial space) is *Nāda* or Sound. Sound-energy again is the material cause of all created objects. Sound is the essence—the soul of everything having name and form.[1] This explains the condition of the unmanifest world existing as Sound

The extension of the sound energy in 'OM' is the ethereal sky or space : 'Omeb Byom[2]. The word 'Byom' or sky is equivalent to (bi+om) ; that is to say, the prefix (bi) indicates the extension of the sound 'OM'. The Supreme Being contracted Himself to a speck or dot before His revelation as sound-energy towards creation. On the eve of creation, this final speck (from gradual contraction) representing His non-disfigured Self was night. According to the Indian philosophers, night is the shadow of the earth. It is significant. The thick darkness of advanced night was Āviḥ or the eve of creation. So it is that the Śāstras have said that in the beginning of creation, the universe was enveloped in deep darkness and at that time only the Lord of Eternity and Architect of the universe was awake for the purpose of creation. It follows that the period of activity for God is the period of slumber or night for the animal world. So it is that the *Yogins* (contemplative saints) consider night to be the best time for meditation and spiritual activity for union with the Supreme Spirit[3].

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1. Bṛ Ār Up 1. 6. 1.
2. "ॐमेव व्योम् । "
3. "या निशा सर्व्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।"—**The Gitā II. 69.**

As in a leaf of a fig tree, the veins spread all over the leaf, so does Brahman pervades the whole creation with 'OM'[1]. The syllable 'OM' is the symbol of both the Brahman Absolute and the Brahman with attribute. His all desires are fulfilled who knows the inner significance of 'OM'. The wise meditate on 'OM' as their very selves in the way: "I am the Brahman". The mediocre takes 'OM' as the symbol and worships it accordingly[2]. OM being the support of both kinds of meditation, it is the best of its kind[3].

The *Nāda* and the *Vindu* are like Nṛsiṃha and *Vāmana* respectively. According to the laws of evolution and involution, it is quite evident that from the time when Brahman incarnated as *Vāmana*, this world of *Jivas* has been trying to shake off its animal nature and revert to its original unique condition. This is like *Nāda* preparing for its return to the state of *Vindu*. The day when it is successful in its attempt, *Jivanmukti* or emancipation will not be far from the reach of humanity. Since the days of *Vāmana*, humanity has advanced much in its journey towards the goal and this is proved by the appearance of Sri Krishna, Buddha, Caitaṇya, Christ and other great men in this world who were and are endowed with full knowledge of Brahman.

Since every evolution is followed by the process of involution, the primal essence evolves gradually into the form of atoms and diverse forms of the material and jiva world till the whole creation reverts once more to its original condition. Hence every thing has the same form both in the beginning and at the end. The Supreme Lord is unmanifest at both ends of this process of evolution and involution but is manifest in between as the universe[4].

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1. "ॐमिति ब्रह्म। ॐमितीदं सर्व्वम्।"—Taitt Up. 1. 19.
2. Katha Up, 1. 2. 16.
3. Katha, 1. 2. 17.
4. "अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत।"—Gita, 2. 28.

All things are inter-connected as cause and effect. Before revelation as effect, a thing exists as the seed or the cause. Brahman is the cause behind the creation. As the cause behind the creation, Brahman is formless but as the effect, He has form. He has been revealed with form through the medium of the phenomenon of living beings and the world. He has been mentioned in the Vedās as the Great One, the Vast One. The heaven is His head, the sun and the moon are His eyes, the quarters His ears, the Vedās His speech, the air is His breath, the earth His feet and the heart of all created beings is His abode.

The same one existence is called by the wise Bāyu (air), Agni (fire), Jal (water), and Pritthvi (earth). The sentient and the insentient, man and God, the beast and the demon, the earth and the sky, the sun and the moon are all shadows of that Supreme Brahman. Diversity is His illusory manifestation as has been declared in the Ṛgveda in the clearest language. The universe has been created in the realm of time, space and causation which create the false idea of diversity. Whatever exists is one. "Brahman is the only Being uncreated and existing both within and without"—says Mundak Up. II. i. 2. Before creation, all was shrouded in darkness, unrevealed and indescribable. With the awakening of the desire in Brahman for creation, the universe having name and form was evolved. The Supreme Brahman has neither form nor name. Name and form are illusory emanations of the Brahman. Behind the different gods mentioned in the Vedās, exists the same omniscient God Supreme. In the *Atharva* Veda, we find that the supreme Being has been described as the supreme support (Skambha Brahman) ; gods and demons, men and beasts, water, air, earth, the moon, the sun, the stars and the planets, the sentient and the insentient, the limited and the unlimited—all are tied fast to Him. So, although He is the receptacle

Skambha Brahman

of the entire universe, He exists in and through all. Behind the bright rays of the sun, there is one great light, sublime soothing and pleasing which the Ṛṣi of the Vedic age longing to see prayed : "O sun ! curb thy dazzling rays and thy material form. I desire to see your beneficient grace covered by your visible rays."—Iśa upaniṣad, verse 16. There is no doubt that the beneficient beauty behind the sun is nothing but the joyful Self of the Brahman Supreme.

The Brahman loses nothing by His manifestation as the universe like the sun and the moon giving light to the world and still losing nothing and remaining unchanged. So this universe is not God ; it only rests in Him[1]. This is why neither His existence is exhausted nor His nature is affected by the creation of the world. "Each minute particle of the world is contained in Brahman ; none exists outside the Container'- declares Taittiriya Upaniṣad, verse 1, 10. Everything is dependent on Brahman but Brahman is independent of all, He hangs on nothing. His infinitude does not signify His exclusiveness of the rest but includes all. He is the beginning and end of creation. The creation flows from Brahman, rests in Brahman and ultimately returns to Brahman. 'We live, move and have our being in God'. "Naturally who could live and who could breathe if this 'Ānanda' were not in 'Ākāśa', His Ānanda or joy creates and sustains the world—'Ānanda rupaṃ amṛtaṃ Yad Bibhāti". He is the spiritual spring from which everything sprang up.

It is written in the *Gunakarinta Byuha* of the Buddhists : "when nothing existed, the Creator existed. He is the primordial being of all ; hence He is designated as the Prime *Buddha*. He expressed His desire to be many. It is this desire to create that is designated as *Prajnāpāramitā*. When all was void, Goddess Prajnā came out along with the mystic

1. "अहमेतद् न ।"—Said He : "I am not this universe.

syllable 'OM'. She is verily the Mother of all *Buddhists* and of all *Bodhisattas*." It is this Supreme Intuition (*Prajnāpāramitā*) that is verily the Vidyā of Brahman, the Great Mother (*Mahāmāyā*), His consort. "O Thou *Prajnāpāramitā*! I bow down to Thee: Thou art Omniscient. Thou guide men along different paths by following which each will attain his own liberation." So this *Prajnāpāramita*, is inevitably Cit-śakti or the conscious energy of the Brahman Supreme, that unfolded all creation.

The Vedānta states that the Supreme Being who was without attribute having desired to create the universe took attributes unto Himself and created the great *Mahā Māyā*—the Prakriti from out of His own body. In the beginning of creation, all these existed in the form of the Great *Puruṣa* or the Supreme Being.

For the fact that He was alone, He did not feel happy. So there arose a desire for enjoying company. He desired: "Let there be a companion with a body second to mine."[1] Thereupon, He assumed a form which was the same as that of a man and a woman locked in embrace. Then He divided the body into two, separating the figure of the man from the woman form. Afterwards out of their combined music called 'OM' (or the sound energy of that mystic syllable) the first of the five primary elements, ether was born. The ethereal sky vibrated in consonance with the life-force of Brahman and created the air. Gradually, from air came fire, from fire came water and from water came the movable and immovable world.[2] So it has been said in the *Vedās* that Brahman is that wood and Brahman is that tree out of which the three worlds have been created. By this statement, the process of evolution in creation has been admitted.

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1. "सोऽकामयत द्वितीयो म आत्मा जायेतेति।—Br Ār. Up. VI. 4. 4. Vide also 1. 4. 3.
2. "आकाशाद्वायो वायोरग्निः अग्नेरापः अद्भ्यः पृथिवी।"—Taitt Up I. 28.

From the Supreme Being's desire for His manifestation in creation, there awakened in Him the unfolding of the universe. As a consequence, *Hiraṇyagarva* or the mundane egg, the prime cause of the cosmos took birth in the *Avyakta*—the unmanifest Prakriti. Within this mundane egg, were generated these various spheres of the cosmos as well as the earth with its seven continental islands. *Hiraṇyagarva* is the prolific nature of the supreme Being. This original state of creation was first revealed in the Supreme Soul as the 'OM' or the mystic sound energy. The movement of this mystic supreme sound is the life-force of the universe and is Joy in its own self. This life-force as the cause of creation, stability and destruction finds expressions as time and space. Fire is the inner combustion of the world ; it is like a smithy where every thing assumes a shape. So creation is nothing but the sum-total of all names, forms and actions. That which envelopes all at the time of annihilation is water. She who is the receptacle of all these is the Earth—Mother good Earth. She is holding in her own bosom the whole earthly creation out of supreme motherly affection. The supreme Being is the receptacle of the origin of everything ; heavens act as repository of the universe and the Earth is the support of individuality.

Para-Brahman has assumed duality for the purpose of enjoying both happiness and misery, truth and untruth. Further, the union after long time of separation is agreeable indeed. The Supreme Lord in order to enjoy the bliss of union has willingly produced this Leela in which He alone plays the part of many. He, as universal ego, has appeared in diverse forms. Just as the stage of *Suṣupti* or deep sleep passes to the stage of dream, similarly, the ever blissful Lord with the intention of creating the jivas adopted the form of *Hiraṇyagarva* who is also known as *sutrātman*, being the connecting link between jiva and the Brahman. The great

Ṛṣi *Patanjali* said, "Enjoyment and emancipation are the two objects of creation". When enjoyment of this world has no more any attraction for a person, he turns to the path of emancipation or realisation of the Ultimate Truth and the Merciful Lord also appears to him as a *Sadguru* or the true spiritual guide.

The Ṛṣis and Seers of ancient India identified this creation with Brahman and called it *Virāt*. Only a minute fraction of the infinite power and consciousness that is He permeates this universe. A fraction or a part can never be so great as to contain the whole and make up a Unit. So, Mrs. Annie Besant said : "that marvellous individuality is not lost and only a portion thereof suffices for the life of a cosmos". Brahman or Ātman lies in and through all the objects of creation. "There is no beast on earth, nor bird which flieth with its wings but the same is a people like unto you—unto the Lord shall they return"—said the Lord Christ.

Just as the human life has four stages—childhood, youth, post youth and old age, so the world of ours has also four ages viz. *Satya* (the Golden age), *Treta* (the second age or the age in the *Paurānik* Chronology of the Hindus), *Dwāpara* (the third age, in which Lord Krishna is said to have appeared), *Kali* (the fourth or the iron age which is an age of vice).

In old age, the physical and mental faculties of man wane. The earth which is a part of the universe has reached the stage of decay due to old age. Its consciousness is gradually diminishing. As at the time of death, consciousness departs from the body, so at the time of dissolution of the universe, the Almighty will withdraw the light of consciousness of this universe and others.

At the time of dissolution of the universes, *Brahmā Viṣṇu, S'iva* and other Gods and all the things, whether living or not, merge themselves in the Great Eternity—

Mahākāla. Kāli is identified with *Mahākāla*, because she laps up the *Mahākāla*. *Kāli* is the great divinity in whom all the powers of creation merge. Only in Brahmānda and the world below cataclysms take place. No change occurs in the world of pure consciousness which is immutable.

Creation and dissolution make up the Leela of Brahman and the changes occur alternately. Hence, it is stated in the Ṛgveda that the Creator created the sun and the moon as in the previous creations—a statement which indicates that creation and dissolution have been taking place all along through the past and will take place in future.[1] "Brahmā created the universe in the present Kalpa as it was in the previous one"—states the Srimad Bhāgavad, II. 2. 1. The same text observes in the verse, III. 10, 13 : "The visible world existed as such in the past and it will remain the same in the future.[2]" Brahmā said : "As directed by the supreme Brahman. I manifest the unmanifest universe, already planned and created by Him in imagination (vide Bhāgavad II. 5. 11 +17). These utterances prove that creation is an emergence. The higher celestial regions like Mahaḥ, Janaḥ, Satya etc. are neither created nor destroyed frequently, because these spheres are the results of disinterested actions. The higher celestial regions like Jahaḥ etc. are inhabitated by the illumined souls. The sages like Vṛgu and others are said to reside there for a period of one *Kalpa* (vide Bhāgavad, II. 2, 25). The earth is created out of *yajna* performed with an end in view. Being the product of an interested action, the universe is created and destroyed in each *Kalpa* (vide Srimad Bhāgavad, III. 10. 9). When by dissolution, the whole earth was immersed in water and made unfit for human habitation,

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1. "सूर्य्यचन्द्रमसौ धाता यथा पूर्व्वमकल्पयत् ।—Ṛgved.
Parāsar says : "अम्भ्रिः जायते विश्वमवैव प्रविलीयते ।"

2. "यथेदानीं तथा चाग्रे पश्चादप्येतदीदृशम् ।—Bhāgavad III. 10. 13.

Manu, the progenitor of mankind entreated Brahmā to raise the earth from water again[1].

During dissolution, the Vedic knowledge merges in Brahman and when it is complete, the supreme Brahman creates the *māyik* Lord called *Brahmā* and reveals to Him the Vedic knowledge which again is handed down to a human teacher—a Ṛṣi who propagates its teachings to the world. A Ṛṣi with a view to be as powerful as *Brahmā* or the creator Lord, performs severe austerities. Whatever a man contemplates at the time of his death, he becomes so in the next-birth. The Ṛṣi is, therefore, re-born as the creator Lord. Through contemplation, he awakens the subtle impressions of Vedic knowledge acquired in his previous life which he carries in his mind in the form of a seed. With the revival of this knowledge, he sets in the work of a new creation. This work of creation is also a mere act of contemplation—a Kalpanā of the creator Lord i.e., an idea for creation in the Cosmic Mind. From this standpoint, the world which is an act of imagination—a mere idea cannot be real. The idealistic creation of a *Māyik* agent is inevitably illusory. The verse VI, 3 of the Praṣna Upanisad, for example, may be cited to show that the universe is a mental creation and that it is the act of a conscious mind.

During dissolution, the creation merges into Brahman and becomes *Avyakta*; what is patent becomes latent again. The unmanifest becomes again manifest at the will of God, for reversion to the previous condition is a law of nature, and according to the doctrine of conservation of energy, nothing of this creation is lost by dissolution. *Pralaya* and *Mahā Praloya i.e.*, minor and major dissolutions affect, only the *Pinda* and *Brahmānda* regions of creation. They do not affect the region of unqualified Brahman; that region, changeless

1. Bhāgavad III, 13. 15.

and indestructible, is *Nirmala Caitanya Deśa* or the region of pure consciousness.

Just prior to dissolution, this earth grows cold and gradually narrowing its orbit falls eventually into the sun. The sun in its turn loses heat and light and as a result, the entire creation is enveloped in darkness again. During dissolution, the creation with its animate and inanimate objects is merged in *Tamas* or the Lord of *Tamas* who is *Maheśwara. Tamas* subsequently merges in the Supreme Being and it is then that the Supreme Soul reverts to the condition of Yoga-nidrā or sleep of meditation[1]. At the termination of this process of dissolution or pralaya and with the approach of the time for creation, the unmanifest Lord wills again to be manifest as many. He again divides Himself into *Puruṣa* and *Prakriti* and the creation starts afresh.

In the Vedās, it is ignorance that has been called Tamas or darkness. The entire phenomenal universe having name and form has come out of Māyā, the rhetorical figure of *Tamas*. In the time of dissolution, the entire creation is merged in Prakriti or Māyā, and creation starts anew when the Great Brahman brings forth the entire creation merged in the womb of Māyā or Prakriti. This non-existent or indefinable condition has been described as night (Rātri) pervaded with darkness. Rātri is equal to R + Atri. 'R' means fire *i.e.* Varhiḥ which means Brahman. Atri means unmanifest, undivided and unchangeable.

The Gita, (verses, 8.18-20) observes that with the dawn of the day pertaining to the Brahman, creation evolves out of the unmanifest *Prakriti*, and when His night comes, the entire creation merges into the same again. Thus the creation and destruction repeat alternately. Even with the total extinction

1. "स सृष्टिकाले प्रकरोति सर्गं संहारकाले च तदत्तिभूयः। संहृत्य सर्व्वं निजदेह-संस्थं कृत्वापसु शेते जगदन्तरात्मा।—Smṛti.

of the world, the Eternal Brahman who is beyond both the unmanifest and the manifest remains unaffected. Brahma-śakti or the power of Brahman is identical with 'Tejaḥ'. Brahman and His energy are one and inseparable. At the beginning of creation, this Brahma-śakti was present in the form of enfolding darkness.

The eight entities—the earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and ego—all belong to *Prakriti*[1]. After these entities were evolved out of Prakriti, a finite consciousness arose in the Divine Mind in the way of 'these are My attributes.' The Brahman, as a result of the awakening of such finite consciousness appeared as *Saguṇa*. Thus the Supreme Soul assuming the attributes of mind etc. enters through His sportive spirit into ovoviparous, oviparous, and viviparous life. He appears like them and enjoys accordingly[2].

Spirit & Matter

The Brahman is the eternal seed of all creation. He divided the entities into elements, senses and the gods. It is said in verse 1-10 of the the Śvetaśvatara Upaniṣad that one supreme Para-Brahman rules over both spirit and matter. He is the supreme one and everything else is His manifestation. Gita, verse 13.27 declares that whatever is found on the bosom of the earth is divided into two groups-Spirit and matter—Puruṣa and Prakriti and that without the association of the two nothing can be produced, The material world is His Aparā Prakriti, whereas the sentient group is His Parā Prakriti, 'Śarva Darśan' says that God lies in and through all objects of creation—animate and inanimate. That is why Bṛhadāraṇyak Upaniṣad declares in verse 2.4.5 that the knowledge of the Absolute gives knowledge of the universe, movable or immovable.

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1. भूमिरापोऽनलोवायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेवच। अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा।"

2. Vide Śrimad Bhāgavada 1. 2. 32.

The universal nature created by the Supreme Being has two facets—one is divine consciousness or spirit and the other is non-divine nature or matter. That which is based on the knowledge of sense perception is non-divine or material knowledge and that which depends on feelings is divine knowledge. Divine nature exists as the basis of knowledge, will, emotion, and active energy. This divine nature is the power of Brahman or the Supreme Being and is the ingredients or original water from which every thing evolved, movable or immovable. "Know it for certain that I am the eternal seed of all."—said Lord Krishna. Matter and spirit are the modes of manifestation of that Supreme Being. "Spirit and matter are only named differentially two mentally recognisable states of the same substance which alone has, nay, which alone is 'Life' , otherwise spirit and matter are identical and inseparable."—'Theism and Thought.' "No matter without force, no force without matter—matter and force are co-existent and inseparable".—says Herbert Spencer. Creation starts by the simultaneous and continued action of *Mulā Prakriti* (matter) and *parā-Prakriti* (Spirit) of the Brahman. Matter and spirit must act harmoniously in creation. Matter and force, *Prakriti* and *Purusa* are but different manifestations of the same Brahman. There is no such thing as dead matter—the universe consists of living forces all through. Life of a creature, motion in matter, current in water, heat of the sun and light of the moon—all owe their energy to One and the same Being. So it is an evident truth that behind these all, there is one spiritual Being whom different men call in different names[1].

Matter has four states—solid, liquid, gas and ether. The solid state is the grossest, the liquid is comparatively fine, gas is finer and ether is the finest. The chief constituent of

1. "एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति ।"

creation is ether. When a person scrutinizes ether, all things in creation appear to him to be trifling and he feels everywhere the existence of ether alone. Even in both sandal-wood and stool, he realizes only the entity of ether and hence he loses the sense of difference between sandal-wood and stool. As ether is all-pervading, so is the Brahman all-pervading. Some men do not assign so much importance to the chief constituent as they do to the varied things created by ether and as instance of the relation of cause and effect, remember only this much that everything in the world has come from ether ; ether is their source. The purport is the same but the view points are different.

Solid substances are called the earth (Pṛthvi), liquid substances, water (Ap), luminous substances, fire (Tejaḥ), the fourth, air (Marut), and the fifth, ether (Byom). In English, Marut, is called electron. The negative molecule of electricity is electron and the positive molecule is proton. One kind of electrical energy called positron has been discovered. The union of one positron and one electron brings forth Gāmmā-Rays. Again, the Gāmmā-Ray can be separated into the two different energies—positron and electron. This proves that matter and energy are not fundamentally different. One is the support of the other and is its component and manifestor. Collective energy is always of the same magnitude ; it has no increase or decrease ; it is only transformed into some other energy. "It is the dream of science that all the recognised chemical elements will one day be found to be modifications of a single element."—'World-life' P. 48.

Lord Sri Krishna told Arjuna : "In all the spheres, I am the Revealer. Earth, water, light, air, ether and other material objects are nothing but My material manifestations or external nature, and the Jivas are My inner nature. The insentient and the sentient—all ultimately enter in Me." The phenomenal matter and the individuals are diverse revelations of the same

Supreme Soul. In universal creation, the union of matter and energy is indispensable.

The things of the earth are made up of electron and proton. Mrs. Annie Besant is of the view : "No particle of matter is in contact with any other particle, but each swings in a field of ether". The molecules of matter are not interconnected ; on the contrary, they are perpetually whirling in the midst of ether. J. Arthur Findlay says : "This earth is the result of violent ether-vibration." Electrons and protons are ceaselessly creating waves in ether and these electric waves cause all kinds of motions and create all things. "Whatever there is, comes out of life and vibrates in it.'[1] The ether thus surging out violently as waves, impelled by life-force of Brahman is distributing various kinds of things all over the earth.[2] It is from this ether wave that we acquire knowledge of material sciences. "The cosmic presents itself to us objectively under the form of the great natural forces—gravitation, heat, light, electricity, chemical affinity etc. ; then as the organising power in vegetables and animals ; finally as human self-consciousness and sociability."—said the Vedāntist Schopenhauer.

Saṃkar in his commentary on the verse IV. 72 of the *Māndukyopaniṣad* states that the world is the outcome of mental vibration. According to the *S'ivāites* of Kāśmira school, the creation is an effect of *hṛd-spandan* or heart-vibration of the Lord *S'iva*. Ether-vibrations that touch the retina take the form of an object. The vibration emitted by a tree in the space around comes in contact with the retina of our optic vision and produces knowledge of the tree including its shape, colour, etc. So the existence of a tree

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1. "प्राणीद्येष यः सर्व्वभूतैर्विभाति ।"—Mu. Up. III. 1. 4.
"प्राणसेदं वशे सर्व्वं त्रिदिवे यत् प्रतिष्ठितम् ।"—The Vedānta
2. "यदिदं किञ्च जगत् सर्व्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम् ।"—Katha Up. II. 3. 10.

depends on ether-vibration. Vibration is the characteristic of all things and beings—material and immaterial because ether is their source.

The elements are unmanifest when they do not enter into quintuplication *i.e.*, when their atoms are not united in suitable proportion. As *Tanmātra i.e.*, in unmanifest state the elements are pure, but when made manifest they lose their original purity and combined with one another they come to the use of human beings.

The essential constituent ingredients of an atom of all elements like gold, silver etc. are protons (positive electricity) and electrons (negative electricity). The number of electrons and protons in an atom of an element is 1—104 and 1—245 respectively. An electron is whirling round a proton at a speed of 50,000—1,86,000 miles per second. The difference in number of the existing protons and electrons in an atom of different elements gives rise to the formation of different elements. So, if the protons and electrons of a silver atom can be arranged in such a way that they are of equal number as in a gold atom, the silver can be changed into gold. The world is a creation of mind. Jullian Huxley observes : "there is only one substance which possesses not only material properties, but also properties for which the word mental is the nearest approach." According to Plato, mind is the sum-total of ether-vibrations. So if the mind is made still and subtle, the union of protons and electrons in an atom of an element in suitable proportion becomes possible. When it is done, one element is changed into another because a gross element is nothing but the aggregate of its subtlest particles. The *Chhāndagyopaniṣad* states that ether is the creator and revealer of all having names and forms, both living and non-living.[1] But this ether is not to be confused with the

1. Chhā. Up VIII. 14 and 1. 9.

elemental ether. What is mentioned above is the ether—the sky of consciousness, confined within the cave of the heart-centre and this is *Ātman*, the soul of beings. Chhā. Up VI. 8. 1 identifies this ether with *jiva* during deep sleep when jiva-self becomes one with *Ātman*. While holding this small ether within the heart as the essence of all things and beings, the Vedānta precludes all ideas of elemental ether and jiva-self[1]. According to the Praśnopaniṣad, this ether dwelling within the body of beings is the Highest Person *i.e.*, the Brahman[2].

The celestial regions and their denizens.

From the spirit of the earth has come the globe : from the spirit of water has come the atmosphere : from the spirit of fire has come the celestial regions : from the spirit of air has come the higher celestial regions and the essence of ether is the composition of the world of Brahman. Just as the God of our earth is the God Viṣṇu, the preserver, so also there are rulers of other stars and planets of the Solar System. The Lord of the entire Universe is the great Brahmā The Solar system consists of the planets and satellites that move about the sun as their centre. The Solar System is Brahmāṇda or universe and is so called because of its elliptical form which makes it look like an *Aṇda* or egg.

Besides this visible earth, there are subtle worlds. They are the sky (*Bhuborloka*), the celestial regions (*Swarloka*) the higher celestial regions (*Maharloka*) and the world of Brahman (*Brahmaloka*). The subtle worlds are situate at gradually higher levels and they are made up of ether or fine ether molecules.

The earth together with a space covering thirty-two times of its dimension around it is lighted by the rays of the sun

1. The Vedānta Sutra. 1. 3. 15.
2. Pr. Up, V. 5.

and the moon. The world is surrounded on all sides by the mountains called *Loka* and *Aloka*. This visible world including both *Loka* and *Aloka* regions constitute the body of *Virāt Puruṣa*. The departed beings enjoy in *Loka* and *Aloka* the fruits of their actions done in their worldly lives. The part of the mountain, named *Loka* is lighted by the sunrays, whereas the *Aloka* is a sphere of eternal darkness ; the sunlight never reaches there. In the Upaniṣad, Aloka is designated as *Anandasthāna*—the sphere of gloom and unhappiness[1]. Both the *Loka* and *Aloka* regions are comprised within the universe. The golden egg in which the four-faced *Brahmā* took birth, was divided into two-halves when He was born. The upper part is called the upper cauldron and the lower part is the lower cauldron. The space within the two is the universe. At the apex of the upper cauldron, there is an aperture, called *Brahmarandhra* through which the liberated souls escape after death to the world of Brahman. *Indra*, the Lord of the heavens hands them over to the subtle wind. *Indra* having form, though very subtle, has no access to the sphere beyond this universe. The subtle wind is the connecting link between this universe and the world of Brahman. This subtle air which is the essential part of the *Prāṇa* or vital air builds the subtle body of a being. *Hiraṇyagarbha* represents the collective suble bodies of all beings. The whole creation is permeated by the subtle air which is *Prāṇa*. *Hiraṇyagarbha* pervades every inch of his creation as the subtle air and His fullness is not affected in any way thereby.[2] The worldly beings, the world and the creator-Lord *Hiraṇyagarbha* all are comprised in the Brahman but the Brahman transcends them all.[3]

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1. "अनन्दा नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसावृता ।"—Bṛ Ār Up IV. 4. 11.
2. Sveta Up. 1. 12.
3. "भोक्ता भोग्यं प्रेरितारञ्च मत्वा सर्व्वं प्रोक्तं त्रिविधं ब्रह्ममेतत् ।"—Sveta I. 12.

It is stated in the *Mahābhārata* that *Yudhisthira*, the eldest *Pāndava*, made for the heavens on foot and was there accompanied by a dog. This proves that the heavens are situated on some part of this Earth. *Nārada* and other Ṛṣis very often used to go to heaven or the region of the gods to visit *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Maheśwara* for various reasons. The four-faced Brahmā revealed the *Vedās* while living on the Earth. Attendants of Lord *S'iva* can be identified with the forefathers of the people of *Nepal*, *Bhutan* and *Sikkim*. *Kālidās*, the immortal poet of India described *Pārbati* as the daughter of the Himalayas, the king of mountains. It is clear then that the father of *Sati* and the father of *Pārbati* had their kingdoms somewhere near the Himalayan ranges and Lord *S'iva* used to dwell very near to them. The Ṛgveda says, "Ilaḥ Svargaḥ" *i.e.*, *Ilāvrita Varṣa* is *Svarga* or heaven. '*Ila*' can be identified with the *Altai* ranges to the north of China. This place is the cradle of mankind. Therefore, *Svarga* is no place beyond this plane[1]. The inhabitants of this region were known as the *Devas* and their language was Devabhāṣā which is Saṃskrit. The Brāhmins, we know, are called Bhūdeva, the Aryans *Deva* and the ladies *Devi*. They were all called *Devas* for their godlike character and profound wisdom.

The verse 1. 16. 12 of the Srimad Bhāgavad states : the emperor Parikshit conquered even the heavenly kingdom of the *Kinnars*, the sphere of the celestial musicians. He made valuable presents of clothes, ornaments and other things to the *Kinnars*. Evidently, the heavenly spheres are not situated outside the world[1]. The celestial regions are characterised by *Rajas*. Here the departed souls enjoy the fruits of actions done in their worldly lives. The material earth is the only

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1. "यदेवेह तदमुत्र यदमुत्र तदन्विह"—Kath Up. II. 1. 10.
Plotinus said : "All things that are yonder are also here."

plane where even the gods are to be born so that they may acquire merit and enlightenment for the attainment of salvation. In this connection Śridhar Goswami made comment on the verse II. 1. 13, Bhā, saying that the king Khattānga was aware of this truth and so he ignored the enjoyments of heaven and descended to the earth without the least hesitation.

Hell is said to be the lowest stratum of the firmament and its denizens are invisible to our naked eyes. Those evil spirits, again, cannot peep into the spheres higher above. The hell is enveloped in gloom ; there shines neither the sun nor the moon. This darkness is not without but within the hearts of the inhabitants of hell. Whichcote rightly observes : "Both heaven and hell are nothing but mental creations ; they have their foundation within us. The guilt conscience and enmity to righteousness are the inward states of hell." The wise see both heaven and hell here on earth. In fact, the sinners and the men of vicious character are often found subjected to hellish tortures while living in this world. Contrary to it, the countenance of the pious beams with celestial delight and they enjoy perfect peace of mind (vide the Bhā. III. 30. 29). The heaven and hell are different states of mind. The departed spirits with gloomy mind cannot rise higher and are compelled to live in the infernal region created by their own minds. The departed souls of the pious make for higher spheres, illuminated by the light of their own soul. These heavenly realms designated as Mahaḥ, Janaḥ, Tapaḥ etc. resemble our earth in every respect. But these spheres being made up of fine ether particles appear exquisitely resplendent and beautiful. There is no sun-light in them ; the worlds beyond are lit up by the halo of the supreme soul and that halo is cooler than moon-light. Like those in our earth, there are cities and villages, streams and rivers, hills and mountains, men and women, all bathed in the bright transparent ether *tanmātras* or the essence of the ether. The

higher *Ātmikas* (the disembodied souls) of these celestial regions descend to the lower spheres, even to the earth and try their best to help the distressed there. They may appear in dream and warn worldly men as to their impending dangers and suggest remedies to overcome difficulties. Those who are anxious to lead pious and spiritual lives get invaluable help from the generous *Ātmikas* towards self-realisation. As for myself, I stepped in the path of spirituality and took to *Yoga* by the urge I received from the departed Great Swāmi Vivekānanda. Many times, he appeared in my dreams and before my meditative vision and was gracious enough to help me in many ways.

With the help of such *Ātmikas* of higher spiritual power, the *jivas* and the *videhas* (disembodied beings) may rise up to the higher planes but their minds cannot retain consciousness there for long. Their minds and senses being made up of grosser elements and accustomed to slow vibration of the earth cannot stand the higher frequency of ether-vibration of the higher planes and so they faint away as soon as they reach there. The worlds above have much greater frequency of vibration, unless the body is made subtle and still by the practice of Yoga and the frequency of vibration of their being is enhanced and the jivas become free from worldly thoughts ; they cannot enter and stay long in higher planes.

In dreams, jivātman comes out of the gross physical body and enters and wanders in *bhuborloka* but the journey is also a short one on account of the above reason. The *Ātmikas* of higher planes as well feel uncomfortable in earth or in the lower planes of other planets due to heavy ether waves of slow vibration and full of dark and evil thoughts flowing from the jiva-minds. When they get inclined to do good to any worldly man, they take help of *Ātmikas* of lower regions. Their minds are so much subtle that the gross minds of the worldly people fail to catch the tremors of thought-wave of the former.

An emancipated soul living on earth can isolate his subtle body from the material one and traverse the whole creation, even the world of Brahman. The subtle bodies are located within the vital airs. The *yogins* with the help of subtle bodies travel anywhere in this universe and outside it. The devout saints and *yogins* pierce through the border of the universe with the help of their subtle bodies. They assume the watery, fiery and luminous sheaths and become as light as air, when they are transformed into etherial space that pervades the whole creation. To such an emancipated soul come the gods and goddesses, the rulers of different spheres and also many *Ātmikas* of higher spiritual excellence to receive his instructions. He declares "I am free soul, the world of Brahman and the Himalayas which are my seat, are all equal to me. Brahman also exists here. Different spheres are but *māyik* creation." All the attributes of God arise at his sweet will. Srimad Bhāgavad, III. 16. 14 declares that the illumined souls who perform disinterested actions and worship Lord Viṣṇu without craving for any return live in *Vaikuntha*, the paradise of Lord Viṣṇu. They represent the Lord Viṣṇu in person. But these regions of the manifested gods are all perishable. "With the awakening of discriminative knowledge when *Brahmā*, the Creator Lord, enters into the Brahman, there is dissolution of the universe. This is the verdict of all the Vedās, Smṛtis and the Yoga-philosophy of the *Sāmkhyas*"—Comments *Vyās* on 25, Yoga-Śāstra by Patanjali."[1] Except the world of pure consciousness, all other spheres are subject to dissolution and destruction. "Jivas have to return from these spheres but he who reaches Me, the Supreme Spirit, there is no rebirth for him"—said Lord Krishna.[2]

1. "विवेकवलाद् यदा स परं पदं प्रविशति तदा ब्रह्माण्डस्य लय इत्येव श्रुतिस्मृतिसांख्य-योगानां समीचीनो राद्धान्त: ।"—Says Vyās.
2. The Gita, 8. 16.

When the desire for creation occupied Divine Mind, the Supreme Spirit spread itself through time and the creation started. Time in the phenomenal plane connects *Puruṣa* with Prakriti and diverse cognitions of the world appearance follow. The idea of time works in the phenomenal plane alone. The Supreme Spirit is timeless because it is changeless. Before creation, time in the form of Eternity was identical with God[1].

The creation started in time

"I am the eternity itself, the everlasting time. I am the All-faced Brahman, facing all directions. I exist in all times and everywhere."—Said Lord Krishna in the Gita, verse 10.35. Evolution starts when the quiescent state of *Prakriti* is disturbed by *Puruṣa* or the soul and the cohesion of the *guṇas* is lost thereby. This agitation in *Prakriti* is caused due to her proximity to *Puruṣa*[2]. So the tendency to evolution is due to the disintegration of the *guṇas*. The quiescence, evolution and dissolution repeat successively through all the Eternity. The Lord of *Māyā* in order to assume different names and forms availed Himself of time, destiny and phenomena, voluntarily created out of His own *Māyā*[3]. In Siva-Saṃhita, *Siva* is *Mahākāla*, the Great Eternity. As the Lord of procreation, He is called *Ardhanareśwar i.e.* half man and half woman. The Brahman manifested Himself through *Māyā* in the realm of time, space and causation as *Brahmās*, *Jivas*, and the worlds. The activities of the creator-Lords are, therefore, controlled by the power of time and so it renders the creation and the creator-Lords perishable. No ultimate good can be expected from them.

According to the *Bhāgavad.* 3.26.15, Eternity is the twenty-fifth entity besides the other twenty-four. But from other texts we learn that above the twenty-four entities, is

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1. Vide Taitt Up. 1. 28.
2. Sāṃkhya Pravacana, 1.96.
3. Bhāgavad, II. 5.21.

Ātman or the soul. It stands, therefore, that Eternity and Ātman are identical. The *Bhāgavad* states that God, who creates agitation in the quiescent *Prakriti* and as a result of which the *guṇas* are disintegrated, is Eternity[1]. Some learned men identify Eternity with the energy of the Brahman[2]. *Brahma-S'akti*, in the realm of time, takes two forms of force and matter. The Being who resides within all created beings as their guide and who exists outside as time, is God[3]. Time has been designated as the Lord of the gods[4], Though the gods are powerless before time, the latter can exercise no influence on an emancipated soul who has transcended the realms of time, space and causation. Ātman is not limited by them[5].

In Hindu Mythology, time is personified as *Mahākāla*, the Great Eternity. Regarding Eternity, saint Augustine observes : "With Thee stand the causes of things that are so unstable, with Thee the origin of all things that here abideth not ; with Thee liveth eternal reason of all which is here unreasonable and temporal." When the desire for creation occupied the Divine Mind, the great *Puruṣa* in contact with *Prakriti* descended into the cosmic plane and evolved Himself through time as the universe. Thus the timeless and changeless Being entered into the realm of ever changing time and space with a view to manifesting itself into finite and limited beings of diverse categories. In *avyakta* or the unmanifest state, the supreme spirit is timeless because it is changeless ; its pre-cosmic nature is Eternity itself. So the idea of time works only in the phenomenal plane. "Time is the moving image of Eternity."—says Plato. Time carries with it a sense of

1. Bhāgavad III. 16.27.
2. Bhāgavad, III. 26.16.
3. Bhāgavad III. 26.18.
4. Bhāgavad II. 2.17.
5. Vide—Samkar Bhāṣya 17, on Taitt Up. verse 1.28 : "आत्मन आनन्तं देशत: अकार्य्यत्वात् कालत: ।"

impermanence. Time brings a change in whatever it touches and ultimately devours it. Its arrow never turns back. It flows continuously as a river in flood, paying no heed to the ravages it leaves behind. Newton said : "Time in itself and its own nature flows equally without reference to anything external." The fleeting and destructive aspect of time sickens the poet's heart and he regrets :

"O Lord, my heart is sick,
Sick of this everlasting change ;
And life runs tediously quick
Through its unresting race and varied range.
Change finds no likeness of itself in Thee
And makes no echo in thy mute Eternity."

According to the Hindu Cosmology, the world-period *i,e.* from evolution to dissolution consists of 432 times a million years and it is called one *Kalpa.* A *Kalpa* is a day and night of *Brahmā*, the creator and *Brahmā* lives one hundred years of such days. The universe appears at the beginning of each *Kalpa* and disappears at the end of it. Each Kalpa is divided again into fourteen periods which are called *Manvantaras.* We live in the seventh *Manvantara* of the present *Kalpa.* Each *Manvantara,* in its turn, is subdivided into seventy-one *Mahāyugas.* We are now in the *Koli-yuga* which is the iron age. The *Koli-yuga* is the worst age and it commenced from 3102 B. C. According to the Hindu Mythology, time is *tamas* or *avidyā*, the ignorance. As the world evolved through time, it is enveloped with ignorance. To remove this ignorance, to obliterate the evil impressions of time, and lastly to overcome its evil effects and influences, the sense of time should be totally forgotten. Bertrand Russel observes : "Both in thought and in feeling to realise the unimportance of time is the gateway to wisdom." Time is the biggest stumbling block on the way to Supreme Truth.

Of the three dimensions of time—the past, the present and the future, the present is at our disposal, the past is beyond our grip and the future is uncertain. Both the past and the future lie hidden in the present. The sweet recollections of the past and the happy dreams of a bright future lurk in the present. So Voltaire said : "When the past is put out through the door, it comes in at the window." Human life is not an empty dream, neither it is discontinuous but essentially it is immense—*Praṇo Virāt.* In the long chain of life, the present is in every moment swallowed up by the past, the future being silently crept into the present which sustains the hope of a bright future. Time and space are the only factors that cast and limit the destiny of man. Space and time are interdependent on each other. The world exists in our mind so long as we are limited by time, or in other words so long as we have the sense of time. The sense of time and space disappears in the state of *Samādhi*, because our plane of consciousness transcends their limitation at that stage. Time and space frame the network of human thought. The thought emerges in time and dies out in time. "Ends are realised through time but not in time, which devours its own children."—says Dr. Inge. Human perfection is attainable through a subtle transition of time into Eternity as the absolute value is realised when all the finite values are grasped. The integral knowledge of the finite is the same as the knowledge of the Infinite.

"I take shelter of that supreme Brahman who first created *Hiraṇyagarbha*, the attributed Brahman, and revealed to Him the Vedic knowledge for the first time[1]". The *Vedās* are said to be breathed out by the Brahman[2]. One day, while seated in

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1. "यो ब्रह्मानं विदधाति पूर्व्वं यो वै वेदांश्च प्रहिणोति तस्मै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये।"
—Sveta, VI. 18.

2. "अस्य महतो भूतस्य निःश्वसितमेतद यद्ऋग्वेदः इत्यादि श्रुते।"
—Bṛ Ār Up. II. 4.10 ; Bhā II. 7.11.

yogic posture, the *Hiraṇyagarbha Brahmā* had been meditating on the Brahman supreme, He felt through the grace of the Almighty an inaudible sound in the core of his heart. It was *Praṇava*, the mystic sound *'OM'* which is the seed of all the *Vedās* and the letters including vowels and consonants. The *'OM'* was revealed to Him in its full significance. The words which were then formulated from the letters and uttered by the four-faced *Brahmā* came to be known as the *Vedās*. The Vedic knowledge was subsequently taught by Him to *Atri*, *Angirā* and *Marici*. In the *Dwāpara* (Third age), Lord *Nārāyana* was born of *Satyavati* and *Parāsar*. Afterwards He was named as Krishna Dvaipāyan. To facilitate the Vedic knowledge, he compiled the Ṛg, Yajuḥ, Sāmaḥ and Atharva *Vedās* by collecting the *mantras* (hymns), suitable for each compilation. On account of such division of the *Vedās*, the *Krishna Dvaipāyan* came to be known as *Vedavyās*. The knowledge of Brahman is called *Vedānta* because it is the essence and concluding part of the *Vedās*. The *Vedānta* has also acquired the name of the *Upaniṣad* because it is the means to the realisation of the Brahman, and annihilation of *Avidyā* or ignorance as well.

The origin of the *Vedas*

It is stated in the *Mundakopaniṣad*, verse 1.1.2, that *Brahmā*, the creator of the universe at first trained his eldest son, *Atharva* with the knowledge of the Brahman and the latter imparted the knowledge to *Angirā* who in his turn tutored *Satyavān* accordingly. Afterwards when the human intellect and their longivity began to decline, Brahmā thought thus : "The *Vedās* which are my works will not be easily intelligible to man". So He took birth as *Vyās* in the womb of *Satyavati* and compiled the *Vedās* in different branches.

Vedavyās compiled *Bhāgavad Purāna* as a commentary to *Brahma-Sutra* or *Vedānta Sutra* and taught the same to his son *Sukdeva*. *Vyās*, his son *Sukdeva* and the disciples of

Vyās are said to have compiled 18 *Purānas*. The date of compilation was about the first century A.D. The *Mahābhārat* was compiled by *Vyās* long after the compilation of the great epic the *Rāmāyana* by Vālmiki. In the opinion of late Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Vedic hymns were composed as far back as eighteen thousand Years B. C.

It is stated in the texts that *Hiraṇyagarbha* was the speaker of the Yoga-philosophy[1]. In *S'āntiparva* of the *Mahābhārat*, Ṛṣi *Kapila* is identified as the compiler of the *Yoga-Sastras* and hence he has the title of *Hiraṇagarbha* in the *Mahābhārat*[2].

The Brahman is knowledge itself and His unlimited knowledge proves to be equivalent to *Tapasyā* or the practice of austerity which is essential for the purpose of His creation. The *Mundakopaniṣad*, (verse 1. 8-9) states that it is the excess of His illimitable knowledge about creation that made Him prone to create the universes. While commenting on it, Saṃkar illustrates thus : "Just as a father merrily multiplies himself as the sons, so through His excessive knowledge, the Brahman spontaneously multiplies Himself as *Hiraṇygarbha* or the *Kāryya-Brahman*, *Jiva* and the world with different names and forms." The attribute of *Hiraṇygarbha* is pure itself ; so the *Vedās* and the *Smṛtis* almost in all places have mentioned Him as the God Supreme. *Vaisvāṇara* or *Virāt*, born of *Hiraṇygarbha* and identified as Prajāpati, though appears distinct from imperishable Brahman is virtually identical with Him[3]. As perceiver and enjoyer, *Virāt* or *Prajāpati* dwells in all living beings. He is the first corporeal being. As empirical self of Jiva, He is the seer, knower and thinker in our everyday life. *Virāt* is the *Ātman* of all the material gross bodies comprised within the world whereas *Hiraṇya-*

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1. "हिरण्यगर्भ योगस्य वक्ता नान्य: पुरातन: ।"
2. "यमाहु: कपिलं सांख्या: परमर्षिं प्रजापतिम् ।"
3. "एष प्रजापतिर्यद् हृदयमेतद् ब्रह्मैतद् सर्व्वम् ।"—Bṛ Ār Up. V. 3. 1.

garbha is *Ātman* of all the subtle bodies of the whole universe, —the aggregate of jiva-minds. Evidently, the universal soul, the totality of jiva-selves, which is identical with the soul of *Hiraṇyagarbha* is superior to *Virāt* or the world-soul. The Brahman supreme who is devoid of *Prāṇa* (life principle), mind and senses is superior to *Kāryya-Brahman i.e. Hiraṇya-garbha* and also to the *Prakriti*, the mother of *Hiraṇyagrabha*. *Prakriti* in her unmanifest condition when she is united with Brahman, becomes reasonably imperishable (vide Mun. II. 1.2).

Before creation, the earth was in the form of water-vapour rising from the oblation offered to the sacrifice (*Yajna*) : "Āpaḥ eba idaṃ agre asuḥ". Here 'Āpaḥ' means an oblation mainly containing water ; out of that water-vapour was created *Hiraṇyagarbha*—the *Satya Brahman*. *Hiraṇyagarbha* is also called Brahman because of His greatness. He created *Prajāpati* (an epithet of *Brahmā*, the *Saguṇa Iśvara*) whose eyes are the sun and the moon. He is the *Virāt Puruṣa*, the aggregate of all the individual gross bodies. The subtle intelligence of the size of a barley grain, residing within the hearts of all is identified as *Prajāpati*, who is an appellation of the ten divine personages like *Marici*, *Atri*, *Daksha* etc. This great *Prajāpati* created the gods. Since every thing and being sprang from *Satya* Brahman, He is called the *Mahat* or the Great. This Brahman manifest, is knowable to the intellect.

Brahmā is the first and the foremost of all the gods. In the verse 1.1 of the Mundakopaniṣad, *Atharva* has been mentioned as the eldest son of *Brahmā*. Again *Bhāgavad*, III.12.4 says that *Brahmā* first created the four sages viz. *Sanak*. *Sananda*, *Sanātan* and *Sanat Kumar*. The natural conclusion would, therefore be, that in any one of His many creations in different *Kalpas*[1], *Atharva* might have been the first-born son of *Brahmā*.

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1. Kalpa is a period of 432 million years for the mortal. It is a day and night of Brahmā—The Creator Lord.

It is stated in the Vedās that after the creation of the universe the Supreme Being created the biped and quadruped animals and entered into them residing within them as a bird in a cage[1]. Thus, the only one soul appears to be innumerable like the moon reflected in countless receptacles of water[2]. Qualified Brahman is but another aspect of unqualified Brahman. Vyās, the author of *Brahma-Sutra* says, "Jiva is the reflection of the Supreme Soul in Buddhi or intelligence. The individual soul is, therefore, nothing but a reflection of Nirmal Caitanya of Ātman *i.e.* pure consciousness in Buddhi wrapped up in Avidyā or ignorance which is impure. Just as hydrogen and oxygen combine to form a new substance, which is water, similarly Ātman or the soul and mind combine together to form a *Jiva*—an individual being. It is stated in Chhā Up that *Paramātman* or the Supreme Soul, assuming diverse *Upādhis* or attributes, enters into the field of name and form and becomes Jivātman or individual soul[3].

The descent of Brahman in the sphere of name and form is the result of His own will which assumes the form of this universe of limitation. Just as the light of the sun passing through different passages of various shapes and sizes takes different forms, so the Supreme Being entering into different bodies appears as many and of various forms. Ātman is all these that exist through past, present and future[4]. "I am present in all creatures in the form of Ātman or the soul"—says Lord Krishna. Ātman is the connecting link between matter and spirit, between spirit and spirit—between man and

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1. "पुरश्चक्रे द्विपदः पुरश्चक्रे चतुष्पदः ।
पुरः स पक्षीभूत्वा पुरः पुरुष आविशत् ॥"—Br Ār Up, II. 5. 18.
2. "एक एवहि भूतात्मा भूते-भूते व्यवस्थितः ।
एकधा बहुधाचैव दृश्यते जलचन्द्रवत् ॥"—Yoga-Vāsiṣtha Ramayan
3. "अनेन जीवेनात्मनानुप्रविश्य नामरूपे करवानि ॥"—Chhā Up.
4. "पुरुष एवेदं सर्व्वं यद् भूतं यच्च भव्यम् ।"—Rgved. Sveta Up, III. 15.

Man the eternal. So Paramātman is also called Sutrātman. It is He alone who, like the all-pervading sky, dwells in every living body as the individual soul[1]. The invisible Para-Brahman permeates through all the objects of creation animate and inanimate in the form of their very life and light and lends power and consciousness to them. The whole of this creation is pervaded and supported by the one fourth of His essence, while the remaining three-fourths pervade the subtle creation[2]. After creating this universe, He entered into it, infused it with life and was as if lost in it. He is all this universe and yet transcends it. So Iśopaniṣad delclares : "He is both inside and outside this universe[3]".

In the Gita, verse, 10.6, Lord Sri Krishna said : "Before creation of the world, I created seven great sages like *Vṛgu* and others through volition. Prior to them, four great sages like *Sanak* and others, together with fourteen *Manus*, the patriarchs or the progenitors of man were born of My mind. They are all My mind-born sons. The men of the world are born of them". "I am the primal seed of creation",—said He in Gita, verse 10.34 "out of which the creatures of the next Kalpa will come into being". The Sāṃkhya Tattvāloka, 72, reads : "After the creation of the world, there appeared the adepts with their transcendental knowledge and power acquired in the previous creation and the Jivas were born with their *Samaskāras* (impressions) of the past. In the first *Kalpa*, the the subtle-bodied beings came into existence through the transcendental power of *Hiraṇyagarbha*, the first emanation and mind-born son of Brahman. The Jivas, afterwards, became bound by the evil impressions resulting out of their

The biological creation

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1. "स एव एष महान् अज आत्मा । आकाशवत् सर्व्वगतश्च नित्य ॥"
2. "पादोऽस्य विश्वभूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ।"
3. "तद्विरन्तश्च भूतानां ।"—Iśopaniṣad.

own deeds done here on earth, and since then they have been revolving in the cycle of birth and death.[1]" The same text continues that the seed of life inherent in plants evolved into animal world[2]. This statement clearly proves the existence of life in plants and its further evolution into creature body.

The organic evolution of creatures cannot be denied. The earth emerged out of waters and the seed of life germinated for the first time in the sea and afterwards living beings spread all over the earth. Life begins in the profound solitude of the dark sea-water which is essential for the germination of a seed and its taking an organic shape. That the animal world came into being through the proper channel of evolution is evident from the saying : '*Vakshyamāna Pranālikayā*' of Sāṃkhya Tattvāloka, 72. The mind evolves out of *Prāṇa* or the life-principle, and life out of matter and the material earth emerged out of waters. The psychic being is now at work to evolve into a spiritual one. A spiritual being will be the crown of evolution.

The *Vedās*, the *Upaniṣads* and the Gita, unanimously hold that a sinner leading a life, unworthy of human beings, is degraded after death to the creature and also to plant life, and even to the inanimate creation like stone etc.[3]. Conversely we may presume that it is also the intention of the texts that the poor being should again evolve into human life, in course of time, under favourable circumstances. Evolution from lower to the higher existences is the law of nature. Further, it can never be the will of Providence nor the intention of the sacred texts that the sinner should continue

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1. "शाश्वता: संसारिणो जीवा: खल्वादौ वक्ष्यमाण प्रणालीकया
तदैश्वर्यमाहात्म्यात् देहिनो भूत्वा आविरासन् ।"
—Sāṃkhya-Tattvāloka, 72.

2. 'अत: चङ्क्रिजदेहबीजा शरीराणि परिजगृह: ।"—Saṃkhya Tattvāloka, 72.

3. Mu. Up, I. 2. 10. Also the Gita, 13. 21.

its degraded existence from eternity to eternity. So it can be assumed that the spirit of the unfortunate being which has been hurled into vegetable life shall gradually evolve into animal life and thence finally evolve as a human being.

It is the will of Providence that we should exercise our free will to realise His wishes and mould our lives accordingly. God has created this world and sent us here so that we may enjoy the fruits of evil deeds done in the past and also amend ourselves. He is so kind and forgiving to the unfortunate who have gone astray! Our life on earth is a probation and here we have the opportunity to correct ourselves so that we can return again to the world of Brahman, our eternal home, if we but wish it. When God sees that the Jivas follow the path of vice and are indifferent to Him, He either takes incarnation, or is born as an adept for their deliverance. Pray unto Him: "O' seizure of all sins! I am a sinful wretch, drowned in vicious acts. Do thou rescue me from the path of sin."

The seed of life inherent in water is the cause of growth and nourishment of the vegetable world. "It is I who, as the water of the soil, promote the growth of all plants and keep them alive"—said Lord Krishna in the Gita, 15.13. "It is I who as the watery moon nourish all herbs[1]" —also said He. Water is the life of all living beings. According to the *Taittiriya* Upaniṣad, I. 28, the earth with all its inmates has evolved out of water. The *Karma-Kānda* (The part of the Vedās which relates to ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites) of the *Vedās* and also the *Gitā* enjoin the performance of *Yajna*, in course of which, ghee (clarified butter) is poured on sacrificial fire, and as a result cloud is formed. It rains afterwards to nourish the vegetable world (vide the Gita, III, 11). Again the same text observes in

1. "पुष्णामि चौषधीःसर्व्वाः सोमोभूत्वा रसात्मकः।"—The Gitā XV. 13.

Verse, III. 14 : "Jivas come into being from food, from rains food is produced and sacrificial performances bring rains on earth." The *Kathopaniṣad* II. 1. 6. suggests that *Hiraṇyagarbha* is the first subtle creation and water is the first of all the gross and material creations[1]. *Smṛti* holds that the beginning and the end of this material creation with all its animate and inanimate beings is water. The *Chhāndogyya* Upaniṣad opines that Brahman entered as a bird into whatever He created. This 'bird' can be none other than the energy of the Supreme Spirit. Innumerable verses may be cited from the various sacred texts to prove that the Supreme Soul pervades everything and being of His creation as life and consciousness. The heart of every being pulsates, because it is impregnated with the life-force of Brahman. So it is needless to say that the spirit of Brahman is also inherent in water. What evolves is not material water but the spirit latent in it. This divine essence, latent in water, gradually passing through different stages of evolution, step by step, has ultimately ushered into human creation.

Smṛti states : "Then out of *Māyā* sprang the cosmic water as dark as to her second[2]." According to the Vedānta the earth came out of water[3]. All the spheres rest in waters[4]. In the *Prajāpati* and *Hiraṇyagarbha* hymns there have been such descriptions as would easily make one understand that the seed of creation was hidden in the waters. Before the birth of living beings on this earth, the world was enveloped in deep darkness, as stated earlier and was submerged under water[5]. In infinite number of times, the universe collapsed in watery ruins and emerged out of it.

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1. "आपो वा इदमग्रे सलिलमासीत् ।"—Taitt. Up. also supports the view.
2. "ततः सलिलमुत्पन्नं तमसीवापरं तमः ।"—Smṛii.
3. "अद्भ्यः पृथ्वी ।" 4. "एवमिमे लोका अप्सुताः ।"
5. "तमसा गूढं सलिलम् ।"—Ṛgveda.

The Bhāgavad, II. 5. 34, states that the creator raised this universe from the water after it had been merged for thousands of years. When through dissolution, the whole universe was merged in water and the world was made unfit for human habitation, *Manu*, the progenitor of mankind entreated Brahmā to raise it up from its watery grave[1]. Water is the body of Prajāpati Brahmā[2]; He created water and cast into it the seed of creation[3]. This germ of life inherent in water is the cause of birth, growth and nourishment of the vegetable world and all living beings.

After its own natural law of water and due to the life-principle inherent in it, moss and other aquatic plants grew in waters. In course of time the moss and the water-plants began to decompose and their contact with air and sun-light gave birth to aquatic organisms. The influence of a planet at a special position and the sun-light in a particular lunar day play an important role in the germination of life. If you cut a brinjal into two halves on the last moment of the twelfth day of a lunar fortnight and watch them through a microscope, no worm will be found in them but as soon as the thirteenth day creeps in, the two pieces will be seen infested with worms.

Very often we see that insects grow in food-stuff or something liable to putrefaction lying in the same place for several days. Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, the world famous scientist, has proved that plants have life. From life is created life. Trees, plants, shrubs, creepers and animal bodies—all are combination of a large number of living cells. This is a proved fact and a scientific truth. Each individual cell of a living body has a separate life. The sum total of all the

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1. Srimad Bhāgavad, III. 13. 15.
2. "अथैतस्य प्राणस्यापः शरीरम् ।"—Bṛ Ār Up, 1. 5. 13.
3. "अप एव ससर्जादौ तासुवीजमपासृजत् ।"

cells in the individual body is called a micro-cosm and the aggregate of all living beings forming the world is known as macrocosm. The sensitive cells of the epidermis are the sources of all the different sense organs. The specific energies of sense-organs were present in the protoplasm and through long history of evolution they were developed in shape of our eyes, ears etc. as the necessity arose. The cells comprising an organism are regarded as individual units, each with a distinct life and function of its own. "All living cells, even the vegetable organisms are intimately united by the means of very minute threads of protoplasm (the vehicle of life) passing through the cell walls"—observed in the 'Theosophical Review' Vol. 25, p. 191. "It was erroneously believed at one time that the cells of vegetable tissues were completely isolated from each other, but we have now discovered fine filaments of protoplasm throughout, which penetrate the thick membrane of the cells, and maintain a material and psychological communication between their living plasmic contents"—says one German scientist. The seers of India knew all these long ago and they said : "The plants have life, they feel happiness and misery too[1]".

A creeper inclines towards a support which shelters it. If the stick or the support is extricated afterwards from the creeper and planted on the opposite side, it will be seen within a day or two that the creeper has changed its direction towards the stick again. This attempt of the creeper proves that plants have life, consciousness and intelligence as well.

There is clear indication in the text of *Ayurveda* that there is life in plants. To prepare medicines if the bark, root or leaf of a tree be required, it is necessary to propitiate it and

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1. "अन्तसंज्ञा भवन्त्येते सुखदुःखसमन्विता ।"—Manu Samhita, verse 49.
Also : "उत्स्रोतस्तमः प्राया अन्तस्पर्शा विशेषिणः ।"—Bhā III. 10. 13.

to receive its happy consent with a fervent, humble appeal for the suffering inflicted on it. Furthermore, the existence of Supreme Being in the plants and trees has been admitted by the sacred Hindu texts and we have been instructed to worship them as such[1].

The existence of Supreme Soul in all the objects of creation and the limitless possibilities of human life were revealed before the inner vision of the Aryan sages who had knowledge of the past, present and future. The omniscient Aryan sages thus felt the pulsation of life in every created object. They had direct vision of all facts and situations through contemplation. They were seers of truth and knowledge. According to the *Srimad Bhāgavad*, the vegetables, abiogenesis, and biogenesis creations are the product of guṇa-evolution of Prakriti[2]. Hegel Says : "Reason becomes nature in order to become spirit. The idea externalises itself and so we get nature." The Prakriti or nature impregnated with the life-force of Brahman, carrying with it the desire to multiply Himself, evolves into world-creation. In the Gitā, 14.3 it is observed :—"I place the germ of life in Prakriti which is my womb whence all beings and things come into existence."

The living vegetable cell passing through various stages in animal life, ushered into existence and ultimately found full expression in human creation. Thus the kinetic potentiality, inherent in the living cells, acting as a life-force behind it has been advancing through ages' ceaseless march of evolution towards perfection and it will continue till we reach a perfection similar to that of the Absolute. The evolution

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1. "यो देवोऽग्नौ योऽप्सु यो विश्वं भुवनमाविवेश ।
य ओषधीषु यो वनस्पतिषु तस्मै देवाय नमोनमः ॥"—Sveta, II. 17.
Also : "या देवी सर्व्वभूतेषु चेतनेत्यभिधीयते
नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै तमस्तस्यै नमोनमः ।"—Chandi.
2. Srimad Bhāgavad, IV. 17. 30.

in the present stage seems to have reached its finality in man.

On the death of a plant having life-energy, it is ultimately transformed into a human being through an evolutionary process in the successive stages of the Ovoviparous Oviparous and Viviparous life. Consciousness of life will advance and assume complete and perfect animal entity, when it will, in the long run, merge in the infinite Supreme Soul which is beyond the limitation of the universe.

The beginning of the display of animal life on the earth was protoplasm and the final stage of this display has been man, the perfection of the spread of life. The protoplasm first gave birth to a kind of living being of the invertebrate order called Forminifera having no spinal chord but being just a soft lump of flesh. From this protoplasm, sprouted at first oceanic creatures, like the sponge, the snail, the coral, the conch (shell-fish), the oyster, the creeping mollusc and several kinds of fish like the Jelly (Sea-nettle). In the start, their mouths and other limbs were not formed, and for self-defence they had no cover on the body ; at this stage they used to eat through the pores of their whole body. When a particle of food is to be received and digested, something like the shape of a mouth is formed by a depression of their surface.

Later on, when there started the struggle for survival due to increase in their number, animals of the mollusc variety developed a kind of crust, composed mainly of lime and the fish developed scales as their covers, all for the purpose of self-defence. During this age of vertebrates, the incarnation of the fish (the *Avatār* as the fish) was the most perfect display of the vertebrates. After this, the gradually concentrated Supreme Being held within Himself as pisces (power held as fish) all the seeds of creation. He then began unfolding Himself towards evolution[1]

1. ततो मीनो बीजानि धृत्वा प्रसरति ।"—Purāṇa.

"The Vedic words which fell from My lips were swallowed by the fish and it played merrily in the fathomless ocean. This fish carried the germ of creation"—said He[1].

When in course of time small islands emerged out of the sea, amphibious reptiles like the lizard and the tortoise (as intermediaries between aquatic animals and reptiles) were seen, and the tortoise was their ideal, their model. During this period, could be seen the tortoise in the water, the lizard and the Iguana on the earth and the Pterodactyle in the air.

Just as on the one side from reptiles like the Iguana appeared the Mammalia moving on dry land like the jackals, the boar, the tiger, the elephant etc, so on the other side appeared the amphibious creatures like the bat, the ostrich and the iguanodan. In this age could be found a large number of sea-snakes as well. In the age of the Mammalia, the boar was the best living being ; that is why the boar was the third incarnation (*Avatār*), after the second incarnation as the tortoise. During the boar-age, animals like the horse and the monkey came into existence. After then appeared a living being which was half-man and half-beast in form, the incarnation in this age being Nṛsiṃha (man+lion). Later on were created living beings in human form. The model of this age was a dwarf ; so the dwarf is the first incarnation of the human race *(Vāman Avatār)*. So fishes characterised palæozonic age, the reptiles mesozoic, and the mammals the tertiary or cænozic age. Thus if we examine the gradual progress and drift of change of animal body we can observe a clear method in evolution with regard to the spread of life on the earth. And we notice that each evolution is an awakening of higher realisation. Zalaluddin Rumi, a Persian seer, sings,

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1. Vide Srimad Bhāgavad, II. 7. 11.

"From the inorganic we developed into the vegetable kingdom,
Dying from the vegetable we rose to animal,
And living the animal we became men.
Then what fear that doth will lower us ?
The next transition will make us an angel,
Then shall we rise from angel and merge in the nameless.
All existences proclaim unto Him shall we return."

The microscopic protists are not devoid of life, consciousness and even intelligence. The tiny insects that we can see through our naked eye show similar movements to those of higher animals. The wonderful architecture of rhizopods, the phalamopora and infusoria are the striking instances. An ant-hill of the white ants is another example to show that tiny creatures like them also possess intelligence and artistic skilfulness. Whenever an ant comes across a particle of food and if it finds it difficult to carry it alone, the same starts at once in search of other ants and goes on circulating the news to each ant on its way. Two ants coming from opposite directions are seldom found to cross each other without exchanging a few words. All these go to prove that creatures, however insignificant they may be, are endowed with life, consciousness and intelligence. The knowledge of Saṃkarācārya and that of an ant differs only in degree of developement and not in substance.

"Even the meanest worm will through evolution one day attain divinity"—said Patanjali, the great seer and Yogin. So the Bible says : "He is sown in weakness to be raised in power".

The special creation as stated in the Bible is untenable. The developement of life from generic to the specific character is more justifiable than the simultaneous appearance of all kinds of birds and beasts on earth. It is clear from the Biblical story of the Ark of Noah that different species of birds and beasts came into existence before the deluge ; other-

wise, how could Noah be provided with couples of different species of creatures to save them from extinction ? So it is reasonable to come to this conclusion that different species of birds and beasts existed prior to deluge. The scientists hold that in course of time one species passed into another through different stages of evolution and some of them retained their original primitive feature. The biological world has thus multiplied itself into different categories having diverse capacities.

"Embryologists discovered that in the course of development, immature animals repeat earlier forms ; a mammalian foetus, at a certain stage, has the rudiments of a fish's gills, which are totally useless, and hardly to be explained except as a recapitulation of ancestral history"—writes Bertrand Russel in his 'Religion and Science', P. 75.

The supreme consciousness as the seed of creative energy contracted itself and lay in and through the fish. Later on the Brahman as the tortoise held within himself and protected the original seed of creation. After this in order that the seed might germinate or blossom, He as the boar raised up this earth from out of the bosom of water[1]. As Nṛsiṃha He tore open the heart of *Hiraṇyakaśipu* and thereby removed the obstacle facing the progress of evolution[2]. Then as *Vāmanāvatār* He performed the sacrificial ceremony of *Bali* with different rituals showing mankind the path of *Karma-yoga* through rituals. The Ṛgveda abounds in hints of God's taking incarnation as Vāmana, Nṛsiṃha and Varāha etc.[3].

As a thorn is removed from the body with the help of another thorn and when it is done, the second is thrown away, so did Lord Krishna assumed human body in the Yādav dynasty

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1. Srimad Bhāgavad, III. 13. 46.
2. Do II. 7. 14.
3. Vide the Ṛgveda, 1. 154. 2 & 1. 22. 1.

and lightened the burden of the world and when it was done, He left the body. Just as a dramatic actor wears different dresses and plays in different roles, so does God in order to take away the burden of the earth, appear as incarnation of fish etc. and afterwards gives up that form too, when His mission ends[1].

We have seen how by the process of evolution through ages, matter becomes endowed with life, intelligence and spirituality; plant-life springs from almost dead matter, creatures from plants, and human being, the best of all created beings, as the last thing in the long line of evolution. Among men, we come across ideal personalities like Sri Krishna, Sri Ramchandra, Jesus Christ, Mahammad and Buddha who were gifted with the divine power and came to this earth as messengers of God—great personalities born for the purpose of giving instructions to the world. "The modifications mankind have undergone and are still undergoing result from a law underlying the whole organic creation; and provided the human beings continue and the constitution of things remain the same, these modifications must end in completeness"—says Mr. Herbert Spencer.

Supreme consciousness has contracted to the stage of an unicellular amoeba or bacillus, which again passes through a series in evolution till the highest expression of absolute consciousness becomes manifest through the realisation of Absolute Truth in an individual. When the veil of Māyā is removed by untying the knot of spirit and matter, the Jiva attains oneness with Śiva—nay he becomes Śiva.

Creation is nothing but the sportive movement of consciousness and play with mind and matter. This spirit of sport is also present in individuals who are His images. This inherent desire for enjoyment is deep-rooted in *Jiva* and

1. The Bhāgavad, 1. 15. 35.

it is not at all easy to uproot it and remove it. The day of emancipation is far or near according as the degree of intensity of the desire to enjoy, is great or small. It is only love of God which can combat and consume desire. 'When the love of God enters human heart, it first burns the passions, then the false ego and at last it consumes every thing.'—says Mister Echart.

To give an accurate estimate of the classification of various types of evolution, it has been written in the Code of Manu, Chapter I, verses 96 to 97 : "The world of animated beings is on a higher level than that of inanimate objects (The Pancabhutas or the five elements, e.g. Earth, Air, Water, Fire and Ether). A creature endowed with life however insignificant, is superior to matter, which is bereft of life. Cows, horses etc. that are gifted with some sort of intelligence occupy a higher position among animals. Man, again, is superior to the animals. The race of *Brāhmins i.e.* the Brahma-worshipping Aryans hold the first and foremost place among mankind. Among the *Brahmins*, the place of honour goes to the learned who are also called Deva. Those who attain maturity of knowlege are held in greater reverence than man of ordinary education. Among the highly educated those who devote their knowledge to the service of the world are more venerable ; and those who direct their knowledge to the attainment of Brahman having undoubtedly used it for the best purpose, top the list." It is worth while to mention here that there is a commonness of attributes between God and man. Only the good things in man appear in their fullness in God. This universe (macrocosm) and man (microcosm) represent Para-Brahman in miniature. Ignorant man has on his lips "Thou, Thou and not I"—but when he attains full knowledge, he cries out "It is I—not Thou."

MAYA AND THE WORLD

"दृग्दृश्यपदार्थोऽस्ति परस्पर विलक्षणः ।
दृग्ब्रह्म दृश्यामायेति सर्व्ववेदान्तडिण्डिमः ॥"

There is much difference between the seer and the thing seen. The Seer is Brahman and the thing seen is *Māyā*. This is the verdict of all the *Vedās*. *Māyā* in the Vedānta philosophy is the creative energy of Brahman ; literally, she means 'illusion'. In the opinion of some European writers, the doctrine of *Māyā* does not constitute a feature of the original Upaniṣadic teachings and it was introduced into the later philosophical treatises either by Bādrāyan, Saṃkar or some body else. But the word '*Māyā*' can be traced in the primitive works like the Ṛgved and the *Bṛhadāraṇyak* Upaniṣad where she is the creative power of the Brahman. For the purpose of creation, the unitary Brahman had to be associated with *Māyā*, an illusory element. *Māyā*, before creation, was one with the Brahman, as knowlegde supreme. She came to be identified with *Avidyā* or ne-science, when she got separated from Him, so that the creation might start. Being the product of an unreal entity—*Māyā*, the world with all its living and non-living beings has been an illusion itself and this unreality has reached its culmination in material creation. Before creation, the Brahman existed as pure consciousness, nameless and and formless Divine. Being desirous of creation, He assumes a causal body and takes the name of *Maheśwar*—the Lord of Māyā. Māyā is ne-science or *Avidyā*, the source of all false knowledge.

What is Maya ?

Of the gross and subtle bodies of a living being the causal body is *Avidyā*. At the root of the difference between Jiva and Brahman lies the causal body or *Avidyā*. So when an individual through the grace of God becomes free from the

sheath of causal body, he is freed from the bondage of *Māyā*. So long as *Māyā* prevails there will be no end of our journey from body to body. To attain salvation, therefore, we have to raise our consciousness above the mental plane by the practice of Yoga and make ourselves, free from the sheaths of body and mind which are the strong hold of *Māyā*. The cosmic mind has evolved out of the cosmic illusion or *Vidyā* and the individual mind evolves out of the individual ignorance or *Avidyā*. When the cosmic mind and the individual mind qualify consciousness then the consciousness qualified by the cosmic mind (collective mind) is called Hiraṇyagarbha or Iśvara and the consciousness qualified by the individual mind is called Jiva or the individual. The cosmic or the collective ignorance inheres in *Iśvara* and in Jiva inheres the individual ignorance. Creation starts when the cosmic mind is veiled by *Māyā* and it persists as long as the veil lasts. So the world is enveloped with utter darkness of ne-science.

As an attribute of Iśvara, the Māyā is His Prakriti or nature[1]. According to the Upaniṣads this Māyā is *Anirvacaniya* or indefinable. To saṃkar Māyā is an illusion. The theory that the world is a fleeting show, rests on a greater premise on Saṃkar's *Māyāvād*. In the opinion of some philosophers Saṃkar's *Māyāvād* is a corollary to the Buddhists' *Sunyavād*. The Creator Lord, in the Upaniṣads, is designated as *Māyin* or Conjurer[2]. This Māyik Lord spreads the net of a deceptive world-appearance[3]. Evidently the creation by a Conjurer is an illusion.

According to the Vedānta philosophy the world is not an actual transformation of Brahman Himself like a tree from a seed but it is an appearance of Brahman like the mirage from

1. "मायान्तु प्रकृतिं विद्यात् ।'—Sveta Up, IV. 9.
2. "मायिनन्तु महेश्वरः ।"— Do
3. "तस्मान्मायी सृजते विश्वमेतत् ।"—Sveta IV. 10,

the rays of the sun—'*Abhāsa eba ca*'. '*Abhāsa*' is the reflection or shadow of the real; it cannot be the reality itself. So the Lord said: "Aham etāt na—I am not this universe."

"Brahman is, by nature, unchangeable, but associated with different upādhis, He takes the name and form of different objects"s—says Katha Up. II. ii. 10. Lord Krishna says in the Gita, verse IV. 6: "Though by nature, I am unborn and eternal, though I am the Lord of all created beings, yet I, with the help of my *Prakriti*, take birth in the world *through my own Māyā*." Apart from this saying of the Lord, it is also evident from the following statements of the *Visṇu Purāṇa* that this creation is not real: "Nothing is transformed; if any change is seen, it is illusory," and "There exists no material object except in mind."

Creation is an illusion

The creation from Brahman is imaginary. Therefore, creation is an illusion. Even in the phenomenal world nothing changes its own nature, not to speak of Brahman, who is spiritual through and through. So a creation of imagination does not affect the immutability of Brahman in any way. The reflection of sun on the bosom of water, contained in pots of different sizes, appears larger and smaller according to the shape of the container and these reflections do not affect the real sun.

The creation is but the actualisation of God's thought process—an act of His mere reflection. If by creation Brahman lost any part of Himself He would be realised in part thereof. If Brahman fully manifested Himself in the creation, the quest of our ultimate end would lead to nothing. Just as a man dreams different dreams without losing any part of himself, so does Brahman imagine this multiform creation without incurring any substantial loss on His person. As gods create at their sweet will different things to bestow grace upon their devotees, so does Brahman create the world. The world is a phantom creation of the Divine Will. As such, though Brahman is the creator of all, He remains unaffected

lifted above this phenomenal existence. Just as a piece of magnet, though itself devoid of motion, can move iron-filings by its inherent power, in the same way, Brahman created the universes times without number by means of His inherent creative power—the Brahma-S'akti or divine energy. His creative energy is inexhaustible, because, its source is infinite and eternal. This power has been exercised for creation, preservation and destruction in the infinite kalpas in the past and it will be utilised in future for the same purpose for kalpas unknown ; still it is never to be used up.

The Gita (verses VII. 4-5) states : Brahman being desirous of creation ejects material objects from His lower nature and His higher nature infuses life and consciousness into them. Some say that Brahman is the efficient cause of the universe and *māyā* or *prakrti* which is His other half and creative power is the material cause. But Saṃkarācāryya refutes this view saying that it is not possible to take one half of a hen for cooking and leave the other half to lay eggs. In the Bhāgavad, it is stated : "Brahman is indivisible, yet He appears to be divided amongst all beings." The word "appears" indicates imaginary projection of His being as the world-appearance. Brahman does not actually enter in person into His diverse creation but only imagines them. His mind-born son, Brahmā, is His first manifestation who contemplated the creation in mind as well for thousand years, and the world of appearances came into being. The Fourth Gospel states that God works through the Logos who represents God but himself is not the God head. Absolute Brahman is pure consciousness. He cannot be expected actually to create or to destroy anything. From the standpoint of Brahman, the creation is an illusion.

Relation of the world to maya & Brahman

The unreality and temporal nature of the objective world is beautifully illustrated in Shelley's following lines from "Lives in Hellas" :

"Worlds on worlds are rolling over
From Creation to decay,
Like bubbles on river
Sparkling, bursting and borne away."

The Sāṃkhya view is that *Prakriti* is the cause and creation is the effect. They also hold in the same breath that *Prakriti* is unborn. If creation be the effect of the cause *Prakriti*, then it follows that the cause *Prakriti* transforms herself as the effect viz. creation. But in their opinion, *Prakriti* is *ajāti* i.e. non-manifesting. What is *ajāti* cannot take birth in any form. As effect is non-different from the cause, manifestation of *Prakriti* affects her immutable nature. The Sāṃkhya -View of creation is therefore self-contradictory. So it follows that neither the beginningless cause can actually produce an effect nor a cause can be said to be produced from a beginningless effect. What is beginningless, is also birthless. Prakriti is made up of *Triguṇas* which are her component parts. The entity which has parts, is subject to change and decay. "So *Prakriti* cannot be the eternal creator"—states S'veta Up. IV. 10. Goudapāda refutes the Sāṃkhya view saying that the cause, Brahman, does not actualty get manifest as the effect, creation, but He only appears to do so. In his opinion, only the ignorant mind that hovers in the causal plane, seeks a sequence of cause and effect in the person of One who is causeless and birthless. Causality operates in the relative plane where the law of causation is in force. In the matter of creation, if the sequence of cause and effect be sought, there would be no end of creation, it leads to regressus in infinitum. Saṃkar denies every causal relation regarding Brahman. Where Brahman is, there is no law of causation. The more a man detaches himself from the notion of causality, the more the world appears empirical in his view. So instead of accepting the theory of creation as advanced by different schools

The Samkhya view on creation refuted

of philosophy, it would be wise to admit the doctrine of imaginative creation i.e. the creation is a mere *Kalpanā*—an idea in the Divine Mind.

According to the *Vedānta*, the names and forms are mere verbal expressions; independent of Brahman they have no actual existence. "*Indra*, the Lord of heaven, assumes diverse forms through māyā"—states Ṛgveda VI. Diversity of names and forms is caused by diversity in manifestations of the same primary material essence, the *Prakriti*. Therefore, worldly objects are neither real nor eternal nor do they actually exist. Only *Para-Brahman* is real, but as He seems to undergo change in name and form in creation, the latter become unreal or illusions only. *Para-Brahman* who is unchangeable, created *Prakriti* or *Māyā* for the sake of creation. The present universe is nothing but transformation of that *Prakriti*. *Jagat* (world) derived from the root gaṃ literally means that which is ever on the move, that is, liable to change and destruction. In one word the creation is ever changing in course of evolution. That which passes through evolution can never be permanent and real. When one understands the insignificance of diversities of names and forms one is apt to be drawn towards Para-Brahman. Conversely when the Jiva is blessed with the knowledge of Para-Brahman—it is then that all names and forms disappear.

The Sāṃkhya and Nyāya system contradict each other over the theory of creation and the only truth that can be inferred from their arguments is that Brahman or the Ultimate Reality is *ajāti* or unborn. The creation being an evolution of thought process of the Cosmic Mind, the world's appearance and disappearance, are, therefore, not real. If Brahman be the cause and creation the effect, the natural conclusion is that an effect is born of an unborn cause which is absurd. The effect in such a case is assumed to be born of a cause or in other words cause manifests itself as the effect, and an effect is

not different from the cause. If the cause be beginningless and birthless the effect also must be eternal. But in the phenomenal world its opposite is seen. When the effect is said to be born, the cause cannot be birthless and immutable. According to the Vedās and Upanisads Brahman is causeless, birthless, eternal.

The agitation in the quiescent Prakriti caused by the desire in the Divine Mind for creation resulted in the disintegration of *Triguṇas*—the constituents of Prakriti. This urge for creation, according to the texts, is the prime cause of Prakriti's conception and her subsequent evolution into the world-creation. Prakriti or Māyā first gave birth to *Hiraṇyagarbha*. Since *Hiraṇyagarbha*, who is second to Brahman, is born of real and unreal entities, He has a touch of unreality or *Māyā*. *Māyā* inheres in every stage of creation and so she is inborn in man. Still, man being born of Supreme Being's desire is the proud possesor of divine consciousness which is Ātman. The separation of Ātman, which is spiritual in essence, from matter or Prakriti tears asunder the bonds of *Māyā* and leads to self-realisation. A constant struggle to escape from the realm of matter is going on in the life of a man and there has been a continual resurrection of his being from material to spiritual. Spirit is the primal intensity of our being, a divine Logos and our moral focus that connects the fleeting mundane life of a man with the Life Eternal.

Māyā is neither existent nor non-existent. She is indescribable being distinct from both the existent and non-existent.[1] Ramtirtha has establishod as the definition of *'Ajnāna'* the indescribability of *Māyā*. This indescribable nature of Māyā, according to the

Nature of Maya

1. "सदसद्भ्यां अनिर्व्वचनीयं त्रिगुणात्मकं ज्ञानविरोधि भावरूपं यत्किञ्चित् इति।"
—Vedānta Sār

author of '*Ista-siddhi*', becomes known when true knowledge is acquired and *Avidyā* is destroyed. An existent entity is never destroyed by the acquisition of knowledge ; only ne-science about a non-essential entity is removed by knowledge. It is through the instrumentality of knowledge (*Jnāna*) alone that *Ajnāna* (Avidyā or ignorance) can disappear. Only a thing or an idea which is born of Māyā *i.e.* which is unreal or illusory can be destroyed by knowledge. *Avidyā* or false conception gets annihilated when the object, about which there is ignorance, reveals itself in its true perspective. True Being or Existence is self-revealing—it always shines in its own glory. A pot which does not exist in reality, no light can manifest it. Only an existent pot becomes visible when the darkness of the place is removed. Since there is a creature like a serpent, the illusion of a serpent is produced in a coiled rope and this illusion disappears when true knowledge originates. Because the positive something which is the category of *Māyā*, cannot be admitted as either permanent or real, *Madhusudan* remarks : "Although Māyā is admitted as something positive, still her positiveness cannot be the ground of its being either the material or efficient cause of creation or the effect as the creation, just as pure consciousness, although it is Being, can neither be the material nor efficient cause nor the effect. Creation is an illusion being the product of superimposition of Prakriti or *Māyā* on Puruṣa."

Brahman is in fact beyond the realm of cause and effect. From His *Nirguṇa* and *Saguṇa* aspects, the world's non-essential nature is established ; though on account of its perceptual character world's pragmatic value is admitted to some extent. The world of duality is a creation of mind. When the mind ceases to function, the world disappears. As the world lacks in spiritual entity, the duality of Brahman is disproved. Both the mind and the mentals are inter-dependent and they are baseless. An object is seen in a

dream and the mental state in which it is perceived, both vanish when the dreamer wakes up. As the beings are born and die in dreams, so the phenomena of birth and death take place in waking state. The Māndukya Upaniṣad, IV, 70, therefore, observes : "Beings both human and animal are *Asat.* They are non-existent, being the creation of mental imagination". The Bhāgavad, 1, 13, 47 states that the dissimilarity in respect of species as is imagined among men and beast is due to wrong conception. The saying goes that neither mind nor mental exists—they are *Asat.* A seer, therefore, never admits the existence of worldly objects. According to the Mā. Up. IV. 72, the world of duality is a product of mere heart-vibration.

Superimposition is the cause of illusory perception

The attribution of some virtue, the characteristic of one thing superimposed on another, creates illusory perception. This act of superimposition by the unreal or the non-soul, on the real or the soul, is admitted on all hands. According to the Vedānta-Sār : " When an unreal object is imagined in one real thing, an illusion is produced and it is a result of an *Adhyās* or *Adhyāropa i.e.* superimposition[1]. The basis of *Adhyās* or superimposition, that is, on which the illusion rests is real. The world, movable and immovable, does not really exist ; it is a mere appearance[2]. According to the *S'āstras* there was nothing of this phenomenal world before creation. That which did not exist before but can be seen now is unreal as dreaming a dream—it cannot be true or eternal. Moreover this creation is a freak or fancy of the *Para-Brahman.* So a fancy-born world cannot be real—it can have no actual existence.

Etimologically the term *Jagat* means that which is always on the move—that which does not continue to be but always

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1. "वस्तुन्य वस्तारोपोऽध्यारोप: ।"—Vedānta Sār,
2. "प्रतिति मात्रमेवैतद् भाति विश्वचराचरम् ।"

fleeting ; such is the world[1]. Therefore, that which is capable of change—growth, decay and destruction can neither be eternal itself nor can be a source of permanent happiness to the jivas. The utility of this empirical world upto the moment of the awakening of true knowledge has been admitted by Padmapada, Prakāśātman Jyoti and Sureśwar, who were Saṃkarācārya's direct disciples. But if this view be accepted by those individuals who are chained by *Māyā* then that will prove to be all the more a cause of their worldly attachment and bondage. Therefore, it will be proper to look at worldly things as transient and unreal so long as we do not reach a high position in spiritual life.

Those great philosophers do not certainly mean that this world helps self-realisation ; on the contrary, it is an obstacle on the path of spiritual progress. We forget the true nature and purpose of our life as we become entangled to the snares and temptations of this world. Whatever may be the usefulness of this world to our material life, we have to search for the ulterior truth, if there be any, beyond the present scene—outside this visible world. How the ultimate good can be realised if we remain fully engrossed in worldly affairs on the presumption that this world is all in all. The Giver of all good, the source of all attainments is only attainable when we abandon everything connected with this world—when we withdraw our mind from the worldly affairs. The existence is one and not many. Many that are found are only illusive manifestations of one Reality. Reality or the shadow—which one is preferable ? Both preferable and desirable objects present themselves in a body. The wise use their discriminative power and accept only what is preferable.[2]

The world is an illusion. It does not help one to reach the ultimate goal

1. "गच्छतीति जगत् ।"

2. Katha Up. 1. 2. 2.

The emanation of Brahman as the phenomenal universe is illusory. His existence beyond the universe is real. The Hindu sacred texts have, therefore, advised us to ignore the external world altogether by painting it as the phenomenal illusion. Because the Śāstras have denied the existence of an effect apart from the cause, separate entity of other things apart from the sole entity of Brahman (the cause of the universe) has been denied. This theory makes the world illusory and false.

The said philosophers hold the world-stuff as *Māyā* and so of Indefinable nature—*Anirvacaniya.* According to them the world is neither real nor unreal. The Saṃkarites and other *Advaitins* do not ignore the world as absolutely unreal. "Saṃkar accepts" says Dr. M. N. Sircar, "the positiveness of appearance, for it is a fact of knowledge and cannot be ignored. But its positiveness and definiteness in spatial and temporal localization are no mark of truth. A positive appearance, which subsequently dies out, is no truth. The epistemological or psychological test of truth as appearance to or object of consciousness has been set aside in favour of transcendental test, for the epistemological dualism has no room in the transcendent identity of being"—'Comparative Studies in Vedantism,' P. 68-9. Inspite of their temporal nature, worldly objects should not be ignored in as much as they have pragmatic value and meet our worldly needs. In Berkeley's estimation, the reality of external objects may be acknowledged to that extent they help realisation of one's ideal, and the rest may be ignored as unreal. If the world were wholly illusory, the idealism of the East and the West would end into nothing.

As the pragmatic value of the phenomenal world is admitted, we cannot dismiss it as wholly negative. According to the most of the great philosophers of the East and West, the world is neither real nor unreal, neither being nor non-

being. The relation between the jiva-world and the Brahman is both identity and difference. Their identity is real but difference in phenomenal. If *Māyā* be the energy of Brahman and the world be the product of this conscious energy, then there is little difference between spirit and matter. In point of this view, the world is positive to some extent. The non-being part of the world may be safely discarded and the being part should have privilege to rise from the level of imperfection to perfection. There is nothing in the world which is absolutely unconscious. The consciousness varies in degree in different individuals. In saints and seers the consciousness is fully developed, but in stone though it is not so prominent, inheres in it to some extent. Moreover the perceptual aspect of the worldly objects is admitted. So the world is not wholly unreal. Dr. S. N. Das Gupta observes : "They (external objects) are somehow essentially of a positive nature. Saṃkar's idealism does not allow him to deny the existence of external objects as apart from perceiving mind and he does not adhere to the doctrine of esse est percipi"—A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. ii, P. 268. Saṃkar abides by the traditional philosophy of India and holds that the world is of perceptual nature and as such it has got only empirical reality. It exists so long as our senses are operative. It disappears from us as soon as we withdraw our senses inside. The illusions appear true so long as we fail to understand the true nature of the object. Rāmānuja accords an ontological reality to the world in the belief that as the worldly objects are perceived by our senses, they have got existential value. Rāmānuja in his 'Vedārtha Saṃgraha' P. 97, states that the world process is from identity to difference. With the dawn of true knowledge, the difference disappears and the world becomes identical with Brahman. Due to *avidyā*, a *vedavāsanā* has been deep-rooted in our mind which compels us to see difference, where difference is not.

This difference is illusory and consequently has no permanent hold upon us. It can be wiped out by contemplation of non-difference. Vijnān Vikṣu rejects the idea of absolute difference between Brahman and the world. So from the arguments of these great philosophers, it is concluded that the relation between Brahman and the world is both identity and difference.

An individual is in essence a spirit and not a form. It takes form to discharge certain duties imposed upon it by God. This earthly life is a characteristic feature of sex and death and does not abide by our true original nature. Aristotle like Plato attaches little value to the objective world and says that our concern here, as rational beings, is to realise truth and the truth is spiritual. So by creating any relation with the material world, we shall fall outside the immaterial world and be degraded into matter thereby. We are dead matter without the indwelling spirit. "The rational soul of man is a fiery breath which is part of the Universal Breath, Divine Reason or God which pervades, controls and determines everything in the universe."—observes A. H. Armstrong. Without this life-giving power, the body is a dead matter. Ātman is a ray of light flowing from the fountain of All-Light. It is free from all names and forms, one without a second, God in essence. The sense of difference and multiplicity originates with the activity in Divine Mind. The revealment of the infinite in the finite was a deliberate thought of God which acted behind all creation, The world process is the result of Divine contemplation and the world will return to the source of its origin when the individuals will learn to contemplate upon one which is his own soul. The individual soul and the Supreme Soul being identical in essence, the former can enter into communion with the latter.

Things come into existence in two ways : (1) by transformation, (2) by superimposition. In the first case, the entity or the cause appears to change its own nature and becomes the

effect. It is like milk changing into curd. In the second case, the entity without undergoing any change in itself appears as a different object, as for an instance the perception of a snake in a rope.

Brahman is the *Vivartakārana* of creation or the cause that does not undergo transformation itself. Formulating *Vivartavāda* Saṃkara avoids *parināmavāda*. According to the adherents of *Vivartavāda*, it is not Brahman but *Māyā*, His divine energy, that has been transformed into the world. It is also the view of Vijnān Vikṣu. He holds *Prakriti* to be the material cause of creation ; Brahman only supports it. According to Ballavācāryya, the *Vaiṣṇava* commentator of *Brahma-Sutra*, *parināma* is not transformation but manifestation. Brahman only makes the latent world patent (Vide Brahmavāda Saṃgraha, P. 21. 31.), So by manifesting the world (*āvirbhāba*) from its state of obscurity (Āviḥ State), Brahman loses nothing of his own nature. The Western philosophers like Plato, Hegel and Bradley lean upon the views of *Vivarta* doctrine. The phenomenal world is the *vivarta* (evolution) of Brahman and *Parināma* (transformation) of *Māyā*. Being the manifestation of *Māyā* herself, the world is unreal. Because the world is created by His accidental power, Brahman suffered no loss at all by such creation. So the Vedās and the Upaniṣads declare Brahman to be the Absolute in His fullness and enjoin on us to take Brahman as the object of our adoration and meditation.

The world is a phenomenal evolution

Some *Advaitins* reject hypothesis of an intermediary between Godhead and man. For the purpose of creation they do not introduce an attributed Brahman or *Iśvara* in their philosophy and hold that it is through Brahman's inherent power that the world has come into being. He is the *Vivartakārana* or manifestor of the creation. It was not He, but His power that was transformed as creation (Vide Vāskarā-

cāryya's Brahma-Sutra Bhāsya, II, 1 P. 97). By such creation Brahman is affected not much more than the sun reflected in waters contained in different vessels. Brahman is all-powerful, all-pervading and omniscient. In Bṛ Ār. Up. III, 8. 9, we come across a passage : "By the command of that *Akṣara*, O Gārgi, rivers flow to the east and to the west." So it was not impossible for such an all-powerful Being to create the universe through self-will. To do away with the objection that Brahman, being of the nature of pure consciousness, cannot create the world of His own accord, various steps have been contrived between Brahman and the world, both in Eastern and Western myths. Demiurge or the logos of the Christian theology occupies the same place which the *Iśvara* of the Hindus does. *Sureśwarācāryya* is of the opinion that Brahman somehow associated with *Māyā* became *Iśvara*.

Goudapāda observes in his Kārikā, III 2 : "Jiva actually does not come into existence, though it appears to be born". Jiva is identical with Brahman ; so no cause can manifest it. In fact, nothing is ever born. Ātman is the essential spirituality in jiva. It is changeless and birthless. So *Ātman* cannot be said to be taking birth or passing away on death. Mind due to Ignorance conceives all such phenomena, superimposing its own characteristics on *Ātman* ; *Ātman* remaining the substratum of all such illusory mis-conception. The substratum is real but the acts and products of superimposition are false due to their empirical nature. An illusory snake can frighten the spectator so long as its true nature remains unknown. It is only a mental state. The phenomena of birth and death are not the characteristics of *Ātman* ; they is conceived by mind alone. When mind is steadied and lost in *Samādhi*, the thoughts of birth and death and the idea of multiplicity do not exist. What persists during the unique state is non-dual *Ātman*. In normal state, when the mind is restless, it imagines in

The conception of birth and death is baseless

diverse ways and experiences various objects ; while *Ātman* or substratum remains hidden from view. The substratum reveals when the activity of mind ceases. *Ātman* is essentially Brahman and the essential part of jiva being the divine *Ātman*, jiva is ever free, unchangeable, blissful and immortal. The idea of bondage and liberation is meaningless for *Ātman*. Even when a *Māyā-bound* creature believes in its coming into and departing from the world, it actually does not do so, because, the Ātman which is the essential part of its nature is birthless and deathless. From the standpoint of Ātman, there is neither birth nor death, neither veil nor ignorance, neither bondage nor liberation. It has no actual movement whatsoever. When the flame at the end of a stick, is set in motion in diverse ways, it takes different forms, but when the motion is checked, the forms disappear. So by the activity of mind, pure consciousness which is Ātman, becomes associated with different ideas of birth, death and the like. When the mind is brought under control, these false notions disappear like the vanishing of different forms of the moving firebrand, when the motion of the stick is checked. The different ideas crop up in mind and they are superimposed upon motionless *Ātman* or pure consciousness. Even when mind is dynamic, pure consciousness remains static like the point of fire at the end of the stick. It is the movement of the stick that creates different appearances of firebrand, otherwise the point of fire always remains fixed at the end of the stick. Like the false belt of light this world also has no entity. So it is said in the Vedās—"*Pratiti mātramevaitad* bhāti viśva carcāram." The great Saṃkarācārya by the use of the word 'Iva' (as it were) wanted to suggest that the existence of the world is mere illusory—it does not exist in reality.

An ignorant mind not knowing the different objects to be the different states of his own mind ascribes their authority to *Ātman*. *Ātman* resides in all *Jivas* and the man, who does

not realise it, is designated as a miser. Though he has the most valuable treasure at his disposal, fails to enjoy it.

"Atman is Brahman"—says Māndukya Upaniṣad. The Chhā. Up. says : "Atman is all this." These two statements clearly show the relation between Brahman and His creation. As the phenomenal world has no independent existence of its own, it is not different from Brahman. Brahman is the substratum upon which the world-appearance is imagined. From the standpoint of Brahman there is neither creation nor dissolution, neither birth nor death. Goudapāda supports this view of non-creation (vide Kārikā 11. 32). The verdict of Bṛ. Ār. Up. IV. 5. 15 also is : "There is no duality". Duality leads to worldliness and so to the pleasure and pain of worldly life. *Adhyātma* Up. 63, declares : "There exists one alone, there is no multiplicity."

The world has been created with a view to unfolding Lord's endless glory and diversions. His endless glory is revealed through the Jivas.[1] The blissful and beneficient nature of Brahman, which was unrevealed before creation, was made manifest by Him in creation. God has granted man work-organs, sense-organs, intelligence and a little freedom of will to make this earth a heaven. The aim of human life is to bring down on earth His spontaneous and infinite joy, beauty and beneficience and it is our *Dharma*.

God wills that we should utilise our discriminative power to understand what is preferable. The perferable things have intrinsic value and they prove beneficient in the long run. If we can act upto his will, our life will be peaceful and blissful and gradually we shall be nearer to Him. Actions and reactions, ups and downs there are certainly in human life, but they are trials for us. If we are not faithful to our duties, we shall betray ourselves when the tests come. The

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1. लोकवत्तु लीला कैवल्यम् ।"—Brahma Sutra.

transcendental nature of man reveals when he nobly overcomes them. It matters little whether we succeed or fail in our attempts to carry out His will[1]. God judges the merit and demerit of our actions in point of our self-exertion, integrity of purpose and the sincere longing to accomplish them.

The senses of a disabled, diseased and fasting person do not attach themselves to the objects of enjoyment. But detachment of this type cannot be put on par with the renunciation of a true Sanyāsin. In the former case, his desires are not extinct but lurk within. A knower of truth disperses spontaneously all the desires for enjoyment.

When the illusions of wordly life are annihilated for ever, the Jiva in bondage becomes Śiva in liberation[2]. "The only truth is Brahman, the world is Māyā, and Jiva is indeed Brahman[3]"—such knowledge alone, according to the Vedānta, is true and acceptable. The characteristics of a phenomenal doer and enjoyer are the superimpositions upon Ātman through *Avidyā* which is incidental to self-seeking. As impure scums of water float on its transparent surface, so different names and forms are superficial aspects of the same ever pure Being which is Ātman. Ātman through its self-māyā entered into different individuals assuming diverse names and forms and became subject to the phenomena of birth and death, appetite and desires, pain and suffering. The instructions of the Vedās are helpful to remove this false knowledge arising out of *Avidyā* which is self-māyā. Ne-science, egoism and passions constitute the tumultuous river of our worldly life[4]. Self is more than ego. The spirit in English implies intellegence which creates egoism. Such false identification is

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1. "यत्ने कृते यदि न सिद्धति कोऽत्र दोषः ?"
2. "भ्रान्तिबद्धो भवेज्जीवो भ्रान्तिमुक्त सदा शिवः।
3. "ब्रह्म सत्य जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः।"—The Upaniṣad.
4. Vide S. B. on S'veta Up. 1. 5.

at the root of all misconceptions. Man's personality is the product of his egoism and it is only a mask. Ideas, imaginations, passions and tendencies may be said to be the component parts of a psychological ego. Ego, as man's personality, reasserts itself perpetually. Empty your ego of all its contents, ego will be nowhere. Ego is an evolute of Prakriti which is Māyā ; so, ego is ultimately an illusory entity.

Self-māyā is the connecting link between spirit and matter, between the soul and the body.[1] Her veiling power creates false conception of a thing. Through her veiling power, even an existent object appears differently. Sri Viśwanath opines that the power in absence of which the truth remains veiled is *Yoga-māyā* or divine illusion, and Māyā in association with jiva shows truth as untruth and vice versa. So Prakriti or Māyā has two facets. As a veiling power, she is *Avidyā*—an attribute of jiva. As a revealing power, she is an attribute of Iśvara and is one with Iśvara. Through indiscretion of Prakriti or Māyā, the one who comes to the Saṃsāra, is jiva and one who controls Prakriti is the creator Lord—Iśvara. In the act of creation, since Iśvara associates Himself with Prakriti, He has a slight touch of Māyā and this Māyik Lord becomes knowable to the human intellect. He who transcends Prakriti and remains inactive in His unitary nature, neither creating nor destroying, is the Supreme Brahman.[2] The total annihilation of *Avidyā*—the cause of our worldly sufferings, is the aim and end of human existence. The teachings of the Vedās are the means to this end. The basis of all the philosophical and spiritual thoughts of India is the *Vedās*. All the decisions of the Buddhist philosophers also have their foundation on Vedantic doctrine.

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1. Vide Śrimad Bhāgavad II. 9. 1.
2. Do II. 10. 31.

The idea of a jiva's bondage and niggardliness is not true. It is as unreal as in the case of a dreamer who sees his head segregated from his body and thinks himself dead ; it is a false conception of the jiva-mind lying under the influence of *Avidyā*. Though the conception of Self in a non-self is false, the jiva is rather inclined to take it as true ; such is the characteristic feature of jiva-mind drowned in *Avidyā* or ignorance. He who has awakened discriminative knowledge of Self and non-self, is not misled by any false conception. He never identifies his *Ātman* with body, mind, senses and sense-objects. Such a knowing sage incarnates God on earth (vide Bhāgavad. III. 7.10-11).

Brahmā said that God Supreme in His transcendental nature is identified by the sages as the Brahmān Supreme. He is always peaceful, ever blissful, free from grief, fearless, ever pure and knowledge itself. Māyā herself is ashamed to approach Him and she stays at a far off distance from Brahman and the knower of Brahman (vide Bhā.II.7.47.). When a *Yogin* transcends the idea of space and time and is installed in his own pristine glory, he overcomes all attachments and is freed from the finite consciousness of 'I' and 'mine' (vide Bhā. II. 9. 3.). Cause and effect are nothing but Śri Hari who is beginningless and endless (vide Bhā. II.7.50.).

Lord Śri Caitanya observes that jivas are eternally related to God. Man being entangled in Māyā, has been forgetful of his divine origin and become indifferent to Him. *Māyā* is His Prakriti or nature and she was one with Him before creation as *vidyā* or knowledge. With the dawn of knowledge, when intellect turns to God, the ties of Māyā fall of spontaneously.

Devhuti asked Brahmā : "O Lord, since Prakriti is always connected with puruṣa and since she never disassociates herself from him, how then the *jiva*, who is a combination of Puruṣa and Prakriti, can attain liberation ?" The Lord replied : "As fire is produced of a log of wood and burns it to ashes.

so disinterested action, purity of heart, the devoted love to Me grown from constant hearing and chanting the name of the Lord, the dawn of true knowledge and the power of Yoga arising out of *Samādhi* overpower Prakriti viz. the Māyā (vide Bhā, III. 27.21-23). A knower of Self always keeps his mind fixed upon Me and so Prakriti fails to do any harm to him" (vide Bhā. III, 27.26).

Bidur, an erudite scholar, once asked the sage *Maitreya* : "How is it possible that a desire for creation arose in the person of one who is self-contented and fulfilment of all desires ? Again, jivas are also eternal and all-pervading. How then they can be bound by action and subject to pain, sorrows and sufferings ?" The *Muni* replied : "O' Bidur ! it is the spontaneity of His self-*māyā* that binds the all-powerful Being and compels Him to move as a niggardly jiva in this world of miseries, sin and depletion. He who was free, became voluntarily chained in His creation through the influence of *Avidyā* which is His *Māya*" (Vide Bhā. III.7.9). In the same text (verse II. 7. 53), Lord said : "Though Māyā is companion to Me in my sports and diversions, she becomes attributeless losing all her binding influences when she is united with Me." He declares again : "I am the only God, creating, preserving and destroying in a sportive spirit, yet I am not attached to anything" (vide Bhā, 1. 10. 24). Jivas being identical with Brahman their bondage and liberation are therefore only illusory—they are relative. Our relation with the phenomenal world is at the root of all such false knowledge. When the world appears as all-māyā, our relation with it is cut off, we regain our true original status as Brahman Supreme. The bondage and liberation for Ātman are therefore meaningless jargons.

Jiva being identical with Brahman its limitations are not real. Jiva is not actually bound ; it is as free as Brahman. Only the ignorant mind imposes limitation on Ātman and imagines it as different from Brahman and becomes bound.

In the Śveta-Up. V. 3, the sheaths of body, mind, prāṇa and senses are described as nets, because, they entrap the soul and bind it to the world. *Buddhi* or intellect is a Prakriti-born entity and Prakriti is māyā which breeds ignorance. Through attachment or ignorance, which is nothing but māyā, jiva is deluded to think its body and mind as its Self and takes the objective world to be real on the presumption of its pragmatic value. But in fact, the finite and limited objects are created to reveal their unreal nature, so that jiva may be drawn to the Being who is infinite and eternal. Dr. S. Rādhā Krishnan says: "It only shows that there is something else which includes and transcends the world."

Psychological ne-science in the form of different upadhis or limiting adjuncts gives rise to the idea of many *Ātmans*, and separates one *jiva* from another. Āhaṃ (ego) is not *Ātman*. Egohood is superimposed upon *Ātman* and it behaves like a knower and doer. But the very act of superimposition is an illusion. So Ahaṃ or ego is a fictitious entity. Because the *jiva* or the egoistic self thinks itself the doer, the fruits of *karma* acrue to it. Unless the seed of *karma* is totally destroyed, the identity between *jiva* and Brahman is not established and, as a result, it is born again and again. A tree dying without leaving a seed behind is not re-born. When the accumulated impressions of the past and present actions are destroyed, *jiva* becomes identical with Brahman, it is no longer subject to birth and death.

It is through the illusion of mind that an individual perceives an illusory object appearing to be existent before his eyes, though in the eye of truth, the object cannot be found then and there. Illusions are produced in various ways: one mistakes a luminous disc for a sheet of water, the water produces illusion of glass and vice versa. The sun-rays falling on a sandy desert creates a mirage and a thirsty deer, through illusion, runs towards it. In practical field, though the rope

is a real thing; sometimes it is perceived as a snake. The idea of a snake is superimposed upon the rope. In this way the sense of difference between the Brahman, jiva and the world, arises. The Brahman is the Highest Imperishable. He is distinct from his creation and from His Prakriti which is Māyā and also the efficient cause of creation. Iśvara, jiva and the world are His phenomenal creation; they have no independent existence of their own, they all rest in Him[1]. By the act of attiribution or superimposition, the real object does not suffer any change or loss, it only appears differently and the pereciver is deluded thereby. So when the world is superimposed upon the Brahman, the latter remains unchanged and it is only the *jivas* that become bound by such false knowledge. *Avidyā* or ne-science pictures the infinite Brahman as finite, misrepresents the all-pervading soul as limited and bound ; it brings before us things which do not really exist. There is nothing eternal in the world, because, the world itself is all-Māyā. Things, created out of our imagination, to meet our worldly needs, are in reality *Asat.*

Patanjali maintains that Ātman or the soul is of the nature of pure consciousness. It is without any quality or attribute. *Vyās* opines that true Self transcends ego and non-ego, and the ego or the empirical self is an aspect of mind in which the true self is reflected. Being a combination of Self and non-self, ego has the dual character of subject and object. True Self being of the nature of pure consciousness can apprehend its reflection, the Ahaṃ or the ego. But ego being an evolution of unconscious *buddhi* cannot know true Self. Ego is a reflectfon and soul is its original. Soul is unknown to others but known to itself. According to Śaṃkara and Śridhar, pure Self is not an objcct of sense-perception. *Vātsāyan* is of opinion that Ātman is an unique

1. "उद्दीतमेतत् परमन्तु ब्रह्म तस्मिन् त्रयं सुप्रतिष्ठाऽक्षरञ्च।"—Śveta 1. 7.

entity, isolated from mind and senses. Pure Self associated with mind becomes limited by time, space and causalty and plays the part of a doer and enjoyer as the ego, imposing upon itself the consequences of its actions. When the pure Self under the influence of *avidyā* enters into *buddhi*, it becomes conditioned by the limiting adjuncts of the latter and comes out as Ahaṃkār or individual self called *jiva*. *Jivātman* or the individnal soul as the knower, doer or enjoyer is an aspect of *buddhi* and as such being an evolution of impure *buddhi* it is impure itself. *Ātman* and *Jivātman* are identical when this impurity is purged off. *Mundak* holds that *Ātman* is realised in deep meditation by one who is pure in heart (vide Mu. Up. III. 8). *Konād* is of opinion that out of ecstatic condition a special merit is born. This special merit is the opening of the third eye latent in man. When by deep meditation this third eye opens, an effulgence of white light streams out and lights up everything. It is the light of the Soul—pure consciousness itself.

Universal consciousness is unconditional; it is beyond subject-object relation and without any attribute. This unconditional consciousness is identical with Brahman. Jiva-consciousness is conditioned by organism and plays both the parts of subject and object. It is the seer as well as the sight. As the seer, it is the subject and as the sight, it is the object. The individual consciousness forming the empirical jiva-self or ego is the knowing subject. An ego goes out of the body as a *vṛtti* (function) of Antaḥkaraṇa or mind and takes in the form of a sight outside. Ātman or the pure Self is the subject of all knowledge, so it can not be an object of apprehension (Bṛ. Ār. Up. II. 4. 14). Ātman is indivisible, so it cannot be divided into knowing subject and known object (S.B. on Taittiriya Up, ii, 1). Padmapada and Prakāśātman maintain that it is Ahaṃkar or ego that plays the dual parts of subject and object in its empirical life. As subject it is the knower and as object it is the visible world.

'*Viṣaya* cannot apprehend *viṣayin*'—reads 'Pancadaśi'.[1] Self in its transcendental aspect is the only subject—the viṣayin, and its phenomenal aspects are objects of knowledge. Ātman is the eternal knower, it cannot be a known object. Ātman becomes an object of sense-perception when something phenomenal is imposed upon it—'*Aviṣayopya upādhikena rupena viṣaya iti*'. Existence is one. So when a man sees, hears and knows others, he is in the plane of dualism, he is under the sway of *avidyā* (Bṛ Ar. Up. ii. 4, 14). Pure consciousness owing to its contact with *avidyā* evolves as jivātman or individual self and the latter through ignorance thinks itself as separate from the Self Supreme which is of the nature of pure consciousness. We are deluded to take the reflection for the original: "Ahaṃpratyaya hi ahaṃkārasaṃbalitaṃ caitanyaṃavabhāsati" (Introduction to Vedānta Paribhāsā, P. 29 C. U. edition). Ego is erroneously identified as Ātman. Real Self is unconditional pure consciousness. So, Saṃkar holds Ātman to be the Brahman or the Absolute. He regards Ātman as the reservoir of universal consciousness: 'jnaḥ nityacaitanya yamātmā (S.B. on Bṛ Ār ii, 3. 18). He holds jivātman to be conditional consciousness of that unlimited one. In its limited condition, individual self is a mere fraction devoid of its original purity. Individual selves are so many bubbles. We cannot know the real nature of the bubbles so long as they are in tact. They appear separate from the element, they are made of. So long they maintain their separate existences it becomes impossible to ascertain their true identity but as soon as the bubbles burst, they melt into water giving us a formula of H_2O.

One God is everywhere, the world is His image, nothing is independent of Him. He is the enjoyer, enjoyment and the enjoyable things within and without. The Brahman is

1. Also vide Bṛ Ār. Up. III. 4. 2.

not many but one without a second. Being entangled in the snare of Māyā, *Jiva* sees Him as many[1]. The sense of duality and plurality is born of *Avidyā*, which is the root cause of all misconceptions and the jiva's sufferings. The world is a creation of mind. Different thoughts weave themselves into warp and woof of world-appearances. Diverse aspects of the world are imagined in mind alone. There is no duality or plurality. He who sees diversity in the world, dies and is born again and again[2]. Do not identify your intellect with sight, try to comprehend it as seer one with your Self; when the physical body falls the seer merges in Brahman[3].

Mahidhara while commenting on the hymn, 3 of the chapter 32, Yajurveda, observes that there is none equal to God[4]; He is the embodiment of all glory. According to the non-dualists, the evidence that proves the existence of God, also proves His non-duality. Without unique and unprecedented majesty none can be God; He, whose power is excelled, is not God[5]. *'Bhāmati'* on *Brahma-Sutra*, II. 2. 44, refutes all ideas of duality and plurality of God and establishes the doctrine of non-duality[6]. "Duality is an illusion and non-duality is the only reality. When mind is hushed into silence, duality is not perceived"—Says *'Viṣṇu Dharma'*. Mā. Up. also holds the same view and states that the world of

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1. The Bhāgavad I, 13. 47,
2. "मनसैवानुद्रष्टव्यं नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन।
मृत्यो स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति॥"—Bṛ, Ār. IV, 4. 19.
3. The Bhāgavad I. 13. 54.
4. "न तस्य प्रतिमा अस्ति यस्य नाम महद् यशः।—Yajurved, 32. 3. Also Vide Śveta Up, IV. 19.
5. "यत्र पराकाष्ठाप्राप्तिर्वैश्वर्ये स ईश्वरः—Pātanjal Sutra 1. 24.
6. "सर्वस्य चेशनायां परिशुद्धौ न कश्चिदीश्वरः स्यात्।"—Bhāmati

plurality disappears when mind ceases to function[1]. According to the '*Viṣṇu Purāna*' different objects like the mountain, ocean, earth etc., all are projected from Brahman through imagination. So, the worldly objects have no actual existence ; they have no existential value, independent of Brahman. "All that exists is Brahman" states Chhāndagyopaniṣad III. 14. 1. The world as Brahman is real. The *knower* of this truth need not run away from the world of relation. His every action, word and thought is characterised by love and charity. He sees the will of Providence even in the most trifling incident of his everyday life. A knower of Brahman does not see any object created by mind, existing as independent of the Brahman. He sees Brahman everywhere. Such a knowing and emancipated soul is the fulfilment of all desires, he has no hankering here or hereafter. Śruti enjoins that Self of a *Jiva* must be detached from the world of enjoyments. To attain such a blessed position in life, the annihilation of *Avidyā* is imperative.

"Nothing is born without the union of spirit with matter"—declares the Gita, 13. 26. *Avidyā* is the root cause that unites Puruṣa with Prakriti or the Spirit with the material body and the jiva becomes bound. The Vedic utterances, pertaining to the *Karma-Kānda* are meant for practical use pertaining to the daily duty of our house-hold life. By the practice of rituals and virtuous deeds, vice and darkness of mind are expelled, purity and knowledge get upperhand, the knots of spirit and matter are loosened and the *Jiva* steps in the path of spirituality. The jiva is drowned in the transient enjoyments of this fleeting and illusory world, always hankering after material gain, thus its spiritual essence is totally ignored and forgotten. An egoistic person

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1. "मनोदृश्यमिदं द्वैतं यत् किञ्चिद् सचराचरम् ।
मनसो ह्यमनीभावे द्वैतं नैवोपलभ्यते ॥—Mā. Up, 1.3. 31.

exults in self-importance, but is unaware of Self's true divine nature and its destiny. As a consequence of it, such a *Jiva* comes again and again into this world of misery and affliction to reap the deserts of its actions, impelled by the law of *Karma*.

The creative will that awakened in the Supreme God before creation of the universe was His desire. This desire of God for creation is *Māyā* or cosmic illusion. When for the purpose of creation, the great Lord divided Himseff into two halves and thus brought into existence *Mahā Māyā* or *Prakriti*, who is His other half, the seed of duality was sown. At the root of creation, the *Prakriti* as distinct from *puruṣa* was identcial with *Avidyā* as knowledge of duality. The idea of duality springs from *Avidyā* ; it is not *Vidya* ; *Vidya* is illumination and linked with Paramātman, the Supreme Brahman ; while *Avidyā* stands as the supreme cause of creation and so is connected with *Jiva* or individual self.

The great *Māyā* in union with *Brahman* and the *Jiva* respectevily, is known by the two names *Vidyā* and *Avidyā* according to a little difference in attributes. When *Māyā* is directly connected with the Supreme Soul as His attributo she is known as *Vidyā* or pure knowledge and when connected with *Jiva* or individual soul, she is called *Avidyā* or nescience and becomes the cause of its bondage. When *Māyā* rests with *Brahman*, the three guṇas—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* constituting Prakriti, remain in equilibrium, and their balance is lost when she is attached to an individual self. With the first appearance of individuality, self gets entangled in *Māyā* or *Avidyā*, which is the cause of human sufferings and bondages of the world.

The two seeds of man's earthly transmigration are first, sorrow and secondly his mental darkness. They are immediate products of Ahaṃkar or the knowledge of a finite selfhood, which again is caused by *Avidyā*, the parental darkness that

feigns to obscure the eternal light, and in its place extends its realm of unsubstantial creation.

Under delusion we hear and yet doubt, we read and yet question and challenge. When *Māyā* or *Avidyā* prevails we rub our eyes and shrug our shoulder not to find any clue to the solution of the life-problem. When *Sattva* (purity) gets upperhand, our doubts are dispelled—narrowness of mind vanishes and our knowledge and perceptions are confirmed.

Delusion is false no doubt but its influence on us is not negligible. Though every day we find around us some men die, we are not prepared to believe that we ourselves shall some day have to die—this is *Māyā* or delusion. Disgusted with the bad conduct of a wicked son, the mother thinks every day that she will forsake him and go away but really she can not do that—this is delusion or self-deception. *Bharat*, the great king, was a victim of delusion in rearing up a small deer. *Vaśiṣtha*, the great sage, gave king *Aja* much good advice when the king was overwhelmed with grief on the death of his beloved queen, but to no effect, because, his heart was in possession of delusion.

Since *Jiva* is a divine fragment, the sense of duality is also inborn in him. The sense of duality and distinction has reached its culmination in the apprehending consciousness of Jiva. In God it remains hidden behind the sense of unity, but in Jiva-consciousness it is the most prominent factor in the form of ne-science. The more the Jiva has receded from the Centre *i.e.*, God, the more the sense of unity has been apparently lost to him and as a result, the dividing mind of the the Jiva has come to the forefront as a determining factor in all the conceptions and activities of its earthly life. This gives rise to false knowledge and Jiva is compelled to folllow wrong philosophy of life bringing upon itself untold miseries and misfortunes, here and here-after. The Jiva-mind has been a stronghold of ne-science or *Avidyā*, through the influence of

which Jiva is apt to see diversity in unity. By the practice of *Yoga* and complete self-surrender, when, Jiva-consciousness is raised from mental plane to that of divine spirit and Jiva learns to see unity underlying all diversities, its existence, as a human being, comes to an end. Having this aim in view the Universal consciousness welcomed *Avidyā*. To enjoy the joy of the Infinite in finite was His deliberate thought behind the creation of this Jiva-world and also of the *Māyā*. Just as a dark cloud prevents sun-rays from coming to the earth and covers it with deep darkness, so does *Māyā* darkens Jiva-mind. When the cloud of *Māyā* is dispersed, mind is illuminated with divine light. Human mind remains steeped in *Māyā* which acts as a screen between God and man. Make a hole in the curtain and go on increasing its circumference by the performance of virtuous deeds and abandoning all desires. When the hole is as large as the curtain, the same Being will be found standing on either side of it. The body, *prāṇa* and mind being made pure and pacified, Jiva sees itself identical with Brahman.

Just as an image and its reflection are fundamentally the same and inseparable, so also, an individual and the Brahman are in reality the same and inseparable. This is authenticated by the aphorism, 21. 31. 43 of the *Brahma Sutra*. When Jiva attaches itself to intellect, the qualities of intellect, its weal and woe—pleasure and pain are ascribed to the individual soul and the soul shines as such. As a result the attributes of mind and intellect are mistaken for that of the soul and individuals are compelled to experience the joys and woes of life. This happens due to *Avidyā* or ignorance only. When through the grace of a capable preceptor and by the study of the *Vedānta* our eyes of wisdom are open we realise the illusory nature of the world and naturally become averse to entering the dirt and filth of the world. *Māyā* loses her hold on such a knower of truth. She naturally gets ashamed to allure a person who is well acquainted with her ins and outs.

The vast phenomenal universe is the material creation of *Brahman*, the *Jiva* or individual is *Taijasa* or the luminous one, and *Prājna* or the wise one—these are the three emanations of the Supreme *Brahman*. In material creation the universe appears on consciousness *'per se'*. Self-consciousness or the sense of ego is also a passing impression on it like the impression of a pot. Self-consciousness has a beginning and an end as it vanishes at the time of profound sleep, but consciousness *'per se'* never ceases to be.[1] In the wakeful state individual self is in bondage but in the state of dream it is free from the shackles of the body and becomes active in the mental plane, so that even then the bondage of mind is not dissolved. In the state of dreamless slumber, the bondage of mind is torn asunder and the *Jivātman* then floats on an ocean of joy in a divine immutable stage—it then exists almost in its own pristine glory as Ātman. Though in this state, individual soul is almost identical with the Supreme Soul, still *Tamas* or the seed of ne-science in the form of sleep continues, on the interruption of which the *Jiva* comes down again to the world of stark reality. In the state of dreamless slumber, the individual self rises above the mind and intellect and enjoys divine bliss. In the state of dreams, it comes down and is reflected in the mind and experiences happiness and misery. In the state of wakefulness, the individual self comes further down and being reflected in ne-science or false ego, appearing as the body, expresses such egotism as—"I am bodied, I am stout, and I am weak etc." The wrong conception or false notion that the body is the *Ātman* or Self is *Avidyā* or ne-science.[2]

Ego is an empirical state of mind. *Ātman* appears itself as Aham or ego through its own *Māyā*. According to the Śveta Up. verse 3 : "The body, mind and senses constitute a net

1. "न हि द्रष्टुर्दृष्टेर्विपरिलोपः विद्यते ।"—The Śruti.
2. "देहोऽहमिति या बुद्धिर विद्या सा प्रकीर्त्तिता अविद्या ।"

of *Māyā* which confines *Jiva* to the world of attachment." It is through association of Self with non-self like body, mind, senses, etc., that *Jiva* becomes bound and helplessly wanders in the cycle of transmigration. Jivas take higher or lower birth, as per their contact with mind and senses doing good or evil deeds (vide Gitā : 13. 21).

In *Brahma-Purāna*, *Māyā* has been portrayed and also designated as the Great Enchantress. It is under the spell of *Māyā* that *Jiva* becomes *Māyā*-bound. *Māyā* hypnotises *Jiva*, as it were, and under this hypnotic trance, *Jiva* forgets its true divine nature and becomes worldly-minded. But inevitably a moment comes, sooner or later, in the life of a man, when the world is realised as a snare and he becomes satiated with the transient pleasures of the world and recoils from them. A desert cannot quench the thirst of a thirsty person ; one who knows mirage to be a desert will not certainly run towards it to quench his thirst. The sense of pleasure and pain is limited to the egoistic plane ; moreover *Māyā* and her breeds being ultimately unreal, human miseries are also not real. Happiness and misery come in succession showing their changeable illusory nature.

The root of all mistaken ideas is illusory super-imposition. They simply appear to be true but in reality they are empirical. One mistakes an oyster shell for silver, a rope for a serpent, a desert for an oasis. These misrepresentations are all due to optical illusions. There may be some false manifestations due to the lapse of intellect. The object which appears to be present somewhere is not present there, its manifestation is just seen with the help of some other object[1] ; such false manifestation is called *Adhyās*[2] or illusory

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1. "ऋतेऽर्थं यत् प्रतीयेत न प्रतीयेत चात्मनि ।
तद्विद्यादात्मनो मायां यथाभासो यथा तमः ॥"—The Bhāg., II. 9. 33.
2. "अन्यवदृष्ट परत्वाभाषः अध्यासः ।"

superimposition which is the outcome of a union of truth and untruth. The oyster shell, the rope and the desert are indeed real, but the piece of silver, snake and the oasis which they are taken for, exist in one's imagination only ; they have no actual existence then and there.

Such perception is evidently an illusion created out of self-Māyā, Avidyā or ignorance.

The infinite space above is colourless, but owing to illusory perception, common people sees it as blue, white etc.; similarly an ignorant man, not knowing the true nature of his being, is deluded to take it as body, mind, ego etc. and thinks himself separate from others, happy or unhappy, stout or thin, rich or poor and so on[1]. Through Māyā jiva imposes upon one unique Ātman various charactetistics of its own and thereby becomes subject to repeated births and deaths. Impelled by the force of Māyā, jiva comes again and again to the world like a piece of straw driven by a tremendous current of water[2]. Aham or ego is not the real Self or Ātman. Through Māyā or *Avidyā*, egohood is fictitiously superimposed upon Ātman and is conceived as the doer and the enjoyer. This false knowledge is put on par with the conception of a snake for a piece of rope, which is an instance of illusory perception.

Illusion and hallucination

According to Prabhākar, for an illusory perception, there must be an object present before us together with the recollection of something similar to the object. The rounded shape of a rope revives the idea of a snake in memory and the rope is illusorily perceived as a snake. The appearance of the rope creates an idea of a snake in the subconscious mind. Here

1. "सितनीलादि भेदेन यथैकं दृश्यते नभः ।
भ्रान्तदृष्टिभिर्वात्मापि तथैक मन पृथक् पृथक् ॥"
2. "स्रोतजलगतम् दृश्यं स्रोतवेगे गतागतम् ।
मायायोगे यथा जीवो यातायात पुनःपुनः

the presentative character of the rope associated with the recollection of a snake, which is of represensative character here, produces such illusion. The illusions are of two kinds : (1) *Indriyaja-Bhrānti* or false perception due to some pathological disorder of the peripheral organ[1] and (2) *Mānasi Bhrānti* or false perception due to derangement of central organ or mind, which is called hallucination by the Western philosophers. When we falsely ascribe the nature of a known object to another, present before us, the illusion that is produced is *Indriyaja bhrānti*. A man suffering from jaundice, sees everything yellow. It is the yellowness of his visual organ that creates such illusion. Perception of silver in a nacre is an instance of the *mānasi bhrānti*, born of the consciousness of similarity between the two objects. The only difference between an illusory perception and hallucination is that in illusion, their is always an object present, which is mistaken for another. In hallucination, however, the presence of an object is not essential. Thus when Macbeth perceived a dagger before him and wanted to clutch it for slaying Duncan, the dagger itself was a creation of his deranged mind and it was not actually present before him. *Indriyaja bhrānti* is created when the humour of the body e.g. flatulence, bile and phlegm are not uniform, and the *mānasi bhrānti* takes place when *Trigunas* lose their balance to the extreme giving rise to strong passions like impernicious desires, greed, lust, grief etc. Śri Rādhā was illusioned to embrace a *tamāl* tree out of intense love for Krishna. Krishna was not present before her eyes, but *Rādhā's* mind was so much captivated by the sweet memory of her lover that she fascinated Krishna everywhere and in all objects. She mistook a *tamāl* tree for her lover Śri Krishna and

1. *Nyāyamanjari.*
Also vide *Nyāyabindutika* of Dhammotara, P. 16-17.

embraced it passionately. What illusioned *Rādhā* was the similarity in dark blue colour of the two—Krishna and the *tamāl* tree.

Rādhā's mind was coloured with Krishna's complexion so deeply that the very sight of a dark blue object was enough to revive in her memory an illusory image of her lover whenever she came it across.

The second type of illusion is of mental origin. The dark blue colour of the *tamāl* tree excites the subconscious impression of the illusory object e.g. Krishna that appears as real on surface mind. It is the same as the illusory perception of *silver* in a nacre. The silver is present in consciousness and not in reality and the consciousness of silver is imposed upon the nacre producing an illusory perception. The brightness of the nacre revives the cognative impression of silver in the subconscious mind and the nacre is illusorily perceived as silver. It is the recollection of silver that creates an illusory perception. The similarity that creates illusion does not consist in the elements of two different objects but in their quality. Śridhara holds in his Nyāyakandali, P. 178-79 that illusory perception is produced when perverted sense organs are associated with the subconscious impressions of the past experience. Some western philosophers are likely to put hallucination and Yogic perception under the same category. The view is ridiculous; for while the former is a creation of the deranged mind, the latter is possible only when the Yogin attains an intuitive consciousness i.e. when his mind is dssolved in the object of meditation. In this state his consciousness is concentrated and one pointed; he transcends the plane of normal consciousness of jiva-mind. The Yogic vision of Śrimad Trailangadhara Swami and Śri Śri Ram Krishna are certainly different from the visions of Macbeth. The perception of a Yogin is the outcome of super-

normal consciousness, while the latter is an instance of an abnormal state of mind.

The Western philosophers have dealt with the physiological sides of illusion but their contribution towards its psychological, epistemological and ontological treatment are not worth mentioning.

When a thing of one plane unites with the quality or characteristic of a thing of another plane in such a way that it becomes impossible to understand which quality belongs to which thing, it is then that an error of judgment arises. The mistake of a rope for a serpent is an instance. Though there is existence of something called a serpent, when we commit the mistake of regarding the rope as a serpent we suffer nothing but optical illusion. The rope is real, the snake also is real, but the impression that is formed at that moment in our mind cannot be traced there on the awakening of knowledge. In the same way, Brahman is real, the Jiva also is real but the world which we now see between the two is an optical illusion and so the world is nothing but the product of an illusory superimposition. As a desert is the substratum of a mirage so is the Brahman of the universe. The desert is true as a desert but the mirage is an illusion. Similarly Brahman is real whereas the world is a mere appearance i.e. it is an illusion. Both the act and product of superimposition are imaginative and therefore unreal, the substratum being the only reality.

This world is a transformation of Māyā and consequently it is false. The root of illusory superimposition is want of discrimination born of nescience. Consciousness is a total entity, it is the difference in attributes that produces differences in knowledge. The human body, mind, the intellect and the sense organs produce illusory superimposition on pure consciousness or Soul and the vast phenomenal universe is the illusory superimposition on the Supreme Soul.

Just as two pieces of thread wound together make a piece of rope, so also, Brahman and Māyā wound up with each other, have created this universe which is like a rope. Twist round the rope in opposite direction ; Brahman and *Māyā* will be separated again and this world of sight will disappear. The world is a creation of sight resulting from ignorance due to nescience. So the first instruction of the Hindu *Yoga*-Philosophy is : "Close your eyes".

The three Guṇas or the primordial qualities viz, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are the matter-born qualities which bind the immortal Soul. Before evolution they were latent in Prakriti and became manifest after the evolution of the universes. Prakriti or Māyā in union with Brahman is regarded as made up of the three constituent qualities—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* in equal proportion. These three attributes are inherent in Brahman in such a proportion as to counterbalance one another and thus render Brahman a *Nirguṇa Puruṣa* i.e. one without any attribute at all.

Brahman is the substratum upon which the creation is imagined. Brahman alone is real and everything else whatever is perceived to exist is illusorily superimposed upon Brahman. The world disappears when Brahman is realised just as the snake vanishes as soon as the rope is cognised to be a rope. Brahman in the Vedās is designated as Stambha or supporter of everything. As the rope, supporting the illusory snake is real, so Brahman, supporting the universe is the only Reality. On dissolution when both the creator and the creation dissolve, Brahman exists alone. The ocean remains the same for ever but the waves, ripples and bubbles upon its surface appear and and disappear every moment. The attributes pass away ; the substance remains the same.

Ātman or pure consciousness is not coloured whatsoever. It is the empirical ego under the influence of *avidyā* that

takes different hues. Like an unruffled ocean, there is no wave on the bosom of pure consciousness. The sense of duality and plurality arises in the self-conscious subjective mind. Vanity and restlessness of mind is the cause of manifold cognitions. Consciousness is the ground of all knowledge. The light of pure consciousness is reflected upon the impure mind that defiles the former to some extent overshadowing its transcendental nature when quite an illusory knowledge is put forth. So long as the mind is impure and oblique in its operation, the true knowledge remains at a far off distance. The existence is one. The conception of many is illusorily imposed upon one by *māyā*. There is neither perceiver nor things perceived, but an unlimited ocean of pure consciousness which is the only reality—the immortal Soul of beings.

According to the Vedic view, Brahman through His own *māyā* spreads the net of this empirical world in a sportive spirit and becomes many to enjoy His creation from different aspects of individuality. *Chhā Up.* VI. 7 holds this view and establishes thereby an identity between Brahman and *Jiva*. Iśvara, Jiva and the world are the manifestations of Brahman in the realm of time and space. When the sense of time and and space is obliterated, they also disappear leaving behind the consciousness of Brahman alone which is beyond time, space and causation. So when Brahman is realised, duality and plurality vanish altogether. Brahman, who is the only Reality, negatives all ideas of duality, terrestrial or celestial. The very conception of duality takes us away from Reality. *Chhā Up.* VII. 24. states : "One sees the other and knows him apart from oneself due to his limited power of perception". Limited knowledge is the partial truth ; it cannot know the whole truth.

Iśvara, Jiva and the world are not actual transformation of Brahman. Actual manifestion with all its changing aspects like birth, old age and death etc. cannot be attributed to One

Who is birthless, changeless and causeless eternal. Brahman is *Mahākāsa*, the infinite space and His manifestations are *Ghatākāśa*—the finite space contained in different jars. The limited *Ghatākāsa* is not distinct from *Mahākāsa*; when the *Ghata* breaks, the space contained in it becomes one with the infinite space outside. In the same way, when the Jiva which is encaged within the sheaths of body, mind, prāṇa and the senses breaks through all these sheaths, it becomes one with Brahman.

According to Saṃkarācāryya, even Brahman with attributes is illusive. So except the Supreme Being all his phenomenal emanations and manifestations are untrue. Analysing the true nature of Brahman and that of His creation Professor Deussen has written at page 147 of his book 'Philosophy of the Upanishad': "All the three definitions of Brahman as, being, thought and bliss are in essence only negative. Being is the negation of all empirical beings, thought the negation of all objective beings, bliss the negation of all beings that arise in the mutual relation of knowing subject and known object." So to understand the nature of Brahman, we have to understand Him negatively. Therefore the *S'rutis* have enjoined giving up of every thing as "not this, not this". When every thing is abandoned, even the mind, intellect and ego what remains is the Soul which is Brahman—the only truth. *Jiva* is indeed Brahman. The difference that appears between the individual and Brahman is due to differences in their attributes. Again attributes differ from individual to individual and the result has been that two individuals are not similar in nature and character. This is why a mistaken notion has gained ground that we are different from each other and even different from God. The idea of difference is based on ignorance born of nescience or *Avidyā*. The Soul is in nature consciousness itself and consciousness is indivisible. So to ascribe any part betrays one's ignorance. This want of

knowledge is *Avidyā*. The great *Māyā* is cosmic ignorance or metaphysical nescience. The individual is shrouded in the veil of delusion which is the psychological ignorance. Ignorance is an indefinable something that is positive.

So long as *Avidyā* prevails, the reality is cognised in the phenomenal form of existence. The phenomenal aspects of true Self or reality is ego, and the visible world being the creation of egoistic self, the ego out of motherly affection towards its progeny is prone to accept this objective world of illusion to be real. But ego itself being a shadow of real Self can have no actual existence. We create this illusory world in our imagination and are fascinated to think it as self-evolved, self-existent and eternal. Thoughts get externalised as the objects of the world and this objective world exists so long as the subjective mind persists. The creation being hypothetical is of perceptual nature. Goudapādo calls this world a dream. Kant denies this phenomenal creation but shifts creative source from human mind to the transcendental Self. Berkeley also like Kant holds that this objective world is born of Cosmic Mind. Bergson opines that the phenomenal world is the creation of Absolute Will. Schopenhauer is an absolute idealist. His philosophy of reality approximates that of Bergson. The Cosmic Mind, the Transcendental Self and the Absolute are synonyms. The idealism as held by Rāmānuja, Berkeley and Kant is theistic in main. Rāmānuja attaches even ontological value to the world of things.

Avidyā or primal ignorance is not insurmountable. We have within us both *vidyā* (illumination) and *avidyā* (darkness), and they counter-perfume each other. *Vidyā* is our very nature, while *avidyā* is an element that has been imposed upon us from outside. As *avidyā* tries to veil the true nature of man by darkening his mind, the *vidyā* in its turn also tries to perfume *avidyā* and as a result of this counter-perfuming, the *avidyā* gradually undergoes transformation

enlightening the mind bit by bit. *Avidyā*, being an intruder and of lesser power, ultimately yields and the darkness is removed with the preponderance of *vidyā*. *Vidyā* perdominating, the world appears in its true light and the illumined Soul abhors further individuation.

"In all philosophy we come to a point", says Dr. Inge "where we must trust our deepest convictions, which are not arrived at by any process of reasoning, but must be accepted as fundamental facts. Such, I maintain, are the Absolute Values, Truth, Goodness and Beauty ; and such is the conviction that behind the multiple there must be unity, behind the changing the immortal, behind the temporal the eternal". So long as we are under the influence of *avidyā* and have a dualistic stand-point, the external objects exist, determining our perception. In ecstatic condition, the perception is intuitive and so indeterminate (vide *Nyāyabindu Tikā*) i. e. independent of external object. Mind ceases to function in this state and so our mutual relation with the world is cut off. Mind is natural, so it is used to perceive phenomenal objects. The phenomenal world is organically connected with jiva-mind.

This empirical world stands upon a basis which is real. The basis which supports the world must be greater than the world. When a man becomes disgusted with his worldly life, he looks upon the Greater. This Greater Being is Brahman. To realise the Supreme Brahman, it is enjoined to adopt the method of *'neti neti'*. Negating everything of the world one by one we reach a point at last which is practically nil or *Sunya*. In the beginning, everything was void ; in the middle the world is manifest and in dissolution it will enter into a void again (The Gita, II, 28). So the ultimate nature of the wordly objects is *sunya*. If we go on analysing a material object, the object gradually becomes so minute as not to be perceived even through a microscope. It ultimately passes into nothing. The *sunya* of the Buddhists is a corollary of 'neti neti' of the

Upaniṣads. Dr. Bhagwan Das considers the formula 'ahametanna' i e 'I—this—not' to be the highest means of God-realisation.

Though *sunya* appears as a negative to the worldly people it has a positive meaning in the world above. The conception of the final truth as *sunya* appears frightening to those who are too much fond of their egoistic self. This is simply because they do not love God. He who is drunk in worldliness has no place for God in his life. A true lover is never afraid to annihilate his ego if union is to result therefrom. The love of God demands sacrifice of the self. When self is sacrificed, we become *sunya* ourselves and disappear in the eternal void. *Sunya* is the land of eternal peace and perfection. When one enters there, one's peace remains unperturbed amidst all tribulations of the world.

When the world is negated of its contents, it becomes void —a *Sunya*. It can be inferred, therefore, that the essence of the world is *Sunya*. And the essence is the truth or reality of the substance. Thus *sunya* negates the world of appearance and asserts its own position as the final truth which is Brahman. The world in its potential condition is *sunya* and this potentiality is the unmanifest cause of creation which is also Brahman. So *sunya* is not negative but positive being Brahman Himself. The *Hṛdaya Sutra* of *Prajnāpāramitā* reads : "Emptiness is not different from form : form is not different from emptiness. Whatever is form is emptiness : whatever is emptiness is form. Thus perception, name, conception and knowledge also are emptiness"—E.T. by Takakusi, Vol. XLIX, P. 148. So *sunya* is *Purṇa*, the fullness of being.

Individual ignorance is a part of cosmic ignorance. It hides truth and leads mankind to falsehood and error. When there is duality, there is contradiction, and contradiction breeds misunderstanding, hatred and malice. The world beyond is a

land of peace and bliss. Since the knowledge of the *Jivas* is veiled in ignorance, they are under a delusion and so they suffer weal and woe. The veil of nescience covers the face of Supreme Truth ; it is essential to uproot it. He who completely surrenders himself to the feet of the Lord can tear asunder this veil of nescience and then and then only he clearly realises that *Jiva* is *S'iva* and the emancipation becomes as easy as if it were a myrobalan in one's absolute possession. When *Jiva* realises his true Self, the entire universe appears to him to be one with the Brahman ; the spectator and the sight, the subject and the object, all overlap one another. Who then shall talk about whom ? Who then shall see whom ? Who will worship whom ? For, every thing then is 'I'—the entire universe is merged in the Self and there is no place for 'I' or 'Thou' ; in the depth of his being then floats only one Reality—the all-pervading Soul, the ever conscious, self-existent, blissful and immortal. If one thing is true, its negation is false. The universe is all one and the difference is only in degree—in the concepts. The world has not intrinsic reality. Intrinsic reality is possessed by Ātman alone. The realisation of the ultimate truth or the establishment of an identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Spirit is salvation : it rests on spiritual discipline and illumination,

It is the wondrous charm of the outer world, the *Māyā* of our relation that keeps us enthralled. The affectionate ties of our domestic life do not allow us to realise the untenability of the views of our present life. The bondage of *Māyā* is so powerful. But in order to cut off the snares of illusion, we must not be heartless. Compassion is not to be given up but it has to be mastered. When your child falls sick, attend the child as a part of your duty—but do not be moved by its death. Such a spirit shall conquer attachment. "I am a man free from attachment"—he who, under this impression, disregards the cries of the distressed and the sick and goes away

from them is to be looked down upon as a demon. If we look upon each work as a duty invested by God and perform it in this light without a desire to make any bargain out of it, we are really freed from attachment.

The present life will mould our future. It is for this reason that every one should give up what is objectionable in one's habits, and practise virtue, good manners and detachment. Lack of restraint causes deterioration not only of physical health but also of mental steadiness. *Māyā* or illusion keeps the *Jiva* enchained to the world and does not allow it any opportunity to know its true nature. We totally forget every thing regarding ourselves being immersed in the enjoyment of the objects conferred on us by *Māyā*. In the opinion of Sri Sri Ram Krishna, his Divine Mother created *Māyā* as a part of Her plan for creation. To him jivātmans are like so many flying kites. They are launched by the strings of illusion. The ends of the strings are in the hands of his Divine Mother. It is Her pleasure to spare a string or two to go off among the thousands.

"Māyā appears to be insurmountable ; but I take them across Māyā who take My shelter[1]. I give them intelligence enough to overcome Māyā who serve and worship Me devotedly[2]"—said Lord Krishna. The devotee who discharges his duties disinterestedly overcomes the binding effects of *Avidyā* or Māyā. Then everything appears to be mere illusion and is reduced to cypher. When the real Self is realised, the knower desists naturally from looking for anything from outside and enjoys within the immortal bliss arising out of Self-realisation. So the peace of an unoccupied mind is not lost at all ; it fails to turn him mad or senseless. It is stated

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1. "दैवीह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥—The Gitā 7. 14.
2. "ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ।"—The Gitā, 10. 10.

in '*S'atapat Brāhmana*' : "The *Brāhmins* who behold the same *Ātman* as being reflected in themselves as in the world beyond do not feel any attraction towards their offsprings."

To tear asunder the screen of illusion, the verse gleaned from Saṃkarācāryya cited in the footnote is specially helpful ; it removes darkness of ignorance from the mind and the illusion of worldly attachment is annihilated for ever. The verse exaplains the unsubstantiality of our relation with the world and it runs as follows.—"Who is thy wife ? Who is thy son ? How long does this illusion exist ? This world is a strange place indeed[1]". In the eternity of time, human life is but the sumtotal of a few days. After playing with the dolls of this earth for several days we go back again, when our worldly connection is cut off. Thus we have come many times and returned. But why do we not feel sorrow for our parents and children of our previous birth ? Because God has drawn down before us a curtain of forgetfulness which is *Māyā* and thereby we have got rid of that painful memory.

It is only due to the influence of *Māyā* that the forgetful *Jivātmān*, in quest of peace and happiness, moves about blindfolded in a world of depletion and want where eternal peace is a thing unknown. Peace is the condition of mind when it is quite free from restlessness. Unalloyed bliss reigns in the world beyond. But it can be tasted here in earth if we practise *Yoga*. If your heart really craves for true happiness and peace, you should turn your mind inwards and upwards.

In material creation, ne-science is dominant, and in spiritual creation the aspect of His consciousness dominates. Because of its relation to body and mind the Jiva links up with ne-science, forgets his own divine nature, and wonders about

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1. "का तव कान्ता कस्ते पुत्रः ।
संसारोऽयं अतीव विचित्रः ॥"—Saṃkarācāryya.

in this illusory world. The mysterious destiny of a *Jiva* is guided and revealed by the inscrutable hand of providence known here as *Māyā* or *Prakriti*. *Māyā* keeps man covered under its veil of ignorance, and is hence also called *Avidyā*.

Avidyā, *Kāma* and *Karma* are the threefold knots of human heart. Avidyā is ignorance that darkens Jiva-mind and false knowledge is produced. Kāma or inordinate desire, born of Avidyā, is the veritable trap of death. Whatever is produced by *Karma* or action as an effect is non-self which is transient[1]. Nothing transient proves beneficient in the long run and so it is not worth-accepting. To a Vedāntist, things are thoughts ; objects do not exist apart from thoughts. So the things that are created out of our imagination, for practical use, are in reality *Asat* (Vide Mā. Up. IV. 73).

The egotism that appears in the individual through false conviction that 'I am happy or unhappy, I am blind, I am deaf etc.' is all hoax. The real Self has neither increase nor decrease and the Self is never deaf or blind. An individual falls into an error of judgment by ascribing to the *Ātman* the characteristics of the body, mind and the sense organs. Although the ideas—'I am the knower, I am the doer, I am wise, I am pious',—are better type of egotism ; yet they are nothing but illusions of the mind. "I am that *S'iva* (ultimate good) in the form of pure bliss and knowledge"—such knowledge alone is the truth. All other kinds of knowledge except this being the product of ignorance are illusory and hence absolutely false. "This Self is *Brahman*, this Self is like Brahman"—such knowledge alone is true. Realisation of Self may follow if we search in our heart for answer to the eternal query : Who am I—whence have I come from, what is my relation with others and whither is my

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1. "यत् कृतकं तदनित्यम् ।"
'वाचारम्भनं विकारो नामधेयम् ।"—Samkar comments on Mu Up, II. 1.3.

destination. Think, O brother, the mystery of life in its true perspective[1]. Life is very fickle as drops of water on a lotus leaf. It is so fleeting and uncertain ! Life leads to death and death is the passage to a new life again[2].

The course directly opposite to that of *Māyā* is the right course leading to truth,—not that which goes downwards through realm of *Māya*. The Soul wrapped up in illusion is *Jiva*, the Soul freed from it is *S'iva*.

According to the Gita, Verse 13. 21 : *Puruṣa* (Spirit) associated with Prakriti (matter) enjoys all the qualities born of Prakriti. "Know thou" says Lord Krishna in Verse 13. 19 of the Gita, "that all modifications a Jiva undergoes, and the qualities like happiness and misery it experiences, are all matter-born." It is only because of contact with the body that in the individual grows the feeling that he is a *Brāhmin* (high-born) or a *Sudra* (low-born), happy or unhappy. Happiness and unhappiness can be conquered by controlling the mind. 'The world is full of sorrow ; there is no prospect here of true happiness'—if this is fully realised heart and Soul and we refrain from the enjoyment of earthly things, the false idea about the world will disappear and the knowledge of *Brahman* shall gradually arise in the quiet heart. It is this condition that has been described in the *S'astras* as supreme joy or quintational bliss. Free your own mind from the clutches of ne-science and reveal the ever blissful One. The Gita (Verse. 14. 2) says that the Jiva who acquires correct knowledge about spirit and matter becomes united with

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1. "कस्य त्वं वा कुत आयातः ।
तत्वं चिन्तय तदिदं भ्रातः ॥"—Saṃkarācāryya.
2. "नलिनीदलगतजलमतितरलम् ।
तद्वज्जीवनमतिशयचपलम् ॥
तावज्जीवनं तावन्मरणम् ।
तावज्जनी जठरे शयनम् ॥"—Saṃkarācāryya.

Krishna—the Supreme Spirit. He is neither born at the time of creation nor is he affected in any way at the time of dissolution. His peace of mind remains unperturbed in all condition of life.

The Vedās and the Upaniṣads were compiled with a view to removing the remotest possibility of attribution due to *Avidyā*. So long as the false conception arising out of ne-science in the way of 'The vice and virtue belong to me, I must reap their fruits here or hereafter' persists and the idea is attributed to Ātman and the egoism plays the chief role in the life of a man, he cannot be indifferent to the actions done by him and consequently he wanders in the wilderness of cause and effect, revolving in the cycle of birth and death.

Only with the dawn of true knowledge and annihilation of selfhood, the idea of cause and effect is banished from the mind. When a man realises the enjoyer, enjoyable objects and the act of enjoyment as conducive to and product of *Māyā*, he separates himself from the world of *Māyā* and becomes a free Soul ; his *Ātman* rests as the Brahman. A Māyā-bound jiva is expected to shake off the bonds of Māyā only when it wins the grace of the Lord of Māyā who chained him to the world of illusion and attachment. "He who can preserve the tranquillity of mind" said He "both in prosperity and in adversity, to whom gold and earth are of equal value and whose mind is neither exulted by success and praise nor depressed by censure and failure transcends the influence of Māyā".

'Besides Brahman, everything is *Māyā—Asat*'—such true knowledge alone can make an end of jiva's becoming. *Māyā* herself is ashamed to appear before one who knows the truth. Only the silly and the evil-minded are bond-slaves of *Māyā* and they boast of themselves in the way of 'I' and 'mine'. The fool who due to his impure ego thinks the solitary and

indifferent *Ātman* to be the doer, does not know the truth. *Māyā* in union with *Ātman* is known as *Vidyā* or knowledge and when united with *Jiva* it is *Avidyā* or nescience. The solitary *Ātman*, who is the Brahman, transcends both *Vidyā* and *Avidyā*[1].

In consequence of great merit when individual beings acquire power of discrimination between Self and not-self, between the transient and the eternal, the *Māyā* of our relation with the world drops away. When through faith in the *Vedānta* one acquires the full conviction that every individual is identical with Brahman, then and then alone, the possessor of such knowledge may be said to have transcended the realm of *Māyā* and obtained emancipation, though still living and possessed of a mortal frame.

"*Bhaba-nirodha nibbānam*, i. e, the cessation of world-experience is liberation"—says Buddha. It is the Turiya-state, a plane of transcendental consciousness above time, space and causation. In this state, the subject—object realtion disappears, the earth becomes extinct, and only the true Self shines as pure consciousness, perfect bliss and eternal existence. In pointing out a way to such blessedness, a Buddhist text under the name and style 'Kindred—Sayings' Vol. II, P. 2 states : "From the fading away and ceasing of ignorance, comes ceasing of activities : from ceasing of activities, ceasing of contact : from ceasing of contact, ceasing of feeling : from ceasing of feeling, ceasing of craving : from ceasing of craving, ceasing of becoming : from ceasing of becoming, ceasing of birth : from ceasing of birth, old age, death, grief, lamenting, suffering, and sorrow, disappar." With the cessation of all these earthly evils, the eternal life begins. The ceasing of 'consciousness' as stated above refers to the over-activity of the Self-conscious ego. In a further interpretation of the term 'ignorance' Buddha says : "Not

1. "चरन्त्व विद्या ह्यमृतं तु विद्या विद्याविद्ये ईशते यस्तु सोऽन्यः ।"—Śveta V. I.

to know suffering, not to know the origin of suffering, not to know the extinction of suffering, not to know the path to the extinction of suffering ; this O friend, is the cause of ignorance. Not to know the four sacred truths as they are, I have wandered on the long path from one birth to another. Now have I seen these ; the current of being is stemmed, the root of suffering is destroyed : there is henceforward no re-birth for me ."—'Buddha' P, 240.

Of all the most valuable teachings of the *Vedānta* Philosophy, nothing perhaps is so inspiring as this brief Vedic statement—"Tat Tvaṃ Asi"—which means : "Thou art that". "Thou Art That"—is very simple to hear, but most difficult to understand. What indeed is 'Tat' and what is 'Tvaṃ' ? That which is denoted by 'Tat' is not the creator, but pure consciousness with *Vidyā* as its only attribute. By 'Tvaṃ' is meant not the impure consciousness of individual soul wrapped up in *Avidyā* but that pure condition of Soul as is common at the time of deep meditation. The Yoga-consciousness of the highest stage of *Samādhi* is unalloyed and pure and is not different from the consciousness of the Brahman Supreme. Both are identical in essence but different in name and manifestation only. So "Tat Tvaṃ Asi" or "Thou Art That" means that when you are pure, you are nothing but Brahman. That is why *Jiva* is *S'iva*. There is no difference indeed between the Supreme Soul and individual soul except in their qualifying attributes. Leave the attributes aside and they will be quite identical as sea-water and the sea.

I have long discussed about the nothingness of the world and have advised my readers to ignore the world altogether. It will be an act of sheer ingratitude on my part not to say anything in favour of the Mother Good Earth in whose lap I have been born and brought up and resting on whose bosom I have seen the light of the world beyond.

I request my readers to look upon each particle of dust of this world, as pervaded by the Brahman Supreme and respect and worship it as such. A purified ego finds God in all the objects of creation. So Lord Śri Caitanya said : "To whatever direction I turn my eyes, the loving countenance of my beloved Lord appears." So if we accept this view that the world is full of Brahman, there will be no harm to take this world and the worldly things as real. Far away from the sun, one sees multiple objects but when one takes one's stand upon the sun, one sees only the sun-light all around. Similarly, the knower of Brahman sees Brahman every-where in all things and beings. To a knowing sage who finds no difference between Brahman and His creation, the world is real. To Ram Krishna Parama Haṃsa Deva, Māyā herself too is one face of Brahman. To the knower of truth Māyā is the manifestation of Supreme Ātman, the august shower of living souls and of the universe. With the total annihilation of the sense of duality when one attains full knowledge of Brahman, Māyā and this world of illusion will be found to be one with the Supreme. When by following the instructions of the Vedānta *i.e.* "Tat Tvaṃ Asi" or "Thou Art That", identity is established between this body and the universe, between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul ; then and then only Māyā and this world of plurality will be realised to be identical with the Brahman. "When I see the whole world in my own Soul, the variegated moods of creation are merged in the beauty of the Universal Soul and in mutual exchange of vision *Dādu* beholds the Truth"—said *Dādu*.

HUMAN BODY, MIND AND SOUL.

"स्थूलानि सूक्ष्माणि बहूनि चैव रूपाणि देही स्वगुणैर्वृणोति।"

Śveta, V. 12.

An individual being, besides its gross body, possesses several other subtle bodies. The material body, begotten of parents is gross. *Prāṇa*, mind and senses together constitute the subtle body of beings[1]. The subtle body is the seat of *Jiva's* enjoyment and suffering. *Avidyā* as an attribute of *jiva* constitute its causal body. Causal body is *Avidyā*. It is so called, because it is the cause of bondage of human soul and cause of both the gross and subtle bodies. It has no beginning but it is terminable through the attainment of true knowledge.

The Brahman through the spontaneity of His Self-Māyā enters into the causal body of a jiva and becomes bound as it were. The causal body that envelopes this Supreme Light within is the sheath of ne-science. The causal body is the first thing in the evolution of *Jiva* or living beings and is the first receptacle of the Soul. This forms the inner-most sheath in the centre around which other bodies or sheaths grow. The sense of ego develops with the development of cause-body and awakens the craving for enjoyment. This craving for enjoyment brings into existence the coarse material body. An urge in the soul is at the root of such gradual evolution. This urge is gradually translated into action and as a result of such activity the development of *Prāṇa* or life-principle, mind and senses follows. When this life-principle becomes active, Jivātman or the individual

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1 "पञ्चप्राणमनोबुद्धिदशेन्द्रियसमन्वितम्।
शरीरं सप्तदशभिः सूक्ष्मं तत् लिङ्गमुच्यते॥"—'Pancadaśi'.

soul feels an inclination to enjoy *Rupa*, *Rasa*. *Gandha*, *S'abda* and *Sparśa*—the enjoyable things in matter. The result is the evolution of a full-fledged animal body. *Rupa* (form) *Rasa* (taste), *Gandha* (smell), *Sparśa* (touch) and *S'abda* (sound)—these are the five materials with which a man is in commerce with the external world. The individual being residing in the next subtle body is named *Taijasa* and the sum-total of all the Taijasa-selves is known as *Hiraṇyagarbha Iśvara*, the Universal Soul. The individual soul sheathed in the five covers or bodies, having lost all knowledge of Self revolves in the eternal cycle of birth and death.

The vital sheath is the essential part of the food-body. As bellows are full of air, so every part of the physical body is full of vital air. Since *Ātman* remains covered under the gross and subtle sheaths, its true nature remains unknown. According to the development of intellect some take body for the soul, some think mind to be the soul, some mistake *Prāṇa* for soul, others consider intelligence to be the soul. These false ideas are born of *Avidyā* ; soul in none of them. The sheath of intelligence is the essence of the mental sheath. Similarly, the sheath of bliss is the vital part of the sheath of intelligence. The being residing within the sheath of bliss is *Ātman*.

Human body consists of five sheaths.

The human body is the universe (*Brahmānda*) in miniature or microcosm and this big universe is the entire creation or macrocosm. Both this universe and human body are made of a combination of three guṇas or entities—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* and are dominated by them.[1] Both the universe and this human body are made of the five elements or *Panca-Bhutas*. The active energy which guides and gives life to the universe gives life to man also. Every atom in

1. "ब्रह्माण्डे ये गुणाः सर्व्वे शरीरेषु व्यवस्थिताः।"

the human body as also in the universe is pulsating with life. It is not that each human being has got only one body but there is quite a number of them within the one which is visible. They are : (I) *Annamoy Koṣa* or the sheath of food i. e., the external physical body, which lives and grows on food. This physical sheath i. e. the material gross body consists of head, hands, feet etc. (2) *Praṇamoy Koṣa* or the sheath of life-energy is made up of five airs which are *Prāṇa, Apāna, Vyāna, Samāna* and *Udāna. Prāṇa-Vāyu* or the vital air flows upwards and it keeps the physical body alive. *Apāna* passes through anus ; it controls the organ of speech. *Vyāna,* resting in between *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* spreads all over the body ; it controls the power of hearing, digests food and turns juicy substance into blood. *Samāna* is at the navel, it controls the power of thinking. *Udana Vāyu* is jumpy ; it helps excretion of non-essential part of the food taken. These are the five airs and their functions. Eyes, ears etc. are sense-organs ; hands, feet etc. are work-organs. The skin is made up of five elements.[1] (3) *Manomoy Koṣa* or sheath of mind. (4) *Vijnānmoy Koṣa* or the sheath of intelligence that creates the notion of Aham or 'I-consciousness'. (5) *Ānāndamoy Koṣa* or the sheath of bliss. In deep sleep and during aesthetic contemplation when the sense of ego is transcended, the sheath of bliss reveals, wherein lies the immortal Soul. These bodies of man are like the sheaths of a plantain tree—the inner one, though subtler is more pervading, being encased by the outer one. The outermost sheath of food is the coarse material body of flesh and blood and the other *four* sheaths are etherial and astral, though not wholly immaterial.

The gross body grows on food and perishes for want of food. All this creation is nothing other than food. What-

1. Vide Taitt Up, 1. 18.

ever is animate or inanimate i.e., possessed of life or not, may be regarded as food. Man and the whole world of animate beings have been enjoying food from the beginning of creation but still it is not exhausted. The mystery involved in life and food, the support of life and the inexhaustibility of food is known only to the few who attain divinity for their superior knowledge. Soul with its energy and potentiality is the cause of the inexhaustibility of food. The Soul by its endless penance and prayer makes food inexhaustible. It is for this reason that though food has been consumed by all creatures since the beginning of creation, it is still as inexhaustible as ever. '*Satapatha Brāhmana*' says : "The self-existent Lord *Brahmā* by suitable action poured Himself int all living beings and all life into Himself."

Prajāpati Brahmā, a causal Brahman, manifests Himself as energy and matter—the eater and the eatable. As an eater, He is the *Prāṇa* or vital energy in the creature body. This subtle *Prāṇa*, remaining within the body in the form of gastric fire subsists on its gross entities. The Praśna Upaniṣad, verse II. 8, observes that *Prāṇa* is both the father and mother and again it takes birth as the son. "Through the activity of mind, *Prāṇa* enters into the body"—says the same Upaniṣad, verse III. 3. A man enters into *Prāṇa* with that thought which he cherishes in his mind at the moment of his death, and *Prāṇa* merges in mind and ultimately the mind, in Soul.

Prāṇa subsists on the physical body

The Praśna Upaniṣad, verse 1. 14 states : "Semen generates from food and from semen all creatures are born." Food, verily, is the *Prajāpati*. The bulk or the outer sheath of the creature body is called *annamoy koṣa* or the food-body. This sheath supports the *Prāṇa*. The moon in the *Vedās* is called *Soma*. The soma-sacrifice is enjoined in the text for the appeasement of *Prāṇa* and for the purification of mind. The sun is identified with *Prāṇa* or the cosmic energy.I

pervades everything. The moon is an insentient body and is without heat. So the moon is the food. The sun and the moon—the eater and the eatable are the first two manifestations of the cosmic *Prāṇa*, the sun forming the essential part or the vital energy of everything. According to the Upaniṣad, Vol. I, P. 86, the natural sun-light symbolises the light of the Soul. In *Gāyatri Japam*, the prayer is addressed to the Being residing in the sun. The meditation of 'OM' and incantation of *Gāyatri mantra*, when practised together, leads to the Self-realisation.

Trigunas or the three primordial qualities—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* in the state of equilibrium is known as Prakriti. *Prakriti* is the mother of all creation. If we start analysing anything of the creation, we ultimately reach the same Prakriti. Take, for example, the case of an earthen pot. The pot is made of earth. Earth is one of the five primordial elements. These five elements are drived from five *Tanmātras* or the five elements in subtle condition. The five *Tanmātras* are produced from Aham Tattva or ego which is an aspect of mind. Mind is begotten of *Mahat Tattva* or cosmic intelligence. This *Mahat Tattva* is the first emanation of Prakriti. If we analyse animal or plant body, we shall arrive at the same conclusion. The animal or the plant body is a combination of a large number of living cells. These cells are made up of five elements as said before and if we proceed with our experiment, eventually, we shall reach that homogeneous ingredient which is Prakriti, the basis of the world of becoming.

In verse 14.5 of the Gitā it is said that the immortal Soul is confined within the individual body through the activity of Trigunas. Since the Prakriti is embodiment of three strands, all the objects of creation, animate or inanimate possess the three qualities *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* in unequal proportions. Mind being the second emanation of Prakriti, it also possesses the *Trigunas*. The characteristic feature of each of the three

qualities is that they try to be predominant by overpowering one another. *Sattva* or purity and nobility predominates in a pure mind and in impure mind *Tamas*, or ignorance and wickedness is supreme, while *Rajas* or restlessness occupies the mind of men who are always active and are neither extremely pious nor very vicious. Though the higher worlds with their inhabitants are more and more saturated with *Sattva* or purity in gradual ascent, still from *Brahmā* down to the tiny blade of grass all are more or less possessed of and controlled by the *Trigunas*. Prakriti and *Māyā* are one and the same : 'Prakritiṃ to Māyām bidyāt, mayinaṃtu Maheśvaraṃ' (Sveta Up. IV. 10). It is clear therefore that the manifested gods are gods with attribute and having a slight touch of *Māyā* they are all perishable and changeable. In the opinion of Sāṃkhya Kārikā, verse 54, higher heavens are rich in *Sattva* or purity, the earth is full of *Rajas* or activity, and inert objects and nether worlds are enveloped in *Tamas or* darkness.

Soul and body are Purusa and Prakriti

In a Jiva, the Soul is the *Puruṣa* and the body of the Jiva is *Prakṛti*. The Soul or Ātman is unqualified, pure and of one essence, but in Jivas as *Jivātman*, it is qualified, impure and liable to change. Since the subtle-bodied Puruṣa is located in between *Ātman* and the gross body, it is called *Āntarātman* or the inner Self. The Soul or the Ātman never undergoes change, it never perishes. Destruction and change are characteristic features of Prakriti. The attributes of Prakriti are reflected in Ātman. To make it clear Swami Vivekananda said: "When the quivering light reflected from a mirror falls on a wall, it will not be proper for the seer to think that it is the wall that moves."

Imagine Prakriti as a play of five acts in which the scenes change one after another. What is it that ends with the end of the play? Is that the seer or the seen that

ends? Similarly, in this universe, it is the Prakriti that changes and even ends, while the seer, the Ātman, remains changeless. The body, mind, intelligence, nay, even the minutest particle of this creation are comprised within the Prakriti and hence they are all liable to change. But Ātman, the Soul being apart from twenty four entities of creation, is eternal and indestructible. The body is the *Kṣetra* or field and Ātman is the knower of the field (The Gita 13.1). So Lord Krishna said in the Gita : "Know Me as the knower of the field in all fields." Soul is the knowledge itself and Prakriti is the object of knowledge. Ignorant Jivas, under the veil of *Māyā*, may take as real such unreal things as the coming and going of the Soul, births and deaths etc. but the phenomena of birth and death, eating and drinking etc. which are connected with the Jiva-self, are as much unreal as the moving backward or forward of trees looked at inattentively from a moving vehicle. Ātman lies as *Kuta* and is so changeless. It is absolutely impossible to think of its movements. Activity of Prakriti is attributed to the Soul. Jivātman connected with the 24 entities of creation behaves as the prime cause and appears to move from one body to another to enjoy or suffer the effect of its *Karma*. It is matter only that revolves in the cycle of birth and death.

In this creation, there is only one Reality, one essence which under different circumstances behaves as either the seer or the seen. When we are absorbed in thinking of the seer, we forget the object to be seen ; but when we pay our attention to these objects, we forget Him who is the only Seer. For, reality and existence cannot be two, it must be always one.

The Supreme Soul manifests Himself as Prakriti. In a human being also we see the same thing. There is the human soul combined with body and mind which are comprised in Prakriti. The highest and lowest strata very wonderfully

have been brought together here. Ordinary man belongs to the lower stratum of Prakriti *i.e.* to the stratum of ignorance. By practice of *yoga* this lower stratum must be made fit for the descent of the divine current. In this way, there will come a thorough change of the interior which will be flooded with the effulgence of knowledge and truth and the *yogin* will begin to enjoy actual spiritual life. He will gradually proceed towards oneness and fullness. It is only then that one, while still residing within this mortal frame, behaves as a free Soul—a Soul free from the bondage of māyā or illusion. Neither Prakriti nor her activity in this universe has any more attraction for him. So, she drops the curtain over her *Leelā* for ever. It is then only that God descends in man. The contraction of knowledge reduces the free Soul ultimately to the condition of an ignorant Jiva with full material outlook, and, conversely, the expansion of the same essence brings about the gradual evolution of Sri Krishna, Buddha, Mahammad or Christ with full realisation of supreme Brahman. It is He who undergoes contraction down to the stage of an atom and expands again upto the stage of God Himself.

Absolute Existence is unqualified Brahman. He plays the part of an Enjoyer by means of His other attributes which are consciousness and existence. The essence of absolute bliss in Him is enjoyed through His Leelā of creation—creation that evolves out of desire for enjoyment. It is for this reason that human beings also are eager to enjoy. That prime consciousness in combination with matter appears as diverse manifestations in the world of Jiva. Now is going on a process of evolution within this creation of Para-Brahman. This body, mind and *Prāṇa* are the faintest expressions of the absolute existence, knowledge and the bliss of Para-Brahman. The divine in man manifests with the gradual change of the body, mind and *Prāṇa* into *Saccidānanda* or the Absolute Existence, Absolute knowledge and Absolute Bliss.

Universal consciousness, being reflected in the material portion of Prakriti gives rise to a novel combination of spirit and matter known as Jiva or a living being. The universal consciousness can be termed Iśvara. The spirit is the first word and last word of creation. Just as a crystal placed by the side of a blood-red flower assumes and reflects the red colour of the flower, so *Puruṣa*, coming in contact with Prakriti, gets itself reflected on the impure part of Prakriti and produces the novel form of Jiva. The pure part of Prakriti being reflected in the individual consciousness assumes the form of Iśvara again. Iśvara is the sumtotal of the entire consciousness of the Jiva-world. Individual consciousness in its entirety condenses and contracts at the time of dissolution and goes back to its potential condition to manifest again in the form of a germ at the time of next creation. This again passes through the whole process of evolution to reach the final stage in the birth of the enlightened.

Jiva is a combination of spirit and matter

Our material body or *Annamoy Koṣa* is the totality of infinite number of living cells. It is composed of solid, liquid and gaseous materials and depends for its growth and developement on food (*Anna*). This material body perishes after death. The subtler internal bodies are made of Ether which is *Ākāśa-Tanmātra*, the essence of the sky. The *Panca* Vāyus or the five winds viz. *Prāṇā*, *Apāna*, *Vyāna*, *Samāna* and *Udāna* along with the work organs form Prānomoy Koṣa or the body of life-energy. The five senses and mind form the *Manomoy Koṣa* or the mental sheath. *Vijnānmoy Koṣa* is the body of consciousness. *Ānandamoy Koṣa* is the body of bliss and is the subtlest of all bodies. *Ānandamoy Koṣa* contains in it the body building materials of the other *Koṣas*. *Ānandamoy Koṣa* or body of bliss is the seat of Ātman. *Manomoy Koṣa* or the body of mind forms the internal organ and *Rupa*, *Rasa*, *Gandha*, *Sparśa* and *S'abda* are objects of sense-perceptions.

Within this coarse external cover are the other four covers which are gradually more and more subtle. Just as the Earth representing the solar system is the external manifestation of the inner invisible world, similarly the gross human body is the external manifestation of its inner invisible frame. External is the typical of the internal. The eleven doors of the external body are : two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, the *brahmarandhra*, navel and the two ducts through which stool and urine are excreted from the body. (Katha Up. II. 2. 1)

Evolution of ego, mind and senses

When the cohesion of Triguṇas is lost, Prakriti feels an impulse for creation and she gives birth to Mahat Tattva or Cosmic intelligence which is identified with Hiraṇyagarbha. Afterwards Cosmic intelligence being deteriorated on account of an inflation of Sattva and Rajas, Ahaṃkar or ego was produced (Bhā. 11. 5. 23). When ego deteriorated the gods were born of its Sāttvik portion, the senses from its Rājasik portion and five elements were produced of its Tāmasik portion (Bhā. 11. 5. 24) On deterioration of Rājasik ego, prāṇa, senses and work organs came into existence. Praśnopaniṣad, III. 3 states that Prāṇa or the life-principle entered into the body by the urge of Ātman. Ātman is the charioteer to the physical body which has been compared to a chariot. Buddhi is the bridle to check the restless horse of the chariot representing mind and senses. The senses are to the body what the wheels are to a chariot (vide Katha Up. 1. 3. 3.).

From Hiraṇyagarbha or cosmic consciousness evolved ego, Ahaṃ or individual self. From ego sprang the five sense organs, the five work organs and the five *Tanmātaras*. Five subtle elements came out of these five *Tanmātaras* and the five subtle elements, when arranged in a particular manner, evolved the five gross elements or *Panca* Mahābhūtas i.e. Earth, water, Fire, Air and Ether which came within the

region of perception. Here it is necessary to add that the life energy or *Prāṇa* of *Hiraṇyagarva* extends over the whole area of creation down to the level of the gross elements to sustain and maintain them.

From the *Sāttvik* portion or the purest essence of the five elements are produced the sense organs, and the work organs are produced from the *Rajas* portion or the less pure essence of the same. Thus the ear is produced from the purest essence of the sky to hear sound, the skin from the purest essence of the air to feel by touch, the eyes from fire to see, tongue from water to taste and nose from the earth to smell. Similarly from the less pure quality of the five elemenis is produced the five work organs. Thus, the mouth is produced from the less pure quality of the sky, the hands from the less pure essence of the air, and so on the legs from the fire, the procreative organs from water, and the rectum from the earth. And from the union of these five entities in their less pure form are produced the five (subtle) breaths of life—*Prāṇa*, *Apāna*, *Vyāna*, *Samāna*, and *Udāna*. Remember that all these things mentioned here are things in their subtle forms and not gross forms. From the union of the five entities in their subtlest and purest form is produced mind. The mind has different functions to perform and as such appears as different things altogether e.g., *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Ahamkār* and *Citta*.

And from the union of these five entities in their most impure forms and by the process of *Pancikaran* (quintuplication) in their union the five elements in their gross forms are produced. Thus came into existence the sky, the air, fire, water and the earth in succession. From these five gross elements, united in suitable proportions, all animal bodies come into existence, while *Avidyā* or nescience stands as the supreme cause of this mixture.

The mind, intelligence and *Prāṇa* or life principle are all material things, but they are all permeated by the *Caitanya*

of the Soul. All creatures live and enjoy life in consequence of their remaining in touch with the absolute bliss of Supreme Soul. Does not the power which burns the countless electric bulbs shooting out light, owe its energy to the same Power House? Our body can be compared to an electric bulb within which is kindled the flame of the effulgent Soul which is again sustained by the continuous supply of power from the universal power house—the Supreme Soul. We cannot understand that the Soul is the real power in the background and so we attribute the authorship of all our activities to our senses and not to the Soul. The man lives even though he loses some organ. The blind and the deaf, though bereft of sight and hearing, continue to live and thus prove the existence of some power behind the plane of senses. That extra-ordinary object is the Soul of beings. In the background of universal mind is the Universal Soul just as the individual soul is in the background of the individual mind. Ātman, the Seer is changeless and unaffected. In the human body, individual soul or ego is like the owner of the house, the objects of senses form the audience. *Buddhi* or intellect is the dancing girl playing in the light of the Soul.

As ornaments and clothings, houses and gardens, boats and other things are things possessed, not the possesser or the Self, so the five sheaths of mind, intelligence, life etc. together with gross and subtle bodies and the senses too are quite different from the Soul which is the Self. There is no relationship, in truth, between the *Ātman* (Self) and the body, mind, Prāna etc. (non-self), just as there is no connection between the oil and the oil cake after extraction of oil from oil seeds.

The Soul is none of the three bodies gross, subtle or causal. It is free from the three conditions of existence and beyond the five-fold envelopes of this mortal body. The Soul is *Sat* (ever-existing), *Cit* (ever-conscious), and *Ānandam* (ever blissful), a witness to every thing (Sākṣin) but not active.

Ātman or puruṣa is bright like a white light free from smoke (Katha Up. 2 I. 15) It resembles the light of a lightning (Kena Up. 4. 29. 4). This Ātman becomes known in *Samādhi*, when the Yogin transcends the vale of joys and tears (Katha Up. 1. 2. 11). "He who can, through the practics of Yoga, concentrate his *Praṇa*, within the *Susumnā Nāḍi*, at the point between the two eye-brows and meditate on Me devotedly, attains Me the Supreme Spirit"—said Lord Krishna (vide the Gita 8. 10)

Soul is all-pervading and all-seeing, but mind is not so. This is evident from its inability to attend to more than one object at a time. Intellect is also a material substance but shines with the light of the Soul and looks like that. It is true that the power of the Soul lends impetus to our actions and thoughts, but it does not lend its consent to dirty acts. *Buddhi* is perverted and undergoes reflections under the influence of impure mind with which the soul is also associated. Under these circumstances free will of man dominates to a certain limit.

According to the verse I of the Kenopaniṣad, mind, praṇa and senses are impelled to work by Ātman. Saṃkar, while commenting on it, observes : "If mind were not free to a certain extent to move in the path of attachment and detachment, evil thoughts could never crop up in mind." In the act of cutting down a tree both the axe and the holder of the axe are cutters. The contact of the axe with the tree is axe's own affair, but its movements are due to the exertion of the person holding it. In this case, activity of both the axe and the man holding it (the two cutters) can be explained but Ātman apart from mind and senses is inexplicable. As mind and senses cannot exert upon themselves and since Ātman is beyond the reach of sense perception, Ātman cannot be indicated as this or that. Ātman is distinct from both the known and the unknown. He alone is wise who knows mind and senses as non-self and takes Ātman to be the

Brahman—the only reality in all the existences. No sage has never attained salvatfon by the acquisition of non-self; only knowledge of the Self secures liberation for him.

Mind defiled by many desires cannot know its revealer. Prāṇa cannot know Ātman by smell. By whom the life-principle functions is Ātman (Kena Up. 1. 8). Prāṇa functions because it is activated by the life-force of Ātman. Prāṇa cannot keep a body alive; its own existence depends upon Ātman that enlivens a being (vide Katha Up. II. 2. 5), The body, mind and senses are distinct from Ātman and with their help, Ātman cannot be realised. If they could know Ātman, the forms and sights of the external world could know one another (Katha Up. II. 1, 3).

The human mind has its own course and is very often found to act in its own way, regardless of the consequences which may be detrimental to life. It does not hesitate to hatch any plan of daring actions which may even endanger life. Himalayan expeditions, explorations in the African jungles and also in the snow-covered regions of the Eskimoes afford striking examples of the unrestraint trends of the mind. It attaches little or no importance to the practical consequences resulting from such adventures. The supremacy of life is thus often challenged by the mind rendering unpleasant and even disastrous consequences. So in Śveta Up. 1. 5, mind has been compared to a rough river—'*Citta naditi*'. Just as a river in flood flows on, quite headless of the ravages it leaves behind, so an unrestrained mind dashes on a perilous course.

Just as molten gold shapes itself in accordance with the various forms of moulds so the mind coming in touch with external objects through the different organs, is moulded into different forms. Bliss and light are experienced by *Buddhi* or intellect predominated by *Sattva*; but bliss remains under cover when *Rajas* predominates in the internal organs and so pure bliss cannot be experienced with that.

The agitated condition of mind or the increase of its activity lies at the root of creation. The entire creation is in our mind in the form of a germ i.e., in the same way as the entire full-grown tree exists in its potential condition in the seed. So the saying goes : "The entire creation is in the mind[1]." All the things of the world, perceived by the senses, are mere perceptions and therefore have no actual existence. They are mere illusions for the reason that when the mind is turned inwards, these external impressions vanish altogether. So Saint Paul said : "Things which are seen are temporal, but things which are not seen are eternal-" A Latin proverb also corroborates this view : "omne ignotum pro magnifico."

Prāṇa or life energy is also not the Soul. It is the kinetic condition of the Soul in the plane of life. The life principle is the foundation of physical, mental and nervous energy. In absence of this the sense organs and work organs do no longer continue to function.

Senses, life, mind, etc. are mistaken for conscious entities. The cause of this mistake lies in the fact that these are all embedded in the conscious field of Self. When the Soul happens to establish contact with a material body, mind and senses, it becomes coloured with their attributes. In this way the Soul appears to be endowed with qualities which are not its own. Just as the sun is reflected in different sheets of water and they all look bright with the ray of the sun, similarly, the soul transmits its consciousness and power to the body, the senses and the mind which, being thus charged, behave as conscious entities.

Under false conception some people take personality and individuality to be one and the same. Personality is related to the material body and mind as a particular consciousness

1. "चित्तमेव हि संसारः ।"

of the limited 'I', whereas, individuality is connected with our boundless spiritual being. Personality changes but individuality clings to the individual till it is dissolved in Supreme Brahman by faith, love and dovotion.

Knowledge also is not the soul, for it is subject to decrease or increase. Decrease or increase is the characteristic attribute of the changeful, but the Soul is changeless. There is a knower for the act of knowing, just as there is an active agent for any other action. All past actions and experiences are retained in the memory by the individual soul. Prajnā is consciousness of the mind. It is the reflected light of the Soul. The Soul is beyond the reach of our senses, neither mind nor intellect can contact it. Absolute truth is not associated with limitation. The Soul is formless and is, therefore, all pervading. Ātman is limited neither by time nor by space, nor by the law of casuality and is therefore eternal and absolute.

The Lord created our senses and endowded them with a natural tendency to flow outwards ; for this reason, we are accustomed to experience matters relating to the senses only (Katha Up, II. 1. 1.). The senses cannot contact Self for which diving inwards is essential. He who is desirous of Self-realisation must turn his attention inwards and awaken the inner vision or the third eye. For knowing the unqualified Brahman one should get rid of all qualifications and go beyond the limitations of space, time and possession. That is possible only by hearing, thinking and meditating on truth. Meditate on truth, truth alone and nothing but the truth.

"The face of the Brahman, who is all-truth, remains veiled by a golden or luminous sheath. Remove the veil and see Him face to face"—observes the Iśa Up. 15. Ātman has to be isolated from the body with much care and patience in the same way as the ear or a sprout has to be plucked out in tact. It means to say that one must realise that Ātman

is entirely a separate entity from body. This is the discrimination between the Soul and non-soul. Such power of discrimination brings salvation. 'One who has awakened this discriminating power knows that blissful Ātman"—Says Katha Up. 1. 2. 12. A Yogin shall bring all the senses under the control of mind, unite mind with intellect, lead intellect to Cosmic Buddhi and finally merge the latter in tranquil Ātman (Katha Up 1. 3. 13).

According to the Chhā. Up. IV 10. 4 : *'Prāṇo Brahman'* —the vital air is Brahman. The Brahman is bliss, He is all this space[1]. 'Kaṃ' in the verse means bliss and Khaṃ implies the eternal space. Extension of the sound energy in 'OM' is the etherial space. When 'OM' is known, every thing becomes known. As there is nothing but He, the entire elemental space is reasonably Brahman. The space outside which is the manifestation of 'OM' is also the space within the body, which again resides within lotus-centre of the heart. It is full in its own glory, all-pervading and without any attachment. He, who knows and attains the Being within the heart, rises to the acme of his perfection —he becomes one with the Brahman[2].

From Brahmā down to the tiny blade of grass, this material world and the astral or etherial spheres all are tied fast to the string of *Prāṇa Vāyu* or the vital air. Infused with this wind human bodies are kept alive. On death, the limbs relax, because the vital air then leaves the body. *Prāṇa-Vāyu* is very subtle and it is the constituent ingredient of the internal subtle body or sheath (vide Bṛ. Ār, Up. III. 7. 2). This subtle air is *Sutrātman*, which is the connecting link between the Supreme Soul (*Paramātman*) and the

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1. "प्राणो ब्रह्म कं ब्रह्म खं ब्रह्म इति।"—Chhā. Up, IV. 10. 4.
2. "यश्चैतद् ब्रह्मलोकं वावतद् योऽयं बहिर्धा पुरुषादाकाशो
यो वै स बहिर्धा पुरुषादाकाशः।"—Chhā III. 12. 7.

individual soul (*Jivātman*). The one whose body is the world, who residing within it controls it and still the world knows Him not, is *Āntaryāmin*, the internal Ruler (vide Br. Ār. Up. III. 7. 3). Since this subtle-bodied being resides in between Ātman and the gross body, it is also called *Antarātman*—the internal Ruler (vide S. B. on Mu. Up. II. 1. 9). The one eternal and attributeless Existence which transcends both *Sutrātman* and *Antaryāmin*, is Ātman or the Absolute Brahman. He is unmoved and inactive. A little agitated condition of the same Being, when it imagines the plan for creation, is Hiraṇyagarbha—the *Sutrātman*. In a further agitated condition, He is the creator *Prajāpati*—the *Antaryāmin*. In His full agitated condition, the Brahman is Jiva. An individual soul (Jivātman) under the delusion of *Māyā* becomes worldly-minded and subject to birth and death. The same Jiva when acquires spiritual power, is *Antaryāmin* and when freed from all attributes, is Brahman Supreme. The one Ātman or the Brahman taking attributes of different names and forms, appears as Hiraṇyagarbha Iśvara (*Sutrātman*), *Prajāpati Brahmā* (Antaryāmin), other gods and as the Jivas. It is the attributes that draw line of demarcation between the Brahman and His different aspects in creation. Different attributes show the latter distinct from the former; otherwise the latter are identical with Brahman. Brahman is both higher (Nirguṇa) and the lower (Saguṇa) in the same way just as a bird, sitting on the top of a tree, is not only said to be on the tree but also above the tree. Ātman is assumed to possess organs of actions when it comes down to the level of the internal ruler. But in fact there is no other ruler than the Highest Self. Moreover *Jivātman* or the internal ruler being limited by its adjuncts is not capable of ruling the earth (vide the Vedānta Sutra 1. 2. 18). The difference between Jivātman and Ātman is that the former acts and enjoys acquires merit and demerit and is affected by pleasure and

pain, but Ātman is free from these characteristics. In all the Vedās and the Upaniṣads, the Brahman or Ātman has been determined as one without a second. For this, all the existences, except the One Existence, which is Brahman, are held as *Māyā i.e.*, unreal (vide Bṛ. Ār. Up. III. 8. 12). This theory makes *Jivātman* a fictitious entity.

The whole universe is pervaded by one spiritual essence called Soul or Ātman. As this divine Soul is the standard of all, men are equal. Viṣṇu Purāna II. 13 states : "Since the same spirit pervades all beings, it is idle to make distinction between man and man." Ātman has neither sex nor caste nor colour. The seers of ancient India realised for themselves the existence of one absolute divine principle that envelopes this and the other worlds. The Ṛṣi of the Upaniṣad prays : "I bow down to Him over and over again who is in water as well as in fire, who is in the annual crops and in the perrenial plants, who permeates the whole world." He is immanent in His Creation. Those who hold that the Brahman or Ātman of the Vedās is an abstraction and also negation of the objective world and the subjective beings, are silenced by the above Vedic prayer of the sage. Absolute Reality bears the stamp of uniformity in all objects, everywhere and in all ages. "God" says George Moore "is not without but within the universe, part and parcel, not only of the stars and the Earth but of me, yea, even of my sheep on the hill side" The poet sees life and consciousness vibrating in all animate and inanimate :

"The red rose cries, she is near, she is near :
And the white rose weeps, she is late :
The lark spur listens, I hear I hear :
And the lily whispers, I wait."

Shelley sings :

"The one spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,

All new successions to the forms they wear"—'Adonair'.

Wordsworth observes :

"A motion and a spirit, that impel
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."—'Tinterin Abbey.'

Browning writes :

"All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher
shaped"—'Rabbi Ben Ezra'.

The poets are seers. God, the poets, the seers and the wise are identical—"Kavirmaniṣi paribhuḥ svayambhuḥ".

The ineffable sentiment of that Brahman who is Eternal Bliss, Knowledge and Existence is revealed before the seers' inner vision, in the sweet social conduct of man ; in the compassion of the magnanimous heart, in the mother's affection, in the smiles of the beloved, in the child's simplicity, in the steadfastness of friendship, in the tunes of a melodious song. Having tasted this sentiment Poet Rabindranath Tagore has sung : "In all the joys I have felt day and night in my life I shall to-day recognize Thou, O Master of Life. Once and again hast thou touched the recesses of the heart from outside through sensations of taste, smell and sound. Thou hast entered my mind and been my companion as father, mother, brother, son, near and dear ones and friends. I shall remember Thou, O Master of Life, in all such joys..."

When matter and spirit are separated, the universe is on the verge of dissolution. That is to say, creation is then unmanifested. Matter and spirit are first born of the desire for creation in the Supreme Brahman ; matter then assumes the form of a body as the adjunct to the Soul. Then matter is converted into various parts of various nature and shoots forth into various characteristics—gross and subtle, small and big, etc. When spirit enters into these numerous adjuncts

various kinds of life and things are created. Due to the variety of adjuncts and due to the degree of manifestation of consciousness animate and inanimate, matter and life are more or less conscious. Stone is the most gross adjunct,—so it has very little manifestation of consciousness or Soul. In trees and plants the manifestation of the Soul is more remarkable and in the animal world it is most remarkable. Again, this power of consciousness is all the more developed in human beings. Consciousness in great men, in hermits and sages and in the Incarnations is similar to the divine consciousness. This consciousness develops gradually through the acquisition of knowledge. Thus when the individual consciousness attains fulfilment and rises to the final stage of *bhakti*, he achieves oneness with the Brahman and then the individual bursts forth like Sri Caitanya: "The day I cast my eyes upon Thy creation, my heart leapt up in joy; and that very day my eyes were cast upon Thine."

To such a superman and seer everything is permeated by the Brahman: "In the lake crowded with blooming lotuses, in the sky studded with various stars, in the mother's breast and in the heart of the compassionate, O Lord, I witness only Thy form."

He visualizes the Brahman everywhere and regards all things, mobile and immobile, as his own Self. For, the same Brahman has assumed all forms of the Universe.

Atman or the Soul is the driver of bodily machine

The man whom we know as the weaver is not the actual maker of the fabric. The active agent is the being lying hidden in the weaver. Or else even after his death, the weaver would have continued to make the fabrics. It follows therefore that the being, who dwelling inside the body of the weaver had woven the fabrics, was no longer there.

Swami Avedananda Maharaj used to say: "Soul is the fountain of light which enlightens *Buddhi*, which weighs and

compares the difference in the working of different organs and which lends energy to our internal and external organs.' Says his holiness Swāmi Vivekānanda : "Soul is the back-ground on which mind paints with brush and colour, and the thread in the garland of imagination woven by the mind.' Ātman is the innermost mind of minds and the essential word of all words.

As behind a machine there is a mechanic or some power to set it in motion, so, behind the mind and the organs of perception there is the guide in the form of the sentient Soul. The sentient Soul is *Saccidānanda*—the combination of Knowledge, Bliss and Existence. An individual attains perfection only with the realisation of *S'iva* and *Sundara*—the ultimate good and the supreme beauty. To divert the course of our life to a fruitful channel we have to take our consciousness above the mental plane. It is only then that the world of love, beauty and bliss will be revealed unto us. The means to this end is the practice of yoga. Mind and intellect are not expected to express and reveal their Illuminator. That is why the *S'rutis* have repeatedly advised us to refrain from trying to realise the Soul with our mind and intellect.

The vibration in the life-principle is the feature of mind. This gives rise to the illusions of diverse reaction. Mind is but multitude of attributes of the objective world. Like the reflection in a mirror the world is reflected in the mirror of our mind. The root '*Man*' means to think. To imagine is the function of mind. It is the product of an association of the Soul and life-principle. The eyes see because the Ātman gives them the power to see ; the mind thinks because the Ātman gives the mind the power to think. It is clear therefore, that the eyes cannot see the Soul. Some subtler and more powerful faculty other than the senses have to be used for it.

Iśvara or the universal consciousness is *Jiva* when reflected in *buddhi* or intellect. As *Sākṣin* (witness) He is

the true Self of beings who does not participate in the enjoyments of jiva-self. *Sākṣin* or Soul within us is an indifferent spectator all through. According to the opinion of '*Tatvavivek*', Iśvara is the reflection of Brahman in the pure part of the *mulaprakriti*[1], and *Jiva* is the reflection of Brahman in its impure part. Some are of opinion that *mulaprakriti* while creating, is *Māyā* and while obscuring Jiva-consciousness is *avidyā*. Both *Iśvara* and *jiva* are creatures of limitation; they differ only in the degree of limitation. *Iśvara*, the *Saguṇa* Brahman is less limited than *Jiva*. It has been stated in Saṃkṣepkārikā that Brahman reflected in *avidyā* is Iśvara, and reflected in mind is *Jiva*, Jiva is identical with Brahman when the former is divested of its limiting adjuncts. Jiva is finite in its immediate surroundings, but in its universal aspect it is infinite as Brahman. If we admit the true nature of Jiva to be Brahman, the limitation theory holds good. Brahman and Jiva both stand in mutual relations of identity and difference. Relation is identical when Jiva attains liberation and differential when in bondage. Identity is real, the bondage is empirical.

Brahman, who is the seed of creation, divided the entities into elements, senses and the gods. *Jivātman* or the self of a *Jiva* is analogous to the self of *Hiraṇyagarbha*, though differs a little in point of illumination. *Ātman* or the Soul is the Brahman Supreme. *Hiraṇyagarbha* or the Sutrātman is pure consciousness reflected in all the subtle bodies taken as a whole, whereas *Virāt* or *Vaiśvānara* represents consciousness reflected on the collective gross bodies. When consciousness is reflected on individual gross or subtle bodies, it is called *Taijasa*—a finite luminous being i.e. *Jivātman*. Pure consciousness reflected on collective ignorance is *Iśvara* who represents Cosmic ignorance which is at the root of world's becoming. *Iśvara* entering into three worlds sustains and maintains them[2]. It shows

1. Nature 2. "यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्तव्य ईश्वरः।"

that the Brahman, *Iśvara* and the *Jivātman* are identical. The *'Brahma-Purāna'* observes therefore that the sense of distinction arises due to *Upādhis* or attributes. Ṛṣi Yājnavalkya also holds the same view. According to the *Visṇu Dharma Purāṇa*, the sense of difference originates from *Avidyā* or ignorance, which when removed, the identity is established. Ātman associated with the *Triguṇas* of Prakriti assumes the technical name of *Jivātman*. *Yogavāśistha Rāmāyan* opines that it is through the association with *Avidyā* that *Paramātman* appears as *Jiva* and behaves like an enjoyer and doer.

Intelligence is naturally transparent; so the light of consciousness is first of all gets reflected in *Buddhi* or intelligence and a sense of self-hood is produced. Second to *Buddhi*, *Ātman* is next related to mind and so with the help of intellect *Ātman* manifests itself through mind and the sense of ego originates. Mind acts as an intermediary and connects *Ātman* with the senses and the latter become conscious to some extent. As the light of consciousness pervades in this way every part of the body, gross and subtle, *Jiva* is deluded to mistake body, senses, mind and *Prāṇa* to be the *Ātman*. Mind and senses collect materials from the outside world and *buddhi* places them before *jivātman* for its enjoyment. The sense organs cannot convey anything from outside without the help of work-organs through which the sensation is carried. The body provides the work-organs with their seats. Thus every instrument of knowledge is dependent on the succeeding one. Consciousness of *Ātman* transmitted, as it were, from the higher to the lower, reflects upon them successively. *Ātman* is the revealer of *buddhi*; the latter is made conscious by the reflected light of *Ātman*. It is known to all that the thing revealed appears non-different from its revealer. *Ātman* reflected in *buddhi* tries to reveal the latter with the help of its own consciouness and in so doing *Ātman* seems to be

superimposed by the traits of intellect and appears as intellect. Owing to this likeness of *buddhi*, misconception about *Ātman* as the doer, enjoyer etc. arises. The *Puruṣa*, who assimilates intellectual knowledge, is *Ātman*. In the opinion of the Bṛ. Ār. Up. IV. 4. 5. an individual soul is indeed Brahman, but associated with intellect, mind, *Prāṇa*, senses and the body, it appears as intellect, *prāṇa*, body etc. Worldly desires associates *Ātman* with mind, senses, body etc. and it transmigrates as *Jivātman* in the long chain of lives. All the desires of a self-contented person lose their urge and become extinct here. So the illumined souls, whose desires have been extinguished, do not re-incarnate (Mu. Up. III. 2. 2.)

Ātman is of the size of a thumb, as the space within the heart where it resides is of that size (vide Katha Up. II 1. 12 & Kena Up. IV. 29). Parikṣit, the son of Abhimanyu, saw a being of the size of a thumb while he was in the womb of his mother and the 'Bhāgavat' (1. 12. 7-8) identifies the being with the Supreme Ātman. The Puruṣa or Ātman is as bright as the lightning. It is called Haṃsa because of its all-pervasiveness. *Paramātman* and *Jivātman* have been compared with light and darkness respectively. *Jivātman* leads a worldly life, is subject to the birth and death and enjoys the fruits of its action done in worldly life; while the *Ātman* is opposed to all these peculiarities, it witnesses all the activities of *Jivātman* as an indifferent spectator but itself never takes part in the Jiva's worldly affairs. Though Ātman and Jivātman reside within the same boby, the latter being destitute of divine power and attainments is stupified and grieves. When the same Jiva turns towards the path of *Yoga*, knows Brahman distinct from its self and realises His endless glory, overcomes all afflictions and the worldly troubles (Mu. Up. III. 1. 2). *Ātman* is free from both virtue and vice, subtler than the sky, greater than the Great and Eternal (Bṛ. Ār Up. IV. 4. 20). It is neither enriched by virtue nor decreased nor defiled

by vice (Bṛ. Ār. IV. 4. 22). Ātman is always Kutastha[1] —Changeless.

Brahman, in a playful mood, covered His consciousness, which is pure and divine, with *Māyā* and descended to the realm of matter. This descent of the Supreme Spirit is neither an error—a delusion on His part nor should it be considered as a falling off His transcendental Self but it is a wilful descension. The will of Providence and the aim of creation is that Jivas should rise from the plane of mental consciousness to that of divine spirit again. The same Being has divided Himself as many ; He is *Paramātman* in His unitary nature and as divine fragments He is the things and beings of creation. To the qualified monists i.e. *Viśisthādvaitists* who are relatively non-dualists, the material creation is His divine manifestations and the world of living is the radiant attributes of the Supreme Soul. The relation between *Paramātman* and *Jivātman* is beautifully illustrated in the Mundakopaniṣad, III 1. 1. and Śveta Up. IV. 6. They observe that they are like two birds seated on two branches of the same tree. The latter sitting on the lower branch eats fruits of the tree—sweet and bitter and thereby experiences happiness and misery in succession. Whereas the other bird seated above, does not eat fruit ; it sits calm and quiet witnessing the activities of the other bird seated on the lower branch. When the lower one looks up, it sees the majesty of the higher one and it is inclined to know what it is that makes the other so peaceful, blissful and majestic. It gradually approaches the higher one out of curiosity and when it is very close to the former, it sees itself identical to him.

Jivātman or the Individual self is a psychological organism. It is the shadow (Pratibimba) of the real *i.e. Ātman* which is its original or *bimba*. The reality of the shadow is admitted

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1. "कूटवत् निर्व्विकारेण स्थितः कूटस्थ उच्यते ।" Pancadaśi.

so far as it reminds us of the original behind it. An existent entity alone can cast a shadow, a void cannot.

Mind, life-principle and the senses work, impelled by *Ātman*, when the latter comes down to the level of *jivātman*. Without the help of *Ātman*, mind, *prāna* and senses cannot keep a body alive. A man dies even when *prāṇa*, mind and senses are in tact. The body is a corpse and the senses cease to work when *Ātman* departs. On death, the life, mind and senses follow their master—the Ātman. This proves that Ātman is the Lord of the living and independent of mind, *prāṇa* and senses. It is Ātman or Brahman by whom the vital air or *prāṇa* is set to action and flows to the every limb which becomes conscious and plays its respective parts. Mind is an attribute of Ātman, through which the latter manifests itself. Revelation of *Ātman* in *Jiva* is more or less in proportion to the elevation and enlightenment of the mind.

Mind is higher than senses[1], ego is superior to mind and intelligence is higher than ego. Intelligence is an evolute of Prakriti, so the latter is superior to intellect[2]. *Saguṇa Iśvaras* like Brahmā, Visṇu and Maheśwar are offsprings of Prakriti and are so perishable. The *Yogavaśistha Ramayan*, therefore, observes : "The attributed Lords and all the created beings run after dissolution and distruction like water following submarine fire." "So do observe what is eternal"—enjoins '*Kulārnava Tantra*'. Ātman which is superior to Prakriti is the only Reality[3]. There is nothing higher than Ātman[4]. Ātman is the quintational bliss and the object of the highest

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1. Vide Katha Up. 1. 3. 10.
2. "महत: परमव्यक्तम् ।"—Katha Up. I. 3. 11.
3. "अव्यक्तात् पुरुष: पर: ।"— Do
4. "पूरुषान्न परं किञ्चिद् ।"— Do

attainment[1]. It is the purest essence devoid of Prāṇa and *Manas*[2].

Unless a Jiva rises above Prakriti, the question of its salvation remains yet to be tackled. Origen observes: "By putting off our physical existence we become spirit". A truly spiritual aspirant can, by the practice of *Yoga*, isolate his spirit from body and mind and rise above Prakriti ; his identity as a spiritual being is established, when a direct experience of Reality is obtained. According to the Katha Up. 1. II. 24, Ātman or the Supreme Reality is realised by supramental intuition. Saṃkar also abides by this view (vide Ratnapravā on III. 2. 24). Ātman is unknowable to a person of normal consciousness, because, it is the Supramental entity. *Puruṣa* is the eternal subject who is the only Knower

The *Puruṣa* who assimilates intellectual knowledge, is *Ātman*. Ātman is seer (*Drostṛ*). hearer (*Srotṛ*), and thinker (*Mantā*), when it associates itself with the eyes, ears and mind respectively. *Prāṇa* has the surname *Ātman*, because it keeps the body and Soul together. So according to its function, in the level of *Prāṇa*, *Ātman* is imagined as *Prāṇa*. *Prāṇa* is sometimes called *Sutrātman*, because like the thread of a garland it spreads all over the body. This *Prāṇa* is said to be identical to *Hiraṇyagarbha* and so rightly it is called *Sutrātman*. Of the senses, *Prāṇa* or the vital air within the body flows ceaselessly and untiringly. Even the sun and the moon set, but *Prāṇa* never declines. *Prāṇa* is air (*Vāyu*). So *Vāyu* is the highest among the gods (Vide Bṛ. Ār. 1.5. 22-23). During slumber all the senses together with mind, merge in *Prāṇa* and then *Prāṇa* alone remains active in the way of constant breathing. All other senses fail to keep a body alive if *Prāṇa* departs. On the contrary, if only *Prāṇa* persists, a

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1. सा काष्ठा सा परागतिः ।"—Katha Up. I. 3. 11.
2. अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुभ्रो ह्यक्षरात् परतः परः ।"—Mu. Up II. 1. 2.

man cannot die even if all the power of his senses are lost. This is why the *Prāṇa* is the best of all the senses[1]. The jiva who knows *Prāṇa* in its true perspective is equal to *Hiraṇya-garbha Iśvara*. The Upaniṣad recognises the *Vāyu* as the gate-keeper to the *Brahmarandhra* which is the gateway to the world of Brahman. The *Brahmarandhra* is the supposed aperture on the crown of the head through which an emancipated Soul corsses the border of the universe and enters into the world of Brahman. It has been stated earlier that *Indra*, the Lord of the heavens makes over an emancipated Soul to the charge of subtle *Vāyu* who leads him to the world of Brahman. This proves the superiority of *Vāyu* over other gods of heaven. According to the Upaniṣad, *Ātman* associated with *Prāṇa*, is the Universal Soul and is superior to all its other aspects,

The utterances like 'the organ of hearing is *Ātman*' 'mind is *Ātman*' as occurring in the Upaniṣads, do not mean primary *Ātman*. *Ātman* disassociated from *Prāṇa*, mind and senses is the primary *Ātman* which is the Brahman. *Ātman* is invisible and unintelligible, but since its energy manifests through eyes, ears etc, as the power of sight and hearing, *Ātman* relatively behaves as the seer and the hearer etc. Since *Ātman* permeates all the jiva-minds, it is coloured by mental traits and has the relative name *Mantā* (thinker). The words like seer, hearer, knower and thinker are customarily used to facilitate easy conception of the incomprehensible *Ātman*, and not intended for the determination of its transcendental nature. Seer is one, it cannot be two. 'It is I who saw the thing before, am feeling it now by touch' such recollection would have been impossible if the case were otherwise. 'There is no other seer but He' this declaration of the Upaniṣad disavows the duality of *Ātman*.

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1. Bṛ Ār. Up. VI, 1. 13.

Ātman is said to have two-fold visions—eternal and transient, the spiritual and worldly. The worldly vision, related to the material eyes, is a function of the mind. Mind is the *Ātman* of the senses. When mind is inattentive, senses do not function. A big procession may pass unnoticed before one's open eyes if mind remains engrossed in something else. "I could not hear you because my mind was absorbed in a different subject' such remark proves that a man sees and hears through mind. In the act of seeing and hearing, mind plays the chief role and the senses serve the purpose of channels though which the sensation and perception come. A blind man dreams and sees different objects. This proves that there is an eternal light inside that reflects on material mind and the latter gets conscious and enlightened to some extent, when it sees diverse objects in dreams. The sight of the material eyes may be extinguished for ever, but eternal vision which is spiritual, gets never extinct (Vide Bṛ Ār. Up. III. 4. 2.) The material eyes belong to the *Jiva* and they are not everlasting; whereas the spiritual light, that lends light to the external eyes to see the material world, is eternal. This eternal light of consciousness associated with unconscious material mind of Jiva, creates a fictitious entity called *Jivātman* which foolishly thinks itself as the doer and the knower. This knower is intellgible, but the Upaniṣads discourage every attempt to know intellectually the eternal seer and knower who is both knowledge and sight itself. "I am the Ātman, the Brahman, free from all desires, all worldly duties and fully satisfied"—this should be the attitude of a seeker of truth. "Atman to its knower is not at an unattainable distance, it is the very core of his being but to the ignorant it is very far off" says the Iśopaniṣad 1. 6.

The surnames that are attributed to *Ātman* according to certain functions, are not indicative of its full dignity and significance. *Ātman* with an attribute is imperfect. For the

realisation of *Ātman*, it must be either taken as attributeless or all the surnames i.e. the *Ātman* in all its differential aspects should be considered. Ātman is indivisible, it cannot be taken in parts. *Jivātman* is imagined as *Ātman* and the functioning of the former is attributed to the latter, when *Ātman* appears to assume the nature of *Jivātman* and all sorts of functioning become possible for the *Ātman*. "By the light of whom, the *Prāṇa*, mind, senses and body become conscious is *Ātman*. *Ātman* is witness to everything but not active"—states Bṛ Ār. Up. III. 4. 1. The attribution of name, form and action is a mere act of imagination of human mind through ignorance. *Jivātman* is in reality a delusion. The Upaniṣads introduce this fictitious entity only to establish the non-duality of *Ātman*. *Ātman* in its own position has no function at all. So the Bṛ. Ār. Upaniṣad, II. 1. 2—6 observe : "He who exists as doer, enjoyer and feeler is not *Ātman*. He who dwells within the mental sheath is not *Ātman*. Lightning is not Ātman, it is its energy. *Prāṇa-Vāyu* is not *Ātman*, it is analogous to *Hiraṇyagarbha*". *Hiraṇyagrabha* is the prolific nature of the Supreme *Ātman* or the Brahman. *Prāṇa* as *Jivātman* regulates all the activities of *jiva*, *Jivātman* is the connecting link between *jiva* and *Ātman*. *Ātman* is ever-conscious. unchangeable, and imperishable *Puruṣa*, whereas *jivātman* is a luminous being possessed of finite consciousness and perishable. Since the great *Ātman* resides within the hearts of all beings, it is called *Puruṣa*. There is nothing in the world that is not pervaded by it.

Ātman is formless and without an attribute ; so it cannot be the enjoyer. *Jivātman* is the field of all desires. Happiness and misery are the features of mind. When *Ātman* associates itself with mind and intelligence it assumes the designation of *Jivātman* and the latter experiences happiness and misery of worldy life. *Jivātman* is an attribute of *Ātman*, it has no actual existence. So the worldly weal and woe which are

enjoyed being imaginary cannot touch and affect the real Soul. The Soul is indivisible ; it cannot play the parts of subject and object—the enjoyer and the things of enjoyment at the same time. When for the purpose of enjoyment the attributeless Soul comes down, as it were, to the level of *Jivātman*, it is equipped with body, mind and senses, and it behaves as the feeler, enjoyer etc. "Thirst and appetite are the characteristics of *Prāṇa* ; Ātman is free from them"—says Bṛ. Ār. Up. 5. 1. Maharṣi Kapil says : "Saṃhataḥ Parārthatvāt Puruṣasya" i. e. whatever exists in the world, from the great Prakriti down to the tiny blade of grass, is for the enjoyment of the great *Puruṣa*. (Sāṃkhya Darśan. 1. 66). The *prāṇa*, mind and senses, all collect round the Soul for the enjoyment of the latter. The first manifestation of the unmanifest Prakriti is *Mahat Tattva* or the Cosmic Intelligence which is identified with *Hiraṇyagarbha*. The Sāṃkhyas view that *Buddhi* works for the enjoyment and emancipation of Jiva. When enjoyment shows its uselessness the man abhors it and the gate of liberation is flung open.

The individual soul takes rebirth with the help of an attribute which is its subtle body. (Vide the Śrimad Bhāgavad, 1. 3. 32). The subtle body is an aggregate of five *tanmātras* or the essence of elements, ten Indriyas or the senses, mind and intelligence. It serves the purpose of a seed for the germination of a new life. Both the gross and subtle bodies are the products of nescience, they have no actual existence (Vide the Bhāgavad 1. 5. 27). According to the Kathopaniṣad, Verse 1. 2. 18, nothing is produced by the actual transformation of *Ātman*. Ātman does not come into existance with the birth of the body and so it does not also perish with the fall of the physical body (vide Śrimad Bhāgavad II. 7. 49). Ātman is eternal, it never perishes ; only the material body is destroyed on death."—comments Saṃkar on the verse 1., of the Śveta Up. The idea of its coming and going is imaginary,

it goes nowhere ; it is only the Jivātman that transmigrates in the round of birth and death. Since Ātman is birthless, it has neither growth nor development nor decay nor death.

During slumber a *Jiva* transcends happiness and misery ; *Jiva* at that time regains its true nature as *Ātman*. When a man falls first asleep, the being within the sheath of intelligence enters into the subtle space within the heart and enjoys the nearness of *Ātman* and the latter withdraws all the powers of mind and senses within itself (vide Br. Ār. II. 1. 17). In dream, mind is active whereas when a man enjoys sound sleep, his mind and senses become inert (vide Br. Ār. II. 1. 18). The causal body during slumber merges into nescience and the *Jiva* at that time remains overpowered by *tamas* or the darkness of mind ; only in the depth of its being, it enjoys the bliss of *Ātman* due to its proximity to the latter. The same *jiva* impelled by the impressions of its past *karma* comes down from slumber to the dreaming state and ultimately wakes up[1].

The four states of matter as described before constitute the Earth elemet. The world created by this Earth element is called bhūrlok or this material Universe. There is something subtler than earth, and that is called the element of water. The world which is created with the atoms of this element is bhuborlok. Just as ether permeates all created things so also the element of water permeates ether. Although it permeates bhūrlok and bhuborlok it extends beyond bhuborlok. The bhuborlok has two regions—the region of the pitṛs and the region of the manes, of which the first is grosser than the second. The subtle-bodied persons that live in bhuborlok have their bodies

Different sheaths of human beings correspond to different heavenly spheres.

1. "सुषुप्तिकाले सकले विलीने तमोऽभूतः सुखरूपमेति।
पुनश्च जन्मान्तरकर्मयोगाद् स एव जीवः स्वपिति प्रबुद्धः॥"

made up of the element of water. This is the body made up of desires. All feelings and passions of the individual like the appetite, anger, greed, cempassion, affection, fellowship issue out of the element of water. The element of fire is thousand times subtler than the element of water. This element of fire is the constituent of *Svarlok* or Heaven, and the bodies of the denizens of this world are made up of the fine atoms of the element of fire. Just as the element of water is spread throughout ether so also the element of fire is inextricably woven into the interior and exterior of the element of water. The worlds of mahaḥ, janaḥ, tapaḥ, satya etc. are the different spheres, one higher than another, and the denizens of these spheres are made up of subtler atomic elements, and every sphere interpenetrates one another and at the same time extends far, far beyond. Just as there is water both inside and outside a log of wood floating on the water and just as there is air inside and outside water so also the subtle worlds interpenetrate in an ascending order and they also extend outside. The human body has similarity with these gross and subtle worlds. The gross body of a human being or the nutritional sheath can be compared to this gross external world. The subtle, vital sheath or second body that exists behind the nutritional sheath has for its constituent the same ether as makes the bhuborlok. Inside the vital sheath and extending outside it to some extent there is the mental (perceptual) sheath. This is made up of the element of water. The mental sheath is our subtle body, the other name for which is 'desire body'. This is made up of the material part of the element of water. Inside and outside this 'desire body' extends the 'thought body' which is made up of the material part of the element of fire. Inside the thought-body there is a body made up of the subtle part of the element of fire and that is the sheath of wisdom. This sheath of wisdom, the golden sheath and the sheath of bliss

together make the cause-body of the individual. The constituents of this cause-body and the world of Brahman are the same pure Ether. The different subtle bodies of the individual are essential to establish relation with different subtle worlds. The material and the subtle bodies have been created to respond to different elements. It is not possible for the gross body to respond to the subtle world, i.e., of the element of water or the element of fire; a subtle body is needed for that. So without the help of the subtle sheaths it is impossible to feel the presence of the higher subtle worlds. When our consciousness leaves the material body through the practice of *yoga* and enters the subtle world, then the devotee attains knowledge about the subtle worlds and their denizens.

The envelopes like the principle of the great germ or intellect, ego-principle, ether-principle etc. with which we enwrap ourselves when we come to this earth as individual selves are each a sheath. These sheaths gradually cover the non-earthly light of the Soul. This downward movement and graded envelopment of the Soul is Involution; these sheaths gradually attain fullness and purity; then the Soul rises from matter to vegetable, from vegetable to the animal, from the animal to man, from man to God—this is called Evolution. The individnual soul is like a mason; it has come to this world with a heavy burden of five ingredients or constituents—brick, lime, sand, mortar and cement; as soon as the rooms of the house are built up the house shall get the appearance of a whole, and then the soul's work will cease. It is only to build the divine body that the soul comes to this earth—the elements are with us; the moment we feel the need we are to erect the temple with our own efforts. The moment the building of the temple is complete, the burden of the ingredients shall also be exhausted and then the individual soul shall be freed from them and will be revealed of itself in its transcendent splendour as Ātman. The more this body made

up of the five sheaths like earth, water, fire etc. becomes subtle and pure, the more do the knowledge, love and power of the individual soul will increase. As a result, the soul gradually shines in its own pristine glory. He who has controlled the five elements by dominating Nature can with their help create everything from a small particle to the huge universe ; he himself is the Doer—he is the Master like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśwar, of creation, preservation and destruction.

Both this material world and our gross body are made up of the element of earth. Our gooss body is composed of of two sheaths material (consisting of food or matter) and vital. The vital sheath is inextricably interwoven with the material sheath. Life-force is constantly throbbing in this vital sheath so that the body receptacle is alive. The element of water is a thousand times finer than the element of earth. The subtle body next to our gross body (the mental sheath, that is to say) and the astral plane next to this world and the denizens of that plane are made up of this element of water. The intellectual sheath next to the mental (perceptual) sheath and the subtle world designated *Svarlok* and the denizens thereof are made up of the element of fire that is finer than the element of water. This *Svarlok*, again, has different-graded planes in an ascending order like tapaḥ. janaḥ etc. Similarly the finest body of man called the causal body and the world of Brahmān that is the subtlest world are made up of the pure Element of Ether. The subtle body and the subtle world are interpenetrated into the gross body and the gross world respectively and extend far beyond them. This is why the subtle body of the individual that is its mental (perceptual) sheath or mind although residing in the gross body has its field of operation extended beyond the body itself. The *Yogins* can separate himself from the physical sheath or the gross body and with the help of subtle body can travel anywhere in Bhūrlok *Bhuborlok* and *Svarlok*.

Our first subtle body or the mental (perceptual) sheath is divided into two parts—the desire-body and the thought-body. Due to the influence of these two bodies, waves of desires and waves of thoughts are constantly playing in our mind. Particular throbbings of the desire-body and the thought-body are the particular thoughts and feelings of the mind. These throbbings do not just arise in the mental field to disappear but they spread far beyond in the external world ; their tremor or their faint echoes even extend up to *Bhuborlok* and *Svarlok*.

An object is seen when its frequency of vibration is within the range of our optical vision. Senses become functioning when they are at a certain degree of vibration similar to that of the external stimulus. That is why we can not see the etherial bodies which have a higher frequency of vibration. When the power of a light is increased exceedingly, it becomes unbearable to human sight. The higher the power of a being the greater is its frequency of vibration and vice versa. A *yogin* becomes invisible when the frequency of vibration of his being is much higher than the normal. If by the practice of *yoga* we can increase the vibration of our senses and thereby make them subtler still, the etherial beings would be visible.

In the atmosphere close to the earth ether-vibration is 34000 per inch. In the spiritual world or the world beyond death this vibration in the lowest range is 64000 per inch. Being composed of gross elements our sense of sight is accustomed to bear the ether-vibration in the lowest range of the sky. As a contrast, the subtle-bodied inhabitants of the higher regions bear vibration of greater frequency. Greater a thing is capable of vibration the subtler and the lighter it is, the more powerful and the more invisible to human sight. When an iron wheel whirls at a tremendous speed impelled by electricity or the power of steam it is difficult to

Union with higher worlds is possible by increasing the frequency of vibration of our being

ascertain what it is or with what material it is made. It is not even possible to see its spikes.

The next world is a world of high frequency vibration. This frequency increases at higher and higher strata starting from this earth to the world of Brahman. That is why we cannot see the inhabitants of the higher worlds. Milton. the poet, has written :

"Millions of spiritual beings
Walk the earth
Unseen, while we wake
and when we sleep."

We cannot see them simply because in the stratum of the universe that we live in, the ether is of slow vibration and our range of sight and touch is too confined for us to appreciate these finer vibrations. By the practice of *yoga* when a *yogin* acquires the subtility of body and mind by increasing the frequency of vibration of his being he gains the power to become invisible and also gets knowledge of the the spiritual worlds.

The love of God enfolds all creation. The heart of the Creator throbbed with the desire to create and this resulted in the birth of sound in ether ; from the sound waves arose thought or imagination ; the energy of thought surged out and revealed itself as visible matter in the external world.

So it is that every living being and every object in creation has the natural property of vibration or rhythm. The heart-throbs of the Supreme Spirit are always echoing and re-echoing as sound energy in ethereal space in the form of the mystic sound 'OM'. This mystic sound energy 'OM' is the origin of all words, alphabets, thoughts, language and imagination. That is why it is necessary to make this seed-like sound 'OM' before uttering any religious verse or any sacred text. If the utterance of OM be properly done and the sound comes out from the very core of your heart, each atom and each molecule

of your body will have a spontaneous and joyful thrill and your body and mind will bring a divine absorption of your self. Indeed the universe is an unusual operation of ceaseless dance. The Creator dances and with Him creation dances. Eternal joy is the Joy of dance and the Eternal Being is the God of dance.

The subtle bodies are the sheaths of life, mind, knowledge and bliss and are endowed with the power of the organs. They are made up of electrons and ether. The work organs and sense organs are parts of the material body but their centres are located within the subtle bodies. For this they behave as mere instrument in the acquirement of knowledge of the external world, but perception of pleasure and pain takes place at the centres of the subtle bodies. And then the soul receives them. Experience of pleasure and pain cannot be derived simply by means of the work and sense organs but by the mind which is the internal organ. According to the Vedānta philosophy, mind is a condition produced by the vibration of matter in its minutest forms. Findlay says : "mind is a substance which is caused by vibration in the ether." Mind is the thinking power of the Soul. All the functional power of the material body are essentially due to the power of mind which is enlightened by the Soul. Again intellect is to the Soul what the ear or eye is to the body. Mind stirred to activity by the power of the Soul, works through different organs. The characteristic mark of the mind is decision and lack of decision. The state of decision is the feature of *Buddhi* or intellect while the notion of ego is *Buddhi* which differentiates. *Citta* comprises of the four conditions of amity mercy, enjoyment and aloofness.

The material universe including our mind and intellect are comprised in Prakriti or Nature and so they are objects of knowledge, whereas, the Soul is the knower. In the world of beings Soul is therefore the subject and all else are objects.

Prakriti is a composite of *Triguṇas—Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.* Mind being an evolute of Prakriti, both good and evil inhere in Jiva-mind, due to the preponderance of Triguṇas one upon another. Under the influence of *Rajas* and *Tamas* jiva is deluded to false perception and false knowledge which bring miseries in life. According to the Śveta. Up. IV. 4, *Triguṇas* constitute the non-essential parts of all things and beings. *Triguṇas* inhere in *Jivas* in different proportions, so some are pure-hearted and some are devils, some are happy, others unhappy (Vide Bhā III. 28.42). As the dust and smoke of one jar cannot pollute the ākāśa of another jar, so one *jiva* cannot suffer on account of misdeeds done by another. *Jivas* are destined to enjoy life according to the impressions of thoughts and actions acquired in this life and also flowing from their previous lives. The Sāṃkhya theory of many Ātmans is refuted by the non-dualist Vedāntists on the ground that the idea of multiple Ātman is a creation of mind due to *Avidyā* or ne-science. Even the Saṃkhyas themselves admit that in the relative world, the acts done by Jivas are the results of *Avidyā.* The cause of *Jiva's* sufferings, weakness and wickedness is rooted in *Avidyā* which veils its divine nature and impells it to nefarious deeds. *Puruṣa* (Ātman) in association with *Prakriti,* enjoys weal and woe of life, otherwise *Puruṣa* itself is beyond all such experiences. Just as a colourless crystal placed in front of flowers of different hues takes in different colour, so does Ātman, coming in touch with *Prakriti,* experiences happiness and misery : "Kusumavacca maniḥ". *Prakriti* is the real doer, but *Puruṣa* in association with Prakriti, enjoys the fruits of *Karma* (action), good or evil. Ātman united with *Prakriti* is the knower of the field—the perceiver or the Jiva-self who enjoys the fruits of action. So long as *Puruṣa* remains in contact with *Prakriti* and Jiva identifies itself with her, it is bound. When the link between *Puruṣa* and *Prakriti* is severed, on account of too much familiarity, *Puruṣa* becomes free from all bondages and regains

its original status as Brahman. Prakriti is inert and so cannot function herself without the borrowed light of Ātman. Supreme Ātman uses Prakriti as an instrument of creation, preservation and destruction. *Puruṣa*, with the help of its own *Jyoti* or the light of conciousness, functions, works and moves through Prakriti (vide Bṛ. Ār. Up. IV. 3. 6). It is Ātman that enters into the body and functions as Prāṇa, Apāna etc. and appears as the doer and the knower[1].

The subtle body as an attribute of a being gives a separate existence to jiva and a mistaken idea gains ground that the Jiva is different from Brahman. It creates a sense of distinction between the two (Bhāgavad, IV. 22. 29). So long as the subtle body persists, the Jiva is deluded to think itself the *doer* and *knower* and experiences sense-objects ; otherwise it realises itself identical with Brahman (Bhāgavad IV. 22. 28). With the help of this subtle body, Puruṣa enters into the gross material body and also leaves the latter when death comes (Bhāgavad IV. 29. 75). When the subtle body is destroyed, Puruṣa is freed from finite consciousness of 'I' and 'mine'. It no longer thinks itself as doer and knower and also does not experience internal and external objects whatsoever (Bhāgavad, IV. 22. 27).

After the evolution of the entities as explained before, individual souls, like so many images of Brahman, under the influence Avidyā appear in the universe regarding themselves as separate from the Supreme Soul and in consequence becoming liable to birth and death and all the peculiarities of this illusory world.

The Jiva, from the standpoint of ultimate Reality, is nothing but non-dual Brahman. Jivahood is a mere name

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1. Saṃkar Comments thus on Bṛ Ār Up. 1. 4. 10 :
"य इह प्राणित्यपाणितित्यानिति, उदानिति व्यपदिश्यते तर्हि द्रष्टा श्रोता,
ज्ञाता स आत्मेति ।"

which disappears when Ātman is realised. Names and forms are *Upādhis* or limiting adjuncts which must be forgotten so as to know One Who is formless and nameless. Through constant meditation on the nothingness of the phenomenal world arises the discriminative knowledse between the real and unreal and as a result the meditator becomes indifferent to this world of illusion. The diverse objects of creation are meant to establish the doctrine of non-duality. They serve no other purpose. Bṛ. Up. II. iv. 5 enjoins : "Ātman alone is to be realised." So, Ātman is the only Reality which alone should be known, negating all other entities of creation.

The Buddhist view of non-self is that the ego is a mere process of becoming and there ends its function. Ātman or the true Self of man is beside his bodily form, perception, feeling, the disposition and intellect. So to know our real Self it is necessary to leave these attributes behind in order to make our burden rather lighter enabling us to rise higher with perfect ease. When we get rid of these attributes, Ātman or the real Self comes out in its full glory. So Lord Buddha said : "My disciples, give up all which is not yours. If shrubs and trees of this grove are taken away, cut down or burnt by any one, would you say that the man is taking us away, cutting us down or burning us ?" The attributes of man are nothing more than the trees etc. where they only happen to live. It is the attributes that constitute separate existences.

The impurities of body, mind and senses cling to different individuals in different proportions according to the impressions of thoughts and actions of their previous births. This is why Jivas appear differently. The disproportion of *Triguṇas* in different individual bodies also shows Jivas different from one another (vide Bhāgavad, III. 28. 42). Akāśa (etherial space) is a homogeneous body and it cannot be conceived as many even when it is seen to be contained

in different jars[1]. Ātman is likened to ākāśa—the infinite etherial space around ; its star-like multiplicity is unreal. The misconception, such as 'I have one Ātman' and 'you have another' is born of *avidyā*. The multiplicity and differentiation of puruṣa are imagined on account of diverse *Upādhis* or adjuncts. Ākāśa always remains the same, only the shape of the containers and rooms present different appearances. Similarly, Ātman is always an undifferentiated homogeneous mass of pure consciousness, only the different *Upādhis* or attributes like the body, mind and senses show it differently in different individuals. The difference is evidently apparent.

Saṃkar while commenting on Mā. Up. II. 38, observes that Ātman is *Kutastha i.e.*, unchangeable like the peak of a mountain and so falling off its nature is not possible. He, who is *Aja i.e.*, birthless and one without a second, cannot undergo transformation in any way (S. B. on Mā III, 27). Ātman is all-pervading like the limitless sky and Jivātman is a finite space contained in a jar (Mā. Up. III. 3). As the etherial space in a jar is neither a transformation nor a part of the infinite space outside, so the Jiva is never a part or transformation of Paramātman. Jiva, in fact, is identical with Him—it is of the very nature of Brahman (Mā. Up. III. 7). The same text, verse III. 25, is emphatic in this decision that there is no cause that can create Ātman. Ātman is not actually transformed into anything like Jiva-self in the same way as gold is modified into golden ornaments. Egohood is an illusion born of *avidyā*. With the dawn of true knowledge, Ahaṃ—the sense of egoism disappears like the waves of an agitated ocean disappearing when the ocean is calm and quiet.

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1. "आकाशमेकं हि यथा घटादिषु पृथक् पृथक् भवेत् ।
तथात्मैको ह्यनेकश्च जलाधारेष्विवांशुमान् ॥"—Says Ṛṣi Yājnavalkya.

Just as ether is inside and outside every object, so is Ātman. Ātman is more minute than an atom and more expansive than the sky. It is eternal, limitless, undivided, the essence of all things, the consciousness of all created beings and the great truth behind the Reality. The Infinite is always one. So Ātman is one without a second and springs from the fountain of Supreme Soul like sparks from fire. The Universal Soul bereft of its absolute power and consciousness as manifest in a created being is Jivātmān. Jivātmān or the individual soul being a spark of the Universal Soul possesses the nature and the essence of the Universal Soul. Since the will of God works at the root of all creation, it is natural that His fragments, the individual beings are also endowed with a will to create something out of themselves. The restlessness of the mind as is found in man is due to the impulse of this creative energy.

"There is a depth in thee, whence all other faculties come forth. The depth is called the centre, the fund or bottom of the soul."—'The Spirit of Prayer'. Apart from the body there is some thing which is immutable and eternal. This something is Ātman, it has no beginning and consequently it has no end. Over and above the individual souls there is one Supreme Soul—the Absolute, the Infinite, the One without a second from which all emerge and into whom all merge.

Within the fifth and the last sheath of this human body there is a hidden chamber at the heart-centre. The fifth sheath is Hiranmaya Koṣa or the golden sheath, and it is the sheath of bliss. Hiranmaya Koṣa is the subtlest of all sheāths and possesses more splendour and brilliance than lightning. This golden sheath is Hṛdpadma or the lotus of the heart-centre resembling a cave and the Para-Brahman or the Supreme Soul dwells in it[1]. So the Hindu Śāstras say

1. "हिरण्मये परे कोषे विरजं ब्रह्मनिष्कलम्।"—Mu. Up. II 2 10.

that the eternal Brahman lies hidden in the cave[1]. This concealed chamber within the heart (*Anāhata* Cakra) is called *Brahmapura* or *Brahma-Koṣa*. It is the ultimate golden sheath in which the Supreme Soul or the Great Puruṣa remains encased (vide Mu. Up. II. 2. 7). One who dwells in *Pura* or body is *Puruṣa*—the Supreme Being.[2] Puruṣa = Pur + vas *i.e.*, Puri Basati Sete Vā Iti Puruṣa *i. e.*, one who lives or sleeps in Pura or body is Puruṣa. This Puruṣa is Para-Brahman. So the human body is the temple of God. That is why Saint Paul declared. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God ; and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any one defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for temple of God is holy which temple you are."

For man to attain manliness is more difficult than to attain divinity. Birth as a human being is a guarantee of salvation. We have His word. So the man is more fortunate than gods. Each of the individual bodies is a temple within which there is going on a ceaseless worship to the ever wakeful Puruṣa. Inside this temple there always shines a tender light of millions of suns and moons. And there can be heard a constant and spontaneous musical sound of the mystic syllable '*OM*'.

The human body is the best field for action. It affords the best scope for works. After enjoyment of heavenly pleasures even gods have to assume human form for the performance of new kinds of actions. For, in heaven there is no scope to perform new actions. Therefore, the seekers of salvation never hanker after the pleasures of heaven ; such hankering is found in the man given to enjoyments.

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1. "गुहा यत्र निहितं ब्रह्मशाश्वतम् ।" —Śruti.

2. "स वा अयं पुरुषः सर्व्वासुपूर्षु पुरि शयो नैनेनकिञ्चनानावृतम् ।"
—Bṛ, Ār. II, 5. 18.

Of the seven nether worlds the earth is the best. As a reward of actions on this earth a man earns the dignity of *Indra*, the lord of celestial regions and the dignity of *Candra*, the Moon-God. If *Indra* and *Candra* can make spiritual progress, then they attain the status of Brahmā, Viṣhṇu, and Maheśwara, and then as God with attributes they individually become Lords of creation, protection and destruction. The denizens of heavens are drowned in the enjoyment of heavenly pleasures and so they may forget their ownselves. But due to repeated blows of sorrows and sufferings on this earth man has the chance of waking up from the sleep of delusion. This earth is a vale of tears ; here we can expect no peace of mind or true happiness until we go back to the bosom of our heavenly Father. If this earth were not a painful abode none of us would like to return to the world of bliss above, and in that case the door of celestial world would have been closed before us for ever. As a result we would have lost the good fortune to reach the feet of our heavenly Father.

Chilling explains this material world as a preparation for the spiritual. The earth is indeed a place for the self to make progress in spirituality. So the birth as a human being is the best kind of birth. In heaven there are only those things which we find here. Our conception of heaven is just according to our individual taste. The man given to worldly enjoyments hold the view that heaven is a desirable place full of material pleasures. The heaven fancied by a youngman is a fascinating garden house with plenty of beautiful damsels. The drunkards conceive of heaven as some locality which overflows with nectar, a favourite drink of the gods. And the opium eater's idea of heaven is that it is made of opium. But the real fact is that heaven is just an improved condition of this earth, and the gods are just human souls of an elevated and better type.

Sādhanā or practice of *Yoga* is not possible with soul alone ; body is equally essential. As rice sown without the husk cannot be grown as a rice plant, so the soul without the body cannot germinate the seed of religion. On physical death the soul moves about in a subtle world and is later on compelled by the will of God to be reborn.

Life is like the amaranthus. Reap it and it grows again. As a bit of grass blown by the gust of wind, a creature full of desires undergoes endless births and rebirths. The effects of his actions will follow him in the next. So what is the good of giving up life by physical suffering through fasting and other kinds of hardship ? Fasting is not desired by God, for is it not His intention that we eat the food which He created ?

Lord Buddha passed full six years in strictest penance and grew very thin and weak. He realised that an extremely weak body could never help him in his attempt for the search of the Infinite. He then gave up torturing himself and the cruel process of self-mortification. He soon regained his lost health with adequate food and drink and again took to meditation under the *Bodhi* tree. The gates of emancipation were then flung open to him. He became *Prabuddha*—the Enlightened.

So it is not proper to inflict pain on the body under any circumstances, not even during the practice of *Yoga*, because, our sacred texts say : "the body is the abode of all learning, the body is the symbol of all holy places, the body is the temple of God."

Total surrender to the will of God obliterates the field of ne-science (ignorance), kindles the light of discernment and everything becomes as clear as broad day-light. Cease to identify thyself with your senses, mind, the intellect or ego. Samkarācārya holds that Ahaṃ or ego is not Ātman, for the idea that "I exist" is present in it. Ahaṃ is the reflection of of Ātman whereas Ātman and Brahman are one and the same. In other words, one's Ātman is a spark of Brahman,

one and without a second, confined in one's individuality. So long as it is in the animal body, it is looked upon as a separate entity, though in reality it is a part of Brahman who is the whole. When it is freed form the cover of a corporeal frame and the bondage of desire, it merges into Brahman. 'Like father like son'. So the individual selves apparently different from one another on account of their separate individual existences, are in reality, not different from Universal Self. Before the dawning of the sense of duality Jiva and Brahman were one and the same. This Knowledge of duality separated them. The sense of duality is *Avidyā*; it vanishes when a Jiva regains true knowledge of the Self and declares "I am He—Soham".

When the golden sheath or the sheath of bliss as explained before is revealed by the practice of Yoga, the individual soul, freed from all qualifications, shines forth in all its splendour and realises its oneness with the Supreme Soul and declares "Aham *Brahmāsmi*—I am the Brahman". Be pure in mind, artless in thought, truthful in speech and action and free from all desires and behold the unveiled glory of Para-Brahman.

Ātman alone can claim kinship with Godhead. The Upaniṣads have declared, that the knowledge of the Soul gives us knowledge of everything, just as the knowledge of earth readily explains the nature of an earthen pot. Therefore try first to know your own Soul through the study of the Vedās, love and devotion; then you will know the Supreme Brahman, for the Soul is Brahman. Since Supreme Soul and Ātman are one, to know Paramātman is to know what we are. To love God is to recognise our own vitality as a portion of that power, wel-coming it with grateful joy as a gift from the Universal Soul whence we have come.

An individual soul, freed from the bondage of gross physical body, is called *Ātmika* or spirit. An *Ātmika* of

higher spiritual power is as powerful as the Creator Lord. It can create and destroy the Universe with the consent of *Iśvara*. An Ātmika freed from the limitations of physical body attains higher powers and can do things which are impossible for corporeal beings to do. It follows that if we can liberate ourselves from the bondage of physical body, senses and mind, our powers will automatically become manifold. We may even attain divine powers through continued practices, for this it is necessary that the bondages of body, senses and mind should be removed by the practice of *Yoga*. The Soul is living like a prisoner in the prison of the body and mind. Liberate yourself from this fettered condition through the power of *Yoga*. Absolute emancipation results from complete annihilation of the five Koṣas or sheaths as also of the eleven organs and five subtle elements.

Our every limb perishes and every sense decays, each circumstance changes, happiness and miseries come in succession, day is followed by day, year by another year,—time and tide wait for no body ; they roll on to the eternity and infinity. But Man the eternal is unchangeable—He remains the same for ever. So do we, because, we live, move and have our being in ever existing God. Being a divine fragment Ātman is also immortal and beyond the limitless sky. The Ātman has no beginning or infancy. It is always of one form, of one essence and devoid of any kind of change. It is intangible, imperishable, formless and eternal.[1] Ātman is not hurt by any weapon, nor consumed by fire, neither drenched with water nor dried up by air (The Gita, II. 23). It follows, therefore, that the Ātman is not at all liable to change. It is everlasting, eternal and indestructible (The Gita, II. 20). Ātman never perishes but the body does.

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1. "अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमव्ययं।"—Katha Up. 1. 3. 15.

Mahātmā Gāndhi said : "He feels in the core of his heart the truth of the statement that death is but another form of life and it is the main gateway to Eternal Existence. If any body shoots me to death with a view to remove him a most offending sinner from the world, he will surely not be able to kill me but the person who appeared to be the offender in his estimation. Ātman is indestructible. Death creates opportunity for the soul to take a new body for operations in a new field." Mahātmāji was a Seer, wedded to the truth, conversant with the mysteries of life and death and a great saint.

The individual souls are always trying to gain knowledge which is possible only through the medium of a material body. So with the advance of age when our body with its limbs and senses becomes weak and decays we feel the necessity of getting a new one. That is why we give up the old worn-out body to take up a fresh one. Thus in every succeeding birth the soul progresses in knowledge and experience till perfection is attained. Eventually shedding all the shells, gross and subtle, it comes out alone to be locked in the loving embrace of one who is Alone.

The Soul gives up its worn-out body and takes up a new one just as a man changes his old dress for a new one (The Gita II. 22). Just as a snake casts off its slough with perfect ease, so does a man aspiring after emancipation gives up his body without feeling any loss or trouble. Just as the shaving of hair and clipping off of nails, repeated a thousand times, do not materialy affect the person in any way, similarly, the Soul is not affected by the casting off of old bodies and the taking up of new ones. Just as the space in a room is not at all affected when the room is consumed by fire, so the Soul is not at all affected by the destruction of the body. Ātman is a flame that always burns ; it can never be put out. One may die but cannot be extinct, because the

Soul is immortal. None and nothing can destroy Ātman Realise your own Self and transcend mortality. A person, who sees himself in all and all in himself, knowing that the same Ātman is pervading all things and beings, is like Brahman. He is no longer fettered by birth and death[2]. The bubble bursts and mingles with water. Just as rivers entering into the sea lose their distinctive names and forms, so does a Seer who has known Brahman, get rid of the bondage of names and forms and attains oneness with the Supreme Soul. Brahman can be known only when one becomes Brahman oneself. Such a person can be called "*Jivanmukta*" or emancipated though still living and possessed of a mortal frame. Christ told his desciples: "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. Blessed are the pure in heart, because they will see God. Change the angle of your vision, be pure in heart and have faith in the providence of God—you shall see Him."

Birth is not the beginning of a new life; it is only admission into a new environment. "Life does not begin at birth or end in death, but is a link in an infinite series of lives"—Says Dr. Radhakrishnan. "Life is a rehearsal for death"—Said Plotinus. In the eternal music of life, a single note can be represented by a single life. Only one note can never reveal the full meaning of the music of life. To gain a clear understanding of its secret significance we must have to take a full view of all the lives before us. We ourselves are limited while the ideal in its fullness is unlimited. By leading a stern moral life we can get into touch with nobler and

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1. "देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्व्वस्य भारत।"—The Gita, II. 30.

Also: विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित् कर्त्तुमर्हति।"—The Gita, II 17.

2. "सर्व्वभूतस्थमात्मनं सर्व्वभूतानिचात्मनि, ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्व्वत्र समदर्शनः।
यो मां पश्यति सर्व्वत्र सर्व्वञ्च मयि पश्यति तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न
प्रणश्यति॥—The Gita, VI. 29-30.

higher moral standard. Following the ideal of morality in every life we shall steadily approach Infinity and absolute fullness. The infinite numbers of ideals before humanity will one day assume form and reveal themselves fulfilling the divine will. This is the object of creation and mission of our life. Eternal life is but a life of ideals.

If death would end all and if there were nothing beyond grave, then who the devil would care to purge off the evils of his nature? Under the circumstances every sinner would come to the conclusion that it is unnecessary to burden this life with the practice of virtues which involve self-mortification.

If with the termination of life the Soul also terminates then there would be no such thing as vice and virtue and transmigration of the soul, rebirth and redeath. So Soul is really immortal and death is only a step forward to life eternal. Victor Hugo has justly remarked : "The tomb is not a blind alley ; it is a thoroughfare. I close on the twilight to open with the dawn." Death is not a change of location but change of appreciation. The end of our present existence is a probation. The world would have been an insoluble riddle were it otherwise. 'Death does not end all, but there is another existence beyond the present scene'—said Sunderland. "Ah, death, thou art to me like Lord Syāma Himself"—greeted Rabindranath, the Poet Laureate of Asia.

"The stars shine over the earth,
The stars shine over the sea ;
The stars look up to the Mighty God.
The stars look down on me.
The stars shall live for a million years,
A million years and a day ;
But God and I shall live and love—
When the stars have passed away.'

As Jivas are born and die in dreams, so the phenomena of birth and death take place in waking state (Mā. Up. IV. 68.) According to the same text, verse III. 9, the events of birth and death are attributive. In the Brahma-Sutra, III. 1. 1, it has been stated that the son, wife and other relatives are creations of mind in the same way as they are seen in dreams—'Nirmātāraṃ *Caike Putrādaśca*'.

When we look up to the heavens and see the moon against the fleeting clouds, the moon appears to be on the move, though really not so ; a similar mistake is committed by us, when we say that the Soul moves in the cycle of birth and death. The universe as a whole is immovable. Movements and changes are characteristics of the phenomenal world, which is limited. But Soul is beyond all sorts of limitation. So movement cannot be attributed to the Soul which is all-pervading and not limited by time, space and causation. When a jar or tumbler is removed from one place to another, the ethereal space contained in it seems to be moving though not actually so. Similarly with the movement of subtle body and mind, the Soul within seems to be moving. What comes and goes is our material body with sense-data. Soul is pure consciousness ; it can have neither coming nor going.

Instinct of beings bears the best testimony to the immortality of the Soul. The greater portion of knowledge that we possess now must have been carried by us from our previous births. 'In man whom we ascribe consciousness, the daily acts of unconscious memory are much more numerous and varied than those of the conscious faculty.' These acts of unconscious memory have their roots in our past lives. Knowledge to originate from things without previous knowledge is impossible. Matter is formed of something that is material, shock by something which is shocked, pain by something that is pained and evil by something that is evil. All these go to prove that man existed from all eternity and

was created by One Who is akin to him in every respect. Nothing can produce anything. It is evident therefore that before creation there was one eternal Being by whose will all the creation evolved and we the individual souls came into existence infused with the life-force of the Supreme Soul which sustains us.

All our physical, psychical and vital powers are grounded in Ātman. At the time of death the energy in the organs is withdrawn in life-principle or *Prāṇa* which then behaves like a battery. This explains how a dying person can obtain visions of persons and objects that are beyond the reach of his senses. Thus when all the senses including mind are withdrawn in *Prāṇa*, individual soul, leaves the mortal frame behind taking the life-principle with it. "Jiva does not die when its senses are destroyed and the senses also cannot keep a body alive when *Prāṇa* departs"—Says Bṛ. Ār. Up. VI 1. 13.

The constituents of *Prāṇa* or the vital air are ethereal space, water and air (Bhāgavad, II. 10. 31). Of the five winds, as explained before, *Prāṇa* is functioning in the heart, *Apāna* in the rectum, *Udāna* in the neck and throat, and *Vyāna* spreads all over the body. *Prāṇa-Bāyu* flows between the nose and the navel and the field of *Apāna Bayu* lies between the navel and the rectum. At the time of taking breath both *Prāṇa* and *Apāna Bāyus* are drawn towards the navel but at the time of expiration they flow in opposite direction. By this act *Apāṇa* maintains a steady pull on *Prāṇa* all the time. If *Apāna* did not keep its hold on *Prāṇa* in this way, the latter could have easily gone out of the body through the nose never to return again. So when *Apāna* ceases to function, *Prāṇa* leaves the body (Bhāgvad II. 10. 16). But in the last few moments of life when *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* move upwards togother towards the nostrils through the region of *Samāna Bayu* in the navel, the phenomenon of *Nāviśvās* or

breathing difficulty peculiar to death appears. Death follows when the two winds go out of the body completely.

At the time of death, a misty cloud like substance emanates from the material body. The yogins of high spiritual power can visualise it. This substance, scientists call 'Ectoplasm'. The quantity of 'Ectoplasm' that passes out of the body after death is about half an ounce in weight. This can be verified by taking the weight of the body before and after death. Ectoplasm is the material substance that builds the subtle bodies in which the soul of the individual remains encased. When it fully comes out of the living body, death occurs and close to the body within a few seconds a shadowy figure, a double of the gross body is formed.

The individual soul after death

During ecstasy, trance and dream, soul may go out of the material body when a white substance like the umbilical cord of a new born child keeps the soul connected with the body. But on death this fine connection is entirely gone and the soul can no more enter into its cage.

Owing to a sudden shock by death, the departed soul falls into a swoon and when it comes to itself, finds the relatives crying and cannot understand why. It tries to console them, but all in vain. Eventually it gets much annoyed with their ceaseless lamentation and leaves the place in disgust. It fails to realise that the bond of life has snapped. Other kindred spirits make it understand that it is no more in the land of living ; so its former earthly friends and relatives can neither see nor hear him—its connection with the World has been severed. It is then led away by a spirit to the abode of the Pitṛs or forefathers and live there till re-birth.

As in dream we live in monomy Koṣa or mental sheath, so do we after death. Heaven or hell is the figment of imagination. A man after death enjoys celestial pleasures if when living his mind was clear and pure or he suffers the

pricks of his guilty conscience and the hellish tortures of the passions that cannot be satisfied after death for want of a material body, if his nature was vile. A departed soul carrying earthly longings becomes earthbound and eventually gravitates back and re-incarnates.

Mrs Anie Besant observes that an apparition is a revelation of an astral light. A murdered person thinks of that dreadful incident and a thought-body is formed thereof which sometimes comes to our notice and we are frightened. This thought-body is full of limbs and senses. An Ātmika, by lowering down the frequency of vibration of its being may be visible in its astral double. Thought creates vibrations in ether and this ether-vibration ultimately takes a concrete shape. An apparition is a floating form of an Ātmika's thought-forces. Śruti states that force or energy is generated by ether-vibration and it has been pointed out before that waves of desire for creation emitted by Divine Mind created ether and the vibration of this ethereal energy took shape of the universe. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle views that Ātmikas give out a kind of gluey substance from themselves which form their thought-bodies and such apparitions become visible to us. This view cannot be maintained, because, from an astral body no viscid substance can ooze out. It is probable that the departed spirits through intense desire and by tremendous will-power, somehow associate themselves with elements and materialise themselves for the time being. The earth-bound spirits of lower order are wicked by nature; they frighten and even sometimes try to do harm to man.

At the time of death Prāṇa departs from the body with the departing soul and the body can no more be revived. The senses, mind and *Buddhi* follow the soul just as the servants follow their master or just as one's kith and kin follow the dead body of a relation, in a procession, to the cremation ground. In the case of an emancipated Soul

departing from the body, it is not followed by the senses, mind and *Buddhi* (Br Ār Up. IV. 3. 38). The mind which is the principle factor of the subtle body, may be looked upon as the whole of the subtle body of the Jivas. The free Soul of an emancipated Jiva quits not only material body, but also the subtle bodies and never enters into bondage again. The Soul of the emancipated Jiva then merges like a light in the eternal ocean of Light.

When death occurs, all the ten senses and work organs together with the mind follow the departing soul and go out of the body. The departure of the eleven organs in this way is death and as this sad event brings tears to the eyes of friends and relatives of the dying man, the eleven members who make others cry are called Rudra. The root *Rud* means to cry or weep (Vide Bṛ Ār Up. III. 9. 4).

There are two courses open to the departing soul. The course of the *Pitṛs* known as *Pitṛyāna* or Dhumayāna (path of gloom) leading to *Pitṛloka* and the course of *Devayāna* or the path of divine light which leads to emancipation. *Dhumayāna* is the unholy course of rebirth and redeath.

The course of Jivātman after physical death

Those who have a chequered life of vice and virtue take to the inferior course of *Dhumayāna* which leads them to the region of Pitṛs and worldly spirits. Devayāna is the superior course of the gods—the path of light extending to the highest heaven. Holy people, Seers and Saints walking on the path of spirituality ascend by the course of *Devayāna*. "Asato ma sadgamaya—take me from the unreal to real. Tamaso mā jyotirgamaya—take me from darkness to light. Āvirāvirma edhi—come thou and reveal Thyself to me." This has been the perpetual appeal of man to the Almighty for the perfect

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1. Śrimad Bhāgavad, II. 10. 16.

release of his soul from the thraldom of Avidyā and its material imprisonment.

Within the human heart there are one hundred and one arteries—of them *Suṣumnā*, the spiritual nerve, is like a hollow pipe and it extends from *Mulādhār* (Sacral plexus) upto *Brahmarandhra*. If a *Yogin* can take his *Prāṇa* into this artery and pass away on death through the *Brahmarandhra*, he attains emancipation ; other arteries lead Jivātman to different heavenly spheres below the world of Brahman (vide Katha Up. 2. 3. 16). An emancipated Soul is not detained in the lower heavenly spheres ; his Ātman directly merges in Brahman.

The course of the human soul after death is determined by the impression of desires cherished in previous births. These impressions lead the soul to parents with like impressions where they may have the fullest opportunity to fulfil themselves. Our gross body is the product of mundane matter. At death this body of dust will mingle with the dust. This is merging into the cause ; the elemental body is decomposed into elements. Spirits of lower planes take advantage of this occasion and associating themselves with the liberated elements take birth again. These earth-bound souls are unable to rise higher up being dragged down by the chain of attachment for their relations in the world. The result is, they revolve in the cycle of birth and death like a *Ghatiyantra* in which the jars ceaselessly go up and down in the act of drawing water from the well.

On death an individual soul disappears in the air and moves along the sun-rays. Those who are pious and philanthropic go along the path of the *pitṛs* or manes. They reach the region of the manes by proceeding along the path of smoke, from there they go to the sky, from the sky they go to the sphere of the moon where they enjoy the fruits of their good deeds and at the termination of this enjoyment, following the moon-rays they return again to the Earth

passing through the stages of the sky, the air, the cloud and the rains. According to the *Karma-Sutra* or the thread of previous actions that follow every soul in life or death, the departed souls take birth again in the families or in the environments where their accompanying impressions may have opportunity for full expression.

The sinners after death are thrown into the region of the disembodied evil spirits and are subjected to hellish tortures. When the time for transmigration comes they are compelled to take the worst kind of birth again, sometimes even in the womb of the most inferior types of ferocious animals. They are born and reborn and they have to die again and again.

Individual soul on death of physical body moves towards higher regions and on its way it falls asleep on the bank of Baitarani which is a river of ether waves, and loses its consciousness there for a time being, when its earthly memory slips away. The memory of this world and its relations ties the soul which delays its taking rebirth. So if the earthly memory is not lost to some extent, the progress of the soul is impeded. As the memory grows more and more faint its attraction for relatives gradually decreases and it takes birth again.

Through the operation of the divine will, when the time for transmigration comes, the soul comes down again to the earth along with showers of rain. The Ears of corn grow in the showers and the soul contacts itself with the ears. When this impregnated corn is used as food by an animal the soul enters into the body of the animal and rests in the Semen in the form of sperm. In the final stage it enters into the womb of a female and is born in time as an offspring—a full fledged being (vide Taitt Up. 1. 28 & Mu Up II, 2. 5). It is for this reason, the material body is called *Annamoy Koṣa* or food-body. Without the contact of the Soul, mere association of male and female matter cannot procreate.

"Semen is Ātman. Know that to be Brahman[1]—taṃ bidyācchukramamṛtaṃ"—says Katha Up, II. 3, 17. The embryo in the womb is infused with life only because the sperm remains saturated with presence of the Soul. The spermatozoa which developes into Buddha or Christ must have contained in it a great Soul in an extremely potential form. In the field of life, at one extremity, then, is the germ where life begins while at the other is formed the Supreme in possession of spirituality in its fullest expansion. It follows then that in the beginning there must have been one endowed with consciousness who assumes a minute molecular form and gets itself encased in the body of the spermatozoa.

The ever existing, all knowing, ever blissful Universal Soul, wrapped in the five covers, manifests itself as the individual soul which on account of the lowering effect of impure mind and unholy body, loses all knowledge of its pristine glory. Thus there arises an imaginary difference of shade and colour between the individual and Universal Soul.

When a man dies, his body usually undergoes radical transformation through pain and excitement. But things like contraction and expansion of muscles and nerves are seldom found in the body of a dying Yogin, when he tries to come out of his mortal frame. The glands and knots of a Yogin's body having already bored by the practice of Yoga his Soul feels the least resistance while making its way out through them. So when the Soul leaves the body for ever the Yogin appears as if to fall fast asleep in profound peace and comfort. Those who saw the dead body of Sri Aurodindo can bear testimony to this effect. The Soul does not confront any obstruction at the time of its exit, since it has already practised the art of leaving the body before. In other words,

1. Śveta up, verse, IV. 3 also holds the same view : "तदेव शुक्रं तद्ब्रह्म ।"

all the routes and chanels being familiar to it, the Soul does not face any kind of obstacle.

The emancipated Souls after physical death proceed along the path of Gods (Devayāna) following the sun-rāys and crossing the subtle worlds like the region of the sun, the moon and the gods finally reach the world of Brahman.

According to Lord Saṃkarācāryya, freedom in this life and absolute freedom after death do not make any difference in the knowledge of the devout Yogin. The difference between the two kinds of salvation is that until his *Prārabdha* gets exhausted he has to live physically. Accumulated actions of the past that have not yet borne fruit but will bear fruit in future are destroyed totally by the fire of knowledge, but those impressions of former action bearing fruit and controlling our present destiny are not consumed by knowledge. The effect of *Prārabdha* has, therefore, to be patiently endured till it is exhausted through experience.

The physical death of an emancipated Soul means nothing but *Nirvāna* or complete salvation. It is not concurrently with the awakening of the knowledge that the stage of perfection appears. Therefore, in order to attain a perfect and proper condition for absolute freedom, the devotee is compelled to remain confined within this bodily cage for sometime even after the awakening of knowledge. Such Souls who have attained liberation in this life are travellers to the divine shore and, as such, only await the best moment on the bank of the river of life. If concurrently with the awakening of knowledge such liberated Souls attained total extinction (*Nirvāna*) we would not then have found even a single *Guru* or a spiritual guide who has seen the light of truth, and as a result, the obscured mysteries of the spiritual world would remain unrevealed to us for ever, and to the future devotees desirous of emancipation it would be a cause of great misfortune.

Salvation or the final emancipation of the individual soul is not extinction of the individual, it is his fulfilment. It is like a drop of water obtaining the fullness of an ocean.

Whatever a man thinks and does throughout his life, occupy his mind at the moment of his death and the very thought determines his future birth[1]. Karma, knowledge and the seed of past impressions of a man follow him to the next life after death (Vide Bṛ. Ār. IV. 4. 2). On death the *Jivātman* departs from the body, groaning, as it were, because the knots within are torn asunder and it is pained to cut off so long a relation with the body (vide Bṛ. Ār. IV. 3. 35). *Prāṇa*, mind and senses follow a departing soul of the Jiva (vide Bṛ. Ār. IV. 3. 38). It is quite opposite in the case of an emancipated Soul. The mind and senses merge in their cause when a free Soul dies[2] (vide Bṛ. Ār. III. 2. 11. & Mu. Up. III. 2. 7). His implements of perception go nowhere, they end in this world, only the name survives because it is eternal. An emancipated Soul, on death, passes successively through the atmosphere, the spheres of the sun and the moon and reaches at last the world of Brahman.

The departing souls leave their physical bodies having the same appearance, nature, desire, experience and Samaskārs of their worldly lives. The higher Ātmikas (spirits) move with a velocity of lightning from one place to another.

Hindus make oblation of water to their departed ancestors with the following words: "Thou hast now assumed ethereal body. Nothing of this material world is now thy support. As air is not visible to our naked eyes, so hast thou become

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1. "यं यं वापि स्मरन् भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥"—Said Vedavyās.
Also vide The Gita, VIII. 6.

2. Śruti states:
"न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति इहैव समवलीयन्ते विमुक्तश्च विमुच्यते ।"

invisible to us. We offer oblation of milk and water. Let it gratify thy Soul—may thy Soul rest in peace[1].

The Christian world also prays for the contentment and elevation of the departed souls of their parents : "I do pray unto God that you may go to the higher and higher spheres."

S'rāddha is the act of offering something with *S'raddhā* or love and regard to a departed soul. The departed soul feels gratified by tasting the essence of the food consecrated with the holy mantras offered with deep devotion and regard. As a result the soul feels lessening of the mundane influence on him.

The subtle bodies are the seat of feelings and not Ātman which is beyond all material affection. Buddhi is the upādhi or vehicle of Ātman. Upādhi is that which saddles another with its qualities. Ātman is the witness of buddhi. An object is the effect of a cause and any object which has a cause is an illusion. The cause only is true, the only reality being the original causeless Cause.

The covers of the mind and the body are made of material substance and hence behave as receptacle of want, suffering and misery. That is why the individual soul is constrained to undergo the woes and agonies of this world. Lack of harmony being the rule here, this earth has been a vale of tears. Human being has been fighting all along since his advent on this earth, against this lack of harmony. But the miseries and sufferings of this world will never be conquered either by human intelligence or science. For the conquest of this eternal enemy is absolutely necessary the culture of the powers of *Yoga* of intution—knowledge derivable from the awakening of a faculty other than senses. Having lost the paradise of *Praṇava* or the adorable Lord in the

1. "आकाशस्थ निरालम्ब, वायुभूत निराश्रय ।
इदं नीरं इदं क्षीरं खात्वा पीत्वा सुखी भव ॥"

form of eternal sound through sheer restlessness of mind caused by desire and having traversed the regions of A + U + M etc. we have come down to the lowest stratum of creation which is full of miseries and turmoil. Now in order to regain the ever blissful region of *Goloka*, we shall have to retrace our steps from the *Bhuloka* by taking to the practice of *Yoga* and advancing inwards. When *Kulakundalini* or the potential energy in man is roused into activity from its inert state by practice of *Yoga*, it will ascend higher carrying the individual soul with it in its upward flow. It is then that Prakriti or nature ceases to create obstacles on the path and becomes helpful in the attainment of the highest human goal. Having ascended the highest altitude in the practice of *Yoga* you will see clearly that God, Prakriti, and your own Self are one and the same. The three are one and one is three. At this point there is nothing as the subject and the object—each and all are then perfectly reconciled in one existence i.e. God. When the stream of consciousness rises upwards by the practice of *Yoga*, the covers of body and mind slip off automatically and the hidden powers of the Soul gradually reveal themselves. The antagonism of nature vanishes and it no longer produces any influence upon us. The powers of nature do not stand on our way. Consequently the Soul regaining its lost position becomes omnipresent and omniscient again.

Ātman is the prime cause of this creation. It is one and indivisible. The notion that there are as many Souls as there are bodies is an error of judgment. Bṛ Up. 1. i. 10 observes : "He does not know who says : 'I am one' and he is another." "When the physical body is identified as Soul, such illusory knowledge appears"—says Śveta Up. That primordial thing which is without a beginning cannot certainly be subjected to analysis. That which is the result of synthesis can be analysed into its ingredients. But Ātman is a thing which is

other than the twenty-four elements of Prakriti which are subject to change and decay.

Soul is not formed by the combination of a number of things ; rather it is spirituality projected and embedded in the subtle sheath of all living creatures. In spite of being one and undivided it appears to be as many as there are bodies and to have separate existences in all living creatures. White light passing through glasses of different colour appears to be of different colour ; similarly the Soul wrapped up in *Buddhi* appears as *Buddhi*. *Buddhi* or human intellect being always dividing, different individuals appear to be different. In consequence of previous impressions, mind tends to function in various ways and deverse capacities. Being qualified in all these various ways the individual souls take their colour and form.

We cannot conceive of a part without thinking of the whole of which it is a part. So every part indicates that there is a whole for it. A mere drop of water reminds us of the ocean. We can trace along a ray of solar light to the reservoir of light—the sun. The created beings, like sparks of fire, appear in different forms which are but emanations of one and the same Being. Two objects of the same class, possessing the same attributes tend to attract each other, like a particle of matter attracting another particle and ultimately combining into one. The idea that all creatures are but manifestations of Brahman in the part and nothing beyond that is the great truth held unanimously by all the Vedāntists. He is the Infinite One in the heart of the manifold. "We are each of us larger than we know, each of us is only a partial incarnation of a larger Self. The individual as we know him is an incomplete fraction. The incarnate fraction varies in different individuals, from something to something rather magnificient and striking."—Says Sir Oliver Lodge. At the very core of human heart, deeper than the intellect and akin

to the Supreme dwells one which is the Soul of being. When the Soul is realised all the barriers between individual and Supreme Soul drop away.

The entire universe is divided into fourteen material and subtle worlds, seven of which are situate in the lower region. The worlds in the higher region are characterised mainly by the light of consciousness and purity (*Sattva*,) and the worlds in the lower region are characterised mainly by darkness of ignorance (*Tamas*), while the earth is characterised mainly by the principle of activity (*Rajas*). According to actions good or evil as done by a man his soul after physical death moves along the path of Devayāna or along the foggy path (Pitṛyāna or Dhumayāna) leading to the habitation of evil spirits. In the first kind of journey the soul can reach the seventh world in the upper region. In the fourth and fifth worlds the pure souls of individuals enjoy heavenly bliss. Being not freed from the sheath of mind they experience the joys and sorrows resulting from the desires through their subtle sense organs. When their accumulated virtues are exhausted they come down again to the earth and are re-born. The fifth world is the kingdom of the gods of whom Indra is the chief. The kingdom of *Apsarās* (beautiful damsels who entertain the gods) the *Gandharbas* (choristers of heaven) and the Kinnars (Celestial musicians) are included in this fifth world. Those who have restrained the senses, the mind and so the intellect are permitted to enter into the sixth world. In this sphere live the hermits and saints. To this plane belong the kingdom of Lord *S'iva*, the kingdom of Lord *Viṣṇu* and the kingdom of Goddess *Kāli* (Female personification of divine energy—*S'akti*). Those votaries of Śiva, Śakti and Viṣṇu etc. who have attained *Samādhi* (state of super consciousness) in any of the five kinds of the gods having attributes arrive at this sixth plane after death. Here they have the good fortune of enjoying nearness to their desired

beloved god. At the time of total annihilation of the universe these votaries and devout worshippers along with their respective deities are merged in the Supreme Being. "Even from the abode of the attributed *Maheśvar*, the devotee may return but there is no transmigration for one who attains Me"—said Lord Krishna in the Gita, VIII. 16. The seventh plane is a kingdom of pure hallowed consciousness—this is the world of Brahman—the *Nirmala Caitanya deśa*, to which entrance becomes possible when Jiva is identical with Brahman in purity, consciousness and wisdom.

This highest heaven is the land of pure consciousness. It is our true home. We are not to fly there but to dive within our own Self to get into that blessed region. We can enjoy heavenly bliss here on earth, only if we can take our normal consciousness to the higher level. When through deep meditation, Jiva-consciousness is raised to its culmination, the meditator is in heaven and in the companion of his heavenly Father. To go to heaven, it is not essential to renounce the world, to rise a mountain top or to enter a lonely cave. If a man follows the motto that the world is his country, all the citizens of the world are his kinsmen, and to do good to all is his religion, he enjoys heavenly blessedness in this very life. Heaven is not a locality that hangs in the sky ; it is the tranquil state of mind within.

EVILS OF PASSION

"काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ।।"

—The Gita III. 37.

Inordinate desires, carnal passions, greed, anger, egotism and similar other passions are born of *Rajas*. Passions are the greatest enemy of the mankind. These tempt men to commit sin and ultimately lead them to destruction. Man is stupefied by anger and infatuation results in the loss of memory which is followed by a total eclipse of knowledge. The loss of wisdom, according to our sacred texts, brings destruction of the Self (vide *Bhā* IV. 22. 31-32 & The *Gita* II. 63).

The body is the hot bed of all sins which are bred in desire and selfishness. Fear, worry and anxiety are signs of impure mind which is formed according to its past impressions.

The material body, liable to petrify, is a sack of worms and is the repository of stool and urine. Its future is skeleton whose fearful vision appearing in the mind removes at once the infatuation for beauty and other charms born of it. King *Joyadratha* turned indifferent to worldly enjoyments and said : "who shall care to relish this unholy body made up of bones, marrow, flesh, blood, skin, semen, phlegm, stool and urine ?" That is to say, the man to whom the Soul is the Supreme and only reality is not tempted by the desire to get pleasure through such an unholy body.

Just as a wine jar remains impure even if it be washed a hundred times with water, so also the mind polluted with many faults is not purified even if a person takes his bath in a holy place times without number. "Unless the cup is clean, whatever you pour into it, turns sour"—Says A. H. Armstrong. The three great enemies of man are the carnal

passion, anger and greed of his mind. They lead him to the gates of hell.

Due to uncleanliness the body is attacked by the ring worm. Itching at first gives a pleasant feeling but later on brings a painful burning sensation. Similarly, the mind drowns the organs of senses in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures bringing transitory happiness. But afterwards a man recoils from the poison of sensual objects and is compelled to suffer eternal hellish tortures in this life and beyond. It is, therefore, necessary to remove the filth of mind. Just as the disproportion of the three humours of the body—phlegm, bile and wind create some disease, so also the disproportion of the primodial elements in the human nature—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* creates mental derangement and uneasiness. This uneasiness is the perversion of mind, it is a mental disease. The root of this mental derangement is ignorance or no-science. The diseases of the material body are caused by wind, bile or phlegm ; the diseases of the subtle body are appetite and passions, six in number : lust, anger, avarice, delusion, pride, and envy. The disease of the causal body is delusion born of our ignorance. Freed from these diseases we are freed from all kinds of existence. For a piece of cloth stripped off its threads no longer remains a piece of cloth. Can a blanket without the fibre be called a blanket ? Is it possible to imagine an earthenware without earth ?

It is needless to say that the three *Guṇas* or the three attributes mentioned before are more or less present in all creation. Excepting the saints and the brutes of animal propensities, all human beings possess these attributes in unequal proportion. Whenever any of these *Guṇas* or attributes gets the upper hand, the other two qualities are eclipsed for the time being. Thus we find the manifestation of *Sattva* or nobility in the character of a man becomes possible when the attributes of *Rajas* or activity and *Tamas*

or darkness of mind are overcome by the former and we find him then only possessed of nobility and his nature is characterised as divine. The quality of *Sattva* with its ideals of nobility, love and bliss predominates over that of *Rajas* with its craving for power and pride, and over that of *Tamas* with its ignorance, wickedness, dullness or inertia. They work at cross purposes to one another. On account of past impressions and by the varieties of food taken the three qualities become manifest at different times.

When *Sattva* is in ascendency, the good qualities of knowledge, discernment, detachment, forgiveness, unselfish love and aloofness appear, the result of which is virtue. When *Rajas* predominate, worldly desires, anger, greed and activity increase resulting in restlessness, loss of mental peace or balance of mind, and sin and disgust follow. *Tamas* getting the upper hand lethargy, error of judgment and stupidity follow. This results in diminution of longivity.

The want of self-control in an individual results in his sufferings, loss and ruin as is examplified in the lives of Michael M. Dutta, Shelley and Byron. The life without discipline is a ship without a rudder. Restless mind and great things go ill together. Life is truth and action in every inch of it. It consists in noble activity and not in greed or jealousy, or in day-dreaming, or in imagination which never sees the light of the day. Mere breathing is not life for insects also breath. Mere eating is not life for worms eat as well. Mere moving is not life for snails also move. Morality, noble activity and a great thirst for the Absolute, all that for which man is called divine, all that for which a man is revealed as Man—the eternal, should be the guiding principle of all. Communion with God through deep meditation is not possible by man whose mind is not yet controlled and is still the play ground of passions. When the fuel of passion is consumed, the recipient of the body gets oneness

with the Brahman and becomes deep, infinite and unfathomable like the limitless ocean or the boundless sky. The existence of everything depends upon a cause, if the cause is removed, effect disappears : 'Cessante causa cessante effectus'. If the source of all our sorrows and sufferings is destroyed sorrows and sufferings will be nowhere. This can be done if we purify our heart and follow moral laws. The emancipation in this life is a state of our being beyond greed, ignorance and sense of duality, a steadfast rock that no torrent and turmoil can shake. Pleasures and ambitions are never found to be satisfying, like fuels they always add to the flame of passion.

Desire cannot be extinguished by enjoyment of objects of desire but it flames up like a fire on which clarified butter has been poured. *Yayāti*, the king, in his old age, having borrowed the youth of his son *Puru*, enjoyed the world for a long time but finding in the long run that there is no end to enjoyment, declared that the whole world with all the objects of enjoyment in it, was not enough for the complete satisfaction of even one person. So, inordinate desire should be curbed. Lord Buddha described greed as a veritable flood. Greed deprives life of its splendour, desire makes it dirty and suffering causes life an object of abhorrence. In a word, the peace of our life is totally lost when we allow ourselves to be guided by passions. The peace of life is true happiness that a man can aspire to attain. Once upon a time Lord Buddha was on his seat in the forest absorbed in deep meditation, when a Brāhmin in search of his several missing oxen came across Him. He was impressed by the beautiful and peaceful countenance of the Lord and exclaimed : "How happy is this man ! Surely he has not lost any oxen !"

Many people are found to run after worldly pleasures and worldly pursuits and to this end they do not hesitate to traverse the whole world. Let these mad men run the heated race of life. A day will come when exhausted and averse to

enjoyment they will have recourse to the path of renunciation. The path of renunciation begins where the path of enjoyment ends and the path of renunciation extends upto infinity. The path for the sensualist is in the external world. The wise devotee has his path in the inner Self, he revets the senses from the external world to the world within.

"Pleasure" Says Seneca "is our companion, not our guide; we have not chosen it because it delights us". The pleasures that we the earthly beings enjoy here on earth is only a minute fraction of the joy of Brahman. The joy that a pauper finds in suddenly getting a kingdom is exceeded a hundred times by the joy of the region inhabited by the *Pitṛs*, the joy of the kingdom of the *Gandharbas* is a hundred times the joy of the latter, a hundred times the joy of the kingdom of the *Gandharbas* is the joy of the kingdom of domigods. The joy of the world of *Prajāpati* is a hundred times the joy of the world of gods and the joy of the world of Brahman is hundred times greater than the joy of the world of *Prajāpati-Brahmī*. The joy of the world of Brahman is the eternal bliss and he who has realised how insignificant are worldly pleasures compared to this Suprems Bliss is fortunate indeed. When a man gains divine insight by the practice of *yoga* and through the grace of God, he can realise the difference, and then he crosses all the earthly attractions.

Wealth without the restraint of passions leads to destruction. Wealth is beneficient in the hands of those who have modified and chastened their passions into unselfish love divine. Such divine love is impartial, it flows towards all without any distinction of friend or foe. Seeing himself in all he cannot but cultivate the spirit of equanimity which goes a great way in establishing mental peace and happiness. When he realises the existence of the same Ātman in all, he naturally becomes less and less inclined to enjoy life at the

cost of other's interest and suffering. Finding the same Ātman being the essential reality or the true Self of all, both man and woman, he realises this truth that he is neither man nor woman but pure spirit which has neither sex, nor caste, nor colour and then and then only that his sensual appetites decline.

"Diseases and grief are signs of My favour,"—Said Lord Krishna : "*Mahārogo Māhāśoko* Madanugraha Lakṣmanaṃ." Bṛ. Ār. Up. V. II. 1, recognises sickness as a great penance. When the sufferings of diseases are taken for penace, the evil consequences of past actions are destroyed. Self-consciousness and Saṃskāras (impressions) are interdependent. When the consciousness of the egoistic self is gone, the Saṃskāras get annihilated and so no new life originates thereof. Fire burns so long as there is fuel. Saṃskāras are fuels to the life's fire and fire cannot continue if all the fuels are burnt to ashes. *Karma* or action that creates rebirth, does not follow a departed saint, because the seed of Saṃskāras, in his case, is destroyed in this life and so there is no new birth for him to cause further sufferings. Suffering is concomitant to matter and if matter-spirit contact is cut off, there will be nothing to trouble the isolated spirit. Sufferings are rooted in mind. So above the plane of mental consciousness sufferings can neither touch nor afflict us. Jiva consciousness can be raised to the higher plane if only the mind is hushed into silence by the practice of *yoga*.

"Tena tyaktena bhunjitha mā gridha kasyasviddhanaṃ"—enjoy whatever is given by Him. Do not covet other's possession. Our desire for wealth liquidates our neighbours and separates us from the rest of the world. This sense of segregation erects, as it were, an adamantine wall between man and Man the Eternal. The motive of selfishness thus takes us away from One Who is the very life and light of Self. To avoid such eventuality, Hartley Coleridge suggests

"But if for any wish thou darest not pray,
Then pray to God to cast that wish away."

The Vedic sage prayed : "O God ! O Father ! Completely sweep away all our sins—*Viśvāni deva savitāra duritāni parāśuva.* Give us what is good and beneficient—*Yad bhadram tanna aśuva.*"

"Lust, greed and anger are the three gates of hell ; one should be free from them.[1]" Maharaja Pṛthu, who is said to be the partial incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, said : "O' God ! Thou art the Lord of the gods who bestow boons on their devotees ! A sensible person can never pray for worldly objects of enjoyment. The sinners also possess those things. O' Giver of salvation ! I do not so want them (Bhā. IV. 20. 23). A sinner enters into hell with a capital of his own sin. There will be many in the world to enjoy the riches left by him but nobody will be ready to share the consequence of his sinful acts (Bhā. III. 30. 30).

The rich with their callous hearts constitute a class of people like the audience of a theatre-hall, temporary cut off from the rest of the world. They are the parasites of society who suck the blood of others to live for their own sake. In spite of their plentiful resources they are generally found wrestling with cares and sufferings. In their heart of hearts they have a feeling that something valuable and essential of their life is missing. As they advance in age, their feeling of isolation grows deeper and their misery increases, their eyes bear an expression of disappointment and distress as if they have gone into a world from which there is no escape. 'I take away his riches who is favourite to me"—Said He[2]. "God is called *Hara*, because he takes

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1. "त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥"—The Gita XVI. 21.

2 "यस्याहं अनुगृह्णामि हरिष्येतद्धनं शनैः ।

away Jiva's ignorance."—Bhāgavad. Chastity and poverty are taken as helpful to the development of a pure moral life. Wealth and power inevitably lower down the standard of morality.

The house which is not frequented by the pious, though full of riches, is dreadful like an abode of serpents. It is said that *Koli*, the god of iron age sought refuge in the kingdom of *Parikṣit*. King Parikṣit permitted him to live in the gambling house, the wine shop, the house of the ill-fame and the butcher's place. But finding that it would be inconvenient for him to live in these four places at the same time *Koli* brought the matter to the notice of the King who thereupon asked him to live in the rich men's house. Since then *Koli* has been living permanently in the houses of the rich and has been proclaiming himself. From the very day of the great departure of Lord Krishna *Koli* the root cause of Jiva's misfortune, came in power (Bhāgavad 1. 15. 36).

A truly unselfish friend is very rare now-a-days, because most of the people are guided by selfish motive and as such are impure in heart. The bad company of such designing and wicked friends adds fuel to the flame of our passions and thereby bring upon us misfortune and downfall. A rich man is always found to be surrounded by the so-called friends who never wish him good. They pretend to be his friends but only to deceive him. So long as a container has honey in it there are bees to hum around it ; so long he has money, these so-called friends clamour around him. But when he is emptied of his purse they desert him alone to weep over his own misfortune and go away in search of honey elsewhere. He is a real friend with whom one can live without any fear or hesitation as freely and comfortably as a child in the bosom of its mother and whose affection never deteriorates. But such a friend is very rare to-day. Religion alone is our genuine friend who accompanies us even beyond death : "Eko

eba suhṛddharma nidhanepyanuyāti yaḥ." Paramahansa Deva used to say, "We shed half of our tears for our children and exhaust the other half for pelf and property ; not a single drop of tear is left for God".

A common object of envy or an object of common interest, gives rise to hostility, hatred, wickedness, grief and misery. An object of desire is born of desire. Desire has its root in experience of pleasure and pain. Contact breeds pleasure and pain, and is possible only when a particular object having a particular name and form is present before the senses. Contact is at the bottom of sensation, arising from objects with names and forms. When the senses are drawn inwards, name and form disappear. So curb your desire and free yourself from the influence of name and form, taste, sound, smell and touch. Those who are free from the influence of senses is never allured by the objects of enjoyment.

Human desires centre round his biological needs. Mean-mindedness, greed and malice work as the steering wheel of our life's boat. We shall be doomed unless this wheel of passion is checked in right earnest and our baser impulses curbed and subdued. We are unable to avoid their influences although the consequences of passions are well-known to us. Such is the dominant power of human passions. Man finds himself quite helpless under the grip of passions and is thus led astray. Reason comes of no avail at the juncture, because, the power of sober judgment fails at the moment. Love of power, ambition and jealousy are the chief characteristics of the present day civilisation.

The civilisation of the day is the outcome of human intelligence working in the domain of science. True it is, that we have succeeded in removing much of the nature's opposition and our secular wants by the magic wand of the scientific inventions, still it cannot be denied that modern science or the civilisation of the age has robbed us of our

peace of mind. It has created falsehood, jealousy, hatred, selfishness and extreme greediness in man. Playing false has become the capital of our business. Hypocrisy is the connotation of modern day civilisation. They are now considered as unavoidable necessity in every walk of our life. If this degradation be the hall-mark of modern science and civilisation, the end of our present existence is certainly not hopeful. Civilisation, in its truest sense, implies refinement in thought and action. Where are the simplicity of mind, purity of heart and honesty in our dealings ? Can we, the moderners, legitimately claim to be really civilised in this sense ? Does not the baser instincts of selfishness and carnal desires still dominate our mind ? To tell the truth, now we are no better than the primitive barbarians in the matter of gratifying our passions. We may be intellectually giants, but morally and spiritually, we are dwarfs. The educational system of the day helps little in building our national character on a sound rock. The godless education, far from influencing us to admit our faults, has taught us the art of skilfully whitewashing them. This clever art of deception passes as the highest pitch of our refinement under the smoke-screen of sweet words, cynical smile and polished behaviour. The polished group with an air of exterior innocence passes as civilised gentlemen, whereas the poor fellows are reckoned as brutes and ruffians. But both the groups, polished and unpolished of the present society, sail in the same boat. To meet our selfish ends, whenever necessity arises to oppress others, we do not blush to declare at the top of our voice that we are actuated by the noble motive of doing good to the wretched. So if the cavemen are held guilty of cruelty, the moderners may be convicted on three charges : wilful deception, shameless exploitation and inhuman practices. The society is nothing but the aggregate of individuals living within it. So the society as a whole represents at present a

horrible ghastly picture of moral degradation. The humanity is at its last gasp. If we do not pull ourselves together to counteract the evils crept into the society, our future will be a life of utter misery, chaos and confusion and another dark age will cover the world.

We find, in general, only a handful of men with vested interests dominating and exploiting the remaining majority. The priviledged few roll in luxury and the dumb millions reel under misery and oppression. This callous disrespect to suffering humanity shows decadence of the sense of moral obligation of the so-called civilised people of to-day. Those that are of independent character, are crushed and the weaker rest are brushed aside to lead a brute-life. At the critical moment the capitalists disillusion the labour class with high promises, but juncture over, they are seldom found to be true to their word. If these poor fellows venture to remind their masters of the promises they made, repression and oppression begin with greater fury to choke their voice. The society at present is full of devils from top to bottom. In spite of gorgeous parade of pomp and power displayed by science and the so-called civilisation, the mankind is definitely receding back to its primitive state of barbarism. True it is that the moderners are intellectually superior to the primitive cavemen, but when the carnal passions invade their mind, they find themselves equally helpless like the brutes. Their intellectual judgment at this juncture cannot save them.

We live in a camoufledged world of utter selfishness and deception. Nobody knows when and how his life and property will be in danger by his more fortunate brethren. Each scientific invention adds a new weapon to the armoury of the war-mongers and brings in its trend an alarm of terrible havoc and bloodshed in the near future. The world knows no peace

There are many hypocrites who would do a lot of unjust things, and still declare from the house top that they do so

at the will of God. It can never be the will of Providence that any one should adopt unfair means to meet his selfish end. The deed that does not unfold the divinity in the doer can never be said to have divine sanction behind it. When a man surrenders himself completely to the feet of his lord and thinks himself as a mere tool in His hands, then and then only God takes up the rein of his life and directs it to the right course. So long egoism persists God never interferes with the free will of man. "God does not help human beings, unless they first permit themselves to be helped—" says Aldous Huxley. When ego-sense dies out, God works through him and the man hails : "Thy will be done." "No great thing can be achieved by mere fraud and hypocrisy"—said Swami Vivekananda. Egoism and hypocrisy have no place in the life of a truly religious man ; it proves rather an insurmountable obstacle to the upward path of God-realisation.

Social punishment and criminal law-courts are no remedies for this all-round corruption. To irradicate the evils that have crept in man, what is necessary to-day is to direct his attention towards higher and nobler principle of life. This alone can curb man's baser instincts. Man in his deepest nature is divine. This essence begins to manifest when man treads the path of love and truth. Only an initiative is essential. The divinity within man is always ready to befriend him, to guide him to the right track. Man in his normal state of consciousness remains drowned in ignorance, egoism and passionate living. This is due to his mental impurities. He is so much addicted to them that the very idea of their purgation makes him shudder and sick. He feels quite at home with them. The non-self is identified as true Self. So when he incurs any worldly loss, he feels as if the whole charm of his life is gone. It so happens because of his ignorance and misconception of his lower self. The

Upaniṣads hold that he who loses all except his Soul, loses nothing, because in the whole cosmos, the Soul is the only reality and everything else is dross—unreal. Nothing belongs to us, everything belongs to the mother Prakriti, save and except Soul. We brought nothing with us while we were born and nothing will we take with us when depart. We purposely forget this truth. We ascribe little value to the Reality within us and run a hot race after sham throughout our life. The result has been what could be expected. We shed bitter tears for our worldly loss and personal wants but we shed few over our moral degradation. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."—said Christ. We can recall of Sri Ram Krishna weeping bitterly every day after sunset regretting the passing away of another day without having vision of his beloved Mother. Such pangs of separation, such intense hunger for the Absolute is the positive guarantee for the union with God. Blind to higher issues, man trembles between right and wrong and as a result good and evil fates overtake him alternately.

Brahman takes up the veil of *avidyā* or ne-science only to transcend it by science or wisdom. Science is *vidyā* when it ceases to feed the brute in man and civilisation is just and genuine when *vidyā* breeds it. The civilisation, which is the outcome of *vidyā* or true knowledge, alone can uphold humanity in the scale of Supreman when out of the brooding darkness of the night divine illumination will be won. The civilisation of the West is nurtured within city-walls and these walls create differentiation in their mental outlook. They separate man from man, nation from nation and ultimately set up an insurmountable wall between man and Man the Eternal. The civilisation of the East was fostered in the forest where nature reigns supreme. The sages of ancient India had in their forest life a full opportunity to enlarge their consciousness without facing any obstruction from such

un-natural walls. The loneliness of the forest site, away from the din and bustle of a busy town, its natural beauty and quietude have special appeal to the human soul. It is congenial to spiritual exercises and is the proper meeting place for the two lovers—the human soul and the Universal Soul. The famous temples in India are to be found in places where nature abounds in beauty. The sole attention of the western mind is directed towards subduing nature by scientific inventions. The Indian sages, on the other hand, discovered a harmony between man and nature and so no clash ensued between the power of man and the laws of nature. God is immanent in the phenomenal world and acts through the natural laws. To go against the law of nature is to act counter to the will of God. Truth is all-comprehensive. It cannot be realised in the isolated state of our being, but we must embrace all so that All may be known. Chilling calls nature a 'sleeping spirit'. Awakening of this sleeping spirit is the aim of *Tāntric Sādhanā*. *Tantras* hold that creation is a real transformation of the Divine Energy. So a *Tāntric Sādhak* does not ignore the phenomenal world. We are nearer to God when we are nearer to the whole of His creation. For Sri Ram Krishna, Prakriti and his universal Mother Śyāmā are one and the same. The key to the gate of the highest heaven is in the possession of his Mother ; if Her grace can be won, the gate will be flung open.

There is no greater enemy than the passion of anger. Under the influence of this, one does all sorts of rash and unjustifiable acts. He who can control the passion of anger, which dashes on madly like a furious horse, is an ideal charioteer. It is said, anger, desire and stupidity all arise from greed which is the hot-bed of sin. Intelligence slips away when greed appears. Greed generates inordinate desires. When greed is stimulated, lust and anger are roused—the sleeping animal in man wakes up. To put a stop to the

occasional out-burst of animalism in man, it is necessary to be guided by the conscience and to follow the path of religion. Religion alone can lull to sleep the demon of our passion. When in some unlucky moment, we slip from the path of religion, that sleeping demon leaps up and drags us to hell. A man who has thirst for enjoyment suffers in this as well as in the next world. Withdrawal of mind is necessary for subduing greed. Man's mind is generally scattered over many objects in consequence of greed, anger and attachment. The utility of *yoga* is to fix the mind on one point only, i. e. God. Just as the two hands of a clock appear to be one at twelve o'clock, similarly, in our communion with the Supreme, the two existences unite to be one when the gulf between the two is bridged over so perfectly that the shades of separation disappear completely.

Like the vast sea, unruffled by enormous quantities of dirt and filth pouring into it you should be calm. You must not give vent to anger even if there be a hundred provocations. Be perfectly steady, calm and quiet. "You have heard that it hath been said, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth' but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil—that is not to return evil for evil"—says Jesus Christ. To put it into practice, Tolstoy's prescription is : 'Non-resistance to evil can only be propagated among men by the practice of humility, meekness and love of peace.'

Pride is a formidable foe to the path of religion and spirituality. A vainglorious man is neither of any good to himself nor he comes of any help to others. Just as no fruit-tree can grow on rubbish, so meditation or prayer of a conceited mind does not bear any fruit. His mind being always laden with vanity remains under the influence of *Avidyā* and so he fails to discriminate between good and evil. Consequently, everything that he undertakes in life ends in hopeless disaster. There is nothing in the world

to pride oneself upon. Where are the stalwarts who in the beginning of the twentieth century intended to subjugate the whole world? Even an eminent scholar like Auguste Comte was a victim to insanity. By a sudden attack of a fatal disease, a very handsome person or an exquisitely beautiful lady may be disfigured into such a horrid and mangled appearance as will make us shudder. In this mortal and transient world there is nothing we can boast of. It is desirable to have excellent physic, unlimited power and exquisite beauty, but to boast of them will be the height of folly because they are all so powerless and transient. Human body being subject to time, space and causality and being ruled over by *Trigunas*, is as powerless as an animal partly devoured by a huge serpent. None should boast of doing good to others with the help of this body (Bhā 1.13.45).

"It is excellent to have a gigantic strength but it is tyrannus to use it like a giant".—said Shakespeare. Be humble as the grass and patient as the mother good Earth and always take the holy name of God and aspire to be one with the Supreme. Pray always: "O Lord, root out self and selfishness. Make me one with those around me. Lord, teach me to be truly humble, so that I may be able to sit at the feet of those whom I look upon as my inferiors and those who are mine enemies." Do not wish to sound superior or conceited. One who is virtuous avoids publicity. It is the man without virtue who hankers after name and fame. "The fool who knows his foolishness is wise at any rate so far. But the fool who thinks himself wise is a fool indeed." —says '*Dhammapada*' a Buddhist text, V. 53.

"Moreover he whose balance shall be heavy with good works shall lead a pleasing life: but as to him whose balance shall be light, his dwelling shall be the pit of Hell."—The Quaran, Sura. Cl.4-7. The same Text, Sura XXIII. 8 States: "Those who abstain from vanities and the indul-

gence of their passions, give alms, offer prayers, and tend well their trusts and covenants ; these shall be the heirs of Eternal Happiness."

Honour the man who dishonours you. Forgive the man who puts you into trouble. Bless him who curses you. "Turn the right cheek to him who strikes the left"—said Christ. Subdue anger by endurance and overcome untruth by truth. "If you meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him"—'The Book of Exodus.' When the evils of fanaticism, bigotry and hypocrisy of our character will be removed altogether, spirituality will dawn upon us as surely as the morning sun rises repelling the darkness of the night.

The principles of Buddha and Christ found full expression in the non-violent cult of Gāndhiji. Once in a thousand year, comes such a man through whom the divinity is manifested so perfectly in sublime beauty and unique excellence. "The evolution of the individual is the story of the growth of individuality in every respect."—said Carl Bare.

If a guilty person is forgiven, the forgiver is entitled to a share of the religious merit and virtue of the culprit. Give up envy, hatred, carnal passion and anger and practise charity, forgiveness, kindness and the like virtues. The voice of truth demands : curb your baser impulses, sacrifice self-interest of all forms and proportions on the altar of humanity, take up service as the prop of your religion, conquer hatred and jealousy by love and fraternity ; it assures you eternal peace and happiness in return. "I say unto you which hear, love your enemies, do good to them which hate you."—says Christ. Bear a truthful conduct and if you do so you shall be entitled to *Nirvāna*. Mahātmā Gāndhi said, "May I not wish ill of the people who are condemning me, even if I die at their hands. May God give me such strength of mind." Śri Rāma listened to his prayer. When crucified, the noble

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Lord Sri Chaitanya when struck on his forehead with an edge of a broken pitcher by *Jagāi* and *Mādhāi*, the two rogues who took much offence with his ceaseless chanting of the holy name of God, did not utter a single word of reproach but he entreated them to take once His holy name, saying : "Brethren, you have done well ; I love you all the more ; please take once the holy name of God." The very act of love and kindness brought a complete change in their mind and they became his followers. Love is the magic stone that transmutes by its touch greed into sacrifice, an enemy into a friend, hatred into love and hell into heaven. "He is beloved to Me who entertains no hatred against a single soul, who cherishes friendly feelings and kindness to all"—said He in Gita, XIII, 14. Again He said : "I am not pleased with the passionate (Tāmasik) worship of my image by those who insult others and become devoted to me" (Śrimad Bhāgavad. III. 29. 24).

The excellence of man rests not in his cunning speech or decent living but in the nobility of his character alone which can uphold a man in the scale of true Being. Mere dragging of physical existence is no better than the life of a beast. In the sacred texts of *Vaiṣṇavas*, an ordinary man has been designated as a creature and in the *Tantras* such a man has been designated as a beast. With the gradual lessening and ultimate disappearance of all our attractions and desires for worldly objects of enjoyments, we advance towards the path of salvation[1]. Beyond the threshold of human existence lies the eternal life divine. He is really worth calling a man whose heart is full of divine love. Love for God generates only when the heart overflows with love for every objects in

1. "यावद् यावद् हृदिस्थातः समूलो वासनाक्षयः ।
तावद् तावद् विजानीयान् मुक्तिसौधस्य सन्निधिम् ॥"

His creation which ultimately unites him with God. When eyes are lifted up to the infinite, the arms automatically stretch out to embrace the whole world. So pray: "Give us, O kind Lord, such love and purity as shall knit us together for time and eternity in Thy holy home."

There is no truth in secrecy; openness is the truth. Falsehood, secrecy, intolerance and fear are the greatest enemies of the seekers of truth. He whose conscience is clear, fears none. According to the Vedas, such a person is designated as *Abhaya Brahman* (fearless Brahman). A fearless Christ alone can stand on the cross with a smiling face and bless his persecutors. A true devotee on no account should burst forth in anger and under no circumstances false and unkind words should escape his lips. When man spits at heaven, the spittle does not soil the heaven but comes back and defiles his own person. While travelling far and wide in preaching his doctrine, Lord Buddha one day stood before a house for begging alms but he was refused with bitter words. Whereupon Buddha asked the householder calmly: "Friend, if a beggar refuses to accept alms, to whom the offering then goes?" "Why, to the householder"—was the prompt reply. "Then if I refuse to accept the alms, it returns to you"—with this Buddha retired with a heavy heart. Truthfulness is the backbone of morality. It is proverbially said that Socrates suffered and sacrificed for his truthfulness at home and abroad. The last word that Socrates uttered before his death is: "Crito! I owe a cock to Asclepius; Will you remember to pay the debt?" Secrecy and falsehood bind a soul, they retard its emancipation. Every piece of untruth is a loose stitch in the web of man's life. To hug truth is a sin. If one does not know a thing, the straightforward thing will be to say "I do not know." Truthfulness was valued as life itself by Mahātmā Gāndhi and so he declared: "Let truth prevail ever though a hundred persons like myself perish."

Reverance for truth has a moral value. Truthful conduct is its own guarantee.

Where there is *Kāma* (lust) there is no *Rāma* (God), where there is *Rāma* there is no *Kāma*. About the sexual desire, Śri Rām Krishna Deva used to say, "Treat sexual desire as equal to nature's call like urination or motion. It is the body's nature or the characteristic feature which may at times appear but you need not worry for that." In fact sexual passion and anger are not sins but their abuses are. For if they were sins, they would not be permitted to enter this bodily temple made by God. Sri Aurobindo said : "Disavow the sexual desire ; do not give in. The mind will gradually grow indifferent." In this connection Swami Śri Bholanath Giri's advice is very practical and appealing : "If a sinful desire arises in the mind, keep the body under control, do not allow it to be ruled over by the mind. In so doing, a wicked thought appearing in the mind shall disappear in the mind. It will fail to do any material harm. During meditation when sexual desire appeared in my mind, I used to tell my mind, 'O mind, think whatever you like. I shall not be ruled by you and I shall on no account leave the seat of meditation.' The mind, thus defeated, would give up the attempt." Whenever any carnal desire arises in mind, bow down unto God with folded hands and say : "O God, it is Thou who appears before me in the form of woman." To the seekers of Self, woman is a gate of hell (Bhā. III. 31. 39). The female is created to serve the purpose of *Prakṛti* or nature. A woman is as if a river which flows both for the good and the evil ; she can equally lead man to the path of virtue as well as to the path of vice. If we are not on our guard, she proves herself an obstacle to the path of *Sādhanā*. Her physical charm illusions a person and the man is led astray. Even the mind of a Yogin may be distracted due to the lack of restraint and he falls from the path of Yoga.

Everybody does not know how to play with a serpent ; an inexpert snake-charmer dies of snake-bite.

"What should be the attitude of an ascetic with regard to woman-kind ?"—this was a question asked by Ānanda, a disciple of Lord Buddha and Buddha replied, "Do not look at their face. If accidentally you see them, do not speak with them. If they try to speak to you, keep wide awake." It is written in Mathew. 5. 28 : "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." *Mark* 9.27 observes : "And if thine eyes offend thee, pluck it out : it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." "Semen is Ātman, it is like the Brahman"—opines Śveta Up. IV. 3. The energies of the body and the mind are concentrated in semen. Loss of virile power causes immature death, its conservation increases longivity[1]. Do not allow it to be wasted but save it and make yourself strong. Strength is the key to salvation. The man without virility can never acquire knowledge of the Self[2]. Abstinence is the best kind of asceticism[3]. He who is perfectly abstinent is not a human being but is God[4]. Celibacy is a pre-requisite to attain divinity. Practising *Yoga* without abstinence may bring incurable diseases and even insanity. Those who are always sick of carnal passions should avoid loneliness; read good books, keep good company and constantly call to mind the figure of their own mother. They should always pray fervently to God : "O God, check the evil in me and awaken my good and noble propensities. Raise me to the level of man ; I can

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1. "मरनं विन्दुपातेन जीवनं विन्दुधारणात् ।"
2. "नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः ।"—Mu. Up. III. 2. 4.
3. "ब्रह्मचर्य्यं तपोत्तमम् ।"
4. "ऊर्द्धरेता भवेद् यस्तु सः देवो नतु मानवः ।"

not carry on this life of a beast. Be kind and gracious to me, give me manliness."

When Lord Buddha was seated under the *Bodhi* tree, the god of love came there with his three beautiful daughters in order to lure him but failed to do so even after much attempt. Some time after Māgindriya requested him to take his beautiful daughter as his wife. He expressed his unwillingness and said. "My mind could not be tempted even by the beautiful daughters of the god of love ; what is there in body full of psssions and filth ? I do not like to touch it even with my feet." Man is not merely a bundle of passions, but within him dwells the divine soul having endless possibilities of unfettered perfection which undergoes birth after birth to blossom to its fullness. The individual soul is like a lotus bud which sheds it petals to unfold the reservoir of honey.

"To be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritual minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."—St Paul (Romans. 8. 6-8). Anger, envy and infatuation—of these three infatuation is the worst ; for a man without infatuation has neither anger nor envy. The beauty of the human body, man or woman is the beauty of flesh and blood. This beauty is short-lived and is nothing but an illusion created by our own minds. The everlasting, the all-knowing Supreme Being whose beauty is matchless and limitless is illuminating your heart. Look at Him and love Him in the fullness of your heart and you gain true peace of mind.

Where there is love, there is no convention ; where there is convention there is no true love. All kinds of love except love for God are false and fleeting. Because love for our kinsmen is transferred from individual to individual ; it is just an animal attraction.

"Friends, that love is false which clings to love for selfish sweets of love."—Buddha quoted by Edwin Arnold. It is said that love towards human being is *Kāma* or passion while if it be directed towards God, it is *Prema*, the loving resignation to the will of God. Lord Buddha and Lord Chaitanya were both above worldly attraction and could, for that reason, abandon home-comfort and leave beloved wife and son in the prime of their youth simply because they were infused with love divine.

"O devotee, listen to the *Chandidas* : Happiness and misery are two twin brothers. He who makes love to seek his own happiness is thrown into sea of troubles and becomes unhappy," Moreover, weal and woe are chains of gold and iron. Both are chains, i.e., causes of attachment and bondage. Without pure love the Self does not unfold ; it does not feel the tremors of joy of the Ever-Blissful. The shock received by one at the death of somebody, dearer to him than life or at being deceived by him brings him sore disappointment and his fascination for and dependence on worldly affairs of love and attachment suffer a set-back. Only when a man finds that his wants are not satisfied by worldly objects he recoils from them[1]. Then he tries to find out a lover for whose sake he shall not have to suffer any loss or sorrow. In course of his search, eventually he comes across a friend and lover who is All-Love and All-Merciful, Infinite and Eternal. "There comes a time when a vague awakening consciousness stirs the soul, the consciousness of the higher law, love of God, and the sufferings a man endures from the contradiction of life compel him to renounce the social life-conception." When our mind is drowned in the negation of all things, the existence of Brahman in the form of *Cit* is realised. Worthlessness of one's own personality is felt when

1. "वस्तुभावं स बुद्धैव निःसङ्गं निवर्त्तते ।"—Mā. Up. IV. 79.

he thinks of God who is Almighty and the ordainer of justice in this world and in the next. "You suffer from yourself, none else compels."—said Edwin Arnold. It behoves us to act up to His wills. Enjoy peace by surrendering self-will to the will of God. Purification of mind follows annhilation of desire, when God replaces the self in us. One can rest surrendering everything to Him. This is the yoga of self-surrender. Surrender you must. His holiness Swami Vivekananda said : "Do not forget that you have been offered as an object of sacrifice to the holy Mother from your very birth."

So long the passion of a man is not calmed down, he cannot attain enlightenment, because, a damp piece of wood fails to produce fire by friction. A human mind is a burden of desires. Will follows desire and deeds follow will and man is bound by his action. It is said in the *Mahābhārata* that covetousness flows in torrents incessantly from human mind. Human sorrows and sufferings have their root in ignorance and spring up from craving and desire. Ignorance of man dwindles away with the awakening of divine knowledge and desires are consumed by ethical practices. It is the concrete man living and struggling for existence who requires the acquisition of morality and not indispensible for the transcendental Self. The Self is beyond the traits of good and evil, vice and virtue ; these characteristics belong to the lower self alone. The lower must be sacrificed if the higher is to reveal. With the total annihilation of the lower self, which is the stronghold of passions, the higher incurs no loss at all. We have our roots in such a depth as not to be touched by the familiar dimensions of the world. It is our supreficial self that is affected by the world's pairs of opposite. Egoism or notion of self under *Avidyā* undergoes evolution, change, decay and growth but the trascendental Self is freed from all the changing trammels. This truer Self is covered as it were by *Avidyā*. Human consciousness is the consciousness of the not-self, it

is the consciousness of the externality. Pure consciousness i.e. consciousness in the state of *Samādhi* is the consciousness of the truer Self which is identical with the universal consciousness. To unfold this Self divine it requires us to calm down the clamour of our passion and silence the appetites of our body and restlessness of mind. When the passions are conquered, the mind will naturally turn towards God and the end will be the recovery of an entirety of an ordered nature in harmony with the cosmos.

"Oh, yet we trust that somehow good,
Will be the final goal of ill."

—Tennyson. In Memoriam. LIV.

When we begin to see beauty even in His trival creations, we realise harmony in nature and in the universal law. This appreciation reconciles us with the apparent contradictions of the universal laws and the nature's oppositions cease : we do not trouble the world and the world does not trouble us. This sense of beauty and the conviction of one's oneness with the world create love for the minutest particle of creation and this universal love unites the lover with the Creator. Christ said : "God is love and he that lives in love, lives in God." St. Paul observes that it is the peace of mind that contacts us with love and knowledge of God. By the practice of Yoga when mind is brought under control, the love of God, eternal peace and celestial bliss are added unto the Yogin. The tranquility of mind is of vital importance.

Passions cannot be subdued without self-discipline and purification of heart. Thomas Arnold observes : "Narrow-mindedness tends to wickedness, because, it does not extend watchfulness to every part of our moral nature and the neglect fosters the growth of wickedness in the part so neglected," A vigilant eye is necessary to watch the movements of the psychic being and to suppress every nefarious thought as soon as it raises its head from the sub-conscious mind. When the

fury of passions subsides, the self-revealing *Paramātman* is realised within as an ocean of light. Ātman is of the form of a light (Br. Ār. Up. 4. 7). Those who are under the delusion of *Māyā* and dominated by passions cannot see the divine light.[1] The mind of a worldling, on account of its manifold desires, is many-branched ; it cannot be made to merge in *Samādhi* (The Gita II. 44). Mind occupied by thoughts of worldly enjoyments is deprived of higher realisation and on death, the Jiva is reborn in the world of inanimate beings. "The worldly objects have no intrinsic value ; they are not worth hankering[2]."—such knowledge alone is true and acceptable. "Worldly enjoyments are transient and unreal"—when this conviction is deep-rooted, human mind naturally recoils from them, higher thoughts gradually occupy it and as a result the baser instincts fail to create new waves of passions, the fury of the latter gradually calms down, they become less and less intense day by day in their operation and finally eclipsed for ever. A truly wise man never thinks himself as a doer ; he always thinks that mind and senses are functioning of their own accord (Gita V. 9). To him it is Prakriti that operates (Gita 13. 29). Knowledge is confirmed when mind is controlled ; it is a prelude to self-realisation. Ātman is realised only when passions are uprooted and mind is made still (Gita XVIII. 53). Desires are born of *Avidyā* which should be shunned by all means. One may desire for worldly objects, but *Jnāna* or wisdom is a condition precedent to liberation. Desire for non-self means death.

He, whose mind is not the playground of passions is blessed with the realisation of Brahman (The Gita XVIII. 53). He alone is wise and established in religion whose mind is

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1. "स्वशरीरे स्वयं ज्योतिः स्वरूपं सर्व्वसाक्षिनम् ।
क्षीनदोषा प्रपश्यन्ति नेतरा मायया हृताः ॥

2. Mu Up. 1. 2. 12.

free from the waves of passions and remains unperturbed both in prosperity and adversity (The Gita II. 56). To attain this quintational bliss, Lord Krishna advised Arjuna : "O, Dhananjay ! Avoid all sorts of company, both good and evil and engage yourself to the practice of Yoga" (Gita II. 48). When the cause of suffering and the way to its cessation are known, there is no birth anew. Our ignorance about the cause of this endless cycle of birth and death is at the root of all our sufferings. We come to this world again and again because of our desire for life.

Salvation comes when desires are extinguished—"Vāsanātānavaṃ Mokṣaṃ". A self-contented person needs nothing, because he himself is the fulfilment of all desires—(Bhāgavad 1. 11. 4). Such a wise man never reincarnates, because, he merges in Brahman after his physical death (Mu. Up. III. 2. 1). Being freed from *Avidyā*, he transcends grief and death and becomes Brahman himself. Never in his family is born a child deficient in knowledge Supreme (Mā. Up. III. 2. 9). "What is attachment and what is grief to one who has realised his Self[1]"—says Iśa Up. 7. It is only an ignorant mind which is afflicted with sorrow, grief and disappointment. When one knows Ātman, the world of Avidyā which is the cause of Jivās becoming and suffering is annihilated for ever. The root '*Iśa*' means divine perfection. So a perfect man is *Iśvara* or God Himself. We should meditate on the nothingness of this illusory world and try to realise the immutability and reality of Ātman who is the Absolute Brahman. The nullity of this world is known when it is realised as the creation of one's own mind. Self alone is real. On the eve of his going to the battle-field of *Kurukṣetra* to fight with the seven great warriors, *Abhimanyu*

1. Saṃkar Comments on Mu. Up. II. 1. 3. as follows : "तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ।"

found his wife *Uttarā* very much aggrieved and bewildered, as his fate was almost certain. He consoled her with the following words: "My dear! this body is mortal, it is an illusion. Our love is not merely the love of flesh and blood; it is the manifestation of divine Ātman and Ātman is immortal. Its ties of love and affection cannot be severed even if this body falls thousand times; it is imperishable. So grieve not." When human love springs from the fountain of All-Love which is Ātman, it neither deteriorates nor suffers extinction.

According to the Tāntrics, Woman is nothing but Prakriti revealed in her fullness and she is the sentiment of bliss. Wife and mother are her dual aspects which have been fancied by man with a view to maintain law and order in the society; otherwise the same woman is behind the two. Nature and woman are one and the same; they cannot be conceived separately. A Jiva has to be born again and again when she is taken for a wife but when she is looked upon as a mother, carnal passions subside and rebirth becomes impossible. Only the wise and the emancipated Souls can realise her blissful aspect. "Who am I to you?"—was the question once put by Sāradā Devi to Paramhansa Deva, who replied promptly: "Verily you are the delight of my heart." The combined aspect of a mother and wife, freed from the call of the flesh, is her joyful form. When a man advances towards spirituality, his evil propensities get subdued and the Sādhak's mind no longer becomes attracted towards the sensual pleasures; he does not feel inclined to enjoy through his body. When Jiva controls nature and is established in higher plane of consciousness, the pairs of opposite of this phenomenal world cannot touch, tempt and afflict him in any way. The direction of spiritual life is opposite to that of Prakriti. Man being a phenomenal creature there is somo womanly sentiment in him. Woman on the other hand, possesses some traits of manly

character. The result is that both men and women are attracted towards Godhead who is Puruṣa in His fullness.

Grief, pain and suffering are intense when we abide by our lower self. We often magnify the worldly sufferings and dangers because we are too much fond of our egoistic selves. They do not always prove fatal or a real crisis in the long run. The noble qualities of heart are destroyed when the peace of mind is lost and the man sinks down to the subhuman level. A true devotee is never daunted by the seeming difficulties of life. To him, pain is the other side of happiness. He accepts worldly sufferings as trials of the Providence. In sufferings alone, there is infinite possibilities of human perfection.

Worldly pleasures are not always unmixed and permanent because we try to enjoy the pleasures through our lower self which is empirical. We ignore the higher one, the most valuable possession of man and thus we are deprived of infinite and permanent joy of life, crystalised in it. It is Ātman alone that can give us joy of the Infinite. Destruction of ego means nothing more than the removal of hairs from the head. *Nirvāna* is not the extinction of true Self but annihilation of the empirical one. If we start for the search of ultimate good with the help of this illusory entity, the result will inevitably be an illusion. The egoistic self that indulges in pomp, power and possession is subject to gravitation which keeps it attached to the earth. A free Soul feels no earthly gravitation or attraction because his burden is lighter.

Untruth and evils are certainly there but not in our true Self; because they have no place in the life of spirit. Ego is the stronghold of everything incongruous to our divine nature and it gives vent to all sorts of errors, misconception, untruth and mal-adjustment in life which create mental frustration to cause untold miseries in our outward life. According to the 'Brahma-Purāṇa', neither greed nor evil can

either add or take away anything from Ātman. A knower of Self faces weal and woes of life with perfect equanimity. Without equanimity, world-peace will be a wild dream. To inaugurate a new society, it must be based upon justice, equanimity and generosity. What we were makes us what we are. The poisonous fumes of passion that spread like a wild fire or a dark cloud all over the earth generate from the mistakes and sins of our past. With the decadence of standard in moral life, the love for higher principle and moral value slips away and the spirit of selfishness and immorality grows unchecked. A man at present is carried away by the superficial grandeur of the modern civilisation. A subtle poison of human passion silently works beneath its fair and romantic surface and eats into the vitals of humanity. The decadent civilisation of the age holds out, perforce, decadent ideals before mankind. It is high-time for the great thinkers and well-wishers of the society to think about the cause of the present tragic downfall of the country. To arrest this deteriorating tendency which is rampant almost in every sphere of life, we have to curb our selfishness to the lowest possible minimum. "Root out the love of self"—enjoins *Jātaka*, a Buddhist Text, Sutta 25. Egoism which is the cause of all evils and a menace to the world-peace should be eradicated with all its roots and branches from the depth of our being. There is no reconciliation between selfishness and selflessness, truth and untruth, good and evil. Virtue and vice, good and evil, truth and untruth interplay and overlap each other. They are fighting for supremacy and truth is on its way to final victory ; in the game of life, love and truth will triumph in the long run : 'Satyameva jayate dhrubaṃ'.

PAIRS OF OPPOSITE

"He who has eyes can see the sickening sight ;
Why does not Brahma set his creatures right ?
If his wide power no limits can restrain,
Why is his hand so rarely spread to bless ?
Why are his creatures all condemned to pain ?
Why does he not to all give happiness ?
Why do fraud, lies and ignorance prevail ?
Why triumphs falsehood—truth and justice fail ?"

(The Jataka, E. T. by Cowell & Rouse, Vol. VI. P. 110)

Happiness and misery, pleasure and pain, virtue and vice, good and evil are the twain pillars upon which the world stands. The world-structure collapses if any one of the two pillars is demolished. The world is a sensate creation and on this rational ground the pairs of opposite are not absolute. "Evil", holds Augustin, "is not a positive force but always negative, a defect, an imperfection—a lack of order". Pain, grief, poverty, want and diseases are the outcome of lack of harmony and mal-adjustment of our egoistic self. In the state of our normal consciousness, we cannot pass beyond human subjectivity. So Santre observes : "Man is nothing else but what he purposes ; he exists only in so far as he realises himself ; he is, therefore, nothing else but the sum-total of his actions ; nothing else but what his life is." Errors and evils take place when man makes his judgment about anything on the proof of his sense perceptions and from the egoistic plane. In egoistic life, man feels the weight of pleasure and pain and he thinks himself happy or unhappy ; but when he can shake off the earthly gravitation i.e. worldly attachment, pleasure or pain and loss or gain practically lose their weight, failing to torment his mind. There was

no evil in the beginning and presumably there will be no evil in the end. The belief of the Christian world in the legend 'The fall of Man' points to a state of our perfection before creation. Man's imperfection is due to his ignorance about his true Self. The Soul of man is always free, pure, perfect and eternally happy. The Bible says : "The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not." This darkness of mind is *Avidyā* which veils the true nature of man and screens God from him. Abiding by this lower self, Jiva takes upon itself the responsibility of a doer and becomes subject to the consequences of its actions. Man is imperfect in his immediate surroundings but beyond the egoistic plane i.e. in Soul-life, he is pure and perfect like his heavenly Father. His imperfection does not imply negation of perfection.

Parts are but individual manifestations of the whole ; the limitless is revealed in limited form and shape. What is wrong is also imperfectly correct. What is false is partly true ; what is immoral is only a moral deficiency ; what is evil is only the other side of good. "Even illusion is true as illusion."—observed Rabindranath. When *Māyā* prevails, we hear and yet doubt, we read yet question and challenge. Man is prone to evils and errors as long as he is within his limited surroundings ; our self is *Māyā* when it is isolated from the universe. When ne-science dissolves with the appearance of true knowledge, we are free ; *Māyā* herself becomes the source of our knowledge and our inner Self then recognizes the essence of *Māyā* in the universe. When illusion is over, man's vision being unlimited by time, space and condition, diversities and finitudes disappear altogether. There is nothing finite in the world. Finitude is but a mere saying—a matter of appearance.

"Know thy Self first"—enjoins all the Upaniṣads. The knowledge of the Self gives knowledge of everything else.

"The man who discovers himself directly in the Cognito also discovers all others and discovers them as the Condition of his own existence"—observes Jan Paul Santre. This, he calls existential humanism "because we remind man that there is no legislator but himself ; that he must decide for himself". According to Ponge : 'Man is the future of man.'

Having entered into the material body and associated with sense-data, man appears as fallen ; otherwise, he is always essentially pure, free and divine. The ego is a non-essential part of our being. This useless cover that hides our divine nature must be thrown aside so that our true Self or *Ātman* may reveal. Emergence from the present state of imperfection to perfection which is our true inheritance and final destiny should be the aim of all. Man's present inclination to sin can be modified and chastened by directing his mind towards good. When the value of goodness is understood, the man becomes instinctively averse to all evils. Rabindranath observes : "The direction of humanity is from evil to good,"

The production and reproduction of wordly things, regardless of their consequences—good or evil is the virtue of Nature who exercises her creative power to produce something new. The natural calamities that befall mankind and upset the normal life do not happen without a cause and an end in view. With her every stroke, Nature gives man a new impulse to overcome his miseries, imbibes a spirit and vigour and develops mental power, fortitude and spiritual elevation. Natural calamities are, therefore, looked upon by wise men as gifts of God. They patientlly endure the freaks of nature even at a considerable loss and damage to their worldly lives. The worldly sufferings though outwardly seem to be curses, assure of better and greater return in the long run. Misfortune presents opportunities to look into the life in its true perspective. The worldly sufferings as well as the ravages of nature make man familiar with the nothingness

and transitoriness of the worldly enjoyments and induce him to look up. When man turns towards God, the duty of Nature to her offspring is said to be at an end in the same way as the duty of a mother terminates when the child is grown up and established in life. Prakriti or Nature is the mother of creation and as such, she cannot be expected to do anything harmful to her children.

In the second book of the Republic, Plato puts the following words through Socrates's lips : "Of our evils, we must seek some other causes and not God." Man is in misery because he always yields to the narrow egoistic self that reflects no light and sees no truth.

The true Self is divine ; it can commit no sin. Aham or ego is blind to its own faults and acts according to its own impulses. Thus it becomes liable to the consequence of its own actions. The lower self is always busy with its discordant and clamorous desires and has no time to spare for looking into the good or evil of a thing. This irrational and incongruous nature of jiva-self brings about all our misfortunes. Nature sins and man suffers thereby while the Soul goes stainless and unaffected. The deeds done by an empirical being cannot affect a real one which is Ātman. "Virtue and vice adhere to the soul embodied and in bondage" —declares all the Vedas and the Upaniṣads.

The evils of the world are alien to our divine nature. So a clash ensues between the real Self of man and his wicked passions, the root of all worldly evils. In the struggle between the two, our body and mind are subjected to pain and sufferings. Having in view the result of this struggle, it can be assumed that pain and suffering as also the evils of the world stand guarantee for our entering into the land of bliss.

Happiness and misery are two good lessons to the world. Sufferings remind us that we did not act properly in the past life and it is time to take the right course now. Pleasure and

pain are, moreover, the imperfect response of our egoistic self to our mental and physical consciousness. The real Self behind this incomplete one is not at all moved by these sorts of peculiarities of the world and it responds only to the higher and vaster field of consciousness which is all bliss. But as man, in his present state of egoistic life, is a combination of devil and deity, his life is a constant struggle between good and evil that makes him experience pleasure and pain alternately. Abiding by the law of morality when the real Self is roused, the evil propensities in man are done away with and he shines as a Superman. Perfect peace and celestial bliss indicate the nature of such a higher being.

It is by a law of nature that the night follows the day and the day follows the night. In comparison with time which is infinite, the duration of pleasure or pain, however long, is but momentary. Experience of pleasure or pain is the characteristic of mind ; they have no connection with the Soul. They give an embrace or knock to the mind but cannot touch the Soul. They cannot leave any permanent impression. Even a previous loss, as the death of a dear son, is forgotten. The Soul is infinite, changeless and transcendental and, is not therefore, affected by the events of the world which are finite and fleeting. It is by God's will that we survive our sufferings which terminate in happiness making amendments possible. Mahātmā Gāndhi said "No man is so simple as to lose all hopes of emancipation." In pain and poverty, in sorrow and suffering, a true sannyāsin glorifies the All-Love, always bearing in mind that all these are inflicted on him simply to purify, strengthen and unfold his self. God reveals Himself in times of dire distress. "With tears in my eyes, I see through them the rainbow colours of heaven and rejoice. Grant me Lord, tears for ever"—prayed Brahmānanda Keśab Chandra. You must accept worldly troubles and miseries as His blessing. He takes away our earthly possessions to draw

our hearts towards spiritual treasures. Like whipping by the teacher or the operation of a surgeon, He makes us suffer all the miseries for our ultimate good. "My heart," said the sage -king of Mithila, like a true sannyāsin—"does not dance with joy on the acquisition of untold riches, nor does it feel crushed and miserable if it loses them all."

The problems of mankind here on earth are only passing phases. To take them as the question of life and death is to lose all sense of proportion. The spirituality in man that urges him to rise above the egoistic self points to the uselessness of earthly objects. The noble impulse towards selflessness is bound to increase with the tension of the worldly crisis and the day will come when, under the pressure of worldly troubles, man will cry out in despair for help and guidance which will be showered upon him in the form of divine grace. To bring about a radical change in the nature of the world, what is required of us is not spiritual upliftment of an individual but an all-round purgation of evils crept into human society. The problem of evil is not individual but cosmic. Evolution is advancing onward in very measured steps and the world is getting tired of its own evils. Unless this slow progress is supplemented by the grace of God, it will take millions of years for mankind to come out of its present evils. It is true that at a certain higher stage of evolution, the evils are sure to be extinct, but it is not worth while to wait for that unknown future when there is possibility of shortening the length of that unlimited period. Heaven helps those who help themselves. If we are earnest in our endeavour to purge off the evils by personal efforts, God's grace will readily and automatically come. He cannot turn a deaf ear to an earnest and sincere prayer. The descent of divine grace is awaiting a call from beneath. Let our call be sincere and His grace in the form of divine life and light will descend on earth and this very

world of vice, selfishness and falsehood, strife and war, suffering and death will have a radical change when its men will be divine men and this earth a paradise.

Suffering is necessary, as it puts a check to our wild passions, the reckless offsprings of the proud ego. The spirit of egoism should, therefore, be uprooted, if we but wish to overcome our evils and to lead a happy life. The evil is no positive factor to clog the current of human life for good; it can be corrected by personal will and efforts. Had it been permanent and continued till the end of our life, creation and resurrection would mean nothing. Buddha says: "Rage to be pacified by the absence of anger, evil to be sublimated by good and conquered by love—Akkodhena jine Kodham asādhuṃ sādhunā Jine." Love and good constitute the true nature of man. Nothing is permanent in nature; the evil passes away and the man becomes happy again. The other side of evil is good. The imperfection has for its ideal a perfection. The sense of evil makes man conscious of this ideal. The light of truth is set free when evils and errors are corrected or eclipsed. The urge for perfection sweeps away evils and all the traits of imperfection. The existence of evil illustrates the importance of goodness; good and evil are relative terms and the one cannot be conceived without the other. Pleasure and pain are said to have empirical reality because of their fleeting nature; their effects cannot touch the eternal Soul. We feel pleasure and pain so long as we are Māyā-bound creatures. Free Soul is not affected by good or evil, pleasure or pain which are nothing but the illusory standard of worldly life.

According to Plotinus, evil cannot touch anything divine. The *Jivātmān* or the individual soul which is limited by time and space is disposed to sin. True Soul is always free. Pleasure or pain enjoyed by us are the enjoyable fruits of our past deeds. God is not responsible for good fortune of

one or misfortune of the other. His grace falls as gentle showers both upon the sinners and the saints alike. Man's lot is cast according to the manner he receives it and makes use of it. If our evil impulses are given a Godward turn, our whole being will be transformed divine. After the purification of heart when the purified ego tends to offer all our errors and sins as holocaust to the Supreme, the ease and joy that come in their train outweigh the pangs of adverse circumstances and the turmoil of worldly life ; they can no longer disturb the peace of mind, because we are then the citizens of another world.

Pain and sufferings are but so many rungs in the ladder that carries us to perfection. According to the Br. Ār. Up, V. II, sickness, pains and sufferings are as good as *tapas* (religious austerities) when they are patiently endured. In pain and sufferings lies the possibility of our Self-revelation. In the hour of dire distress, man naturally turns towards God and the light of truth comes within the range of his vision. The bitter experiences of this unsatisfactory world full of wants, diseases, pains and suffering urge us to look up[1] When we are beset with an unavoidable calamity and when the foundation stone shakes under our feet and the world seems to collapse on all sides, we resign ourselves to the feet of the All-merciful for protection, help and guidance.

The farther is a world or region situated from the world of Brahman, the more is it denied Existence, Knowledge and Bliss and the greater is the influence of Illusion upon it. Again, the greater is the influence of Illusion (*Māyā*), the more afflicted are its inhabitants with sorrows and sufferings, wants and ignorance, diseases and grief. Heaven's realms are close to the world of Brahman. Yet because they have a faint

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1. "यदा संचीयते चित्तमभावात्यन्त भावनात्
चित् सामान्य स्वरूपस्य सत्त्वासामान्यता तदा ॥"

touch of *Māyā*, even the gods are compelled to suffer mental weal and woe. Being farthest, this earth has turned into a realm over-charged with *Māyā*; so disharmony is the ruling principle here. The individuals, tied to *Māyā*, suffer so much because of this disharmony on the earth. In the conflict between external nature and inner human nature, the individual is ever suffering wounds and injuries. So long as man will keep near the margin of egoism, conflict will not cease; due to antagonism of nature, all his dreams of happiness will be shattered into pieces. Ascend the stairs on the embankment of "I am He" and go higher and higher up: you will reach the higher being, knowledge and bliss of the finer worlds, and when you arrive at the highest level in the realm of Pure Consciousness, you will realise that the inner and the outer have merged into One—He who is within is also without. If by spiritual discipline, the individual consciousness can be carried to the upper cerebrum, the gate of the realm of pure Bliss will be flung open.

The more has creation proceeded from the subtle to the gross form, the more have Existence, Knowledge and Bliss suffered decrease. That Infinite Consciousness which is God Supreme has finally assumed the form of a small and limited human intelligence. The more did the surge or power of the Creator recede during the period of creation, the more did the momentum and consciousness of it rateably decrease. At last, that tremendous surge of oceanic flood turns into bubbles and assumes the nature of the *Jivas* (individual souls). In the stagnant water of *Māyā* (Illusion), these bubbles in the form of individual souls have gradually turned sordid and more sordid. Seeing these sordid bubbles, it cannot now be believed that these are ultimate developments of that tremendous surge. If these bubbles can be taken back by the opposite current into the heart of the Sea, they will burst again and merge into the bosom of the Sea when each of

them will appear as sea having the original tremendous surge.

Whatever in life is painful—sorrow, suffering, dangers and difficulties—everything renders immense good to us in an indirect way. Those whom we are accustomed to see as enemies or mischief-mongers in the world are verily our benefactors in many ways. Socrates used to say: "Unless I had a quarrelsome and hot-tempered wife, I could never be forbearing and forgiving by nature." Without some adverse power, our inner latent powers would not develop. It is in order that we may be successful in life by warring against Nature that our sense organs have fully developed and our knowledge in science has made notable advancement; as a result, physics and medical science have through researches been daily discovering new things and rendering immense service to the humanity and many of our inconveniences have disappeared.

According to the Śāstras, God can be attained more quickly as an enemy than as a friend. God is revealed in two forms—one is His beneficent form and the other is His awe-inspiring form. God is manifested as Śri Viṣṇu and Śri Krishna as the incarnations of love and compassion, and He is manifested as *Maheśvara* and *Kāli* in His destructive and fearful form. The *Śāktas*, worshippers of Sakti, the goddess *Kāli*, the spouse of Śiva, worship the fearful-looking image of *Kāli* only to attain the same final and supreme goal. The horrid cremation ground in the depth of darkness in the night of the new moon, the fearful appearance of a corpse, the ghosts and spirits, the jackals and the owls shouting loudly in a weird manner, the sky-rending cry and dance of the blood-thirsty, sword-handed, open-tongued, naked Śyāmā wearing the garland of human skulls—even in the midst of these, the worshipper of Śakti realizes the Divine Mother, symbol of good and fearlessness and remains unperturbed; otherwise, no Śākta devotee

could attain success in his worship of Śakti. It is in the midst of all kinds of terror that the Mother who is beyond terror is always eager to reveal Herself with all the boons and fearlessness of spirit—"In the Koli Age, the goddess *Kāli* is eager to reveal herself before the devotee.—" States *'The Tantrakalpadruma'*.

It is generally observed that the sinners, inspite of their sins, pass their days happily in the world—while pious men walking on the path of virtue have no end of suffering. This mutualy antagonistic phenomena naturally create a wrong impression in the mind of people about God's existence and His impartial judgment.

The goldsmith, in order to separate the alloy from gold, dips the latter into acid, puts it into fire and then hammers it on the anvil. God also does very much the same thing by throwing the Jiva in the fire of distress and acute troubles for the purpose of purifying its mind.

Attempt is now being made to clarify this apparently inexplicable connection between sin and happiness on the one hand and virtue and suffering on the other. Pious men, pssing a few days of happiness in any family bless the family at the time of departure in consequence of which it prospers day by day. The sinful do the very opposite of it. As their misbehaviours would have it, they are expelled from the house by the host and they curse the family when they depart. Human body is the only receptacle of virtue and vice. When sin enters into the human body, virtue departs. The blessings of the departing virtue are the cause of momentary prosperity of the sinner. Hence the prosperous sinner brags of his wisdom and, in defiance of virtue, says many things against it. "But there is no sin so small, so secret, that He does not know it and reveal it. There is no sin that He leaves without vengeance. He is the judge without appeal," Nobody escapes that ever-wakeful and all-watching eyes. So

in a few days, the hour of retribution overtakes him. With accummulation of sin when it becomes impossible for virtue to stay any longer there, it walks out of the body leaving it in the sole possession of the sin. Sin continues to accummulate in consequence of which an overflow takes place resulting in adversity which is pointed out as the inevitable result of commtting sin. The sinner sinks in the sea of misery and finds himself at his wit's end to discover any means of escape. It is then that he cries with repentance for the mercy of the Lord, which is granted to him. God's wrath subsides when the sinner takes His refuge and prays : "Thou O' refuge of all, pardon me and extinguish my sins[1]". Atonement is the best means to coerce His Compassion. He gets information of the company of the good and God-fearing men where he can find help to correct himself. *Draupadi* once enquired of Durbāsā as to the benefit of good company to which that Ṛṣi replied that every step forward in the direction of good company is equal in virtue to the performance of a hundred thousand horse-sacrifice. Company of the good brings the reward of heaven, while company of the wicked brings annihilation. It is said, a moment's company with the good saves a sinner as a vessel saves a sinking man from the midst of the ocean[2]. "The fools do not appreciate the truth that the nectar of divinity flows from good company"—says Mabātmā Kabir. Good company is more preferable to the attainment of heaven and the right to a kingdom is insignificant to it (Bhā. 1. 18. 13).

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1. Admit your sins and pray unto Him :
   "पापोऽहं पापकर्माहं पापात्मा पापसम्भवः ।
   त्राहि मां पुन्डरीकाच्च सर्व्वपापहरो भव ॥"
   "O Seizer of all Sins ! Perdon my sin. I am a sinful wretch drowned in vicious acts."
2. "क्षणमिह सज्जन सङ्गतिरेका भवति भवार्णव तरणे नौका ।"

Similar is the case with the virtuous. When any one goes on performing good acts, vice finds it too difficult to stay there in consequence of growing accummulation of virtue and slowly begins its exit cursing and causing destruction. As a result, inspite of virtuous acts, the virtuous man finds himself in the midst of adversity, difficulties and troubles. A time comes when vice quits the body altogether giving a parting kick which proves a very fatal blow. After departure of vice when an overflow of virtue takes place in such a person, he is blessed with a life of eternal happiness.

Those who alternately perform good and bad acts experience alternate pleasure and pain also. So in the life of worldly men both virtue and vice interplay and overlap each other as a result of which they experience happiness and misery in succession. Virtue begets virtue, vice follows vice—"*Punyo vai punyena pāpah pāpena.*" When Jiva sinks in the sea of misery, he cries for protection at the feet of the Lord and having found relief by His grace, continues to lead a pious life for some time. If for lack of clear understanding and judgment, he slips from the path of virtue, he again finds himself thrown in a sea of trouble. With such alternate experience of pleasure and pain, he drags his worldly existence. The wheel of fortune and misfortune thus revolves affecting all human beings of this world : "Cakravad parivartante Sukhāni ca dukhāni ca."

The divine in man is shrouded by the animal propensities of his mind which gain the upperhand and thus degrade him to the level of brutes. These instincts tending to evil rouse our thirst for worldly enjoyments resulting in vicious pursuits. The impressions produced by vicious habits of the present life chase us through future existences in the form of destiny. Repentance can minimise the duration of our suffering which otherwise may be longer. Man is stirred to tread the path

of virtue in consequence of virtuous acts done before. Impressions of bad actions done in the previous life cannot produce all their effects then. Those who do not repent and at the same time are full of egoism soon get their virtue exhausted and thus again plunge into a life of sin. Those in whom the influence of virtue is considerably greater than that of vice are not inclined to vicious acts the impressions of which in extreme cases ultimately merge into infinity.

So to avoid bad consequences in the future, it is proper to see that the actions done now are done right. Swami Vivekānanda said :"If we do not do anything for the fulfilment of our mission which has brought us here and go back, then nothing can be more deplorable than that. Our life on earth has been a life of misery ; we have shed bitter tears throughout our life and should we share the same fate in the next world too or the life hereafter ?" Saints are few but sinners are many. The world does not abound in Buddha, Christ and Chaitanya and so it is full ot misery.

In *Satya Yuga* or the golden age, man's longivity was embedded in pith ; he was twenty-one cubits high and lived a million years. He possessed full virtues. In *Tretā* or the Second age when Śri Ram Chandra incarnated Himself as *Avatār*, the longivity of man was embedded in bones ; he was fourteen cubits in height, lived for ten thousand years and acquired three-fourth virtue. In *Dwāpara* or the Third age when Lord Krishna appeared, the longivity of man was embedded in blood ; he was seven cubits high, lived thousand years and his virtue was half. In *Koli* or the iron age, his longivity is embedded in food-body ; he is three cubits and a half in height, lives only a hundred years and his virtue is reduced to one-fourth (vide Bhāgavad). Man at present has lost his hold on primal virtues. In golden age, religion was based on four essential qualities viz. purity, kindness, truthfulness and austerity. At present, three of them are conspicuous

by their absence on account of man's curiosity, pride and worldly attachments (Vide The Bhāgavad 1. 17. 24).

The Supreme Brahman in one aspect is evolving but He is also unchangeable essence and perfection. Godhead stands as impersonal at one end of the pole and personal at the other. He who was one in the beginning became many in His creation. The difference between finite and infinite, between personal and impersonal appears in logic only. In Supreme love, finite and infinite, unity and duality are not at variance. The divergence noticed in Nature are not real but are due to our imperfect knowledge and defective view fostered by an analytical mind. In truth, there is an all-round uniformity in the midst of diversity. Even bondage and freedom are not mutually antagonistic. He who was free in the beginning became chained in His creation. He welcomed bondage only to transcend it by love. The world marches on with measured steps and in perfect rhythm. If diversity and finitude were themselves secular and absolute, the world would have remained eternally stranded in a desert of uncertainties,—sin and evil would have ruled the world.

The sinners need not despair ; they have His word : "Do not grieve. I will free you from all your sins—Aham tvām sarvapāpevyo mokṣayiṣyami mā śucaḥ." (The Gita XVIII 66). Tense moments of crisis are also the moments of His grace. *Kunti*, the mother of the five *Pāndavas*, made reverential obeisance to Śri Krishna and said : "Thou hast saved my sons many times from numberless troubles. O Lord, I pray that similar troubles and misfortunes may come again and again in our lives so that we may see Thee frequently (Vide Bhāgavad 1. 8. 24—25).

"Greater is He that is within you than he that is in the world"—said St. John. The aim and ambition of an individual is not so much securing of worldly pleasures and worldly pursuits as the realisation of the Self. "Conquer yourself than

the world."—says Docharte. The object of life is progress of the divinity in man. This progress depends on the firmness of our belief, broadness and simplicity of our heart, frankness and truthfulness in our dealings, tenacity of purpose and a strong desire to escape bondage.

Undying faith in our oneness with God always keeps us alive and alert in the midst of failure and disappointments. As we rise higher and higher in morality and spirituality, earthly desires pale into insignificance. In this higher stratum of man's existence, the absolute value of life and death, virtue and vice, good and evil, pleasure and pain is entirely lost. Pain is to our feeling what error is to our intellect. Pain, grief, poverty, want and disease being purely phenomenal cannot touch Ātman ; they entirely belong to the mind. Men of saintly character who lead Soul-life do not feel happiness and misery caused by others because the Soul transcends all such characteristics (Bhāgavad 1. 18. 5). As error is not in keeping with truth, so, in fact, pain has no elasticity and permanence in our life. Neither suffering nor error can produce a permanent effect on the human mind and mar his future good. For every error there is a correction. No evil can retard soul's progress for an unlimited period of time ; nothing can keep one fixed in the region of uncertainties for ever. For every downfall there is a means to rise again. If free will of man be properly exercised towards love, truth and goodness, the right way will not be found wanting.

FREE WILL

You are not bound, the Soul of things is sweet,
The heart of Being is celestial rest,
Stronger than woe is will ; that which was good
Doth pass to better—best."

Light of Asia, Book viii.

Where there is a will there is a way. Boundless future is lying before us. There is an unending future life at our disposal in the eternity of time for the solution of our problems which are multifarious and infinitely remote. Spiritual progress of a man depends upon the nature and extent of his will and exertion towards the Infinite. Emancipation has to be achieved by our own effort. God will not thrust it on us. He is ever ready to help us but we are to make a start in right earnest. Exert yourself, heart and soul, and your efforts will be crowned with success. Heaven helps those who help themselves. Always move upwards and forwards without looking behind. Our birth as human being is neither purposeless nor accidental. We have greater mission in life than simply gratifying our lower passions. The true greatness of man is tested by the extent of his will towards self-exceeding.

Our present life is meant for self-exertion. As we sow in this life, so we reap in the next. By sowing the seed of prickly shrub none can certainly expect sweet mango fruits in the future. The compassion of God is equally showered on us. How much of that compassion we shall accept or whether we shall make good use of it depends entirely on our sweet will. Our sacred texts enjoin that the effect of accumulated actions of the past can be rendered harmless by personal activity : "Sancitāgāmini ca yā pouruṣāt kṣiyate tu sā". In its support, it is asserted again that it is not Ātman

but *Puruṣakāra* (self-exertion) that is responsible for good or bad deeds done by a human being. So it is incumbent on us to set right, neutralise and overcome the bad effects of our action with the help of our *Puruṣakāra* tending to good. By will and action each individual in his own measure can determine what the next moment in his life is bringing for him. The destiny of human being can be modified and reshaped to some extent by his personal will and exertion. So the free will counts.

Human will is a part of Universal Will. Man due to his limiting adjuncts is free to exercise his will-power up to a certain limit. Free will is granted to him only to test his sincerity as to how much he abides by the will of God and exerts himself to attain perfection in life. Man's free will is operative so long he lives in the egoistic plane. God never interferes with the free will of man before he surrenders the self-will to the will of the Providence. When self-will is surrendered it results in the transition of the lower self into the higher.

Ego or the lower self being an evolute of Prakriti bears all the characteristics of the latter. As the law of Nature sets up a limitation of herself and separates her from God, the limited ego similarly separates man from his true being. The natural craving in man is to become free. So when human will tends to act ignobly and contrary to the universal principle, it must be understood that the will is not that of our true Self and as such it deserves no encouragement. The peace of mind is lost when the self-will is not in concord with the spiritual urge of the Divine Soul. On account of the false identification of Soul *i.e.* taking non-soul for the Soul and acting accordingly, man gives vent to internal conflicts and brings upon himself untold miseries. Unless this ignorance is removed and the discordant elements are harmonised in love and knowledge, mental

quietude is not restored. The self-imposed limitations make man move towards the narrow groove of his self-centered life. His activity is limited to the phenomenal world because of his limited will-power. He is allowed to enjoy the freedom of his will upto the point where his ego separates itself from the Soul. To enter into the Soul-life, self-will must be surrendered or transformed. Self-will is a power of mind and mind is of material origin. So, as long as a man lives in the mental plane, his self-will has no access to the spiritual realm. Matter cannot soar higher. So the will-power of man cannot penetrate the Noumena. By raising the level of consciousness higher and higher by the practice of Yoga and meditation or by surrendering the self-will to the will of God, human will acquires spiritual turn and becomes universal.

When a Yogin thoroughly surrenders himself to the feet of the Lord by sinking his individuality in his Lord, his individual self completely merges in the divine. All his activities are then regulated by the will of God. All the acts of such a yogin are, therefore, the reflected acts of God Himself. Such a Yogin looks at things in their correct perspective and his judgment errs not. His voice is the voice of God.

"If the will sins, how can the soul be sinless ?"—asks Imblichus. This shows his ignorance about the distinction between mind and the Soul. The questioner erroneously identifies matter with spirit. He is not to blame because, in English, intelligence is identified with Spirit. But, according to Hindu Metaphysics intellect which is an aspect of mind is recognised as a material substance. Mind, intellect and ego are evolutes of Prakriti and they have no consciousness of their own. Aham or ego is the lower self of man and it is made conscious by the reflected light of Ātman or the higher Self. Human will is the will of man's lower self *i.e.* ego which is disposed to sin. The divine Soul is armed to deny the immoral calls of the flesh and mind. I may be permitted

to quote here a stanza from the 'Gradual Sayings' of the Buddhists (Vol. I. P IX) :—

"The self in thee, O man, knows not what is true or false
Surely the noble witness, Sir, the Self,
To do misjudge, in that when sin is there
You do conceal the Self within the self."

Here we feel an Upaniṣadic ring. We suffer because our Aham or the lower self sins. Man's free will operates upto a certain limit because man is finite in his egoistic life. When egoism is obliterated and the self-surrender is complete then Ātman or God Supreme controls his activities. God has granted us the free-will not to limit ourselves but to act in such a way as to reveal our true Self. So long as man works in the egoistic plane, he cannot avoid the consequence of his wilful acts. The will of a man in the plane of normal consciousness is that of his egoistic self and not that of Ātman or Soul. So Ātman cannot be held responsible for the sinful acts done by the *jivātman*. Ātman is Brahman whose nature is truth, goodness and beauty. Goodness is our very nature and its revelation is emancipation. To grow in perfect goodness is to become God Himself. When free will is exercised towards goodness, love and truth, it becomes a potent means of God-realisation.

Some people are of opinion that the statement : "*Yathā niyuktosmi tathā karomi*—as I am directed so I do"—is a contradiction to man's freedom of will and action. But such conception is erroneous for God in the case of a true surrender transforms himself in the form of volition arising in the heart and also in the form of action as *Puruṣakāra*. Evidently, the above statement is applicable to and adoptable by a man who has made a complete surrender of his self-will to the will of God. Leading an egoistic life and doing a lot of unjust things if a man, in support of his misdeeds, says that he is directed to do so by God, he is a hypocrite indeed.

Our philosophy declares that God takes the form of free will and action of a devotee who surrenders himself completely. The *yoga* of resignation does not mean total relaxation of individual activities. It is not possible for a man to keep himself aloof from the world of action. He must do some thing. The Master has equipped us with a mind, a body, intelligence and senses and our failure to use them properly in the selfless discharge of our duties which is service to Him, may justly be condemned. True self-surrender consists in the resignation of all the fruits of our actions to God.

The law of Nature appears inimical to us because we lack in discriminative knowledge and power. It is harmonious all through but the obliquity of our mind is apt to seek discordant elements in nature which it holds responsible for human sufferings. This idea does not stand to reason. Natural law is regarded as the law of the Providence and it is intended for the good of mankind at large. The law is a check on man's tendency to do evil. As a divine scourge it reminds man of the result of his sinful deeds. Violation of universal law is a crime against the will of God. The natural law bends before love ; because love is truth and truth is God. When law is harnessed in love, the beneficent and loving aspect of nature comes to light. The way to God is through His law to love. The human will is to be transcended to the divine will in order that the communion may be possible. Man is bound by His law but free in His love and joy. Love God as the Soul of your soul ; His law will be found beneficent and helpful to the upward path of your spiritual journey. He who always meditates on Brahman with love and devotion, lives in Brahman. All the activities in his worldly life are controlled by Brahman. So, the law of *Karma* cannot touch him. When human will is given a Godward turn it loses its cosmic aspect and becomes dynamic in its activity giving

true freedom to man—to walk in the path of virtue and not freedom to commit sin.

Philosophy, theology, as well as religious principles and other injunctions are of no use if they are not applied and followed in our individual life by our personal will and efforts. The baser instincts grow unchecked if we do not care to exercise our free will and apply the principles of religion and higher philosophy to counteract their urges towards evil. Self-exertion is needed. There are many who ask, "Why pray when God is omniscient ?" The following story which was narrated by my departed father is an answer to the question : Hearing that in Benaras where rules the goddess *Annapurnā*, who is said to feed the world, and none goes without food in Benaras, a man with a view to making an experiment of its truth, laid himself down in a garden close to the temple. He was not given even a morsel of food and the night came in. Just before mid-night a man was seen coming out of the temple court and wandering in the vicinity of the temple. As the man went to and fro as if in search of something, he shouted, "Come all, who are still without food for they will be fed." The man heard the stranger saying so but he remained silent. The stranger passed him over but on account of darkness the tester did not come to his notice. Finding the inviter going beyond his reach, the starving man raised a vocal sound of 'hum huṃ'. Attracted by the sound, the inviter returned, took him to the temple and fed him well. Whereupon the tester remarked, "It is true that everybody gets food in *Annapurna's* place but one must utter 'huṃ huṃ'.

To those who are against the view of the free will of man my humble submission is that unless it is true, we lose every chance of our redemption and consequently our salvation remains a dream—never to be materialised. Endless births of an individual being presents new opportunities

in every successive life to redeem himself so that in one or the other life better sense may dawn on man to rectify himself. The theory of rebirth propounded by the Hindu doctrine is justified by this explanation. It is the only hope left for the fallen to rise in any one or the other life following. God is love, so every man will have a chance some time or other ; no one, however sinful, is to be doomed for ever. Soul is divine and bears kinship with the Supreme Being ; it can not perish.

When we first sojourned to this earth the All-merciful God gave us a conscience and a little freedom of will by the the abuse of which we have subjected ourselves to endless troubles, woes and sufferings. By our sinful acts we have veiled our innate godly nature and think ourselves apart from Him. "But whensoever a man shall turn unto God, the veil shall be taken away'—says Saint Paul.

"In each human spirit is a Christ concealed.
To be helped or hindered, to be hurt or healed,
If from any human Soul, you lift the veil,
You will find a Christ there without fail."

Claudefield.

The good God is gracious enough to grant us a little freedom of will by the exercise of which we may try to redeem ourselves. If this free will be rightly utilised a man can secure much better qualities which may neutralise the impressions of evils transmitted from the previous births. Even the possibility of rebirth as a beast may be overcome. With the help of this free will it is not impossible for a man to progress in the path of spirituality by constantly acquiring religious merits inspite of the volumes of impression born of impious deeds committed through many past lives. When the higher knowledge is attained by *Puruṣakār* aided by the power of free will, the effect of action, not enjoyed till then, merge in the infinity. The free will of the mind leads a man

either along the path of enjoyment or along the path of denial. To go to heaven or to hell depends upon one's personal preference.

"Minds are of celestial birth
We can make a heaven of earth."

Man is the architect of his own fortune. God *Jagannath* of *Puri* with his body without hands and feet seems to be telling mankind : "Look at Me, O human being ! I have no hands and feet. You are destined to suffer from the consequence of your own deeds. As you sow so you reap. You may offer me palatable dishes or promise valuable offerings, but I am helpless, for as you do observe—I have no hands."

It is because the individual has freedom of action that he is held responsible for his actions and it is he who has to reap the fruits of his actions either in this life or in the next life. If this autonomy of the individual will be denied does not everything including penalties of the law and restraints prescribed by religion become meaningless ? Therefore, freedom of will in our material life has to be admitted. Just as the father punishes the son when he does wrong, so also the Supreme Father, instead of interfering with man's freedom of action, penalizes him afterwards for the wrongs done by him to teach him and others a lesson so that they may correct themselves.

The work done in this life shapes our fate or destiny in the next. That man is generally drifted to the path of enjoyment or to that of evil is the result of the impressions of evil done by him in previous lives. So in order to get rid of misfortune and downfall it is necessary to watch that the things done now are done under the guidance of our free will tending to good. Whether we shall tell a lie or not, whether we shall steal or not, depends on our free will. God never wishes that we should have recourse to wrong path. He is too holy to consent to any evil and too loving to let

any one go astray. He has given infinite time in endless births and enough scope to the sinners to redeem themselves. We must turn to God or to our passions—we have to choose the one yoke or the other. God has granted each of us a free conscience. If we do not make good use of it, if we do not utilise it in judging what is good and what is bad, then it is we who shall be held responsible for the consequences thereof. Human conscience and free will may raise a man to the status of god in heaven ; they may equally turn a man into a devil and push him on to the gates of hell.

There is a great deal of possibility of unfolding divine power even in the worst sinners. We are really not so innocent as we appear to be. Our present improved status has also not been attained in a day. Behind it there is a history of ceaseless struggles. No one should be disheartened. With the help of divine consciousness that every human being possesses the divine qualities in man will gradually unfold in a favourable environment till at last he attains perfection. Every event of this creation is under the control of destiny and free will. Human life is the sum total of successive events linked together as causes and effects. If our aims and ideals are noble and high, the effects cannot be anything but good. Destiny which is as inscrutable as potential energy cannot be comprehended by the mind. Freedom of action pre-supposes independence of man (within destiny) to a certain extent.

Human nature has a limit and it is circumscribed by the effect of our actions done in previous births. Yet inside each individual there shines a Divine Soul of limitless consciousness, eternal power and absolute freedom. With the help of this ever-free entity we can raise ourselves far above the foul atmosphere of the world by tearing aside our own net of actions. The free Soul is the fountain of our free will and free thinking. The more we liberate the Soul from the

shackles of the body and the mind, the more our divine nature will unfold itself and then applying our free will it will not be impossible for us to attain our ultimate goal. In the game of life, according to our previous actions, God has given us different kinds of playing cards. How far shall we bid or with what card shall we open the game depends on our free will ; the range of our freedom of will extends, in the midst of our action, to this much. By dint of our free will it is possible to change the current of our life to a better course by performing good deeds. It will be a self-deception, utter foolishness and cowardice at the same time to sit idle or to waste the numbered days of our life by allowing ourselves to be drifted away in the flow of time like dumb, driven cattle. Every body must exert himself to do his duty. It will be the argument of an insane, not to extinguish the fire set to his house, simply because it is the duty of the Fire-Brigade. Equally self-deceptive will it be to console the mind with the thought 'this is my decree of fate, nothing else could possibly happen in my life.' This defeated mentality is to be avoided by all means. Fatalism is a sin. Arise, awake and exert yourself to be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. A perfect man is Man the Eternal.

If everything happens according to the will of God, then the activities of robbers and of highway men are not also to be condemned outright. The fact is however otherwise. To rise to the spiritual plane a man has to seek mental and moral development. Escape from the body, gross and subtle, is the only means to be at one with our divine Source. Since the Soul is divine, it is immortal by origin. Life in the body is a living death and death of our passions is the door of freedom for the individual soul. "The Soul"—said Plato "is enshrined in that living tomb which we carry about ; we are imprisoned in the body like an oyster in its shell," By weeding out carnal passions and internal desires

if one leads a holy life, one's Soul will be released from its bonds and will finally attain its immortal destiny. As long as the soul is unredeemed, the cycle of life and death steps rising and falling according to its deeds. "As is desire, so is his will and as is his will, so is his deed, and whatever deed he does that will he reap." *Guru Nānak* says : "The being is bound by its own deeds."

How can those who deny free will explain and justify the punishment suffered by the vicious for their wicked deeds when it is assumed that they are not responsible for these. They punish Peter for the crime of Paul. So instead of hanging a murderer they should hold that God is actually the murderer and that man is merely a helpless tool in His hands. If we deny the free will of man, it is hard to escape the conclusion that men are forced to do certain acts and are held responsible and punished for the misdeeds which they could not avoid. They are to reap the fruits of such actions as are pre-ordained by God and over which they have no control. They have no choice about certain actions but they will have to suffer if the actions are blamable. The judgment is a queer one. In the misuse of a fire arm, the instrument is sentenced instead of the gunner. But the impartial judgment will be, according to those who deny the free will of man, to hang God instead of a murderer ; because here in the act of murder, the murderer is a mere instrument in the hand of God who is the real culprit.

The unconscious tendencies in man are the inevitable result of his previous conscious actions. Sufferings are the wages of sin. Each act and every thought will be judged by an universal law of justice. The Bhāgavad asserts that doer of good deeds can never suffer—"*Na hi kalyānakṛt kascit durgatim tata gacchati.*" The freedom of will, therefore, not only opens before man the gate of heaven but that of hell as well. This special grant of the Providence to mankind

proves a curse in the hands of the wicked. So the freedom of will, improperly exercised, has brought in its train the evils of the world. God is not to blame for it. The evils of the world are man's own creation. God granted this boon of free will to make our own choice between good and evil, between virtue and vice. Virtue and vice, good and evil must there be in the world so long we are only human beings judging everything from mental plane. Further, men have their different tastes and they are at liberty to follow any of the either paths. This choice or free preference determines the destiny of men. So by granting this special favour to mankind. God has also imposed upon him a great responsibility—a moral obligation to His creation. So long there is distinction between good and evil, between virtue and vice in the world, free will has to play an important part. As there are two paths open, the question of preference must arise and man has to make choice between the two. According to Dante, man is free to choose between the two alternatives—either he is to rest content with the transient enjoyments of the world or to enter into the blessedness of the life eternal. He must change the life he leads now or perish. It is his *dharma* that survives him and makes him immortal.

Man oscillates between his animal nature and the divine spirit. When one is subdued, the other gets the upper hand. The animal nature being predominant, the spiritual side becomes blank. With the rise of spirituality in man, the brute forces subside. There is one ever wakeful reality in man that never sleeps. The Soul of man is ever free and ever conscious. But our egoistic self is so much busy with and absorbed in the worldly things and affairs that we can hardly spare a single moment to think upon that unique reality which is the most valuable of all we possess. With the help of this free Soul we can control our mind and direct it to proper course to create a better destiny. While

making a comment on the verse 1. 3. 38, Brahma-Sutra, Saṃkarācāryya declared that *Sudras* like *Suta* and *Vidura* had obtained the knowledge of the Self by dint of their virtues *acquired* in previous births.

The most powerful desires can be resisted by sheer act of will. Conscience or reason is the bridle to check the unbridled course of passion. Free will and free acts must be controlled in such a way as to express one's divinity. If our free will be properly exercised, we can rise above the level of our present animal life by the performance of good and unselfish deeds when *Karma* will fail to bind us again. Let by-gones be by-gones. We have no control over the past but the future is still at our disposal.

"When I love with my will, I transform myself into Him." —said St. Bernard. How the will of a *Jivanmukta* person or a man emancipted is conducted by the will of God is beautifully illustrated by St. Bernard in the following lines : "As a drop of water is diffused in a jar of wine taking its taste and colour, and as molten iron becomes like fire and casts off its form, and the air transfused with sunlight is transcended into that same light so that it seems not illumined but itself the light ; thus in the saints every human affection must in ineffable mode be liquified of itself and transformed into the will of God." When the divine current flows in the depth of our being, the sense of material gain or loss, even the consciousness of physical and mental existence fade away into indifference. God takes up our responsibilites in life in His own hands and we escape the consequence of *Karma*. This spirit of surrender and resignation of selfhood when demolishes the adamantine wall of separateness between finite and the Infinite, the devotee realises that his being is God, not by simple participation but by actual transformation of his self. "Make your will one with the divine will."— enjoined *Daula*.

In our meditation on Brahman we have to dive deep into the ocean of Brahman like an arrow completely penetrating its target. Spirituality works in a *yogin* silently gaining momentum every day through each revelation. Like life within the seed, it grows on till it grows into a mighty spiritual tree. The simplicity of our lives which should be strictly maintained will help the unfolding of the eternal truth within us. Soul is the fundamental reality. When the Soul is realised, our individual existence comes to an end.

"O Saviour, pour upon me, Thy spirit of meekness and love, Annihilate the selfhood in me, be Thou all my life."—Blake.

Mahātmā Gāndhi observed : "A humble seeker has to reduce himself to a cypher before God will guide him." The seekers of truth must be always as lowly as a particle of dust or even more so.

"Unity itself divided by zero will give Infinity. Make thy claim of wages zero, then, thou hast the world at thy feet."—says Thomas Carlyle (Sartor Resartus. 11. Ch. IX.) God rules the lives of those, and acts through them who surrender themselves without the least reservation to him. By complete self-surrender when our mind will be totally withdrawn from the external world, the eternal light will be visible, a voice from within—the dictates of pure reason will be heard, and eventually the identity of the humàn soul with the eternal flow of life will be realised. In our journey towards the ultimate goal, "we must try to walk in love, the wide house of the world, to stand in propriety, the correct seat of the world and to walk in the path of righteousness"—said Mencius.

When egoism is consumed, what remains is God Himself embracing individual self which then, so to say, practically merges in the Supreme Self. Individuality being abolished, the creative limited ioy which is crystalized in individual is lost in the infinite joy of the Supreme Individuality to become Infinite itself.

THE LAW OF KARMA

Nothing can happen without a cause behind it because effects and causes are co-existent. There can be nothing in the effect which is not in the cause ; effects must resemble the cause. Effects of actions done now will be kept in store in the form of a seed for future germination. This seed is the cause of actions that a man is destined to do in future life. This is the law of *karma* or causation. Actions done by a man go to form an unbroken chain of antecedents and consequents which shape the destiny of man. Motive of a man acts as a force behind all his actions, and motive and tendencies are formed according to the impressions of the past ; consequently all his actions are determined by his past impressions producing the present tendencies. So, the present actions ensure the future conduct, character and destiny of a man as surely as the morning shows the day. It is evident, therefore, that the motive of a man is the seed matured of the previous actions which acting as incentive cause urges a man to behave in a particular way and act accordingly. "When a fruit ripens, its stem gets dried and loose, the crops within become soft but seed hardens with provision for next germination."—said Tagore. This also explains the diversities of life and promises re-birth of man. Diversity of life is not accidental—the law of *karma* is at the root of these divergences. The individual souls are chained by the law of *karma.* The diversities of life and present sufferings of man should be considered as clear beckoning to the effects of *karma* and warning against our misconduct. Man becomes good by good works and bad by bad works (Bṛ Up III. 2.13). So Jesus Christ said : 'Seeing no more lest a worst thing comes unto you.' By this he has admitted rebirth of man and the law of *karma.* The Christian theology points to the future retribution of actions done now and this fact fills the human heart with hope

and fear. The fear of divine scourge is a check to man's inclination to commit sin. Our destiny is solely governed by the law of *karma* or moral causation.

Neither dead matter nor Soul is the enjoyer of the fruits of action. It is the wonderful combination of the two which really enjoys. A little observation will suffice. The body which is destitute of life is not at all affected if you hammer it, saw it or burn it. The Soul on the other hand has no body at all and cannot play the part of an enjoyer. It is clear, therefore, that the jiva under the influence of *Avidyā* imposes upon itself the responsibilities of an agent and thinks, 'I am happy or unhappy ; of this sex or that sex, Brāhmin or Sudra and so on'. The water of the Ganges is not polluted though people of all castes touch it or bathe in it. The earthen pots at the potter's place are not polluted even though they may be handled by an unclean man. But it is the combination of the two—the earthen pot containing water which is at once polluted by an impure touch. In the matter of enjoyment also what prevails is neither consciousness nor matter but the wonderful combination of the two.

Karma or actions can be divided into three classes :— (1) *Sancita* or the accumulated actions of the past the fruits whereof are kept in store for future enjoyment. (2) *Prārabdha* or the actions, the fruits whereof are enjoyed in the present life and the sum total of which is called destiny. (3) *Āgāmi* or the actions done by the knower of Self after the attainment of knowledge. Actions which in the form of destiny control the life of a man continue to exercise supreme authority in weal and woe. Destiny is not consumed by anything else ; so it has to be patiently endured till it is exhausted through experience in millions of births[1].

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1. प्रारब्धकर्म्माणि भोगादेव क्षयः ।

Also : "ना भुक्तं क्षीयते कर्म्म कल्पकोटिशतैरपि । अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म्म शुभाशुभम् ।"

It is enjoined by our sacred texts that accumulated actions of the past and their effects that unfold in future can both be either neutralised by *Puruṣakār* i. e., human efforts or exhausted by enjoyment[1]. *Prārabdha Karma* is such as by its force has produced this life with all its possibilities and has been creating a field for the next[2]. *Prārabdha* is consumed neither by *Brahma-Jnāna* nor by *Puruṣakār* but can be moulded by both. The effects of *Prārabdha* deeds cannot be counteracted which is clearly proved in the lives of *Judhisthira* and Sri Ramchandra. Lord Krishna said to *Arjuna*, "O Arjuna, you cannot oppose *Prārabdha*, but through the influence of that you will be driven to act as though compelled by nature. You will be forced to do what you may not desire to do at present[3]." If you believe that whatever you are doing is the effect of *Prārabdha* and attach no value to it, looking upon every phase of life as mere illusion or passing show, you will not be affected at all. The magician is never deceived by the show or illusion which he produces.

None comes with a vacant mind. Our tendencies and inclinations are the result of our past actions. The future career of a child is determined by its inborn inclinations which are the outcome of its past impressions. The impressions of our present thoughts and actions will mould our future character and destiny. So how we grow up in the future depends upon what we think, talk or do now. The inequalities and diversities found in different individuals are due to the different kinds of impressions acquired in the previous births. These impressions bring us to the world

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1. "सञ्चितागामिनी च या पौरुषात् क्षीयते तु सा।"
2. "प्रारब्धजनितो देह सरसो रसः वर्ज्जितः।"
3. Vide the Gita XVII. 60.

and this process will go on in the endless future unless and until they are effaced by the knowledge of the Self.

A man gets into a body in the next birth according to the impressions carried in his mind at the time of his death i. e., according to the seed of actions then urging for immediate germination. Due to the difference in impressions, the inclinations of any two individuals differ. Just as the space circumscribed by one particular pot though dusty or full of smoke, does not affect the spaces circumscribed by other pots, similarly, particular individual may have a dirty mind but that does not make other individuals dirty and so the result of actions done by one person has not to be suffered by another (Mā Up III. 5). Though the individual souls are one in reality and there is no difference between soul and soul, still connection with a particular body and mind creates individual differences in them and the experiences of a particular body and mind can be attributed to a particular soul only.

The effect of previous actions ever accompanies us. Time cannot efface it; death cannot overcome it. The longings and the unfulfilled desires of a living being in the present life await endless lives in the next births for their fulfilment and satisfaction. The doctrine of transmigration of soul brings to the human mind the hope of freedom and the glimpse of eternity. The consequences of sin and injustice done by the body and the mind have to be suffered by the body and the mind themselves. Sins wilfully done and aversion to religious and spiritual life will certainly make our future life gloomy. Except ourselves who shall suffer the consequences of own deeds, good or bad? God is just, and His judgment is inscrutable.

A man becomes responsible for his actions and reaps their fruits in this life or in the next. Though God is the guide to all the *Jivas* and shows them the way, still the *Jivas*

perform blamable acts on account of their sinful impressions and proneness to commit sins which are hidden in them as potentised samaskāras. As wind carries fragrance of flowers, so does jivātman at the time of its exit from body on death takes with it mind laden with impressions of diverse categories acquired in this life and also flowing from previous births. The Lord makes the *Jiva* work according to the impressions of its mind.

The events which create unpleasant conditions in the mind are generally the events that are repressed. The reason behind forgetting the name of a person is that some loss has been sustained on account of him and malice is nursed against him. The root cause of hysteria and other mental diseases is the presence of some repressed mental events of the past life. If the patients are given any opportunity to relate those facts or to fulfil the repressed wishes, there is spontaneous relief of their disease. Events which are shameful, fearful, disgusting, malice-provoking and unpleasant are repressed in the sub-conscious mind and getting entangled there create mental diseases.

The mind has two levels—the conscious and the sub-conscious. The thoughts of the present are the reactions of the conscious mind. The events that appear in our memory when recalled a little rest in our sub-conscious mind. Sometimes, a set of certain thoughts and desires do so suddenly appear of themselves in our mind that even with hundredfold attempts we cannot bring them to our conscious level. The level of the mind from which they arise is the sub-conscious level. Making mistake in speaking, hearing or writing and forgetting our duties are the activity of the same sub-conscious mind. Each such mistake fulfils some end of the mistake-maker. The end rests in the sub-conscious mind and it is when we are driven by this end that we commit such mistakes without the knowledge of the conscious mind. It is because our

conscious mind is reluctant to be associated with such a state of affairs that we commit a mistake of that kind. It is due to some hidden ill-will, disgust or apathy to them in the sub-conscious mind that the mistake takes place. Once the President of the Austrian Parliament in opening the Parliament said, "Honourable members ! the requisite number of members is present, so let us close the business of the meeting." The subject allotted for discussion that day was very controversial and the President's mind was unwilling to face it. That is why the word 'Close' instead of the word 'Begin' fell off his lips. This was due to the activity of the sub-conscious mind. The influence of the sub-conscious on the conscious mind is very great. As a matter of fact, every act and every thought of our conscious mind is controlled by the sub-conscious mind which is the repository of all our past impressions.

An impression is like a seal on wax. It is the retention of what is experienced in our every-day life. It includes all tendencies, mental and physical, the elements or factors of consciousness. 'Sāṃkhya *Sutra*' verse 2.24 holds that human mind is the container and the impressions are the things contained. Impressions of previous births follow one in the succeeding life as a faithful dog follows its master. *Maharṣi Vedavyās* is of opinion that even the good impressions of enjoyments bind the soul and consequently, may become the cause of future sufferings. The seed of metempsychosis lies hidden in these Samaskāras, good or bad. Even God with attributes is not an exemption to this rule. When He reaps the fruit of His actions in heaven He is forced to return to the earth. The accumulated stock of past impressions is totally destroyed by the fire of knowledge and by the performance of disinterested actions when no further fresh impressions can germinate. They who have acquired power of dicrimination between the transient and the eternal, have their thirst for worldly enjoyments ceased for ever,

meet with physical death, when both their gross and subtle bodies of which mind is a part are totally destroyed ; so further germination of the seed of life becomes impossible in those cases. (Vide S. B. on the Kena Up. IV. 33. 8.)

In *Sāṇkhy-Sutra* III. 63, it is stated that as the cook leaves the kitchen when the cooking is finished, so the play of *Prakriti* so far a particular individual is concerned comes to an end when he becomes truly accomplished. According to the Nṛsiṃha Upaniṣad, Soul is ever-conscious and eternally pure. The *Kurma Purāna* lends support to this view by asserting in verse 2.2.12, that if the Soul were impure by nature, its liberation would not have been possible even in thousand births. So the case of Ātman or Soul is always free and pure.

Our dirty mind is full of filthy impressions of the past. They are not exhausted by death alone but follow the departed soul in the next life and control its each activity which in its turn go to form the future destiny of man. These impressions remain dormant in a new-born baby but with the advance of age when mind becomes active, they raise their heads under favourable environments, form its tendencies and create its future destiny, Any filthy thought or nefarious deed is sufficient for them to come out of their dens. So to avoid any bad consequences in future we must be always alive and alert about every word we utter, every deed we do and every thought we think at present.

The totality of Saṃskāras or impressions is the personality of man. The personality manifests while living but contracts to the potential condition after death. These potentised Saṃskāras drive individual souls through the cycle of births and deaths. The cycle of birth and death continues until the past impressions are completely wiped out when a perfection, similar to that of the Almighty is reached and the inherent godly powers become fully manifest. Our birth as a human being

is a privilege. The true nature of man is divine; complete revelation of it is the mission of our life.

Before a perfect life is reached, man has to pass through myraid strata of physical existences—animal, human and divine. A superman like the Buddha or the Christ is an emergence of man from animality to divinity. With spiritual progress in man his personality goes on unfolding itself for the better and in every succeeding birth a new type of personality of higher order evolves pushing him a step forward to the divine shore.

Impressions are like coatings, over-shadowing our divine nature. Take the coatings away, the divine essence within will shine in its pristine glory. The slow but sure ascension of our being from animality to a progressive consciousness of divinity through different bodies has been taking place in measured steps. Good and noble thoughts raise us to a life of higher knowledge and spirituality which eventually gain for us the knowledge supreme—the only means to our salvation. If we faithfully work for the fulfilment of our mission in life, some day we shall be able to reach the end of our journey.

Professors C. G. Lang and William James hold that emotional tendencies of human mind are due to the primitive impulses that work instinctively in man and compel him to act in a particular way. They are also the result of sensation produced by mind-object contact. Adler opines that mental balance is lost when strong desires of mind do not find proper avenue for fulfilment and expression. These repressed desires are at the root of different mental diseases and nerve-troubles. Freud differs from Adler in the point that mind becomes upset when sex-urge is repressed. But the self-control as explained by Yoga-philosophy of the Hindus does not imply repression of desires but moulding and directing them according to the higher principles of life.

Mere repression or suppression of our physical and brutal appetites is likely to create mental frustration and conflicts.

What is needed is a thorough change in our taste and mental outlook. Desires are to be modified in such a way as to keep harmony with the ultimate objective of life. Man in his physical and mental organism is an animal. When his animal propensities are absorbed in the higher philosophy of life, man transcends animalism and enters into the domain of spiritual life. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled"—said the prophet of Nazareth. Hedonism is a menace to spiritual life. Love and not self-interest contacts man with God. Mystic union ends in a feeling of union with the highest good and bliss.

Those who are not fortunate enough to know the truth of Self but somehow become indifferent to the world of enjoyment, merge in *Prakriti* or in one of its eight-fold aspects : *Mahat*, *Manas*, Ahaṃkār and five *tanmātras*—'Vairāgyāt Prakritilayaḥ'. These partially liberated souls are called *Prakritibāns* or Prakritileens. Below *Prakritibāns* there is a group of departed souls who are known as *Videhas*. These partially liberated souls of the second order merge in one of the sixteen manifestations of Prakriti i.e., the fiive elements and eleven senses. The subtle bodies of the *Prakritibāns* and *Videhas* remain intact after physical death. Their mental sheath being not destroyed, impressions of their previous births compel them to be born again either in this world or elsewhere (Mu. Up. 1. 2. 9). If in this birth they fail to acquire knowledge of the Self and the Absolute, they are installed as ruling deities like the *Indra* etc. in some higher sphere of existence or occupy the rank of kings or emperors here in this world or where they may be born. *Prakritibāns* stand on a higher plane than the *Videhas*. Those who cannot rise above the state of Saṃprajnāta *Samādhi* and are unable to visualise *jyoti* or light of eternity in meditation, their mind merges into its elementary cause, *A Prakritibān* of the last creation appears in the next creation as *'Hiraṇyagarbha'*—God with attribute like *Brahmā*, *Visṇu* or Maheśwara. This

Hiraṇyagarbha as we have already said elsewhere is the manifested God of the Sāṃkhyas and the *Ādi-Buddha* of the Buddhists. Brahman of the Vedās is the *Sunya* of the Buddhists—He is beginningless and endless.

The Law of Karma affirms the implicit presence of the past in the present. Though we are guided by the impulses of the past impressions, though their influence appears to be insurmountable, still through our personality, through the exercise of our free will and by dint of our honest endeavour, we can rule over our mind and make them inactive. Liberate your Soul from the thraldom of passion, you will breathe an ampler air. There is not any such thing as chance. Man is the architect of his own fortune. Man's fate lies deep down the obscure recesses of his being, Past impressions float as his fate from the sub-conscious mind on the surface mind, and urge him to act in a particular way. Try to accumulate good impressions to grapple with the fate resulting from the evil ones. Every effect must have a definite cause and cause is the unmanifest state of the effect, as the cause of a tree lies in the tree itself in the form of a seed. Similarly, all the desires, tendencies and propensities of a full grown man exist in the germ of life from the very birth in a potential condition which time cannot blur nor death erase. Like the laws of Nature the law of causation works automatically and inevitably. It requires no judgment, human or divine.

Sattva, Rajas and *Tamas* in varying proportions form the diverse destinies of man. The sum total of *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas* of the infinite universal destiny is *Prakriti.* Jiva engages itself in either good or bad deeds under the influence of these three *gunas* mixed in varying proportions. There is a close relation between the three-fold primordial qualities stated above and the law of *Karma* as between cause and effect. The higher we rise in spiritualism by the exercise of our free will, the more *Sāttvik* we become in our conduct.

and practices. When *Sattva* predominates, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are rendered inactive and we go on acquiring good impressions to such an extent as to neutralise the evil impressions arising from the accumulated *Rājasik* and *Tāmasik* actions of the past. In this way the binding effects of *Karma* can be rendered harmless. When a man through knowledge, self-sacrifice and austerity gets enlightened, the law of *Karma* practically ceases to operate and wanderings of the soul in the maze of transmigration come to an end : "Avidyayā mṛtyuṃ tirthva Vidyayā amṛtaṃ aśnute."

With the dawn of knowledge, ignorance vanishes, the seed of actions is burnt, impressions are reduced to ashes and then the individual soul does come to the end of its journey : 'jnānamutpadyate puṃsaṃ Kṣayat pāpasya Karmaṇaḥ.' We cannot cut off our relation with the body so long as bodily egotism persists. There is no hope of salvation through resignation alone without giving up all kinds of egotism and the weeding out of desires. At the root of the difference between the individual and the Supreme Soul lies the attributes of an individual—his body, mind and ignorance. Because of the differences in attributes, the souls of individuals look upon themselves as different from one another. Else, all the individual souls are fundamentally one and inseparable. An individual soul passes through many millions of births in consequence of actions, good or bad, done in previous births. The seed of these accumulated actions is destroyed totally by the fire of knowledge when one happens to realise that he is Brahman and nothing but Brahman. This sort of direct knowledge or Self-realisation clears the bondage of *Karma* of the past.

As is the contact between a lotus leaf and water, so is it between a knowing man and the result of his actions performed after the attainment of knowledge. The impressions of his actions are destroyed totally by the fire of knowledge.

No amount of effect and impressions can arise out of his actions again. A person who has attained perfect knowledge does not allow himself to be bound by *Māyā* again ; fire in the act of spreading does not return to the spot already consumed. Inspite of attaining emancipation by his spiritual exercises one may still continue to live as a worldly man does. So an emancipated Soul is compelled to drag on till the termination of life. A free Soul like this, continuing to live in a body and experiencing pleasure and pain as may come to him attains *Kaivalya Mukti* or *Nirvān Mukti*—the highest form of emancipation after his *Prārabdha* gets exhausted in this way. Actions done by such a theist are left behind for the experience of others. To people who serve these knowing sages goes the merit of their good deeds while to those who speak ill of them, spite or hate them goes their demerit. But these sages are always very careful and seldom commit any act of sin. Serve them with a cheerful heart and gain the wonderful merit of their actions.

It will be quite safe for us to depend upon the will of God in the performance of our every action. 'God is the real performer of all our actions while *Jiva* is a mere instrument in His hands'—this idea must always be borne in mind to keep it free from the binding effect of vanity or Aham. One who has realised this truth may at times submit to passions but that is only momentary and for the sake of peaceful discharge of worldly duties causing no harm to himself or to others. *Paramhamsa Deva* used to say : "The rope reduced to ashes still bears the rounded and twisted shape of a rope but it can no longer be used in the act of binding." The steel blade of a dagger transformed into gold by contact with a touch-stone cannot be used for the act of killing.

Avidyā creates an endless chain of *Karmas* that causes re-birth : "Karmaṇā jāyate jantuḥ". The acquisition of true knowledge or *vidyā* which illumines self accrues to the study of

the Vedas, self-discipline and the practice of Yoga. *Vidyā* or self-illumination liberates a soul : 'Vidyayā jantuḥ bimucyate'. *Avidyā* connects Self with non-self. Man, by the practice of Yoga, can extricate Self from the world of non-self, the body, mind, ego and *Karmas* etc. and become emancipated. To avoid the law of *Karma* and so further individuation, ego-sense must be wiped out. Surrender yourself to God, your Aham will become less and less intense in its operation day by day and ultimately vanish altogether.

Calamity befalls us when guided by Aham or ego we think ourselves as the doer. It is so stated in the Āl Quarān : "Oh man, whatever good happens to you comes from God and the misfortune that overtakes you results from the own actions." We are drowned in the pit dug by ourselves. It is desirable, therefore, that our each thought and action should follow the path of rectitude. If instead of checking our evil practices, we allow ourselves to be led astray by a current of recurring corruption and sins, we must give up all hopes of better prospect in the future life, not to speak of our salvation. Sin begets sin, corruption follows corruption.

None can put us into trouble, we are tied to the effects of our own actions which is the sole cause of all our happiness or misery[1] Ātman or God is not the ordainer of our good fortune or misfortune ; happiness or misery accrues to our own deeds—good or evil[2].

A thief regretfully said : "I earn abundantly in life but my wants and worries are never removed." Have an implicit faith in the mercy of God and surrendering yourself completely to His lotus feet say : "Whatsoever cometh from Thee, O Lord is good for me. Whatsoever I create for myself is a curse unto me." It will be better to perform every work as we

1. "सुखस्य दुःखस्य न कोऽपिदाता, स्वकर्म्मसूत्रग्रथितो हि लोकः।"

2. "नैव प्रवर्त्तकोऽन्यात्मा स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्त्तते।" Also vide the Gita V. 14.

are directed to do by God[3]. According to the Gita, II. 51, the devotee who has awakened the virtue of equanimity and renounces the fruits of actions attains the lotus feet of Lord *Viṣṇu*. Lord Sri Krishna advised Arjuna : "O Arjuna, offer all fruits of your actions to me whether they be eating or drinking, performing, sacrificing or making gifts etc. Do all essential works and discharge your duties with perfect indifference as to the consequence."—Vide The Gita. IX. 27.

The inequality of conditions in life between man and man compels us to believe in the law of *Karma*. Man is innately divine. The innate nature of a substance cannot be changed without destroying the substance itself. If the soul is lost what remains to be desired ? Our present state of imperfection may be compared to a handful of dust thrown over a fire that suppresses its heat and light. Remove the dust and fan the fire, the fire will glow afresh and radiate heat and light again. Only the removal of dust and not pouring water over it or adding more dust to it will be found useful. By the grace of God and by the exercise of one's free will towards goodness, man can counteract the evil tendencies, raising their heads on account of the incentive causes acting behind them. The incentive cause is the accumulated impressions of his past actions. When the evil tendencies predominant in his nature at present are subdued, the good ones get the upperhand and the man steps into the path of religion and spirituality which is the cause-way to final liberation.

Govindānanda while commenting on the verse 1. 2. 14 of the Kathopaniṣad observes that all the *Karmas* of an emancipated Soul, are destroyed and the man is identified with the Brahman : "Tat Kaivalyaṃ Brahmaiva Karmaphala Vilakṣanatvād iti arthaḥ".

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3. "यथानियुक्तोऽस्मि तथा करोमि ।"

TRUE HAPPINESS

"न यत्र दुःखं न सुखं न चिन्ता
न द्वेषरागौ न च काचिदिच्छा ।
रस स शान्तः कथितो मुनीन्द्रैः
सर्व्वेषु भावषु शमः प्रधानः ॥"

Happiness or misery, hatred or anxiety, passion or desire cannot touch an emancipated Soul. He enjoys eternal peace and bliss. To the sages, mental equilibrium is the highest state of all human existences. The mind is in a state of equilibrium when it is undisturbed by the waves of passion. A *Jivanmukta* person standing on the threshold of *Nirvāna* is neither tempted by riches, nor does success or failure affect him in any way ; joy and tribulation make no difference : "Duḥkheṣvanudbighna sukheṣuvigata spṛha." In fact, human soul cannot actually rest on God until it ceases to be influenced by external factors.

Human soul is like a burning flame inside a closed chamber. It burns brightly if not over-shadowed by poisonous gas within the chamber which is generated by passions. Egoistic self being the stronghold of passions always sounds in discord but the true Self, the Soul is like a tuned harp giving out a symphony of pleasant and orderly notes ; because it sings song of the universal. When the heavy curtain of *Avidyā* or ne-science is withdrawn some mystery, unknown before, seizes us and the whole atmosphere of our being becomes entirely changed. It is then and then only that true and permanent happiness is secured. Those who lead spiritual life are predestined to life eternal. Live a holy life and enjoy the bliss of Brahman. According to the Vedānta Sutra, 1. i. 12, the Self consisting of bliss is the highest possession in man's life.

The happiness which brings in its train an inexpressible bliss and removes all human sufferings is *Sāttvik*. Though appearing as poison at first, it ultimately proves agreeable and beneficient (The Gita XVIII 37). Everybody wants happiness in life but some of them, however, are compelled, by the force of their past impressions to step in the path of vice and make their lives miserable.

Contact breeds pleasure and pain and it is possible only when a particular object having a particular name and form is present before the senses. Contact is at the bottom of sensation arising from objects with names and forms. Creator is always greater than His creation. Bearing this truth in mind when one withdraws one's senses from the external world, name and form disappear. So, curb your desire and free yourself from the influence of name and form, taste, sound, smell and touch. Those who are free from the influence of senses is never allured by the objects of enjoyment.

"All men desire for peace but few indeed desires those things which make for peace"—'Imitation.' Everyone of us wants to pass the limited span of our life in unbroken comfort and eternal happiness, but how many fortunate men are there who have been able to enjoy their lives peacefully? Possibly, there is none so fortunate among those who live worldly life. Man's life in the world is not always a bed of roses. Wants, diseases and sorrows cast the shadow of gloom at some unauspicious moment or other in everybody's life and shatter his dreams of happiness. "With everyone without exception, life is as full of pains and sorrows as bramble bush of thorns—an undesirable thing, at least. The happiest tale for man is not to be born at all, while the second is to die —no sooner he sees the light."—writes an eminent writer. "These say, the babe is wise that weepeth being born"— 'Light of Asia' by Arnold. The third suggestion that we can

make for the living is to lead a dedicated life which is the source of all peace and bliss.

The path of religion and of renunciation is the only means to beguile a truly happy life. The sham-pleasure of life ever produces re-birth. Divine grace, responding to devotion, can loosen the bond and admit the believer to the land of eternity. It is the extinction of all kinds of desires and so miseries that make true happiness possible. Desires and wants are as if twin sisters. With the supremacy of one, the other is sure to get the upperhand ; where there is one, there is another. Greed and desire bring wants and the feeling of wants steals away the peace of mind. So if we can free ourselves from greed and dominate over our desires, few there will be our wants and a mind without any feeling of want is always happy. The natural trail of character of our true being is a state without want.

Transcendence from animality to the progressive manifestation of divinity is the ultimate objective of human life and this end is achieved by perfect reliance on truth, perfect activity in goodness and perfect union in love. Acquisition of such perfect manhood or divinity leads one to the recognition of the highest Brahman ; nay, he becomes Brahman himself.

To the Sāṃkhyas, the annihilation of worldly miseries and sufferings is salvation and it is the object of human pursuit[1]. In their opinion, the being that enjoys is the *Puruṣa*. This enjoying soul associated with Prakriti becomes subject to worldly sufferings. *Puruṣa* gets liberation when its connection with Prakriti is severed. They hold that salvation comes through *Puruṣārtha* or human effort[2].

No desire, want or grief can cross the mind of a knower of Self : *'Taroti śokam ātmavit'*. "Hence this *'Tanha'*

1. "अथ त्रिविधदुःख निवृत्तिरत्यन्त पुरुषार्थः।"

2. "यदा तन्मा तदुच्छित्तिः पुरुषार्थस्तदुच्छित्तिः।—Sāṃkhya Sutra VI, 70.

(thirst) must be completely eradicated, root and branch, during our present life-time—if at death we want to get out of the cycle of re-birth."—'The Doctrine of Buddha, P. 312.' Liberated condition is the highest expression of the Self. It is a state of ecstatic bliss—a joyous expansion of the limited 'I'. Perfect peace and celestial bliss mark the highest realisation in all the existences. When the indwelling divine Spirit in man destroys his egoistic self with all its weakness and vulgarity, selfishness and falsehood, the destiny of man comes to a fruition. True Self of man always seeks to go beyond this world of mockery and illusion to the land of Eternity . A *Jivanmukta* (an emancipated Soul) realises the Supreme Spirit by the spirit in himself, in one another, in every created thing and being. Such a being is said to have entered into the realm of eternal peace and bliss—he becomes Brahman Himself. Brahman is free from all taints of weal and woe : "Na sukham na duḥkhaṃ Brahman." The Soul is Brahman. It is all bliss. The creation started with the joy of Brahman and so our end and perfection will be also a blissful one. The beginning and end, the cause and effect must be the same. 'The heart of it is live, the end of it is peace and consumation sweet'. So a *Jivanmukta* person incarnates God on earth and he remains in the Saṃsāra quite indifferent to its charm like the lotus grown up in tank, towering above the surface, untouched by the water.

"The coming does not make him glad,
The going does not make him sad,
The monk from longing all released,
Him do I call a Brāhmana" *Udāna* 1.8.

We often misinterpret the term 'Happiness' when we conceive that true happiness lies in the possession of worldly objects which are supposed to give us pleasure. Failure to have the so-called objects of pleasure within our reach fills our heart with pain and sorrow. Positive happiness

here on earth is a delusion because all the worldly pleasures are mixed with some sort of pain or suffering. The objects of enjoyment, gratifying our desires for the moment, give fresh incentives to our passion. The common man does not know this truth and he, therefore, pines for 'what is not'—pursues after all kinds of earthly pleasures throughout his life. To him the realm of perfect and eternal happiness remains unexplored for ever.

"Ye seek for happiness alas the day !
Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold,
Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway,
For which, O willing slaves to custom old,
Severe taskmistress ! Ye your hearts have sold."

—Shelley.

S'vetāśvatara Upaniṣad, verse III. 8 declares : No attainment in the relative plane which is limited by time-space continuum and governed by the law of causality can be eternal". So nothing worldly can give us true and unlimited happiness which is a blessing of the transcendental realm. The Upainṣad observes : "Infinite is bliss, there is no true happiness in the finite—bhumaiva sukhaṃ nālpe sukhamasti." True happiness is, therefore, not to be sought here but there beyond this phenomenal plane. He who has not sold his mind for anything worldly, whose mind is always steady and rests in peace is entitled to eternal happiness[1]. His mind is in perfect equipoise and enjoys bliss who sees himself in all and all in himself ; a knower of Self alone enjoys eternal happiness and none else[2]. Tranquility of mind is restored when it is not allured by worldly temptation and agitated by the waves of passion. Lord Krishna while showing the way to mental equilibrium and true happpiness said, "Restrain passions of your mind—

1. "विकारहेतौ न च विक्रियन्ते चेतांसि येषां त एव धीराः ।"
2. "आत्मस्थं ये अनुपश्यन्ति धीराः तेषां सखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ।"

pride, lust, greed and anger, calm down its restlessness : Peace and bliss shall be added unto you[1]." Jesus said : "Be still ! Be still ! and know Him".

As an egoistic man lives in mental plane, he cannot take a broad view of other's opinion and activity. It creates strife and war between man and man, between nation and nation and the world knows no peace.

The world to-day is a field of fierce competition. We are busy making a bargain of everything to our advantage ignoring its true and essential value. The rapid progress in materialistic civilisation has made us oblivious of the higher value and aim of human life. Man in the modern world is treated more as machine than a living being. As a consequence, we do not feel in the least the qualms of conscience when we use our weaker brethern as mere instruments of our power, subjecting them to the most ignoble treatment. This civilsation of ours is fundamentally based upon cannibalism and it must ultimately vanish like many other civilisations of the past. The modern civilisation is a revolt against humanity and as such it should be replaced. It has introduced into the society slavish immitation and moral degradation. Now life is insincere and injustice is rife. We pretend to be vegetarian while running a butcher's shop. Time is not far-off when the dumb millions will rise in a body to dismantle the structure of an unjust civilisation and tear it to pieces. Our sordid greed has gone too far. It has lowered the value of man. We have forgotten that within each and all there shines the one and the same immortal Spirit. So when we do wrong to others and undervalue their individuality, it is not they alone who are humiliated but we also share this degradation and thereby belittle our own humanity. Not by acquisition of wealth but by nobility of our self, we can establish our

1. The Gita, XVIII 53,

affinity with the Infinite. The worship of God and Mammon simultaneously is not possible.

Man becomes enslaved by acquisition but free by renunciation. Our finite self always seeks for worldly gains but in its infinitude, Soul abounds in supreme joy giving full satisfaction to all our hankering. As worldly beings, we are finite, but in the spiritual world when we enter the heart of the manifold, we become infinite, perfect like God, as Christ exhorted his followers to be. The worth of a man in the scale of being is to be judged by the amount of his love towards others and this universal love alone can uphold humanity. The great man is he who does not lose a simple and loving heart. So Sri Aurobindo sang ;

"Better
To be a common man 'mid
common men,
And live an unspairing mortal life
Than to call into oneself a Titan
Strength.
Too dire and mighty for its
human frame,
That only afflicts the oppressed
astonished world
Then breaks its user."

The world today is more divided and afflicted by formidable evils of passions in the way of greediness and selfishness. As a result, the rivalry and conflicts of races and nations are more rampant than ever before. If total extinction is not desired we must try to read the sign of the time.

The powerful nations in the world are now engaged in digesting what they have already devoured. If their greed is reduced a little, the fearful menace of another war will be a thing of the past. Greediness is a menace to the world-peace. Regardless of the comforts and interests of others, we

try to satisfy our sectional end but a tremendous pull from the back brings all abnormal desires to crash. By unfair means, man may prosper only for a short period of time, he may gain what he desires and triumph over his enemies for the time being but in the end, he is cut off at the root and suffers extinction.

The bright and glorious picture of our past presents a sad contrast to the selfiishness, hatred, disbelief, dishonesty, deception and last but not the least, the heinous black-marketing of the day prevailing throughout the country. From one end to the other, the poisonous fumes of greediness now defile the atmosphere of the country. This cannot but fill our hearts with sorrow and disappointment. Time has come to check and crush the evils with a firm hand and change the present mode of education before disaster overtakes our country. In order to save our beloved motherland from a sad catastrophy, we should follow the path chalked out by our Ṛṣis and sages of the old which alone can produce men in the true sense of the term. Such men will hate anything immoral and despicable and save our country from the impending peril.

Godless education helps little in growing up a man worth calling a man. Education aims at the unfoldment of man's divine nature latent in him. So the syllabus for the youngsters should be prescribed with this end in view. The selection of books must be such as to suit their taste and aptitude ; it must not overburden their mind and dry up the genial current of their soul. If their natural inclinations tending to good find proper scope for full expression through the medium of their study that will go a great way in building up their future character and career befitting a great man in the true sense of the word. A student is likely to cut a good figure if the selection is made according to the tendencies active in him. He who has a philosophical

turn of mind, if forced to take up science as his subject, the greater part of his true nature will remain unmanifest. As a result, he will always feel a void within and try to fill up the gap with what is not preferable and wholesome. This will create a frustration of mind making his own life miserable and others too. "Education must be regulated by natural endowment."—said Ruskin.

A knower of Self looks upon *Prakriti* and its manifestations as something external and as he is indifferent to it, *Prakriti* fails to exercise any influence upon him—it cannot torment him in any way. An emancipated Soul who transcends the realm of Nature does never identify himself with either body or mind and so he suffers neither from bodily ailments nor from mental agony (Saṃ Nik, XXIII. 18). Prakriti recoils from a person who knows her ins and outs. So when death invades the frail house of his mortal frame, the connection between matter and spirit is severed for good, never to be joined again. An individual is a knot of spirit and matter. This knot is the source of all our sufferings. Through many births knots after knots have multiplied. Soul is eternal but matter is transient. When human mind can realise this truth, the knot is cut and spirit and matter get separated for ever resulting in a total annihilation of all the saṃaskārs or impressions of our past so that the law of *karma* or causation fails to bind us again. Complete salvation is subject to the separation of spirit from matter. Mokṣa is the total extinction of individuality—its annulment in the Absolute.

Neither dead matter nor spirit alone but a combination of the two which enjoys the fruits of our actions. Consequently when spirit and matter get separated for ever, our impressions of the past are lost in eternity. The verse 2.15 of the *Yoga-sutra* asserts that complete separation of spirit from matter assures our final liberation. The vedāntists like Schopenhauer and Hartman of the Western world also held that total

extinction of life is the only means to make an end of all our sufferings. An isolation of spirit quite independent of matter and indifference to the world of enjoyments and attraction enable us to enter the land of eternal silence, peace and bliss. To be established in such a position, to realise our true identity and Self is the summum bonum of human life. The Yoga-Philosophy of the Hindus shows the method by applying which we can untie the knot of spirit and matter and thereby overcome the influence of Nature or Prakriti. If our association with Parkriti is terminated, we shall be alone when our true and pure Selves being free merge in Him Who is Alone.

Referring to the futility and inability of mind, intellect and wealth in unfolding what is unique in us, Buddha enjoined : "Therefore, my disciples, do not rely upon *Skandhas* (mind & senses) and their sensations and perceptions. Give up everything that you have, your health, your wealth and your happiness for the good of the world ("*Majjhim Nikāya*, 22.) An emancipated Soul leads a spiritual life rising above mundane existence ; so the wordly pleasure or pain, loss or gain cannot disturb the peace of his mind. According to the verse I. II.22 of the Katha Upanisad, a *jivanmukta* i. e., an emancipated Soul is truly happy ; he does not grieve who knows himself free, incorporeal and the only changeless one in the everchanging universe. "He transcends both good and evil—pain and pleasure"—says Bṛ Up IV. 3. 22. *Rājarṣi Janak* declared that if the whole of *Mithila* were burnt to ashes, his peace of mind would remain unperturbed. It is stated in '*Vinaya*', a Buddhist text that *Bhaddiya* one day while seated under a tree and lost in meditation, suddenly burst out : "O happiness ; boundless happiness." On being enquired afterwards, Bhaddiya replied that as a king, his mind was always full of anxieties and fears but then as a *Sanyāsin*, his mind enjoyed perfect peace and happiness. He who possesos nothing is

relieved of many worries and anxieties. There is not true happiness in enjoyment. "Whatever is distinct from Brahman is perishable"—says Bṛ Up III. 4. 2 ; so every enjoyment, terrestrial or celestial, has an end and break. In the path of renunciation alone come eternal peace and bliss.

The peace and happiness of heaven caused Dante to exclaim : "O joy, o' ineffaceable gladness, o life entire !" Pleasures enjoyed here on earth pale into insignificance compared with celestial bliss enjoyed by a man of saintly character. Worldly pleasures are as insignificant as electric light before the rising sun. Manifestation of divine joy and love is the ultimate object of creation and the end of human existence is to work for the realisation of that superior object on earth. We may die a thousand times but our life will not be extinct as long as a single soul will be living. We shall continue to survive through others in love and joy. "From joy we are born, we are sustained by joy, in every step we are advancing towards the land of bliss and unto joy we shall return in the end"—declares an ancient sage of India.

The celestial happiness though it excels worldly pleasures has yet an end. When the result of good deeds are exhausted the departed pious return to this world again. The celestial pleasures are but phenomenal and transitory. "The Brahman Supporting everything up to ether is the only Imperishable"—says *Vedānta Sutra*. 1. 3. 10. "He is all these—*Tajjalān*"—*Vedānta Sutra*, I.2.1 "He is *Bhumān* and bhumān is bliss and immorlatity"—states *chhā* up, VII, 23-24, Pāṇini in Sutra VI. 4. 158 defines bhumān as the Great One—Vast One.

The conception of eternal heaven or eternal hell is likely to create an eternal idleness. If there is nothing to be done in heaven except eternally enjoying its pleasures, sooner or later owing to their sheer monotony we shall get tired of them. So it is useless to live eternally in heaven. "Endless duration makes no good better, nor white any whiter"—

observed Aristottle. Hindu idea is that the pious souls come down again to the earth after they have reaped the fruits of their virtuous deeds and engage themselves again redeeming those who are still gropping in darkness. Only to the self-centered men the line of demarcation between pleasure and pain, happiness and misery appear broad and vivid ; but to the Soul emancipated it grows more and more dim and finally fades away. "The waves on the surface are tumultuous but deep down, the current flows silently and calmly."—Said Dr̥ Tagore. We are subject to the dual throngs of Nature because we live on the surface of life and lose contact with the depth.

Material possession cannot win a man his immortality or a blissful eternal life. When *Yama* promised *Naciketā* the kingdom of heaven, he refused it saying : "It is transient—it cannot do me any ultimate good. What shall I do with it ?" Hunger for the Absolute cannot be appeased with any thing but the Absolute Himself. "All the delights of Paradise are nothing in comparison with the delight of meeting God."—Says Āl-ghazali. A certain Persian sage said : "The man who desires worldly pleasures and comforts is not liked by God. He is doomed to hell. He who aspires after the pleasures of Paradise serves his own interest like a labourer." If the trifling things which have briefer existences than even this empirical world can be so attractive and desirable, then imagine how much more welcome should be the permanent Reallity lying behind them all. It is foolishness on the part of one residing on the bank of the Ganges to dig a well for the supply of water. If you leave all, you will get All. If all the earthly things are abandoned, you will get One who is the quintessence of all bliss. What is the use of a fan when enjoying the sweet and refreshing breeze of the spring blowing from the *Malaya* mountain, surcharged with coolness, fragrance and mildness ?

Seldom a wordly man can be found to enjoy a life of unbroken peace and unmixed happiness. Wealth itself cannot buy a permanent peace of mind. However a man may be rich, he is also subject to loss, grief, disease and death. None can avoid their inevitability. So Bartrand Russel asks : "What is the good of making everybody rich, if the rich themselves are miserable ?" Wealth is not the criterion of greatness and true happiness. A man may have little resources but there is nothing to prevent him from following a higher standard of life which is conducive to true happiness. When the higher philosophy of life is taken up as the guide to human life, poverty and worldly tribulations can no longer touch the inner man and the mental quietude is sustained perforce. Poverty does not, as a matter of fact, produce the restlessness of mind and viciousness of character. Instances are not rare both in our country and abroad that spiritually elevated persons were economically poor. The bless of spirituality exceeds all sorts of pleasures and happiness that any worldly possession can afford us. The countenance of a self-content sanyāsin who has renounced everything, always beams with celestial delight.

Taittiriya Upaniṣad, verse 2. 4. 7, reads : "The Supreme Being is all-bliss." We are attracted towards worldly objects because God is present in all that can give us pleasure. It is in reality the divine touch which is felt as a sensation of pleasure. Tho most fleeting enjoyments of human life are, no doubt, the momentary touches of the Ever-joyful. But earthly pleasures are limited and transient. When they end one day, we feel their want and this fills our hearts with a sense of voidness, with sorrow and grief. The Sāṃkhyas compare earthly possession with the flesh of a crow. The flesh of a crow is very small in quantity and bitter in taste. If this poor flesh be the leavings of a dog, certainly it cannot satisfy anybody. Thus true happiness remains a dream

to the worldly men running after transient pleasures of this unideal and unsatisfactory world. Blake views the world in its true persepective when he observes :

"A mark in every face I meet,
Marks of weakness, marks of woe"

Eternal happiness, unalloyed with pain and suffering is an absurdity in Nature. It is through Prakriti or Nature that we as human beings are brought into contact with the painful peculiarities of this illusory world. "Pain is the fundamental facts in life. Wherever life is, there is pain"—'Cannon street's Reality, P.57'. Pleasure and pain being the dual throngs of Nature, overtake man alternately. Man is, therefore, sometimes happy and sometimes he is unhappy. As long as man remains a Nature's child—a species of the biological world, he is swayed by her inscrutable law. Hegel aptly observed : "Prakriti is a mere passage from implicit to explicit." Nature's force is the universal power and this energy works through man resulting in biological creation. As long as we are physical beings moving in the phenomenal plane, we cannot but allow us to be preyed upon by Nature's urge and her dual throngs of pleasure and pain. Eternal happiness is a thing to be obtained by shifting the centres of appreciation from mental plane to the divine spirit.

It is a matter of great consolation that in the scheme of evolution, mind which is an evolute of Prakriti is not the last word. Evolution from lower to higher principles of life is taking place every moment. "The supramental change is a thing decreed and inevitable in the evolution of earth-consciousness ; for its upward ascent is not ended and mind is not the last summit"—observed Sri Aurobindo. So when super-mind will emerge through the process of evolution an organic unity of the world will be established and all the distinctions between man and man, between different faiths, colour and creed, between nationalism and internationalism

will completely disappear and peace will reign supreme in the world. In integral unity, all differences vanish altogether.

There is spirit above Nature without whose will and consent nothing can happen in Nature because Nature is a passive principle and as such she cannot exert herself. So in every natural phenomenon and worldly suffering, we are apt to reckon an auspicious hand of the Providence. Bearing this truth in mind when misfortune is patiently endured and cheerfully overcome, it brings in its train mental peace and a sense of joyous feeling. According to Sri Aurobindo, joy and misery are the two real terms of existence.

The higher a man rises above Nature's plane, the less he feels Nature's torrents and torments. In spiritual level, man transcends the lower strata of the phenomenal world and so Nature's biological needs are not keenly felt. The so-called bondage is not of the Soul but of *Prakriti* or Nature. The soul which is wrapped up in Prakriti is bound and becomes subject to all the peculiarities of this phenomenal world. The embodied soul is the enjoyer so the enjoyable things of nature, good and evil, go to it and prolong the chain of human life. According to the *chhā Up*, verse VIII. 12, only the embodied soul is subject to worldly pleasure and pain. Rebirth is a consequence of mind-object contact i. e., our connection with Nature. Isolated from Prakriti, the Soul, our true being becomes free from all bondages. With spiritual unfoldment, the nature is separated from spirit and the man's personality grows more and more sublime and divine. This transformation of personality continues till Nature is completely absorbed in Spirit. Plato refers to this absorption of human soul in the universal Soul in 'Eneads', IV. 8. 4 & III. 2. 4.

Spirit is connected with matter only in the phenomenal plane and matter is concomitant to human miseries. We can make an end of our worldly sufferings and attain perfect

peace and happiness if we can tear asunder this inauspicious link of attraction between the two—the spirit and the matter. To cut off this link means an entire segregation of spirit from matter. This is done when man transcends his self-centred life and extends his being and interest to the universal stream of life. Salvation does not come by the cessation of worldly existence in death alone. Man must be a pure vessel and enlightened spirit if he aspires after divine transformation. Continuous resurrection of body and mind brings this transformation. When the life of a redeemed Soul is brought to a successful close, there is no life anew. An emancipated Soul finds in death perfect repose. Goethe said : "The thought of death leaves me in perfect peace." Certainly Goethe was an emancipated Soul

Man's inordinate desire is at the root of his mental restlessness and worldly sufferings. A covetuous person knows no peace because his thirst for riches, name and fame knows no bound ; his thirst is never quenched. If he conquers the world, he regrets that there is no other world to conquer. However higher he may rise, his ambition grows more and more intense for the highest and when the highest is reached, he sighs that there is nothing more beyond it. "If you desire glory, you may envy Napolean. But Napolean envied Caeser and Caeser envied Alexander and Alexander, I dare say, envied Hercules who never existed."—observes Russel.

Right views in life, correct knowledge regarding our true identity and clear understanding of the Law of *karma* open the gateway to the land of eternal peace and celestial bliss. By the exercise of one's strong free will, one's present inclinations can be directed towards good and God and this Godward turn will seldom allow a person to fall back upon a mundane life again. "God is in all men, but all men are not in God. That is why they suffer"—said Ṛṣi Romain Rolland.

Our needs are few. If we lead a plain life, the necessaries of our life will be greatly minimised and there will be no cause to ferment dissatisfaction. "The essentials of human happiness are simple, so simple that sophisticated people cannot bring themselves to admit what it is they really lack"—says Russel.

The imaginary wants of man afflict him worldly worries and mental unhappiness. Apprehending what other people might say, we invite troubles by taking to a standard of life beyond our means. We do not lower the standard, even if we have to earn money by dishonest means. Such is our degradation.

Luxury did not find a congenial soil in our country before the advent of the British. Simple living and high thinking were the motto of our social life in those days. Even two hundred years ago, our social life and moral character were not so polluted, In those days, the mode of life was very simple ; so the wants were very few and corruption was rare. "Do you feel any want in your family ?"—This was the question Pundit Rāmnāth Tarkapanchānan, the famous dialectician of Bengal, was asked by Mahārājā Krishna Chandra, ruler of Nadiā. Whereupon the Pundit replied, "The rice grown in the small piece of land I possess is quite sufficient for my family. And in front of my cottage there is that tamarind tree with the leaves of which my wife cooks a soup. I highly relish my meals with that curry, No, Sire, I have no want,"

While bathing in the Ganges, some ladies of well-to-do family laughed at the sight of bangles made of sacrificial grass on the wrists of the Pundit's wife. At this the Pundit's wife told them, "O dear, the very day this bangles of grass will be removed from my wrists, your beloved land of Bengal will turn a widow[1]". Mental unrest or anxiety cannot

1. A Hindu widow belonging to the higher Castes does not wear any kind of ornament.

cross the mind of such an ungreedy couple, contented with so little.

Think of the hundreds of families passing through greater distress than yours and thank your own stars. If you think of the wants that other men feel, how long can your own complaints subsist ?

There is a fable which runs as follows : One winter night a poor wayfarer was cursing aloud his own lot for want of clothes. Hearing him a man, fallen into a well by the road-side, called him and said : 'Look at me ! and thank God that you have not dropped into a well."

He who has created us shall see to our securing daily bread. "Behold the fowls of the air : They sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them all. Are you not much better than they ?"—said Jesus Christ. If we repose trust in Him and be satisfied with the little we get we shall not have any want at all. Who is really poor ? Poor is he whose longing for wealth knows no bound. Who is really fortunate ? Fortunate is he who is contented in all conditions of life.

The mind cannot be freed without selfless service to humanity, banishment of aham, desire and affection and also love for all and a whole hearted devotion to the Almighty. Identity of Self with others can not be established without self-purification and sacrifice of self for which is necessary absolute truthfulness and complete detachment.

If we are to live in society peacefully, we should not only look into our own interest but also take into account joys and woes, comforts and discomforts, advantages and disadvantages of our neighbours as well. Each man has a different desire, liking and inclination ; so it is probable that there will arise a conflict between man and man. To maintain peace in society, therefore, mental tolerance is indispensable which is purely human. To the question "who

is my neighbour ?" Jesus replied : "Whosoever is in trouble, whatever may be his race or nationality."

"Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." Consider the prosperity of your neighbours as your own prosperity and it will make an end of your mind's jealousy and covetousness ; when all the troubles in society will disappear. Only the extreme self-love fans discontent amongst the neighbours, which ultimately bursts open in the form of great chaos in society and heavy loss to the selfish man himself.

Each one of -us has a different standard of happiness. What is highly pleasurable to you may be a cause of great pain to another. There are people who take delight in rendering service to others, or, in the way in opposite direction of it in causing pain to others. There are some who find pleasure in giving away their belongings, while there are others who with a merry heart will deprive others of their legitimate possession. Again man's taste for enjoyable objects differs at different ages. What is pleasurable to a child cannot satisfy a young man. Again a youth's object of enjoyment proves repulsive to the aged. A sense-object loses its charm and importance as the senses grow more and more weak with the advance of age. A hard-boiled villain takes pleasure in torturing others but a kind-hearted man is delighted in redressing the sufferings of the distressed.

Sacrifice has a creative energy of itself. Brahman sacrificed Himself to laying the foundation of the world. He is *Yajnesvara*, the Lord of sacrifice. Sacrifice yourself and get His blessings. Charity is the best type of religion. That gift is *sāttvik* which is given away to fulfil one's duty, in a sacred place, on an auspicious occasion to a worthy person, unable to repay (The Gita XVII. 20). "Give with regard, give gracefully, give with modesty and with sympathy—Śraddhayā deyaṃ śriyā deyaṃ hriyā deyaṃ viyā deyaṃ saṃvidā

deyaṃ" (Taitt Up. III. 24). Generous disposition broadens human heart. It reveals divinity in man. Our sacred texts declare that, what is not given away is wasted : "Tannastaṃ *Yannadiyate.*" There is no greater virtue than charity. Benefaction is piety ; spending for our own pleasure and comfort is a vice and is wastage. The man who takes food without sharing it with others takes vicious and unclean food. Yudhisthira one day seeing Arjuna much emmaciated asked him : "May I hope that you have not done anything blamable by taking food without offering the same to the aged and the youngsters ?" (Bhāgavad 1, 14. 43). So the right thing is first of all to give at least the insects the first handful of food and then to partake of it.

Be helpful to the needy. A little act of help, a little sympathy of mere word of kindness and a little expression of love you make for your fellowmen go to the All-love and they return to you thousand times multiplied.

"When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth : that thy alms may be in secret : and thy Father which seeth these secrets, himself shall reward thee openly"—enjoined Christ. Service to mankind is the worship of God. It must not be actuated by any selfish motive. Charity should not be practised with an eye to gain name and fame. Disinterested act of charity is sure to come back thousand-fold in the future, whether you want it or not. Desire for return even of any good action produces new impressions that bind us equally. Spinoza holds that we must not seek the reward of our good actions.

Perfect satisfaction comes from the spirit of detachment. Renunciation must be in the mind and not in the object. The sense of renouncement in the object may give vent to egotism, but when it is cultivated in mind itself, the ego itself becomes extinct. Perfect goodness is the source of true happiness. A man is truly happy when he

finds himself at the summit of his well-being. This summit is reached in spiritual life alone which is the fruit of complete self-renunciation and self-effacement. The permanent happiness proceeds from capital sacrifice, the disinterested renunciation of everything possessed. The spirit of renunciation and resignation is the way to the land of eternal bliss. "Renounce everything and enjoy Him"—enjoins Iśopaniṣad.

When a man realises that his Soul is more valuable than all that he possesses, the illusion about them no longer shows him under its control and he steps in the path of renunciation. God sacrificed himself in the work of creation. Who is the fool that can expect His grace by running away from work and duty? Through work the world was evolved and through work it will be dissolved again. It is easy for a man to reach his final destination if he takes up the thread of action left to him by God and proceeds in the reverse order.

Non-action is no solution for the realisation of the ultimate truth. An idle brain is the devil's workshop. When the soul sleeps in stagnation, our enemies, the human passions, raise their heads and we are led astray. So it is enjoined by our sacred texts that we should keep ourselves always engaged in some sort of work. Activity is the sign of life. It is the play of the Creator. He is always at work to remove the inherent wants of His created beings. Through the performance of legitimate and virtuous acts without looking to the fruits thereof, our life's harp is attuned to the music of the universal Soul and it vibrates harmoniously. In our daily life whatever we do, its result should be consecrated to the feet of the Lord, so that our actions will fail to bind us again. Through disinterested action we will attain a state of total inactiveness which was the state of Brahman before creation. Attached to our present belongings we are finite,

but future is infinite where lies our Supreme possession—the emancipation of our impersonal Soul, what is yet to be achieved but never to be lost. Man finds joy in work, because his natural fulfilment is possible only through action and self-exertion.

To remove the darkness of a room, the lamp that burns consumes the oil with which it is fed. So for self-illumination and to remove the darkness of the world we must consume ourselves—make a complete sacrifice of our self. In the Vedās God is called *Ātmadā*, for He sacrificed Himself in the work of creation. Christ died a bleeding victim for the good of mankind. The lives of the great Souls of the past have lightened the load of humanity and strengthened the weak by guiding those who have lost their way in their life's journey. "The love of Christ has drawn me towards those who are down-trodden and oppressed ; and among them I have found all my love for Him grew deeper. The love in my heart blossomed out into flower"—said Mahāmati Andrews. The love for man begets love for God. So serve and love the poor and lowly, meek and suffering to win the grace of All-love that is God. A saint after death was awarded in heaven a golden crown for his austerity. He was surprised to find that some other saints had been wearing on their heads golden crowns set with diamonds. On enquiry, an angel explaining this discrepancy said that this was due to the fact that while he had always sought for his own salvation, the other saints had looked for their own emancipation as well as for the emancipation of their fellow beings, shed tears for the fallen, the destitutes and the distressed. The tears they had shed for the poor were shining like precious stones in the crowns worn by them. He had never wept for others, hence his crown was without a diamond. To suffer for others is a divine prerogative. Take vow like the Chinese Vikṣus : "Never will I seek nor receive individual salvation

never will I enter into final peace alone, but for ever and everywhere will I live for others". "Wherever justice and charity have the force of law and ordinance, there is God's kingdom"—Observed Spinoza. If the universal religion of service and fraternity be accepted once for all, it will mark a new era in the history of mankind.

Suffering has got no permanent hold upon us, it comes and passes away. Its oppression is severe when we try to hold this illusory world tightly as our own. Nothing belongs to us, everything belongs to God. When this truth is forgotten, we suffer from attachment. Attachment originates re-birth which is concomitant to suffering. Suffering goes on multiplying until re-birth is extinguished by the dawn of true knowledge. According to the Buddha, the three evils of the world namely birth, old age and death make religion a requisite. Who would have cared for God or religion if we were perfectly happy? Repeated blows that we sustain in our worldly life shatter all the pleasant dreams and awaken in us an insatiable desire to escape bondage. The worries and anxieties of life draw our attention to the beatitude of religion. Religion shines better in adversity. So long as there will be worldly troubles man will turn to both religion and God as his last resort. Religion will count so long as there is evil in the world. In *Majhimnikāya* it is stated that religious life is the source of happiness and a religious man can make an end of all his sufferings even in the present life. The Jains hold that happiness is the aim of life and religion is the gateway to this blessedness.

Bṛhadāraṇyak Upaniṣad, III. 7. 23 declares that anything distinct from Brahman is subject to pain and suffering. This view has made the religious mind of India other-worldly and self-denial has been extolled as a great virtue. When everything is given up, the Giver of all good, the fountain of peace and bliss, is realised. According to Bradley: "The

perfect means the identity of idea and existence, attended also by pleasure."—'Appearance and its Reality' P. 244. Knowledge is perfect when it transcends all distinctions. The knower of truth sees the never-changing One behind the ever-changing many. Ideas may be many but the existence is one. When many ideas are lost in one existence, the identity is established. The seer finds himself existing in all and everything existing in him. He pervades the whole universe and there is no other seer but he Such an emancipated Soul neither fears nor suffers from any worldly embarrassment.

Buddhaghosa says :

"Misery only doth exist, none miserable ;
No doer is there, naught but the deed is found ;
Nirvāṇa is, but not the man that seeks it ;
The path exists, but not the traveller on it."

'Budhism in Translation' P, 146.

When we enter into the universal life, we are infinite and the Infinite is bliss—"*Yo vai bhumā tat* sukham." For the attainment of the highest peace and bliss which is the primary objective in human life, it is essential to adopt and follow the universal ideal *i.e.*, the ideal of God which alone can reveal the divinity latent in man. If this highest ideal be taken up as the ultimate goal of human life, egoism, selfishness, narrowness and primitive urges that dominate human mind, are annihilated for ever and the man is transformed into a superman. "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."—said Christ. Here Christ does not refer to any new birth after the end of this material body, but a complete redemption of being in the present life. Our birth as a human being would mean nothing if we are born as man and leave the world as such—without working for the liberation of the soul—a mission entrusted to us by our heavenly Father. Our earthly existence is not a

meaningless dream—a *māyā*, but a trial, a preparation for eternal life.

Death is no solution to the eternal problem of human emancipation. After the fall of the physical body of a worldly man, the problem of his salvation remains as thorny as while he was alive. Spirit is freed by the perfection of body and mind and not by their absence alone. Resurrection does not imply the rising of a dead body but that of a living one in purity and wisdom. Life is in a state of perpetual resurrection and Spirit too is continually unfolding itself from its dark obscurity. Body and mind are purified only by following the religious standard of life. The ancient Hindu Code, the Manusamhita enjoins that a man is born as a *S'udra* and becomes *Dwija* (twice born) by regeneration through ethical and spiritual exercises. Swami Vivekananda enjoins: "You must make all and everything work through the vitality of your religion. Let all your nerves vibrate through the backbone of your religion"—'*Works*', iii, 220.

Attachment, when harmonised in love and knowledge becomes sublime and transcends the object of attachment. "Soul that has tasted the sweetness of divine life, finds no true happiness in the common pleasures of the world"[1]—said the world-preceptor Śri Ram Krishna who himself tasted the nectar of a blissful life. The Soul and not the non-soul is more precious and dearer to man. Jesus said: "For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world and forfeits his Soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?"—Mathew, 16.26. Personal interests and desires pale into insignificance before the well-being of all and these are easily sacrificed at the altar of universal interest. This does not mean that we are to trample down all our personal desires and ambitions, but what is suggested to do, is to

1. Vide 'The sayings of Sri Ramkrishana XXXI, p. 603

mould them according to the 'Sermon on the Mount'. Desires and aspirations may be allowed to have expression so as to cope with the ideal of the Divine Man. When our ideal acts contrary to the ideal of religion, troubles ensue. To do away with all sorts of sufferings and misfortunes in life, it is desirable, therefore, to abide by the ideal of God. Aiming at the high and doing the low none can expect to reach the cherished goal. Pitch the ideal noble and sublime, your life will be peaceful, blissful and magnanimous. Without a religious ideal and thorough ethical training, it is very difficult to uproot the primitive urges and thus to control the mind.

If mental impurities are not purged off, mind in spite of lessons of the scripture and instructions of the preceptor fails to grasp the real import of their teachings. Apart from that, false knowledge may originate due to misunderstanding. *Indra* and *Virocan* are instances to the point. Unless the mind is brought under control, the desires cannot be made to take higher and better course. Divine unfoldment is subject to strict ethical discipline and culture of higher psychology. *Patanjali*, the author of Yoga-Philosophy has prescribed *Sama*, *Dama*, *Niyama* and *Yama* to ensure self-control. The practice of these four virtues of which I have elaborately discussed in the following chapters bear an analogy to the 'Purgative Process of the Christians'. The method of psychological training and spiritual exercises that form the very foundation of all religions came to be prescribed by those seers who themselves had actually realised the ultimate truth. These methods will prove genuine to all aspirants of all ages and of all countries, if proper trial be given. The teachings of the world-preceptors like Buddha, Christ, Ram Krishna and others command universal appeal, because of their inherent truth. Unless and until we can prove these great teachers of mankind as mad, self-deluded and designing people,

the genuineness and authority of their statements are not questionable. Let a man follow their instructions at least for one year, and there will be no reason for him to hold an atheistic view.

The world has irresistible attractions for a mind stuffed with desire. When the string of attachment is severed like a baloon filled with light gas, the mind goes upwards. A flying crow with a piece of meat in its beak is chased by other crows. Similarly our own people coveting our possessions will always run at our heels and will make our lives miserable. The less attraction a man has for worldly enjoyment, the holier is his career. Ignorant men under illusion look upon worldly pleasures as celestial, for their conception of it is confined within the narrow compass of objects of sensual pleasure. The natural tendency of the body and mind is towards wordly enjoyments, while the Spirit in the Spirit's plane is inclined towards God. In the midst of these two opposite attractions the Jiva is at a loss to decide which course to adopt. "We must belong to God or to our passions. We have only the choice of one yoke or the other. Which appears the most honourable?"—asks saint Ignatius. The path of renunciation alone can give us peace, happiness and perfection.

The path of renunciation generally arouses in the mind the stern feature of a *Sanyāsin* (mendicant), but the fact is otherwise. The right procedure is to assign the authorship of work and the result of actions to God. It is certainly not blamable for a devotee to lead a domestic life if he performs all kinds of household works in the belief that they are desired by God, and therefore, are his duties. If we work in this spirit we shall not feel pride in the mind or be mean in days of success. Nor shall we be stung in the mind by despair due to failure. The person who walks the path of truth and is without any attachment or affection for relatives keeping no

connection with them except for urgency and has no greed for money or property is, without a shadow of doubt, the true sojourner along the path of renunciation. The real significance of renunciation is detachment from worldly objects and complete attachment to God.

Stay aloof from the show—from the world of attraction and keep your mind unperturbed even in trying circumstances. The man who has controlled his mind and senses, chill penury cannot freeze the genial current of his Soul; he never suffers the ship-wreck in the voyage of his life. If you can come out of the ordeals of life with glory and honour that will place you in higher stage of humanity, next to divinity. If you want to learn anything for your own good or to acquire knowledge the best way is to live an obscure and neglected life. He who has good virtues keeps himself in hiding but he who has none is always anxious to advertise himself. You will get the blessings of God when all the world, your friends and your wife and children will forsake you. The company of All-love is assured when all others abandon us. So it is that a devotee has regretfully said, "My popularity is my curse! Oh God, save me from it. The world does not yet regard me as its enemy! This distresses me; O God, have I done nothing to merit unpopularity and odium? Have I not given Thee enough evidence of my love and devotion to excite the enimosity and derison of the world?"

The home and the forest have the equal charm for a true *sanyāsin* and home-life is not a hindrance to the attainment of spiritual advancement of a person who can soar to lofty heights within the mind and whose inner Self is accustomed to bathe in the divine light of spirituality. While leading a domestic life a little restraint in our every day life will afford us enough chance for successful meditation. In domestic life it is possible with a little effort to get a

quick and excellent result from meditation. There is no hope of salvation even in asceticism if there do not grow in the heart love, longing and anxiety for God. Craving for God will bring joy in meditation ; want of it will increase the mind's evil. Hence instead of retiring to the forest silence your mind to enjoy tranquility within. Lord Śri Krishna in the Gita did not advise Arjuna to renounce the world but to stay at home and discharge his duties properly. 'One need not renounce his wife and children, although one must not idolise them."—Enjoins Jesus Christ. Renouncing the world is not the means to salvation ; that may be only of some help in its attainment. 'Mere restrain of food or strict abstinence cannot take us to God, but it is pure love for Him which is the cause of divine communion'—said Mira Bai.

Just as a firestone immersed deep under water does not lose its capacity to generate a spark of fire, similarly one who has genuine love for God can live in this world and yet does not suffer from any loss or deterioration of faith and love. God dwells in him who is simple like a child, truthful in words and deeds, master of his passions and lover of God. Simplicity is next to Godliness. "The great man is he who does not lose child-heart.'—said Mencius. It is better to be simple than to be clever. Simplicity in one's life is the highest product of man's virtues. Meditation of God is easier for the cheerful and artless mind. For the attainment of a body fit for the descent of God, a calm, blissful and simple mind is essential. God does not manifest Himself in the midst of spectacular show of outward performances.

A man who is filled with vanity of learning and with egoism cannot earn the blessing of His union. A scholar without the pedantry of pundit is a true model of humility in greatness. It is impossible to progress an inch in the path of spirituality with a mind full of vanity and selfishness. Even the greatest of ascetics may tumble over this block of

selfishness and vanity and go down. Vanity in its subtle form appearing even in the heart of the good, is the cause of downfall. "Blessed are they who are not vainglorious, for them is the kingdom of heaven.'—said Jesus. *Yudhisthira*, the eldest *Pāndava*, alone had the privilage to enter heaven for absence of vanity in his mind, while the other *Pāndavas* could not have it because of their vanity.

The response from the holy Mother comes more easily in the case of an illiterate and simple-minded devotee than in the case of a man laden with the vanity of learning. The mother takes up in her arms the child who cries for her. The Mother of the universe does not forget such a child who may be forgotten by all others. She is more anxious for such of Her sons as are blind and helpless. *Bāmākṣyāpā*, an adept used to say: "I am Mother's son, blinded by love, whom She always keeps with Her, lest he loses his way." "The shepherd rejoices more over the one sheep which was lost and is found than over the ninety-nine which are in the fold."—says an Western mystic.

He is a real sanyāsin (Ronouncer) who makes no difference between a rich and a poor dish nor finds any between gold and clay. He considers no work mean, no praise high and no blame disgraceful. He must be a worshipper of truth, the truth alone and nothing but the truth. The mere putting on of the loin cloth or the garb of a *sanyāsin* is not renunciation of the world. Travelling over long distances from forest to forest, from temple to temple, from one holy place to another, with *Sanyāsin's* stuff and bowl in hand and with the head shaven betrays an unbalanced and restless mind. Eternal peace cannot be found in those places but is harboured within.

A life of detachment like that of king *Janaka* does not harm even though the person be apparently immersed in the pleasure of the world. A king seated on his throne, selflessly devoted to the administration of his subjects is as good a

sanyāsin who has renounced the world. True renunciation does not lie in turning back from what is unavailable like the grapes of Æsop's fables. Feasting in the mind and fasting in the belly is not the sign of a true *Sanyāsin*. Subjugation of the senses is not actually the relinquishing of the objects of enjoyment. Neither Parāśara nor Durbāsā nor Viśvāmitra was able to conquer their rebellious passion whereas both Viṣma and Lakṣman can be regarded as persons who succeeded in predominating over their senses. A real sanayāsin is he who can renounce or has renounced every thing. The plying of oars to lead the boat ahead will be in vain if the anchor be unlifted. "No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"—said Jesus (Luke 9. 62.) Repeating of the holy name on the lips with dark designs in the mind cannot bear the desired fruit—there must be harmony in thought and action. The seed of spirituality cannot germinate so long as the mind is intoxicated with desire.

There is no need for the outer garb of a sanyāsin (ascetic). Did Paramhansa Deva take that external symbol of asceticism ? When the true spirit of renunciation invades the heart, all attractions of the world fall off spontaneously. True renunciation does not wait for the saffron dress or the loin cloth of the sanyāsin. Then do away with all outward show, put on the garb of detachment and plunge in the fathomless ocean of your being with the holy name of Mother *Kāli* on your lips. The Mother of this universe is as shy as a newly married bride and if you wish to see Her you must enter into inner apartment of your heart. The valuable gem which shines in the lowest depth of the heart, will never be offered for sale in any open market.

God Who is one and without a second viewed from afar appears to be many. Try to seek Him deep in the innermost core of your heart and He will reveal Himself as a stream of

bright white light before your inner vision. "His form is light, His thoughts are true"—declares Chhā Up. III. 2. According to the Bṛ Up. IV. 4. 16., the gods worship Him as the Light of lights. Mahātmā Kabir said : "A man who is surrounded on all sides by Brahman and yet thirsty for the knowledge of Brahman and crying bitterly for its attainment is as much a cause of laughter to me as a thirsty fish living in water." Brahman is present in every creature. You are merely wasting your time and energy by searching Him in the outside world like a musk-deer who runs about in quest of musk. So Kamalākānta has it : "O mind keepest thou, in thine own place and movest not in the outside world so restlessly, look inside your ownself where lies the treasure of your heart." "Where can I meet Thee unless in this my home made Thine. If I leave my home, I shall not reach Thy home. Thou without me or I without Thee is nothing."—Said Tagore. St. Augustine said : "I, Lord, went wandering like a strayed sheep, seeking with anxious reasoning without, whilst Thou wast within me. I went round the streets and squares of the city of this world seeking Thee, and I found Thee not, because in vain I sought without for Him who was within."

Mokṣha is the final liberation—a perfect release from the slavery of the mind, body, clan and possession. "Leave all and you get all"—this is the doctrine of Hindu Philosophy. When everything is sacrificed, the Lord of sacrifice grants man the peace of mind which cannot be equated with any amount of gratification resulting from worldy possession and the like. The enjoyer of such heavenly blessedness is an emancipated Soul who enters into eternity though still alive and possessed of a mortal frame. In Katha Upaniṣad, Verse 1. 2. 14, emancipation is defined as distinct from merit and demerit, beyond cause and effect and as not connected with anything past, present or future. This is human

perfection. Aristotle gives the name of *eudaemonia* to such a blessed state, and eudaemonia in his estimation is the aim and end of human existence. When a Yogin is absorbed in deep meditation, he enjoys the taste of its bliss. For St. Augustine a man enjoys true happiness when he is in union with God. An eternal life for Plato is a happy return of the individual soul unto itself. "Heaven is not a thing without us nor is happiness anything distinct from a true conjunction of the mind with God"—says Whichote.

The knowledge that does not unfold divinity in man is not true knowledge ; similarly the happiness which has an end and break is not true happiness. Happiness derived from worldly attachment is not permanent because the world itself is changeable. According to Saṃkara, the world is *māyā*, an illusion—a dream spun out of our imagination. Knowing this truth an illumined Soul neither grieves for any worldly loss nor exult in any worldly gain. In 'The Book of Herodotus' there is a description of a truly happy man : "He is whole of limb, a stranger to disease, free from misfortune, happy in his children and calmly to look upon. If in addition to all these he ends his life well, he is of a truth the man of whom thou art in search ; the man who may rightly be termed happy"—Rawlison's E. T. Vol. I, P 16.

To attain perfect and eternal happiness, it is incumbent on us to acquire such a state of mental equilibrium as not to be perturbed by thoughts of worldly pleasures or pains. The acquisition of such a state of mind which is the cause-way to salvation, brings with it the total extinguishment of the flame of passion or desire. Those who have realised this truth and have given up the pursuit of worldly pleasures, may be said to have found a way to eternal bliss resulting from the destruction of the root of all sufferings. A man of such a disposition of mind when gets enlightened, declares like Buddha : "O, Builder of this bodily mansion, I have

found you out, you cannot further build it. All my past impressions are consumed. I have no longer any thirst whatsoever. Rebirth is exhausted, lived out the holy life, done what was to do; no more this world for me..... unshakable is my deliverance, this is the last birth—there is no more becoming anew." Attaining such perfection in life Jesus Christ said, "It is finished—consumation est." This is *pre-nirvānic* state of Budhism, and to the Hindus it is the state of an emancipated Soul or *Jivanmukta*. One who reaches the verge of *pre-nirvānic* plane is called an *Arhat* by the Buddhists. An *Arhat* attains perfection of equanimity,—gain or loss, pleasure or pain is equal to him. Buddha used to say that friend and foe were equally dear to him. Buddha loved them all who sought after his pleasure and comfort and also who caused him trouble. Attaining such perfection of equanimity Buddha said: "I have in this life entered *nirvāna*, while the life of *Goutama* has been extinguished." The mind of such an emancipated person is free from all sorts of pangs and anxieties. On the shore of this unruffled sea of life, *Jivanmukta* or *Arhat* waits for *Nirvāna*. With the fall of his physical body he enters into *Nirvāna*. "*Nirvāna* is the land of silence and non-being"—'The Voice of Silence.'

The Western mystics call that unknown land of silence as 'divine dark.' The realm which is shrouded in dark mystery, neither knowable to intellect nor accessible to the senses may be rightly discribed as a land of darkness. But our Upaniṣads declare that behind this apparent darkness there shines eternally a light of celestial beauty and glow. When approached with an intense zeal and with a loving heart the darkness melts away and the light divine shoots forth. This darkness far from damping our spirit in the quest of the Infinite, always attracts us towards it. Men's ardour is naturally increased by the obstacles on the way, for the invisible and

the unknown have instinctive attraction for man. So this darkness is in a sense divine indeed.

The Western mystic Ruysbroeck has described '*Nirvāna*' as divine darkness : "The soul sinks into the vast darkness of the Godhead". Out of such thousands of utterances of Western writers, only a few are cited here : "Fathomless sinking of the Soul into a fathomless nothing"—Tauler. "The Soul being rapt into the nakedness of nothing"—Henry Suso. "Of the self being annihilated in some mighty life, that overpasses his own."—Underhill.

Hinduism and Buddhism have their foundations laid on pessimism. The sacred texts of these two great religions show the means to be adopted to redress human sufferings and to cross over the sea of worldly troubles. Man suffers from three kinds of troubles : (1) Sufferings caused by the five elements. (2) Sufferings due to fate and the gods. (3) Sufferings due to diseases, physical or mental, the latter including, for instance, those caused by some great loss or bereavement. We can get rid of these sufferings if we know how to overcome the influence of *Avidyā* or ignorance.

To be relieved of pains due to diseases, man has to forget his bodily existence—he must isolate his mind from the body. Earthly misery and physical ailments cannot afflict a man when he is established in higher consciousness other than the normal. It is the state of his true being. To attain such a position the Yoga-philosophy enjoins complete separation of consciousness from sense-world. Pain and suffering stand aside when a higher existence takes their place and such consciousness as 'I exist' only persists within. This stage of our being is identified as the witnessing Soul.

The end of human life is the attainment of an ecstatic bliss which depends upon the state of a complete equilibrium of mind. When the survival of our suffering through the operation of any external cause whatsoever becomes impossible,

then and then only eternal happiness or in other words, the total annihilation of our sorrows and sufferings becomes a certainty. According to the opinion of the great sage *Goutama*, the man who has been able to reach this stage may be said to have attained emancipation though still living and possessed of a mortal frame. Removal of ne-science and acquisition of true knowledge are the only means to salvation. *Maharṣi Koṇād* also holds the view that with the extermination of all attributes of human soul when the individual consciousness becomes calm, quiet and motionless, like a boundless sky, not agitated by the wind of passions comes the fulfilment of our life—the salvation.

Mind is the sole cause of bondage and emancipation of human soul: "mana eva manuṣyānāṃ kāraṇaṃ baddhamokṣayo." The sum-total of all the dispositions lying dormant in the sub-conscious mind is the principal prop of the human mind. Without a support, mind is not active at all and consequently the inactive mind has no existence at all. Under the influence of the indelible impressions of our actions, mind moves on in the cycle of births and deaths. So the remotest chance of rebirth can only be removed, if the accumulated impressions of the sub-conscious mind are totally effaced and the mind becomes inactive. Thus we find that with the total annihilation of the mental faculty and the attributes of the human soul, the dominant tendency of which is to make us unhappy, the Soul becomes free and then virtue or vice, happiness or misery, life or death ceases to disturb us. We regain *swarāj*, our own kingdom—the kingdom of God.

"We are the children of God; and if children, then heir of God, and joint-heirs of Christ"—said St. Paul. To mount to Christhood, we have to cultivate dispassion, foster pious thoughts and desires and cherish higher and nobler ideals of life which characterise a Christ. A man is firmly established in God when he is established in religion. Higher psychology

manifests in a controlled mind. Higher realisation is not possible unless the mind is made calm and quiet and the heart pure. Religious life is a divine life and both divinity and reality reveal in the spiritual plane. The revelation of man's divine nature—the manifestation of the infinite in the finite is the aim and end of all religions. Religious excellence is the fountain-head of celestial bliss and eternal peace. In Bhāgavad Gita, II. 71 Lord Śri Krishna says : "The man who is not attracted by worldly enjoyments and is devoid of the sense of 'I' and 'mine' attains peace." According to Buddha, the extinction of all thirsts (*Tanhā*) brings salvation.

The Supreme Brahman is neither happy nor unhappy. Neither happiness nor misery can approach Him. He is past and above all such disturbing elements. Happiness and misery are the peculiarities and legacy of the earth, and consequently related to man. Their influence is felt by the mortals only. To overcome their influences here, what is required of us is to become Brahman ourselves. This at-oneness with Brahman is the be-all and end-all of our present existence. The identification of Self with God and final amalgamation of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul solely depend upon the acquirement of a state of our being, similar to that of the Absolute. Oil and water cannot be mixed together ; but two drops of water, one collected from the ocean and another from a pond bear the same properties of H_2O, and as such they easily mix. Like the dirty water of the pond, we have acquired some impurities here on earth which must be purged off in order to raise ourselves up to the status of Brahman. Being freed from all the shackles of body and mind, the Soul escapes birth, death, rebirth and redeath. After the destruction of this mortal body, it merges into the Infinite. This is the real salvation—total annihilation of our miseries and entrance to an eternal life of true happiness.

HUMAN PERFECTION

The history of mankind is the history of its endless march from epoch to epoch towards perfection. Human existence is not static but dynamic ; it is moving every moment towards perfection transcending its limitations. Its direction is always from evil to good—from finite to the infinite. There is nothing stationary in universe. Man's personality changes, matter undergoes transformation and two opposites tend to meet ; the universe itself is changing every moment. These changes take place to help the two opposites to meet together, the imperfect to attain perfection, the parts to reach their fullness, that which is evil, wrong and untruth to be corrected and changed to goodness, justice and truth. Thus the finite is always trying to reach the infinite through manifold forms and manifestations. The reality in man inspite of earthly attractions and temptations always seeks for something which transcends his present. So, man from the very beginning of his appearance on earth has been advancing step by step towards the longed-for goal—the human perfection. Death can neither intensify nor diminish man's unquenchable thirst for perfecting himself. Ātman is changeless. Time which is the leveller and destroyer of all individualities cannot touch Ātman. The body only perishes on death ; soul escapes unscathed. Death is a recurring rhythm in the transmigration cycle of the individual's becoming. "The world process can only cease when Nature is absorbed in Spirit. "—Says Bradley. Our body, mind and ego—all are comprised in Nature. So when Nature merges or is transformed into Spirit, our journey along the long chain of incarnation comes to an end. It is the time for the great dissolution. In dissolution, all the individuals find perfect repose in the bosom of their heavenly Father.

"Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in thee." —Said St. Augustine. Mind is at

rest when it overcomes all the worldly attractions. A rich youth enquired of Jesus, how the highest good may be attained. Jesus replied : "Go and sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, thou shall have treasure in heaven."—Mark, 17—22. There is no true satisfaction for man in this fantastic world. The yearning of his deepest nature is for reality and not for the sham. This gives him no rest till he comes to the end of his journey. He cannot rest satisfied with his present as he is not complete in his immediate surroundings. He must come out of his self-centred suffocating life to breathe free and pure air.

The man who is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, who is never beset with difficulties in life, seldom cares to think of the other world. The number of such satisfied people is very small. The majority of the people are dissatisfied with the present condition of their lives. They strive hard to better their condition ; but some succeed and others break down in disappointment. When death comes, it levels both the groups ; the rich and the poor share the same fate. But what do they gather from their world-activity when they depart ? The Hindus believe that only the virtuous deeds of the pious follow the departed souls. After death, only man's *dharma* or his religiosity accompanies him, and everything else—his relatives, name, fame and his possessions are left behind. They come of no use beyond death. Ātman is not enriched by the accumulation of wealth ; rather it covers man's real divine nature in the same way as gold loses its lustre when it becomes covered with mud. Soul is the only reality in all existences. We exert so much for the satisfaction of our empirical self and pay little heed to the real one. Is not the Reality more covetable and adorable than the shadow ?

Do work for the work's sake and leave the result for the enjoyment of your Lord. Your Lord is your *Ātman*. It is

not at all affected by the illusory standard of your loss or gain, pleasure or pain. Try to realise that you are nothing but *Ātman*, and if you succeed, the dual throngs of your earthly existence will fail to torment your mind. Love *Ātman* as the very essence of your being and beyond. The more you love and meditate on it, the less egoistic you become. Meditate on it with faith, love and devotion, your life will be blissful, way easy and the goal nearer at hand. The love for Ātman far from snatching you away from your dear and near ones, or making you indifferent to the humanitarian services, will draw yourself closer to them. You will realise that *Ātman* is not a separate entity but within it rests the whole creation. This self-illumination will convince you that the Divine Reality which pervades all and everywhere is your immortal *Ātman*. The attainment of such knowledge is the perfection of human life. He who knows *Ātman* as such, becomes Brahman himself.

The realisation of our ultimate being which is the end of human perfection is a subject of occult science ; it has to be realised in a mystic way. Reality is spiritual ; it belongs to the domain of mysticism. So the idealistic Absolute of the Upaniṣads is an object of spiritual experience.

"Who approaches reality", says Kant "loses himself in it and then everything that he could define and name, everything that he could call his own, vanishes, and what is left behind is some transcendent joy, self-complete, self-sustained, self-illuminating and eternal. It is a reality in which all thinking, feeling and willing merge and get transfused. All cognitions through the senses and experiences are nothing but sheer illusory, and only in the ideas of the pure understanding and reason there is truth." Upaniṣadic idealism is absolutely mystical. Idealism as held by the Upaniṣads is the outcome of spiritual thought of the seers who realised truth themselves. 'The knower of truth rests in truth'—this is the verdict of

the Upaniṣads. The seers of the Upaniṣads stood face to face with Reality and so they were competent to show the real path to the seekers of truth.

Mysticism stands on veritable truth. It is the glorious and the highest gift of religion. Mystic life ends with the realisation of the Supreme Good which is Brahman. Mystical attainments are not the result of intellectual speculation but are born in devotional meditation and prayer. "Mysticism always ends in impersonal immortality"—says Ksyserling in his "Immortality" P. 175. Mysticism leads us to that life which is eternal, to the joy which is never marred by sorrow and to the illumination which reveals God. "It is an intuitive certainty of contact with the super-sensible world"—opines Leuba. It springs from every religion and in all ages. The mystics speak the same tongue all over the earth because they are the actual seers of truth. The germ of mysticism is latent in every religion and only will and effort on the part of an aspirant are necessary for its germination. "Mysticism, the living heart of religion, springs from a deeper level than the differences which divide the churches, the cultural changes which divide the ages of history"—writes Dean Inge in his "Freedom, Love and Truth" P. 26, The mystics have mystic eyes to visualise supernatural things. The mysteries of the unknown are unveiled in their intuitive knowledge. Plato compares this intuitive inspiration to "a leaping spark" —it flickers, as it were, in the mystic vision. According to Plotinus, every one is possessed of this power but few use it. This power lies asleep in man and has got to be awakened. The practice of *yoga* is the means to this end.

Samādhi or right rapture resulting from deep meditation is the crown of success in a mystic life. The spirit has its lyric triumph in *samādhi*. "Mysticism finds its working expression not in intellectual speculation but in prayers"—truly observes Dom Butler. Constant prayer and deep

meditation steep mind into ineffaceable peace. A mystic never returns empty-handed. His experience of the world hitherto unknown grows more and more day by day and the vistas of higher heavens open before him with the gradual unfolding of higher consciousness. Mystic life is predestined to life eternal. The future religion of the world claims to be mysticism.

When anything presents itself before you, judge it for yourself whether it is eternal or transient and then accept or reject it according to the nature of the thing. As this power of discrimination grows more and more certain, the surrounding crusts of mental impurities like ignorance, egoism and passions that hinder man's progress towards the quest of ultimate truth fall off one by one and consciousness rises to the higher and higher strata through the purity of heart, love of God and deep meditation. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—said Christ. This assures us that the acquisition of such blessedness is possible even in this life. From the saying of the seer, it can be inferred that God exists and that He can be seen. The condition that is to be fulfilled before we can aspire after mounting God is to make ourselves perfect 'even as the Father in heaven is perfect.' This perfection in purity, love and bliss is perhaps the approximate definition of God-head. The central theme of 'The Sermon on the Mount' as preached by Christ demands such a standard of perfection. God is comprehensible only to those who are God-like. To be God-like attain 'the peace of God that passeth all understanding.'

"The blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God"—said Christ. Religious and the spiritual leaders are the real peace-makers whom Christ refers to as the children of God—and not the war-mongers who try to bring peace with havoc and bloodshed. The peace that comes after the war ends, is the peace of a cremation ground, dreadful to all. God, the abode of peace, reigns supreme in

the hearts of the saints. Wherever they go, the whole atmosphere is filled with purity, peace and bliss.

The objective world has no essential value. Everything that we sense, perceive and know is transient, because the instruments that we employ for their knowledge are transient themselves, being of material origin. Anything transient cannot give us lasting happiness. 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again"—exclaimed Buddha when a woman offered him drink from a well. He meant to identify that water with worldly pleasures. Indulgence in earthly enjoyments far from abating man's thirst for enjoyment acts as fuels adding to the flame. Spirituality is an antidote to such a malady. Drink water from a spiritual fountain which will quench your thirst eternally, here and hereafter. Man in his normal life remains hypnotized, as it were, by the alluring charms of the world. Under the influence of *avidyā*, he thinks himself limited—a finite being. By the grace of a capable *Guru* (spiritual guide) when his limited consciousness expands far and wide he comes out of this hypnotic trance and his consciousness extends to the infinite ; he realises his unlimited divine nature. Our general experience of life in its normal state of consciousness, is birth and death, pleasure and pain. So long as we are phenomenal beings, its laws and our desires are in conflict and we suffer therefrom. But as we transcend this phenomenal plane, we enter into the realm of an extra cosmic Reality above this world of appearance where divergences and discordances drop away and harmony reigns supreme. Just as a man forgets the objects of his dream when he wakes up, so does the experience of this illusory world dwindle away when he rises to the sphere of higher consciousness. He can retain his mental quietude even in the midst of adverse circumstances because he lives in a world of higher consciouness. Heaven is not a region that hangs in the sky but it is a plane of consciousness higher

than the normal. The environment of the plane can affect only one who lives within it. Our experiences vary differently in different states of our consciousness and they appear real or unreal to us according to the plane of consciousness we live in. The experiences in dreams are naturally forgotten as they are perceived in a state of our consciousness lower than the normal. Similarly when we rise in higher consciousness the experiences of normal life i. e., world-experiences appear to be dreams—illusions. Śaṃkara places the world-perception and dream-cognition under the same category i.e. they are both illusory. In point of this view the world is an illusion to an illumined soul. To attain divine life, therefore, it means to mount God-consciousness. When such perfection is attained, the last vestige of *Māyā* or *Avidyā* gets annihilated for ever, the law of *Karma* ceases to operate, the attributes drop down and the Yogin, then an emancipated Soul, moves in the world as God-incarnate—a Superman.

The belief in life beyond death is almost universal. If there were nothing beyond grave, the thirst for the Absolute would never have been felt as an eternal thirst with a promise of appeasement, the mission of our life would never be fulfilled and our birth would have been meaningless. "Death is not a call to annihilation but to eternal life"—said Tagore. According to Lord Buddha, our essence is not exhausted with the extinction of our personality. Man's personality is a mere mask ; what survives beyond personality is unconditional consciousness. When individual consciousness is lifted to the plane of super-consciousness in Yogic meditation, man comes in touch with the Supreme Reality, the field of Ātman which is man's only real form. The consciousness of our personality *i.e.*, our egoistic self is not an end in itself, but it has got immense possibilities. When this personality is dissolved in the infinite individuality, our seemingly finite joy and existence are merged into the infinite

becoming infinite itself. Man's perfection is God's own revelation. In an emancipated Soul we find God's own joy blossomed, human love transformed into love divine, and the celestial beauty and purity shining in the countenance of a liberated being marks his divine perfection. He incarnates God on earth. He realises the Supreme Spirit in every object of creation and through this realisation his oneness with God and His creation is fully established. He feels the rising sun, ths starry heaven, the snow-clad mountain, the flowing water, the flowering meadows and the fruitful earth as so many living manifestations of the same Creator. This clear consciousness of God's presence in all the created things and beings puts him in perfect harmony and direct unison with all and their Creator.

Perfect humanity is attainable through disinterested action, moral purity, sincerity of speech and universal love. Confucius who preached the ideal of humanity did not encourage any spirit of indifference to the world. Truth, love and bliss are synonymous. God is all-truth and He has incarnated Himself in love and bliss.

It is true that a liberated Soul detaches himself from the noise and clamours of this world but he does not denounce the noble activities prompted by love and truth. He dwells in love and walks in righteousness rendering services to the suffering humanity. His emancipation is the freedom which he has earned from the thraldom of *Avidyā* through self-conquest. Lord Buddha observed that Nirvāṇa is liberation from animality. Nirvāṇa does not imply the extinction of Self but its fulfilment. In Nirvāṇa what is destroyed is not our Soul but *Avidyā* or ignorance and in that state we attain the fullness of our being. The man who has been able to control his rebellious passions by pacifying his mind is on the threshold of Nirvāṇa : "*Ihaiva tarjita svargo yeṣām śāmye* sthitaṃ manaḥ." He can hear the voice from within —the dictates of his pure reason.

The strict ascetic discipline is practised to ensure purification and sublimation of our whole personality. "Ethical conduct is only an aid to a better re-incarnation", rightly observes Schweitzer. The only motive behind such practices is to purge the soul out of its surrounding crusts of impurities that veil its true divine nature. Resurrection does not imply the rising of a dead body but revelation of the divinity that lies buried within this bodily tomb and is made impure by human passion. It is the liberation of our true nature from the clutches of carnal passions—a transcendence above animalism. Christ sacrificed his mortal body so that the immortal one may reveal itself. Without crucifixion there is no chance of resurrection. According to the Upaniṣads the true Self of man is the only Reality. Our ignorance about true Self is the very cause of our individuation which brings untold miseries in life. When the Self is realised the knower abhors further individuation. It is the analysis of Self and not of matter that helps self-realisation. When the soul will be stripped of all its attributes it will reveal itself in all its splendour. When Self is known there remains nothing unknown. So the Vedas enjoin: "Know thy Self first." The key to God-consciousness is in the consciousness of the Soul.

The Vedānta teaches us that the real Self is neither this body, nor the mind, nor a combination of both; it is beyond both mind and matter and no other than the philosopher's puzzling 'Thing-in-itself.' The fable of two birds has got an inner significance. It explains the dual nature of man real and empirical. His true being, the blissful *Ātman* is an indifferent spectator to the divergent activities of the egoistic self. Ātman does not take any active part in the life and living of a man so long as he thinks himself the doer. The German mystics also corroborate the Indian theory of two selves. They maintain that the Soul has got two eyes, one of

which is always directed to the eternity and the other to the world. The Jiva or the lower self being the shadow of the real Self, is an illusion itself. So the pleasure and pain that a man enjoys in his empirical life cannot touch the real Self or Ātman. Christ said : "Do ye not perceive that whatsoever thing from without entereth into a man, it cannot defile him ; because it entereth not into his heart"—Mark, VII. 18. Unless man's ego-sense dies out and he is born again in Spirit, there is every chance of his tasting the bitter fruits, as the tree of ego-life grows both the fruits—sweet and bitter. The way to divine life is the path of gradual self-effacement. When ego-sense is lost, the devotee is raised to the higher plane of existence, and as a result, this phenomenal world disappears from his view failing to exercise any of its characteristic influence upon him. "If God's kingdom is to come, man's must go"—rightly observed Aldous Huxley. Man is innately pure and divine. If he were vicious by nature, no amount of purifactory process could make him pure and perfect 'as the Father in heaven is perfect.'

The spiritual quest and knowledge of the Absolute run in parallel lines. The higher we rise in spirituality, the nearer we approach God. All the advanced *yogins* feel a strong upward attraction during meditation. There is a reciprocity of attractions between the meditator and the meditated. God attracts us upward with that amount of love which we grow in us for Him. "We are complete in Godhead"—said St. Augustine. When completion is attained, the mutual attraction ceases. We then become God-like ; so who will then attract whom ? To know God, knowledge is to melt in love, because it is love alone that can unite us with God. "If we desire to taste God in our own selves, we must pass beyond reason."—said Ruysbroeck. Truth can be revealed by only one who has created an intimacy with God through love and devotion. God is Truth and All-Love.

The easy way to love God is to love his creation. The Upaniṣads hold that we love others not for their sake but for the satisfaction of our own selves. Doing good to others, we do good to ourselves as we are not essentially separate from others. The same divine essence indwells every one. The knower of Self cannot but love others. "Each lives in the other and each is the other, and the two are made one in a transformation of love"—said St. John. In the isolated life of self, the love is selfish. In the universal life, the love is truth that apprehends reality. We live in the surface life, the depth remaining unknown. Love is universal in the depth of our being. To taste divine love, therefore, we have to dive deep into the very core of our being. "I entered into my inward Self and beheld with the eye of my Soul above my mind the light unchangeable"—Confessions VII, 16. 13. To have the beautific vision, a descent from the superficial to the inner Self is essential which demands an incessant struggle within for better and juster leading of life. 'Except a man be born anew, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' If a divine life is to be formed, our present must be based upon goodness, purity and truth. Absolute sincerity is the true light that removes all doubts and darkness of our mind.

An individual is in essence Spirit and not a form. It takes form to discharge certain duties imposed upon it by God. This earthly life is a characteristic feature of sex and death and does not abide by our true original nature. Aristotle like Plato attaches little value to the objective world and says that our concern here, as rational beings, is to realise truth and the truth is spiritual. So by creating any relation with the material world, we shall fall outside of the immaterial world and be degraded into matter thereby. We are dead matter without the indwelling Spirit. "The rational Soul of man is a fiery breath which is part of the Universal Breath, Divine Reason which pervades, controls

and determines everything in the universe is God."—observes A. H. Armstrong. Without this life-giving power, the body is a dead matter. Ātman is a ray of light flowing from the fountain of All-light. It is free from all names and forms, one without a second, God in essence. The sense of multiplicity begins with the Divine mind. The revelation of the infinite in the finite was a deliberate thought of God which acted behind all creation. The world process is the result of Divine contemplation and the world will return to the source of its origin when the individuals will learn to contemplate upon one which is his own Soul. The individual Soul and the Supreme Soul being identical in essence, the former can enter into communion with the latter. The knowledge of the Self and spiritual progress run in parallel lines. "Knowledge" says Clement "as it passes into love, unites the knower with the known." The religion of spirit is love and in love man becomes perfect. There is only one ideal for men to be the ideal man—the Divine Man. Idealism points to the perfection of manhood. The realisation of one's own ideal is the attainment of Self-knowledge. Man's perfection lies in self-conquest and in the unfolding of his divine nature.

During involution, the divine energy became fragmentised as individual souls which, in course of time, because of their isolation from unity, lost their absolute purity. Evolution begins with man's thirst for spiritual life. Multiplicity returns to unity when this thirst is quenched. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Fourth Gospel states: "God is Spirit and they that worship Him, must worship Him in Spirit and truth." Plotinus in referring to his own unique experience says: "Seeing the one suddenly appearing in itself for there is nothing between, nor are they longer two but one, for you cannot distinguish between them while the vision lasts; it is that union of which the union

of the earthly lovers, who blend their beings with each other, is a copy. The Soul is no longer conscious of the body and cannot tell whether it is a man or a living being or anything real at all.....In this state, the Soul would exchange its present condition for nothing, no, not for the very heaven of heavens, for there is nothing blessed than this.....All the things that once pleased it, power, wealth, beauty, science, it declares that it disposes, it fears no evil, while it is with the One, or even while it sees Him ; though all else perish around it, it is content, if it can only be with Him, so happy is it." The vision over, a sweet memory of divine communion still fills the devotee's heart with peace, bliss and a mystic fervour. Divine grace comes down, at times, in the form of such mystic visions to encourage the devotee and when withdrawn, the devotee's zeal for divine union, grows all the more intense.

"To win to the being of all, wish not to be anything yourself"—said St. John of the Cross. As we dive deeper and deeper within ourselves, the inner man expands in the outer world embracing all in love and affection. Man is perfect in his universal life ; he is finite when isolated from the rest. In spiritual life he feels even for the lower animals, knowing fully well that the same divine essence vibrates in all, both the highest as well as the lowest strata of the *jiva*-world. So *Ahimsā* has been enjoined as the best virtue which an aspirant must practise, if he really wishes to have divine grace. Love for all liquifies itself so as to reach the stream of the life eternal. The sense of universal brotherhood is inborn in man. Natural calamity in any part of the world moves our heart and we cannot but sympathise with the distressed there. The question of nationality, caste, creed or colour cannot silence the tremor of our sympathetic heart. An act of heroism, an event of wonderful invention and an instance of unique self-sacrifice spontaneously call for our

praise and convey our sense of gratitude to the farthest corner of the world. "All have a fellow-feeling with each other and with all ; so that when I suffer, the All feels it too"—said Plotinus.

Man's true nature is half-concealed and half-revealed. The revelation of this hidden part is the aim and ideal of human life. We are essentially rooted above ; the non-essential parts like the body, mind and senses only branch earthwards (Gita XV.1). In our superficial life we may feel quite at home with our worldly belongings, but in the deepest core of our being, we feel as if something essential of life were missing. There is a constant struggle between mind and Spirit for what a man is and what he wishes to become. The mind remains engrossed in the visible world but the Spirit within is haunted by the invisible. This eternal thirst for the unknown and longing for perfection is the result of a firm conviction as to the existence of a spiritual world above. St. Thomas Aquinas aptly says : "It is impossible that a natural craving should be a delusion." The plane of divinity is a far cry. Socrates believed in the existence of a spiritual world and thought himself to be a citizen of the heavenly kingdom. This conviction is common in Platonic doctrine and in the cults of the Hindu religion. We are Spirit in essence and naturally there should be a spiritual world—our true home, independent of this material one. The denial of its existence takes away the most valuable possession of our life. If the end of our present existence leads to nothing and nowhere, all the charms and interests of our life will be gone : None would care for virtue and vice and the world would be inhabited by a race of lunatics. It cannot be the aim of God to create such a chaotic and meaningless world.

Mankind is instinctively on its march towards perfection evolving out of its present limitations. By casting off all

worldly bonds, out-growing intellection and transcending the level of conscious self, man will achieve his true inheritance. He has already passed different stages of evolution, from matter into life, from life to the mind and now he is up and doing in evolving out of his mental sheath to become Spirit again. Mind, the stronghold of all ignorance is the last barrier obstructing his vision from the ultimate Truth. When this barrier is shattered down the Soul which was so long a prisoner of body and mind comes out victorious.

Evolution will come to an end when all the inmates of the world undergo a complete transformation from the realms of matter to divine Spirit. "He that showeth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, and he that showeth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life."—said St. Paul. Again, "He that saves his psyche shall lose it, and he that is willing to lose it shall save it"—'New Testament'.

Within every human heart, whether of a saint or of a sinner, there shines the same divine reality. In the case of a sinner this divine essence or Soul remains covered under ignorance ; whereas the Soul of a saint is free from it. Our personality is a combination of true Self and the empirical one. When the false one along with its individuality and specific character merges into true Self, the "ahaṃ" or ego becomes extinct. *Mundak* holds that the lower self enjoys all the experiences of life and the higher one remains all through an indifferent spectator ; and it is only when the lower self is induced to look upon the higher Self as the true being and its lord that man becomes averse to wordly enjoyments and deliverance is secured.

Through the influence of *avidyā* or ignorance we forget the true Self and identify ourselves with the false one or ego. Ignorance originates ego-sense ; that again creates in its turn Tanhā or love for life. Referring to this thirst for life Jesus said : "He that loveth his life shall lose it." Both the sinner and the saint, though strive in different ways, work for the

achievement of the same end—the attainment of happiness and freedom. This urge acts consciously in a saint whereas unconsciously in a sinner and in a wrong way.

The mind of a man remains captivated by the glamour of the so-called modern civilization. The civilized man of our age has come slipped far from the orbit of a natural life of simplicity. The hubbub of the so called civilized Indian people of the day reminds us of a fable of the crow shining in peacock's plumage. By constant copying to the highest degree the original has come to a non-est. We have engrossed ourselves so deeply into worldly matters that it seems as if we have become a part of it—a mere matter or mechanism.

Yet, reminiscences of the days gone by still linger over the wreckages of this traditional race. The subconscious remembrances of our past in rare and auspicious moments pant for their appearance in our memory but the charms of the present life nip them in the bud. When a man becomes aware of the nothingness of this illusory world he feels disgusted with the present life and his mind becomes home-sick by the mockery of modern civilization. His mind is haunted by a feeling of something spiritual. It hankers after a peaceful and secluded life and it hovers round a small hermitage far away from the human habitation beyond the din and bustle of a civilized and prosperous city. The sweet murmuring sound of a brook meandering its course by the hermitage and whispering of the forest captivate his mind so as to make it soar high in the limitless sky, bringing in its train an atmosphere, congenial to deep meditation. Thus retired from the world, our soul feels within itself a call—a beckoning of a dumb distant kinship to move towards the unknown. The legacy of India's past history like a distant call of One akin to oneself overflows our heart with a mystic affection and allures us to retrace our footsteps.

The picture of an eternal life of "True Happiness', as I have depicted before, is looked down upon by some of the Western philosophers as "not the life of comfort but a fearful menace to the best of all men." This is but natural. People of the West are of a materialistic turn of mind and they will not care to see anything beyond it. The Western world is deeply engrossed in the outward charm of this illusory world and their sole attention is fixed upon the loss and gain of their unideal life. They can hardly be expected to subscribe to the higher and nobler principles of life. The Westerners feel quite at home with their hedonistic philosophy. We hear of only one materialistic *Cārvāk* in ancient India, but quite a lot of his disciples can now be found in the Western world. In India, a Fakir or a mendicant who has renounced all the worldly pleasures is held in much higher esteem than a king, while in the west wealth stands as the only criterion of greatness. The result is what can be expected ; the life of renunciation has been ignored and rediculed there. The gulf between the two schools of philosophy at present is so wide that the East and the West will remain apart and will never meet unless this gulf of difference is bridged over by the philosophy of heart and not that of the head. "Humanity has a long way to go before it fulfils Kipling's vision"—truly commented Edgar Sheffield Brightman of Boston University, Department of Philosophy. People of the West will, we are confident, realise sooner or later the untenability of their views of life and the futility of the apparent charms of the external world and they will then be inclined to direct their attention to the inner world of eternal bliss. Let us wait for the bright dawn of that golden era.

Before Christianity got its foothold in Europe, Alexandria was the religious centre of the West. Alexandrian theology at that time was a synthesis of Greek, Hindu and Jewish religion, Hinduism having contributed the lion's share. M. Vacherot observes : "The essentials of Alexandrian philosophy are all eastern. It has nothing Greek except its language and its methods." Even in the 2nd Century B. C., the states lying on the either coast of the Mediterranean were well-known to the Indians. Aśoke's inscriptions contain references to the then kings of Macedonia, Syria, Egypt and other States. According to *Herodotus*, IV. 44, Darius, king of Persia sent Scylus, a Captain of his Navy, to explore the region along the Indus in or about 510 B. C. The acquaintance of the East with the West is, therefore, very old. A striking feature of resemblance we come across in the Indian and Iranian philosophy, especially in the doctrine of rebirth, the divinity of Soul, its bondage and the possibility of its release. Gomperze observes : "The curious Greek who was a contemporary of Buddha and of Zoroaster too, would have acquired a more or less exact knowledge of the East in that age of intellectual fermentation, through the medium of Persia"—'*Greek Thinkers*', Vol I. Pl. 27. It has been shown elsewhere that the Vedic '*Mitra*' god is identical with '*Mithra*' of Iran. Professor H. G. Rawlison admits in the following lines that the Greek metaphysics was greatly influenced by Indian thoughts : "Almost all the theories, religious, philosophical and mathematical, taught by the Pythagoreans were known in India in the Sixth Century B. C. Pythagoras was influenced more by India than by Egypt. Like the Jains and the Buddhists, the Pythagoreans refrained from the destruction of life and the eating of meat and regarded certain vegetables such as bean as taboo"—'*Legacy of India*' (1935), P. 5. Like Gomperze, Sir William Jones, Colebrook, Gave and other intellectuals and renowned historians of the West

also believe that Indian philosophy entered Europe via Persia. Plato like the Hindus believed in the doctrine of rebirth—in the transmigration of soul. That certain individuals can recollect the events of their previous lives is adduced as a proof of his belief. The Hindus also stressed on this point long before Plato. In fact, all the doctrines about Soul are almost the same in both Platonic philosophy and in the cults of Hindu religion. It must, however, be noted that the views pertaining to the Soul were promulgated in the Upaniṣads long before the rise of Platonism. This led Stutfield to conclude that the mind of Plato was heavily charged with orphic mysticism mainly derived from Asiatic sources. India, always the home of mystical devotion, probably contributed the major share (vide '*Mysticism and Catholicism*', 1925, P. 74).

Sir Flinders Petric in his 'Egypt & Israil' (1923), P. 134, expressed this fervent belief that the cult of asceticism was introduced by India into the West. Professor Rudolph Otto opines that mysticism in Christianity is an import from the Aryan East and not from Palestine.—'*The kingdom of God and the son of Man*', E. T. (1938, P 16). Socrates believed in the existence of a Noumenal world beyond this phenomenal plane and his knowledge and purity made him eligible for the heavenly kingdom. His disciple Plato invited for the first time the attention of the Western people to this invisible world of heaven (*The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought*', 1926, P. 7. & 9). The Indian sages of the old realised this visible world to be a shadow of a real one above and of its transient nature. They sang the immortality of Soul, realised the latter's divine origin and identified its true home to be not here but there viz. in heaven. This happened at a time when perhaps the whole of the western world was merged under water.

Brehier opines that Platonic thoughts are fundamentally Indian. In support of his view, Brehier refers to Enead, V.

3. 17. Dr. Inge in his '*Christian Mysticism*' P. 74, recognises the influence of Indian philosophy on the view of visionary perceptions as held by Plotinus. Dr. Rufus in his '*The Flowering of Mysticism*' describes vividly how in the remote past the philosophical thoughts of the East influenced the Western mind. In the religious texts of Palestine and Greece nothing is said about the deliverance of soul. It was only when the West came in contact with the East that its possibility struck the Western mind. Dr. Radha Krishnan in this connection remarks : "In John, the Baptist, in Jesus and Paul, the current of other-worldliness emerges, and it cannot be accounted for by their Jewish background." St. John who baptized Jesus was a follower of Essene creed of truth righteousness to God and mercy to men. Essenism and Pythagoranism, according to professor Lightfoot, owe much for their philosophy to the profound East. The doctrine of the remote East found a welcome reception with the Essene. Jesus who was baptized by John must have been greatly influenced by Essene tenets (vide 'The History of Christianity', Vol. II. P. 41). The remarks on '*The Sermon on the Mount*' made by Professor T. W. Rhys Davids is significant : "Of all the moral doctrines collected together in '*The Sermon on the Mount*' are in the *Pitakas*, a buddhist text". Dr. Radha Krishnan is of opinion that Jesus was influenced by the Hindu and Buddhist doctrines. He says : "Jesus enlarges and transforms the Jewish conception in the light of his own personal experience. In this process he was helped considerably by his religious environment which included Indian influences, as the tenets of the Essenees and the Book of Enoch. In his teaching of the kingdom of God, life eternal, ascetic emphasis and even future life, he breaks away from the Jewish tradition and approximates to Hindu and Buddhist thoughts. His gospel stories bear striking resemblance to the life and teaching of *Gautama*, the Buddha."

The Book of Enoch was written before the beginning of Christian era. It is found there that *Enoch*, a saint gave descriptions of different spheres of the spiritual world which he traversed himself during his ecstatic ascent. These descriptions of heavenly spheres are exact portraits of *Pitṛloka*, *Devaloka*, and *Brahmaloka* of the Hindus. Enoch penetrated these divine realms in *Samādhi*. The Hindus, from times immorial, are familiar with these spiritual worlds and the process to ascend there. Commenting on such a miraculous ascent of spirit, Professor Otto observes: "These materials are found in India in more primitive form not merely at a late period but in the remote pre-Christian *Kausitaki Upaniṣad*."

It has been stated before that Judaism or the religion of the mediaeval Europe got enriched by absorbing the essence of Hindu Theology in the main. Egypt, in its turn assimilated the valuable thoughts of Alexandrian Judaism. So Egyptian Philosophy is not immune from Indian influence. The Christianity abounds in Neoplatonic thoughts. Christ, in formulating his creed, got much help from the gnostics. The gnostics were the enlightened souls, the seers like Socrates, Plato and Plotinus. Like the Hindu mystics, these gnostics did not attach any importance to the symbols and externalities of religion. There were people who imported spiritual thoughts of India from time to time and incorporated them into Hellenic theology and Christianity. Many views in gnosticism are common to the Upaniṣadic thoughts.

The gnostics believed in the doctrine of soul's pre-existence, its transmigration and its deliverance. They held that the soul after physical death passes through dark and luminous paths. These routes are analogous to the *Pitṛyāna* and *Devayāna* of the Upaniṣads. Such theories were in vogue amongst the gnostics before the rise of Chirstianity and they displayed characteristic traits of Indian Philosophy. The striking

similarity that exists between the principal doctrine of Hinduism, Buddhism and gnosticism does not fail to impress an acute reader. Such resemblances led Swami Vivekananda to assert that Buddhism is nothing but a rebel child and Christianity a distant echo of Hinduism. Stutfield holds that Indian mystical thoughts passed over Africa and entered into Western Europe, blossomed forth in Plotinus and passed into Christian thought through the monk mystic and the theosophical pantheist, the so called Dionysus, the Areopagite (vide '*Mysticism and Catholicism*', 1925 P 34 ff). Plotinus's view about Godhead is analogous to that of Brahman of the Upaniṣads. From all these it can be concluded that India offered a philosophical basis to the religion of the West. She is the fountain-head of world mysticism. So the mystics all over the world, modern and ancient, speak in one voice.

> There is neither East nor West, Border nor
> Breed, nor birth,
> When two strong men stand face to face, though
> They come from the ends of the Earth."
>
> Rudyard Kippling.

The Asian culture bears a spirit of underlying unity through each individual. A belief in one eternal Spirit pervading all, stands in the background of it. This spirit of unity has inspired the philosophers, poets and writers of India, China, Iran and other countries of the continent to think and express themselves in such a striking similar manner that their views are remarkably the same in character, inspite of their divergences in nationality, caste, creed, colour and language, and though they are separated from each other by natural obstructions like Mount Everest, deserts and rivers. The teachings of great prophets of the world are peculiarly similar in essence, though they speak in different languages. They are the seers of the past, present and the future and

reveal the ultimate Truth and the truth of the Ultimate is one; it cannot be many or different.

The original home of the Aryans is identified with Āltai mountain, situated on the north of China. In *Rigveda* Āltai mountain is a heavenly abode—"Ilaḥ Svargaḥ". God *S'iva* told *Pārvati* that some particular locality in the Himalayan ranges is heaven (vide 'Kumarsambhabaṃ', Canto V. verse 45). The Aryans descended from this mountainous region, proceeded southward as the waters receded back and settled on the plains near between the Himalayan ranges. There they composed the Vedic hymns and formulated *mantras* to propitiate Brahman and the nature gods. After the lapse of many centuries, a clan of this godly people entered India by the north-western pass and another branch went westward. They carried with them the Vedic religion and Vedic culture wherever they went. Some of the words of their Saṃskrit language called the *Devabhāṣā* still bear a striking resemblance to the equivalent Latin words. Saṃskrit root *Pitṛ* (Latin Pater), *Bhrātṛ* (Latin Frater), *Sasṛ* (sister) etc. may be cited as instances. *Mitra*, a god of the *Vedas* is analogous to the Iranian *Mithra* god and is identified with it. Before the rise of Christianity the worship of *Mithra* god was so popularised in the West that Renan observes: "If Christianity had been stopped in its growth by some deadly disease, the world would have been *Mithraist*". The Vedic *Mitra* or the Iranian *Mithra* represents a God of light who enlightens the minds of His devout worshippers. Ernest Mackay in his 'The Indus Civilisation (1935), Vol. I, P. 1, writes: "The worship of the Mother Goddess is a very early Indian cult and probably existed in the country long before the arrival of the Indus Valley people." All the nations of the world owe much to the Vedic religion for their philosophy, culture and civilization. In India Vedānta offers a philosophical basis to all Sectarian creeds. The Vedāntic

doctrine is fundamentally monistic. It speaks of one Reality which is Brahman.

The recent excavation by the Archaeologist in Central Asia proves that the Vedic worship of fire was in vogue outside India in 4000 B. C. : "Actually we now know that the veneration of fire goes back to the earliest time in Central Asia. Archaeological excavation in Khorzem in the delta of the Darya (oxus) east of the Caspian sea has uncovered the communal homes of a neolithic people of the fourth and the third millenium B. C. In the centre of each house was a sacred hearth in which a fire was kept burning continuously"—'The Archaeology of World Religion' P 101.

The *Mahāyānists* of China used to worship *Brahmā*, *S'iva* and *Buddha* seated in a meditative posture. From the Archaeological excavation in China-Turkistan we come to know that there was the existence of Hindu temples and monastaries in the remote past which has now come to light. Many documents and manuscripts written in *Brāhmi* scripts have been discovered there. The manuscripts bear some names which are distinctly Indian.

In ancient times *khotan* in Central Asia was a Buddhist centre. Of the kings of Khotan we find one named Vijita Sinha. According to the emminent Archaeologist, Sten Konow, Vijitasambhaba was the grandson of Kuṣyan who is said to be the son of Emperor, Aśoke, the Great. Kuṣyan established Khotan kingdom in the 1st century A. D.

Kuchi on the southern border of China was a famous seat of Vedic learning and culture. Next to Kuchi is Quara Shahr which, in ancient times, was called *Agnideśa*. Such Indian names as Indrārjuna and Chandrārjuna were attributed to the then kings of the place. Many manuscripts written in Saṃskrit and Pāli have been discovered there. In Niya, a locality in Agnideśa, seals engraved with three faces and also bearing the image of *Kuvera*, have been found out.

From the account left by Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveller we find that in 1300 A. D. many people lived in China and Central Asia professing Vedic religion and culture. He found some Indian Yogins in the court of the then Chinese emperor, the Grand Khan. These Yogins, he says, could by their will-power, control tempests and heavy rains. Marco Polo describes some events in proof of their Yogic power in the following lines : "If it should happen that the sky becomes cloudy and threatens rain, they ascend to the roof of the palace where the Grand Khan resides at the time, and stay the tempest so that whilst, in the surrounding country, storms of rain, wind and thunder are experienced, the palace itself remains unaffected by the elements"....."They appear to have been Indian Yogis who are known to travel by the way of Kashmir into Tibet, and thence, frequently, to the northern parts of Tartary"—'Marco Polo' by Thomas Wright F. S. A., P 135.

Here I am now going to enter into a brief discussion on some of the vital points of differences in the views held in the philosophy of the East and West. To some of the Western scientists and philosophers, "Immortality of the Soul is an absurd dogma and a superstitious view." The scientists and philosophers of the Western world will deny everything unless and until its truth is verified on a scientific basis. One of them holds that if the Soul be gaseous or etherial, it is possible to collect the same in a vessel when it breathes out on death from a body and that it can be converted into a liquid substance, when subjected to high pressure at a low temperature. This is not all. He further asserts that "if this immortal fluid could be put under still higher pressure at a lower temperature he could get a 'Soul-Snow." It is gratifying to note that his experiments in converting Soul into matter have not been successful.

Space cannot contain Ātman, for it is without position. No measure can measure it because it is all pervading. Time cannot measure it for it is beyond time ; rest and motion are identical with it. It is Reason that cannot be reasoned out ; it is supra-logical and so no logical account can be made of it[1]. It is beyond word and so none can teach others about it. It is an absolute non-existence, that is, above all existence.

The Western scientists and philosophers seem to have a very high conception of their sky-scrapping intellectual faculty which is only a minute fraction of their entire consciousness. If these positivists turn their attention from the scientific world to the science of the Ultimate, some day or other they will find themselves in a position to collect the Soul in a bottle or flask or in any receptacle they like. If their exertions and attentions be directed towards spiritual excellence in unfolding the wealth of serenity and benign character of their being from its shy obscurity to the light, attainment of real and eternal happiness would be possible. Unfortunately, however, intellect is lamentably poor and the scientific instruments and apparatus of the most exquisite and delicate character are too insufficient to catch the Soul which is thousand times smaller than an atom—'Aṇoraṇian'[2]. "A portion of substance consisting of a billion atoms," says Sir Oliver Lodge, "is barely visible with the highest power of microscope and a speck or granule in order to be visible to the naked eye must be million times bigger still."

The vacant space within an atom is immense. The mass of electron and proton within an atom is negligible. So, if all the atoms of a human body can be pressed together, the man

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1. "अनन्यप्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति,
अणीयान् ह्यतर्क्यमणुप्रमाणात् ।—Katha Up 1. 2. 8.

2. "अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयान्
आत्मास्य जन्तोर्निहितोगुहायाम् ।"—Katha Up 1. 2. 20.

will assume such a minute form as hardly to be visible through a microscope. Protons and electrons are respectively positive and negative charges. So when they collide, the mass-product becomes still more minute. Electrons whirl round the nucleus so tremendously that the determination of their ultimate nature becomes almost difficult for a scientist. The ultimate reality behind proton and electron which is the reality of all substances cannot be put to any scientific experiment. Any such endeavour is sure to be baffled. Reality is spiritual. To make it a subject of intellectual speculation or scientific experiment would be a fatal blunder and the highest folly.

So, even if the Soul could at all be collected in a bottle, it will not be possible for the scientists to ascertain whether the departed Soul has actually entered into it because his microscope is defective for the purpose.

Further, the condensed Soul will be even smaller to the utter disappointment of the scientists. If a dying man breathes his last inside a glass chamber or within an iron safe his Soul will easily make its way through the pores of glass or iron sheet because, it can assume the smallest form possible. According to *Sāmkhya* Philosophy, the Soul is endowed with eight modes of psychic power by which its desires and undertakings are at once fulfilled at its sweet will. Further, according to *Maharṣi Koṇād*, the Soul is all-pervading like the boundless sky[1]. It is also greater than anything. So we are unable to measure the capacity of a vessel which is proposed to catch the all-pervading Soul. It will not be, therefore, very wise to try to collect Soul in a vessel and make experiments on it with the help of a material instrument and human intellect which are so helpless to stretch their wings beyond the world of senses. Though the utility of science in the material world may be admitted

1. "विभवान्महाकाशस्तु स चात्मा ।"

to some extent, its futility in the world beyond is universally recognised. "Science" observes Rabindranath "has not brought with it the light that helps understanding ; on the contrary, science on its practical side, has raised obstacles among them against the development of a sympathetic knowledge". To have a clear conception of that divine substance a divine eye, the *Bodhi* or intuition is necessary. The Western scientists and philosophers may awaken that divine and latent sight removing the fold from their sensuous eye by the practice of *Yoga*. Science and intellect are too helpless to realise the Supreme truth. The realisation of supreme Truth is an object of direct experience and not of logic or science. Moreover, science and intellect, even within their own limits, are found to be not always accurate and reliable. Lord Kelvin, one of the foremost of the Western scientists says : "The word 'failure' is written on all the efforts made by science during the last fifty years." This admission needs no comment.

The over-intellectuality of the Westerners has shadowed their spiritual vision. Hindus' inclination towards spirituality and the Westerners' materialistic outlook are conspicuous in each work of their everyday life. Sir Charles Eliot observes : "Let me confess that I cannot share the confidence in the superiority of Europeans and their ways which is prevalent in the West. European civilization is not satisfying and Asia can still offer something more attractive to many who are far from Asiatic in spirit".—'*Buddhism and Hindusim*, Vol. i, p. cvi'. The psychological problem of the West has not been solved by the spread of science ; rather the problem is getting more and more complex and insoluble every day. Ṛṣi Romain Roland who is an admirer of Indian culture and philosophy admits : "There is a certain number of us in Europe for whom the civilisation of Europe is no longer enough." Disgusted with the mockery of Western civilization, Madame Alice Louis Barthou writes : "I look upon the

occidental with abomination.....If I had way, I should have a Chinese wall built between the orient and the occident to keep the latter from poisoning the former. I should go and live where you can see clearly and where there is no European." The life based on greed and deception is not the road to prosperity and true happiness. Due to the inflation of ego man misses the objective of human life and embarks upon an unwise course which makes his life miserable.

At present, the religion of Mammon and not that of Jesus prevails in the West. God dispenses with all our inherent wants. They forget that the dispenser is always greater than the things He dispenses. Modern Europe directs its activity mainly in the sense plane and as a result the divine is pushed away by the creaturely activities of its people. Having constantly preyed upon worldly desires and disgust, they have lost the peace of their minds.

The life today is not at all happy and peaceful there. Men are mere machinery parts of a destructive roller propelled by the war-mongers. Armed with the destructive weapons like atom and hydrogen bombs, the hallmark of modern science, the war-mongers of the West are threatening the East with the ultimatum that if the East is not prepared to wipe out her nationality, tradition and civilization she will be doomed. These western monsters meddle with the Eastern affairs most shamelessly, though they have no business here. The whole of Eastern globe has been made a target ; its very existence is at stake. May God awaken good sense in those greedy tyrants. The world has witnessed the havoc of two great wars within half a century and the people have clearly realised that the Christian doctrine "Commit no sin" has utterly failed to impress the Christian mind. The giants at the helm have little respect for the Sermon preached by their Prophet. The Churches have lost their hold on the average Christians and the Christian world

is relapsing into its primitive barbarism. The civilisation of a nation thrives and spreads by the independent thoughts of her enlightened people ; but if their voices are choked, the land is enveloped in utter darkness and doomed to destruction. Ancient Greece which was once the home of Western civilisation fell from the summit of her glory and was lost in oblivion.

The prosperity of a country depends upon her peaceful living—a truth which is so easily ignored and the result is the outbreak of a war on a trifle cause, regardless of its consequences. Christ prophesied that the tyrants would perish by their own sword. The utterance of an adept like Christ cannot be otherwise and go in vain. Let us wait and see the consequences.

With the advent of science simplicity, honesty and divinity in man have evaporated in the air. It has made man crooked, immoral and irreligious. "Science is great when it destroys evil but not when the two enter into unholy alliance. Science has given us blessings of surgery but curse of explosive"—says Dr. Tagore. Of all the mighty productions in the scientific world during the present decade atom bomb perhaps tops the list to-day which recently devastated the cities of Hirosima and Nagasaki of Japan with its millions of inhabitants—innocent men, women and children and animals. Within a very few seconds, all the living souls of so vast an area closed their eyes for good, singing perhaps the monumental glory of science, the product of human genius. Some will call it a triumph of science and a great advancement of civilisation but to all sensible men, the whole thing is a sheer mockery of science and nothing but a mere dance of death. Through science, a blood-sucking monster of barbarity has been let loose to tear up the whole world and spread devastations.

People of the West are accustomed to look upon human being as a lump of flesh and not a spark of God. That is why they do not feel in the least the biting of conscience to

commit such an inhuman act of mass-murder. The present outlook of the Christian world has been grimly revealed in the recent pronouncement of the Archbishop of Canterbury : "Thank God that we are the first inventor of the atom bomb," Ignorance armed with power is a dangerous weapon.

The incident of Hirosima has beaten all the past records of havoc, horror and barbarity of inhuman practices. So atom bomb is a great achievement of science indeed ! Many thanks to the genius of the West which can reasonably boast of such a unique invention of a weapon which can claim its singular capacity to lull to sleep for ever millions of people within the twinkle of an eye. May God save humanity from this sort of blessings of science. Let us join in chorus with Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore and sing in praise the glory of simple and peaceful life of man :

"Blinded are you by over much journeying
from bourne to bourne,
O Gangaram, be simple ! then alone will
vanish all your doubts.
The simple man was in the Paradise of my heart,
Alas, how and when did I lose him,
That now no peace I know, at home and abroad ;
My meditation and telling of beads, in worship and
travail,
The quest goes on for ever ;
But unless the simple man comes of himself.
Fruitless is it all."

He who follows the simple current of life, hears the voice of eternity. Simplicity and humility characterise a truly great man ; this alone can arrest the manifest decline of moral standard of humanity.

A German scientist and philosopher remarks, "The revelation of Indian and Egyptian religion is mere superstition and creation of imagination," and that "true revelation is to

be sought in Nature alone." Another has observed, "Spiritualism is one of the most remarkable forms of superstition. Spiritual revelations are creations of human imagination ; they are irrational and superstitious." The materialistic mind could not think otherwise. Our Vedānta philosophy enjoins that a man is not worth calling a man and he cannot rise above the level of brutes unless and until he can overcome the influence of nature. Man is man so long as he struggles to rise above Nature. So it is obvious that the Western philosophy is not meant for us.

Though the western philosophy has much influence on the Indian thought today still the Hindus feel a natural bent of mind towards their traditional philosophy and find greater solace and inspiration in the teachings of the Upaniṣads. Materialistic philosophy cannot satisfy a Hindu mind ; it feels at home when absorbed in spiritual thought. Religion is the chief occupation of Indian idealism. Religion evolves spirituality which paves the path to emancipation.

Nature, far from being a help is itself an obstacle on our way to Supreme Truth. Our sacred texts declare that Prakriti, *Māyā* and *Avidyā* are one and the same. What is known as Nature is only the sum-total of phenomenal occurrences and the varied scenes which are but fleeting shows of the illusory world. *Prakriti* or Nature creates charms and attractions diverting our mind from the path of detachment. Nature is always changing and so she cannot be a source of eternal bliss, not to speak of her revelation. Road to Almighty lies not through Nature but in the opposite direction. God has manifested Himself as the world through Prakriti or Nature. So if we go in the direction along which His energy descended we shall recede far away from Him. But if we move in the opposite direction the narrower will be the distance and finally we shall reach our destination. We may sail along the current of Nature only to pass beyond it.

Nature is nothing but a passive principle of creation, and as such she cannot be expected to play an active part in her own revelation. For each deed or action, there is a doer or agent. God alone is to ordain how and when a thing will happen in Nature and without His will not a blade of grass moves. "There is Providence in sparrow's fall"—observed Shakespeare. Of the twenty-four elements mentioned in the *Vedānta*—five elements, i.e,, Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth together with the psychic senses including intellect are all comprised in Nature save and except the Soul which stands as a separate entity. Nature is subservient to man ; Nature's revelations will be of no help to us for the realisation of anything beyond it. Man becomes a superman not only by unfolding the mystries of Nature but at the some time he must transcend them.

He condemns the description or true picture of the revelation of Nature as poetic fancy and at the same time ascribes a scientific back-ground to the phenomenon of Nature which comes across in our daily life. The views are apparently contradictory in as much as natural phenomena are nothing but the revelation of Nature herself, which are reproduced by a poet in such a way as to appeal to our feelings.

While personally holding the above view, I am not certainly discouraging the study of Nature which widens the scope of our knowledge of the external world. This finite knowledge will, some day or other, prompt us to peep into the unexplored region of the Infinite. Human mind, though caught in the finite, in its inmost core it always aspires after the Infinite. Infinite is revealed on the very verge of finite.

True conception or real significance of eternal life is not clear to these positivists and so they prefer the struggling and groaning life of this world which resembles more like fire in a theatre. I have briefly touched on this point before and it will be made clearer later on.

Watson says : "Consciousness is a plain assumption, just as unprovable, just as unapproachable, as the old concept of the soul". Some psychologists and the behaviourists of the West like the *Cārvāk* of India deny the existence of consciousness and consider mind as a bundle of nervous sensations that produce emotions, cognitons, will and other thought processes. They confuse the *Adhisthāna* or the Centre of perception with the channels through which they are perceived. The channel is inert ; the nerves and the senses cannot function without the instigation of a conscious entity. Merely the nerves themselves cannot react or exert if consciousness does not energise them. Without the contact of a conscious soul the nerves are dead matters. These mechanistic psychologists mistake wires for electricity. Further to an inattentive mind the objective world produces no sensation and so no cognition follows though the nerves and senses are intact.

This proves the independent existence of consciousness. If man were a bundle of successive sensations, how could he remember the memory of some past events ? If nerves were all in all, they should behave both as subject and object. Nerves becoming the object of sensation cannot play the part of a subjective perceiver at the same time. Mind illumined by the light of the Soul is endowed with the latter's characteristic power. Besides the nerves and senses, there is a conscious and permanent entity that infuses life and consciousness into them for their proper functioning. The mind made conscious by *Ātman* projects its waves through the nerves and senses and creates the world-appearance outside, which in turn reacts on the mind again through the same channels and the cognition follows.

Some are of opinion that much of what we are now owe to our heredity. This view is not always true because 'like father like son' is seldom found. Instances of a vast learned father

having a stupid son, a father of the highest moral character having morally degraded son, a pious father having a criminal son are not rare. If the influence of heredity were supreme these striking differences could not come to happen. Sometimes, reverse circumstances are found to take place i.e., sons of brilliant scholarship, of moral character and saintly disposition are found to be born of such parents who absolutely lack in those virtues. Personality of man is formed according to the impressions flowing from previous births. Josheph, the elder brother of Napoleon, was born of the same parents as the latter. Yet the Emperor constantly complained of his brother's incompetence. Lord Nelson was a man of great personality, commanding respect of all while his brother was a mean-minded person. How can they explain it? It may be as the poet Wordsworth has said, 'trailing clouds of glory do we come from God who is our home'.

I have shown how a departed soul, coming to the earth for taking rebirth brings in its train only the mind loaded with the impressions of actions, done in previous births. It goes to a parent who have similar disposition of mind and where its impressions are likely to have favourable opportunity for full expression. So the little similarity in nature and character that we notice between father and son is due to this fact that they possess minds of *similar disposition* to a certain extent. Differences that are found may be explained by the fact that an individual soul passes through millions of birth and goes on accumulating impressions of diverse character and in certain birth, when he happens to come across any incentive cause for the awakening of a particular type of impressions those impressions will be roused in him and manifest through his actions. Further, under influence of surrounding environment when any of the three qualities, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* get the upperhand, only those impressions will be manifested through his actions as are

congenial to the particular quality, dominating his character. Then the man shines as much. The influence of environment acts as an instigating agent for the revival of a particular type of impressions latent in man. If two boys of the same father having the same *Rājasik* temperament are allowed to live in the environments of *Sattva* and *Tamas* respectively then *Sāttvik* and *Tāmasik* impressions acquired in their previous births will become prominent in their character overpowering the *Rājasik* propensities and one will turn a saint and the other a devil. The nature of a man is determined by the impressions of his past and it depends to a great extent on the momentary condition of his environments. The story of a lion cub brought up in a flock of sheep is the best instance to the point. So it is obvious that it is not heredity but the impressions of his past actions under the law of *Karma* or causation that play the most important part in the life of a man to shape his character and destiny.

The parents are merely the channel through which the soul comes into being. Our present existence is the effect of a cause that existed before our birth. This seed like cause is the subtle *Ātman* that enters into new beings. As something cannot come out of nothing the existence and pre-existence of soul must be taken for granted. "Existence comes before essence."—observes Jan Paul Santre.

"That trembles into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the soul of each, and God of all."—Coleridge.

There are many who deny the existence and pre-existence of soul and also its continuance after death. From time immemorial the mystery of life and death has been a perplexing question to the human mind, for the learned as well as the ignorant, the elevated as well as the degraded. The materialistic solution of this momentous question as has been done by some of the Western scientists and philosophers

does not appeal to us. Some of them deny the very existence of soul and explain life as a process of Nature governed by mechanical laws. But anything conscious cannot be the outcome of an inert object. Matter or force cannot produce consciousness. Material force is blind, it is not intelligent. Thoughts, ideas and feelings cannot be produced by anything material. It is *Ātman* or Soul that transforms the molecular activities of brain and nerve-system into sensations, perceptions, thoughts, ideas and desires. For every effect there is a cause. The cause of our coming into being is the immortal Soul. The environments only help favourable manifestation of the structure that is in potential form ; neither matter nor force nor environment—can add an atom to a germ that is not already there. The potentialised Saṃskāras manifest as effect of our previous actions in favourable environments in our present life. The Soul stands as the Supreme Cause behind this manifestation—it gives impulse to all our thoughts and activities.

What you do and think now that shall you become—this is the Law of *Karma*, the law of causation. The birth of *Jiva* points to a cause that existed before its coming into being. Every thought creates corresponding thought ; every cause produces an effect as every reaction is the result of an action. The unfulfilled desires of a dead man drag his thirsty soul to the earth again for their fulfilment. The verse 6, Ch. VIII of the Śrimad Bhāgavad Gita declares that personal desires predominating at the time of death determine the future of the individual in the next birth. "Owing to the innate desires, we transmigrate from one state to another revolving like a wheel, like phantom creation or like a walking ghost"—says T. D. Suzuki. Like Pythagoras and Plato, the most of the philosophers of ancient Greece, believed in the existence of Soul and in its immortality. "The Soul of man is naturally immortal" —said Barkeley. Lebnitz holds that "pre-existence and past

existence must be coincided both to animals and men." The retrogression of human soul to lower animal, plant and stone has been admitted by the verse VI. 2. 16 of the *Bṛhadāraṇyak Upaniṣad*, the verse V. 10. 7 of Chhāndogya Up. verse II. 2. 7 of the Kathopanisad and the Gita XVI. 19-20. Immanuel Kant observes : "The summum bonum of human life is only possible on the supposition of the immortality of the Soul". Swami Avedananda is of the opinion that "Each one of us has a beginningless past and an endless future." "As to you, life, I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths ; no doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before."—said Walt Whitman.

The great devotee Pralhād, when he was only five years old, once walked into a forest with Sri Krishna. There Pralhād saw a heap of bones as high as a hill and asked Śri Krishna what it was. Krishna told him that Pralhād had taken birth many times before and that the bones were his own gathered from innumerable lives. He also added that it was his last birth and so though a boy of five Pralhād had the good fortune to see Him. In the Gita Śri Krishna told Arjuna : "Both you and I were born many times before. You know them not ; while I know them all"—(Vide the Gita IV. 5). This shows that *jivas* move in the transmigrating cycle for innumerable lives before a perfect life is reached.

The soul existed before it was linked with the body and it exists even when the body perishes. Therefore, the soul is a different entity other than the body—it is without beginning, indestructible and eternal. So long as the soul does not attain perfection it continues to occupy different bodies one after another. According to the Christian and the Mahomedan religions the future of the disembodied soul is a bodiless, eternal life—it does not again enter a new body. But it a cannot as well be God's purpose or the decree of fate that the sinner is to suffer eternally in Hell. Will he therefore be hanged eternally in vacuum after he serves his term in Hell ? Thus if the

pious were freed and the sinners hung in vacuum would not the world by this time depopulated? But in the material world we see just the opposite. It cannot be denied that the differences in the individual's fate and the differences in strength and intellectual capacity are evidences in favour of rebirth—this cannot be denied. But yet this flow of life is not endless, it has its end. To be born again and again and to suffer weal and woe is not an enjoyable experience. Therefore, the Aryan sages have as well shown the path of emancipation.

Higher knowledge and transcendent persons endowed with uncommon genius compel us to believe in the pre-existence of soul, because an extraordinary knowledge and power cannot be achieved within the span of a single life. It is said that the great Śaṃkarācāryya when he was only a boy of twelve, wrote a commentary on the most difficult Vedānta Philosophy. Without pre-knowledge such a thing could not happen. Extraordinary proficience in a certain branch of study in an individual indicates his pre-knowledge of the subject. The objects which are not experienced before through the body, mind and senses can neither appear in dream nor float on the conscious mind (Bhāgavad IV. 29.64). Human mind is laden with impressions of many lives which appear and disappear as enjoyable objects of mind and senses. "Nothing experienced before, arises in the mind"—says Śrimad Bhāgavad, IV. 29.68. So the pre-existence of soul must be postulated.

Some men are found to acquire proficiency in poetry, fine arts, science and spiritual study in this life to an extent which is not possible to attain with the practice of one life only. Acquiring such knowledge is due to previous impression. On this point let me quote as proof a statement from '*Kumār Sambhabam*' written by the great poet Kālidāsa: "Just as the flock of swans assembles on the *Ganges* in autumn, just as the *ousadhis* (medicinal creepers) respond to the rays

of the Moon at night, similarly the entire range of her studies acquired in previous births went after her who was steadfast in her attention at the time of receiving lessons[1]."

When *Pārvati* was receiving education all the learning acquired in her previous births floated in her memory. As a matter of fact, particular individuals are found to develop a great deal of attraction for particular branches of study and to acquire uncommon proficiency with very little labour. This cannot be possible but for impression of the previous births. Without the variety of impressions of previous life the variety of bodily appearance and the variety of nature cannot be possible. Thus says Gautama : "Due to previous habit the individual is compelled to do good action or evil action in one life according to the good or evil he did in his previous life." Again, "whatever gift or learning or penance a person has practised life after life he goes on following that through the sheer force of his habit" (Kumār Sambhabam, canto VI. verse 10).

Memory is not possible without previous impression. Without memory a man seen formerly can not be recognized only with the help of the eye. Direct recognition like 'This is that man' comes from previous act of memory ; it is never due to sight. Desires etc. are attributes of the mind, but the soul is the knower in its nature ; this knowing soul carries previous memory.

Man's personality subsists on memory and memory is the function of mind. The subtler the mind, the stronger the memory and personality. The Yogin who has developed a

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1. "तां हंसमालाः शरदीव गङ्गां महौषधिं नक्तमिवाऽत्मभासः ।
स्थिरोपदेशमुपदेशकाले प्रपेदिरे प्राक्तनजन्मविद्याः ॥"
—'Kumarsambhabam', Canto 1. Verse 30,

Also it is said : "पूर्व्वजन्मार्ज्जिता विद्या ध्रुवं धावति निश्चितम् ।"

subtle mind by psychological exercise can even recollect the events of his previous births. Man of strong personality like the Buddha and Pythagorus gave accounts of their lives of past existences. The existence of soul and its rebirth cannot be denied. Even Buddha when asking his disciples to get free from the *skandhas* (mind and senses) meant to say that besides mind and senses there is something real and permanent in man. This reality is the core and centre of our being and it is *Ātman*.

The Śrimad Bhāgavada, IV. 65—66, observe that all perceptions of a subtle bodied being are the result of things perceived through physical body of past existences, because, nothing can arise in mind which was not experienced before. Mind which is the whole of the subtle body revives memory and reveals past experiences. Impressions of mind prophesy man's future life, character and destiny. The motive and tendencies of a grown-up man are formed according to the impressions acquired in his previous lives; they are not inherited. In the subtle body of a new-born baby some vestiges of its past individuation still persist which go to form its future character and destiny.

Studied subject, acquired knowledge, *karma* and previous impressions are the prop and capital of a departing soul; they follow it to the next birth (Br. Ār. Up, IV. 4. 2). Dr. Bain in his '*Mental and Moral Science*' says: "It is consented by some Philosophers that certain elements exist in the mind, at birth, as for example our ideas of space and time and cause; the axioms of the mathematics, the distinction of right and wrong; the ideas of God and immortality". Even without initiation, some men are found to reach a higher stage in spiritual life. They fall into *Samādhi* unknowingly or with a little effort. It so happens because of their past impressions arising out of their spiritual activities in previous lives. Only on account of *Karma* and bound by it, such elevated souls

come to take re-birth. Some of them get their *Prārabdha* exhausted in the present life and obtain emancipation.

Think how an infant smiles. The great Ṛṣi Gautama declares that the expression of joy, fear and sorrow in the new-born child very well proves previous birth and the imortality of the Soul. Without the memory of the previous birth the changes of expression on its face are impossible; because, the new-born child has gathered no experience in its present life. So long as the child does not gather new experiences in its present life and acquires new impressions the memory of the past life in him is not lost. The more he acquires new impressions with the advance of age the more does his memory of the past become faint, and finally one day the gateway of past memory closes for ever—he loses himself in the plethora of weal and woe of the present life.

The child's instinct to suck the mother's breast is due to its habit of the past. The calf immediately on birth tries to suck the mother's milk[1]. The baby-monkey immediately on birth takes the support of the branch of a tree. Some little birdies immediately on coming out of the eggs begin to fly in the sky. The duckling just on birth gets into the water. Such things cannot be possible without the impression carried from previous births.

The fear of death in the individual is born of his previous impression and knowledge. The memory of suffering at death in the previous birth remains in his mind so that the fear of death proves the existence of former birth and the immortality of the Soul.

According to the Vedanta Philosophy, the soul retains after death its individuality in a subtle body. Pythagoras, Plato and their followers believed in the theory of transmigration. According to them the soul after physical death assumes

1. "पूर्व्वजन्मानुभूतार्थं स्मरत्यन्मृगशावकः।
जननीस्तन्यपानाय स्वयमेव प्रवर्त्तते॥"—Mānasollās.

an etherial vehicle and passes into the region of the dead where it remains till it is sent back to inhabit some other body, human or animal. This theory supports the Hindu view of life and soul. Some western philosophers hold that in each birth, God creates a new soul. Bradley refutes this theory saying : "In that case the universe would have been full of souls of the dead and living multiplying to an inconceivable number and the world could not accomodate them all".— 'Appearance and Reality', P. 502.

At the time of death many of our impressions are overpowered by the fear of pain and death. In the next life those impressions are not easily re-awakened except with very powerful recognition or some such instigating cause.

How many of us can remember the words or events of our childhood in this life? If we meditate about the impressions of the previous life that have awakened in the present life, i.e., if we constantly think over the manner in which we live our individual lives and the subject-matter to which we are very much inclined the memory of the past is awakened : Samaskāra Sākṣāt Karaṇāt purvajāti Jnānam[1].

Occassionally, we hear of some persons remembering the events of their previous births. The descriptions of such persons regarding their relatives and the location of their houses in previous lives were found to be correct. A question may arise as to why every one of us cannot remember our past life. Reason of this is that our mind is so overcrowded with the impressions of our past lives that we can hardly peep through them and recollect any particular event of our previous birth. In *Pātanjal Darśan*, 3. 18 Maharṣi Patanjali says that if we can concentrate our mind on the impressions of our past that have been active through our present thought and action, the memory of the past life can be revived. By the practice of

1. Pātanjal Darśan, Bibhutipāda, Sutra 18.

Yoga when our mind becomes calm and quiet like a sheet of tranquil water, the memory of the past floats on our surface mind from the sub-conscious depth when we can catch it. The fresh and powerful impression of our present thoughts and actions over-shadow the impressions of the past which, as a result, fail to come to the surface and are compelled to lie dormant in the sub-conscious mind. This explains also why we cannot remember all the events of our early life. The practice of Raj-Yoga has been prescribed as a means to regain the memory of our past lives.

That the Soul is independent of the material body as we know it and that it exists after death can be demonstrated by citing some facts. It is not a rare occurrence that some person just after death appears in his astral double before his relatives living in remote places to communicate the news of his exit from the world. Late Santosh Kumer Banerjee, a very intimate friend of mine, who was the Head Chemist to Messers Bathgate & Co. Calcutta, died of malignant tumors in his native village Seākhālā in the District of Hughly. On the very night of his sad death, I saw him at 2—30 A.M. approaching me with his usual smiling face. When he came close to me, he said : "Abhaya Babu ! I died just half an hour ago. I am now on my way back to home." After this his shadow body melted away. I roused my wife from sleep and informed her of the story of the apparition. She remarked that it was possibly a hallucination and that I should not take it seriously. On the day following at 6 O' clock in the evening, Śri Anil Kumar Mukherjee, a friend and neighbour of Santosh Babu brought the sad news that my friend had expired on the previous night at 2 A.M.

Burnt in the pyre of many lives man is made pure and wise, his memory of the past lives revives and as a result he desists from worldly enjoyments and sin. A purified ego is reborn with the memory of its past lives. A man remembering

the events of his past existences bears evidence of his spiritual progress. The spirit of detachment that grows in man is the result of severe austerity practised in previous births. Adherence to truth and the practice of celebacy develop in man such an extraordinary power of memory that with the help of it he can remember the events of his past lives. Through good impressions flowing from previous births some men become accomplished without practising Yoga. They fall into Samādhi with or without a little effort.

Man can remember his condition in the past life through the study of the Śāstras, purity, purification of the heart, behaving truthfully, non-violence and the practice of yoga ; this is what the great sage *Manu* has declared.

Even the faintest impression wakes up due to some stimulating cause. If the mind be applied solely to that impression the memory of the past shall float on the mental mirror. If consciousness can be solely applied to the impression that has once left its mark on the mind of the individual, then that impression will certainly show itself as effect arising out of casual base or seed state. When the impressions imprinted on the unconscious level of the mind are awakened, conscious mind cognizes them. But it is the nature of the mind to shift to different subjects every moment. Therefore, newly-acquired cognition and its imprinted impressions gradually become faint on the canvas of our memory but does not fully disappear ; they continue to stay in a dormant condition on the unconscious level of the mind, and the moment the appropriate stimulus appears they re-awaken. Immediately after going through a few lines of a book read before we remember that long ago we had read that book.

The moment we see somebody, there arises in our mind a feeling of love or aversion. Impressions borne from beforehand is the cause of this. So said Gautama, the great Ṛṣi.

It is written in the *'Jātaka'* of the Buddhists that Lord Buddha on attaining illumination related accounts of his many previous births. We get examples of men remembering their past from the story of *Jadabharata* in the *Mahabharata*. "Man's efforts can be easily inferred from the results just like impressions of previous births"—The *Raghubaṅśam*. As past action of the individual must be admitted there is no way but to admit the doctrine of re-birth.

Aroused impression is what causes memory. When some stimulating cause favouring the awakening of former memory appears before us then at once previous memory or impression becomes active to some extent. Sometimes an unknown place or village or room or a person appears all on a sudden to be very familiar. Most probably we had contact with that very place or person in previous life ; the moment we see them they act as the stimulating cause and try to arouse our former memory. At the sight of king *Aja* in the assembly for the self-choice of a husband (*Svayambarasabhā*) the memory of her past life awakened in *Indumati*, and understanding former relation she ignored thousands of highly eligible kings gathered on the occasion and garlanded king *Aja*.

Those who advocate the one-birth theory, fail to explain diversities and ineqalities in the lives of different individuals. In Christian and Mohammedan religion it is believed that the soul is created out of nothing and that it has come into existence for the first time. So they deny the pre-existence and rebirth of soul. According to the principles of cause and effect, the effect without a cause is impossible. If we deny our past we can have no future. For every beginning, there is an end and vice versa. So the dream of enjoying celestial pleasures ends in death. It will be wise, therefore, to admit that each individual has a past as well as a future. The denial of pre-existence of soul makes God partial, blind-folded and irrational for creating once for all individuals of so

diverse destinies, different natures and capacities. Therefore, the admission of pre-existence of soul will be found to be the only solution for these perplexing problems bearing upon the destiny of man here and hereafter. The present state of our being which is far below the final destiny of man calls for total resurrection from humanity to the divinity. Unless the doctrine of re-birth is admitted the attainment of human perfection remains a dream because complete resurrection within the span of one life is next to impossible.

Lord Buddha used to say : "The annihilation of man by death—this doctrine goes against the inner nature of man"—Grimm, P5. If human individuality exists between the cradle and the grave, then morality, religion and salvation of man would have been meaningless words.

The dogma of conditional immortality in which the orthodox Christian theologians believe, makes the Supreme Judge partial. It cannot be the will of Providence that a few shall be allowed to enter heaven and the rest doomed to hell for ever. These theologians deny the pre-existence of soul and hold that the soul comes into existence with the birth of the individual. In such an event soul is limited by time and consequently the immortality of soul is discredited. According to the law of nature what begins with birth, must end in death.

It is written in the *Garbhopaniṣada* that the child in the womb remembers the past like a yogin and repents and promises that after birth it will meditate on God. But on birth the child forgets this decision deluded by the *Vaiṣṇavi Māyā* (Divine Māyā). So Ramprosad, the great devotee, has sung : "When I wast in the womb I was a Yogin ; landing on the earth I was humbled to the dust,"

If the soul were an immortal one, it must have continuity of existence. Applying the theory of cause and effect it can be proved that soul existed before this present birth.

Immortality and pre-existence of soul are so closely connected with each other that we cannot accept the one unless we admit the other too. Our present life is but a connecting link in the long chain of our previous lives and the lives to come. If this theory be admitted, most of the problems of life and death will be solved.

Hundreds of thinkers have brought forward all sorts of arguments to do away with the question bearing upon this momentous subject i. e., whether soul exists after our physical death or not. The central theme of all the Upaniṣads is the query : "Whence do wo come from, whither do we depart and what is the end of human destiny ?" The questions are inseparably connected with human nature. We cannot avoid them. Absorbed in the worldly pleasure and comforts we may forget or ignore these for the time being, but we are dragged face to face to these vital questions, the very moment we loose some dear and near ones of our own. We are compelled to pause for a moment to think over the departed one : "Is it his extinction or does he survive beyond grave ?" Referring to this question Meister Echart observes : "All that is dead, is life there. And all that is here gross and tangible is there spirit." In the world of changes, this soul is always constant. By death it becomes latent and on birth it is patent again. Death is involution and birth is evolution. Rebirth is the only chance for rising to the higher strata of our being. "Death in nature is birth and in itself appears visibly the exaltation of life. Death is the ladder by which my spiritual vision rises to a new life."—Says Fichte.

Ancestor-worship of the old that still exists today in some form or other among the civilised and uncivilised goes to prove the existence of soul and its survival after man's physical death. *S'rāddha* ceremony consists of prayer, praises and offering of food to the departed soul. *S'rāddha* means doing good thoughts to the departed one and good

deeds are done in its favour with the hope that it will release the soul of its earth-bound condition. In fact the ancestor-worship is the basis on which the structure of many religions is built.

Human body is the abode in which the soul happens to lodge for some time and the necessity of an abode ends as soon the tenant leaves it. Soul is not the off-shoot of the material body, because, neither matter nor the forces of nature can restore either life or consciousness to the dead. Therefore, besides the material creation and natural forces, the existence of a third entity is required to keep the bodily machine working. This third entity is *Ātman* or the immortal soul of man.

When a screw gets loose, to fix it up again, a mechanic is required. Individual soul serves the purpose of a mechanic for the proper working of our organs. It is Spirit that forms matter into a body. Matter bereft of life and consciousness cannot exist by itself. Those who believe that material body produces consciousness or soul, take the effect for the cause. They put horse behind the cart. In science we speak of the indestructibility of matter and conservation of energy, but it is very strange that we hesitate to apply the same theory to one which is the source of all our knowledge and the cause of our coming into being and the world of becoming. When asleep or unconscious, we fail to concieve existence of either matter or force. To have their knowledge therefore, an everwakeful and conscious entity, apart from body, senses and mind is essential. This conscious entity is the immortal soul which is beginningless and endless. It is always constant—it neither increases by birth nor decreases in death :

"Death has no power the immortal soul to slay,
That, when its present body turns to clay,
Seeks a fresh home, and with unlessened might,
Inspires another frame with life and light".—Dryden

According to the Hindu and Buddhist texts, rebirth is the consequence of man's longing to live even at the approach of death. This desire owes its origin to the accumulated impressions of the past. Impressions or *Samaskāras* of the past existences induce man to undertake new *Karma* which produces in its turn new impressions causing rebirths. The seed of *Karma* unless destroyed by the fire of knowledge, must have some soil to germinate again. It does not perish by physical death alone. From the law of causation it may be presumed that jiva-consciousness, *samaskāras* and rebirth are interdependent. So long as the consciousness of individuality is active in man, the *samaskāras* arising out of his actions, go on multiplying. It is only when the consciousness of the world and self is lost to a Yogin, no *samaskāra* generates or accumulates. The *samaskāras* or the impressions are the products of worldly knowledge. To a man who rises in *samādhi* above the phenomonal plane, the objective world disappears and as a consequence there is no origination and accumulation of *samaskāras* putting a stop to further individuation. Apart from that true knowledge dawns only when a Yogin enters into *samādhi* and evolves higher consciousness which destroys the accumulated impressions of the past. Our religious taxts lay down that the law of causation does not touch a knowing saint because he is not bound by his actions. The deed done by a knower of Brahman is neither black nor white; it is never tainted whatsoever.

An emancipated soul is lifted above the ethical distinction of good and evil. Rituals and scriptures are mandatory for the beginners. A perfect Yogin has no duty here or hereafter. "Protect and save the self by renunciation"—says Iśa Up. 1. This means renunciation of work as well. A knowing sage does his worldly duties in a spirit of non-attachment; so the result of his actions cannot touch him.

"Sin does not touch such a soul"—says Chhā. Up. IX. XIV. 3. As a huge conflagration consumes the whole forest with all its inmates, living or dead, dry or wet, so does the fire of knowledge burns all the *samaskāras*, good or evil, instantaneously. So there is no rebirth for him beyond grave. The phenomena of birth and death are reflected in the lives of the worldlings whose seeds of samaskāras are not yet burnt.

The mission of human life is fulfilled when we are only Spirit and nothing but spotless Spirit. A thorough transition of matter into Spirit is the aim of Hindu life ; and the practice of Yoga carries this end to a successful close. The supreme God is without any attribute and we must be devoid of all attributes in order to establish our pre-existing identity with the Godhead.

When the soul becomes isolated from prakriti, it is established in its unique glory of transcendental knowledge. With the dawn of true knowledge, the illusory bondages disappear and the soul is set free. In a quiescent, transparent and colourless mind when the discriminative knowledge about the transient and the eternal reveals itself, the man passes beyond the transitory and becomes united with the Eternal. Consciously or unconsciously through the process of evolution, humanity is on its march towards a higher order of existence by gradual transformation. According to the Hindu texts, there is no scope for work after death. The connection between God and man is, therefore, cut off on death. To renew the work of redemption and to create relationship with God afresh, which are the pre-requisites for emancipation, an unregenerate man must take a rebirth.

By death we are the children of nature and by rebirth we are the blessed sons of our heavenly Father. If the present existence were all in all and there were no life beyond grave, most of us would pass away from this haunted world unredeemed and incomplete. But this cannot be the will of

the Providence. Perfection of humanism is a condition which every man must fulfill to make an end of all his future existences. For an all-round resurrection, our body, mind and personality must undergo transformation—and we have to transmigrate thousand times if such transformation is found difficult to attain in one birth. Buddha believed that the attainment of such perfection is possible in present life if a man exert himself for it in right earnest. Even in this life a man can transgress the sequence of transmigration and become free. Resurrection does not imply the rising of a dead body but the transformation of a living one. The elevation of body and mind liberates the soul from all its bondages. The impurity of body and mind as well as man's ignorance about his true identity is the cause of soul's embodiment. The soul is not actually in bondage, the ignorant mind supposes it to be so. It is *Prakriti* or Nature which is bound. She moves in the cycle of birth and death. Prakriti is personified as a woman and her motive is said to be unselfish. She works for the liberation of the soul in bondage.

Lord Buddha is regarded by some people as an atheist and they say that he did not believe in soul and its immortality. According to Budddha, name and form together with Jiva-consciousness constitute an individual. But in *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*, name and form pass the limits of comprehension and the individual-consciousness loses itself in the universal consciousness. Similarly when an *Arhat* attains *Nirvāṇa*, his individuality together with jiva-consciousness becomes totally immersed in the transcendental entity. So to admit the existence and immortality of one that seems to disappear, does not stand to reason. That is why possibly Lord Buddha denied the existence and immortality of soul. The disappearance of the individual soul however is not the extinction of it, but its fulfilment. In *Nirvāṇa*, the part becomes whole: "Purnamidaṃ Purnamada"; the individual

attains fullness of his essence in *Kaivalya Mukti*. *S'rimad Krishna Murti* in explaining the meaning of *Nirvāna*, made the following significant remarks : "Liberation is not annihilation—liberation is not negative, on the contrary it is positive. It is not entering into void and there losing yourself."—'By what Authority', P. 37. This view seems to be in accord with the interpretation of *Nirvāṇa* which the Buddhists themselves have :

If any one one teach, Nirvāṇa is to cease, say unto such they lie.

If any teach, Nirvāṇa is to live, say unto such they err.

Not knowing this,
Nor what light shines beyond their broken lamps,
Nor lifeless, limitless bliss."—'Light of Asia',
Book VIII

T. H. Huxley's view on Buddhism is : "A system which knows no God in the Western sense, which denies a soul to man, which counts the belief in immortality a blunder and the hope of it is a sin, which refuses any efficacy to prayer and sacrifice, which bids men to look to nothing but their own efforts for salvation." Childers in his article on 'Nirbana' in the Pali Dictionary writes : "There is probably no doctrine more distinctive of *S'ākyamuni's* original teaching than that of the annihilation of being." Burneuf is of the view that the goal of Buddhism is annihilation. But Nirvāṇa does not imply extinction of Self, but extinction of the fire of passions and the attainment of bliss of union with the universal. Nirvāṇa or emancipation is possible in this life even before physical death. The life of a religious devotee is immersed in Nirvāṇa, his goal is Nirvāṇa and he ends in Nirvāṇa. It is the rest that knows no break—a peaceful rest in the bosom of the Eternal. It is the end of all existences hereafter.

The Christian world and the Mohammedans believe in the resurrection of the body ; so instead of destroying it they preserve the dead body in a burial place. But the question is, how after a certain time when the buried corpse will be decomposed with nothing remaining but its five primordial elements, will it be possible for the same material body to rise up again on the day of judgement ? If this absurd theory of resurrection be discarded and instead the appearance of the disembodied soul before the Supreme Judge on the day of judgement be believed, as would be consistent with reason, the difference with the Hindu theory will be narrowed down.

This doctrine of resurrection is discredited to day. The theory that the departed souls wait for thousands of years till the day of judgement, has lost its hold now. Immortality and transmigration of soul are considered to be the more rational view. Modern thinkers are inclined to hold that a continuous testing and shifting of souls will be carried out here and hereafter by an absolute standard of human perfection. None will be thrown into hell for ever, no punishment will be everlasting. However sinful, each and all find eventually an eternal rest in the bosom of their heavenly Father. An un-ending process of redemption will go on, till all get liberation. Pythagoras holds that if at birth the soul descends into the body, what can be more natural than that after physical death it should ascend to the lofty sphere of its origin ! "Soul is an absolute reality, it exists before ever it belongs to a body"—said Plotinus.

Because the Hindus believe in the immortality of the soul and that the soul is independent of the body, they burn the mortal frame to ashes after physical death. In the world of changes, the soul within us is always constant. Ralph Waldo Emerson has contributed the following English Poem reflecting the idea contained in verse 19 of Chapter II, The Gita and Kathopaniṣad 1. 2. 12 :

"If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again".

Dryden says :

"From tournament to tournament though tossed,
The soul is still the same, the figure only lost".

Our relation with the body persists so long as the soul remains confined within the cage and the utility of the cage is lost when the bird has flown away. But as all the departed souls are not equally wise, so some of them through attachment to the body hover round it and their relatives and as a result they become earth-bound. As a safeguard against such an eventuality the Hindus burn the dead body and observe the *S'rāddha* ceremony. The practice of cremation. has been in vogue in India from the pre-historic age.

Moreover the Indians thought it to be the best sanitary method of disposing of the corpse to which they attached little value. To the Hindus, material body is only a medium for the manifestation of the individual soul and when the soul is departed, it can have no importance. 'When the seedling comes out of the seed, it first bursts the husks'. So to take a new birth, the soul has to sacrifice its shell.

In Christian and Mohammedan Paradise the pious are entertained with palatable dishes, best drinks and beautiful damsels which they can enjoy freely till the end of creation. But according to the Hindu sacred texts such enjoyments being phenomenal are not permanent. They have an end, though that end may come after thousands of years. Further more this endless pleasure is sure to bring a monotony and as a result the soul will get sick of such a heavenly life and pant for a change, when it will come down again to this earth or any other planet. The kind of heaven depicted above does not appeal to the Hindu mind. This sort of heavenly

pleasures far from giving him salvation entices the soul all the more. Hindu mind aspires to soar much higher than these planes of enjoyment. The ultimate aim of the Hindus is identification with the Godhead, immersion in the Absolute. Lord Krishna said, "He who attains me, (The Supreme Spirit) overcomes the influence of the phenomenal worlds; for him there is neither birth nor death." He remains for ever in the bosom of All-love, Bliss and Peace.

"I will tell thee a secret my son, constraining thee
Lest thou dare impart it to any man while I liv,
My writing is at end, I have seen such things
revealed
That what I have written and taught seemeth to me
of small worth.
And hence I hope in my God, that, as of doctrin
Ther will be speedily also an end of life."—
St. Thomas Aquinas portrayed by Robert Bridges
in 'The Testament of Beauty'.

It is a matter of great surprise that most of the eminent western philosophers are found to change their psychic views of youth-time in their old age. The psychic views which these philosophers so strongly support in the bright days of their youth are entirely changed in their old age, when they put forth quite antagonistic views. The views of the sunny days of their youth when the philosophers climbed to the summit of their glory by the virtue of their genius, clear conscience and active senses differ from those of their old age when the functions of their brain, mind and senses become weak and decayed. The people of the West are at a loss to account for the divergences in views on the same topics at different ages in the life of the same man. They find it difficult to decide which of the two views is true and acceptable. According to a *sutra* of the Vedānta philosophy (2. 1. 1: "*Tarkāpratisthānāt*"), we can safely ignore both

the views. Saṃkarāchārya's commentary on such views runs as follows : "The logical solution of a problem which is solved by mere intellect does not hold good ; because every intelligent man will solve the proposition in his own way, and as such the solutions are likely to be different." Maharṣi *Vedavyās* is enlirely against a truth which is established logically. None should try to prove a truth logically which is beyond comprehension : "*Acintyah Khalu ye bhābā na tān tarkena yojayet*[1]." A man who argues from only the logical point of view, has been compared to a dog in the Mahabharata (Vide 12/37/11—13). The realisation of the Supreme Truth comes in the path of mystic *Sādhanā* ; it is an object of direct experience and not of logic or science. The moderners readily accept everything as Gospel truth, be it a hypothesis or theory that presents itself with the hall-mark of science. But the findings of science are not always true and correct.

Conclusion that can be drawn from the differences and divergences of opinion expressed by a philosopher at different stages of life is that the psychic functions are subject to constant changes. Human knowledge unless illuminated by the light of the Soul can never be perfect. Ninety per cent. of the so-called truth are therefore ultimately proved to be baseless. The differences of views of the same man during the span of one individual life are natural as he tries to realise the truth from different mental planes limited by time, space and circumstances. The seers of ancient India realised Truth through the eyes of their Soul which is unchangable and which is not subject to the limitation of time, space and circumstances. That is why their doctrines and views have never been changed ; they are still as true to-day as they were six thousand years back.

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1. Katha Up. 1.2.9 also holds similar view :
"नैषा तर्केण मतिरापनेया, प्रोक्तान्येनैव सुज्ञानाय प्रेष्ट ।"

In the day of India's spiritual upheaval her sage-philosophers rose to the peak of their mountainous career and propounded to the world the ultimate Truth. The Vedas and the Upaniṣads are replete with their philosophical and spiritual wisdom. Professor Maxmullar says that these thinkers climbed up to the heights where their lungs only could breathe, and where those of other beings would have burst. Hindu philosophy teaches us that the human senses up to the state of intellect are inert, changeable and fleeting and so perceptions acquired through them are subject to variation with the change of time. Soul alone is real, reliable and eternal. Accordingly all the realisations attained by it cannot be anything but true, dependable and eternal. The seers of ancient India knew it well and were so fully convinced that they could boldly assert: "Truth cannot be realised by the power of speech, mental faculty or the naked eye[1]. Because Truth is neither approachable to the eye, nor to the power of speech, nor to the mental faculties[2]. It is also not attainable by intelligence, study or vast learning[3].

Milton also holds similar view:

"Who reads
Incessantly and to reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings what needs he elsewhere seek?)
Uncertain and unsettled still remains"

—Paradise Regained Book IV.

Then how to know the Supreme Truth?

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1. "नैव वाचा न मनसा प्राप्तुं शक्यो न चक्षुषा।"—Katha Up. II. 3. 12. Vide also Mu. Up. III. 1. 8.
2. "न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाक् गच्छति न मनो न विद्मो न विजानीमः।
—Kena Up. 1. 3.
3. "न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन।"—Katha Up. I. 2. 23.

LIGHT BEYOND LIGHT

Besides the light of the human intellect, there is existence of another higher light dormant in us which is more powerful and penetrating. It is '*Bodhi*'—the light of the Soul, the unity of intuition. Ātman being a divine fragment, this light of the Soul or *Bodhi* is reasonably the light of the Infinite as well. The light which appears through our brain as intellect is a reflected light of Ātman in *Buddhi*. It is a shadow light. This is why we are ever-compelled to come back baffled from the midway of our search after Truth, when we proceed to comprehend the Infinite on the basis of this poor knowledge of intellect.

The Infinite is not any invisible, unknowable or imaginary world. It does exist and it is quite possible for each and all to acquire knowledge about it. But it is not easy for men like us with our limited knowledge of intellectual faculty to enter that divine realm which is infinite and boundless, where complete life, absolute consciousness and full bliss are revealed.

We can awaken that latent conscious energy aforesaid if we practise 'Yoga' with love, integrity and the surging desire for the Absolute. This latent energy rests in our third eye which is situate between the two eye-brows. This inward third eye sees more clearly than a frontal steroscope. When this eye of wisdom opens a white halo is radiated by it and that halo enables us to visualise everything in the whole of creation and the Truth beyond it. Even though we live in flesh and blood it is possible for us with that divine light or '*Pure Reason*' as Kant called it, to enter that world of the Infinite which is beyond the reach of sense organs and beyond the reach of ordinary knowledge.

The Yoga system of Indian philosophy calls this divine light '*Bodhi*'—the 'Ṛtaṃbharā Prajnā' or the light of the Soul

which is also called "The mysterious eye of the Soul" by the mystics and thinkers of the Western world. *Bodhi* or the light of the Soul sees the Truth. The sages, seers and ascetics become omniscient by waking up *Bodhi* or the inner vision through the practice of *Yoga* when a bright stream of white light shoots forth from the *Third eye* and floods every creek and corner. By the practice of *yoga*, when the light of *Bodhi* dawns, all the darkness of mind vanishes, the inner sky of our consciousness becomes illuminated by this divine light of intuition and we get enlightened with the knowledge of the Infinite. It is said that Hajarat Mahammad, riding on his steed, the famous *Burarhk*, pierced through the heavens and entered into the region of the moon. *Burarhk* can be nothing other than the divine light of the Soul.

According to different functions Antaḥkarana or the internal sense is known as *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Citta* and Ahaṃkār. *Bodhi* or pure intuition is quite a different faculty. So long as the mind, with its four aspects, is not completely inactive and individual consciousness is not dissolved in the object of meditation, the highest pitch of ecstasy that wakes up *Bodhi* is not possible in man. So the appearance of one depends upon the eclipse of the other. Therefore, *Bodhi* whose awakening depends upon the total inactivity of intellect can not be said to be much related to it. The moon becomes visible when the sun sets ; so the two planets are different. The visible world is a creation of the mind and as such it cannot transcend the territory of its own creation. Only the knowledge Absolute transcends the knowledge of the finite. Mr. Bergson has justly remarked, "The mind, which thinks it knows realities because it has made a diagram of Reality, is merely a dupe of its own categories.....Life has evolved it in the interest of life, has made it capable of dealing with '*Solids*'—with concrete things. With these it is at home. But it is not Reality, because it is not alive." Intution brings message from the unknown.

Intellect only comes in afterwards to see what bargain it can make out of the harvest. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of by mind and science. The life and activity of Śri Ramkrishna clearly shows a distinct difference between the two—intuition and intellect. Ramkrishna Paramhansa Deva, the world preceptor who was an illiterate man could solve the most difficult problems in a very simple and easy way which baffled the most intelligent and educated men. Through the grace of goddess *Kāli*, the Mother of the Universe, he had awakened in him the *Bodhi* or intuitive power which enabled him to see through the Truth. He studied the inner encyclopaedia of the human soul with the help of this divine light.

God, who is the supreme unity of all contradiction, reasonably seems to be a riddle to an intelligent man. How can He be knowable to human intellect, who is knower and the known, seer and the things seen, static and at the same time dynamic, immanent but transcendent, creator and destroyer, emblem of love still a strict judge, eternity Himself though controlling each moment of our life ? The very idea for unification of such contradictory elements makes an intelligent head dizzy and crazy. The truth lies in unity—not in diversity, concord and not discord.

An object is perceived in its two different aspects—determinate and indeterminate. In determinate perception, the object is apprehended in all its differential characters involving its qualities and properties and as differentiated from each other by way of assimilation and discrimination. In indeterminate realisation, the object is perceived in its entirety as mere 'being' or 'existence' unqualified by any of its properties i.e. in its non-synthetic aspect. Analytical knowledge proceeds from super-activity of dividing mind, whereas the object is known in its entirety when the mind remains calm and quiet leaving room for intuition to play its own part.

Indeterminate knowledge is not the result of sensual perception but of higher *yogic* intuition. Intuitive knowledge is all-comprehensive. It is boundless and all-embracing. In *yogic* vision the object is known in its entirety by a single stroke of intuition.

Knowledge acquired through the intellect is indirect knowledge. Knowledge acquired through spiritual practices and in the light of intuition is direct and true knowledge. It is the divine knowledge or the knowledge of the Ultimate that every *yogin* aspires after. The glimpse of truth that we indirectly get through book learning and logical argumentation is mere idea or shadow of truth and that is finite. It is only on the awakening of intuition that the full picture of the Infinite is revealed before the inner vision of the meditator and then it assumes a form. Intellect analyses the truth but intuition brings in the realisation of the truth in its entirety. The plane of intuition is situated far above the plane of intellect. To ascertain the nature of the ultimate truth behind the endless playful sport that is going on in the playful nature of the universe is the chief aim of spiritual science. Intuition wants to establish a relation of unity with the final and supreme truth that rests above this natural order. The vision of the ordinary scientist is confined within the realm of nature. That vision is limited. The vision of the *yogin* penetrates the realm of nature and extends up to infinity beyond nature. The business of the ordinary scientist is to dissect a thing into its component parts in order to unfold its mistery but the aim of the *yogin* is to find out an unity in diversity. There is no truth in the part; the full unit holds the truth. That which creates differences can never be beneficial. An individual finds his own true Self in unity; he is helpless in the midst of diversity. Intellect rests on differences; intuition leads to unity. So in the material and in the spiritual world the usefulness of intuition is far greater than the utility of intellect.

"Knowledge is acquired in three ways : By sensuous representaion, reason and intuition. Mind collects ideas from the external world and then draws inference from them by reason. Intuitional knowledge does not depend upon reason, it is self-accomplished".—Observed Spinoza. Our mind takes the shape of the external world and acquires knowledge about it. So the world outside us supplies food for our mind. Hume oberves : "Every idea is an image or copy of an impression". The impression of the five qualities of the external world (*Rupa, Rasa, Gandha, Sparśa* and *Sabda*) being carried over by our senses reach our mind which mould them into their proper shape. This moulding is called "synthetic unity of appreciation." Kant is of opinion that "neither senses alone nor the understanding alone produces knowledge, but both cognitive powers are necessary, the active and the passive, the conceptual and the intuition. Concepts without intuition are empty", The seers of India knew it long ago and consequently they advised their disciples to shut their eyes for introspection and withdraw their senses within—"*Āvṛtascakṣu amṛtattvamicchan*" (Kathopniṣad II. 1. 1.). When our mind together with the senses are drawn inside and become inactive, the truth of the spiritual world floats before our inner vision.

Therefore, Madam Blavatosky has said, "If through the Hall of wisdom thou wouldst reach the vale of Bliss, disciples, close fast thy senses against the great dire heresy of separateness that weans thee from the rest."

Psychology like all other sciences is discursive. Intellect is prone to take a subject in a round about way which could otherwise be easily understood. Ignoring all other subjects it meddles with one which cannot be known by any amount of intellectual speculation and mental exertion. Apart from all these mind induces man to reprehensible conduct. Discursive knowledge is relative ; it is subject to analysis.

But indeterminate knowledge is attained through intuition when we become one with the subject. Such knowledge is synthetic ; it is integral and so cannot be analysed. In the opinion of Bergson : "By intuition is meant that kind of sympathy which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible." Young observes : "Through our feelings we experience the known but our intuition points to things that are unknown and hidden that by their very nature are secret."

Time and space are the limitations of our knowledge. The conception of Time and Space is relative. No country is to the east of some other because it is to the east of another. This is similarly true about time : When it is day in India it is night in America ; the time taken by a planet to travel once round the sun is different with different planets. A thing having one weight on the earth will have a different weight if it is taken to another planet. The cunning device of the atom bomb that has been made in America is probably already well-known to the inhabitants of some other planet for thousands and thousands of years : on the contrary, there may be some planets where the atom bomb will be discovered millions of years hence. Thus the conception of time and space is always relative. As nothing is fixed or permanent in the scale of Time and Space, the knowledge acquired by our mind and intellect does not always come to be true, because our mind and intellect are governed by Time, Space and Causality. This is why the knowledge acquired by mind and intellect is limited ; since it is limited it cannot impart the knowledge of the limitless.

The theory of knowledge has been finely explained by Schopenhaur in the following observations :—

1. "When a new object appears to us, it must have a cause, physical, physiological or psychological ; and this we

call the reason why it becomes. 2. Objects are referred to concepts more or less generally according to the logical rules of definitions, classification and inference; that is the reason of their being known. 3. Objects are mathematically determined by the position relatively to the other objects in space and time; that is the reason of their being. 4. Practical objects of ends of actions are determined by motive, the motive is the reason why one thing rather than another is done."

The motive of a man, therefore, originates from external stimulus. The fundamental law of psychophysics lays down that the intensity of sensation increases in arithmetical progression when the external stimulus increases in geometrical progression. It is enjoined, therefore, by the Hindu Yoga Śāstras that one should shut his eyes first in the practice of Yoga so that one's mind may not be influenced by the sights and incidents of the external world.

When there is a reaction due to a clash between the external objects and our sense organs, there is produced a vibration in the centre of mind and the mind gradually takes the shape of the external thing. Our external sense organs coming in contact with the outside world bring a particular change in the mental plane; at that time the mind like a flame of light goes out of the body through the apertures of the sense-organs and unites with the external object and assumes its from. Since the mind is illuminated by the light of the soul, the external things, too, get illuminated by it and then the soul recognises it and we gain knowledge about that object.

Mind helps in acquiring worldly knowledge but intuition brings us close to the knowledge of the world beyond. Mind belongs to the department of economy in the human organisation. Its utility is limited to the phenomenal world

alone. Logic is a mechanism of the so called 'correct reasoning' as is evolved by the human intellect which is nothing but a mental phase. The scope of logic is limited to the condition of space and time and so it fails to give us a true conception of the reality which can only be attained by intuition. Intelligent and shrewed men like Chārvāk and Huxley who were lacking in intuitive power, ultimately became atheists. As Kant says, "Neither on the one path—the empirical nor on the other—the transcendental can reason achieve any thing and that it stretches its wings in vain it it tries to soar beyond the world of senses by the mere power of speculation."

Bergson has very skilfully analysed the difference between intellect, intuition and instinct in the following lines : "Intellect and intuition represent two opposite directions of the word consciousness. Intuition goes in the very direction of life, intellect in the opposite direction,.....intellect is characterised by natural inability to know life, it helps to view the reality outside it. Instinct is sympathy and turned towards life". Our lacking in instinctive power may be compensated by the awakening of intuition. It is said that the aborigines were 22 cubits long in height and proportionately likewise in dimension. They were like giants in physical structure in the primitive age. But later on with the development of intellectual faculties in man the primitive man gradually became short in stature thus losing proportionately his physical bulk and strength. At present, an intelligent man feels the necessity of a faculty deeper, higher and more powerful than intellect. So he turns to the path of spirituality. Necessity is the mother of invention. So *Bodhi* or intuition was discovered to meet the demand. The world of phenomenon is open to intellect but to penetrate the realm of noumenon the 'Bodhi' is indispensible. So, in turn the activity of intellectual faculties requires to be suppressed

or eclipsed for ever so as to give proper scope for the awakening of intuitive power latent in man.

Intuition is rather akin to instinct. Instinct in man dwindles in proportion as intellect becomes more and more sharp. By the gradual development of intellectual faculties instinctive power in man has become dull but in the animal world instinct is still very active. If a cow or a dog is sold to a person living fifty miles away and it is taken there it will return at the first opportunity to its former master, though it may have to pass through devious paths or cross rivers, dense forests and vast deserts. The carrier pegions service in war and the activity of the hunting dogs are typical examples of the development of instinctive power in lower animals.

Man's superiority lies in the fact that he is a rational animal. Lower animals do not possess thinking power. This deficiency on the part of the animal is compensated to some extent by their instinct. Animals are inferior to men because they have no ideal before them, no standard of thought and so their life is not marked by any rise or fall in the standard of living. A human being can raise its standard by culture of mental faculties. Man descends to the level of lower creatures when the tender feelings of human heart are ignored. In the background of all praiseworthy activities there must be some high ideal; otherwise the internal passions may prevail upon him. So, it is necessary to follow the path of conscience and take up the ideal of really great men.

All creatures have, like men, power of perception through the external senses but the sense within (intuition) can be developed only in man. Lower animals lack in this and hence they cannot progress along the path of spirituality. In the case of human being, there is full opportunity for culture and development of proper sense perception and power of reasoning which helps the awakening of inner sense. And

then by practice of Yoga, intuitive power developes in man so as to make it possible for the infinite power of God to manifest itself through him. In any way, contrary to this, spirituality cannot grow in man and the field of objects beyond the senses remains unexplored for ever.

The wheel of the universe has got its axles and spokes all fixed and connected with *the great centre of life* which is all-pervading. The activity of sense organs should be closely watched so long as the life-energy in the individual is not brought under proper control. Prāṇa is also an instrument[1]; its restlessness is the feature of mind. It is only through control of mind and senses, that one can react on the centre of life or Prāṇa. When the restlessness in individual life is pacified and calmed by practice of Yoga man can contact the great life-centre of the universe. Experience of the external world depends entirely upon the harmonious working of the sense organs, mind and intellect. It is not at all possible for the limited capacity of these instruments to grasp the infinity which is unlimited. When the internal faculty, which is latent in man, is developed by the practice of Yoga, the light of the Soul is kindled and everything even which is beyond the reach of our senses becomes revealed. Consequently, nothing remains hidden from the Yogin[2]. He steps into the infinite region beyond this finite material plane and is blessed with glorious vision of the Brahman. In the world of religion, the absolute reality that is revealed in different ways is infinite. The Infinite has no beginning or end and it can neither be seen. nor touched, nor is audible nor grasped by any of the sense organs. But man, by the practice of Yogā, can transcend his mortal power and peep into the Infinity. Only love of God and strong urge within can raise the human

1. "करणत्वं प्राणानामुक्तं।" Also "प्राणान् एव प्राणः।"

2. "आत्मनो वा अरे दर्शनेन श्रवनेन मत्या विज्ञानेनेदं सर्वं विदितं।"

consciousness to its culmination enabling man to contact with the Infinite.

Mind is the controller of all sense and work organs. Knowledge of subtle substances can only be derived by subtle senses. Knowledge of subtle substances is acquired by mind concentrated and at rest, when by practice of Yoga the senses become subtle and pointed. The restless mind is pacified by conquering human passions in the same way as the fire is extinguished automatically when the fuel is consumed. Restless mind lends support to the power of *Rajas*; while it is the pacified and the calm state of mind which is favourable to the growth of *sattvam*. Only the one-ponited and concentrated mind can take us to the realm of life beyond the senses. The body, mind, *Prāṇa* and senses,—all restless impediments stand in the way of the descent of divine power in man. "In order to make oneself worthy of the descent of God in human receptacle one must try to finish the notion of ego, subdue the six passions of desire, anger etc. and avoid the application of force"—So said Lord Krishna (The Gita, XVIII. 53).

Our sense organs are quite busy and active in the external world but not so in the internal world. When their corresponding centres are further stirred to activity by practice our perception and mutual power are also greatly improved. It thus becomes possible for a man with developed psychic powers to read easily the mind of another man who happens to come before him. The motive at heart and the inner nature of a man are reflected in his countenance. A man, angry by nature, usually looks rough and rude. This disfiguration of the face due to anger and hatred may remain deeply imprinted on the face and may become visible in succeeding generations.

Ordinary knowledge is acquired by the study of worldly objects through the senses, whereas the extra-ordinary

knowledge of the seer is derived by the light of intuition. The *Yogin* or seer by the force of meditation attains the stage of *Samādhi* and acquires knowledge of the ultimate through unobstructed *yogic* vision. The penetrating vision of a seer pierces into the very heart of truth and realises its very essence leaving no room for doubt. This kind of vision is *Bodhi*. Human intelligence is a minute fraction of it. That there is something even finer and higher than intelligence has now been admitted by Western philosophers : "There is developed in some men another sort of consciousness, another sense, beyond those normal qualities of the self"—'*Mysticism*'. "Its light never changes"—says saint Augustine. "Cease to identify your intellect with Self.....we are not pure intellect ; there remains a vague, somewhat nebulous substance at whose expense the luminous neucleus we call the intellect is formed"—observes Miss. Underhill." "It is a new type of unity—intuition". "So far, the faculty of exterior observations has been fairly perfected. Next step is in the development of the capacity for interior cognition until a similar standard of perfection has been reached"—'Science of Seership.' It is a faculty different from mind and intelligence ; "different from that which reasons and is denominated rational"—said Plotinus. "It is a definite transcendental principle in man beyond intellect"—Says Eucken. The Western philosophers call it *novum organum*—a new faculty but from the remote past the seers of India have been well acquainted with it. The difference between *Bodhi* and *Buddhi* was well-known to the Hindus from time immemorial. This has been discussed in the Upaniṣads of great antiquity.

The Ṛṣi of the Ṛgveda declares : "The more I am going ahead in search of that divine light within the recesses of my heart the more and the farther are my mind and intellect receeding from me." That is to say, mind, intellect and senses are

sacrificing themselves at the altar of that divine light. To put it in a more concrete form, they are becoming insensible and so inactive one after another on the way to the Supreme Truth. The utterance of the said Ṛṣi proves that the senses along with the mind and intellect are quite unfit to lead us to that divine realm of the Infinite[1]. The path of that divine kingdom is illuminated with the light of Supreme Ātman which is intuitive light in man. Therefore, we should awaken this third faculty of wisdom, namely *Bodhi* or intuition, which rests within us and which is beyond all sense perceptions. Proceed with its help and you will reach the kingdom of divine illumination.

"The Soul alone is to be seen, heard, meditated and realised" declares the Śruti[2]. For realisation of the Self the Vedānta and other Śāstras should be read again and again and their import interpreted by the preceptor should be pursued with rapt attention. With such repeated analytical reading, hearing and thinking the doubts and the conflicts of mind, desires, *māyā* and passions are all uprooted, and the filth of mind is finally washed away. By the discusssion on the topics of the Śāstras their inner meaning should be intaken by the intellect and after that, it has been enjoined in the Vedānta to realise that import in the light of intuition through spiritual practices. To reveal the truth, to dive deep into the occult science and for the realisation of Self, the awakening of *Bodhi* or intuition and its help are essential, if not indispensable. The Soul reveals itself only in the contemplative vision (Bṛ. Ār Up. II 4. 5). Through the practice of *yoga* it is possible to know the Truth of truths.

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1. "वि मे कर्णा पतो वि मे चक्षुर्व्वी इदं ज्योतिहृदय आहितं यत्।
वि मे मनश्चरति दूर आ धीः किं स्विद्वक्ष्यामि किमु नु मनिष्ये॥"

2. "आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यो मैत्रेयि"—
Bṛ. Ār. Up II 4. 5.

The Universal Truth is all-comprehensive. It can be realised by becoming one with all the objects of creation. Truth in the domain of nature is a subject of science and analysis but the ultimate truth is to be realised in Soul alone through direct intuition. The Supreme truth manifests itself like a flash of lightning, but the knowledge of the phenomenal world including different branches of learning is acquired bit by bit and we all know that this accumulation of knowledge is not Self-realisation. Truth of the ultimate is one, it exists in unity and reveals itself as a whole, whereas the knowledge of a thing is gathered only in parts in an order of succession. God is All-Love and All-Bliss; so, Supreme Truth is realised in an ecstasy of divine love and heavenly joy.

Hindu Philosophy declares in unmistakable terms that insight into Reality does not originate from analytical intellect. Intellect can give only partial idea of Godhead but it is intuition that reveals Him to us. Science is helpless to unfold the mystery behind the visible. Not only the seers of the East but the great teachers, saints, and philosophers of the Western world like Plato, Plotinus, St. Paul, St. Augustine and many others held the same view. The externals of the phenomenal world are transparent to the human intellect but the fact behind them is visible to intuition alone. The right way to ascertain our truer Self lies through our attempts to scrutinise our thoughts and actions in the light of pure reason. Science drags on indefinite programme of research that will never touch reality. "Mysticism at its highest and simplest expression is not a sensible vision nor the intellectual revelation; it is the intuitive apprehension of a beyond that is present, of an infinitude in which my personal consciousness is momentarily observed in order to find itself in a greater and better certitude."

—'La Religion, 2nd Edition, P. 37

That the light of intuition is not something like physical light is evident from the Vedanta Sutra I.1.24 and *Chhā Up.* III, 13, 7 which declare : "This light shines in the highest world beyond which there are no other worlds, that the same light which is within man." The Source of this celestial light is Ātman. It is not the light of the individual soul or the self of the Jiva e.g. ego. In reality, there is no such thing as ego. The passage 'The real self is to be described as neti neti' in the Sutra III. 2.26 of Bṛ. Up. implies that below it everything is unreal. The author of the *Panchadśi* has declared, "The individual's bondage or liberation is nothing but imaginary, for the Soul is an entity that is eternally perfect ; his state of bondage is born of ignorance."

Intuition or *Bodhi* is not the outcome or development, elevation or evolution of human intellect. It has been pointed out before that mind is a product of matter and intellect is an aspect of the mind. Both mind and intellect have no light of consciousness of their own. The light of intelligence we observe in the mental activities of man is a reflection of the Soul-light. When mind is a bit enlightened by this reflected light of Ātman, it acquires the surname '*buddhi*' or intellect. So the property which does not pertain to mind cannot be said to develop into intuitive consciousness. The fact is that in *Samādhi*, the reflection (*Pratibimba*) reverts to its original (*Bimba*). One is empirical—a shadow while the other is the original and real. Intuitive faculty remains covered under intellectual activities as fire covered under ashes. Ashes that hide the glow of fire may absorb a little heat but it can radiate neither heat nor light of the same magnitude as the fire does. If the realisation of Reality were possible through intellect, intuition would lose its importance. It is only when intellect fails that intuition comes forward and plays its own part. Saṃkar holds that it is only when reason comes to

rest, all distinctions are reconciled and no error can take place. Intuitive light emanates from the Central Sun or the Soul. The sheath of intelligence is the fourth sheath within the human body, whereas intuition occupies the fifth one viz., the sheath of bliss which is the sheath of the immortal Ātman. "Intellect is to the mind what the eye or ear is to the body',—opines Wildon Car. The function of the ear is not the same as that of the eyes. Intuitive knowledge is non-perceptual. Intuition gives integral experience whereas intellect indulges in discursive knowledge and so the latter cannot reach the heart of a thing. All the perceptions, therefore, through intellect are partial and seldom correct. Katha Up. I. 3. 12 recognises the existence of a higher and more subtle faculty of perception above intellect which when awakened, the *Yogin* acquires an intuitive subtler vision that enables him to see through the Truth : "Dṛśyate tvagrayā buddhyā sūkṣmayā sukṣmadarśiviḥ."

Man cannot sleep so long as his mind is occupied with some thoughts. In spite of his best efforts he cannot sleep, because such an endeavour involves some amount of mental exertion which keeps him awake. When he is free from thoughts and there is no strain of mind and senses, his limbs relax and he soon falls asleep. Similarly when the mind becomes inactive by the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* the Yogin enters into *Samādhi* ; a vacuum is created within resulting in total forgetfulness of his being and only then the light of the Soul or intuitive consciousness shines of itself. For the awakening of intuition, therefore, what is required is not any effort on the part the mind but its total inactivity. On the other hand the light of intellect shines when mind is deeply engrossed in a subject and so active. In the revelation of intuitive light mind must stand apart ceasing to function. An active mind has a sense of duality. All sorts of sensation depend upon mind-object contact and it implies duality.

So long as this sense of duality persists, so long we live in the egoistic plane, *Ātman* does not reveal. Intuition is the light of the Soul and this divine light manifests when ego dies out.

According to the Upaniṣads, it is the *knowledge* of the Soul in the non-soul that is ingorance ; the Buddhist have designated precisely this conception of the non-soul in the Soul (vide text of *Dharmasangani*). When Nāgasenā was asked "who is the real Nāgasenā" ? he answered, "Nāgasenā is but the combination of the body and the sense-organs." But according to the Upaniṣads the body, the sense-organs, the mind, and intellect etc., are but adjuncts, they are born of Ignorance ; therefore, they are mortal but the Soul is immortal. According to the Buddhist faith, *Nirvaṇa* is attained with the extinction of attachment. The seer of the Upaniṣads has also said, "Emancipation is attained by suppressing all the modifications of *Citta* or mind". It is thus observed that although they have difference of opinion about the explanation of the nature of the soul both give identical direction as to the path for attaining the Soul Supreme. From this the natural conclusion follows that the difference between the Hindu conception of the Soul and the Buddhist conception of non-soul is only verbal. Moreover, it is not much open to serious objection to conceive the Soul in the non-soul after the aphorism "Sarvaṃ Khalvidaṃ Brahma" given in the Upaniṣads. Such an opinion is specially not at variance with the Buddhist faith, for it is natural to realise the Soul in the non-soul for the religion whose only message is non-violence, service to living beings and offering love to all. The Sāṇkhya Sutra, 3/23 observes that emancipation is attained only through knowledge. It is that knowledge by which the difference between the individual and the Brahman disappears and ignorance is destroyed.

When true knowledge dawns the seer realises that he himself is the One Impartite Brahman. This opinion has

been given in verse 1/16 of *Māṇḍukya Kārikā*. In verses 4-5 of the *S'vetaśvatara* Upaniṣad it has been stated, "The Male Being in order to enjoy embraces Nature. When enjoyment is over He extricates himself from the embrace of Nature and becomes independent again. Being independent He winds up within Himself Nature along with the entire sense-manifolds—the two return to the One". To be grounded in monism we have to renounce all we have. "In order to become the knower of All-Self, thou hast first of self to be the knower. To reach the knowledge of that self thou hast to give up self to non-self, being to non-being."—'The voice of Silence'. That which remains when all desires for enjoyment, sense of discrimination and all adjuncts with the illusion of the stamp of individuality in the individual are given up, is verily the Soul—the Brahman that is the receptacle or the merging point of all things.

If the reality could be intellectually realised the sages who spoke so highly of the *bodhi* or the Ṛtambharā Prajnā, would have been the last persons to mention it at all in the Vedās and the Upaniṣads.

Intellectuality is a function of the brain or cerebrum which is a grey matter inside the skull. The brain is not self-luminous and self-comprehensive. When the light of the Soul-consciousness reflects on it, the brain is illumined and made conscious to understand things around in that light. The Soul is pure consciousness and its light is intuition. The self-spontaneity of Soul works through this light which illumines the human intellect. Maharṣi Charak and Śuśruta place the function of the heart above the function of the brain and recognise the former as the seat of all secret knowledge. Puscal is of the opinion that the brain has not the same stuff of reason like the heart. Referring to the inability of intellect to penetrate the noumena, Ruysbroeck observes: "Where the intelligence must rest without, love and desire

can enter in." Love is an attribute of heart and not that of head. According to Rouseau, the feeling of heart outweighs the logic of the brain. Bergson holds that intuition is the only means of achieving direct and integral knowledge. These great sages and philosophers claim to assert that intuition or the feeling of heart is the secret door of the transcendental knowledge : "Hṛdayena Satyaṃ jānāti hṛdaye hyeva satyaṃ pratiṣṭhitaṃ" (Bṛ Āṛ. III. 9. 25). When the mind is made still and heart pure, the man developes a sixth sense through which comes the experience of some super-sensual reality that lies beyond the ken of intellect. It is only when intellect stands aside that intuition steps in. This phenomena alone is enough to silence the philosophers who argue that intuition is the development of intellect.

The view that Supreme Truth is not within the reach of intellect has been supported in Verse 13 of the authoritative book '*Astosahasrikā Prajnāpāramitā*' of the Buddhists : "*Nahi Cittam vā cetanā chaitasiko bāhtra dharmah Prabartate*". The moral order is not revealed either by thought or by factors of consciousness. "Learn to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. Learn above all to separate Head—learning from Soul-wisdom. This "Eye" from the "Heart" doctrine"—observed Madam Blavatsky. *The Prajnāpāramitā*—reads : "He who visualizes under contemplation That which is undefiled, without any modification and change like the Ether, he alone realizes the Buddha."

Intellect ceases to function when mind-object contact is severed. According to the Kathopaniṣad, this state of our being is the beatitude of all human existences. Saṃkar holds that no error can creep in, if intellect ceases to function. When identity is established between the Brahman, Jiva and the World, everything becomes known. So for want of knowable objects, the activity of mind, senses and intellect also comes to a stand-still (S. B. on the Katha. Up. 1. 2. 8).

One who has realised that the function of intellect, mind, prāṇa and senses is being activated by Soul feels the existence of Ātman behind them and then Brahman is realised[1]. Self-realisation does not originate in a discursive mind. There is actually no relation between intellectual speculation and Self-realisation. So it is as ridiculous for a person to attempt the acquisition of the Supreme knowledge with the help of intellect as for a dwarf trying to catch the moon by stretching out his hands. The realisation of the Ultimate Truth is a subject belonging to the domain of pure consciousness where intellect has no access.

Intellect is the faculty of knowing phenomenal objects whereas intuition deals with the noumenal world. In intuitive level both the subject and object disappear and what survives in that transcendental stage is pure consciousness. Pure consciousness is the highest intuition and it is not the attribute of anything else like intellect but it is the Thing-in-Itself.

"You cannot realise truth along any path, through any system, through any learning or teacher but only through the flame of self-consciousness,"—says Krishnamurti. Commenting on it Lily Herber observes in her "Krishnamurti and the world Crisis", P. 36 : "This does not mean that reality is self-consciousness. It is of the ego and when we are rid of our consciousness, there is reality that is free of self-consciousness". So long as the consciousness of self persists, reality is not realised. It is only when the mental activity and even the thought of 'I exist' cease that reality reveals itself. Evidently Krishnamurti's 'self-consciousness' is Soul-consciousness. Like the *Paśyanti Vāk* or the seeing word of the *Yoga-S'āstra, buddhi* or intellect is also supplemented by

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1. "प्राणस्य प्राणमुत चक्षुषश्चक्षुरुत श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो ये मनोविदुः। ते निचिक्युर्ब्रह्मपुराणमग्र्यम्॥"—Br. Ār. Up IV. 4. 18.

Paśyanti buddhi that sees the truth. This *Paśyanti buddhi* in Kathopaniṣad is referred to as *Agrābuddhi* which is the same as *Rtambharā Prajnā* of the Upaniṣads and intuition of the western philosophy. It is the sixth sense, capable of transcendental vision. The light of intuition emanates direct from the Soul and intellect is its reflected light or shadow. Intellect, however subtle, cannot play the part of intuition. Intuition is *Jyoti* or white light of pure consciousness whereas intellect is material and it cannot produce consciousness and throw any light of itself.

Perception by mind and senses implies duality. The Buddhists hold that sensation is produced by mind-object contact which postulates duality. Intellect gives only a vague idea of the Ultimate Reality apart from itself and intuition grasps it in entirety. So man draws an outline of his adorable deity in his mind, gives it a concrete form and thus an attributed god becomes the object of his worship. Intuition is the only vehicle that can take us to the land of the Absolute.

Hegel's absolute is a God with attribute who divides Himself into three aspects—self, not self and absolute idea. Though he differs with Hindu philosophy in point of identity of the Godhead, yet he is right in saying that the absolute or the universal consciousness is the source of jiva-consciousness and without any attribute. On entering into cause-body Godhead became Puruṣottam, the Maheśvar who is lord of Māyā. Assuming a subtle body he came to be known as Hiraṇyagarbha and in gross body He is the universe including all His manifestations and incarnations. Brahman in causal and subtle body is realisable in deep meditation. Brahman as related to the world *i.e.*, as incarnation being accessible to our intellect and senses becomes our adorable Lord. Brahman appears differently to different individuals, according to their respecting capacity and stage of development of the votaries.

The Upaniṣads declare Him unknowable, as eyes cannot see Him, words can not express Him, mind with intellect shrinks back baffled. Really, to obtain the knowledge of Brahman, a devotee has to merge his senses in mind, mind in intellect, intellect in ego, ego in Mahat tattva and Mohat tattwa in Soul. In the state of Nirvikalpa Samādhi when one realises Brahman, his senses with mind and intellect become, as if dead altogether. So how can the senses with mind and intellect which, due to passivity through samādhi, could not know Brahman be expected, after the break of samādhi, to reveal Him in words? Kathopniṣad holds that subtler than the senses are the five qualities or the essence of matter viz. Rupa, Rasa, Gandha, Sparśa and Sabda or appearance, taste, smell, touch and sound. Mind is subtler than these five qualities, intellect is finer than mind and subtler than individual intelligence is cosmic intelligence or Mahat tattva. Prakriti or Nature is finer than Mahat tattva and subtler than Prakriti is Puruṣa or Ātman—the Soul. Nothing is subtler than Ātman. Soul is the finality of everything and the source of all reality. It is in all creatures but not perceived by senses. Only the knowing sages visualise it in their Ṛtambhara Prajnā or intuition. Kathopniṣad asserts that Ātman can be seen only by 'Agrābuddhi' or Superior knowledge: "Dṛṣyate tvagrayā budhhyā". This "Agrā buddhi" is pure reason of Kant and 'Bodhi' or 'Ṛtambhara Prajna' of the Hindu Philosophy. Bodhi' is the light of the Soul; Soul is seen only in its own light; earthly light cannot reveal it.

The annihilation of one's egotism alone is not enough for a man to attain the knowledge of Brahman. He has to realise the presence of that unitary existence in all—animate or inanimate. When by the practice of *yoga Rajas* and *Tamas* or the restlessness and darkness of mind are overcome, the five kinds of nescience—ignorance, egotism, attachment, malice, and fear of death are also removed. By

the destruction of nescience human mind is purified and *samprajnāta* samādhi ensues easily. *Samaprajnāta samādhi*, according to the degree of concentration of mind, is of four kinds—*Savitarka*, *Savichāra*, *Sānanda* and *Asmitā*. In *Samprajnāta samādhi* some thought or feeling is present. In *Asamprajnāta Samādhi* none of the kind exists. It is like a state of dead slumber. In *Asamprajnāta Samādhi*, the Ātman is illumined by its own light or *jyoti*. *Ātman* is Brahman and the knowledge of *Ātman* is the same as that of Brahman. So the Upaniṣads enjoin us to know and worship *Ātman* as the most valuable and the dearest of all.

When the light of Ātman is reflected in *buddhi* and the latter is super-imposed on the former, Ahaṃkāra (ego) is produced which plays both the part of the subject and the object. Though Ahaṃkāra is material, it gains consciousness by the reflected light of the Soul and behaves as a knower. When Ahaṃkāra is super-imposed on Ātman, the former in the light of the latter becomes known. So ego or Ahaṃkāra is an object of self-consciousness.

In self-consciousness egoism predominates : Ahaṃpratyaye *hi* ahaṃkāra saṃbalitaṃ caitanyaṃ *abavāste* (*Vedāntā Paribhāsā*, Introduction Chapter, P-29 of C. U. Edition). According to Vācaspati, the Soul, on the other hand is intuited directly and immediately (*Bhamati* i, ii, P. 39). *Ātman* is fully real and so fully knowable.

A wonderful invention in the domain of science, an expression of poetic beauty, the aptitude of a social and political leader and the illumination of a *Yogin* are the direct momentary flashes of the same eternal light. The different grades of consciousness respond to the different stimuli. At a certain stage when the mind dies out, the light of pure consciousness emanates and floods every nook and corner, which enables the *Yogin* to acquire integral vision of this world and beyond.

Intellect discusses a subject on logical point but the intuition perceives it as if touched with one's own hand. Intuition takes us to the very inwardness of the truth whereas intellect wanders at its outskirts and picks up pebbles for pearls. The light of intellect grows more and more faint and dim in our old age, but the light of the Soul never changes ; it is eternal.

When I see somebody simultaneously dancing and singing, it is to be understood that there is something in me that sees and hears at the same time. "Mind cannot attend to two things at a time."—declares *Kausitiki* Upaniṣad, iii. 2. So the existence of a separate entity apart from mind and senses is established. When we want to say something mind arranges the words but the lips and tongue utter them mechanically at the direction of the soul. The act of our senses is not due to physiological causes as in that case mind loses its importance—not to speak of the Soul. The real seat of all our knowledge is neither in mind nor in senses but in the Soul itself—it is the subject and object at the same time. The subject Soul is objectively seen as the world.

Mind can grasp reality only as an abstraction and not as a concrete whole. This is the gross defect of mental faculties. But we should not be disappointed. The mind is not the last stoppage in the path of evolution ; still there is super-mind to evolve endowed with spiritual light which is intuition. So the next step in the long chain of evolution will be an intuitive one. In the face of world-evolution, no organic principle, no theory or doctrine, institutional, scientific or philosophical, no standard—either social, moral or ethical that exists today is immutable as they have no ultimate value. In every succeeding step of evolution they are sure to undergo certain fundamental changes, modifications or complete transformations due to the emergence of this intuitive power in men.

The difference in true value of things, theory and doctrine arises from the differences in taste and from intellectual error. "The human-mind" says Sri Aurobindo "which relies on thought, conceives that to be the highest or the main process of knowledge but in the spiritual order thought is secondary and not an indispensable process.'—'*The life Divine*', Vol. ii, P. 994. Logical conclusion and the result of scientific research are not final. Though they appear to be so under certain time, space and condition, still afterwards in many cases they are found to prove otherwise. The intrinsic value of things cannot be determined by Science. Atom bomb, for instance, served the purpose of U. S. A. but proved fatal to the Japanese. Science deals with objective value which is not ultimate and in consequence thereof the result of its experiments is not always beneficial to the world in an impersonal sense. The solution as to values lies wholly beyond the realm of scientific knowledge. When we approach to determine logically or scientifically the subjectivity of values, our mind gets stranded on the shores of differences. So Bertrand Russel observes, "Science has nothing to say about values and cannot prove such propositions as 'It is better to love than to hate' or 'kindness is more desirable than cruelty'. Science can tell us much about the means of realising our desires but it cannot say that one desire is preferable to another. Science does not include art or friendship or various other valuable elements in life." Science is a means and not the end-in-itself. The scientific and intellectual attainments whether correct or not, remain yet to be seen.

"Religious realisation is an experience which as a matter of principle lies beyond the domain of Science."—observed Dr. Malinowski. And so Sir, J. Arther Thomson said : "Science cannot apply its methods to the mystical and spiritual." The world beyond is the jurisdiction of the mystics who have awakened intuition. The knowledge that

brings salvation cannot be gained either by the study of the Vedās or by much learning. *Mundak* states that knowledge is of two kinds—higher and lower. The knowledge of the second order can be acquired by the study of the Vedās, science and grammer, but the higher knowledge, the knowledge of the Self is that by which Brahman is realised. So *Nārada* once regretfully said : "Though I am well-acquainted with the verses of the Vedās that provide me with the sacred *mantras* I do not know the Self." For the attainment of knowledge of the Self, a divine insight is necessary which can be obtained by awaking intuition in the path of *Yoga*.

Intuition is the only divine light with the help of which we can pass to the stage of Gnostic Being or the Superman. It brings to the Yogin the message from heaven that fills his heart with a hope of higher destiny of man. The destiny of men is not to be mere man but to be infinitely higher. "Man is a bridge and not the end"—rightly said Nietzche. The emergence of a race of Supermen is the end and aim of humanity.

Intuition gives us direct access to the heart of a thing and thereby coincides with what is unique in it. Bergson defines intuition as integral experience. When by practice of yoga the activity of mind totally dies out, a yogin gets an integral experience and a clear vision. The more the Self is released from its physical and mental imprisonment, the more it becomes capable of shedding light to our surface consciousness or receiving the same from a higher source. The light of intuition emanates not only from within but also from outside—from an individual supermind. Only the pure-hearted soul can catch this divine light.

The existence of thirty moons in the limitless sky the truth of which has already been established by the scientists through telescope should not be denied by us, simply because we cannot see more than one with our naked eye. Similarly

the mystic vision does not stand disproved on the ground that its truth cannot be verified by a telescope or on a scientific basis. Since Self or Soul in its essence and reality is akin to the Supreme Reality, the light of the Soul alone can unfold Truth. The integral character of truth floats on the mirror of intuition that lands us in the land of pure consciousness.

To obliterate the frontier between phenomena and noumena, it calls for the awaking of a new faculty of apprehension—'*novum ovum*'. Kant holds that when we apply our senses to realise noumena we are thrown back into the realm of phenomena. Findings of intellect fall far below the fundamental Reality; they cannot enlighten us much about our remote past nor do they throw much light on our endless future. Perfect Knowledge is truth entire; it cannot be grasped by partial consciousness of intellect which falls by its own weight. So the Ṛṣis of the Upainṣads inspire us with the message: "Tato bhuyaḥ"—wake up and arise from the state of partial consciousness to that of complete consciousness, taking to yoga. Man can reach this stage by turning away from all that is mundane and subjective. The lowest strata of creation is the stronghold of mental darkness but at the other end there shines the resplendent light of entire consciousness which is *Ātman*. Between these two poles men of normal consciousness swing this way and that way, sometimes having a glimpse of eternity and sometimes being drowned in utter darkness.

We are chained and stupified, as it were, by the ties of our domestic life. Potentiality is inherent in every soul which always seeks for self-expression, either through beauty or through love or through truth. When we find ourselves in perfect harmony with Man, the eternal, we feel His beauty and realise it as truth. Truth and beauty, love and bliss are co-existent and inseparable; they all go hand in hand together. We cannot conceive of one without realising the other. They begin to peep out through us when our personal

character becomes sublime and mind disciplined. *In deep ecstasy* a Yogin filled with celestial joy sees His divine beauty and finally becomes one in love with Him who is All-Truth. Truth is the perfect symbol of God—He is All-Truth. Reality is realised when individual soul blossoms in all its perfection and unites with the Absolute.

The first and the very hard cover that has developed around Ātman is the egoistic self. Ego makes man believe that it is the Self or Ātman. But this self-imposed personality lacks in essential reality though it plays an important part in the individual life of man. Ego is fascinated to think itself high or low, rich or poor, happy or unhappy, the doer of all deeds. It attaches us more and more closely to the environments of this illusory world and makes life miserable. The limited 'I' is a mere shadow of the Ātman or Soul whose very nature excels all limitations.

A *Jiva* is to be *S'iva*—individuality is to attain Divinity. With this object in view, every individual being is marching on, consciously or unconsciously to that destined goal of eternity. The innate craving of the individual soul to attain perfection is the key-note to the *summun bonum* of human life. Sooner or later, every creature will, one day find itself to be the proud possessor of Absolute existence, knowledge and bliss and enjoy eternal rest in the bosom of the infinite ocean of bliss called *Bhumā* or the quintessence of joy. The greatness is the eternal happiness itself. This is the sure final destiny of all living beings. The individual has forgotten its original true Self and has veiled itself in the garment of illusion or Māyā, born of nescience due to ignorance or *Avidyā*. Let the truth come out by tearing aside the veil of ignorance and be revealed to the world.

The light of intuition alone can transform the logical suggestion into spiritual perception. The knowledge of the spiritual world must be spiritually known. The yoga-

philosophy of the Hindus shows the method to awaken intuitive power in man that will bridge over the gulf between this world and the world beyond. When mind comes under control, its restlessness is gone by the practice of yoga ; deep meditation settles mind so perfectly on the object of meditation that jiva-consciousness is absorbed in it and we become one with the object of meditation. In such a state of our being the truth is revealed on the mirror of our pure consciousness. While depicting this ecstatic condition of self, required for the attainment of supreme knowledge, St. Augustine in his '*Confessions*' says : "Suppose all the tumults of the flesh in us were hushed for ever, and all sensible images of earth and sea and air were put to silence ; suppose the heavens were still and even the soul spoke no words to itself, but passed beyond all thoughts of itself ; suppose all dreams and revelations of imagination were hushed with every word and sign and everything that belongs to this transitory world". It is clear, therefore, that for the realisation of Supreme truth, the inactivity of mental faculty is essential. We must shatter down the walls standing between the surface mind and the subliminal Self so that the light of the Soul may flood our surface consciousness, making everything visible and knowable.

Intuitional revelation comes in a mystical way which neither the science nor the logic can touch. The logical views on the same subject vary with different individuals but the mystical knowledge is seldom found to be different in different seers. The seers of all countries and of all ages realised the one and the same Ultimate Truth. As a matter of fact, their views on the great problems of human life are peculiarly synonymous. So Dean Inge was right in saying : "I know nothing more remarkable than the unanimity of the mystics, ancient, mediaeval and modern, Protestants, Catholics and even Buddhists or Mohammedans." The concurrence of the views on main points of mysticism which is evident from the

sacred texts of all religions in the world, proves the validity of mystic revelation. So mystic revelation cannot be ignored as an act of mere hallucination.

Both the individual soul and Supreme Soul are immortal. To bring about their union, it is necessary, therefore, to follow the traditional method. Contemplation in the inner Self is that method. The Supreme Soul is like an ocean and the individual soul is like a drop of water. The drop is to lose itself in the ocean by proceeding along the path of Yoga (abstract meditation). This is the instruction given in the Hindu philosophy of Yoga. Meditation is an act of attention, an effort of will. Concentration is that state of mind in which will and thought become fused.

Yoga is the thoroughfare leading to the Infinite. The path of yoga transcends the limit of nature, and penetrates into the divine realm of the unknown. Individual soul stands as a bridge—a connecting link between finite and the Infinite. Supreme Soul can be realised by Soul alone. There is no other causeway. So, know you first your own Self and transcend mortality. The knowledge of the Self begets the knowledge of the Supreme. Shallow knowledge of Psychology, physical science or mathematical exactness will be of no avail to know the unknown. To know the world beyond something spiritual is essential.

Scrutinise everything on the mirror of your pure consciousness. Cast a penetrating eye inside your ownself. In the very depths of your being there flows a current which is contrary to the brute nature of man. *Bodhi* or the light of the Soul alone can take us to the spiritual fountain of this stream of hallowed consciousness. Plunge yourself in deep meditation of the Supreme Being—your individuality and personality will bo swept away by the divine current within—whither nobody knows, only your consciousess will find the self possessed by a being higher and greater than the

self but still identical with it. This is the ultimate end of Yoga—the cult of union.

The naked follow the naked Christ. So, by the practice of *Yoga* your consciousness has to be isolated from the five-fold envelopes of this mortal coil. To enter that sublime region of the infinite, formation of a vacuum within is essential. When through deep meditation we attain a stage of *Samādhi* our mind becomes perfectly blank and truth is reflected on the mirror of our pure consciousness. The awakening of transcendental consciousness, together with a feeling of perfect bliss is the end which every Yogin aspires after. This has been the time-honoured tradition of the Hindus.

The unity of the whole organic world is based on the conception that a common Soul pervades the whole Universe. That is the connecting link between man and Man the Eternal. So, when you acquire the knowledge of the Soul, the knowledge of the Universal Soul shall be added unto you. As a lost cow may be traced and found out by following its foot prints, the Supreme Soul can similarly be traced by reverting the steps along the route or course by which the Soul came down to this plane.

"This above all,—to Thine ownself be true ;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

(Shakespeare)

Therefore, O Lord, take off the veils from me, reveal Thyself to me in Thy paramount beauty of luminous form, show me your *Viswa Rupa* which overlaps the finite, and let me O Lord, realise the all-pervading One Who I am.

RELIGION

The word *Dharma* (Religion) is derived from the root *Dhṛ* which means to hold—to protect. What holds the world and protects us from wordly evils is *Dharma* or religion. Religion eliminates the evil propensities, crept into our character and gives us a push towards the unfolding of our divine nature. It shapes the moral feeling and reveals benign character of our being. Fichte defined God as 'the moral order of the universe.' The world is sustained by religion ; it is the only fort whence we can fight against the demons of our passions and save ourselves from downfall and corruption. Religion grows in man the sense of his oneness with God. The eternal divine fire which is burning in every human heart bursts into flame by the very touch of religion. When it enters the frail house of a human body, it first burns the passions, then the false ego, and at last it consumes everything. True religion lies in the moral worth and its value and utility is determined by its capacity to uphold a man in his life of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, making him perfect and divine. Morality is the foundation stone on which is built the great edifice of the temple of manhood and it raises a man above the level of animality.

The philosophical significance of *dharma* is truth, though it has now come to be identified with some social injunctions. Man must stick to the truth and it is his *dharma*. Everything perishes but truth always survives and triumphs in the long run. Mahatmā Gandhi observed : "Denial of God, we have known. Denial of truth, we have not known". *Dharma* is the ideal of man, it is his destiny. Our destiny finds its fulfilment in Brahman, because, our soul is akin to Brahman and we cannot remain fully satisfied unless the river is carried to the

ocean. "You are complete in God-head,"—so comments St. Paul. He says, "As science is the liberation of our knowledge in the universal reason, religion is the liberation of our individuality in the Universal Person,"

Hallboch observes : "If we go back to the beginning we shall find that ignorance and fear created gods". Another philosopher remarks that religion is born of agony. It is only when man received Nature, "red in tooth and claw" that he began to look up to the Nature gods and to worship them. Man's thirst for greater and higher knowledge, his hunger for the Absolute brought into existence, ethics, philosophy and spirituality. Though man now remains hypnotised by the glamour of the modern civilisation, still in the core of his being he is haunted every moment by a distant call of the invisible and the unknown. Man is rooted above, so he feels an upward attraction. Religion is indeed the breath of our nostril and blood of our veins and we cannot do without it. A man without a religious turn of mind really drags an animal existence.

Infinity overlaps and transcends the finite. The path which leads to the centre of infinity, to the lap of God, is true religion. Each religion moves along different radii to reach the same centre and they reach it only to find that their destination was the same. The centre is the point of concord and reconciliation. When one reaches there all the differences disappear. The diverse forms of religion and irreligion have their origin in the eternal quest of the unknown and the Infinite. It is through the divine vision of the eternal and ever-wakeful Soul i.e., in the path of religion and spirituality that we can have direct knowledge and realisation of our Lord's infinite mercy, endless grace, variegated moods and unlimited glory. And it is through the great hunger for the absolute that all the religions of the world to-day have come into being. The paths may be different but the goal is

the same—the direct realisation of that unseen supreme Being. All the sacred texts—all the creeds have borne that one and only person and have been reveted to that one and the only person. The different preceptors—the spiritual leaders of the world who have known the truth do also hold the same view and they all reveal only one existence and one Reality that Brahman is one and without a second. In all countries and in all ages, irrespective of caste and creed, this stands as the eternal religion or *Sanātan Dharma* of the world. Such true religion suits every age, clime, race and nationality. *Dharma* furnishes us with a complete philosophy of life. It stands for the furtherence of world fellowship. It reawakens the inner Self, dormant in man in every sphere of life, physical, mental and spiritual.

Truth reveals itself in the path of religion when falsehood prevails. Soul is God and God is truth. When untruth is rampant in the world it is time for God to incarnate Himself in the world to save the pious and punish the vicious. The light of the rising sun begins to flicker in the eastern horizon at the darkest hour of night. The night just before dawn assumes its darkest aspect. So when untruth becomes aggressive man aspires after truth and inclines to the path of religion. Religion is the law of God ; it is the truth—the living force or *dharma* that sustains the world. The denial of truth shakes the very foundation of man's faith and makes all the best arguments of the logicians null and void. If truth is disapproved—if religion of man be violated the very foundation of morality is demolished. God is both truth and love. Soul being akin to God is of the nature of love and truth as well. So, having recourse to irreligiosity, if we hate and illtreat others we shall act against our true nature and go against the law of God. Going counter to His law, we cannot expect to have grace of the law-giver. I quote here a few lines from Mahātmā Gāndhi, who was a Satyā-grahi upto

the last moment of his life : "There is an unalterable law governing everything that exists or lives. It is not a blind law ; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings.....That law which governs all life is God. Law and law-giver are one." Elsewhere he says, "I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a living-power that is changeless ; that informing power or Spirit is God, and since nothing else that I can see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is."—'Mahatma Gandhi's ideas' by C. F. Andrews, P. 47. The ideas laid down in these few lines is the central theme of Indian philosophy and idealism.

For the salvation of the soul the first thing necessary is birth as a human being. After that is needed awakening in the heart the hunger for the Soul's freedom. The salvation of man depends upon the manner and extent of his exertion through religion towards the Infinite ; it is not like a ripe mango to be dropped from heaven one fine morning as a divine grace. The path has been chalked out and we are only required to step forward. Morality of a mechanical type will not take a man to God. We should lay more stress on our conduct than on mere dogmas. Greed and pride, vanity and luxury have sapped the backbone of morality in man. The life to-day has become an unbearable burden with the mockery of modern civilisation. The so-called civilisation of the day has practically demolished the foundation of the great edifice of moral and spiritual excellence of humanity. At this hour humanity lies wounded in the home of its own children. Religion alone can change this current of perilous corruption to a better course. Religion is born in misery ; it aims at the total annihilation of all human sufferings. Religion is a rod to check the erring and a true guide to human life. It is the Healing Balm of the ailing people of this aching earth. It generates joy of the Spirit, capacity for work, strength and vigour of character

and enthusiasm for a moral and spiritual life. It is the unifying discipline of the rhythmic training of both mind and body. Religion is the food for our life to grow into perfection. It creates an ideal man, a cosmic man—Man, the eternal. In the ocean of life it controls human vessels and saves them from sailing adrift. There is need for an inward approach and for the setting in motion of the factors which lie at the root of life. Religion is the starting point in the onward march towards self-realisation.

Religion teaches us to live according to Spirit and not to our senses. The ethical characteristic of Hindu religion is based upon the belief of Supreme Soul permeating all the objects of creation, however insignificant they may be. The conception of unity in humanity and realisation of God's presence in all objects of creation may be described as the essence of a true religion. True religion is embodied in the fatherhood of God and the fraternity of mankind at large. Our larger and truer Self reveals when we enter into the universal life. In order to be really happy, we must establish a harmonious relationship with all. Creation is but the *modification* of relationship. We fail to realise our Self for want of fellow-feeling and sympathy towards others. We have to realise the indissoluble bond of unity among all beings. "I shall never find myself compelled to deny the thesis of the unity of human nature."—says Rudolph Vircho. The sense of oneness of all spirits creates a feeling of religious hospitality. Cultivation of the spirit of unity is the true religion of man and real worship of the all-pervading God. The more we cultivate this feeling, the more we manifest the Infinite in us and the higher and more sublime we become in the scale of being. At last a day will come when the Infinite will reveal Himself through this finite self and each of us will become as perfect as Sri Krishna, Christ, Sri Chaitanya and Muhammad, the Prophet. So the Hindu *Dharma* inculcates on its votaries

the necessity of showing respect and tenderness towards all forms of animal creation. 'Man stands in some relation to God and intercourse of some kind is possible between God and man.'—says Dr. Radhakrishnan. All the creation, animate or inanimate, is not the outcome of the evolution of matter but has flowed from the Supreme Spirit whose consciousness sustains every thing and being. We live, move and have our being in God. In the depths of our being there dwells the eternal Spirit which gives us inspiration for self-sacrifice even in the midst of our self-centred life. As the sense of unity of individual self with universal Self grows more and more intense, our divine Self becomes more and more manifest.

Religion backs us to climb up the ladder of spiritualism. *Dharma* or religion expresses man's true nature ; it does not make man proud ; neither its merit is estimated by personal education, power or cleverness. It is the reality beyond the empirical succession that strengthens the mind and responds to the confidence of the devotee. Though everything in this empirical world is passing, yet *Dharma*, the moral causation of humanity and the transcendental character of it, is eternal. It never rusts and decays. Religion is the only true friend that accompanies us even after death. Discordance, differentiation, incoherence, lack of rhythm etc. are characteristics of our mortal life and it is religion alone that harmonises all conflicting elements. *Dharma* is the immanent order ; it rests on a harmonious rhythm of law, order and truth. *Ṛta* and *Satyam*—order and truth are the two practical sides of one Reality. *Dharma* governs the law of nature, sustains the universe and redeems the fallen. Religion is the thoroughfare that stretches up to the Infinity. The way of *dharma* is the way of Brahman. The Brahman of the *Veda* is identified with the '*Dharma*' of Buddhism. So Sir Charles Eliot remarks, "The *Dharma* or *Niranjan* of *Śunya Purāṇa* seems to be equivalent to *Ādi Buddha*." According to Buddhism

the Supreme Being assumes two aspects—one being *Ādi Buddha*—the embodiment of pure wisdom and another as *Ādi Dharma* or power in His divine fullness. The Buddhists' Supreme Person with His two attributes—*Ādi Buddha* and *Ādi Dharma* has been described in '*Mahāyāna*' as neither *being* nor *not-being*, neither like this nor like that : He is beyond the round of birth and death. He is free from growth and decay and He is above purity and impurity. Does not this description tally with the nature of Brahman of the *Vedas ?* So Brahman and *Dharma* are identical.

The royal road to the Almighty lies through the practice of religious virtues. The right way to follow the path of religion lies in suppressing the rising of evil thoughts in mind, in eradicating those which have struck deep into the mind and in stimulating good qualities inherent in man. Lead a holy life and thereby you come nearer to the Brahman. "Purity and divinity are not attained merely by pouring ghee or adding sticks to the sacrificial fire. I kindled that fire within me which burns for ever,"—said Buddha. None is entitled to know and see Brahman who has not kindled the light of his own Soul. In the Vedic age prayer and worship constituted the chief methods for God-realisation. In the ages before the Upaniṣads, sacrificial system was the most popular method for the purpose. But later on in the ages of Upaniṣads sacrificial ritualism was ridiculed as unsound raft for the journey beyond. The Upaniṣads lay more stress on the awakening of intuition by rapt contemplation. The power of thought and will can be enhanced by temperance, purity and concentration. Religious and spiritual practices give us a clear and penetrating insight, the clarity of vision and freedom of joy.

That religion is genuine which brings us nearer to God ; otherwise, it is a vague—a perverted religion and it has no justification to exist. Religion springs out from the very core

of human heart. Neither can it be purchased in the open market nor can it be communicated to any man by force : 'Wilt thou then force men to believe when belief can come only from God ?'—observes '*Spirit of Islam*', page 212. So it will be the height of folly to force any one to embrace a particular religion, if not with a view to increasing the number of its followers. By this type of conversion neither the sect nor the man converted is benefited ; ultimately, the convert turns into a *Kālāpāhār*—a pest of society and religion. "In the name of religion inhuman practices of mediæval age should not be encouraged by any one when you are getting civilized day by day."—Mr. Amir Ali puts it. Sir Ahmed Hussain in his '*Notes on Islam*' has the following beautiful words worth pondering : "Please remember that there are many men and many minds and there are likely to be as many religions, as many conceptions of God, as many notions of His attributes and as many ideas of the beginning and end of things as there are thinking minds." A portrait is better painted with different colours than only one ; a garden full of flowers of different hues is more beautiful. So the diversities of religion far from being unauthentic adds to His glory. The different forms of religion current in the world are due to the differences in social environments, climatic conditions and the historical circumstances of different nations of the world. Paths may be different but the end is the same.

The membership of a big religious institution alone does not make a man truly religious ; personal exertion, merit and qualifications are the essential requisites. Rudyard Kippling observes : "Down to the Gehenna or up to the throne, he travels the fastest who travels alone." Brahman is unique and alone ; so our flight to Him also must be alone to the Alone.

Mere dogmas and doctrines cannot lead a man much towards spirituality. To a student of the spiritual school,

truth, purity of mind and body and a serene regard for his own faith are the fare, so to say, which he will have to pay in the journey of his spiritual life. Exertion in right earnest for Self-realisation paves the path of a religious life. A devotee must be the embodiment of the virtues of purity, fraternal love, humility and self-denial. He is to remain absolutely calm even when great peril threatens his very existence, death snatches away his beloved ones or personal losses make him pauper. Balanced in mind with peace and joy, he must glory in his poverty and rejoice in his sufferings. He should not resist evil by evil but try to overcome it by love. 'Turn away evil with that which is better',—declares *Ál Quarān*. Realise your own Self in the Being who is in all beings and reveal in your own personality the Supreme Person by the aforesaid virtues. Cultivate and manifest the qualities inherent in your nature to be Man, the eternal. There is a life truer and more magnificient than this transient physical life. Realisation of potentialities of man is the same as revelation of God in man. The defects of human nature prominent at present, are foreign to the original divine nature of man. We acquired them here on earth and thereby veiled our true and divine nature. To purge off all these impurities and to regain our original divine Self it is absolutely necessary to adopt the disciplinary practices and follow religious injunctions as enjoined in our religious codes.

The meaning of the English word "Re-ligion" is "to go back" : The path which we must tread to return to our original Home is Religion. Religion is that path which has gone from this incomplete, incongruous world to the complete, congruous world of the highest existence.

Every religion, every sect, each ritualism—finest or the grossest—works to meet the same end. Our Vedānta preaches the doctrine of universal religion and on its basis a harmonious religious creed can be formulated to bring all the religions

of the world in ties of love on the same platform. Men are of different minds and inclinations ; so, they take up the path of action, devotion or wisdom according to their taste and aptitude. When these three paths are combined together and manifested through any individual they symbolise the nearest approach to universal religion. Universal religion should be an embodiment of service, devotion and wisdom. The essence of Muhammedanism is the brotherhood of all embracing Islam. The essence of Hinduism is that a common Soul pervades all the creation. The one idea of unity is the guiding principle of the two faiths ; they are different only in non-essential things—the insignia and paraphernalia of rituals ; otherwise all true religions of the world are one in essence. The universal religion must be such as would supply food for all minds.

"We have enough religion to hate one another but not enough religion to love one another."—regrets Swift. The followers of different religions may condemn one another but each religion has a place in the world. "A person shall attain salvation through whichever religion he believes in" —said *Swāmi Tailangadhara*, the godly sage. "I have more sheep ; they are in other folds"—said Jesus Christ. By this statement Jesus wanted to say that the followers of other religions also move towards the same destination to which he himself was directing his desciples through his own path. In fact, a true Hindu and a true Christian cannot be fundamentally different. Hinduism and Christianity do not rest on the externalities of religion but on the personal conduct and divine qualities of the followers who embrace the faith. What does difference in names matter when all names point to that one supreme spiritual and moral excellence ? Ours is an age of reconciliation of all religions ; so the intolerable bad practices in vogue in any religion should be modified in such a way that the different religions

current in the world may assemble on a common platform of love, peace and faith.

Only in the *Vedantas* can we find the reconciliation of all faiths. Swami Vivekananda said, "Dualism, qualified monism and absolute monism are three steps succeeding one another and these are fit for three stages of the human mind. In the first stage there is dualism—the Christian and the Muhommedan faiths have accepted it. The European nations have taken to the Christian religion and the Semetics to the Muhommedan religion. Then came qualified monism. Last of all was found absolute monism. Absolute monism in its aspect of exclusive yogic realisation is known as Buddhism". The combination of the three "isms" is known as Hindu religion, and among the various sects of Hindusthan can be found men of all the three persuasions. By the Hindu religion is meant the religion of the Vedāntas and the religion of the Vedāntas is the religion of the world. Everything pertaining to a true religion is universal. "Yo Vai Bhumā Tadamṛitaṃ Yadalpaṃ tanmaṛtyaṃ"—Infinity or fullness is immortality but the finite is mortal. The condition beyond duality is Infinity or Bhūmā. That religion is genuine which transcends finite—mortality and leads to Bhūma or Infinity.

Hinduism in the present phase is an amalgamation of the Dravidian and Vedic religion. After the Aryans had conquered India, her traditional religion came in contact with the Vedic religion which the Aryans brought with them into India and the former drew inspiration from the latter. Thus the Dravidian religion retaining its own cult gradually assimilated all the Vedantic thoughts and assumed a new phase, modified to a great extent. The worship of divine personages like *Siva*, *Kali Durga*, etc, is not enjoined in the Vedic texts and so it can be inferred that the worship of these deities was in vogue in India before the advent of the Aryan invaders. The ancient usage was handed down to the posterity and it still survives

today in spite of the spread of the Vedic religion, its cult and culture.

The nature gods of the Vedas are not held in a very high esteem because they are not so powerful as the Brahman of the Vedas (vide Chhā. Up. VIII and Kena Up. 14-18). These gods must follow the usual course prescribed for the human beings in order to attain perfection. To acquire Brahmanship they are to be reborn as human beings in this world and work out their own salvation. The present Hinduism which is the breed of both Dravidian and Vedic religion also abides by this philosophy. The gods in heavens are themselves in bondage. They are not emancipated souls and they can help little towards the spiritual progress and deliverance of man. So when a Hindu worships a national god like *Siva, Kali* or *Durga*, his prayer and oblation are consecrated to the Highest. In the Bhāgvad Gita Sri Krishna is the only *Purṇa Brahman*. To the *S'ivaites, S'iva* is the Highest Brahman and *S'akti* or *Kāli* is the highest to the Śāktas. Ramanuja identifies *Viṣṇu* with the Supreme Brahman. Lord *Viṣṇu* is worshipped by the Vishnuites as God Absolute. So in whatever names these sectarian gods are worshipped, the prayer goes to the Supreme. These deities represent in toto the God in Christian theology of the Western world. The devout worshippers belonging to all sects are *Bhāgavatas* i.e. the worshippers of one God and as such they are monists. Those who profess one religion and one God are called in the *Vaisṇava* treatises as the upholders of *Ekāntika Dharma* or the followers of monotheism.

The *Purānas* describe God in myths and symbols. The symbol is an indirect presentation of the Reality. Harnock views symbol as a sacrament and according to the Greek Philosophy, a sacrament is a mystery. The symbol and the object symbolised postulate a sense of organic unity. "Myth" says Dr. Inge, "is the poetry of religion, and poetry,

not science, is the natural language of religion." So long as we are natural beings, we cannot but resort to myth and symbol. "With certain persons, the intellectual effort to understand the universe is a principal way of experiencing diety."—Says Bradlay. The symbolic image of God, contrived through human brain, constitutes a deity. The best we can assume with the help of our intellect is a diety governing this universe. The Supreme Brahman or Godhead, according to the verse II. 9 of the Taitt. Up., is not realisable through mind and senses. In the highest stage of spirituality when the mystic eye opens, the Brahman is realised in *Samādhi*. Intellect leads us to a diety, but intuition to the Absolute. To try to realise Godhead by intellect is similar to an effort to mount uphill by clutching its dust.

To the Hindu, a deity is an aspect of Brahman. When worshipping through any Vedic god like *Agni*, *Varuna* etc. or through a household deity like *S'iva*, *Kāli*, *Krishna* and others, a Hindu believes that his oblation goes to the Supreme, because his God is the Lord of all. Regarding Godhead, it is said in *Rigveda*, verse V, 3. i : "Thou art *Varuna* when shower and *Mitra* when kindle. In Thee are all gods". This description identifies *Agni* with the Brahman. Brahman without attribute is inscrutable to the finite mind ; so His attributed forms are imagined and worshipped as Brahman Himself. In the lower strata of religious life gods, scriptures and outward ceremonies are helpful. Vyās while commenting on *Brahma-Sutra* III. ii. 15 expressed the similar view. Hindu's polytheism is rooted in the belief of pantheism. He believes that God pervades everything of this creation and so anything can be the object of his worship. *Ananda Giri* in his commentary on Goudapāda's *Kārikā* (IV) unveiled the mystery how in the vicinity of *Badrikāsram Goudapāda* had worshiped a deity, *Nara-Nārāyana* who revealed to him the knowledge of the *Advaita-vedānta* or the doctrine of non-duality.

Bhagavada Gita does not condemn, rather encourages the worship of a personal God. A truly religious aspirant gradually extricates himself from all formalities and conventionalities and ultimately enters into an ecstatic and mystical state of monotheism.

The Hindus do not recognise many creators. To them the gods of heavens are spiritual beings possessed of divine powers. They try to please these heavenly beings with offerings, prayer and oblations with an eye to gain some worldly good. They regard these higher spiritual beings in the same way as they regard a godly man here on earth. There are many saints in the world who have acquired higher status than the gods in heaven, in purity, knowledge and power, but they always try to avoid human association lest their popularity stands in the way of their *Sādhanā*. In Hindu mythology the different gods are said to possess different powers. They are the god of fertility, fortune, success, learning and the god of war etc. A Hindu selects one of these divine personalities according to his need, and worships him to evoke his grace and extort a boon from him. The gods, it is said, are bound by regards and they are very gracious and benevolent to their devout worshippers. It is natural, therefore, that worldly men would be inclined to worship such a god as is thought to be useful to them. But the man who aspires after higher knowledge and salvation seldom turns to these national gods. They know well that the gods are not wholly free from *Avidyā* ; they are not emancipated souls and as such they are unable to grant true knowledge and higher illumination. To an advanced *Yogin*, deities have little space. The Soul hankers after the Highest ; it cannot remain satisfied with anything less. Knowledge is the gateway to salvation. So an educated Hindu pays less attention to the ceremonials. Brahma-Sutra III. 2. 25 states that the highest knowledge is attainable through meditation

and devotion. Śaṃkara also holds in his commentaries on 1. 1. 2 and II. I. II that the knowledge of the Brahman which is the highest of all, is not acquired by study but is intuited in one's own Soul through deep meditation. This proves that the Vedās and the Upaniṣads do not attach much importance to ethical practices. Rebirth is a consquence of ignorance and salvation is obtained when ignorance is removed by the dawn of true knowledge. So the occupation of a Yogin is constant meditation and absorption in Brahman through meditation. When at-one-ment with Brahman is achieved true knowledge dawns, rebirth is extinguished and deliverance becomes secured.

A Hindu worships national gods and the incarnations in the same way as a Christian prays before Christ, Madona and the angels. In this point of view William James in his '*A Pluralistic Universe*' P. 310 observes that Christianity is also a polytheistic religion. For him polytheism is easily intelligible to the average men and so a national god is indispensable. The worship of a personal god purifies body and mind, calms down mental restlessness and induces the worshipper to an ecstatic state of being. So polytheistic creed should not be condemned or slighted away as altogether unserviceable. If the Church can expect a child becoming eligible for heaven when a few drops of water are sprinkled over its head or when the Holy Cross is made to touch its breast or when a few *mantras* are uttered and further, if the bread and wine of the Christians can be animated by the said process and worshipped and inspite of all these beliefs which characterise a polytheistic creed, the Church can pass as the upholder of monotheism, the Christians cannot certainly accuse Hinduism as a polytheistic religion. They worship Christ, Madona, saints and the angels as well. There is much difference between a Christian, the worshipper of angels, bread and wine and a Hindu worshipping his national god whom he

takes for a spiritual being. Decidedly, a Hindu can claim his religious views to be more in the line of monotheism than a Christian can do. Only the bigoted persons who think religion to be a merchandise regard their own creed and sect as the best and final and think violence to be the only means to establish their faith.

Aquatic plants grow in a stagnant pool that foul the water; they do not thrive on the bosom of flowing water. These over-zealous followers are creatures of a cesspool. The word '*Dharma*' implies the essential truth of everything. When the truth about anything is denied or concealed, the people say that '*Dharma*' is violated. To tell a lie or to hide a truth is an '*Adharma*' i.e. irreligious. According to the *Māhābhārata*, (XII. 298), the taking of a forbidden food is not so much an *Adharma* as its denial.

Different religions emanated from the lips of different seers who lived in different parts of the world in different ages and stood face to face with Reality. Reality is one, spiritual and realisable. The drift of religious thoughts in different religions bears a marked similarity. The ultimate truth in all religions is one and the same. Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity run on parallel lines and not crosswise. They are all pervaded by a common thought having a common end in view—the realisation of God. Though the gulf between them appears to be very wide at the outset, the difference is gradually narrowed down when the roads approach towards the end. The pilgrims travelling by different religious paths find themselves at the end of their journey standing at a tryst where all roads meet. A God-intoxicated person becomes so sunk in divine love that the difference of paths completely fades away and the gulf is ultimately bridged over. Below the depths of all religions there flows a current of common aspiration to unite with God. This union with the Highest is the aim and ideal of all religions.

The apprehension of the essential unity of all things and beings is the aim of all true religions. Ātman is the only reality that pervades everything and forms their essential part. So the religion of Ātman alone can claim to be the universal religion of the future. The reality is spiritual and the Ātman or the Spirit being the only reality on earth, the ideal of Spirit has been from time immemorial the ideal of Hindu religion. India is a land of religion and her culture and civilization are inseparably connected with her religion. Hinduism has been the torch-bearer of Indian cult, culture and civilization.

The path of religion is not strewn with roses. It lies through a series of poverty, unpopularity, opposition, severe austerities and self-mortification. It is strenuous in the beginning, sanguine in the middle and glorious in the end. Man is prone to oppose any new idea, be it religious, social or scientific. Rāmānuja and Śri Chaitanya were tortured, Origen and Echart were condemned. Even the works of Tauler and Ruysbroeck were decried and attempts were made to proscribe their writings. When Gallelio said that the earth moves round the sun he was declared an imposter. When Pandit Vidyāsāgar tried to introduce window-marriage into the Hindu society and Lord William Bentinck abolished *sati-dāha* they met with the strongest opposition from the orthodox Hindus. Christ was crucified and Buddha was alleged to be an etheist for holding certain religious views. And it is a matter of greater surprise that Gallelio's oppressors were scientists and not clergymen. Gallelio was thrown behind the bars and was not released until he made a statement in black and white that the sun moves round the earth ! Thus the preacher of a new faith, a social reformer and the discoverer of a truth like Gallelio were condemned as infidels and sometimes crusades and horrible persecution followed thereof. In Christianity and Islam faith is deemed as virtue and so their followers are guided more by creed than by reason.

The result is that the average people lose their power of judgment, become dogmatic and bigoted. They worship ethical ideas with greater zeal paying less attention to their object of worship i.e. God. To Islam, the followers of other religions are all infidels and they must be converted by any means, even by violence. This persecuting spirit of Islam does not appeal to the intellectual and spiritual minds. Conversion should be voluntary ; compulsion or conversion by force seldom produces any good result. Such a hostile convert cannot be expected to make any progress in the path of religion. Neither the convert nor the sect is benefited by such conversion. Forced conversion is unknown in the long history of both Hinduism and Buddhism. Conversion must bring in its train the divine unfoldment of the convert. Divinity unfolds through love and not by sword. Buddha and Christ were love incarnate ; they were prophets of love. Christ at times got disgusted with the evils of the world but Buddha never grew angry for the wickedness of men. Buddha knew that the evils are not permanent and that men are wicked because of their ignorance.

The religions of the world in spite of differences in modes of worship and other practices cherish only one goal and that is attainment of human perfection and communion with God. It is clear, therefore, that there cannot be any quarrel or ill-feeling among them against one another : "Dispute not against those who have received the scripture—and say, we believe in the revelation which hath been sent down unto us, and also in that which hath been sent down unto you ; our God and your God is one and unto Him are we resigned—verily unto thy Lord shall be the return of all".—Āl Quarān. In spite of such valuable instructions of the sacred texts religious quarrels and strifes are rampant all over the world. Followers of different religious sects fail to appreciate one another's views and there is no tolerance for others. People who know

the truth deplore the situation and laugh at their ignorance and advise cultivation of friendly feelings, tolerance and regard for others' religious views. We ought to read one another's holy scriptures. This will be found to be very beneficial. It will educate people to cherish regard for others' religions and scriptures and prove that all religions really aim at one and the same goal. Rāmkrishna Paramahamsa Deva put into practice the practical side of different religions and found that there was no difference in the waters collected under different names by the Muhommedans or the Hindus or Christians. It is only the use of different *ghats* or staircases for getting access into the stream that create the difference. Mahātmā Gāndhi used to read the Geeta, the Bible and the Quarān regularly with equal reverence for each of them.

Jalaluddin Saheb, the Persian Spiritualist says, "when Allah is one and without a second, there cannot be but one religion." Schiller, the Western philosopher says, "Which among the religions should I profess? It is religion which can claim me, but I belong to no particular sectarian religion." Sri Aurovindo has thus said, "If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal." Realisation of the principles of spiritualism, free from limitations that arise from communion with God is the true religion.

The followers of different religions and of different paths up the hill of the Lord ultimately meet at the top. The demarcation line though appears broad and vivid at the outset, is gradually narrowed down as the adherents move onwards and upwards. The ultimate religion is the religion of Spirit that transcends mundane differences of all shades and colours. A truly religious life never indulges in bigotry or fosters partisan spirit. He lives in a higher sphere of consciousness where harmony is the ruling principle. To find out the ultimate one, we must embrace all, irrespective of caste, creed and colour.

Faith is organically united with God and religion fosters this faith. The belief in man's divine origin stands or falls with our faith in God. Faith is its own guarantee. The conviction that has been so fondly cherished in the very core of our being from ages unknown cannot be a delusion. All the religions of the world count upon faith as the very backbone of religious life. "Religion in its completeness" says Westcott" is the harmony of philosophy, ethics and art blended into one by a spiritual force, by a consecration, at once personal and absolute. The direction of philosophy is theoretic and its end is the true. The direction of art is representative and its end is the beautiful. Religion includes these several ends but adds to them that in which they find their consummation, the holy.'

Ego is self-centric but the real one is rooted above through all and in all. The very nature of the real Self is spiritual. Mysticism is that royal road by which we can smoothly pass along the spiritual current of life. Mysticism according to Bergson is 'open religion'. Whatever is true, beautiful and holy and makes a man perfect, springs from the spiritual fountain. Religion evolves into spirituality which illumines the upward path of God-realisation. It reveals the mystery of spiritual life. The mystery lying behind this visible world is spiritual. So the invisible Reality is to be intuited in Spirit alone. A Yogin who has awakened mystic eyes can penetrate the mystery beyond. The highest mystery is God.

Nature half-conceals and half reveals this invisible mystery ; so God is not fully revealed to us. Brahman or the Godhead is neither a word nor a concept but absolutely pure consciousness, essentially the *Ātman*. The summit of spiritual life is reached when *Ātman* is realised in the light of pure consciousness. *Ātman* is Brahman, spiritual in essence and so it has to be spiritually known.

Mysticism is an evolute of religion. It grows within the temple-walls but when maturity is attained the mystic breaks through all the barriers of both the religion and the temple. He is then neither a member of any sect nor does he confine himself within the temple-walls. His religion is characterised as universal religion which is the religion of Man, the Eternal. He sees God everywhere; so anywhere he sits for meditation it becomes the temple of God. The mystic *Sādhanā* terminates when *Sādhak* outgrows the temple precincts. "Institutionalism and mysticism have always been uneasy bed-fellows"—observes Dr. Inge. The authorities of the Church and the temple—the clergy and the priests are prone to disown mysticism; they apprehend that if the mystic religion is allowed to grow unchecked and the common people incline towards it their trade in religion would be at stake. This is why the philosophy of Origen, Echart and Erasmus could not meet with the appreciation of the general public in their life-time. It was on account of a strong opposition of the clergy through their influence with the Government that a ban was finally passed on the study of Ruysbroek and Tauler.

Mysticism is the kernel of religion. The mystics of different religions of all ages living in the remotest parts of the world are found to subscribe to the same view regarding the Ultimate Truth. They are spiritual kinsmen all over the world. The unanimity of their views should silence the critics and the infidels. True mystics have no rivalry or conflict with other sects, creeds or nationality. In the life of Spirit there can be no scope for discursive logic. Sectarianism, bigotry or egotism is never displayed in the life of a true mystic. Mysticism is the only factor through which unitary or synthetic knowledge is attained. The discordances in the mental outlook of different persons and heterogeneous complexities of the material world are harmonized only in the mystic religion. Reality is perfection, unity and

identity; so it has to be known spiritually i.e. in the mystic way.

There is no substitute for religion. Man must follow it or be doomed. Human nature is fundamentally divine. Tending to evil, he makes his life a hell. Guilty conscience and enmity to righteousness create a hell for him. Hell is not a subterranean world but a state of the human mind. The unbearable pain a vicious man suffers from his disgust with the self and guilty conscience is the hellish torture. Hell is a self-created state of mind. Mind burns in the fire of guilty conscience and the man gets purified like gold in fire. Vice is but an error; it can be corrected by the exercise of free-will. True nature of man cannot perish. His divine nature begins to unfold when he takes to the path of religion.

Man is perfect and his action is just when his mind does not oscillate between right and wrong. He is guided by his clear conscience and his reason errs not when he is free from fear, ignorance and error. There is nothing to fear in the path of religion. Plato considers him a coward who shrinks from his quest for an apparently insurmountable obstacle or a plausible gain whatsoever and returns back empty-handed from the midway. A religious life is led to perfection by participating in the duties of one's own callings and firmly adhering to one's own faith. A righteous man may be persecuted and tortured for holding a particular view which he thinks to be true and just but misunderstood by others. It is not reasonable to give up the view through fear or inducement simply because his view is not liked by some people. God is good and there is nothing to fear in what is good and just. The good is easily won and the bad is readily overcome. The Hindus are alleged to be fatalists but their Vedas and Upaniṣads teach that man by dint of his free-will and personal efforts can counteract evil

tendencies and change the present course of his unregenerate life. Having recourse to the path of religion and spirituality he can acquire good *samaskāras* and thereby neutralise the bad impressions of the past. By regulating his thoughts, emotions and actions, man can transform the evil contents of his subconscious mind and make his life blissful and divine. Śri Aurobindo believed in the possibility of man's becoming Superman. A man can be superman only if he exerts himself in right earnest. Mere possession of the Vedas and Upaniṣads will not improve our status unless we apply their principles in our every-day life.

Originally, there was no caste system in India. In *Kṛtyayuga* before *Manu*, the Hindu Law maker, all men were Brāhmins (vide Uttarkānda, 74. 9-11. & 1. 300). In the Vedic age there was no caste system. Even when Manu divided men into four castes social restriction was not so rigorous. Castes at that time existed only in a rudimentary form. In *Chhā.* Up V. 3. 7, Kauśitaki Up. IV and Ār. Up. II. 1, it is stated that in early age the Kṣatriyas had the exclusive right to the knowledge of the Brahman. Kings like Janak and Ajātaśatru imparted spiritual knowledge to the Brāhmins. Visvāmitra, a Kṣatriya acquired supreme knowledge by dint of his severe austerities and attained Brāhminhood. We hear of Nārad Muni receiving instructions from Sanat Kumar (vide Chhā. Up. VII and Bhā. X. 24. 26). Before the spread of Buddhism, the Kṣatriyas occupied the first rank in the society and they commanded greater respect and honour than the Brāhmins.

Caste system in ancient India was merely a division of labour. The term "Varṇa" in "Varṇāśram" does not, as Vincent Smith has rightly observed, mean 'colour' but a 'class' or 'order'. According to the individual aptitude social work was allocated to different members of the community. Excepting their respective occupations, there was no bar in their social

life. In those days even a *S'udra* could rise to the rank of a *Brāhmin* by dint of his knowledge and conduct. *Manu* Saṃhita, Chapter iv page 253, states that a *Brāhmin* can accept food from a *S'udra* who is friendly and willing to serve. Even a man belonging to the *Mlechha* order is also endowed with a divine Soul and is, therefore, not past all hopes of salvation. Hindu religious code declares that if a man leads a pious and religious life, the evil effects of his actions acquired in the previous births which caused his re-birth in a *Sudra* family are wiped out and he overcomes the consequences of his heritage. The question whether a person belonged to the Brāhmin or to the Sudra caste did not matter in those days. The personal conduct was the determining factor. Distinction of caste is of no value if character is not elevated. *Aśoke*, the Great, said, 'Religion stands on individual virtues and virtues have nothing to do with caste'.

Suta and *Bidura* were born of *S'udra* parents (low borns) but due to good deeds done in their previous births, they attained the knowledge of Brahman. It was through meritorious work that *Vaśiṣtha*, son of a harlot, *Vyās*, son of a fisherman and *Nārada*, son of a maidservant were all elevated to the position of Ṛṣis (sages).

The caste system was introduced to facilitate the smooth evolution of the society. For the intergrity of the nation, it is desirable that this system should now disappear.

An individual being passes through many millions of births and deaths before a perfect life, fit for salvation, is reached. The highest pitch of spiritualism cannot be achieved all on a sudden. We have to climb up the ladder of spiritualism, step by step, to reach the summit. Four stages of a Hindu life—Brahmacharya, Gārhastha, Bānaprastha and Sannyās, as prescribed by the Hindu School of Philosophy represent the four steps of the ladder. The first stage is Brahmacharya or the practice

of self-control, purity, sobriety and discipline which the Hindu boys have to cultivate from a very early age. In ancient India, a young pupil only eight years old, irrespective of caste and social status, had to live in hermitage of their preceptor studying different branches of learning along with the Vedas and other sacred texts. Practical training to acquire the qualifications which helped in building a life divine was also given to the Brahmachārin. Thus trained, when the pupil completed 32 years of age he was allowed to enter the life of a house-holder. In the second stage, as a *gṛhastha* or a house-holder, he with that previous background had a unique advantage in cultivating the highest and sweetest virtues of human nature such as hospitality, benevolence, charity, kindness and love for all. At the age of 50 he had to renounce the world and retire to solitude. This is the third stage, called the *Bānaprastha* or the secluded forest-life. Service to humanity and communion with God through deep meditation were the only duties in the *Bānaprastha* life. He had to subsist only on fruits of the forest and water of the river. By virtue of his disinterested actions and a strong urge towards the Almighty when a close communion with the Supreme Being was reached he turned into a sanyāsin joining the company of Śaṃkarāchārya, Buddha and other great moral preceptors of the world. Life of a *Sanyāsin* is the expectant awaiting for salvation across death. So the life of a Hindu is a pilgrimage and we move from the place of one pilgrimage to another and finally we sail for the last shore of existence across humanity. *Mokṣha* or complete salvation was the goal towards which every Hindu had to move. Thus the silent cry within found full expression in complete emancipation.

The people of ancient India lived for one another and the result was that peace reigned supreme in society. Each individual worked for the betterment of the social unit and

the social unit for the good of the province and the province for the country. The great teachers of ancient India carried the light of knowledge and the message of peace and salvation to the remotest corner of the world.

Such men as have priesthood as their profession are mere priests and not Brāhmins. None is Brāhmin or non-Brāhmin by birth. One becomes a Brahmin or a Śudra by personal merits and demerits, good or bad acts. Many are found to be engaged in sinful acts, even though they are born in a Brāhmin family. Similarly, many, born in a low caste, may be seen to be truthful, honest, religious and masters of their passions. The ideal of Hindu India in all ages is a Sanyāsin like Swami Vivekananda and not a ruling prince. The emaciated Mahatma Gandhi and not the wrestler Gama or a fat and pot-bellied multi-millionaire is still our ideal.

India, today, is pre-eminently the land of caste prejudices. Whatever might have been the usefulness of the caste system in ancient times, its advantages at present are more than counterbalanced by the evils arising out of it. It is creating a feeling of jealousy and hatred amongst the Hindus, retarding the national progress and prosperity. The Hindus are now isolated even amongst their own people. If Hindusthān and the Hinduism are to survive, a feeling of unity amongst the different castes and sects of India is essential which alone can *bind* us together to grow into a prosperous nation. The prevailing customs of India, however sacrosanct they may appear, must also be examined in the light of social usefulness. Many customs prevalent in ancient India do not exist now. The immutability of social laws can have no meaning. Reforms have been introduced from age to age for better adjustment of the social system to the re-arrangement of changing times and if necessity arises, modifications and changes have to be introduced in the future. Inspite of

divine inspiration claimed by the Vedas, they have been supplemented by the Purānas and other religious texts to meet the demands of a new age. For the integration of India's social life and for the very existence of Hinduism, the caste system and many of the customs which survive today in India should be modified. Some of the Hindus who have received modern education insist on the total abolition of the Caste system and other institutions which restrict individual freedom in our social life. It is not beyond expectation that under our national Government, the evil customs some of which have been for generations eating into vitals of our life will be gradually removed. The projected Hindu Code Bill is a distinct move in that direction. The demand for the abolition of the caste system is gaining ground everyday. We hope that if the Government of free India take up the problem in right earnest, they will be supported by an overwhelming majority. Under foreign rule the people of India had very little part in controlling the social life of their own. In free India we are in a position to build up our social edifice in such a way that it may uphold our pristine glory. Untouchability is a curse of Hinduism. It is a crime against God and humanity. All life is one; to God we are all resigned. To God there is no question of high and low, touchable and untouchable, caste or outcaste. The so-called untouchables are the worshippers of the same God whom the caste-Hindus also worship and they should have, therefore, the same right as the latter in social matters. They must be allowed to participate freely in religious ceremonies from which they are barred and also the right to temple-entry without any discrimination. If temple-entry is denied to them simply because of their alleged inferiority, the temple can no longer be regarded as the house of God. The sanctity of the temple and that of the deity inshrined in it does not depend upon the superiority of our birth but upon the simplicity

of our hearts. Instead of maintaining a rigid aloofness from the backward, it is our duty to lend a helping hand to them and to provide them with equal opportunities for the improvement of their lot. Try to realise the greatness and significance of the activities of Lord Krishna, Śri Ram Chandra and Śri Caitanya. They came to redeem the fallen. By weeding out the inferior groups and outcasting many of its brethern, the strength of the Hindu Society has already been very much reduced. When the Aryans advanced down the Gangetic valley they did not drive out the aboriginal people ; neither did they destroy their culture and religion but took them all into the Hindu fold. The Aryan Hindus believed in gradual transformation ; they did not forcibly try to impose their own views on others but they approached those who differed from them with sympathy and understanding and built up a synthesis of culture in which divergent customs, creeds and institutions were accommodated without any internal conflict.

There is nothing indignified in social service. The service of a scavenger is no less indispensable to society than the service of a teacher or a physician. Why then is a scavenger regarded as unclean ? The services rendered by a scavenger or a tanner can be done in a more clean and hygienic way. He can take a bath after his daily work and put on a clean cloth. Untouchability, by reason of mere low birth is not justified by the canons of the Śāstras. Moreover, it is contrary to the laws of humanity. Hindu Śāstra condemns one born of a Brāhmin woman by a Śudra husband, doer of five sins and one in dirty and unholy state. The so-called untouchables and those who are branded as inferior because of their alleged violation of the caste rules, tainting their origin, are not the only sinners in the Hindu society. Ninety-nine per cent of the remaining Hindus can be held guilty of one or other kind of sins. There is hardly any person who is absolutely stainless.

Imagine the unhealthy condition of the big cities without the service of the so-called untouchables. In return to this valuable service, they have been deprived of the bare necessaries of life by our cruel social arrangements and more heinous is it on our part to perpetuate the inhuman customs bearing the stamp of religion. Our social and religious festivals are observed in such a way as to make them seriously understand that they are not the same sort of human beings as the Caste-Hindus are. We should be ashamed of our conduct for subjecting them to drag such a miserable existence. If the orthodox Hindus stick to their principle of exclusion, some day their very 'touch-me-not' spirit will make themselves untouchable. This 'touch-me-not' spirit has made our minds narrow, bigoted and selfish. It is the biggest stumbling block to hinder the progress in our national and spiritual life. Without broadness of mind and purity of heart, the quest of the Infinite will prove a failure. If we think less of our petty selves and feel more for others, the distant will come nearer to us and the light that was invisible before will shine on us and the finite self will grow larger and larger until it overlaps the Infinite Individuality. To realise the oneness we have to assimilate all or scatter ourselves to all—"Bhuteṣu, bhuteṣu vicintya." Perfection of humanity is reached by a spirit of an all-pervading infinite feeling.

The reality in man i.e. his divinity truly manifests itself when he is united with all. Man becomes superman when he transcends his individuality and merges himself into the Universal. In universal existence his personal loss, grief or pain finds no place and becomes absolutely inoperative so that he rises to the status of a superman. Seer is he who can enter into the life of all. Like flowers in a garland, we are all strung together by an all-pervading Spirit. The God Supreme dwells within the heart of every created being as individual soul, controlling each moment and all activities

of our life—"Ekaṃ rupaṃ bahudhā Ya Karoti taṃ ātmastham anupaśyanti ye dhirāḥ teṣāṃ sukhaṃ śāśvataṃ netareṣāṃ". It is clear, therefore, that any ill-treatment or dishonour to the depressed classes will act like a boomerang and wound the heart of the Immortal Spirit who is the life and light of all.

Untouchability has drifted them far away from us as a result of which they are falling an easy victim to men following other faiths. Realising that Hindu society, losing strength, is about to be extinct soon, the great Śri Caitanya, incarnation of Love and Mahatma Gandhi endearingly embraced these crores of ignored, dumb helpless masses. The Ārya Samāj which is devoted to the work of delivering the fallen deserves thanks of every Hindu ; the Hindus will remain ever grateful to them.

Those who leaving crores of Hindu men and women in darkness wanted to delude themselves in the sphere of spirituality have themselves been dislodged to-day from their own faith because of that sin and have reached the extreme limit of suffering. To-day, both the preacher and the preached have lost the path and are wandering about aimlessly inside a dark deep forest ; none is able to find the way. Due to the short-sightedness and selfishness of the community of religious preachers the invaluable treasure house of knowledge of the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads* has turned to-day into a wilderness. As a consequence, the path of the mental and spiritual progress of the Hindus has closed down and they have come down to the very bottom of retrogression.

If the sacred hymns of the Vedas and the Gāyatri are deemed conducive to religion then no one is entitled to deprive other men of the texts. As every man is entitled to have sunlight and the water of a river so also all men are equally entitled to worship God and to practise religion. It can never be that the community of preachers should make a monopoly of them and control them without limitation of power and that

other men should foolishly continue to dance in joy forever by beating the drum and plated brass instruments.

"Those days are gone by."

Thousands of non-Brāhmin Hindus are at present hundred times more advanced than the community of preachers in matters of education and culture, in arts and science and in religiosity. In the 19th and 20th centuries who except the splendid sons of Mother India like Āchārya Prafulla Chandra Roy, Āchārya Brojendra Seal, Āchārya Jagadish Chandra Bose, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda and others are superior and true Brāhmins in the strict sense of the term? In intellectual power, scholarship and broadness of mind they were seated on the pedestal of Ṛṣis, although none of them had a Brāhmin lineage.

The chanter of the sacred text of the *Gāyatri* was Ṛṣi Viśvāmitra, a *Kṣatriya* (vide chapter 6 of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*). Verse 2/26 of the Manusaṃhita says that even non-Brāhmins were eligible for the use of the Vedic *Mantras*. The womenfolk also were entitled to the Vedas; nay, among them were scholars, like Lomaśā, Viśvavārā, the mother of Indra, Ambhṛni Vāk, Devyāni, Lopamudrā, Gārgi etc. who were revealers of a host of Vedic *Mantras* and they were worshipped by the world. Those who are interested in this may read the book *Sarbānukrama*, written by the great sage Vedavyās. The main verses of the sacred text with the help of which Lord Śaṃkarāchārya established the doctrine of non-duality were written by Vāk, daughter of the sage Ambhṛna. Those verses have been collected in *Devisukta*, and have been used in *Chandi* Māhātmya after the manner of *Deivsukta*. Both Vedavyās, the great sage and collector of the Vedas, and Śaṃkarāchārya, their interpreter, have admitted the above-mentioned women scholars to be the revealers of different Vedic *mantras*. The names of Lomaśā and Viśvavārā are recorded in the verses of the different *mantras* of the

Rg Veda composed by them. In the Vedic age Śudra (low-born) and even the son of a maid-servant, were eligible for the Vedic study as is proved by Kābāsa, son of a prostitute. This Kābāsa is the revealer of hymns 30—34 of the 10th *Mondala* of the Rg Veda Saṃhitā. According to the great sage Dwaipāyana, Ṛṣi Kākṣibān was also born of a maid-servant—this is stated in the treatise of *Sarvānukramī*. This Ṛṣi Kākṣibān was the author of hymns 116-126 of the first *Mondala* of the Rg Veda Saṃhitā. So it will not be difficult for anyone to understand how hollow, partial and angular is the direction of those who in later times have given the ultimatum that authors of different parts of the Vedas, being so many women, low-born, and even born of maid-servants were not entitled to the Vedas.

Accept the Gāyatri as the national anthem and the whole Hindu nation will be raised to the Brāhminic ideas. If the worshipper of Christ be a Christian, that of Muhammed be a Muhammedan, that of Śiva a Śaiva, that of Viṣnu a Vaiṣnava, of Buddha a Buddhist why then all Hindus, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, shall not be Brāhmins for their initiation into the Gāyatri mantras and worshipping Brahman ?

If India of today is to survive her great tradition of the past ; if the unity of India is desired and if the Hindus being re-united have got to be invincible in the world then success is to be attained in creating one nation, one religion, in accepting only one God, namely, Brahman, and in practising the one *Mantra*, namely, *Gāyatri*. Otherwise, the history of the Hindu nation and that of the Hindu religion will be subjects for research by the archaelogists in the near future.

"The practice of religion for those who destroy unity by useless quarrel and conflict regarding religion is vain—it has no value. They are unable to enjoy true happiness and good

fortune; the path of in-come is barred and the treasure collected is spoiled. Good advice appears to them as poison; they regard genuinely well-wishing friends as enemies; and their life becomes disquiet. Those who have no unity are sure to perish"—Chapter 33, Udyogaparva, The Mahabharata. It seems that the present regretable picture of India appeared in the subtle Yogic vision of the great sage Vedavyās thousands of years ago who uttered those words of caution keeping us, the future posterity of India, in view. So, if we are not bent upon destruction, must meditate on and follow the chief tenets of unity, mentioned before and we gain the main objects of human pursuit—virtue, wealth, enjoyment and final beatitude.

Attain, every Hindu, male or female, genuine Brāhminism by accepting and following the Vedic religion and the worship of one God who is Brahman.

It is the attainment of Brāhminism that should be the only aim of every Hindu. This is not possible simply by being born of Brāhmin parents; the knowledge of Brahman alone can make one a Brāhmin—this is what the Śāstras have prescribed.

The direction of the Manusaṃhitā, the treatise on Hindu Jurisprudence is that even a non-Brāhmin shall be raised to the status of a Brāhmin through the study of the Vedas, pious conduct and on the merit of his own actions. Character and conduct were the base of Brāhminhood.

When according to this direction of Manu all Hindus will become true Brāhmins India will rise from her present state of downfall and shall change into a Paradise on earth. When every man and woman in India shall attain Brahminism and unhesitatingly declare "I am He"—I am that Omnipotent Master of the universe, who would be so powerful in the world as would dare even imagine going against him or turning into his enemy? The knower of Brahman does not know what is death to him and what is sorrow? He knows that after

death he shall merge into the Eternal, the Supreme Brahman—the bubble of water into the great ocean. Therefore, a true Hindu does not fear death but face it calmly.

Save, therefore, Hindusthan and the Hinduism from the verge of destruction by initiating every Hindu, man or woman, into the *Gāyatri mantra* without discrimination of caste, creed or colour and by helping the formation of one undivided Brāhminic nation and one undivided India. Those who declare that the non-Brāhmins have no right to the study of the Vedas or to the use of the *Gāyatri mantras* are either ignorant of the sacred texts or impelled by some ulterior motive deceive other castes by denying them the right to attain Brāhminism and thus they push the nation and the country to the verge of destruction. The wicked intention of keeping the knowledge of Brahman in reserve for a particular caste is the root of our present distress. In no religion, Christian or Muhammedan, is there such a conspiracy for reservation. So the Christians and the Muhammedans are united and progressive. As a contrast, look at India and you will see that crores of men and women here are compelled to-day to live the life of beasts, unable, as they are, to realize their own selves as a consequence of their being deprived of the study of the Vedas and of religious teachings. The prejudice of caste distinction has dealt a heavy blow at the foundation of unity by creating malice between the superior and the inferior. The high-caste Hindus have no sympathy for the illiterate, helpless and poor Hindus of the lowest order. The position now seems to be that they are none of the Hindu polity. Christ said : "He that despiseth man, despiseth not man but God." The Gita states : "He is beloved to the Lord who entertains no hatred against a single soul, who Cherishes friendly feelings and kindness to all"—(XII. 13—14).

Though in the important towns and cities in India, untouchability is at present regarded more or less as a thing

of the past, conventions of caste-distinction and untouchability somehow preserve themselves by holding fast to grand feasts in houses where the Śrādh ceremony is on and to the kitchen of the common house-wife and thus carry on their own existence. As a matter of fact, their extent has been outmoded ; this is certainly to be regarded as a good sign. Without a united nation, one faith and worship of one Brahman, India will be disintegrated into hundred parts ; as a result, due to want of unity the country will ever be the target of a foreign attack. So, in order to remove completely the possibility of foreign invasion in future every son of Mother India shall have to forget his own racial identity and to make himself known only as a Hindu. Accept Brahman of the Vedas as your only deity in worship as the symbol of God Supreme. Śāktas, Vaiṣnavas, Buddhists, Jains—all of you give up narrow and communal ideas and bow down before the feet of that one Supreme Father. Irrespective of castes and community, all of you join the chorus in the sublime song of the *Gāyatri mantra* of the *Sāma Veda* ; let the air and the sky be filled with purity ; tied to the same knot, the whole of India from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorion shall continue to vibrate like one string. The unprecedented power that shall be generated in that unity shall bring new life to India and she will be an invincible tower of strength ; as a result, the desire of the foreigner and the heretic to attack and break the solidarity of the nation shall naturally tend to be restrained. So, if you want to attain perfection in your own life and to reach the high ideal of national life you have to rise above the social evils, weaknesses and mud-slinging and for uprooting communal rancour and bitterness your unavoidable duty is to attain success in bringing about one nation, one religion and the worship of one God. To attain the entire benefit in this life here and here-after, it is the Creator who has to be worshipped and not His creation which is limited and ephemeral.

Equal distribution of resources is also necessary. The welfare of the country demands to-day a standardisation of economic and social condition. The gloom of poverty and ignorance which has enveloped the whole country, if not dispersed soon by an equal distribution of food and knowledge will lead to the break-down of the structure of the entire society which will be reduced to a heap of ruins. For the unjustifiable greediness of a few men, the life of the people in general is disintegrating. The pious and the religious are being sneered at, the intellect of the society is denied the recognition it deserves as it fails to propitiate Mammon having recourse to dishonest means, In the present society the naked brutality and indecent audacity of the capitalists go unchallenged. The strong are at liberty to do whatever they like and the weak suffer, as if, it were their fate to do so. Now God has been dethroned and Mammon has succeeded Him. To save the country from an impending peril, far-reaching changes are necessary.

"By equality Marxism means not equality in personal requirements but the equal emancipation of all toilers from exploitations. The equal duty of all is to work according to their ability and the equal right of all toilers to receive according to their requirements (Webb, Soviet Russia, 1936, Vol ii, p 702).

Standardisation of social life by the state shall not certainly imply the deprivation of our freedom of thought and action. Each individual should have an equal right and should have an equal opportunity to progress in his own way. The lilies of the field are not to be planted in the desert but the desert itself should be fertilized so that the lilies may grow there. Kalidas and Śri Aurobindo are not to be dragged down to the common level but the common men who are now ignorant, down-trodden and are deprived of the bare necessaries of life are required to be cared for so that they may live like men befitting the dignity of man and developing as a useful part of the society. The standardisation should be

attempted in creating harmony and not in damping the spirit of the nation. According to the diverse impressions of the past men are born with unequal talents and different inclinations. So, it will be wise and profitable to allow each to grow up according to his aptitude. For an all-round improvement of the country, science, literature and industry, social work, religion and spirituality should have equal encouragement.

My discussion on the above topics under the present head may appear irrelevant to some of my readers. My humble submission is that unlike other countries the social and religious customs in India are closely connected together. Divine perfection which is the fruit of spirituality is not achieved unless the angle of vision becomes transparent and broad. Moreover, without equality in resources and free distribution of knowledge, peace in society and mental quietude cannot be maintained without which progress in religiosity and spirituality is impossible.

In the different stages of Hindu life a true clean-cut picture of Indian Philosophy is vividly represented. In India, Hindu-life and the philosophy of the land are inseparably connected. To the Hindus philosophy is not an abstract subject but it is a part and parcel of their individual life manifesting itself through the four stages of Hindu life. As the law of all true humanity, Indian philosophy rises above race bias ; it appeals to the mind universal.

Look at Lord Krishna and Mahātmā Gāndhi. The panorama of their whole career depicts the very philosophy of Hindusthan. 'The heart of Hindusthan is the art of *Āchār*'—truly, said a great Indian. Hindu religion based upon Indian philosophy demands of each Hindu an *Āchār* or the practice of piety, selflessness, truthfulness, an undivided attention and complete self-surrender to the Almighty.

The basic principle and ultimate aim of all true religions point to the same end—the realisation of the Self. As we

dive deeper and deeper into the core of things, it becomes clearer to us that beneath the divergent externalities connected with different religions there is a fundamental note of unity In spite of diversity on the surface, all the true religions possess the same fundamental truth, essential for the spiritual growth in man. The realism is a subject of occult science ; it is spiritual; and spiritual essence can neither be directly known nor immediately sensed by any recognised process of cognition but to be realised in one's soul alone in the path of mystic *Sādhanā*.

Religion is not associated with the creeds and places of worship but with the individual life of man. Religiosity of a man is tested by how much he can fulfil the purpose of human life. Our aim is the at-one-ment with God and the way to it is the manifestation of our innate Godly qualities. "The essence of religion is the strong and earnest direction of the emotions and desires towards an ideal object, recognised as of the highest excellence, and as rightfully paramount over all selfish objects of desire. This condition is fulfilled by the religion of humanity in as eminent a degree and in as high a sense as supernatural religions even in their best manifestation and far more so than in any of their other"—observed John Stuart Mill. The value of ethical life is goodness of mind and purity of heart pointing towards the welfare of mankind. Universal religion should be the embodiment of service, devotion and wisdom. "And Man's allegiance must be to the truth, the Self, the Spirit, the Divine which is in him and in all."—said Śri Aurobindo. Religion is the root cause of everything and truth alone is the foundation of religion.

The motive of service takes us to the heart of the universe, the seat of God. In the eyes of Śri Ram Krishna, man is '*Nārāyana*'—the visible manifestation of God. "I felt" says Rabindranath "that I had found my religion at last,

the religion of man, in which the infinite became defined in humanity and came close to me so as to need my love and co-operation." Our true Self is the cosmic Self. Unless we feel oneness with the universe, our knowledge of the Supreme remains yet to be known. "It is only within ourselves, in our active ideals of truth, righteousness, charity and beauty and consequent fellowship with others, that we find the revelation of God,"—says Professor Halden. Anything that creates broadness of mind and purity of heart paves the way of religious life and anything that all dread as being vicious, is an obstacle in the path of religion. Religion consists neither in ashes over the body nor in a shaven head but in abiding pure amid the impurities of the world. Fanatical asceticism is not indicative of religious life. A man cannot be made clean simply by washing his body ; purity of mind and heart is more essential, because, the perfection of an individual is not at all outward and mechanical but inward and spiritual.

Religion is not virtually a bundle of vague ideas. The philosophy of religion though theretic points to the ultimate Truth. Its ethical side is no doubt practical but religious practices subdue the lower self, purifies body and mind. The objective ethics or humanitarian works create a sense of unity of all the jivas. Śveta Up. V. 14 observes that the Brahman is realised in a pure heart. Viṣṇu Purāna urges that salvation is impossible without purification of heart. To make the heart pure one must practise truthfulness, non-violence, non-injury and celibacy. Chhā Up. II. 23, Kena Up. IV. 8, Mu Up. 1. 2. 11 and Praśna Up. 1. 10 declare that the practice of austerity opens the gate of higher heavens. Maitrani Up. IV. 3 speaks of asceticism as the gate of knowledge. But the disciplinary practices do not imply torture of body and mind. These are likely to weaken the physical and psychic powers of a yogin and as a result his

discriminative power and capacity for enduring heat and cold will decline. The Gitā, Verse VI. 17 prescribes temperance and moderation to be the means to build up a successful ascetic life.

Ritual and ceremonial functions have their importance in social life no doubt, but far the less they are important in mystic religion. Faith in religion is its kernel and externalities are its fibres. The cause of India's present decline is due to the fact that she has lost her spiritual force in religion and is content with its fibres.

Rituals are means and not the end in themselves. To a true worshipper the externalities of religion or ceremonials shrink away as relatively unimportant. He rises above all sorts of egotism and bigotism. Ego and its breeds have no place in religion. "Fight self and you need fear no other foe"—said St. Catherine of Siena. John Van Danton observed : "Ego, personality, a sense of human power and existence, these are the stumbling blocks that perpetuate *Māyā*." To lead a religious life, there must breathe a sense of selflessness and the only thought that should occupy a religious mind is the thought of God. Though anchored in the worldly life his Spirit shall soar in the spiritual plane. When life becomes unbearable here, the unfortunate man may take shelter of a pious man or a religious institution for real comfort and guidance. If the life is allowed to be drifted away recklessly in the path of evil, he will make his life miserable all the more. Since good is beyond our reach, it is neither wise nor desirable to have recourse to evil paths.

Holiness and humility are the first things that an ascetic should practise. It is written in 'Tamakbaggo' a Buddhist Scripture that 'mere wearing of ochre-coloured cloth is useless for the person who is not ground on restraint, non-violence, truth and religion'. Mere mechanical adherence to creeds and dogmas is also not faith which stands for the

religious experience acquired intuitively and the belief that promotes the growth of a spiritual life. Purity of mind and humility of nature that make the mendicant life glorious are essential to tread in the path of religion. Yellow clothes, shaven head and begging alms prescribed for a Hindu mendicant are supposed to represent a true picture of a *Sanyāsin*. These protect him from falling into the gripe of passion, lust and desires. In a vain-glorious mind God's mercy and revelation of Godliness are not possible. From the highest Śaṃkarāchārya and Buddha down to the common *sanyāsins*, we find them wanderng homeless in the yellow garb of a monk, attracting the public mind to the path of renunciation. Men are naturally inclined to appreciate the nothingness of the world, when they find Buddha, the son of a king, and Śaṃkar, the greatest erudite scholar of the world renouncing everything and voluntarily leading the life of a *Vikṣu*. So a Hindu monk in India is held in higher esteem than a king.

Man is essentially divine and his divine nature can be manifest by leading a religious life with strict discipline, mental training as well as with constant prayer and meditation. "Do this either by work or worship or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more or all of these and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrine or dogmas, rituals or books, temples or forms are but secondary details"—observed Swāmi Vivekānanda in his 'Works'. I, P. 257. For Swāmi Vivekānanda, religion is the manifestation of the divinity latent in man.

Religion is that path which has gone from this incomplete, incongruous world to the complete and congruous world. It is the only path which we must tread to return to our true Home. Mysticism is that royal road through which we can reach the spiritual current of life. According to Bergson, Mysticism is 'open religion'. Whatever is true, holy and

beautiful that make a man perfect spring from spiritual fountain. It matters little what religion is followed by a man, if it helps to pave the path of mystic *Sādhanā*. A mystic *Sādhak* is not outside the ken of any of the great religions. If a religion fails to develop mysticism, it is not worth-embracing.

It is wrongly believed that religion and the practice of *Yoga* make our life dry and monotonous. It is not at all true. By helping us to fulfil the mission of our life, they confer upon us eternal bliss and lead us to the perennial source of perfect peace.

Faith is the power-house of spiritual energy. This force helps a man to stick to his own views in every sphere of life, religious or otherwise. Without this glowing faith none can achieve success either in religion or in worldly life. No amount of sacrifice is deemed to be too much to carry out one's faith into action. Faith is the dynamic force acting behind man's each enterprise. Faith in religion ends with the realisation of its goal. "Faith" says Wisely "is the vision of the Soul, that power by which spiritual things are apprehended, just as material things are apprehended by the physical senses." Faith is a firm adherence to the life of the Spirit. It is a sense of profound Reality and a vision of the ideal. Any belief that ensures the spiritual progress in life is true faith, worthy of acceptance. "Faith is useful when it is grounded in sight : Because, one has to realise the supreme truth in his own person"—*Majjhim Nikāya* I. P. 317.

Faith deals with values and not with facts which is the aim and object of science. Science estimates the value but religion and spirituality realise it. Ethical and moral injunctions being not the last words in the scheme of evolution equally fail to ascertain ultimate value. The difference between ethical and religious pursuits is that the former is satisfied with the moral value which being mutable with the

change of time cannot secure for us the ultimate objective of human life, whereas, the religion having a vaster field of unlimited possibilities, its quest ends in the realisation of the ultimate Truth. Religion helps us to attain the knowledge of God, ethics mould us into an ideal man, spirituality is the bridge to cross over the gulf between man and Man, the Eternal. They are equally indispensable to combine with God. If religion is supplemented by the practice of *Yoga*, our success will be prompt and sure. Only faith in religion will not take any one to his cherished goal; he has to work for it and the practice of *Yoga* has been prescribed by the seers of the old as the method for quick and easy determination of our final destiny. So a closest co-operation between faith in religion and the practice of Yoga is essential to meet the ultimate end.

Dharma is the implicit truth inherent in the nature of man. It extends the scope of our consciousness towards a higher and larger sphere of life where lies the highest reality of mankind. The path of religion is very steep and narrow at the outset but the path ahead shines in dazzling splendour which like a light-house shows to souls the way they have lost.

Religion of the Vedās is earlier than every living faith in the world. It rises above race bias and sings song of the Spirit Universal. The *Gita* is a synthesis of Vedic doctrines. It teaches the most useful and rejects the less essentials. The different sects within the Hindu fold are strung together by the fundamental principles of the Vedās. They all follow the general instructions of the Vedās though they differ in externalities. The teachings of the Vedās exclude no faith and no teacher. Lives of Jesus and many other spiritual leaders of mankind illustrate the teachings of the Vedas. The teachings of the *Gita* were fully revealed through the lives and activities of many seers of the East and the West irrespective of creed and nationality. "Though mystical theologians of the East

and the West differ widely, though the ideal of life which they hold out to the soul differs too, yet in the experience of the saints this conflict seems to be transcended ; when the love of God is reached, divergences become impossible, for, the soul has passed beyond the sphere of mankind and is immersed in the one reality. One cannot honestly say that there is a wide difference between the Brāhmin, the Sufi or the Christian mystics at their best"—observed Miss Evelyn Underhill. While commenting on Hindu religion professor Clement Web makes the following remarks : "With its ready acceptance of any and every local divinity or founder of a sect and ascetic devotee as a manifestation of God, its tolerance of symbol and legends of all kinds.....it could perhaps more easily than any other faith develop into a universal religion"—'Science, Religion and Reality', P. 334. Sir Charles Elliot opines : "The bottles of Hinduism have always proved capable of holding all the wine poured into them". Hinduism far from being sectarian in spirit embraces each and all. It bears a sense of respect and good-will for other sects and faiths. That is why we find in India Hindu temple, mosque of the Muhammedans and Christian church standing side by side. The utmost liberty is given in the matter of addressing and in the modes of worship by the Hindu *Dharma*. Any body may approach Him either through knowledge or through love or through service to humanity. Even idol-worship is in vogue in the Hindu society though it was unknowu in the time of the Vedas. So Hindu Dharma is very liberal and impartial to the seekers of truth. Whatever may be the worshipper's form of address, whatever may be the means they adopt and whatever may be the paths they follow to approach Him, there is no bar according to our sacred texts. Lord Krishna said : "Every path leads to God as every river leads to the ocean." This doctrine enables the Hindus to tolerate even the most absurd creeds.

The Hindus not only tolerate other's creeds but try to assimilate them. Śri Ram Krishna Paramhansa Deva is said to have practised other religions besides Hinduism. Faith is a mystical sense of trust that is essential to realise the ultimate Truth. Religion begets faith. It bequeths us mystery rather than meaning. The path of religion and spirituality is somewhat mystic—'*Dharmasya tattvam* nihitoguhāyāṃ'. So religious path is to be traversed in a mystic way (Katha Up 1, 2. 12). The different religions are but the different branches of the same tree; so no religion, however crude it may appear, should be undervalued, neither should we decry or seek to underrate other sects, nor bear hatred towards their followers. In the eye of God there is perfect equality; nothing is superior or inferior. Learn to respect other religions and treat them as that of your own. This sense of equality will help you to understand the doctrine of non-duality—the gateway to salvation.

Men in ancient India of whom we are legitimately proud, were trained not for defensive and offensive purposes, not for the acquisition of wealth and power, but they were intiated into the contemplative life to comprehend truth and reality. An Indian forest is a site for great spiritual experiences. Retirement into the serene solitude of the wilderness helps a devotee to attain mental peace and calmness. Trees and shrubs in the forest loaded with fruits and flowers seem to show God's endless blessings; birds make the air melodious with their sweet songs; the soft and silvery light of the moon adds to the loveliness of the place; if there be a rivulet nearby, its sound captivates the mind, without which the highest ecstasy is not possible. Nothing more agreeable set-up can be imagined for the human mind to become a true receptacle of sublime thought towards quiet and peaceful meditation.

GOD EXISTS

It is natural that men are not inclined to believe in the existence of one who is invisible and incomprehensible. So, Berkley says : "It is contradiction to suppose that an object can exist imperceived." It happens, therefore, that we hesitate to admit the existence of God as we cannot see Him with our naked eyes. But can I deny the existence of my grand-father who died before my birth ? The reality of an object is not subject to our optical vision. God is truth and without a form ; He cannot be sensed. Kant is right in saying ; "Things-in-themselves are unknowable. We may, therefore, possibly feel, believe in, pre-suppose the Absolute, but know it in the strictest sense, we cannot"—'The Logic of Hegel' by W. Wallace. The reason why we cannot see or know Him is that in the realm of things-in-themselves, there is no motion, whereas our mind is always moving. Those who are in the same plane having equal frequency of vibration can see and know one another. So with a restless mind we cannot determine the reality or subjectivity of an object which is motionless. When our mind would be made still by the practice of Yoga, we would be in a position to know, feel and even touch the 'Thing-in-itself'. The Thing-in-itself cannot be the object of our optical vision. God is realised identically i.e. when we become one with Him or in His differentiated condition. God as reality is incomprehensible. He is perceived in our pure consciousness as is common in *Nirvikalpa samādhi* or the state of highest trance. Our mind can form an idea about this invisible Being when we think of Him as related to the world. Human mind fails to conceive Him unless it attributes a form or quality to the Absolute Brahman.

Brahman or the Ātman is beyond mental concept and so He cannot be indicated as this or that. By textual evidence,

His existence is established. Śveta up V. 6 states : "Brahmā knew Him *who can be known only from the Vedas.*" The purpose of *S'āstric* utterances is to make one initially acquainted with primary knowledge about Brahman. *Madhu-Kāṇda* of the Bṛhadāraṇyak Upaniṣad ends with the word 'Ityanusāsanaṃ'—this is the dictum. Muni-Kāṇda of the same text ends with the instruction : "Etāvadare Khalu amṛtatvaṃ —this is the sure immortality". As no amount of intellect can stop rising of the morning sun, so misinterpretation of the Vedic utterences by intellectual dexterity is an impossibility. Bṛ. Ār Up II.3.6. advises us to know Brahman negatively i.e. by the method of *Neti Neti*—not this, not this.

We cannot know Him by any instrument of perception through which everything becomes known : "Yenedaṃ sarvaṃ vijānāti taṃ kena vijāniyāt". So *Yājnavalkya* told *Maitreyee* : "There is no such faculty of perception that would enable one to know Him who is the only Knower"—*Vijnātaramare Kena Vijāniyāt* (Bṛ. Ār. Up. II.4.14).

Since God's existence cannot be proved to demonstration, some scientists are of the view that God's existence is a matter of pure abstraction having no foundation in fact, that He can be found nowhere except in metaphysical speculation. But at the time of adversity these scientists do not hesitate to pray fervently to God and invoke His aid.

Man is so weak before sorrows and sufferings, old age and death and feels so helpless before a natural calamity that he cannot but bow down before the Most Powerful ; he is compelled to admit the existence of God. That there is one Arbiter of the individual's virtues and vices man can realise from the experience of his own pious and impious conducts. This does not require other proofs. Be meek and loving and you will feel His presence.

"Or, if virtue feeble were
Heaven itself would stoop to her."—Comus, line. 1022.

Even if due value be given to human efforts, there remains much which cannot be accounted for except by contemplating the existence of a divine agency. "There is no one and nothing else but God in this universe"—said Mahātmā Gāndhi. This implicit faith in the existence of God gives us strength in our weakness when we see despair all around, supplies us with a motive for noble action and it exercises a healthy control on us, inspiring a living hope in our distress and checking an undue elation in our prosperity.

God is near us but we are far from Him. We may remain ignorant and indifferent about God but nothing in us is unknown to Him. We always live within His purview. "Sight perceives Him not, but He perceives men's sight; for He is the knower of secrets, the Awari"—Āl Qurān, Surā VI, P. 104. Our ignorance about Him is great, yet the Great God, affectionate as He is, has endless mercy for His sinful children. He assures all sinful men with the message, "I shall forgive all your sins, come to me."

"There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."—Hamlet. V. 2.

God Supreme is All-benign. We have forgotten Him due to our greed for feminine charms and for gold. That is the reason why the gracious God inflicts upon the individual from time to time sorrows and sufferings, diseases and natural calamities and thus gives his mind which is worldly inclined an opportunity to be directed to Him. When in danger, even the greatest rogue and atheist look up to heaven with folded hands and prays piteously, 'Save me, O Father, save me, O Mother.' For the non-believers who are very very few in number, it can be safely remarked that their pessimism is a mere pose—a self-deception, intentional, sentimental or intellectual. While walking through an Indian street one may occasionally notice a number of boys running after an old man shouting "*Rādheśyām*", "*Sitārām*" and the

latter turning back with a beating attitude. This is not because the old man dislikes the slogan but the wrath which he pretends is simply to excite the boys to shout more loudly.

The nature of Brahman is *Satyasya Satyam*—the Truth of truths, which renders Him incomprehensive. Accordingly Bṛ. Ār. Up, 11, 3. 6 suggests that Brahman should be known negatively. Since the existence of Godhead cannot be established by direct evidence, one school of Indian Philosophy, viz. the *Sāmkhya* system seems to deny His existence[1]. In Sāṃkhya Sutrā III. 56-57, the existence of God as the Creator and Regulator of the universe has been admitted[2]. This God of the Sāṃkhyas is not the highest Being but some emancipated Soul[3]. Such a Soul is powerful like *Hari*, *Hara* etc. as stated in the *Purāṇas*. These liberated beings attained Godhood by dint of their devoted worship and severe austerity. The Sāṃkhyas are of opinion that save and except such God, there is none else.

Verses 1/92 and 5/10 of Sāṃkhya Sutra state that there is no authoritative proof to show that God exists. Professor Maxmuller commenting on these two verses, remarks : "The atheism of Sāṃkhya Philosophy is very different from what we actually mean by it. It is the negation of the necessity of admitting an active or limited personal God." He does not differ much from Kant in that ; both imply that though the existence of God cannot be logically established, still those who believe in God should not be discouraged ; since its denial also cannot be proved. The Sāṃkhya deny the existence of God but at the same time Sāṃkhya Sutra, 3. 57

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1. "ईश्वरासिद्धेः । प्रमाणाभावात् न तत सिद्धिः ॥"
—Sāṃkhya Sutra, V. 10.
2. "स हि सर्व्ववित् सर्व्वकर्त्ता । ईदृशेश्वर सिद्धिः सिद्धा ॥"—Do III. 56-57.
3. "मुक्तात्मनः प्रशंसा उपासासिद्धस्य वा ।"—Do I. 95.

declares that the emancipated Souls represent God in their person and the adepts are endowed with divine power and they incarnate God on earth. A statement like this does not involve a categorical denial of God but amounts to an indirect admission that God exists. The followers of Sāṃkhya philosophy acknowledge *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśwara* as the creator, preserver and the destroyer of the world. These three deities are the three different aspects of Brahman—the Supreme God. God is Trinity in unity. He essentially upholds the oneness of Hindu conception of Trinity. Godhead is the glorious Trinity of knowledge, Love and Power representing *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśwara*.

Sāṃkhya *Sutra*, III. 56 states that those who merge in nature emerge as the omniscient Lord of the creation. This Primeval Being of the Sāṃkhyas resembles the *Ādi-Buddha* of the Buddhists who can be identified again with the *Trimurti* of the Hindus—*Brahmā*. *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśwara*, the Gods with attribute. But these manifested Gods, however, cannot give us salvation. Therefore, if salvation aimed at by the *Sāmkhyas* is *Nirvāna*, *Mokṣa* or complete emancipation, the existence of one Supreme God will have to be admitted, otherwise their liberation will be limited and partial ; it cannot be more than *Sāmipya Mukti* or the nearness to God but not *Nirvāna* or immersion in the Absolute.

According to the *Sāmkhya* philosophy, *Parkriti* is all in all and there is none above it. Manifest creation is prakriti and creation is the evolution of unmanifest *Prakriti*. *Prakriti* is a string of three strands—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*—the three *gunas*. So long as the state of equilibrium of the three strands is not lost, so long as the three qualities constituting the Prakriti are not separated by an external stimulus, creation does not start. As has been ably set forth by Dr. Annie Besant : "When the three qualities are in equilibrium, there is the virgin matter unproductive"—'Esoteric

Christianity, P.231.' *Prakriti* as understood by the *Sāmkhyas* can be defined as the root matter in differential equilibrium. When the three *gunas* get agitated, the cohesion of the *Triguṇas* is then only lost and *Prakriti* begins to manifest. The question is : "By what force or agency the agitation in the *gunas* is caused ?" Prakriti is inert : consequently she cannot apply any power to cause the movement. 'I shall be many, I shall procreate'—this desire of Brahman for creation excites the three *gunas* and the latent Prakriti becomes patent (Vide. *Viṣṇu Purana*, II. 2). This furnishes the conscious energy which is required for t e inert Prakriti to evolve herself. 'Unless there is any exterior principle to stir up the *guṇas* into an unstable state, activity of Prakriti is impossible'—says S. Radhakrishnan. It is reminded in this connection the theory held by Goethe : "Matter cannot exist and be operative without Spirit."

It is known to all and it is written in the *Brahma Sutra*, II. 2. 1, that an artistic design and its execution is not possible without the heip of an artist. Śamkar while commenting on it observes that the potter and the weaver draw up at first a sketch of a pot and a cloth in their minds and finally give them material shape. So God also draws up an image of the visible world in His own mind and ultimately manifests the same with a concrete shape and appropriate name. In the Gita 9, 7. Lord Krishna said : "At the end of each Kalpa, I bring forth everything, living and non-living, out of my Prakriti". Again in verse 9. 8. He declares : "Seated in Prakiti, I animate her and she evolves herself as the world". The agitation in the *gunas* is described as a condition prior to Prakriti's conception. Before Prakriti got agitated, the world was merged in her in a dormant state. According to the *S'rimad Bhāgvad*, I. 10. 22 it was the great *Puruṣa* who made her prone to creation. In verse III. 26. 19 it is clearly said that *Para Brahman* cast

virile semen into the agitated Prakriti and she gave birth to *Hiranmoy Mahat Tattva* or the Cosmic Intelligence. The Vedas call Him Hiraṇyagarbha—the Brahman with attribute. *Mahat Tattva* is the first principle evolved from Nature being the fundamental intellect and first step towards creation. Ahaṃ, the universal Ego sprang from *Mahat*. *Aham* or Ego produced the first subtle elements, the ten Indriyas (senses) and the mind. The five gross elements of creation arose from the five subtle elements or the *Pancatanmatras*. Puruṣa is an entity which is beyond the twenty four entities of creation or the *Caturvinśati Tattva*. It is the Prakriti that undergoes change and destruction but Puruṣa is eternal.

Hiraṇyagarbha or the Brahman with attribute is the manifested God of the Saṃkhyas. How can the Saṃkhyas deny the existence of a father to this manifestated God ? Finding it impossible, *Vacaspati Miśra* and other great teachers to Sāṃkhya Philosophy introduced at a later date the theory that behind the Prakriti there is an unknown power and that the evolution of Prakriti is directed by an Omniscient Spirit. Reffering to this unknown Power, Jesus said : "It sweetly and mightily ordereth all things".

"Yet I doubt not through the ages
One increasing purpose runs"—Tennyson.

Creation is the unfolding of an idea which has been in the mind of God Supreme. To those who deny the existence of a driving force, a divine impulse acting behind creation, my humble submission is that without a creative force acting behind, nothing could evolve. Further, the creation without aim and end is meaningless. If the movement of the world-process is not towards any pre-destined goal, it is sure to end in disaster. The theory of mechanical movement and physiological evolution make the purpose of creation a bewildering farce. Science cannot infuse life and consciousness nto a dead matter. Liebig observes : "I would more readily

believe that a book on Chemistry or on Botany could grow out of dead matter than believe that a leaf or flower could be formed or could grow by chemical forces." Throughout the chain of creation a Cosmic purpose runs. To support this view Professor Holden says : "If we assume that life is not inherent in nature and that there must have been a time before life existed, this is an unwarranted assumption which would make the appearance of life totally unintelligible." Each step in the process of evolution carries with it the essence of spirituality of its unique spiritual source that desired : "I shall be many, I shall procreate." So the world is a creation of a conscious being and not the chance-play of unconscious *Prakriti*. It is a Lila—an expression of God's spontaneity[1]. According to the Goudapāda Kārikā 1. 9, Brahman is the fulfilment of all desires ; He cannot be actuated by any desire for creation. It follows, therefore, that creation is a freak or fancy of the Supreme Mind. It is the unfolding of an idea which had been in the mind of God Supreme.

'Yataḥ' or 'from whom' in the second Sutra of *Bādrāyana* —'*Janmādasca yata iti*' points to a Conscious Being. This view is supported by the 5th verse 'Ikṣaternāsabdaṃ'. The root '*Ikṣa*' which literally means seeing, indicates an act of seeing of a Conscious Being. Samkar's Commentary on this *Sutra* bears the same and a further significance. He explains the 'Seeing' not only in its original derivative meaning but he attaches to it a cognate sense i.e. including all verbs that indicate conscious action. So the creation is not a whimsical play of a blind force. Śri Aurobindo calls this creation a Lila—'A child's joy of creating and re-creating Himself in Himself for the sheer bliss of that Self-creation,—

1. "लीलया वापि युञ्जीरन् निर्गुणस्य गुणक्रिया ।"—The Gita.
Also "लोकवत्तु लीला कैवल्यम् ।"—Brahma Sutra.

Himself the play, Himself the player, Himself the playground.'—'The Life Divine', P.155, Vol. 1.

Being or *sat* cannot be Prakriti on account of her illusory nature. The root 'Ikṣa' which means to see in 'Ikṣaternāsabdam' cannot be ascribed to the inert Prakriti ; it refers to conscious Ātman. 'That' in the phrase 'Thou art that ; O' Śvetaketu' cannot point to an inert object like Prakriti. Another utterance of the said Ṛsi removes all doubts : 'Tat satyaṃ sa ātmā—that is truth, that is Ātman'. An intelligent being like Śvetaketu cannot be identical to inert Prakriti. Matter without Spirit is lifeless. Neither the body nor the mind is alive and active if Ātman leaves them. *Digha Nikāya*, a Buddhist text, II, 63 asks : "If the *vijnāna* did not descend into the womb, would body and mind be constituted there ?" Saṃyukta Nikāya, a like text, XII, 12-13 holds *Vijnāna* (consciousness) to be the cause of jiva's coming into being. According to Audulomi, the chief characteristic of a free Soul is *Chaitanya* or consciousness. The whole range of creation is permeated with different grades of consciousness and consciousness at its highest level is God. The key to God-consciousness lies in the consciousness of the Soul. Soul-consciousness originates when we realise that essentially we are Spirit and nothing but Spirit : "Tamevaikaṃ jānatha ātmānaṃ."

The view of an unconscious force developing into life and consciousness is a contradiction in term. What is not already in it, cannot evolve. Evolution of matter is apparent, what actually evolves, is Spirit out of matter. Matter only serves the purpose of a medium through which Spirit unfolds itself. To the self-evolutionists I take pleasure to make present of the following beautiful passage from *'Pagan and Christian Creed'* : "Each little leaf of a tree may very naturally have sufficient consciousness to believe that it is an entirely separate being, maintaining itself in the sunlight and the

air, withering away and dying when the winter comes in—and, there is an end of it. It probably does not realise that all the time it is being supported by the sap which flows from the trunk of the tree, and that in its turn it is feeding the tree too—that its Self is the Self of the whole tree. If the leaf could really understand itself, it would see that its Self was so deeply and intimately connected, as to be practically one with the life of the whole tree."

Taittiriya Upaniṣad declares that from whom all created, by whom all are sustained and unto whom all return, is God. He is the truth, the way and the light and the living energy of all living beings. "In the world of existence every individual entity or personality, human or otherwise, is only one temporarily or spatially conditioned or limited aspect of that Divine Career. Every human personality is essentially one with that Supreme End ; and the consciousness, though seemingly only human, is really the Divine consciousness functioning within self-imposed limits."—says an eminent writer. Our Vedanta philosophy asserts that Jiva is indeed Brahman and nothing different from Brahman : 'Jivo Brahmaiva nāparaḥ'. If Brahman is fire, *Jiva* is its spark. The former being the sky of consciousness, the latter is but a tiny ray of it. *Jiva* is a mere drop in comparison to the Ocean—Brahman, the limitless sky of consciousness.

Puruṣas are three in number (1) *Uttama*, (2) *Akṣara* and (3) *Kṣara*. The Supreme Soul is *Uttama Puruṣa*. *Jiva* or the individual soul, changeless in reality like the kuta or mountain-peak is the *Akṣara Puruṣa* (imperishable), and the entire ever-changing creation is *Kṣara Puruṣa* (perishable). *Uttama Puruṣa* is the sky of consciousness, *Akṣara Puruṣa* is but a tiny ray of it while *Kṣara Puruṣa* is nothing but a reflection of divine consciousness in *Māyā*. Divine consciousness is the ocean, Jiva consciousness is like a drop, and, the drop being a part of the ocean, they are identical in essence. It is He

who is the Soul of all souls, the life of all lives, a citadel of infinite living beings—the locus, the resting place of all. God is inside the world as well as outside it. So with the total annihilation of the world, God's existence is not extinct. The world was evolved and dissolved times without number and will in the future appear and disappear through eternity to come. God, the only unchangeable and indestructible Being existed before creation and He will be the only existing Being after dissolution.

We can see electric light but not the electric energy which remains invisible to us ; still we cannot deny its existence. Similarly, behind the visible, there is one unseen Power controlling universal law and regulating each moment of our life. Creation without a creator cannot be imagined. Paramhansa Deva used to say, "Those who fruitlessly argue on the existence of God, are in reality very far from Him. As soon as we get access into His light, everything becomes definitely clear and all arguments cease. The bees buzz only so long as they do not get at the honey."

Science admits that there is creation but does not admit that there is a creator. Here does science differ from philosophy. According to philosophy an art cannot find expression without an artist. Science, on the other hand, holds that Nature exerts herself spontaneously. Scientist's business is with matter ; to him the material of art is more useful and more important than the artist. But creation without a creator cannot be imagined. Newton observes : "The exquisite structure of the sun, the planets, and the comets could not have had their origin but by the plan and absolute dominion of an intelligent and powerful being." After the day comes the night, after the night comes the day, the rainy season follows the summer, the winter follows the rains, adolescence follows childhood, youth follows adolescence—this disciplined regularity working in nature would never be possible without

a controller. The Ṛsi of the Ṛgveda asserts : "Truly, O' *Gārgi*, it is at the command of that Immortal Spirit that the sun and the moon, heaven and the earth, the hour and the second, the day and the night, the month and the fortnight, the year and the seasons have all received their individuality. Truly, O' *Gārgi*, it is at the will of that Immortal Soul that the rivers come out of snow-clad mountains and flow to the east or the west, each in its own direction."

"God's in His Heaven—
All's right with the world."

Robert Browning's 'Pippa Passes.'

According to professor J. B. S. Halden, 'the spread of science inevitably leads to the spread of atheism.' To the lower strata of the scientist's world, his view holds good, but almost all the greatest of scientists believe in one ultimate Reality by whatever name may it be called.

The last word of science is energy ; when an atom of a substance is sub-divided, it passes into nothing and the scientist gets only some energy as its remnant. So energy is the ultimate cause that combines the atomic particles of matter to form a substance. Matter is produced when energy associates itself with time and effect. Since this energy is active in the universal nature, it plays within each atom of all things and beings. It is not a blind force but conscious energy. The regularity noticed in the world-phenomenon and in the creation of the jiva-world has been possible only because this conscious energy is active behind them. "Emergence of life out of a Newtonian world would be a quite unintelligible miracle"—'The Philosophical Basis of Biology' P 30 by J. S. Halden F. R. S. Professor Bateson admits that the origin and nature of species remain utterly mysterious. Nature works in harmony as the natural laws are controlled by this unseen Power. Seasons follow one after another in regular succession ; the Sun rises in the east and sets in the west,

beasts are never born of human beings and jack fruits never grow on a mangoe tree. R. Boyle rightly observes : "The genuine scientists can never force their way into knowledge of the secret of creation without being aware of the finger of God".

Creation is not of atomic origin independent of an intelligent factor. The existence of a conscious and intelligent Power lying behind an isolated and motionless atom which sets an atom in motion and connects innumerable atoms to form a material substance, has got to be admitted. Atoms devoid of Spirit cannot be the cause of material creation. Aristotle holds that matter is purely negative and it has no characteristic of its own. He says that the sun, the moon and all planets are actually kept in uniform motion by *Primum Mobile* or *elan vital*, the ultimate uncaused Cause of all motion and creation. Motion without a force behind is impossible. Newton's first law of motion states : "Everybody continues in its state of rest or of uniform motion in a straight line except in so far as it may be compelled by force to change its state." It is the First Cause which, unmoved itself, initially moves every thing.

Atomism is based upon the theory that movement of atoms are governed by 'Natural Laws.' But Nature herself is inert ; unless impregnated with Spirit, she or her laws cannot move a blade of grass. Atoms when descend downwards fall in a straight line. During their straight downward motion they cannot unite with one another to form a substance. But some of them are found to slip away from their straight down-fall and collide with other atoms. Such collision and counter-collisions give rise to the formation of material objects. But the question is by what force or agency the atoms are made to divert their course and collide with one another ? Such incidents compel us to admit the instigation of a controlling power that causes the atoms

to swerve and slant aside from their straight downward journey.

In the 'Phaedrus' (245, 5s ff), Plato observes that Soul is self-moving and it is the cause of motion and changes of the non-souls. Aristotle followed this Platonic doctrine and admitted the existence of an Unmoved Mover. Both Plato and Socrates believed that the world is being directed towards a good end. Plato admits only one Reality which he calls 'good' and to it we attribute the name 'God'. For Plato God is Soul. God, the Creator dwells in the heart of all : *Eṣa devo viśvakarmā mahātmā sadā janānām hṛdaye* sanniviṣṭhaḥ." Reality is the core of everything phenomenal. We may remember in this connection the saying of the *Upaniṣads* : "Sarvavyāpaḍ Sa Bhagawān tasmāḍ Sarvagata Śivaḥ." Tattiriya Upaniṣaḍ, II, 6 says : "Having created the universe, He entered into it." It is inferred, therefore, that every particle of creation is permeated with divine essence or consciousness.

A Nebulae is a floating light in the firmament. This gaseous mass takes a rounded shape by its constant rolling, caused by an energy active at the centre. The energy that whirls the nebulous mass also works at the centre of the atoms constituting the nebulae. On account of constant rotation its component parts are ejected to the sphere and, ultimately, they take the form of innumerable suns. These suns impregnated with that active energy go on revolving as well and eject in their turn metalic substances which in course of time cool down, become hardened and eventually take the shape of the earth. The conscious energy within the sun is identified as the highest God : "Ya eṣa antarāditye hiranmayaḥ puruṣo dṛśyate (Chhā Up. 1.6.6.). The sun-rays are called *devas*—gods. The word *deva* is derived from the root *dyut* which means to shine. So the Conscious Power which makes the sun shine is God. It is that centripetal conscious force

that keeps the worldly things fixed at their own position. It acts as vital energy in all living beings. Human body is a corpse without this life-giving power. Any power without consciousness is blind and material. The consciousness in its purest form is Ātman. "It is a mass of undifferentiated consciousness ; it is the same in all individuals."—states the Bṛ Up. IV.V.13. We may conclude, therefore, that Ātman is the unique entity in all the creation and beyond it. So all the Upaniṣads declare Ātman to be the Brahman—the Highest Being.

To err is human. The scientists, therefore, are not infallible and their pronouncements do not always bear the stamp of finality and certainty. Quantum theory, for instance, seems to differ from Einstien's Relativity. It is a theory that all motion is relative in respect of space and time as a fourth dimension. Regarding the theory of Relativity Bertrand Russel observes : "The principle of Relativity does not have such far-reaching consequence as is supposed. Both Quantum theory and Relativity do not count much in the science of the Ultimate." Scientific experiment of an object may be carried up to its atomic stage ; beyond it science can proceed no further.

The ultimate nature of everything is inscrutable. So Sir James Jeans says : "The stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality ; the universe begins to look upon more like a great thought than like a great machine". The western philosophers admit now-a-days that the manifestation of the universe is a projection of thought process of the Cosmic consciousness. They say : "We are all projected from one common centre which is God : From whom all beings are projected, in whom all live and unto whom they all return, that is God."

"From the heart of God proceeds
A single will, a million deed."

The Western scientists and philosophers now admit that there is an unknowable and incomprehensible force which can be transfomed but not destroyed. Herbert Spencer has called it "persistence of force." He says : "The power which manifests itself throughout the universe distinguished as material is the same power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness." It is elsewhere observed : "The power which manifests itself as consciousness is but a differently conditioned form of the power which manifests itself beyond consciousness."—Ecclesiastical Institution, page 838. Lord Balfour says : "The one Sole Reality eternal and infinite, sustains all things, itself unmanifest, but made manifest through them." It is an echo of the Vedānta-Philosophy. In *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* it has been stated that the Brahman in creating the universe enters into it as Being expressible, self dependent, consciousness, reality, while it in harmony with its own nature persists as the opposite—inexpressible, independent, unconsciousness and unreality.

There is a far higher and greater consciousness than what the scientists call mind. Dr Karen Horney in her 'Self—Analysis' P 36, says : "Certain gains are beckoning to those who are capable of self-analysis which are more spiritual in character, less tangible but not less real." Self-analysis or Self-introspection is possible when mind is concentrated and passions subdued. Direct perception of reality is intuited in one's Soul alone when one becomes absorbed in *Samādhi*. In ecstatic state normal consciousness lapses into passivity and higher one dawns, in the light of which Reality is known. Even philosophy itself has to stop before the portal of higher realisation. Only the higher consciousness attained through the practice of yoga, aided by divine love and intense hunger for the Absolute leads one to that sublime region. Such love is spiritual ; it is not physical and procreative. It is the love of the self for the Self that unites

human soul with the Soul Supreme. Love is the highest form of understanding. Reason, wedded to love comprehends Reality. So, Ruysbroeck observes "where the intelligence must rest without, love and desire can enter in." Some of the western scientists and philosophers admit today that the perception without the help of conceptual organs is possible : "However astonishing it is now proved beyond all rational doubts that in certain abnormal states of the nervous organism perceptions are possible through other than the ordinary channels of the senses."—Notes by Sir William Hamilton in his edition of Dr Read's works.

As in pure consciousness there is no wave of saṃkalpa (mental determination) and vikalpa (doubt) it must be *Sunya*. Hegel also holds that the category of pure Being, for want of some determination passes into nothing. "Both spatially and temporally the division of anything can be carried until the thing itself becomes nothing."—'The Awakening of Faith' P 105. In the opinion of Chandra Kirti, no determination can be attributed to Reality. The psyches are blind to the higher issues. Noumenal cannot be explained in the term of the phenomenal ; dynamical cannot be explained by anything statical. Similarly, Reality cannot be realised through anything ephemeral. So Herbert Spencer says : "Thus it turns out that the objective agency, the noumenal power, the absolute force, declared as unknowable, is known after all to exist, persist, resist and cause our subjective affection and phenomena, yet not to think or to will." Psychological reasoning is a two-edged weapon. Both affirmation and negation on any issue is reversible by psychological arguments. Intellect overshadows higher consciousness limiting the stretch of transcendental wisdom. Moreover, the Brahman is not the subject of knowledge, because, He is the knowledge itself. In the opinion of Kant : "It is impossible, therefore, in the theoretical sphere and with

perfect stringency in all respects to prove and comprehend the existence of the Soul as a real subject, the existence of the world as a single system and the existence of God as Supreme Being, the single metaphysical problems proper lie beyond the limits of philosophical knowledge."—Schwegler's 'History of Philosophy'. P. 214.

What Sir James Jeans remarks about the laws of mathematics is also applicable to all scientific experiments : "As far as the laws of mathematics refer to, they are certain and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality." Mr. Alfred Noyes says : "At whatever altitude our reason allows us to halt, the one absolute mystery is there. The naive question does not alter or abolish that one tremendous Fact."

Brahman or Ātman is invisible, intangible and inacessible to the mind and senses. If God were an object of sense-perception, all his beatitude and attraction would have gone. Man is instinctively attracted towards anything unknown, the charm of which is lost when it is made explicit. If the eye could see itself, it would lose its importance. "There is no beauty" says E. I. Watkin "where the entire meaning is obvious." So God keeps himself hidden from our view. "When one knows God as he is divine, having the reality of God within him, God sheds light on everything, everything will taste like God and reflect him. God will shine in him all the time"—says Echart. God is only knowable to him who believes in His existence[1].

Man is eternally related to consciousness ; materialism does not abide by his true nature. When human mind turns towards Ātman which is the reservoir of pure consciousness, it sees the play of the same energy in the minutest particle of creation. The energy inherent in every individual at the

1. "अस्तीति ब्रवतोऽन्यत्र कथं तदुपलभ्यते ।"—Katha Up., II. 3. 12.

state of his normal consciousness touches both the ends of Spirit and matter ; jiva turns to the end where either of the two is predominant. Due to material attraction, mind becomes steeped in *Avidyā*. Even the pursuit of material science tinges mind with the quality of matter which makes it heavy. Thus the loaded mind goes down ; it cannot ascend to the realm of higher consciousness. This is the distinction in the two results accruing from *Parāvidyā* and *Aparāvidyā*. He who aims at worldly attainments may take up the study of *Aparāvidyā* like material and natural sciences but whose goal is Brahman he must have recourse to the science of the Utlimate which is *Parāvidyā*. Śri Aurovindo's *Sādhanā* was directed towards a complete transformation of matter into Spirit. This end is reached by waking up higher consciousness and not by the analysis of matter. When mind hinges on consciousness, man wins higher illumination and truth reveals in the light of pure reason.

"Oh ! never yet hath mortal drunk—
A draught restorative,
That welled not from the depth of his own soul."—
Goethe's 'Faust,' Prologue in Heaven.

According to Bradley and Bosanquet, organic unity is the standard of truth. God, the supreme unity of all contradictions, is the ultimate truth and in the opinion of Levy, 'Truth is a dangerous word to incorporate within the vocabulary of science.' Whenever anyone tries to fathom the *First cause*, he will inevitably limit it within the range of mental concept and thereby finitize the Infinite. The how and why about the First Cause can neither be ascertained by intellectual speculation nor by scientific experiments. The very endevour of such kind on the part of a scientist proves that he roundly admits the existence of a Supreme Power. Scientists would, therefore, deem more honest, if they would frankly confess

that their theories, hypothesis and experiments are directed only to the phenomenal world and its relations.

The worship of *Sunya-Niranjan* is a clear confession of man's ignorance as to the true nature of the Godhead. The '*Neti*' of the Upaniṣads, the 'Nescio' of St. Bernard and 'Divine Dark' of Ruysbroeck show the same inability of human intellect to express God in His transcendental nature. But the human mind cannot remain content with a negative description of the Ultimate Being. It refuses to resign itself to negation or to a mere cypher. So the mankind have been up and doing from ages past to ascertain the Ultimate Reality. Through his ceaseless quest man realises at last that God Supreme is Ṛta-Brahman—the Eternal Truth (vide the Mahabharat, Śantiparva, II, 5). Everything rests on truth : "Satyaṃ *Brahma* sanātanaṃ sarvaṃ satye pratisthitaṃ" The voice of God said to St. Catherine : "I withdraw myself from her sentiment, and to cause her to seek me in truth."

The Bible says : "The peace of God passeth all understanding". According to the *Vedānta* the Brahman is all bliss. The great seers of the East and West experienced for themselves the ultimate truth as bliss. God is all love and bliss. The Upaniṣads declare that none could have breathed or moved if the sky were not charged with joy and love—"*Ko hyevānyat* kaḥ *prānyat Yadiśa ākāśa ānando na syāt* ?" Whatever exists in the world is born of His immortal bliss : "*Anandarupena amṛtam yad vibhāti*". From His joy the world comes into existence, by His joy it is sustained, onwards joy it is approaching and unto His joy it returns—"*Ānandadheyva khalvimāni Bhutāni jāyante ānandeva jātāni jiva* ānandaṃ *prayantya bhisamvisanti.*" Whatever exists in the universe is pervaded by God : "Isāvāsyamidaṃ sarvaṃ *yat Kinca jagatyām jagat.*" Though the Brahman is indefinable, yet the peace of mind and the bliss of life He offers to the

person wedded to divine inclination cannot but make one believe in the existence of a merciful God.

Referring to the *First Cause*, Chhā. Up. VI. 2. 1. States : "Being only existed in the beginning, one without a second." So 'Nothing existed before creation' does not imply non-existence. If the world be the effect, there must have been a cause, as oil cannot be pressed out of sand. "The idea of the Infinite' writes Pasteur "has a double character, it commands belief, yet it is incomprehensible." The *Guna karinta Vyuha*, a Buddhist text, says : "When all was void Goddess *Prajnā* came out along with the mystic syllable *Om*. She is verily the mother of all Buddists and of all Bodhisattas." "It is this Supreme Intuition (*Prajnāpāramitā*) that is verily the conscious energy of the God Supreme". "O Thou *Prajnāpāramitā* ! I bow down to Thee. Thou art omniscient. Thou guide men along different paths by following which each will attain his own liberation."—*Prajnāpāramitā*. This *Prajnāpāramitā* cannot be inert. Buddhadeva was falsely accused as an atheist on the ground that he declared God as untraceable. But similar remarks occur almost every where in the Upaniṣads, Yoga-Philosophy and other sacred texts of the Hindus of which an instance has been cited before from the *Taittiriya*. As his views were misinterpreted even in his own life-time, Buddha regretfully said ; "These Brāhmins under false impressions accuse me for nothing."—Majhimnikāya. 22 *Sutta*.

Bhagwan *Tathāgata* called that transcendental principle 'unborn', 'unbecome' and 'unevolved'. Does not this description exactly tally with that of Para-Brahman ? In depicting a true picture of the *Nirvānic* plane, Lord Buddha said : "There is yonder realm, where is neither earth nor water, neither fire nor air, neither the boundless sun nor the moon. This I call neither coming nor going nor standing, neither origination nor annihilation, without beginning

without foundation is this."—'The Doctrine of Buddha', P. 518. The zero world of the Buddhists is the *'Bhumā'* of the Upaniṣads. *Bhumā* is the land of supreme unity of all contradictions ; it is the plane where all the human sufferings come to an end. In *Tebbiz Sutta'* Lord Buddha said, "I know Brahman and the world of Brahman." The blame of atheism, therefore, cannot justifiably be attributed to Buddha. The highest essence which Buddha calls *Sunya* means 'immortal' : "*Ye ca subhute ! Sunyā, akṣayā api te.*" So Nirvāna or disappearance in 'nothingness' is to attain immortality. In abstract meditation of that *Sunya-Niranjan* an *Arhat* gets amalgamated with the Imperishable—he attains fullness of his essence—he incarnates eternal peace, eternal rest, eternal bliss—the Absolute Himself.

In the opinion of Annie Besant, "the immersion in the Absolute is like a spark lost in the fire, the drop within the ocean, the ever-present ray becomes the All and the eternal radiance".—'The voice of Silence'. That full existence in which the *Arhat* gets *Nirvāna* has been described by the *Mahāyāna* Sect as the universal principle manifesting itself as the one life (vide "What is Buddhism"). *Tathāgata* himself used the term *Achyuta Sthāna* (Land of eternity) as a synonym for Nirvāna (See 'Dhammapada', P. 125) and *Achyuta Pada* or the immortal acquisition (*Theri*, P. 97) also as a synonym for the same.

In *Sukha-Baggo*, verse 8, *Nirvāna* means celestial bliss and blissful tranquillity. Buddha described *Nirvāna* as the returning to our eternal abode : "We repose there in the boundless infinitude of our highest essence." In the *Vedānta* and Upaniṣads this state of our being has been mentioned as "*Brāhmi sthiti*" or living in God. According to the verse 1. 2 of *Brahma-Sutra* this is the end and aim of our Ultimate Being. So what is universal principle of the Buddhists is Brahman of the Vedas, the Nirvana of the Buddhists is

identical with the *Mokṣa* of the Hindus and fullness of the Vedas is the *Sunya* or cypher conceived by the Buddhists.

Lord Buddha has been accused of being an athiest, because he called that transcendental principle a *Sunya* or a cypher. But this *Sunya* or cypher has been explained in "Dhammapada" as immeasurable, unknowable, unspeakable and indescribable. Numerous instances may be cited to show that the *Vedas* and the Upaniṣads of the Hindus have used similar terms to express Brahman. The interpretation of *Sunya* as given by 'Dhammapada' does not materially differ from the figurative exposition of Brahman. The similarity of the two definitions proves that the Brahman of the Vedas and *Sunya* of the Buddhists are one and the same Being—"whence the human intellect with mind and senses shrink back baffled'—Taittiriya 2.9.

Buddha did not deny the existence of Soul ; what he denied is the existence of its emperical aspect i.e., one which is subject to decay and death. According to Buddha, what passes from tenament to tenament is consciousness. Consciousness is not extinguished on physical death but transmigrates into another life. 'The Dhammapada' a Buddhist text, P. 160, speaks of two selves and admits the superiority of one above the other : "Self is the Lord of self, none else can be the Lord." When the individual self is surrendered, the higher Self takes its place. The Buddhists recognise the law of *karma* and *rebirth* and they say that *vijnāna* or consciousness is reborn. *Karma* belongs to an individual ego and ego is the shadow of the real Self. A shadow can have no factual existence. It stands, therefore, that the law of *Karma* operates in the life of a soul in bondage. So when the embodied soul shakes off all its bondages, the law of *Karma* becomes inoperative. *Nirvāṇa* or the deliverance of the individual soul presupposes a further higher state of our being. Nirvāna is the extinction of *tanha* or human desires and cravings.

A free Soul desires nothing. Though Buddha does not ascribe any name to such a higher Self, he admits the existence of it.

Besides the five primordial elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether, Lord Buddha has mentioned the existence of a sixth element. He said, a man is made up of six elements—"Chhadhāturo ayaṃ vikṣu." He called this sixth element as '*Vijnān Dhatu*' which is identical with the 'Pure Reason' of Kant and the 'Ṛtambharā Prajnā' of the Hindu Philosophy. It has been said in the sixth chapter of the '*Dighanikāya*' that this sixth element is invisible, boundless and all-penetrating. This definition of '*Vijnān Dhātu*' is not at all different from the exposition of *Ātman* or Soul.

Dr. Radha Krishnan is of opinion that the Supreme Brahman at the level of *Vijnāna* or self-consciousness becomes the personal *Iśvara* with a voluntary limitation. So this *Vijnāna* is identical with Soul or God. The Verse IV. 5. 13 of *Bṛhadāraṇyak* also states that consciousness is Soul.

This sixth element has been clearly mentioned as the universal consciousness by the author of 'What is Buddhism ?" : "The pure white radiance of the universally diffused eternal world-Soul which is invisible, boundless and all-penetrating, is broken by the prism of the human body into the differentiated entities, we call men"—P. 61. So Buddhism, though apparently denying Soul, having admitted the existence of a sixth element admits it. Our gross and subtle bodies are made up of five elements and a fraction of that universal consciousness has been infused into it acting as the driver of the bodily machine. This sixth element in Buddha's doctrine is a clear substitute for *Ātman*, admitted by the Hindus.

What matters in the difference of names if they indicate one and the same thing. Mere terminological differences cannot over-shadow the basic character of his thought which is free from the taint of atheism.

Lord Buddha admitted the existence of heaven and hell, virtue and vice and he was a believer in the law of *Karma* and transmigration of soul. He held that our present existence is not our whole life, but a tiny section of our life. The following statement is attributed to him in the *Dighanikāya*, 2. 29 : "Though not understanding, though not penetrating the four noble truths, O' Vikṣus, we have wandered round this long journey—you and I." This book is full of legends connected with the life-history of many departed souls. Similar ideas and stories we come across in another like text, the Saṃyukta Nikāya. There we find many departed Spirits approaching before *Tathāgata* and narrating their history. He himself said that he could recollect all the details of his preceding births as Siddhārtha.

As God is beyond comprehension, Buddha called the ultimate reality a *sunya* or void. *Sunya* is literally a cypher. When a man tries to learn more and more about less and less, he finally reaches a point which is practically *sunya*. At this stage the mind is lost in the object of meditation, it becomes perfectly blank or *sunya*. *Sunya* is a vacuous state of mind—when there is no wave of thought in it. Such a blank mind, not agitated by mental waves, is a pre-requisite for the awakening of Ṛtambharā Prajnā or intuition. In the light of intuition the Reality is realised. So to realise the Ultimate Reality, it is essential to create a void in the mind i.e., the mind must be hushed into silence. The world was *sunya* in the beginning and presumably *sunya* it will become in the end. According to the '*Pancharātra*' a *Vaiṣnava* text, *Viṣnu*, the adorable Lord of the Viṣnuites becomes *sunya* when the dissolution period comes. So *sunya* is *Purna*. Dr. Das Gupta opines that Buddhaghosa in defining "Bhutatathāta or essential reality of things, turned to Nagarjuna's *sunyavāda* and combined with it the Upaniṣadic conception of Brahman. "As *tathāta* is beyond comprehension, reality is called *sunya*"—

'The Awakening of Faith' P. 60. Buddhist's *sunya*, Kant's thing-in-itself and the Brahman of the Vedas are synonymous. Brahman is the essence of everything and being.

Our moral sense commands us to believe in the existence of God. "This conviction is not logical, but moral certainty, so interwoven with my moral feeling that as little as I run the risk of losing the latter, so little am I apprehensive of being deprived of the former." If we shrink away from our conviction, we shall be cut off at the root of our very being and suffer extinction. Bradley firmly believes that if there be no Supreme Spiritual Power which is above chance and change, our own spiritual interests are not safe-guarded. God has double character; He commands belief though He is incomprehensible. "Are you yourself a bit happier for your negation?"—This was the question put to the author of the work entitled "Belief in God and Immortality". To this question his reply was: "The existence of a good Shepherd, a perfect all-loving and all-powerful friend would, at times, be a most comfortable and encouraging thought." The belief in human immortality stands or falls with our belief in God. The Gita, X. 41 states: "He who thinks Brahman as non-existent becomes non-existing himself."

God, the distributor of *Karmaphal*, exists, for otherwise there would not be any difference between man and man. The beautiful and the ugly, the rich and the poor, the blind and the lame etc., are the so many proofs which disclose the hand of God, the distributor of justice to all beings. The fact that we exist, is the greatest proof of His existence. We can infer the existence of a rational manipulator in the back ground of this creation by watching the panelled case of an energy under control producing particular results. Brahman, the Supreme Cause of causes, is identical with the energy as fire is with heat, flower with the seat of fragrance, the gem with its lustre and the sun with its rays. We can

not dismiss any of them and think of the other. We may deny the existence of God and His divine power, but we cannot thereby escape the inexorable operation of the universal laws which control the creation.

Can we deny His existence simply because we cannot see Him? Should we drink the poison simply because nectar is beyond our reach? Should we take recourse to falsehood only because our vision cannot reach the truth? Should we be slave to ignorance for the reason that knowledge is inaccessible? Stars are not visible at day-time, but this fact does not disprove their existence. Is any one who is blind from birth and consequently does not possess any idea about the sun competent to declare that there is no such thing as the sun? Should we deny the existence of our grand-father simply because we never saw him? Our father is the best proof of our grand father's existence, St. John declared—"we cannot know God—the Father, but we can know His son."

In the 'Timaeus' Plato says : "To discover the Maker and the Father of the world is a hard task and when we have found Him it is impossible to speak of Him". The Brahman or the Highest God is indescribable because of His spiritual nature. He is realisable in spiritual plane alone. So a man when comes down from *Samādhi* and enters into the sense-world, is deprived of that faculty of apprehension which made him eligible for divine knowledge. God, according to the verse II.9 of the Taittiriya Upaniṣad, is spiritual and nothing can be said or described of a spiritual entity by the help of a non-spiritual implement. This was why Buddha remained silent when he was asked whether God exists or not.

"Our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence"—aptly says Hooker. The Sage *Bādhva* when requested by *Vāskali* to reveal the identity of Brahman kept silent and that silence was his answer to Vāskali's query which meant to say that Brahman was not capable of being revealed by words,

Though fervently and repeatedly requested to describe the true nature of that Supreme Being Lord Buddha and the sage *Bādhata* held their tongues (vide Saṃkara's commentary on the *Brahma-Sutra*, 3/2/17). Even if they tried to describe it they would at once fall into trance-like state by attaining the state of Brahmanhood. So who else would then describe the true nature of Brahman? The trance-like state came over Paramhansadeva the moment he recited the Lord's name or heard it—this is known to many. The recital of the Lord's name brought the trance-like state also to Śri Śri Chaitanyadeva. The eternal cannot be estimated in the terms of the temporal[1]. The Psalmist observes: "God is in heaven and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few—'Psalms, 25-27. "Jesus said: No one knoweth who the Father is save the son". Only a beloved son can understand his father and tell others how good and kind his father is. God is knowable to those who are God-like. Even if such a godly man try to describe the glory of God, he will not be understood by the ordinary people. A man asked St. Augustine, "what was God doing before creation?" Augustine said in disgust: "He was preparing hell for the overcurious."

If an atheist follow the intuitive way of life and make a mystical experiment of it with integrity of heart and tenacity of purpose, the Ultimate Truth will be revealed to him. During his practices, he will feel himself less and less egoistic day by day, the inner man will grow more and more free, joyous and enlightened of the object of his quest till his whole being is transformed divine. "Be ye transformed by the renewal of your mind."—said St. Paul. This transformation implies purity of heart of which Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Pious thoughts

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1. "जानाम्यहं शेवधिरित्यनित्यं, न ह्यध्रुवैः प्राप्यते हि ध्रुवं तत्।"—
Katha Up I. 1.10.

and good actions raise us to such a moral and spiritual height that the light of the Soul begins to emanate and in that light the Ultimate Truth is seen. Self-discipline, purity of heart, the whole-hearted devotion and the practice of *Yoga* pave the way to the Supreme Truth. In deep meditation when human consciousness rises above the egoistic plane, the trainee falls into *Samādhi* and in that trance-like condition the light divine flashes out enabling him to realise his true Self or *Atman* to be the only Reality—the Brahman. The covers of our gross and impure body and obliquity of our mind hide the reality from our view. When our whole being including body, mind and soul is directed towards a single-pointed focus, we become single-visioned, discarding all senses of desires, appetite, possessions and recognitions ; in a word when ego-sense is totally lost, the Brahman is realised. Ātman is potentially divine and immortal. "I have a firm conviction that our Spirit is a being of indestructible nature, it works on from eternity to eternity ; it is like the sun, which, though it seems to set to our mortal eyes, does not really set, but shines perpetually"—said Goethe. Physical death can take away nothing from our true being. Spencer sings of the immortality of the Soul :

"It is heavenly born and cannot die,
Being a parcel of the purest sky."

"He is not like any object that the human mind can conceive"—says Āl Qurān, If God can be seen, He will be God no longer. When He is realised the seeker and the sought, the devotee and the Lord become one. Since individual soul is like a salt-doll, when it touches the ocean of Brahman, it melts away—it disappears altogether. The salt-doll never comes back to tell the depth of the ocean. "The wind bloweth where it listeth ; thou hearest the sound thereof, and can'st tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so in every one that is born of Spirit"—says Christ.

It matters little with God if any one refuses to believe in His existence. "If thou art faithful, thy reward is in heaven. Seek no earthly reward, not even the smiles of your friends. Whoever shall be niggardly shall be niggardly towards his own Soul. For God wanteth nothing but you are needy. If you turn back, He will substitute another people in your stead."—Āl Quarān.

Kathopaniṣad declares : "He is beyond the reach of sense-perceptions, but still whoever believes in the existence of God can one day attain Him. Anatheist or non-believer in God can never be blessed with His grace, for He reveals Himself to the thirsty only. Truth unfolds itself, bit by bit, to one whose inner Self really thirsts for it. A theistic *Guru* alone can help us in the realisation of God."

We usually pray to God to obtain relief from distress and when we are rescued by His grace we realise that we are not alone in this world and we feel that we are safe under His protection. He is our Saviour from sufferings and sins.

The universal Soul may be represented by the ocean while the individual soul is taken as a tiny rivulet falling into it. If the Supreme Soul be taken as the sun, the individual soul is to be regarded as the moon. The rivulet dries up in the absence of the ocean and the moon loses its lustre if there be no sun. Individual existence depends entirely upon the existence of God. A material thing casts shadow, the vacant sky does not. In the existence of a candle rests the existence of the candle-light ; because the sun exists water can reflect it. The soul of a living being is the reflection of the Soul of the supreme Being. If the existence of Soul of the Supreme Being is denied the existence of the soul of the living being has also to be denied. But how can we deny our own existence ? Pope in his 'Essay on Man'—II. 1. writes :

"Know then thyself, presumme not God to scan :
The proper study of mankind is man."

According to Śri Aurobindo our liberty in social, religious and ethical life rests on the fundamental principle of our existence. Genesis, 1. 26 states, "And God said, let us make man in our own image". Image disappears if the original is denied. Our own existence proves that God the Supreme Father exists. "The eye hath not seen Him, imagination cannot conceive Him, yet faith beholds that loving countenance."

"By Faith and Faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove."

—Tennyson's 'In Memoriam'

TRINITY

"नमस्त्रिमूर्त्तये तुभ्यं प्राक् सृष्टेः केवलात्मने ।
गुणत्रयविभागाय पश्चाद् भेदमुपेयुषे ॥"—

Kumar Sambham, Canto II. verse 4.

The theory of *Trinity* is based on the conception of three personifications representing *Trigunas*. The Supreme Brahman, who is one without a second, manifested Himself as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara, the three personalities incarnating *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* respectively. *Brahmā* represents *Sattva* or knowledge, *Viṣṇu* represents *Rajas* or activity and *S'iva*—*Tamas* or power. So the Godhead becomes the divine personalities possessing the three characteristic features of faith, love and perfection or wisdom, beauty and power or infinitude, grace and sovereignty which are generally the three aspects of our conscious life—Cognition, Emotion and Will resembling the primordial three-fold qualities of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* which represent light, love and life respectively. *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *S'iva* or *Maheśvara* are therefore the three-fold manifestations of the Supreme Brahman who are to play their respective parts in creation. *Brahmā* created this universe with his profound knowledge, *Viṣṇu* through love maintains it and Śiva exercises His destinctive power when required[1]. The path to *Brahmā* lies through wisdom and meditation, that to *Viṣṇu* through love and devotion, while Śiva demands austere penance and self-denial.

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1. "तिसृभिस्तमवस्थाभिर्महिमानमुदीयन् ।
प्रलयस्थितिसर्गानामेकः कारणतां गतः ॥"—
Kumar Sambhabam, Canto II. Verse 6

Since Brahman has divided Himself in triune aspects of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśvara* there can be no question of superiority or inferiority about them.[1] For the purpose of creation, preservation and destruction the supreme Brahman assumed three names—it is a matter of mere nomenclature. The gods addressed *Brahmā*, the creator Lord, thus: "O Lord, thou art the Uncaused Cause of creation, none has created Thee. Thou art the destroyer of everything, none can destroy Thee. Thou art the beginningless one, none precedes Thee. Thou art the only Lord and there is none above Thee.[2]" Here we find that the *Devas* identify *Brahmā* with the Absolute Brahman. Regarding *Maheśvara*, Brahmā said: "The *Mahādeva* is like Para-Brahman. Neither I nor Viṣṇu can estimate His endless glory.[3]" The gods elsewhere said to Brahmā, "Thou art self-created and Thou shalt merge into Thyself.[4]" In Bhāgavad, II. 9. 29, it is stated that Brahmā prayed unto Brahman for true knowledge that would not produce such vanity which may lead thinking himself a separate entity from Brahman and as powerful as Brahman. That the *Trimurti* symbolises one Reality is evident from the following incident written in the Bhāgavad, IV. 1. 29: "Once *Brahmā*, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara simultamously appeared before *Atri*, a Ṛṣi, in course of his meditation and said, 'you are meditating on one of us but we three have come, because, we are three in One." It is clear therefore that each of the three divine personalities is treated as identical to Brahman Supreme. The partiteness of Brahman is imaginary.

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1. "एकैव मूर्त्तिर्विभिदे त्रिधा सा सामान्यमेषां प्रथमावरत्वम् ।
विष्णोर्हरस्तस्य हरिः कदाचिद् वेधास्तयोस्तावपि धातुरादौ ॥"—
Kumar Sambhabam, Canto VII. verse 44.
2. Kumar Sambhabam, II. 9.
3. Do II. 58.
4. Do II. v. 11.

According to the Essene Creed, the son is a begotten one and not made out of the flesh and blood of the Father. The nature of Brahman is a homogeneous mass of pure consciousness which cannot be divided into parts. Since the Upaniṣads admit only His impartite transcendental nature, they reject, therefore, all His manifestations as illusive. To arrive at a monistic view both Plato and Hegel had to exclude all ideas pertaining to His phenomenal aspects contrived by mind. The Upaniṣads hold Brahman to be the only existent Reality in all the creation. The three distinct aspects of Godhead in Hindu religion are analogous to the Christian trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. The second person of the trinity, according to the Christian mythology is the Cosmic Mind whom the Hindus identify as Hiraṇyagarbha Iśvara who contemplates diverse creation. The son is a link between the Father and the generation to come. Essene creed holds that worldly things and beings are created by the Son. In the matter of creation the Father Himself appears as the Son ; so the Father and the Son are not essentially different. Absolute is the transcandental Divine and Logos are the cosmic divine. Christ, the son is the image of the invisible Lord. He has both the characteristics of the real and the phemomenal. A Logos has the characteristics of Godhead and at the same time typifies a man. The triad aspects being the mind-born sons of the Father, the Logos are as much God as the Father. Plato recognises three existences—the Father, the *Nous* the Son and the world-Soul the Holy Ghost. Dimiurge of Timaeus is identified with Aristotle's *Nous* The prophets symbolise Holy Ghost and through them the worldly men acquire knowledge about the Father and the Son.

In the state of Samādhi Godhead is unity. So long man under the influence of *Avidyā* has knowledge of neum and teum—God is seen in diversity. There is not much difference

between God having attributes and God without attribute. The same Brahman exists in two different conditions as potential and kinetic at two different stages. The same Supreme Being is seen two-fold as assuming a form and formless. He takes form when He is active and formless when He is inactive. When the Supreme Soul is inactive and does neither create nor protect nor destroy, He is Brahman Absolute, without any attribute. When we conceive of Him as the original cause of creation, protection and destruction He is God with attributes—our personal God. His different aspects and figures have been fancied for the convenience of human conception.

Paramhansa Deva observed, "My Mother, *S'yāmā* is the Mother of the universe—She has given birth to this world. She is Brahman of the *Vedās* and *Ātman* of the Upaniṣads. My divine Mother is none other than the Absolute. She is at the same time the One and the many, and beyond the One and the many." To Paramhansa Deva Māyā or prakriti is also one face of Brahman. He said, "Brahman and *Sakti* (devine energy) or *Māyā* are one and the same being. I call Him *S'akti* or *Māyā* or *Prakriti*—the Personal God. The Personal and the Impersonal are the same Being, in the same way as milk and its whiteness or the diamond and its lusture."—Quoted from Romain Rolland. The different gods and goddesses being the manifestations of the same Being should be held in equal reverence with Brahman Supreme because our sacred texts declare, "That is Infinite and this too is Infinite. That which is evolved out of Infinity is also Infinite. If out of infinity we take away what is infinite what remains behind is still the Infinite.[1]" A mother-o' pearl does not lose its own nature even inspite of its false silvery brilliance. So also the Supreme

1. "ओं पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥"—*Iśopanisad 1*

Being loses nothing of His own nature even inspite of His varied manifestations due to association with *Māyā*.

Brahman is the sum total of 330 millions of gods and goddesses of the Hindus. The impersonal form of Brahman looked at thorugh the prism of personality appears in the forms of various gods and goddesses, clothed in rainbow. If we combine all these forms and make it the object of our meditation, then by the act of synthesis they will reproduce one united form of Brahman only. Just as in a cloudless sky the rainbow does not appear, but does so when the sky is clouded at day-time, similarly, when the mind is clouded with *avidyā*, the formless and the colourless Brahman appears in various forms and colours of gods and goddesses, but does not do so when the cloud of *avidyā* disappears and the mind gets illuminated with the light of knowledge. In the spectrum of pure consciousness when all the differentiations vanish, it reflects one colour only, every thing else is lost in the abyss of nothingness.

The trunk of a tree, which is the main part of it, is one, but the branches and leaves are many. Similarly, God is only one and at the root of creation. *Rāma* is one, but thousands are His name. All the religious books, all religious faiths and all religious teachers have spoken of one God and only one way to approach Him. Love is that thoroughfare which can take us to the vicinity of God. It is in love alone that dualism, monism and qualified monism meet together—ever three and ever one achieve oneness. "O, mind, thou knowest not the ultimate causation"—says Kamalākānta "My Mother Śyāmā sometimes assumes the hue of the cloud and changes into male being—*S'yāma i.e.*, Krishna." Brahmānanda Keshab Chandra Sen, the accomplished devotee who found the joy of the Ever-joyful, said, "He Who has the insight can see Mother even in the earth. I have seen the Supreme Being of the *Veda*, as *Lakṣmi*, as

Sarasvati, as the first divine energy and as *Rāj Rājeśvari*—the Queen of queens—celestial glory of the universe." To the wise He is formless and to the devotee He has a form. It is for the sake of Lila *i.e.*, for devulging His own grace that He becomes qualified and unqualified, according to His own sweet will; He appears before His devotees taking attributes of *Māyā* as *Brahmā Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Kāli* and *Durgā* etc. Whereas in the pure reason of Supermen the Brahman is revealed as bliss and eternity. "Enter thou in the joy of thy Lord"—*Confessions*, Part VI. To rise to this blissfull position in life an aspirant must pass from symbol to Reality, because, each successive manifestation is not held equally perfect as its archetype.

The very Sun-god who has been adored with the hymns "*Sanno Mitra*" by the Vedic Ṛṣis is also recognised in the *Vedās* as one with the God Supreme. The *dyu* of the Vedas and Mitra-god are also said to be one. Rightly it has been observed by an western erudite scholar : "*Dyu* is the *Zeus* of the Greeks. *Zio* of the Germans, *Tin* of the Saxons, *Jupiter* of the Romans ; *Baruna* is the *teranus* of the Greeks and *Mithra* of the *Zendāvestā* and *Āhur-Māzdā* of the Iran." "*Zezadan, Isvara, Jehovā, God, Āllāh* are the names in different languages of the same Infinite"—says Sir Ahmed Hussain in his 'Notes on Islam'. The trinity of the Christian doctrine—the Father, the Son and the Holy ghost correspond to the Hindu view of the three-fold aspects of the Supreme Brahman. Christianity and Vaiṣṇavism look upon God as Love and to Judaism and Islam God is power. To Hinduism God is Sat-chit-ānanda—the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

God Supreme has two powers—the power of being enjoyed and the power to enjoy. His power of being enjoyed is nature, and the power to enjoy is *Jivā*. The world is inert and capable of being enjoyed ; the *Jivā* is animate and is

the enjoyer, and God is the supreme Dispenser. *Rāmānuja* admits the three truths of the Person Supreme, the Jiva and the world. This view of *Rāmānuja* is known as qualified monism. He takes viṣṇu to be the highest God. To him there is no difference between the Brahman and Iśvara.

The monist like Saṃkara aims only at Brahman in the whole of creation. He does not admit the reality of anything else. Therefore everything else but Brahman is to him *Māyā* or illusion. His mind is as clear as the cloudless sky on which there is no play of light and shade and no variegated colours of the rainbow, He does not want to taste sugar ; he wants himself to be sugar. That is to say, he does not want to attain God ; he does not consider salvation leading to the nearness of God as desirable ; he himself wants to be identified with the Supreme Brahman. Whereas Rāmānuja, a qualified monist, sees no difference between Brahman and a personal God, between the Supreme Soul and Jivātman or the individual soul. To Him Viṣṇu is the Highest God. The Viṣṇuites who follow Rāmānuja's religious view do not aspire after Kaivalya-mukti or complete emancipation but prefer to live after death in the company of their personal God—Lord Viṣṇu. Immersion in the Absolute is not their aim. In the opinion of Saṃkara such souls have to re-appear in the next creation. It stands, therefore, that these purified egoes are detained in the paradise of Rāmānuja's personal God. Buddha, Ramanuja and many other religious teachers restated old religious doctrines according to their own views, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. Spinoza, Hegel and Schopenhouer enunciated theistic philosophy in terms of contemporary thoughts. But if only nearness of God is desired we have to admit the relation of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, and that gives rise to dualism. But the monist says "I am He" or "I am Brahman"—"Everything comes out of Me ; I am all ; all things belong to Me ; I am Eternal."

To the dualist the Brahman without attribute or the Brahman unmanifested is inscrutable. So he accepts God manifested as his desired deity and imagining Him to be father or mother or son or friend or husband or wife he carries on his worship and tries to establish a close and charming relation between himself and God. In the supreme anxiety for union and through insistent invocations God of the devotee gradually comes nearer him—the distance between the two narrows down, and finally at an auspicious moment the devotee sees himself locked in the embrace of his adorable Lord : "The two become One, who again reveals itself as many in the universe."

The process of worshipping formless God is inductive whereas propitiation of God with form and attribute is deductive. The worship of Self or Soul is the real worship of formless Brahman.

The divine presence that we feel within us every moment when transferred to some inert object like stone or a piece of wood and the latter is worshipped as the abode of the former, it is icon-worship. The worship of *Nārāyan S'ilā* or *S'iva Lingam* comes under this class. In Vedanta Sutra, verse 3.2.34 it is stated that as the sky or space contained in a pot becomes limited, so Brahman for the purpose of worship is imagined in an image : "*Sthāna viśeṣād prakāsādivad*". This does not diminish His greatness by such manifestations.

The sage *Asmaratha* holds that to favour His devotee God Supreme takes various forms : "*Abivākta rityasmarathaḥ*." —Vedanta Sutra, Verse 1.2.30. The sage *Vādari* observes that God reveals Himself in part or in full to His devotee for his meditation : *Anusmṛte Vādari*'—ibid 1 2.31. That devotee alone can visualise his Lord who is favoured by Him : "Yamevaiṣa *Vṛṇute tenu lavyaḥ*". When worshipped with love and devotion God makes His appearance : "*Api samṛādhane pratyakṣānumānāvyāṃ*"—Vedanta Sutra, Verse 3.2.24, As the

sun gets reflected in a mirror and fire is produced by rubbing two pieces of wood, so the realisation of God is commensurated with adequate practice and prayer. (Do III. 2. 25.)

According to the Vedanta, Brahman is apprehended as having attribute and attributeless in *Savikalpa* and *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* respectively.

Every object of creation, natural or unnatural is likely to fulfil a devotee's desire when He is worshipped through these objects, so said our sacred text—*Chitra-dwip*, P. 208. As water takes the shape of the container, so does God fill the object of meditation with His presence and consciousness, through which He is worshipped.

In the sacred texts of the Hindus like the Vedas it has been enjoined to worship *Sun*, *Moon*, *Vāyu*, *Varuna*, *Indra*, *Ākāśa* or the firmament etc., as manifestations of the Supreme Brahman. But it is to be remembered that this Sun is not the same material sun which rises in the east and sets in the west every day. According to the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*, '*Āditya Deva*', the presiding Spirit of the sun is a luminous being ; his body from head to feet is as bright as gold. Does not this description suggest that *Āditya Deva* is the same as Brahman ? Hindus worship the presiding deity of the sun as a luminous one who sends forth light to the world through this material sun. While making an obeisance, a Hindu says in its praise : "Thou art the splendour of Lord Viṣṇu, Thou art the luminous Brahman ; I bow down unto Thee." We do not worship water but its Ruling Spirit, the *Varuna Deva* as Brahman itself. Long after the Vedic period the Purāṇas enjoined worship of *S'iva*, *Viṣṇu*, *Kāli*, *Krishna*, *Rāma* etc. as the manifestations and incarnations of the Godhead. The real aim of Indian icon-worship is to achieve greatness through the medium of small things. The Hindu's adorable deity is not confined and limited within the image itself but his Lord is present outside as well. By the

earnest prayer of a devotee the divine Spirit is infused into the image and the image becomes alive.

"He who created the gods, made them bountiful and from whom *Hiraṇyagarbha* was first born, let that transcendental *Rudra*, the knowledge supreme, be pleased to create good-will in us"—*S'iva Strotra* and *S'vetāśvatara* Upaniṣad. Here we find that the Upaniṣad identifies Rudra or *S'iva* with the Absolute Brahman. "There is no other existence except Me. I am the transcendental Rudra. Ās Brahman I am the One Self that pervades the universe."—*S'iva Gita*.

"I bow down to Thee, O goddess, once and again who is present in all beings as consciousness—Yā devi sarvabhuteṣu cetanetyavidhiyate namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namaḥ".—*Chandi*. Here our sacred text *Chandi* identifies the goddess *Durgā* with the universal consciousness which is the Absolute Brahman. "I bow down to Lord *S'iva* who is of placid mien and the Lord of the three strands —*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* that created the universe." "O God Supreme ! I am quite ignorant of Thy true identity, whatever mayst Thou be—formed or formless, noumenal or phenomenal, I bow down unto Thee once and again[1]" Is this reverence shown to a mere idol ? "I bow down to goddess *Durgā* at whose command the wind blows, through whose fear the sun gives heat, the cloud rains and the fire burns."—*Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa* and Kathopaniṣad, Verse 2.3, "I bow down to Lord *Ganapati* who is the only existence in the noumenal world and from whom this phenomenal world with its endless attributes have evolved."—*Ganeś* strotra in *Brahma Vaibarta Purāṇa*. So Lord *Ganapati*

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1. "नमः शिवाय शान्ताय कारण हेतवे ।
निवेदयामि त्वां चात्मानं त्वं गतिः परमेश्वर ॥
तव तत्त्वं न जानामि कीदृशस्त्वं महेश्वर ।
यादृशस्त्वं महादेव तादृशाय नमोनमः ॥"

is the Absolute Brahman. Thus we find that the Hindus worship through innumerable gods and goddesses the same Brahman who is one without a second.

When Brahman is seen from and through this phenomenal world, He assumes a form and attribute and is then known to us as attributed Brahman like *S'iva*, *Kāli* or *Durgā*. The sense of plurality is the outcome of our ignorance. In *S'iva Purāṇa*, *Maheśvara* has been mentioned as the all-pervading Soul of the universe and in *Svetāśvatara* Upaniṣad, Maheśvara has been described as the creator of *Hiraṇyagarbha Iśvara*. But we know that *Hiraṇyagarbha* is the first manifestation of Brahman. It follows therefore that *Brahman* and *Maheśvara* are one and the same Being. In *Vāyu Purāṇa*, Śri Krishna is found to be worshipped as *Turiya Brahman* or Absolute Brahman. *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa* identifies Krishna as the Lord of innumerable universes and in Viṣṇu *Purāṇa* Krishna has been described as the Supreme Soul or *Paramātman*. All the sacred texts of the Hindus reckon Him with Absolute Brahman—'Purṇa Brahman'.

Most of the Hindus are believers in one Supreme God whom they call Bhagawan, Parameśvara or Nārāyan. According to the Census Report of 1911, Sir Herbert Ridgely has written in the book 'People of India': "The ideal of Hindu religion is well-known to every Hindu, educated or un-educated. We are astonished at the common peasant's knowledge about the fundamental tenets of Hinduism regarding Supreme Soul, consequence of one's previous actions, *Māyā* (illusion), salvation etc." In her essay on 'Indian Sagas' Sister Nivedita has beautifully brought to light how low-class Hindus like the un-educated village peasants, labourers, grocers etc., gain knowledge in subjects treated in the Vedantas by listening to the reading of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Reading and listening to these two great epics—the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* with devoutness and firm faith lead to

higher knowledge. While paying tribute to the Mahabharata, Schopenhauer observes: "O, how the mind is here washed clean of all its early ingrafted Jewish superstitions! It is the most profitable and most elevating reading which is possible in the world. It had been the solace of my life and will be solace of my death."

The personal God of a Hindu devotee is conceived as identical with Godhead. When a devotee attaining the knowledge of Brahman can declare—'Ahaṃ Brahmāsmi'—I am the Brahman'; it is neither strange nor inconsistent to worship the personal God as Brahman. When *Amvṛni Bāk* acquired the knowledge of the Self, she declared: "It is I who have entered into all beings as Soul—Tāṃ māṃ deva bādadhaḥ *puratrā*."—'Devi Sukta, Ṛgveda.' Pralhad declared—"Everything is created of me, everything rests in me, I am eternal,—Mattaḥ sarvaṃ ahaṃ sarvaṃ mayi sarvaṃ sanatane"—Viṣṇu Purāṇa, verse 1. 19. 95. None can deny that Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Chaitanya, or Ramkrishna was at a much higher level than ourselves in point of spirituality and that they are all adorable to us. So to worship these godly men is neither wrong, nor useless. Śiva, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, all lived in flesh and blood. For their piety they are now worshipped all over the world as God Himself or as His manifestations or incarnations.

If a man by leading virtuous life and by acquiring godly powers by the practice of yoga can rise to the height of Divinity in his own life-time, it is not surprising and unnatural that such a godly man like Krishna, Buddha or Christ would be adored as God after his demise.

Freed from their gross and subtle bodies these liberated Souls become far more powerful than they were in their life-time and command our greater respect. In support of this view, *Kathāmṛta*, II. 222 asks "If idol-worship be permissible, why God-like men, living or dead, cannot be taken as

objects of our worship ?" It is not unbecoming, therefore, to worship these higher Spirits and pray unto them for help and guidance. May I remind the advocates of the worship of formless Brahman that the Roman Catholics of the Christian Church worship the image of Jesus and that of his mother Mary ; the Buddhists worship Buddha, the Sikhs worship *Grantha Saheb.* The Muhammedan brethren who are awfully against figurative worship, consider it to be the most sacred vow in their life to kiss the black stone at Kabba and visit the mosques at Mecca and Medina. It is written in the Quaran that Allah appears before His devotee and holds converstion with him. How do the bigoted Muhammedans tolerate His taking appearance ? "Allah replied to Mosses, 'Look at the mountain, if it can stand at its place. You will be able to see Me'. When Lord manifested Himself on the mountain, it was shattered to pieces, and Mosses fell down senseless"—Sha Muhammed Badiul Islam's 'What is Man ?' P. 209.

When a Hindu worships through an image, he earnestly believes that his adorable Lord has appeared within it. Brahman is superior to an image and so instead of thinking Brahman as the image it is proper to imagine the image as the Brahman : *"Brahma Dṛstirutkarṣād"*—Vedanta Sutra IV 1. 5. Thereby the vital energy and consciousness of the image are increased. For the advantage of worshippers of different capacity, the sages have contrived different names and images of Godhead—"Sādhakānāṃ *pṛtyarthāya Brahmano rupa kalpanā*"—*Tantra.* If we carefully study the hymns for bringing life into the image, we shall not fail to understand that the adorable deity of the Hindus is not a lifeless image as made by a potter but the God manifested therein. That the aim of our worship is not the image, but a conscious being is evident from the manner of making obeisance before the image. Bending down before the image a Hindu worshipper says :

'Śivāya namaḥ'—I bow down to Lord Śiva, 'Krishnāya namaḥ'—I bow down to Lord Krishna', '*Durgāi* namaḥ'—I bow down to Goddess Durgā.

A Hindu never utters such words as 'Pratimāi namaḥ'—I bow down to the image. In *Mārkaṇḍeya Chandi* the Goddess *Durgā* and *Kāli* being described as the *Chit-S'akti* of the universe, they are identified with Brahman. So the worship of these attributed gods in images regarded as Brahman is in keeping with the religious Hindu Codes. Whoever listens attentively to the recital from the *Markaṇḍeya Purāṇa* sung in honour of the goddess *Durgā* will understand clearly that the Hindus do not worship an image, but he worships through that image Brahman who is without a second. It is true that those who are not familiar with the Hindu mode of worship are likely to get perplexed to find every sect within the Hindu-fold claiming its adorable deity to be without an origin and the Supreme Being—the fountain-head from which all other gods have sprung. It is because of the fact that the different sects amongst the Hindus, worship the one Brahman through their respective diety and consequently they cannot admit the existence and supremacy of other deities. *S'iva*, *Kāli* or *Durgā* is the same Brahman under different names: 'Ekaṃ sadbiprā bahudhā badanti'. Brahman appears to us differently because we are far away from Him. The water of the sea looks from a distance dark-blue, but when we take it on our palm and examine it, it is colourless. Every Hindu knows that Brahman is one and without a second.

The commentator of *Chhāndogya* Upaniṣad explains *Upāsanā* or worship as the meditation upon an object selected by the sacred codes. The meditation will be so deep as not to be disturbed by anything external. Our senses and mental faculties must be directed to that point alone like the steady flow of a tranquil river. It is evident, therefore, that for our

worship or meditation, a support for our mind and an object to meditate upon, is essential.

We should not take the limited objects of creation as separated from the Limitless Brahman, but take them all as comprised in Brahman. "One is not alone, but One and all, One in all and all is One",—'The Logic of Hegel' by W. Wallace. So long as the devotee does not feel the presence of his Lord in all the objects of creation, the universal love is not awakened which is of vital importance to secure final emancipation. Before a yogin can declare 'Aham Brahmāsmi —I am the Brahman' he must realise that the world is pervaded by Brahman : 'Sarva brahmamayo Jagat' ; otherwise his Aham or ego will bring about his down-fall. Even he who sees or thinks that he knows Brahman, and proceeds to express his knowledge does not actually know Him, as a Knower of Brahman can have no separate individuality : Yasyā matam *tasya* matam matam *yasya na veda* saḥ". So it is said in the Upaniṣads that a salt doll never comes back to tell the depth of the ocean.

A few sacred texts of the Hindus that decry the worship of attributed God, generally treat of the worship of formless Nirguṇa Brahman. They hold that the worship of a god with attribute cannot give us salvation. But it cannot be denied that by such worship the mind of the devotee is moistened, purified and becomes free from earthly desires paving the way to the worship of formless and Nirguṇa Brahman. So it is stated in Ch. XII of the Gita that salvation is possible, through the worship of an attributed god, as this sort of worship finally qualifies a devotee for the worship of the formless Brahman. Without the knowledge of an alphabet none can be expected to read a book. If a man without going through ritualistic worship tries to meditate upon Brahman without attribute he will face the same difficulty as the student of a primary school will find if he be admitted

into the Post Graduate class. The instructions of *Mahā-Nirvāna Tantra*, Panchadasi and the like texts are obviously intended for the advanced Yogins. A Yogin who has climbed higher up the ladder of spirituality, can safely avoid the externalities of worship and the worship of an attributed god, because, he has passed that stage. If an advocate of noumenal worship cite a verse from *Mahā-Nirvāṇa Tantra* to support his view and thinks the purport of the verse to be intended for all, then that would prove disastrous to the backward group. The performance of religious rites is certainly desirable than doing vicious acts. Higher than the externalities is the worship of attributed god ; the worship of Absolute Brahman is the highest in rank. So it is said : 'Better to observe the religious rites of any lower standard than to lead an amimal life." Nobody denies the worship of Absolute Brahman to be the best, but it is not easy for the common run of people to practise it. Lord Krishna also observes in the Gita that in the path of knowledge the Nirguṇa Brahman is realised with much difficulty. So the seers of the old contrived various aspects and images of Godhead for the benefit of common men and they laid down in the sacred texts the procedure of ceremonial and sacrificial rites for their worship. But as this kind of worship is seldom performed disinterestedly, salvation is barred. The sacred texts of the Hindus say that an individual attains perfection after he has been through eight million births. The little progress that a *Sādhak* makes in this life is gathered up for the next birth and he starts from an advanced point. Thus the individual approaches his goal step by step through every succeeding birth. The attainment of salvation is subject to severe practice. So a birth or two is nothing for the achievement of that end. Before we had reached the present state of our evolution, who knows how many times we were born. A Ram Prosad or Ramkrishna is not the result of practice of a birth or two.

A devotee, really willing to have divine knowledge, has to pass through different stages of spiritual practice. At the outset he has to worship and meditate upon the image of an attributed God. This prepares him for the worship of formless Brahman. When through devotion and by the practice of *yoga*, his mind and senses are brought under control and the jiva-consciousness becomes transparent like a sheet of tranquil water, the light of the Soul shoots forth. This divine light illumines the path leading to the world of Absolute Brahman.

The worship of Noumenal Brahman is the method by which the individual soul is immersed in the Soul Supreme. "The wise attain Me by severe practice through hundreds of births. When the devotee realises Me as omnipresent *i.e.* I am present in all the objects of creation, he gets salvation. But such a wise man is very rare"—said Krishna.

Brahman is one and without a second. Hence worship in any form or name will reach Brahman. Shakespeare, the poet has truly said, "What is in a name! By whatever name we may call a rose it will smell as sweet." It is love and faith and not pedantry and power of reasoning that are essential for the realisation of the Lord. "Those who believe that God is without a form attain Him, just as well as those who believe He has a form. The only two essentials are faith and self-surrender. Dualism, qualified monism and monism are the stages on the way to the Supreme Truth. They are not contradictory but rather complimentary to one another. There is a back door to every house. Why one should not have the liberty to enter a house by that if he chooses to do so? Of course the front door is the best."—said Ramkrishna (Quoted from Romain Rolland.)

An absolute monist holds, "I shall attain Brahman by my own power, knowledge and contemplation". A dualist holds that he shall please his desired deity by devoted worship and then his deity will be pleased to open before him the pathway

leading to Brahman. His deity possesses, so he believes, the key to that secret. The Supreme Being without attribute, God and living beings with the universe is a theory of three-fold manifestations accepted as qualified monism. The theory of qualified monism as held by Ramanuja is that the Godhead consists of the double nature of intelligence and materiality, a sort of monism not very different from Dr. Bain's views on the subject as described in his '*Body and Mind*'.

According to Śri Jiva Goswāmi, the three words Brahman, Soul and God are but the other names for the one Truth and Reality. The same Reality that is symbolized in full knowledge and Bliss is revealed differently in different planes of worship, according to the differencess in the insight of different devotees, yet it is really one and the same (*Vide Tattva-Sandarva*). If the lapis-lazuli (Sapphire) be broken into pieces, each piece radiates blue, yellow and other hues : so also due to difference in meditative mood the Lord Divine who is the One without a second, is seen in different forms (*Bhāgavad Sandarva*). Lord Buddha advises his disciples to adore and pay homage to the Immutable One under different names according to the merit of the initiates. He finds no fault in this ; because, though He is one, His manifestations are manifold. He is revealed in many forms (Vide Prajnāpāramitā, 9).

In fact the monism of *Achāryya* Saṃkara, the qualified monism of Rāmānuja and the dualism of Māddhāchāryya are all founded on the Upaniṣads. So the creeds of different sects within the Hindu-fold attract and colour one another. In order to establish his position a monist in his writings has described the Supreme Brahman as the Eternal Entity and has set aside everything else as *Māyā*. The dualist commentators having proclaimed Brahman with attributes as the Reality, the Brahman without attributes has been ignored in their treaties which have become vague and

difficult to understand in many ways. Thus the same Vedic utterances having been differently explained according to different initiates, the doctrine of trinity has come out and this doctrine of trinity is now a great perplexing problem for men with ordinary intelligence.

The Supreme Brahman has three-fold power, namely, inward, outward and proximate. The inward power is the own power of Brahman ; endowed with this power He lives in the fullness of His glory. This is His state without attribute. Endowed with the proximate power he lives as the pure individual radiating pure knowledge. His outward power is *Māyā*. Assuming this power He has taken to material form as the reflection of His consciousness. The inward power, again, has three aspects *Hlādini*, *Sandhini* and Saṃvit. Saṃvit is superior to *Sandhini*, and *Hlādini* is superior to Saṃvit. The power by means of which the Lord Divine becomes integrated with pure existence is *Sandhini*, the power by means of which He is revealed as pure knowledge and by means of which consciousness is instilled into the individual is His power of Saṃvit, and the power by means of which He is revealed as Joy and by means of which He makes the individuals feel joy is called His power *Hlādini*. The seers of the Vedas knew Joy to be the Brahman. When with the rude shocks of reality man realises the transitoriness of earthly things, and averse to those things he becomes eager for the eternal, then in that very auspicious moment the proper field for the expansion of the power *Hlādini* is created. Consequently the devotee becomes entitled to enjoy divine power, love and bliss. This state in the Bhakti Śāstras has been described as unqualified mercy of the Lord Divine, and as awakening of the erotic sentiment in the Rasa Śāstra.

Truth, beauty and bliss are the triad aspects of one and the same existence. These are so closely connected together that when one is realised the other two are also apprehended.

When truth is established, the knower of truth sees the Ever-Beautiful even in the most trivial things of creation and enjoys the illimitable joy of the Ever-Joyful. Celestial bliss results not from the lower sentimental emotions but is felt as a divine touch in the moments of spiritual absorption. Realisation of God's existence in the minutest praticles of dust drowns the seer in an ecstasy of Supreme Joy giving him the full knowledge of Brahman. "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—Confessions, Part VI.

God is compassion incarnate. Though attributeless and fromless, He takes both form and attribute to favour His devotee. Though spiritual, He incarnates in the person of a being. The practice of austerity through many births enables a man to visualise his beatific vision : "*Rupametat tayā dṛstaṃ prāktanaṃ tapasaḥ phalaṃ.*" Renoucement of all pleasures is austerity and renunciation of all attainments, here and hereafter, is the end of Yoga : "*Sukhatyāge tapoyoga sarvatyāge* samāpanaṃ."

It is *Māyā*, the outward power of the Lord Divine, that directs the mind of man away from God. To be freed from this *Māyā* devotion to God and single minded attraction for divine love are necessary ; also necessary is the exercise of compassion, friendliness and cheerfulness which are the outward manifestation of the aspect of His inward power called *Hlādini*.

The Vaiṣṇava devotees give up the path of strict renunciation and are satisfied with maintaining the little relation with the world necessary for worship and meditation and for earthly things required to maintain their body. The devotees of the path of knowledge consider this world to be illusory and the cause of attachment, and taking to renunciation as the means of removing worldly sorrows and sufferings take recourse to that One Supreme Reality. Bṛ Ār Up, III. 5. 1, states that renunciation of all desires, even the hankering

after heavenly kingdom is the condition to be fulfilled by the aspirant who aspires after final liberation.

The Brahman and His power are one and inseparable like fire and its heat. Though the Brahman Supreme is without a second, He is the repository of manifold powers. He is not within the reach of intellect and He is beyond thought, so that the *Goudiya* Vaiṣṇava sect has come to the conclusion of identity-cum-difference being indefinable. Professor Hiranya commenting on *Bhedāvedavād* says : "It may generally be taken to indicate a belief that the *bheda* or distinction and *abheda* or unity can co-exist and be in intimate relation to each other." According to Hegel, the relation between the Absolute and the world of appearance is identity in difference. In Hegelean philosophy the One and the many are tied fast together by a chord of spiritual unity. Vijnān Vikṣu does not approve the theory of absolute difference between Jiva and Brahman as advanced by the *Naiyāikas* or the logicians (vide Brahma-Sutra-Bhāsyam). Without accepting the extreme monism of Āchāryyā Śaṃkara or the extreme pluralism of Māddhāchāryya, the viṣṇuites have followed the middle course between pluralism and monism and have come to the conclusion of identity-cum-difference—*Acinta Bhedāvedavād* being indefinable. As illustrative of this theory of indefinability of either identity or difference, let me quote an utterance of Śrimati *Rādhā* addressing Śri Krishna, seated on the regal throne of *Mathurā* : "In *Brindāban Lilā* there was not the consciousness of such difference as I am your wife and you are my husband, but now it seems that you are the husband (protector) and I am your wife (protected)—what can be more surprising in Rādhā's life ?"

Learned discussions on the theory of trinity can never bear any fruit in the path of God-realisation ; they can rather effect downfall as a result of roused up vanity and egoism. What need can there be in knowing if God is one or many ?

It is improper to wound any one's heart and set views by means of fruitless argumentation. The daily hawker need not bother his head about shipments of the articles he sells. Hold Him fast with faith and devotion and He will surely bestow His grace on you. The unshaken belief that your adorable diety is present before you in the form of Śiva or *Durgā, Kāli* or *Krishna,* will take you nearer to Him and He will listen to your prayers. This is the real type of unflinching faith that is needed for communion with the Lord.

Devout Yogins like Rāmprosād Sen or Sri Rāmkrishna used to see Divine Mother of the universe before their very eyes. During *Samādhi* or deep meditation these qualified froms of Brahman used to merge in their Soul throwing the Yogins in the bliss of monistic ecstasy. Brahman looked at through the veil of *māyā* appears qualified—our personal God. Effort of human intelligence can help in the realisation of Qualified Brahman only. So in this world of time, space and causation He is qualified, but beyond this He is unqualified. Brahman is worshipped as Śiva by the Śaivas, as Śakti (power) by the Śāktas, as Brahman by the Vedantists, as *Arhat* by the Jains Diversity rests on unity. To attain that unity we certainly have to pass through the net work of diversity.

The formless God has come down by the divine nerve-current, *Suṣumnā* to take form. We having forms are to go back in our turn in the direction opposite to that by which He came, in order to be formless again. In creating the universe God has exchanged His eternal freedom for bondage and in our upward ascent we have to shake off the ties of bonds to attain freedom again. Thus from freedom to bondage and bondage to freedom the wheel of the universe will be revolving on until we all get emancipation, "God sings and we hear ; He ties the bonds as He sings to us ; we untie them as we listen to Him."—Says Tagore. So drown yourself in the eternal music wherein are lost all the senses of duality and plurality.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Brahmānanda Keshab Chandra Sen, the two founder-leaders of *Brahmo Samaj* advised their followers to take as their object of meditation—sky, darkness, the image of a loving pious man and even any minutest object of creation. The contemptation of a mere quality is not possible unless we meditate on its possessor. *Maharṣi Vedavyās* being unable to meditate upon formless Brahman, begged apology of Him saying: "O' Brahman I cannot worship Thou as formless. So I have contrived Thine figure. Do please forgive my inability."

Saṃkarācaryya who incarnates Lord Śiva in person composed a verse in praise of his personal God as a laudatory introduction to his *Aparokṣānuhuti*[1]. His Guru Govinda-padācaryya also worshipped a personal God[2]. Whosoever reads the hymns compiled by Saṃkara in praise of Lord *Śiva* will take him for a Śivaite and anyone who reads his *Bhabānyaṣtak* will think him a *Śāktist.* Again the verses compiled in his *Viṣṇu Satpadi* lead one to believe that Saṃkara was a Viṣṇuite. The opening verse of *Sadācar* written by Saṃkar sings in praise of Lord Viṣṇu[3]. From his *Prabodh Sudhākar* we come to know that Lord Krishna was his household deity: "Soḥsmākaṃ *Joyati Kuladevo* Jadupatiḥ." *Charpat Panjarika* witten by Saṃkara enjoins the worship of *Viṣṇu*: "*Bhaja* Govindaṃ bhaja Govindam *bhaja* Govindaṃ *murhamate.*" Thus we find that Saṃkara is more Viṣṇuite than Śivaite or Śāktist in temperament.

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1. "श्रीहरिं परमानन्दमुपदेष्टारमीश्वरम् ।
व्यापकं सर्व्वलोकानां कारणं त्वं नमाम्यहम् ॥"
2. "स्वर्गस्थिति प्रलय हेतुमचिन्त्यशक्तिम्
विश्वेश्वरं विदितं विश्वमनन्तमूर्त्तिम्
श्रीवल्लभं विमलबोधघनं नमामि ।"
3. "सच्चिदानन्द कन्दाय जगदङ्कुर हेतवे ।
सदोदिताय पूर्णाय नमोऽन्ताय विष्णवे ॥"

The mere display of pedantry in the research as to whether God is one, two or many will be of no avail to attain Brahman. He is other than the known and beyond the unknown. He is at the same time container and the content. He is the shell but He is also the Kernel. So what is of vital importance to gain His blessing and grace is complete self-surrender, unflinching faith, faithful devotion, sole dependence and an august passion in which the merely human is drawn nearest to the divine—a desire that is insatiable —a glorious folly—a heavenly madness. "Let men know what is divine, let them ; that is all. If a Greek is stirred to the remembrance of God by the ark of Pheidias, an Egyptian by paying worship to animals, another man by a river, another by a fire—I have no anger for their divergences. Only let them know, let them love, let them remember"—says Prof. Gilbert Murray.

INCARNATION

यदा यदा हि धर्म्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्म्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्म्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥

The Gita IV. 7—8.

When dignity of morality is lowered down, religiosity becomes shaky and diseased, the Incarnations of God come in our midst—the Infinite is revealed within the finite, Eternal enters the transient, Formless takes form to redeem mankind. In *Dwāpara* or the brazen age when religion degenerated in India, Keśab (Śri Krishna) made his appearance, saved the good from the oppression of the wicked and promised that he would reappear and remove the alloy from religion.

About a century before in this great city of Calcutta, capital of India at that time, society was going to rack and ruin due to evils like drinking, adultery, injustice and oppression. And at that time this great city turned into a seat of irreligiosity. Realising the special need of God's power revealing at that time the departed great like Ram Krishna Paramahansa Deva, Brahmānanda Keshab Chandra Sen and Swami Vivekananda appeared in Bengal to change the tide to a better course and thus saved the spirit of Hindu India. Indeed, it was a very hard and gloomy hour for Hindu religion in India. Many people of the educated class being fantastically deluded by alien culture and education were specially attracted to Christianity which was privileged by the bestowal of favour on it by the then Government of India. They began to be converted to Christianity. At this the pious Hindu leaders of that time who followed the

traditional path apprehended that if the tide were not checked the ancient Hindu religion would very soon be wiped out for good from the face of India. In that critical hour Śri Ram Krishna and Brahmānanda Keshab Chandra Sen made their appearance in Bengal and saved Hinduism. Thus from time to time a voice from heaven is heard through the great and favourite sons of God out of the din and bustle, strife and struggle, hatred and jealousy of the world showing the real path of salvation to the humanity.

The three great enemies with whom a true seeker of truth has to contend are the theologians, the ritualists, and the worldlings. From age to age ignorant masses have held the devotee to be a foolish and mad man and have inflicted on him unspeakable tortures. Lord Sri Krishna said, "The ignorant mass as not recognising Me entered into a human body, show disregard to Me" (The Gita, IX. II). Jesus, Chaitanya, Rāmānuja and others became victims to their inhuman tortures. The common run of ignorant men, given to worldly enjoyment cannot understand the messages of these great saviours of mankind. They cannot grasp their higher thoughts of spiritualism and cannot enter the world in which these great men live. The good advice they give are naturally opposed to the pleasures which the worldly men enjoy. As a result they regard those great men as their enemy and treat them accordingly. Men of the common roll who are addicted to the externalities of ritualism that has tradition on their side but not the true spirit behind, are generally found to stand on the way of the favourite sons of God. "I have chosen you out of the world ; therefore, the world hate you"—said God through saint Ignatius.

Divine rays descend from above into a human receptacle and the man shines as an *Avatāra*. Rays are divine no doubt but the receptacle in which they descend and the channels through which they enter being made impure by

passions, the rays lose their lusture and original purity and the man appears only as a human being and not God. It is so written in *Mark* 1. 9—11 : "It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth to Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And straightway coming out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder and the Spirit as a dove descending into him and a voice came out of the heavens, 'thou art my beloved son, in thee I am well pleased."

Since in the case of an emancipated Soul the seed of *karma* together with all the past impressions are destroyed, he does not take birth again. But out of pity and sympathy for the fallen such a liberated Soul to instruct and show them the real path may by dint of his will-power assume a mental vehicle (*Nirmān citta*). *Is'vara* takes birth among the human beings to liberate those who are desirous of salvation (Vide *Pātanjal Dars'an, Kaivalyapāda, sutra* 4). The Yoga-Sutra observes that an emancipated Soul by means of Asmitā may assume a mental body and reveal divine glory : "Nirmāncittānyāsmitā mātrād." At the end of a *Kalpa*, Hiranyagarbha Is'vara taking a mental body advises ontological knowledge to the world so that the worldly-minded men may follow the real path. So it is no surprise that God to favour His devotee who is always absorbed in divine thought would occasionally assume an astral body and appear before him.

The etherial and astral bodies encased within the outer one become known when the Yogin is absorbed in *Samādhi*. Rising to the plane of higher consciousness he can isolate these subtle bodies from the gross one. The view that through an effort of will these finer bodies can be made to work is supported by the verse IV, 4. 5, of the *Brāhma Sutra*. Majjhim Nikāya, 86 states that once Buddha called up an astral body of his own which slowly moved away from him. Angulimāla noticed it and followed the appearance but it

could not be overtaken even by running after the subtle-bodied Buddha. Texts enjoin that if the subtle bodies can be made to work the progress towards salvation is accelerated and we become free in a much shorter time.

The dawn of prosperity takes place in the midst of adversity in the same way as a lotus springs up from the bed of mud. At the time when Jesus was born, the Western world became so corrupt that in order to save the demoralised and sinful people of Europe he took his birth as their saviour in the womb of Virgin Mary in the city of Bethelhem in Asia Minor. Jesus Christ is a gift of the East to the West. It is thus stated in the Mathew II. 1—2 : "Now when Jesus was born in Bethelhem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men, from the East to Jerusalem. Saying, where is he that is born, King of the Jews. For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him."

Why does God send to the earth great men and *Avatāras* ? The reason is that there is no other superior God by showing regard to whom He could set up an example before the people. Therefore, He does not, for the purpose of mass-education, appear in person, but sends His favourite sons. The full glory of the sun is unbearable to human sight but when the sun's rays pass through clouds and the air to reach the earth their heat and brilliance decrease and then the sun-rays appear to be pleasant to human eyes. Likewise the real power of Brahman is difficult for common men to bear. But when His glory is revealed through man, the public can easily understand it and accept it. *Avatāras* are to Brahman what the waves are to the ocean. An *Avatāra* is the brightness of God. He is the son and image of the invisible lord. Each *Avatāra* or incarnation of God expresses some attribute, glory or power of that Supreme Being. In Śaṃkarāchāryya, Śri Chaitanya and Netāji we have observed the full revelation of knowledge, devotion and activity

respectively as different qualities of the same Brahman. Again, in Śri Krishna and Mahātmāji revelation of Trinity has been noticed. One in three and three in One.

When the heart of the Merciful Lord melts with pity and symyathy for the suffering humanity a ray from Him comes down to this plane and enters into a proper receptacle. The ray thus descended and entered into the person of a man transforms him into a Superman in time. In ages past the same thing happened times without number and it will happen also in future.

God in a sportive spirit incarnates Himself as gods, men and animals (Bhāgavad, 1. 2. 33). He takes incarnations for the welfare and protection of mankind and to show them the real path[1] (Bhāgavad, 1. 1. 13). For the purpose of creation He assumed the figure of a boar to raise the earth merged under water (Bhāgavad, 1. 3. 7). Kunti, the mother of five *Pāndavas*, told Krishna, "O' Lord, Thou art above birth and death and not bound by *Kārma* ; still it is very strange that Thou hast taken births amongst the animals as boar, fish etc., in the human race as Sri Ram Chandra, and amongst the sages as *Nārāyana* (Bhāgavad 1. 8. 30)". It is so written in the Śrimad Bhāgavad, 1. 2. 24-25, that in the beginning of iron age God is to incarnate in the person of Buddha and in the last part of this worst age He will take birth as *Kalki*[2] in the house of Viṣṇuyasā.

When a country is flooded with immorality, injustice and oppression, great persons infused with divine power, appear

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1. "यस्यावतारो भूतानां क्षेमाय च भवाय च।"—Bhāgavad 1. 1. 13.

2. *Kalki* is the tenth and the last incarnation of *Viṣṇu* in which He will deliver the world from sin by destroying the wicked.

on earth to save mankind. "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." There are accounts to show that the social condition of Palestine on the eve of the birth of Jesus Christ was very low ; Europe was morally low before the advent of Martin Luther : "Hell hath enlarged her soul and opened her mouth without any bounds. God was scarcely any longer known, or loved, or served on earth ; and souls fell into the Abyss every day in such numbers that hell was obliged to enlarge its precincts"—*Manresa*. Another observes : "It was a period of disaster, the collapse of the higher intellectual life and the decline of righteousness ; the European Civilisation had fallen so low that many thought that the end of the world was near." At this hour of world-crisis Jesus appeared with the proclamation : "I am come to cast fire on earth and what will but I be kindled ?"

The Lord Divine, invoked and entreated by *Brahmā* took birth as Krishna in the womb of *Devaki*, the wife of Vāsudeva, in the prison of Kaṃsa, the *Bhojraj*.—(Bhā. III. 2. 25). The physical and the etherial sheaths of Śri Krishna were that of *Nārāyana*. Nara and Nārāyana, the two great sages were born of Murti, the daugher of Dakṣa Prajapati by *Dharma* (vide Bhāgavad). So the receptacle supplied by *Nārāyana* in which the Spirit of *Viṣṇu* descended was supremely pure. In the great epic, the Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, XXIX. 19, *Nara* and *Nārāyana* are said to be born in their next birth as Arjuna and Krishna. Nārāyana is the Soul of the universe. In *Mathurā* and *Dwārakā* Lilā Krishna displayed dual personalities—divine and human. He was both a great warrior, statesman and a divine personage of high spirituality. His love of Brahman and his amorous sports with the *Gopinis* characterise him both as God and man respectively. His profound knowledge in the domain of spirituality identifies him as Purṇa Brahman or the Brahman Absolute.

In the person of Śri Krishna the power of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśvara* appeared at different times. So it occurs in the *Laghu Bhāgavad* : "The youngster of the *Yadu* dynasty is one person and the son of *Gopāla* is another". In *Mathurā Lilā* the power of *Viṣṇu* entered the person of Śri Krishna, in *Dwārakā Lilā* the power of *Brahmā* entered his person and in the *Brindāban Lilā* entered the power of Maheśvara. So it is observed that different powers on different occasions concentrated in the same body. The various kinds of instructions that Śri Krishna gave Arjuna during the battle of *Kurukṣetra*, Arjuna wanted to hear the same again on the event of His departure to *Dwārakā* Whereupon Śri Krishna said, "O Arjuna, when I delivered that, I was a *Yogin*, but now I do not remember those instructions."—The *Mahabharata*, *Anuśāsana Parva*, Chapter XVII).

The person of *Paraśurām* carried the Spirit of *Viṣṇu*. But on hearing the valour of Śri Ramchandra when he appeared before him in Mithila in order to defeat him, the Spirit of *Viṣṇu* left his body and entered the body of Śri Rama Chandra.

In the silver age, Śri Rama Chandra was the Avatāra. But several aspects of his conduct were like those of an ordinary man. After the fall of *Rāvana*, when he forsook *Sitā* he told her : "Sitā, please fix your mind either in *S'atrughna* or *Sugriva* or the demon *Biviṣana*." Is this language becoming of God ? It is clear that divine power sometimes disappeared even from Him. Else how could He, the omniscient God, be ignorant of the true Self of the golden deer and of the innocence of *Sitā* ? *Brahmā* Himself has said : "*Rāma* entered a human figure only in order to kill *Rāvana* ; when Rāvana was killed *Rāma* could return to heaven." What returned to heaven was the power of *Viṣṇu*, not *Rāma*. Otherwise, how it was possible for *Rāma* to rule over the Earth for ten thousand years if he were to carry out the order of *Brahmā* only at the age of forty ? Then he

who actually did return to heaven after the killing of *Rāvana* was the Spirit of Viṣṇu and not *Rāma Chandra*—the son of *Daśaratha*.

God himself does not bodily come to the earth as an incarnation or *Avatāra*. Divine power is infused in pure human mediums. The owner of the body in which divine power enters, wields that Power and he reveals himself as some *Avatāra*. This divine power also does not continue to remain permanently in that receptacle but at times it disappears.

In *Chaitanya Charitāmrita* and *Chaitanya Bhāgavad* are found accounts of different moods of Lord Śri Chaitanya at different times. Here is an instance : While in the residence of Pandit *S'rinivāsa* one day the vigour of Viṣṇu entered the person of Śri Chaitanya. He was enthused with that vigour and assumed the figure of Viṣṇu calling to service His carrier Garuḍa. Murari Gupta was present there. Seeing Lord Śri Chaitanya demands the appearance of Garuḍa, Murari Gupta, finding no other alternative, sat on the floor in the posture of the bird Garuḍa, and *Mahāprabhu* got up on his back. Elsewhere it has been described as follows : The colour of *Rādhā* comes upon the Lord, and the Lord accordingly merges in her existence and behaves like *Rādhā*. Gods like *Viṣṇu* temporarily possessed the person of Śri-Chaitanya : Lord reveals Himself sometimes as God and sometimes weeps saying 'I am a mere servant.'—The *Chaitanya Bhāgavad*. In a different context :

"Everyone beholds Him full of splendour with the charming flute in hand, Balaram to his right, the Goddess *Lakṣmi* offering betel on the palm, the Gods *Brahmā* and *S'iva* doing obeisance before Him."—The *Chaitanya Bhāgavad*. When again this mood of the Lord disappears :

(He) sometimes weeps bitterly by putting some straw in His mouth saying, "O Krishna, O' my child, thou art my life."

He weeps so piteously that even the stone would break into pieces. The Lord thus diverts Himself unceasingly in the sentiment of servitude (The *Chaitanya Bhāgavad*).

Viśvarupa, the elder brother of Śri Chaitanya, sometimes possessed the body of *Nityānanda* when *Sachi*, their mother, was charmed to hear the voice of her own son out of the mouth of *Nityānanda*. Bhuju of the Lāhyān dynasty related the following to Yājnavalkya : "Once upon a time I, in the company of some student-friends travelled into the district of *Madra* in Punjab. There we accepted hospitality of a house-holder named Patanchal who had a daughter possessed by *gandharva*. We asked the being possessing her, who it was. It replied that it was Sudhanyā born of Angirā dynasty."—Bṛ. Ār Up. III. 3. 1. What is possible for a Gandharva is also possible for a higher being or God to possess a human receptacle.

The helpless feeling that occupied the mind of Jesus when he was on the Cross is not expected of any Superman having divine power. He himself admitted that at that time divine power had left Him : "My father ! My father ! why hast thou forsaken me ?" The impression on the public mind about this great man at that time is more deplorable : "There was no beauty in Him, nor calmliness, and we have seen him and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him, a man of sorrow and acquainted with infirmity and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. A seditious impious man deserving the greatest punishment. All condemned Him to be guilty of death."—Quoted from *Manresa*. Harnock says ; "The Ebionites affirmed that the spiritual being of Christ was distinct from the man Jesus. The former descended upon the latter at the baptism and left him before crucifixion, never being to him in one person." As an answer to Yudhisthira's query why Arjuna looked so pale and powerless,

the latter replied that his valour which once astonished gods in heavens had left him since the day of the great departure of Śri Krishna.

The view that an incarnation is God humanised, that the power of God descends into human receptacle is supported by the following statement of the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*, VI, 88 : "Śri *Viṣṇu*, Lord and protector of the universe, came down from His chariot and entered the body of Śri Krishna". In his infancy Śri Tailangadhara Swami was one day laid down on the precincts of a temple of God *S'iva* by his mother. She was worshipping *Maheśvara* when all on a sudden she saw a luminous light flickered from the figure of *S'iva* and entered into the body of Tailangadhara from whose body as a result a divine halo radiated in all directions. Besides the *Tāntrik Sādhanā* of the Hindus, Ramkrishna Paramahansa Deva practised Islamic and Christian rites and the result was that the power of Muhammed and Jesus entered into his being which completely changed his Hindu outlook for the time being.

All these go to prove that divine power is attached to, infused with, enters and stays in a fit receptacle which is pure. Supermen are not born as readymade *Avatāras*.

TRUE WORSHIP

It is observed in the *Bṛhadāraṇyak Upaniṣad* that in ancient times there was the convention of offering of lessons, religious rites and worship through ingredients which were mentally conceived. Prior to this, in the Vedic age, we find that the mode of worship sought after the formless, renouncing the symbols of meditative sacrifice, as enjoined in the *Āraṇyakas*. In the Vedic age, meditation of the Formless Supreme Brahman was considered as the best and highest kind of worship. Thus we find how the method of worshipping the Formless Supreme Brahman came down, step by step, into worship of some forms in the age of *Purāṇas*. It was Krishnānanda Āgambāgiś, an inhabitant of Nabadwip in Bengal, who first devised forms for gods and goddesses by fancying images after them. Krishnānanda, a *tāntrist*, was a contemporary of Śri Chaitanya. We have not to go back to the remote past ; only 400 years ago Krishnānanda, the *Tāntrist*, started worship of the goddess *Kāli* through an image designed and made by him.[1]

Irrespective of caste and creed, men are all sons of the same Supreme God. Therefore, mankind can have only one religion and one God. In different countries the real nature of God and the method of contemplation have been ascertained from various angles of vision according to the drift of mind, its set-up and its vision in different devotees. The Indian paths of worship followed by Buddhists, Jains, the *S'aivas*, the *S'āktas* and *Vaiṣṇavs* etc., are the branches of the Hindu religion. These branch-religions are established on the fundamental tenets of the *Vedanta*. All of them have their basis in the Vedanta. Due to differences in human nature,

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1. Vide *Nadiā Kāhini*.

different religious creeds have come out. Each preceptor has explained the Vedanta according to his own knowledge, intelligence, nature and aptitude. The result is that in India, we can find different sub-religions and various methods of religious exercises born of them. This is the reason why in India can be found so many religious creeds and conventions to worship different forms of God. Externally, there are differences of opinion among them but all of them follow the same fundamental principle that the Supreme God is pure, enlightened and free, that He is the embodiment of knowledge, existence and bliss, that He is full of eternal peace, happiness and love, that He is All-knowing and He is the Creator and Dispenser of everything, that He is one and He is many, and that He resides in the heart of all living beings.

Besides the meditative practices, the people of India used to offer prayers and sacrifices in worship to the Nature-gods in the Vedic age with a view to winning their grace. *Smṛti* observes that performer of *Yajna* or sacrificial rites can attain the divine status and by the practice of meditation on attributed Brahman he can rise up to the rank of *Brahmā* ; but salvation comes only in the path of knowledge. As the sacrificial performances are not conducive to liberation, *Mundakopniṣad* 1. ii. 7, compares such acts with frail rafts in the ocean. Ultimate good is not attained through ritualistic worship, performance of *Yajna* or humanitarian works (*Mu. Up.* 1. ii. 10). The Upaniṣads declare that such a practiser may be placed in higher heavens but salvation is denied to him. He is born again and again in this world or in some other planets till he attains perfection fit for salvation.

In the Ṛgveda VI. xivii. 18. *Indra*, the Lord of heavens, is described as the Highest God. According to the verse 1. 10 of the *Praśnopaniṣad*, the adoration and meditation of such a deity regarding him as the Highest, place one in the highest heaven where one remains absorbed in deep *Samādhi*

till the end of a Kalpa. When the cycle terminates, the meditator merges in Brahman along with his adorable deity and achieves liberation.

Viṣṇu and *Rudra* are mentioned in the Ṛgveda. In *S'iva Gitā*, *S'iva* or *Rudra* has been mentioned as the Absolute Brahman[1]. *S'iva* has a surname—*Paśupati*—the Lord of all creatures—animals and men. He is the shephered and we are, so to say, His cattle. He is also identified with *Mahākāla* or the Great Eternity. *S'iva* personifies Brahman in His destructive aspect. Like *S'iva*, a *Saguṇa* Brahman is an idea which has for its substratum the non-dual Brahman. Every idea is an image or copy of the real. The waves are not different from the ocean ; it is the name and form that show the attributed Brahmans as distinct from the Supreme. Diversity is nothing but the diverse states of human mind. The sense of duality and plurality disappears when the mind is at rest, as in *Samādhi*.

Various manifestations of the sublime aspect of universal nature have been contrived as different gods in the Vedas. *Surya* (sun), *Chandra* (moon), *Vāyu* (air), *Varuna* (water), *Agni* (fire) and Indra were taken as symbols of the varied play of nature like wild-fire, light, lightning, rainfall, flood, cloud etc., and the modes of their worship were described in the *Vedas*. In and through them all the worship of the one Universal Soul was enjoined by the *Vedas*. Through that symbolic worship of nature's varied manifestations the worshippers in fact used to show reverence and devotion to that Supreme God who is one and without a second. This is not the worship of matter ; this is also a direct indication of the *S'āstras* to reach unity through diversity. The same great power of God Supreme has been revealed through all.

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1. "न द्वितीयो यतस्तस्थे तुरीयं ब्रह्मयत् स्वयम् ।
भूतान्यात्मनि संहृत्य चैको रुद्रो वसाम्यहम् ॥"—Śiva Gitā,

The above view is supported by the hymn to *Varuna* as found in the Ṛgveda : "O, Varuna ! your energy and power that exist as submarine fire in sea-water has spread as light in the solar system. Again, that same energy is revealed as digestive power in all living beings, as life-force in their heart, as eletricity in the region of the clouds, and as heroism of the soldiers in the battle-field"—The Ṛigveda. IV, 58. II.

About *Agni* it has been said in the *Vedas*, "O, *Agni*, your hidden beneficial Self and the source from which you have sprung are not unknown to us." If Brahman is to be worshipped his power is also to be duly valued. Lord Śaṃkarāchāryya has said in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sutra* : "Those who perform religious rites according to the mandates of the Ṛgveda are all worshippers of Brahman, the Cause of the universe, the Immutable in the midst of manifold mutations. Even those who follow the *Sāmaveda*, worship Brahman in their great vow of worship." The appreciation of the inner meaning of all the hymns and prayers of the *Vedas* make it clear that the same Omniscient God Supreme is present everywhere—from the gods of the universe to all the sentient and insentient beings of the earth. Captivated by the beauty of the spirit of the hymn to *Prajāpati*, the erudite scholar Professor Maxmuller wrote, "The whole hymns must have been the expression of a yearning after the *Supreme deity*, who had made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them are.....I add only one more hymn in which the idea of one God is expressed with such power and decision, that it will make us hesitate before we deny to the Aryan nations as an upholder of instinctive monotheism."

In each living being and each object in creation did the Vedic *Ṛṣis* realise that unseen Supreme Being—He is within, and He is without. The daughter of sage *Ambhṛṇa* declared on Self-realisation, "I have created the universe by manifesting myself as static and dynamic energy. It is I who have sown

the seeds of creation in sea-water, in vapour and in all the nebulae.—*Vāksutra*, 10/125/1-8, The Ṛgveda. After attaining full knowledge of Brahman Ṛṣi *Bāmadeva* realised Brahman in all living beings and declared, "It is I who am active everywhere ; all that are either visible or invisible that I am".

But it will not do to look upon this world and all its things and living beings as different from the Self. It is to be understood that those who without direct realisation and with limited vision call everything Brahman or regard the discrimnating "I" as Brahman have gained no knowledge at all about Brahman. Just as it is meaningless to declare "Everything is Brahman" keeping in view the standpoint of the material world and without understanding the nature of Brahman so also it is sheer arrogance and fool-hardiness to declare or to think "I am Brahman" without the extinction of egoism. Before attaining the trance-like state designated *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* it is not possible to visualise or realise Brahman in all creation. Moreover, only one quarter of Brahman is manifested as the Universe and three-quarters remain transcendental. Though it may be convinced that He is the inner Soul of all creation it is not so easy for common people to realise His full nature. Therefore, *Āchāryya Rāmānuja*, *Mādhvāchāryya* and the great Lord *Śri Chaitanya* in opposing the dictum "*I am He*" have declared while giving instructions, "Your only stock is discriminating ego, how dare you express pride by regarding yourself as Brahman before attaining full knowledge of Brahman ? Learn to regard yourself as the servant of His servants. Say, 'I am Thy servant, Thou art the Lord, I am just Thine attendant'. If you can build your mind thus your ego will disappear, all your evil will vanish. Pleased with such utterly selfless devotion He being gracious will Himself open your vision of knowledge, then you will attain true knowledge".

The *Viṣṇuites* are the followers of *Bhaktimārga* i. e. they follow the path of love and devotion to reach the lotus feet of Lord *Viṣṇu*, their adorable deity. Their love for God will one day culminate in universal love and then only it will be possible for the devotee to realise that he himself is that Supreme Being whom he had been worshipping so long with the offering of *bhakti*. It is along this path that the mercy of the Graceful Lord can be gained quickly and easily. Even a steadfast monist and a preacher of monism like the world-preceptor Śaṃkarāchāryya, the follower of the path of knowledge, has inspired men to invoke the Mother of the Universe, '*Bhawāni* ! I am your servant. Cast your merciful eyes upon me. If thus to invoke you anyone utters only this much 'Bhawāni I' then you grant him the ultimate absorption of his Soul into your Divine Essence which is worshipped by *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and Maheśvara" (*Ānandalahari* written by Śaṃkarāchāryya). The true possessor of knowledge is the true dovotee and vice versa.

According to the Vedanta, knowledge is the only stepping-stone to salvation. Are then Vedic religious rites useless ? No, whatever attempt we may make in any direction in order to attain nearness to God, it cannot be futile. Disinterested action purifies the heart ; in the pure heart is born the sense of discrimination, and this develops the spirit of indifference to the world due to which the human heart rushes to the upper world for a natural union with God Supreme. The more the eagerness and anxiety in the individual become intense, the more does God draw the individual unto Him in a like manner. As a result, the ties of ignorance in the devotee are broken, and the knowledge of Brahman awakens in his heart. At last his own individuality one day disappears in the vast expanse that is Brahman when he finds himself in the firm embrace of the loving God. This union never comes to an end.

According to *Rāmānuja*, those who perform religious rites are alone eligible for the knowledge of Brahman. The difficulty of holding this view is that the gods in that case can have no hope of salvation ; because in heaven there is no scope for any fresh religious rites. Moreover, only gods like Indra receive the offerings made in oblations and religious rites performed on the earth. So the question is : 'What religious offering shall they make and to whom ?' If the view of Rāmānuja be accepted even gods like Indra find it impossible to attain knowledge of Supreme Brahman and so realisation of Brahman or complete freedom becomes extremely difficult. Moreover, interested performance of religious rites makes the consequential bondage of *karma* more enduring. The result is that man continues to revolve for ever in the cycle of births and deaths. So how can the above view of Rāmānuja believing in qualified monism, be judgment-proof and acceptable ?

Interested worship and interested action being evil by nature do not help Self-realisation. Action without a motive alone can check the current of desires and direct the flow of life to a fruitful channel. So in order to realise Brahman the use of disinterested religious practices is equally admissible as necessary. The knowledge that we acquire about Brahman from the study of the Śāstras like the Vedas etc., is indirect knowledge. If Brahman is to be directly realised by changing this indirect knowledge into direct knowledge (or direct intuition) the performance of religious rites, meditation etc., is equally essential. A bird with one wing cannot fly in the air but a bird with two wings can easily do so. The other name for a bird is *Dwija* which means twice-born, that is why the twice-borns or the brāhmins have to depend on both the wings—just as they have to study the Śāstras and take to meditation so they have to perform religious rites. The attempts to soar up into

the higher plane by depending on one wing alone will inevitably lead to fall and death.

The thought of anything which is expressive of matter and quality is figurative. That is why when we think of God as all-powerful, kind and loving, naturally the figure of a man having the same qualities stands before our mind's eye. Without making a comparison with anything earthly, we cannot identify God in an abstract way. It is said in the Bible that God made man after His own image. So it is not unnatural that man in turn should fancy God after his own. "Man can paint or make or think nothing but man".—Says Emerson.

Practice of discipline creates mood for contemplation. Through the exercise of three kinds of discipline, namely Knowledge, *Yoga* and *Bhakti* (love and devotion), the one Reality reveals itself in the Trinity of the Brahman, Soul and God. Brahman without attribute is revealed through faith and knowledge while the Soul appears in its true nature in the path of yoga and God is visualised when He is adored with love and devotion i. e. in the *Bhakti-mārga*. Brahman is the Truth of all truths and Soul of all souls. The omniscient sages of India finally said : "Know this immeasurable Truth to be One". In this connection we should remember the saying of Lord Krishna : "He who sees no distinction between the yoga of action and yoga of knowledge, is a real seer ; he has attained true spirit of equanimity".—The Gita, V, 5.

Worship means offering of prayers to one's personal God with reverential faith and uttering of hymns in His praise as laid down in the sacred texts. These hymns generally include the description of the deity's figure and it is not very easy to shake off the impression stamped upon the mind by such description. Human mind requires as a support an object to meditate upon. Meditation of formless Brahman being almost

impossible for an ordinary worshipper, a personal God becomes indispensable in meditation and worship. Consequently the worship of Brahman devoid of a form is a contradiction in term. The propitiation of Absolute Brahman belongs to the domain of spiritual exercise and not to that of external worship. The reality of Brahman is not alluded to where the *S'āstras* speak of Him as knowable but only of His manifestation, that is to say, the attributed Brahman. So the manifested Brahman or the Brahman in His differentiated condition in creation is the object of our worship.

Though Idol-worship or the worship of an image or symbol is not an end in itself yet it may be regarded as a step towards the final attainment. It does not matter if one uses a stone staircase or a ladder or mere ropes or any other means in order to get upon the roof ; it is fulfilment of the object which is essential and this determines the value of the means.

Idol-worship has a proper place of its own in the field of spiritualism, in as much as, it is helpful for getting access into higher spiritual truths. So it cannot be regarded as quite a meaningless thing. On the contrary it is very helpful in drawing the ignorant people towards religion. And it is only for this that the holy scriptures of the Hindus advise devotion to Qualified Brahman first as a step to realisation of the Ultimate Truth.

Swami Vivekananda was a monist of steady persuation. Yet in order to attract the ignorant public to the path of religion he himself arranged for the worship of Goddess *Durgā* and Goddess *Kāli* in images at Belur Math. This shows his keen insight and his liberal sympathies. He used to say : "Externality of religion certainly has its value so long as it purifies the mind. The day when you find that external rituals do not stir your spiritual feelings give it up at once that very moment without any hesitation."

In Hinduism Idol-worship is tolerated in as much as it helps man to be religious-minded. The Supreme God being beyond the reach of sense-perception, a symbol for the common people is indispensable. Swami Vivekananda said, "we are all born-idolaters and idolatry is good, because it is in the nature of man. Man may cry against it, struggle against it, but as soon as he attempts to realise God, he will find the constitutional necessity of thinking God as a man." So it is not inconsistent to worship Him in the figure of a man. The Hindus do not worship trees, stones or the earth ; they worship the power in the back ground. Are not the black stone of *Kaba* sacred to the Muhammedans and the sign of the Cross to the Christians regarded as symbols ?

From the subtlest state of existence we have assumed gross forms and have changed into men with material bodies. If we are to go back now to our former state we have to proceed through a material symbol. Because, the proverb goes—similar is cured by similar and poison is a cure for poison[1]. It is easy to reach the subtle through gross only ; for, the visible opens the gateway to the invisible. Hegel also observes that since the infinite God-consciousness pervades this *Māyik* world, the Infinite should be sought for through the finite objects of creation. Mind clouds all higher thoughts by limiting the scope of consciousness. But Soul tends to move towards higher consciousness away from matter. In the life of Spirit none can display egotism, begotism or sectarianism. *S'rimad Bhāgavad*, IV. 22. 37, states that to realise *Antaryāmin* or the inner Self one must proceed in the reverse order from the grosser to the subtler—subtlest. we have to make our body and mind the subtlest possible if we are to apprehend a subtle thing or the Ultimate Reality.

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1. "शमं शमे शमयति ।" Also "विषस्य विषमौषधम् ।"

In the realm of Reality there is only one indeterminate consciousness. Intuition of reality transcends all determinateness, both subjective and objective and it stands beyond all logical dialectics. In *S'avari Bhāsyam*, it is stated that *Ātman* which is the only Reality is known by itself i. e. Ātman is Svayaṃsaṃvedya. Knowledge acquired intuitively is true knowledge. Without direct realisation it is not possible to from a correct idea about an entity or to realise a truth which is of spiritual nature.

Who has been able all on a sudden to write a fine hand without tracing a copy for some days? Hand-writing becomes beautiful by tracing it first on the floor, then on the slate, then on the palm leaf and finally on paper. Similarly when the mind is moistened by figurative worship there shall come of itself the spirit of a non-figurative idea.

To show some-body a small star in the sky we have first to show a very big star by its side. When the look is fixed on that big star, it is easy to show whether the small star is above the big star or below it or whether it is to the right or to the left. The eligibility of figurative worship is similar. It is useless to describe the various sceneries of the world before the born-blind. So also it is useless to talk about Supreme Brahman and of the religious practices of high order before the ignorant. He has to be led step by step from smallness to greatness in the spiritual plane.

If Brahman is to be worshipped, His power and attributes are also to be taken into account and duly worshipped. Brahman and His powers are inseparable. *S'iva* without *S'akti* or power is like a corpse. If you hold the attributes of Brahman in contempt, you commit a great offence and the sin of it shall affect you. There is no harm in worshipping *Jagannāth* of Puri or *Viśwanāth* of Benares as the symbol of God. But one must give up the notion that

they are made up of wood or stone[1]. The formless God has been devised in various forms for the benefit of the worshippers. The mind of a beginner is easily concentrated when it is fixed upon a certain form. To a religious devotee God personifies Himself. The form and the formless, the Infinite and the finite unite in love and devotion. The Supreme Being is infinite in essence but finite in His manifestation. Reveal the Impersonal in your personality. Realise Him who is in all beings through sincere and disinterested service to mankind. An English dictionary interpretes the term 'Idolatry' as excessive love. So it is no wrong to invoke a deity in an idol and worship Him with love and devotion. *Nanda* and *Yaśodā* worshipped God as a son, *Hanumān* adored Bhagawan Śri Ram Chandra as his master, *S'rimati Rādhā* and other *Gopinis* loved God as their husband and Ram Prosad and Ramkrishna worshipped their adorable deity as mother. The same sentiment of love found its expression through filial, conjugal, maternal and other relations, and oblations were offered accordingly. Brahman is an ocean of a vast expanse of water which crystalizes into icebergs by virtue of devotee's concentration, love and devotion. The icebergs represent our personal Gods—Brahman in differentiations. But when the Sun of knowledge rises and illumines devotee's mind the icebergs melt away into the ocean losing their respective individualities when the formed becomes formless again.

In the Ṛgveda God has been described as father, mother, friend and lover of mankind, so it is not unnatural that He should feel compassion for us : "*Sthāyi vātsalyatā sneha* putrāstvālambanaṃ mataṃ (Sāhitya Darpan, Kārikā III. 221). Śri Krishna also said in the Gita, IX. 17 : *Pitāhamasya jagato mātā*,

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1. "जल-पाषाण-मृत्काष्ठवास्य कुद्दालय: ।
ईश्वरा: सव्वतवैते पूजिता: फलदायिन: ॥"—Chitradip, 208

dhātā, pitāmahaḥ. There is clear indication in Atharva Veda, X. 23. 4—28 to worship God as father, mother, friend and lover, son or daughter[1].

Brahman or the Godhead is realised in two ways, (1) by abstract meditation of the formless Brahman or the Supreme Being (2) by the worship of His manifestations or Brahman with form and attribute[2]. The absolute Brahman is known to the wise by the practice of introversion, whereas Brahman having form and attribute is attainable to His votaries through the path of love and devotion. When an image, name or any one of His endless symbols is taken as a means to approach Him, such worship is regarded as idolatry. It constitutes *bhakti-yoga* or the process of communing with God through love and devotion In the worship of formless Brahman. i. e., in *Jnāna-mārga*, the idea of name, form or any of His attribute is totally banished from the mind, and senses together with the mental faculties are controlled in such a way as to leave the individual soul free to merge in the Absolute Brahman. When by symbolic worship our mind becomes pure and quiet, we become fit for the meditation of the formless Brahman. So Lord Krishna in pointing out the utility of ceremonial worship said in verse 18/5-6 of the Gita : "None should abandon rituals. The heart of the devotee gets purified by the performance of rituals and asceticism. But the religious rites must be

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1. "उतेषां पिता उत् वा पुत्र एषां उतेषां जेष्ठ उत वा कनिष्ठ ।
एको ह देवो मनसि प्रविष्टः प्रथमो जातः स उ गर्भे अन्तः ॥"

Prapannāmṛta, 95. 100 reads :

"पिता माता सखा भ्राता पुत्रो बन्धुर्गुरुर्धनम ।
विद्या सम्पच्च भोगाश्च सर्व्वं रङ्गेश एव मे ॥

2. "द्विरूपं हि ब्रह्म अवगम्यते, नामरूपभेदोपाधिविशिष्टं
तद्विपरीतच्च सर्व्वोपाधिविवर्ज्जितम् ।"—Brahma Sutra

performed disinterestedly." Again in verse 3.29.25 of Śrimad Bhāgavad He says : "So long as you do not feel My existence in your heart and within the heart of all creatures, worship Me through My image at your leisure time". In the practice of meditative worship, a devotee should meditate on his own Self and not on the image. He should neither consider the image as constituting his Soul. In idol-worship the *Pratika* or the symbol is to be viewed as immersed in *Ātman* or Brahman i. e. as one with *Ātman* (vide Vedanta Sutra, 1. 5). The so-called idolatry of the Hindus is not comparable with the worship of an inert object like a tree, stone or earth. A Hindu installs an image of his personal God and invokes therein the Spirit of the deity whom he worships as Brahman ; it is not the lifeless idol that becomes the object of his worship. Through the medium of this deity, Hindus worship the Supreme Brahman, just as the Christian world worships God through Jesus Christ. Every Hindu knows that God is one and without a second—"*Eko Brahma dvitiyo nāsti.*" Only His manifestations assume defferent names—"*Bahu rupa nānā nāmaviridyase*"—Śruti. "Godhead is limitless, so His attributes are also infinite in number."—Opined Spinoza.

The *Naiyāyikas* hold that God is wise, prudent and considerate, so the wise never do anything aimlessly (vide *Nyāya-kanikā*, P.221 and *Tātparyya Tikā*, P 994). According to the *Mu Up*, 1. i. 9, God is omniscient : Yaḥ *Sarvavid* Sarvajnaḥ". The author of *Nyāya Bārtika* observes that creation would have been impossible if God were not all-knowing. While commenting on *Nyāyā-Sutra*, IV. 1. 21, *Vāchaspati Miśra* writes that since the ingredients of the universe are well-known to God, He alone can be the Creator. The invisible protons and electrons are the constituents of world-creation. He is the Omniscient Lord who knows the mystery of these two invisible entities : "*Adṛśya dṛṣtou*

Sarvajnaḥ[1] (Nyāya Kusumānjali by Udayanāchāryya). Wisdom reaches its acme in God : "*Tatra* niratiśayaṃ Sarvajnavijaṃ" (Pātnjal-Sutra, 1. 25). Since knowledge is a quality, it must have a possessor. Supreme knowledge culminates in God and this knowledge in His *Vidyā.*

Of the two existences of Godhead as I have described above, the God without attribute is unknowable to the human mind but the manifested Gods having attributes can be conceived by us as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the Universe. It is clear that the transcendental nature of the Brahman cannot be realised by the common run of men whose consciousness is in the normal plane. The Supreme Being is known to us only when He is thought of as one related to the world. Brahman is knower of all ; He cannot be the object of our knowledge. "How can one synthesise synthesis"—says *Brihadāraṇyak.* Herbert Spencers also holds this view that what is without attribute cannot be determined by human intellect. Supreme God being unknowable to human mind cannot be the object of our worship. Our knowledge being confined to the phenomenal world, mind cannot rise above its own plane with the help of mere senses and intellect. We can neither know nor form an idea about One who is invisible, imperceptible and formless. That is why Śruti declares : "He who thinks that he knows Brahman, does not know Him." While commenting on it Lord Śaṃkarāchāryya said : "The Brahman whom we mentally worshlp is not the Absolute but Brahman with attribute in differentiated condition." For the same reason the worship of *Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara*

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1. Mandon Miśra in his *Bidhi Bibek*, P. 210—11. also supports the above view :

"सर्व्वकार्य्याणां कर्त्तृत्वादेव तर्हि सर्व्वज्ञत्वं। उपादानोपकरण सम्प्रदान प्रयोजनाभिज्ञा हि कुलालादयः कर्त्तारः। सर्व्वेषाञ्च कार्य्याणां ईश्वरः कर्त्ता इति। समस्त कार्य्योपादानाद्यभिज्ञ तथा च सर्व्वज्ञ इति।"

and other deities cannot be said to be the worship of the Absolute Brahman. To support the view that the transcendental Being is unknowable to human intellect, Mensel observes : "Our conception of the deity is bounded by the conditions which bound all human knowledge and therefore we cannot represent the deity as He is, but as he appears to us." According to Śaṃkara, the knowledge of Brahman is not attainable by human effort[1]. That devotee alone is entitled to it who is a chosen one and favoured by Him : "I favour my devotees with the *yoga* of discrimination by which they come to Me".—Said Krishna.

The Soul is Brahman. So the worship by a knower of Self may be said to be true worship of Absolute Brahman. Except the meditation on the light of the Soul, all other kinds of worship are symbolic worship of the Gods with attributes. Even those who do not worship the idols or image, cannot be said to be performing worship of the Brahman, as their worship is mentally done. The mental feelings like anger, hatred, avarice, happiness and misery, love and affection have got no form ; even so, their perception is objective. We cannot form an idea about true happiness unless we see some truly happy man. So Dr Bain says : "Our emotions are more or less associated with objects, circumstances and occasions, and spring up when these are present either in reality or in idea ; affection is awakened at the sight or thought of what is lovely or endeared to us ; fear is apt to arise when perils are brought to view." Mind being a subtle and inert entity perception through mental faculties naturally takes some concrete impressions. Sully observes : "Thinking means sorting and arranging the images of the external world." Our worldly knowledge being limited by time, space and circumstances is limited itself. So any knowledge about

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1. "अतो न पुरुषव्यापारतन्त्रा ब्रह्मविद्या ।"—Comments Śaṃkara.

Godhead acquired through intellect, cannot but be limited and objective. The Absolute Brahman is not attainable by ceremonial worship as He is not subject to religious rites. Behind every kind of ceremonial worship there is an eye to gain something in return. Such being the case the Highest Good is not attained by the performance of externalities. So Lord Krishna said: "The devotee who worships Me disinterestedly or with an eye to gain something, are favoured accordingly." A damp piece of wood can be set to fire some how or other, but it is extinguished soon.

Religion has not been extinct but it exists quite alright. It is we who have strayed away. That is why we suffer so much. If you misuse a fire-arm, it is you who will be punished and not the fire-arm. The glory of religion does not suffer because of hypocrisy in its practice ; but the hypocrite in future shall be in danger. It is ignorance and perversion of religion that have brought untold miseries in our lives.

There are men who were once wealthy but have now fallen to penury. They have been preserving the family deity in their houses quite alright but whereas formerly they had all religious ceremonies throughout the year they have now either been totally ruined or their successors are living lives of misery. Why has this happened ? Why has a family with God Himself represented as its deity reached such a deplorable condition ? Why do the children starve in a family where the Goddess of Fortune were expected to have a permanent hold ? Clearly, the reasons are defective worship of the deity and various other kinds of misconducts on the part of the worshipper as well as the house-holder.

If you do not properly receive and welcome a respectable invitee to your house and if you appoint a man of licentious nature to serve food before him, will then the invitee be pleased to wish you good luck or will he feel insulted, and in anger, seek to your ruin ? If you neglect the service of

the deity set up in great esteem by your forefather or if you appoint a foolish, misbehaving priest, ignorant of the sacred texts, in the act of worshipping your house-hold deity then certainly want and distress will be inevitable in your family.

If it be physically possible for a hired priest he would not hesitate to perform the worship of Goddess *Kāli* in a hundred houses in one night. When somebody expresses doubt about the possibility of this the venerable priest replies : "Well, my good man, why don't you understand this ? In the first house, I invoke the goddess, in the intermediate houses I chant a few *mantras* and the moment I reach the last house, I call the drummer and tell 'start the music to bid farewell to the Goddess." So naturally in these houses the real music of perdition does not take long to ensue.

Brāhmin priests, having knowledge of the sacred texts and following the right code of conduct, are very rare now-a-days. Under such circumstances I suggest that the head of the family shall himself worship and meditate in the temple every morning and evening. He shall watch service to the deity himself. Ṛṣi *Ātreya* has said, "The performer of sacrifices enjoys the fruit of that sacrifice. So religious rites must be performed by the person himself." Vedic rites performed in sincerity and with due observance shall certainly bear fruit. According to the great Ṛṣi *Bādrāyan*, everybody is eligible for Vedic rites. Vāchaspati Miśra, famous philosopher and commentator on Śaṃkarāchāryya, has said that the Ṛṣi Bādrāyan and the great Ṛṣi Vedavyās (author of the Mahabharata) are one and the same person. Śaṃkara believes that the authenticity of the Vedas are firmly established on their inherent truths. *Sāyanāchāryya* in his *Vedārthaprakāś* also expressed the same view. The Sāṃkhya Philosophy regards the Vedas as authoritative but it does not admit the existence of God. It is very strange indeed. Sāṃkhyas hold

that the *Vedas* do not refer to such a Being. But it is also to be noted that there is no statement in *Kapil Sutra* proving the non-existence of God. In the estimation of *Udayanāchāryya* the Sāṃkhyas cannot be identified as atheist since they worship *Ādi Vidvān*. Buddhists and the Sāṃkhyas exhibit striking similarity in their views. Many are of opinion that Buddhist Scriptures are greatly influenced by Sāṃkhya Philosophy. Buddhist's *Nirvāṇa* and emancipation as defined by the Sāṃkhyas apparently point to the same thing. Swami Vivekananda emphasised that Buddhism is a rebel child of Hinduism. When Buddhism disappeared from India, *Vaiṣṇavism* assimilated all its valuable thoughts and came out enriched in a new phase. Some writers take Śaṃkara to be a crypto-Buddhist. He drew much inspiration from the Buddhist Literature and his philosophy owes a good deal to the Mahāyānist tenets. Śaṃkra flourished in 800 A.D. and Rāmānuja in 1100 A.D. Rāmānuja propounded the doctrine of qualified monism and was a worshiper of Lord *Viṣṇu*. He did much for the spread of Vaiṣṇavism in India. Thus we find that the *Vedanta* offered a philosophical basis to all the Sectarian creeds of India. It can be concluded therefore that the different paths and creeds prevalent in India to-day being broad based on the Vedantic doctrines if followed devotedly and with a heart full of sincerity, will surely bear fruit.

Such men as have priest-craft as their means of livelihood are priests and not *Brāhmins*. *Brāhmin* is he who has got mastery over the Vedas and full knowledge of *Brahman*: 'Brahmānaṃ *jānāti* yaḥ sa brāhmanaḥ'. According to this law of *Manu*, the Hindu law-maker, there are very few *Brāhmins* in India to-day. So it will be neither unlawful nor harmful on the part of a *Sudra* to worship personally his house-hold deity if he is willing to serve with a heart full of love and devotion. It is not possible to establish a close relationship with the All-Merciful without self-exertion. Heaven helps those who help themselves.

It is only when we are exhausted due to self-exertion that God stands by us and helps us. Many other tasks may be accomplished by a representative but you shall gain nothing if you appoint a priest as your advocate in the practice of religion essential for your own salvation. The worship and chanting of hymns done by the priest shall uplift his own soul and not yours. "If you worship Me through an agent, you shall never come unto My presence. Your mediator will see me, not you. I wish that all my children, even the humblest should come and speak to Me direct. Beloved children ! you are always welcome. The oftener you come to Me and the more earnestly ye ply your optic nerve, the more clearly shall ye see My countenance." Jesus Christ said : 'Prayer leads to the Lord, knocking opens His door, search reveals Him before us." Truth, faith and whole-hearted devotion are the only capital of a true sojourner on the path of religion and spirituality. Temples and Churches are not the only places of worship. God is everywhere and so He can be worshipped anywhere under the sky. Plotinus never cared to visit a place of worship. He used to say that it was for God to come to him. Muhammed would not go to the mountain but wanted mountain to move towards him.

Many people fall into error of judgment by regarding as meant for worldly happiness the prayer to the Great Goddess, "Rupaṃ dehi, Joyaṃ dehi, Yaśo dehi, Dviṣo Jahi—Grant me beauty, grant me victory, grant me fame and may Thou destroy my enemies". In this prayer, *rupa* (beauty) indicates the aureole of Brahman in whose light the very heart of knowledge and truth is illumined. This appeal is not for personal physical charm or beauty. By the prayer for 'victory' is understood the prayer for success in the discipline for attaining knowledge of the Truth. 'Fame' is to be interpreted as 'power' by which the devotee can succeed in attaining Knowledge of the Truth. Finally, 'destroying the enemy'

means defeating the sixfold Passions, for the passions are the greatest enemies of man. So how can the above prayer to the Goddess be noxious or blame-worthy ?

It is in a perverted mind that religion is misconstrued. In a pure, transparent heart the finest qualities of the mind and body naturally shoot forth. Therefore, purity of body and mind is necessary. When a mirror is dusty, we cannot see our face clearly ; so with impure mind we cannot feel the presence of God. He is better reflected beautifully on a pure heart.

Worship done with a motive to gain a particular blessing is not a genuine one. Many men go to *Kālighāt* in the hope of securing remedy for their sons fallen sick and thus make promise to the Goddess, "O Thou Mother *Kāli*, pray, cure my son and we will offer you a pair of goats in worship." If Mother *Kāli*, should thus accept a bribe and cure their sons then where lies Her difference with a goonda of Barabazar or of Benares ? Moreover, She is the Mother of the universe : She is the mother of all. To Her a human child and a lamb are equally dear ; why will She be partial and give indulgence to irreligiosity ? The body is temporary and delicate ; what is the good of pestering God for it. "God is in all men, but all men are not in God. That is why they suffer."—Truly observed Romain Rolland. Suffering caused by disease should be borne patiently, and it should be looked upon as a penance. Paramhansadeva used to say that if any one wants to live in a body, he must pay tax for it. Diseases of body and mental agonies that a man suffers in life are such taxes.

The darkest hour is just before dawn. Illumination is won out of the brooding darkness because tense moments of crisis are moments of His grace. So the worldly troubles and misfortunes are considered as penances which help to build up a moral and divine life. When beset with dangers we find no means of escape we return to Ourselves. We dive deep

into the recesses of our being and come back refreshed, serene, satisfied and truly happy. The world is a vale of tears ; it is a troubled sea through which we must sail across to reach the peaceful and blissful shore of the Immortal Being. Just as a ripple approaching the shore gradually loses its momentum so does an individual become calm and quiet as he moves onward to complete the great circle of life. As nothing except food can satisfy a hungry person, so a true seeker of God can have no hankering after worldly attainments and enjoyments (Vide Bhā 1. 12. 6). True manliness manifests at the hour of dire distress. A man of strong personality is not cowed down by world-tribulations and he disavows worldly charms and allurements. He is free from fear of misfortune, grief and death. Śri Krishna gave the following instructions to Uddhava : "Overlook derison of your friends and relatives, bear no sense of difference between high and low—make obeisance by long prostration to the low castes and the animals like cow, ass etc., so long as you do not realise My presence in all the objects of creation, living or non-living go on worshipping them mentally and physically[1]." This will grow sense of equanimity in your mind and win for you God's mercy and ultimately you will gain knowledge of Brahman. Thus showing reverence to the minutest particles of creation you will one day realise that the world is pervaded by Brahman and all your doubts will be removed and earthly attachment will cease.

There should be no solicitation for property, wealth or fame. The religious rites performed to this end are the beggar's worship. In the performance of such rites longing never dies. If we be devoted to God and if we depend on Him, He shall fulfil all our wants. Through His mercy what

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1. "विसृज्य स्वयमानान् स्वान् दृशं व्रीड़ाञ्च दैहिकम् ।
प्रणमेदं दण्डवत् भूमावाश्वचाण्डालगोखरम् ॥"—Uddhava Gita.

we will obtain then will be sufficient for us. So where is the utility of having recourse to the beggarly path and losing sight of the goal? Religious rites should be performed only for the purpose of attaining the best of all wealth to which all the worldly treasures prove to be very trifling and contemptible.

A truly spiritual aspirant should not lose the balance of his mind by worldly troubles, loss or gain, censure and persecution. He has to please none but God. Love, faith, and forbearance must go, hand in hand, with the life of a man who aspires after human perfection. "You have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shall love thy neighbour and hate thy enemies'. But I say unto you, 'love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."—said Christ. Obviously the sermon can be put into practice only by a person who sees himself in all and all in himself. But the non-resistance of a coward does not reconcile with the above sermon. He who has power and abstains from applying that power is said to have understood the real significance of it. Under no circumstances we should have recourse to violence. We are allowed to hiss but not to bite.

A purely spiritual aspirant never tries to demonstrate his religiosity or spirituality before the public. So, Christ enjoins: "And when thou prayest enter into the closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Prayer in a public place may draw others' attention, and winning their admiration, your ego may be satisfied but not your true Self that thirsts after divine union.

"Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrite of a sad countenance. When thou fast, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father which

seeth in secret shall reward thee openly"—said Jesus (Vide *Mathew* VI. 16—21).

Pure mind is in a pure body. Mind is not purified and conscience is not clear unless body is purged of all its sins. Vice is extinguished by ritualistic works. Performance of religious rites by a purified ego bears fruit. Mind is concentrated by *Upāsanā* or worship. Concentrated mind easily enters into *Samādhi* and the *Jiva* gets illumination and emancipation. Even the emancipated Souls do not give up actions. In his sermon to Sādhu Sinha, Buddha said that he refrained from those works only which are evil by nature. He did not denounce the practice of benevolence, forgiveness, love, charity and truth. His *nibbāna* implies the extinction of passions and ignorance and not the extinction of the noble qualities that characterise a man divine. Transition from animalism to divinity is the aim and real significance of such an extinction, as defined by Buddha.

The more outward show there will be in the performance of worship, the more artificial will be the spirit of regard and devotion. The mere externalities of religion i.e., outward shows in the performance of religious rites are nothing ; the spirit behind them is all in all. Absolute devotion and unflinching faith in the worship of God should be the only oblation. The externalities of ritualism are almost killing now-a-days the spirit of Hindu religion. We seem to remain fully satisfied with the unsubstantial part of worship i. e., its outward shows discarding the essence of it. Christ vehemently disliked the Jew's exaggerated devotion to ceremonial worship.

Thākur Narahari says, "Ritual ceremonies observed in our society should be avoided like a jar of poison. He who finds joy in such rites will go down and will never escape the inexorable cycle of birth and death." For this reason *Swāmi S'rimad Abhedānanda Māhārāj* used to say : "Mere rituals are nothing ; what is the good of scattering a few flowers

before the altar ? The gods in heaven are asleep ; awaken the God in your inner Self. What is the good of worshipping the sun or the moon ? It is far better to till the land. You have to realise your own Self, then alone shall you scare away the fear of death and love the world."

The practice of offering *Bali* or sacrificial ritual in *Yajna* has a higher and deeper significance. "It is not the flesh or blood of a beast which we sacrifice that is acceptable to God ; it is our piety which is acceptable to the Lord." Sacrificial ceremonies and other rites are nothing but a means to worldly ends and these instead of liberating our soul fetter it by the chain of new desires. The real and higher significance of a sacrificial ceremony is to cultivate self-sacrifice and to imbibe a spirit of self-denial in the interest of the highest good for mankind. In the material world, the formation of all objects around us has been made possible through the diffusion of the supreme energy. Thus we find the extent of self-sacrifice made by Brahman in creating this universe was immense. To realise the Supreme Being, therefore, we are to realise the spirit of His self-sacrifice acting in Him which can be done if we but resort to the practice of sacrificing our own self. By constant sacrifice of our self both the personality and our very existence will be reduced to a functional zero and this final zero for want of any support to exist will ultimately rest in the Infinite.

The Sāṃkhya theory of *Prakriti* follows *Tantras*. *Kapila*, the author of Sāṃkhya philosophy, possibly, was an worshipper of *S'iva*. In the path of *Tāntrik Sādhanā*, as propounded by *S'iva*, the devotees are instructed to follow the principles of worship, shows, how a Jiva living in the lowest stratum can achieve divinity through the successive stages of *Paśvāchāra*, *Virāchāra* and *Divyāchāra*. The theistic Sāṃkhya-Yoga assumes that matter, Soul, and God are separate existences of the same reality. Soul is inclined to move away from

matter towards God. *Tāntrik Sādhanā* is directed to the attainment of power. Each and all, irrespective of caste and sex, are eligible to take part in *Tāntrik Sādhanā* as in the religion of Muhammed the prophet. It is presumed therefore, that the seed of equality or communism was sown in the cult of *Tāntrik Sādhanā* in the remote past. *S'akti-Sādhanā* is a form of worship of the Universal Mother. For the common people, it is very easy and natural to follow this modes of worship and with their mediocre intellect they find it beneficient for the fulfilment of their material aims. Śaṃkara was not much against *S'akti-Sādhanā* as in this path some power is attained. Emancipation cannot be achieved without the acquisition of mental and spiritual power —a truth which is admitted on all hands.

The Great Prakriti, whose energy inheres all the things and beings of creation, is *Kāli*. Śakti or energy i.e., *Kāli* which is the generic character of the Universal Nature assumes a specific character as the universe. *Puruṣa* is inactive ; it is Prakriti impregnated with the power of *Puruṣa*, who evolved herself as the creation. Owing to His passive nature, *S'iva* lies as a corpse under the feet of *Kāli*, the Mother of the universe. Mother *Kāli* or *S'yāmā* symbolises a profound spiritual truth. Her terrible appearance gives us the lesson that we should not run away from what is ugly and horrible—that we should learn to look beneath the surface of life. She combines both the aspects of life and death. She is the symbol of reality. She is the Mother of the universe—the giver of life and death. When death and disaster are looked upon as our very mother, we conquer all fear and become fearless Brahman—the *Abhaya Brahman*. In one hand She distributes the boon of fearlessness to Her devout worshippers and in another hand She weilds a sword to create terror in sinful minds. Young beheld *Mahāmāyā* as a frightful and beheaded form, great and incomprehensible.

It has been mentioned in the *Devi Bhāgavad*, III. 3. 51, that Goddess *Bhagawati* is the supreme knowledge and the root cause of us all. She again is Nature in Her fullness assuming the form of the Great *Mahāmāyā*. "The real aim of Nature is a true unity supporting a rich diversity."—Said Śri Aurobindo. *Prajnāpāramitā* of the Bhuddhists reads : "You by your terrible appearance create terror in the minds of the fools i.e., ignorant men but you grant the wise hope, assurance and peace—to them your appearance is very pleasing. To him who does not know the mystery of creation, the Great Mother *Abhayā* naturally appears to be a terrific horror (Vide also page 252).

A father is just but a mother is affectionate. So the *S'āktas* imagine and worship God as the Divine Mother. The same God has appeared to some people as power, to some people as Soul and to some other people as mother or daughter. The yogins visualise that Supreme Being within their own Soul and not in the image. The worship of the Supreme Brahman is the best worship. Worship of God with attributes has less value. Worship of some *Avatāra* (incarnation) comes next, and worship of some weird being, sceptre etc., is the worst kind of worship. Like devotee like God.

In the *Tantras* Prakriti is the devotee and *S'akti*, that is, power is the means to worship. A *Tāntrist* does not depricate Prakriti but has placed her higher above *Puruṣa*. This is the inner significance of the conception of the standing posture of the Goddess *Kāli* with Her feet planted on the breast of Lord *S'iva*.

The Vedantist is indifferent to and detached from the world of nature (enjoyment) which to him is nothing but a mirage. But the *Tantrist* views nature as instinct with consciousness. The Vedantist has, through his apathetic attitude towards world of enjoyment produced recluses and

ascetics, while the *Tāntrist* has created the tribe of *Bhairabs* and *Bhairabis*, symbolising attachment to earthly pleasures. *Rādhā Tantra* holds that *Bhoga* (enjoyment) and Yoga (spiritual exercises) may go hand in hand together; without *Bhoga* there is no chance of emanipation. Enjoyment leads to renunciation. By restraint and repression of the self, the *Vedantist* has shown in resplendent light the glory of renunciation. While the *Tantrist* first indulges in every kind of pleasure and afterwards when he reaches satiety he realises the futility of worldly enjoyments and chooses, as a result of this experience, the path of renunciation.

The *Tāntrists* hold that if the hankering of the lower impulses be given a full satisfaction the animal propensities in man can be modified for the better and made more humane. Naturally, an excessive indulgence in eating, drinking and other kinds of passionate living ultimately creates antipathy and indifference to these things. So this view is supported by *Kulārnava Tantra* which states: "*Tair eva* patanaṃ dravyaiḥ siddhiḥ tair eva coditā"—V. 48. The leftist group of the *śāktists* or the *vāmāchārins* adopt this principle to tide over the fury of passions. They meet in a private orgy and perform the rites of *Panchamakāra*. In a secluded place at dead of night, the *Vāmāchārins*, both male and female seated in a circle, offer *5 Ms* to the goddess first and then take those things to their heart's content. *Mahānirvāna Tantra* does not encourage this lavishness but lays stress on the moderate use of *5 Ms*. The *Dakshināchārins* or the rightists of the śakti-worshippers perform their religious rites openly and the performance approaches more to the *Brāhmanic* usages. They follow in the main the *Mahānirvāna Tantra*. From the rightist group the adepts come forth. When the adept is totally free from all passions he enters *Koulāchāra*, the highest stage of *Śāktism*. A *Koula* is an emancipated Soul like a 'jivanmukta' of the *Vedas* and the Upaniṣads who is

the knower of absolute Reality. So long as he lives in the material body, he works for the regeneration of the backward group.

The spiritual perfection is also the aim and end of what is called as the *Tāntrik Sādhanā*, though in the preliminary stage, the *sādhanā* is directed towards the attainment of certain *siddhi* or fulfilment and success in worldly life. As there are three *guṇas* in Prakriti, men are of three classes. Those who idolise the principle of 'eat, drink and be merry' and take it as the fulfilment of human life are called animals by the *Tāntrists*. *Tama-guṇa* predominates in the lives of such beastly men. Those who follow the motto of 'might is right' and think the world to be enjoyable only to the brave, are termed heroic and the *Rajaguṇa* is active in them. They alone are divine who do not care to run after worldly pleasures and possessions and whose sole attention remains fixed upon one unique Being viz. God. *Sattva* is upperhand in this class of divine men. Divine men are adepts among the *Tāntrists*, heroic men are the staunch *Tāntrists* and the people who form the first group are not regarded as *Tāntrists* at all. The *Tantrists* are *S'āktists* in as much as they both worship *S'akti*, the divine energy of Lord *S'iva*. *S'akti* is also identified with *Prakriti*, the Mother of creation. In Hindu mytholgy, *S'akti* is the spouse of Lord *S'iva*. Since, S'*akti* manifests herself as the universe, she inheres everything of the creation, material or spiritual. In human body this energy lies sleeping at *mulādhāra* (sacral plexus) in the form of a coiled up serpent. The awakening of this serpentine sleeping energy is the first stage in *Tāntrik Sādhanā*. A *tāntrik sādhak* rouses this sleeping energy which, when awakened, helps the *Sādhak* to penetrate into the *chakras* or the different centres of consciousness within the *suṣumnā canal*. *Saḍa-chakra-veda* or the process of piercing these six centres occupies the most distinct place in *Tāntra S'āstra*.

The penetration of these *chakras* leads to *siddhi* and enlightenment.

The final aim and end of all is the ever-existing, ever-conscious, blissful and immortal Supreme Being. The idol-worshiper and the greatest of Tāntrists, Ramprosad Sen, sang at the end : "I do not wish to taste sugar, but wish to be sugar itself." In fact there is not much conflict between renunciation and enjoyment, *Prakriti* or *Pusuṣa*, *S'iva* or *S'akti*. It is the ignorant persons who are at the root of all confusion and contention.

S'akti and Brahman are one and the same being. Can we conceive of any difference between a diamond and its lustre ? Is it possible to think of the one without thinking of the other ? What is the worth of a diamond without its lustre ? The object of contemplation of the *Vedantines* is Being and means to the end is renunciation. The aim of the Tāntrist is power generated by constant exercises. The chief tenet of *Vaiśṇavism* also aims at the attainment of power in the path of love and devotion. There may be some difference in externalities of worship among the *Sāktas* and the *Viṣṇuites* but their ultimate aim is the same. As for a *Jnāna Yogin*, his knowledge bears no fruit if it is not saturated with divine love (*Bhā*. 1. 5. 12). When love for God overflows a devotee's heart he is blessed with divine grace and *Avidyā* quits him through fear. (Bhā. 1. 7. 7).

There is an inner significance lying behind the term *Panchamakār* of *Tantra*. To have gone through *Panchamakār* means attainment of domination over the five fundamental elements—the earth, water, fire, air and ether. The *Panchamakār* is as follows (1) *Mudrā* (2) *Matsya* (3) *Māṇsa* (4) *Madya* (5) *Maithun*. Each of these begins with the letter M and so they are collectively called *Panchamakār* or 5 Ms. (1) *Mudra* literally means a piece of cake = Earth = The *Mulādhār Padma* or circle where lies *Kundalini*, the energy potential in man.

(2) *Matsya* = fish = water = the second circle *Sādhisthān*. (3) *Madya* = wine = fire = Manipur circle in the navel. (4) *Māṇsa* = meat = air = *Anāhata Chakra* in the heart. (5) *Maithun* = sexual intercourse = ether = union of individual soul with Supreme Soul. The knowledge of Brahman is added unto him who understands *Maithun* in its true perspective. *Maithun* terminates when through the practice of Yoga, *Nāda* disappears in *Vindu*. Ātman and *Kula-kundalini* are the two principal factors that enter into *Maithun* to bring about liberation of the *Sādhak*[1]. By the practice of *Prānāyāma* human consciousness is drawn upwards as a result of which the individual soul moves towards the Supreme Soul and finally unites with Him. A devotee is required to realise the real significance of the five earthly Ms, as stated above and direct his mind upward by awakening the corresponding circles in the human body. So the foundation of *Panchamakār* is firmly established on the scientific basis of *Yoga*. It is not addiction to cakes, fish, meat, wine or sexual intercourse as the degenarated masses imagine. A Yogin drinks the nectar flowing from the thousand petalled lotus by *Bipariti karan mudra* and is drowned in the ocean of bliss. This nectar is the wine which a Tāntrik devotee drinks.

So long as man remains overhead and ears in sensual pleasures he cannot rise to the sphere of higher consciousness i. e. he cannot progress in spirituality. In the *Tantras* common men are termed as *Paśu* or beasts and so *Paśvāchār* or an

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1. मैथुनं परमं तत्त्वं सृष्टिस्थित्यन्तकारणम् ।
मैथुनाज्जायते सिद्धिर्ब्रह्मज्ञानं सुदुर्लभम् ॥
रेफस्तु कुङ्कुमाभासः कुण्डमध्ये व्यवस्थितः ।
मकारश्च विन्दुरूपो महायोगी स्थितः प्रिये ॥
अकार हंसमारूढ एकता च यदा भवेत् ।
तदा जातं महानन्द ब्रह्मज्ञानं सुदुर्लभम् ॥"—Tantra.

inferior type of practice in which the devotees enjoy all sorts of prohibited food and drink, was prescribed for them. It was expected that these kinds of food and drink so lavishly used would create satiety in them and they would naturally recoil from their misuse. To check the fury of passions and for a sublime growth of a renunciating spirit, the infernal desires should be given a full satisfaction. A Yogin like *Viśvāmitra* stumbled over his *Sādhanā* even after attaining a very high position in spirituality. Infernal desires may be subdued to some extent by good advice, by study of sacred texts and personal effort of will, but that is for the time being. They lie dormant within us and as soon as an incentive cause presents itself, they raise their heads and pull down the ego. A few devotee can tide over their tremendous surge and save themselves from downfall. *Bāmā Kṣepā*, an adept used to say that a single indulgence in sensual pleasure is enough to let one know the ins and outs of such enjoyment and perforce one becomes averse to it, because the proverb goes : 'Familiarity breeds contempt'. To meet her own ends, Nature deludes a person and tempts him to indulge in passionate enjoyments. When Nature's interest is fulfilled, the Yogin is allowed to resume his spiritual journey and he starts from the point of break ; he has not to begin afresh.

The moderate use of '5-Ms' as enjoined in the *Tantras* far from doing any harm to the devotee brings about a healthy tone to the body and mind which helps him to enter the second stage of *Tāntrik Sādhnā* called *Virāchār* or the heroic practices. *Virāchār* wins for the devotee mastery over the six passions. In the deep darkness of night under the new moon, a *Tāntrik Sādhak* meditates calmly sitting on a dead body in a solitary funeral ground and conquers all fear. A *Vaiṣṇava* devotee, a Yogin and a *Tāntrik Sādhak*, though they differ in externalities of worship, all aim at the same goal— attaintment of power, fearlessness, mastery over six passions

and concentration of mind. According to the Gita, II. 48, the evenness of mind is *Yoga*. So all the devotees, irrespective of sect and creed, the *Sāktists*, Visnuites and the Śivāites who have through their different paths of *Sādhanā* attained singleness of mind may be called *Yogins*. In the higher stage of practice when the ties of mind are torn asunder, all of them are raised to the status of Superman : "*Pāśabaddho* bhabejiivaḥ *pāśamukta* sadāśivaḥ". Commenting on the verse 68. 1, of the Mā. Up., Śaṃkara observes : "The sense of difference between the objects of worship and the different modes of worship has no ideological basis".

The rituals, as laid down by the *Tantras*, are for the worship of God with attribute ; the realisation of Absolute Brahman demands far higher spiritual exercise and austere meditation. *Mahānirvān Tantra* declares in unmistakable terms that the *Sāstric* method of worship is intended for idolaters : "*Lakṣaṇai rāptu* micchānaṃ bihitaṃ tatra sādhanaṃ"—third chapter. It means that the rituals, as described in Hindu *S'astras*, may be followed by those who want to know Brahman with attribute. The Brahman that we, the worldly beings can conceive of, has got a form. Our thought and knowledge being confined to the worldly objects can hardly rise above this material world and can scarcely think of anything spiritual. So it becomes natural that we should fancy a material form of God and take it as an object of worship and meditation[1]. Moreover, fancy for a figure is inborn in men. It cannot be denied that the knowledge about God is acquired in this material world and there is no wonder that some impression of it would abide in our mind.

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1 The Commentator of *Chhāndogyopaniṣad* defines *upāsanā* in the following words : "उपासनं तु यथाशास्त्रसमर्पितं किञ्चिदालम्बनमुपादाय तस्मिन् समानचित्तवृत्तिसन्तानकरणं तद्विलक्षणं प्रत्ययान्तरितमिति विशेषः।" Another text observes : "तस्मिन् प्रीतिरस्य प्रियकार्य्यसाधनञ्च तदुपासनमेव।"

Anything good and beautiful in this world reminds us of its creator. So it is not very easy for us to efface its impression from our mind and worship the formless Brahman. This material universe has got a form and as we try to comprehend God through its different aspects, we cannot but fancy Him as having a form. So the adorable God for worldly men is endowed with a personality.

The fourth and the highest state of consciousness is called the *Turiya*. This *Turiya* state is above the states of our wakefulness, dream and dreamless slumber and cannot be reached by mere indirect knowledge. The Absolute Brahman is realised in this fourth state of consciousness. In the state of peaceful sleep, though the mind is dissolved, the impressions of previous knowledge cling to our consciousness. The soul in this condition assuming a casual body attains the status of Brahman with attributes as *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* or *Maheśvara*. In dream, soul resides in the subtle body and is then called *Kutastha Brahman*. In the state of wakefulness, the soul or Brahman in material body becomes *virāt* or fully manifested in the form of the universe. So when we are awake, our mind can acquire knowledge of the external world at large. The consciousness awakened in the above three states and also in *Savikalpa Samādhi* or partial trance, is much inferior to pure consciousness as we acquire in the fourth or the highest *Turiya* state. In the highest stage of *savikalpa samādhi*, the kingdom we can enter in is the land of Brahman with attributes or manifested Divinity. Only in *Nirvikalpa samādhi* or in the fourth, i.e., *Turiya* state of our consciousness, we can enter into the land of Absolute Brahman. So for the beginners, the worship of *Saguṇa* Brahman being natural is quite the right approach. The best that our mind can conceive of that invisible Brahman is the shape or form of a man of of godly character and grace. The human mind being in essence material, it cannot help when contemplating God-

head. Our mental faculty, being limited, can picture the Being in human form and with human attributes ; it cannot conceive the shape of unlimited Brahman. The particular passage in which Upaniṣads instruct us to see Soul or Brahman like "*Ātmā bā are* draṣṭabyaḥ etc.," is not the seeing with physical eyes but the realisation of Brahman by the mystic eye of a Yogin, as is seen between the two eyebrows of *Maheśvara.* This third eye is intuition.

Like the four states of consciousness, Godhead is also known to us in different existences. In *Turiya* state He is *Nirguṇa* Brahman or Absolute God without any attribute. As absolute reality in this *Turiya* state Brahman is looked upon as neither Creator, nor Preserver, nor Destroyer. When, being desirous of creation, Brahman enters into the causal body, He is *Puruṣottam Iśvara.* In subtle body He is *Hiraṇyagarbha* Iśvara—the lord of creation, preservation and destruction. He is the *Sutrātman*—the connecting link between Brahman and Jiva. Assuming a material body, Brahman manifests Himself as the universe and becomes *Virāt.*

The fourfold states of consciousness as delineated above can be attained by a man in regular order by the practice of *Yoga.* When human senses are brought under control by the practice of *prānāyām,* the Jiva-consciousness rises from the state of wakefulness to the dreaming state and in that partially released condition we get the glimpses of the other world. In further higher state, when mental faculties also become inactive we enter into a state, similar to that of previous actions hidden in prakriti, in the form of a seed. During such *Savikalpa Samādhi,* the yogin enters into the world of Brahman having attributes and is identified with Him. But this region of manifested Divinity is slightly tainted with *Māyā* or illusion : "Māyāṃtu parkritiṃ *vidyāt* mayinaṃtu Maheśvaraṃ". As the ultimate truth is not

realised by the worship of attributed Gods, Bṛ Up, II. 3. 6 negates every-thing having name and form and advises to follow the data of neit neti—not this, not this. Negating everything as unreal we reach at last One which is the only positive entity in all the phenomenal and noumenal creation.

So to enter into the land of Absolute Brahman, the Yogin has to conquer Prakriti as well. In the highest state of spiritual practice, when the seed of saṃskāras lying hidden in Prakriti is totally destroyed, the *Sādhak* crossing over the barrier of Prakriti enters the land of Absolute Brahman in *Nirvikalpa samādhi*. This is *Turiya* or the highest state of consciousness. In this transcendental state of our knowledge and consciousness the subject and object become perfectly reconciled and identification with the Absolute is established and the Yogin, freed from all attributes, becomes part and parcel of the Omniscent and All-pervading Brahman. The attainment of this *Turiya* state by the suppression of senses is a much coveted acquisition even to gods and it is subject to severe practice of Yoga.

Like the Sāṃkhyas, those who could not attain success in *Nirvikalpa samādhi* deny the existence of a Supreme God. Their spiritual knowledge is limited to a god with attribute. By the suppression of our senses and by nagative analysis of our being, the innermost recesses we reach is *Ātman* or Soul. *Ātman* is Brahman. With the help of our Soul we can know the Supreme Soul. This is like the worship of Ganges with the water of the Ganges. *Ātman* is above everything and above *Prakriti*. Prakriti is an inert object and the cause of our bondage. But *Ātman* is ever Self-conscious, free and eternal. Upaniṣads declare that knowledge of *Ātman* begets knowledge of Brahman. So know *Ātman* first—'Ātmānaṃ viddhvi' and knowledge of everything else, even of Brahman, will be added unto you. Worship *Ātman* as the dearest of all: "Ātmānameva priyamupāsita'—enjoins a

sacred text. They who realise Brahman or the ultimate Reality, realise it is to be a void[1]. *Goudapāda* observes that Brahman or the Ultimate Reality is like *ākāśa* or void—a sunya which is again imagined as *Ātman*. He says in his *kārikā* that he worships one to whom everything appears as the vacuous sky. So the sky has become an object of our meditation. Yoga-śāstras enjoin to meditate on the small *ākaśa* within the heart-chamber and they identify this luminous sky within with *Ātman*. During meditation when mind becomes concentrated on the outer sky the concentration is to be shifted from outer to the inner sky of consciousness.

"Ātman alone is to be seen, heard and meditated[2]".—This dictum of the *Vedās* disavows the worship of those which are other than the Self. The worshippers of the latter type are, so to say, animals to the gods : 'Devānāṃ *paśurevacha*', i. e. they are enjoyable objects of the gods. Just as a house-holder is aggrieved at the loss of a domestic animal, so are the gods when a *jiva* gets emancipation. The gods do not like that any *jiva* should escape from their fold and get liberation (Bṛ. Ār. Up. 1. 4, 10).

The gods who are adored in different names and forms are not the Brahman Himself but are His diverse aspects, conditioned by time, space and causation, who may be taken as an object of worship, but that is not His full being and glory[3]. The worship of *Hiraṇyagarbha* may make the worshipper

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1. *Goudapāda Kārikā*, II. 23,
2. "आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः।" Bṛ Ār Up.. II.4.5
3. "यन्मसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनोमतम्। तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते॥"
—Katha Up

while commenting on this verse of the Kathopaniṣad, Śaṃkara observes : 'नेदं ब्रह्म यदिदमित्युपाधि भेदविशिष्टम् अनात्मेश्वरादि उपासते ध्यायन्ति।' i e. the Brahman who appears to us as this or that and serves the purpose of an object of adoration and medition is an attributed Brahman and not the Brahman Absolute.

as powerful as a manifested God (*Iśa. Up.* 13); he may be endowed with eight modes of attainment (*Iśa. Up.* 14). The knowledge of *jivātman* begets eight kinds of attainments but the knowledge of *Ātman* brings salvation. If with the help of *Puruṣakāra* the powers are utilised in the acquisition of Self-knowledge, *Avidyā* is destroyed, immortality attained and sufferings are annihilated[1]. The awakening of supreme knowledge which is the knowledge of Brahman is a condition for the attainment of salvation. Immortality and immersion in the Absolute are not the same thing. Living in heaven until dissolution is, according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, the immortality of the illumined souls and the gods. The gods in heaven are not emancipated beings. 'The celestial regions are subject to destruction'—knowing this truth, a true aspirant must not hanker after heavenly life. He must cultivate the spirit of complete detachment. When a spirit of dispassion grows in man, his mind naturally recoils from enjoyments, here and hereafter and turns towards God alone. This is the verdict of the *Atharvaveda*. A true aspirant frees himself from all desires, sees no difference between *jiva* and *Brahamn* and renounces the world. A true *Sanyāsin* retires to the forest and never enters into worldly life again. He who realises Brahman everywhere and in all perceptions is said to have obtained salvation.

During ascent to the higher level of spiritual practice (*Sādhanā*)—if the false sense of individual separateness or distinction does not disappear—then there may appear obstacles in the path of emancipation. But total annihilation of selfhood is unnecessary for them who, like the Vaiṣṇava devotees, do not wish complete immersion in the Absolute, who want to maintain the uniqueness of distinction of their individuality in order to taste the sentiment of divine love.

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1. Sāṃkhya Sutra, VI. 70.

In the Upaniṣads, ceremonial worship is not much encouraged. Chhā. Up. 1.10.11 declares that without knowledge mere performance of religious rites bears no fruit ; it is worse than useless. *Yājnavalkya* while instructing his wife, *Gārgi*, said : "To offer sacrifices and practise austerities even for thousand years without getting any knowledge of the Imperishable Brahman are useless and such works will perish (Bṛ. Ār. Up. III. 8. 10). Again, to the knowing sages rituals are useless because they rise above the meshes of *Karma*. The fruits of *Karma* accrue to the doer who lives in the egoistic plane. The sacrificial rite of *Agnihotra* is meant for those who lack in Self-knowledge (*Iśa Up. 2*) He who is very fond of his life may perform sacrifices ; but a true *Sanyāsin* who has acquired knowledge of the Self cares very little for life or death. The results accruing from sacrificial performances and complete renunciation are entirely different. Actions lead men to the path of enjoyment whereas renunciation to that of detachment. *Sāttvik* devotees worship gods, those who are of *Rājasik* temperament adore demi-gods and demons, and those who are *Tāmasik* by nature are the worshippers of ghosts and evil spirits (Gita XVII. 5). *Manu* observes that only the worshippers of *Ātman* realise Brahman : Saṃpaśyan Ātmayāji. According to the Upaniṣads, the worshipper of Ātman is higher than a worshipper of attributed god : "Ātmayāji Śreyān Devayājinaḥ." He whom we worship as one present before us is not Brahman (S. B. on Mā. Up. III. 1).

The worshipper of Prakriti or Nature-gods merges himself in Prakriti when a name of *Prakritibān* or *Prakritileen* is attributed to him. He remains merged in Prakriti for a period of ten *Manvantaras* and then is born again (For particulars see page 281 in the chapter entitled *'The Law of Karma'*).

Amalgamation with Godhead or immersion in the Absolute is not the Jiva's extinction, nor is it a negation. What is negated is *Avidyā* which stands as an obstacle on the path of

Jiva's union with Brahman. Salvation comes when *Avidyā* is removed. The false impression of the serpent is destroyed when the rope is cognised to be a rope. Salvation is attained when a true aspirant fixes his soul on the luminous Brahman (Bṛ. Ār. Up. IV. 4. 9). He who worships *Avidyā i.e.* anything but Brahman enters into eternal darkness, *i.e*, he comes again and again to the Saṃsāra[1]. The knower of *Ātman* is the Lord Supreme ; he is the Soul of all (Bṛ. Ār. IV. 4 13).

"*Upāsanā bā muktasya*".—The Sāṃkhya-Sutra enjoins that we should worship an emancipated Soul. So long as a single individual remains in bondage the emancipated beings cannot attain the liberation of *nirvāna* ; they have to assume self-determined bodies (*Nirmān-kāya*) and to descend again and again on the earth for the deliverance of the individuals coiled in the meshes of *Māyā*. There is the difference of heaven and hell between the effect of the worship of the gods and the effect of the worship of Brahman Supreme. The gods can grant their worshippers wealth and happiness but cannot grant them salvation ; because, they themselves are not fully emancipated. "Upto the highest world of gods every existence becomes annihilated. So, why should we worship a second who is born and dieth" ?—asks *Guru Nānak*. The gods are confined within their mental sheaths ; it is not possible for them to reach the world of the Absolute Brahman with their desire-permeated bodies constituted of materials replete with desire. It is only when one is freed from all sheaths that one acquires the power to enter there.

True worship lies in the spirit of sincere service to humanity. Hindu religion demands that one's whole life should be dedicated to the service and to the good of all creatures. Performance of all acts dear to God with sincere devotion is true worship. The real worshipper is he who

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1. "अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते ।"—Bṛ. Ār. Up—IV. 4.10

loves His creations both great and small. Humanity is divinity. You should worship the one and the one God only who is love and Sevā. Chandidās; the poet and devotee sings : "There is no other truth above man." The divinity is better manifest in man than in any other object. God is before thee in endless forms ; where thou seekest Him forgetful of His presence in every individual being ? 'Are you seeking God—then seek Him in man'—said Ramkrishna.

God is the Supreme Father of all and human beings are tied together by a common thread of fraternity The gradual advancement in devotion to God with love for humanity is the last word in the evolution of human perfection. This is the right form of universal religion. The reverence towards humanity as expressed in the culture and literature of Hindusthan has in its background a firm conviction of a kinship with all beings in and through the Universal Self. His Holiness Swami Vivekananda says, "After life-long penance I come to the conclusion that the Supreme Being is enshrined in all creation and there is no separate existence for Him. *Seva* or service is the essence of spirituality ; everything else is nonsense. The world of living beings in their diverse forms is the manifestation of God before us. It is the *Jivas* that should be worshipped. Devotion to God means service to His created beings and not any formal show of worship."

Real service to the poor, the destitute, the needy and the distressed is the true worship of God. He is neither to be sought in a temple nor in the sky. "That God dwells in heaven, that Christ will come again from some place in heaven etc., have no meaning for us." He dwells in the heart of all. The feeling of fraternity irrespective of caste or creed is the ideal religion. To love one's fellowmen is to love God. Service to others is service to one's Self ; for it is the Oneself that is manifest in many. When he got throat-sore Śri Ramkrishna, requested by his disciples, begged his adorable

goddess, *Kāli* : "O' Mother, I cannot take food ; do please enable me to eat a little." Whereupon the Mother replied : "Are you not taking enough through others' mouths ?" The same Self is pervading the whole creation. He is in a *Brāhmin* as well as in a *Chandāl*, in men as well as in women, in the virtuous as well as in the sinners. The Self manifests in various capacities—rearing up children as father, nursing them as mother, teaching them the lesson of unity as a brother and a lesson of co-operation as a friend. The Self is the food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, the aim of our prayer and the adorable in our worship, The Self is fragrance in a flower, the tree potential latent in the seed, coolness in water, heat in fire, beauty in form and perception in all objects. "It is He who moves under a diversity of forms, sometimes as a hypocrite, sometimes as a pious man, sometimes even as a criminal[1]". As vital force He is shining through all. Even the murderer is nothing but Brahman, only the qualification of a murderer has been attributed to him. Let the murderer perceive it clearly that the quality attributed to him is as false as the perception of a snake in a rope ; it is empirical—nearly a matter of seeming. He is in matter too but matter is not aware of it ; it is for this reason that we declare matter is not sentient. God is in every thing just as there is butter in a drop of milk, liquidity in water, sweetness in the sugarcane. Let this conviction be firmly implanted in your heart. Exhibit it in evey sphere of life. Let the belief in Godhood of every living being and idea of universal fraternity be offerings to the Lord in your daily worship.

"I see Thee smiling in the sweet jesamine I hold in my hand ; Father in heaven ! Bless me."—a prayer offered by a true worshipper. "I bless thee my child. Love and honour each flower in my garden."—replied the heavenly voice. In the kingdom of God no one should be looked down upon with

1. Quoted from *Ramkrishna* by Romain Rolland.

contempt ; rather there should be affection, love and regard for all. Whom can you hate ? Even the little ant under your feet is the receptacle of the holy vibration of the supreme energy of the Supreme Soul. So whatever invectives are hurled against him come and pierce Him.

Pave the way for your posterity in future life by adopting the spirit of service to others and kindness to all in this world of sufferings as the most important factor in spiritual activity. The lesson of spirituality is taught by practical application in the lives of the great. Jesus Christ set an example of right conduct even at the cost of his life for the cause of religion. If you lead a great life worthy of emulation your example will be followed by those that come after you[1]. Your mode of spiritual practice will then be adopted by others and the progress of spiritualism will be possible through all. Efforts of individul emancipation will then lead to universal salvation and will bring down on earth a kingdom of God true to its name and nature. Great personalities like Buddha, Christ, Chaitanya, Rabindranath and Mahatma Gandhi were infused with universal love. Sympathy and fellow-feeling for others is loyalty to humanity. Let the humanity be flooded with that spontaneous flow of love. Cultivate the cult of love, preach the gospel of universal brotherhood and surrender yourself completely to the feet of the All-Love and attain perfection through this sort of true and genuine worship. Love for others will wipe a way the filth of your mind, destroy the selfishness of your heart and kill the false ego of yourself. Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. "Paradise is lost when *Sati*, the spirit of Reality is disunited from Śiva, the spirit of goodness. The real and good must meet in wedlock so that the Paradise may be regained."—said Rabindranath.

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1. "स यत् प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्त्तते ।"—The Gita, III. 21

SCRIPTURE, PRECEPTOR AND DISCIPLE

Rules, regulations and valuable instructions laid down in the sacred texts show the right way to mankind to grow into His likeness and to be as perfect as God Himself. Repeated reading of the holy books help in the realisation of the unbounded glory and grace of God which is so encouraging in one's journey to the divine destination. Mere getting a number of verses by heart without assimilating their real significance does not fill the heart of the reader with lofty inspiration. First read or hear, then think and meditate and finally try to carry out them in practice. Mere theoretical knowledge acquired from the study of scriptures will be of no avail. Try to follow the instructions and manifest them through your own personality so that your whole being may be transformed divine.

As a result of the reading or hearing of the Vedas or the holy instructions contained in the writings of the seers and by the grace of a true guide whose help is sought the veil of *māyā* drops down. Notions such as 'I am this body', 'I am a man or I am a woman', or 'I am a Brahmin'—'I am a Sudra' are no longer cherished. They disappear altogether. The soul being disillusioned, Brahman is realised and the bondage of *karma*, which is binding upon all living beings is destroyed. Memory of past lives is revived and incidents of past experiences are recalled to mind.

Those who cannot read the holy books written in Sanskrit for their ignorance of the language may read their translations and other religious books published in their own vernacular and enrich their mind. Religious books written in vernacular by saintly people for the good of their countrymen are laden with the very essence of the *S'āstras*. The truth about *Dharma* or true and practical religion is hidden in a locked chamber, as it were, where there is no access for the common

men. This being the case, the footprints of the great and the good show the right way to the world[1].

The knowledge of the *śāstras* furnishes only second-hand information of *Para-Brahman*, the direct or first rate knowledge of which as "Aham Brahmāsmi—I am He", can be realised in the highest state of concentration ; at this stage the entire consciousness is focussed on the Supreme Soul. Only a vastly learned *Guru* who is a yogin himself can help us to progress in the path of spirituality. The knowledge that we acquire by book-reading is indirect ; it is direct when through the grace of a competent Guru the inner significance of textual instructions is realised and the knowledge thus acquired is finally intuited in one's own Soul through yogic practices.

A capable spiritual guide (*Guru*), who is the true expositor of the Vedanta philosophy, is very rare now-a-days. Only the wise pay their attention to the Upaniṣadic teachings. The inner significance of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads is accesible to the persons alone who, thirsting for truth and knowledge, resort to a competent and compassionate preceptor. But now such a disciple is also very rare. Scriptures propose but reason and experience dispose. So, to remove all shades of doubts and misgivings of the mind, the help of a *Guru*, well-versed in the *Śāstras*, is of utmost importance. Company of spiritual adepts ameliorates the heartache of the unfortunate. Just as a man whose crown of the head is set on fire hurriedly enters into water, so does a man whose heart pines for God, resort to a spiritual guide. The teachings of the scriptures induce few to the path of religion and spirituality. To a student, the content of the texts seems to be a combination of some dead letters. But they appeal to his mind when they are written, spoken and explained by a living adept in a simple, lucid and attractive manner. This

1. "धर्मस्य तत्त्व निहितो गुहायां महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः।"

is why a *Guru* of the *Rādhāswāmi* Sect of Dayalbagh, Agra, advised his disciples to regard and follow an existing *Guru*: "*Byakt guruki mān tere valoki kahun*—follow a living *Guru*; this I insist on you for your own good." Thirst for God, self-exertion and grace of a capable *Guru* are the essential requisites for progress in the path of spirituality. To the thirsty, *Guru* will not be wanting:

"The saints will aid if men will call,
For the blue sky bends over all."—*Christabel.*

The *Chaitanya Charitāmrita* observes: "If Krishna is pleased with a fortunate person, the preceptor as the indwelling regulator of mind becomes his teacher." Lord Krishna Himself said, "I favour my devotees who are wedded to Me, with the Yoga of discrimination by which they come to Me". (Vide the Gita, X. 10).

Approach a *Guru* with an inquisitive heart full of love, faith and devotion; the preceptor who is the knower of truth will instruct thee in that knowledge (Vide the Gita, IX. 11).

Mere study of the Vedas, Upaniṣads and other sacred texts is not very helpful to arrive at a correct decision; because, false argumentation generally leads to false knowledge and thereby a man is led astray and fallen from religion[1]. The Kathopaniṣad vehemently protests against establishing a truth logically. According to the *S'āstric* definition, an *Āchāryya* i.e., a preceptor is one who grasps the real import of the texts, himself follow the *S'āstric* injunctions in his everyday life and imparts the same to his disciples without the least reservation[2]. He alone, who has gained the ultimate knowledge and realised Brahman is the unique speaker and

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1. "केवलं शास्त्रमाश्रित्य न कर्त्तव्यो विनिर्णयः।
युक्तिहीनो विचारे तु धर्म्महानिः प्रजायते॥"
2. "आचिनोति च शास्त्रार्थं आचारे स्थापयत्यपि।
स्वयमाचरेत् यस्मात् आचार्य्यस्तेन कीर्त्तितः॥"

interpreter of the sacred texts[1]. Supreme Truth is attained in the path of mystic *Sādhanā* when life becomes sublime and divine being moulded according to the realisation. Mysticism is the kernel of religion and it is the only path that can take one to the Absolute. So, a mystic and theistic *Guru* is the only resort to the disciples who are ignorant of and blind to the higher issues. Bow down with reverence before a *Guru* who incarnates God on earth and he will open your eye of wisdom and show you the real path.

The Upaniṣads enjoin complete surrender and submission of a disciple to his *Guru* or preceptor. A spiritual aspirant must approach a spiritual guide with a spirit of full submission and he should have an implicit faith in his teachings. *Mundakopaniṣad*, 1. 2. 12 states : "Let a man take fuel in hand and approach his *Guru* who is learned in the Vedic lore and who dwells in Brahman." The fuel is required for sacrificial fire in which the disciple's false knowledge, desires and egoism are to be burnt. The pre-knowledge, self-will and personality of a disciple have to be left outside before he enters into the dwelling place of his *Guru*. He must be an obedient and loving disciple. Preceptor's teaching is a revelation of God to the disciple. A disciple can learn nothing from the preceptor's teachings unless his mind is submissive and receptive. The field must be ready before the seed is sown. To Swami Vivekananda, *S'raddhā* or reverential faith on the part of a disciple in the teachings of his *Guru* is a condition precedent to his entrance in the realm of mystic *Sādhanā*; he must fulfil it before he steps into the path of spirituality. Mind is not concentrated unless the impurities of the body and mind are removed by the practice of austerities and as a result, the disciple fails to grasp the instructions of the

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1. "आश्चर्योऽस्य वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्धा: ।
आश्चर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्ट: ॥"—Katha Up 1. 2. 7

preceptor. Indra and Virochan are the instances to the point. Knowledge awakens of itself when body becomes sinless: 'Jnānamutpadyate puṃsāṃ kṣayāt pāpasya karmanaḥ'—Smṛti.

To seek God in scriptures is to seek the living among the dead. The Vedas and the Upaniṣads may point out the path but personal exertion and the help of a guide are essential to move along the prescribed path. The preceptor makes the disciple's spiritual journey easy, comfortable and sanguine. Spiritual knowldge cannot be attained by lying on an easy-chair and studying the *Vedas* and the Upaniṣads only. "Who else but a theistic *Guru* can show you the real path ?"—asks the Kathopaniṣad, II. 3. 12. The way to salvation is the knowledge of Brahman which can be grasped from the lips of a capable *Guru* who is the knower of Eternal Brahman. So, Mu. Up, 1. 12. enjoins selection of a *Guru* who is the knower of Brahman. Knowledge of Brhman can be imparted by one who is established in Brahman. Accordingly, the *S'iva* Saṃhitā holds that spiritual knowledge is to be obtained from one who incarnates both God and man on earth.

A spiritual guide appears before us as the symbol of the infinite mercy of God moved to pity at the sufferings of human beings. He is the ancient bridge of the great union between man and Man, the eternal. There was a time when a disciple revered his *Guru* as a devotee worships his God and a *Guru*, in his turn, loved his disciple as his own Self. But with the introduction of foreign education on the Indian soil that reverential relation has disappeared and a relation of seller and buyer has been introduced. The result has been that a capable *Guru* and a successful disciple are very rare to-day.

First, serve the saints and the wise with a merry heart; win their grace and blessings from which will grow reverential faith in religion. This, in turn, will awaken in heart love for God. Through love of God the power of discrimination will

arise when the aspirant will clearly understand that Ātman is distinct from all the gross and subtle bodies and distinct from everything else. He will naturally become indifferent to the body, and attractions for the worldly enjoyments will cease. True knowledge and perfect detachment from the world will result in the attainment of powers like omniscience and omnipotence (The Bhāgavad, II. 5. 34).

Initiation is not the end of the duty of a spiritual guide ; he has to help the disciple in the religious practices and raise him up to his own level. The true guide of spiritual life explains the mysteries of this universe and reveals the secret path of fulfilment, thus enabling a pilgrim to reach the final destination. A piece of black coal when comes in touch with fire becomes ablaze in golden hues and loses its ugly dark colour. So a disciple winning the grace of his *Guru* and by assimilating his teachings becomes replete with wisdom when the impurities, doubts and darkness of his mind are washed away[1].

A true guide is the best representative of God. To approach a true *Guru* is to approach God and so one should be very careful in the selection of a *Guru*. *Mahātmā Kabir* said : "The person of a true guide or *Guru* is the mirror which shines with the reflection of God[2]". Such a Guru is the confluence of the three powers of God :—(1) *Parā*, (2) *Aparā*, and (3) *Paramā*. The word *Guru* consists of five letters : G+U+R+U+H. The first letter *i.e.*, G is uttered from base of the tongue for which its guttural sound causes the unfolding of speech, intelligence and life. The second letter U on the pronunciation draws our inner Self upwards. The

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1. "सद्गुरु पाओये भेद बताओये ज्ञान करे उपदेश ।
कायला कि मयला छुटे यव आग् करे परवेश ॥"—
A saying of the *Rādhāswāmi* Sect.

2. "अलख् पुरुषका आखिं साधुका देह ।"—said *Mahātmā Kabir*.

sound R is cerebral, as it is produced from a spot above the palate. Its utterance checks decay. The second U brings an end to ignorance and generates knowledge. The word *S'ri* preceding the word *Guru* suggests the splendour which surrounds him, and the *Visarga* at the end signifies that the Guru is endowed with divine qualities.

The initiates are predestined to be different—superior, mediocre and inferior or the first rate, second rate and third rate. The first rate initiate attains knowledge of the *Advaita* or the doctrine of non-duality as soon as it is explained to him and becomes emancipated. The second rate and third rate initiates have their minds clouded with various doubts and so there is delay in their emancipation. *S'vetaketu* realised the truth as he heard seven times the message : "Thou art that[1]." Both *Indra* and *Virochan* served their preceptor and listened to the truth. Of the two, *Indra* alone got an insight into truth but *Virochan* failed to conceive the true import of the instructions of his preceptor because of his want of singleness of mind and so he could not get the insight. "Of thousands of men seldom does any one endeavour to attain God. Of thousands of men in the search after truth seldom does any one attain Me."—said Lord *S'ri Krishna.*

The disciple is blinded by ignorance and he who can restore inner eye-sight with the magic touch of the stick of knowledge is a true *Guru* or spiritual guide[2]. The term *Kula-Guru* does not refer to any successor of an ancestral *Guru.* The real import of the term signifies a capable person who can awaken the latent power of *Kulakundalini* or the energy potential in the disciple.

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1. "एतदात्मामिदं सर्व्वं तत्सत्यं स चात्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो ।"
—Said Āruni, the sage, to his son, Śvetaketu.
2. "अज्ञानतिमिरान्धस्य ज्ञानाञ्जनशलाकया चक्षुरुन्मिलितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ।"

If the ancestral *Guru* be not a capable preceptor, he can certainly be replaced by a capable person without any harm to the disciple. A life without a guide, terminating in death, or the life of a disbeliever is preferable to the unfortunate life of one who has been duped by a pretender. The Upaniṣads declare in an unmistakable term that a blind fellow cannot be the guide of another blind person, for, in that case, both may fall into the pit and get injured[1]. Just as a physician without any knowledge of medical science is dangerous to a patient,[2] similarly, a pretender without any direct knowledge of the spiritual path is dangerous to his disciple. So *Mundak Upaniṣad* 1. 12. advises to select a Guru who is the knower of Brahman. If we are not to be led by the blind we must resort to a contemplative saint. The spiritual guide infuses into the disciple spiritual knowledge and power. What benefit can be expected of a pretender who has no knowledge of spirituality? One lighted torch can light up hundreds of torches. A man in possession of millions can shower money to the needy.

The light thrown by the explanation of the term *Kulaguru* suggests the type of *Guru* which should be sought by a seeker for reaching the place of destination and the path shown by such a capable *Guru* is the right path. *Guru* transmits into the disciple his own spiritual power by the force of his will or by a simple touch. This is known as Baptism in Christian theology and vesting with spiritual power in the Hindu *Śāstras*. It is true that a disciple has to qualify himself for receiving the spiritual charge; for, otherwise it may end in danger. The *Guru* also never imparts his spiritual power to a disciple who has not prepared himself. On one

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1. "अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ।—Katha Up. 1.2.5 ; also Mu Up. 1.ii 8
2. "मूर्खो हि यो यमसमः ।"

occasion Śri Ramkrishna Paramhansa Deva touched the breast of *Subodh Babu* and calling on the Holy Mother said, "Wake up Mother, wake up"—several times and the disciple instantly felt a flood of light rising from his sub-conscious region upwards and making for the higher centres. Various forms of gods and goddesses flashed before his inner eye and in the next moment they were lost in a sea of divine light. It is that Supreme Light which is worthy of realisation and at the sight of which Yogins obtain full knowledge of Self[1]. This white light has been called *Viśokā* or *Jyotismati* in the Upaniṣads. The yogin can enjoy unobstructed vision throughout the universe by means of this light. It is that all-pervading knowledge before which nothing remains hidden or unknown. The Western philosophers and mystics have called it "the mysterious eye of the Soul". It has been called 'Pure Reason' by the philosopher Kant. Awaken this eye of wisdom and let your consciousness spread far and wide to gain the vision of God. He by whom the whole universe is pervaded, who is All-knowledge and Infinite is revealed only by a true *Guru*[2]. The true Guru unfolds the absolute truth and infinite light to his disciple.

The disciple advances in the path of spiritualism making progress day by day with the help of the *Guru*. Gradually, sweet twinkling sound of the bell coming from a long distance is heard within and he merges his consciousness into the light embedded in the sound and ultimately by deep concentration he is absorbed in *Samādhi* and reaches the lotus feet of Lord

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1. "तच्छुभ्रं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिः ।
तद् यदात्मविदो विदुः ॥"
2. "चिन्मयं व्यापितं सर्व्वं त्रैलोक्यं यत् चराचरम् ।
तत्पदं दर्शितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥"
Also : "अखण्डमण्डलाकारं व्याप्तं येन चराचरम् ।
तत्पदं दर्शितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥"

Viṣṇu[1]. The flame-like individual soul passes through the different centres with the help of *Kundalini*, made kinetic, and enters the subtle regions of light beyond the senses and enjoys the beautiful celestial visions. Ultimately, Jiva reaches *Sahasrār* and merges itself in *Param S'iva*, the Supreme Being.

The power which attracts yogin upwards to merge his being in Brahman is *Kundalini S'akti* and the path through which the latter ascends is the yogic path. Supreme light reflected in individual intellect leads Jivātman as a spiritual guide. Follow this divine guide; it will take you to the world of Absolute Brahman. The Yogin, who visualises nothing but radiant *Jyoti* during *Samādhi*, proceeds with a speed of an arrow from a bow.

Soul is the emporium of the highest knowledge and truth. Highest truth is realised when mind is concentrated and consciousness is introspective. The way to it is the practice of yoga. Without a penetrative vision born of Yoga-practice no amount of logical discussion and display of pendantry will throw any light on the mystery of creation, Ātman or Brahman. Self realisation or the Supreme knowledge is denied to us only because we try to realise Self leaving the self drowned in ignorance. Soul is like a beehive—a reservoir of honey. But on account of our foolishness we are wandering about from one flower to another like a bee in search of a drop of honey. A true seeker of truth need not restlessly run about to have a spiritual guide. The preceptor will surely come to him of his own accord, quite unsought for.

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1. "अनाहतस्य शब्दस्य तस्य शब्दस्य योध्वनिः ।
ध्वनेरन्तर्गतो ज्योति र्ज्योतिरन्तर्गतं मनः ॥
तन्मनो विलयं याति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ।
सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः दीपीवचक्षुरात्मतम् ॥"

POWER OF MANTRA

We do not know the exact language to commune with God but our words long for the truth and also the truth for words. When the words are expressed in a melodious hymn, they imitate the language of God. The heart of God begins to vibrate in resonance with the utterance of the hymn and we two join in the chorus. Whereupon the discord in the words disappears and our heart is filled with love and joy by the divine touch and it goes on dancing in ecstatic joy until a state of super-consciousness overtakes our being and we feel oneness with the Unknown.

Feeling or sentiment is the soul of all utterances. It is useless to expect any appreciable result from the repetition of the Holy name or prayer, when it is bereft of love and devotion. The name of the Holy Mother and the Holy Mother are one and the same—the true name and the owner of the name are identical. The utterance of the holy name unattended with a genuine feeling of love is an act of sin. For that reason Christ was against such meaningless and harmful repetition of the holy name: "Go and repent and then come with a heart full of sincerity and thou shall be heard"—"said he. Therefore it is necessary to practise *Ajapā japam* with maddening love of Śri Chaitanya. Śri Ramkrishna Deva used to say, "Faith first, for faith is followed by devotion. With faith as foundation one can build as one chooses." Faith in the Perfect builds path for the perfect.

The verse, IV. 22.23 of the Śrimad Bhāgavad conveys the idea that the acts like chanting of Lord's name and singing of His glory are not attributive. Due to God's compassion for the *Jivas* such acts appear as expressive of His qualities only to raise human consciousness to the the realm of the Attributeless. The constant meditation of God and repetition of His holy

names with love and devotion bring an over-flowing blessedness in man. The name of God is identical with God. A Hindu *Guru* while initiating his disciple whispers to his ears a small *Mantra* consisting of a few letters. These letters formulate the name of an adorable Lord which the disciple has to repeat mentally. By mental repetition the restlessness of mind calms down, the *mantra* gets enlivened, the God within becomes manifest, and a direct union between the worshipper and the worshipped is established. "Hallowed be thy name"—So said Christ.

The mystic syllable *OM* is the sound-form of Supreme Brahman. The repetition of this *mantra* is the only means of God-communion. It is the connecting link between man and Man, the eternal. The word "*OM*" finally took the form of the universe. According to the Christians, the word or the logos was with God before creation, and the word was God. The logos or demiurge is the son of God, the first manifestation of Godhead. Christian mystics believe that to reach God they have to pass through the son of God. They regard Jesus Christ as the son of God who is one with his Father in heaven. So the *OM* of the *Vedas* is analogous to the *logos*. The *Vedas* declare that *vāk* or word is Brahman. The vedic views about *sphotavāda* corroborate with the Christian doctrine of Logos. '*OM*' as a *sphota* is the potential state of creation. '*OM*' in its inexpressed condition is the thought-form of Brahman : when expressed it is the universe. So '*OM*' stands as a bridge between Brahman and his creation. To reach Brahman, therefore, we cannot but have recourse to this mystic syllable. Recite mentally and meditate on it, always bearing in the mind the real significance as aforesaid. Constant repetition of this holy syllable, even while walking, working or sitting, will create a spontaneous flow of *Japam*, (repetition of Lord's name) even when you are asleep. Such a practice is '*Ajapā Japam*' and it sweeps away all the

undesirable thoughts from mind. Mind thus being made tranquil and thereby the heart pure you will be naturally drifted away by the spiritual current flowing within : With every breath His holy name will be chanted—it will vibrate in every corpuscle of blood and your very being will be transformed divine.

The idea contained in the teachings of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads is not to be considered as mere abstract but should be taken in good faith as living experience of the seers. They experienced God's existence in their own soul and that God-consciousness enabled them to chalk out the right track. They lived in Brahman and whatever they said, was said being established in Brahman through the heart of Brahman. The Brahman of the *Vedas* is not the God conceived or imagined but God realised in their own Soul. According to Dr. Inge such conviction or awareness is akin to prophetic consciousness in its best culmination. Aldous Huxley opines that the technique of mysticism properly practised may result in the direct intuition of and union with an ultimate spiritual reality that is perceived as simultaneously within the self and in some way beyond it. The *Vedas* remain philosophy so long we try to grasp their instructions through intellect, but when their teachings are put into practice during *Sādhanā*, the philosophy ends in experience. 'It is that attitude of mind in which all other relations are swallowed up in the relation of the Soul to God'—said E. Caird.

When mind is controlled and the Yogin enters into deep meditation the Vedic ideas are actualised i.e., their relative value culminates in one Reality. Meditation of a concentrated mind evolves higher consciousness which unfolds reality. The possibility of union between *Jiva* and the Supreme Being is admitted by Dr. William Brown. Pflieder holds mysticism to be the immediate feeling of the unity of the self with God. So the attainment of supernatural knowledge, rising above the

surface consciousness is not a delusion. In his 'Philosophic Basis of Mysticism' Mr. T. H. Hughes writes that through intense concentration when the field of surface consciousness is narrowed down there is an openness of Soul to receive what the beloved has to give.

Brahman conditioned by *māyā* assumed the form of a *sphota*, an inexpressible word, which found full expression as creation. According to Christianity, God incarnated Himself only in the person of Jesus but the Hindu view is that God will incarnate Himself in all—the things and beings of His creation. Śri Aurobindo is of opinion that even in the dust God must incarnate—so that the dust itself may be raised to the spirit-level. We may stumble now and then and our progress may not prove remarkable, still there can be no doubt that the human race as a whole is marching towards the lost Kingdom. In every successive step forward, that tiny ray of light, the central essence within is taking mankind towards the kingdom of God, evolving material into vital, vital into mental and finally mental into spiritual. One end of the long chain of creation is inhabited by the highest conscious beings who stand on the verge of liberation and the other pole is the strong-hold of the unconscious and inert things. The common run of people form the middle part of the chain and being subject to the nature's dual throngs they drag a life of light and shade till at last their miserable existence is brought to a successful close. The deliverance of the world from its enigma is assured.

The cosmic consciousness while descending in the lower strata becomes fragmentised into tiny rays which being confined within individual bodies are termed individual souls. By its downward movement in every successive strata it loses some part of its original lustre and purity through diffusion of its energy and the lower strata of material world gains in consciousness proportionately. The individuals

of the higher existences are more conscious than the lower. A *Sādhak* invokes higher power and consciousness to descend in his person so that his Jiva-consciousness may be elevated. Thus he rises from the myriad strata of biological existence to Godhood gradually raising his consciousness higher and higher by *Sādhanā*. *Kundalini*, the energy potential in man, wakes up by the power of *Yoga* and tries to rise higher and higher through the *Suṣumnā* canal. Jiva-consciousness accompanies *Kundalini* in her upward movement. The higher the Jiva-consciousness rises with *Kundalini* along the *Suṣumna* path the lower part of the body loses its sensation; it practically becomes dead. *Kundalini* not only takes Jiva-consciousness upward but it also attracts downwards the God-consciousness awaiting above. When Jiva passes through different higher circles, his consciousness gets purer and more and more intense transcending its individual aspect till at last it becomes identical with God-consciousness at *Sahasrāra* where the former becomes fused with the latter. In the practice of *Yoga*, the fusion of these two is aimed at. Kundalini is the agent that brings about this union. In this union the individual consciousness becomes universal. It is then that it becomes all-pervading, sublime and pure as transcendental consciousness.

Śri Aurobindo believed and preached that by *Sādhanā* even the power of the Absolute can be made to descend on earth and work for the spiritual transformation of material objects. Consciousness evolved matter and matter must return to its state of origin—it must be transcended to the spirit-level. To establish this truth he spent a life of *Sādhanā* in strict asceticism. The will and determination to bring down the kingdom of God on earth should be the aim and end of our *Sādhanā*. To be a superman by dint of his own *Sādhanā* should be the aim and ideal of man.

Divine consciousness descends in human receptacle and works there for the spiritual transformation of the body, life

and mind. By counter-perfuming the lower consciousness in Jiva becomes higher. This was the *Sādhanā* for which Śri Aurobindo lived and died.

God's grace may be showered upon us both in the form of divine energy and higher consciousness. When divine energy descends, the wielder attains divine powers and becomes extra-ordinarily powerful. Psychic powers are attained when mind becomes tranquil and pure by the practice of *Prānāyāma*. A pure and tranquil mind when becomes wedded to higher thoughts, higher consciousness descends from above and as a result distant and future objects are known. Past, present and future, everything lie in our mind. Mind is the mirror where everything is reflected. But the mirror is dusty, so we cannot apprehend the object as it is.

A *mantra* becomes easily alive when it is uttered by one who is truthful in speech and action. If the man is truthful in speech and action, who applies the *mantra* be truthful, virtuous and master of his senses, the *mantra* uttered by him may generate vibrations in the hearts of the deities at rest and make his worship fruitful. When any one curses from the bottom of his heart being stricken with agonising grief, the words may hit and produce direct effect on the person cursed. They enter into the innermost part of others' mind and produce disastrous vibrations which cannot be avoided. *Mantras* become kinetic in the same way. But the man who neither knows the meaning of the *mantra* nor its powers cannot expect any effect even after using it an infinite number of times.[1] When a mantra is uttered with a concentrated mind and with full faith and attention to its significance, it becomes alive and being charged with life produces similar vibrations in the life-centre of the addressed

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1. "मन्त्रार्थं मन्त्रचैतन्यं यो न जानाति साधकः ।
शतकोटी जपेनापि तस्य मन्त्रं न सिद्धति ॥"

deity who reveals himself or herself to the devotee and blesses him.

The sage *Jaimini* says that the particular hymn or *mantra* intended for a particular god in the *Vedās* is the body of the same god. When by constant recitation the *Sādhak* becomes an adept in that particular hymn or *mantra*, the god is induced and appears before him. Here I may be excused if I quote a few lines from Sir John Woodroff's writing :

"The natural name of anything is the sound which is produced by the action of the moving forces which constitute it. He, therefore, it is said, who mentally or vocally utters with creative force the natural name of anything brings into being the thing which bears that name[1]. Thus Raṃ is the *Bija* of fire ; and is said to be the expression in gross sound (*Vaikhari S'abda*) of the subtle sound produced by the activity of, and which is, the subtle fire-force. The mere utterance, however, of Raṃ or of any other *mantra* is nothing but a movement of two lips. *Mantra* and *Devatā* are one and the same. By *japa* the presence of the latter is invoked. *Japa* or repetition of *mantra* is compared to the action of a man shaking a sleeper to wake him up.....*Mantra-Vidyā* is the science of thought of its expression in language as evolved from Logos or *S'abda Brahman* Himself"—*Studies in Mantra Sāstras*, Part IV by Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroff), P. 19-20.

A melodious note is subtler than mere verbal utterance. The vibrations of a musical note raise our normal consciousness to a much higher level than mere words can do. The scope of speech is limited to the phenomenal world—it can only define an earthly object ; the door of the noumena is tightly closed to it. So the place of song is higher than that of poetry. When the vibrating sound of a melodious song,

1. "Thought and thing are identical,"—Says Hegel.

floating on ether, enters into noumenal plane, the singer's mind being automatically lost in the tune is carried away to the worlds beyond. The vibrant waves of a sweet song rise from heart-centre which is the seat of all higher feelings. So conscicusness of a devout singer transcends the mental plane and enjoys the bliss of transcendental realm. Carried away by higher sentiment of a song, Paramhaṃsa Deva used to be absorbed in deep *Samādhi*. The devout Ram Prosad Sen had the good fortune to visualise the Universal *Mother* through his song sung in Her praise. Articulate sound rouses higher sentiments of heart. The resounding note of Krishna's *Murali* (flute) touched the innermost core of the Gopinis' hearts and made them restless. *Satyam* and *Sundarm* can be realised only in a drunken ecstasy of divine love and joy. The inner luminous sky of consciousness reveals when mind is lost in higher sentiment. In a still higher stage this luminous sky condenses into a luminous form. Just as *Nāda* (sound) terminates into a *Vindu* (dot), so does a higher sentiment ultimately transforms itself into a luminous figure of the adorable deity.

Mental incantation is better than muttering *mantras* or hymns. It has been so enjoined by the *Yoga-Sāstras* to repeat *Praṇava* or *OM* mentally. When incantation is deep, rapid and intense, jiva-consciousness becomes one-pointed and flows in one way ; the whole being of the devotee becomes rigid like stone and light like feather ; mind merges in the subtle sound or *OM* and the devotee finally enters into *Samādhi*.

Each *Mantra* is made conscious by devoted incantation and as a result the *mantra* is endowed with life, power and motion. Power has a natural attraction for its centre and as a matter of fact its motion is directed towards the centre. An aimless motion ends in a disaster. A motion without a goal in view is inconcievable. As earth is sustained by the law of gravition, so every power and its motion have their rims fixed to the Great Centre of Life. When power is

harmonised in love and devotion, its motion cannot be towards anywhere but God—the Supreme Power. Only a true lover of God feels within himself an attraction of a divine centripetal force. The vibration of a loving heart can infuse life and consciousness into a *Mantra* when its motion is accelerated and is directed towards the diety in whose praise the prayer is offered. Thus a direct unison is established between the worshipper and the worshipped.

From our subtle body designated the mental (perceptual) sheath the throbbings of evil propensities like sexual appetite, anger, greed etc., and good propensities like kindness, forgiveness, fellowship, affection, love, devotion etc. are always being scattered in the outside world. The minds of saintly persons always generate throbbings of love, kindness, forgiveness, knowledge and spirit of renunciation as a result of which a vast area around them is surcharged with purity and holiness. On the contrary, the evil throbbings generated in the mental field of sinful souls soiled by desires poison the environment which gradually turns akin to hell. It is for this reason that we enjoy heavenly bliss in the company of the good and are damned in the company of the bad. The greater the mental power in a person, the more deeply active and communicative (to other minds) is the force of these tremors. Therefore, just as in the company of the truly good the impure tremors of our mind are controlled and changed and the tremors of the good propensities are generated, so also as a consequence of staying in the company of the sinful souls the tremors of the perverted mind influence us and create the six impure passions within us as a result of which the seeds of those evil propensities are sown in our subtle body leading to each seed developing into a poison tree. Places of worship like the temple, the mosque, the church etc., are purified by the tremors of sincere devotion of millions of devotees and become such strong centres of

spiritual power that even the most hard-boiled villain coming to such a place finds a change in the drift of his mind.

It has already been said that the mental (perceptual) sheath is made up of the Element of Water. So the tremors of the mental world may cross the gross world and enter the subtle one. A person with high mental power may by concentration create similar tremors in the mind of a person living at a great distance. In this way it is not impossible even for the pious to establish communion with the gods in heaven.

The heavy air of the earth cannot rise up to the higher altitude. When heated it becomes fine and light and easily rises up into the higher region and mixes with the air of that region. Similarly when the individual by the practice of Yoga attains subtlety he is able to establish contact with subtle worlds. The adjuncts of the individual born of ignorance present huge obstacles before the prospect of union between the individual and Brahman. The coating that is first formed on the Soul when it travels to the earth through the desire-permeated world is the mental sheath. On subsequent arrival to the earth the coating that covers our mental sheath is verily our food-body or material body. Just as the constituents of the material body of an individual are the five elements like water, earth etc., of the gross world, so also the constituents of the mental sheath are collected from the mind-world or subtle world. Similarly, the constituent of the Soul is also Pure Consciousness of the world of the Absolute Brahman.

Just as ether pervades all places of land, water and the welkin, so also the subtle worlds hold this earth on the lap by surrounding and pervading it. It is like creation within creation. Just as sound-waves emitted by the radio come floating on the ether and entering the apartment stationed under the water generate the sound, so also the subtle sound-wave of the subtle world penetrates the material

body of the individual and creates reaction in his mental sheath. If the capacity to receive that subtle sound-wave is to be acquired the agitation of the body and the mind is to be suppressed by the practice of Yoga and they are to be made subtlest of the subtle.

Men of saintly disposition are as holy as the sacred places of pilgrimage. They visit these places only to increase the sanctity of the place ; otherwise they need not frequent there. The wise hold that the water washed off the feet of a saint is the best antidote to sins[1].

Holy tremors are stored in the home, in seats and other articles used and touched by holy men. That is why the remnants of offering, the water washing the feet, flowers etc., presented by the spiritual preceptor or a saintly person are accepted in great veneration by the group of disciples and devotees ; those articles carry his sincere goodwill and blessings. So high is the rate of vibration of the power stored in their seats that an ordinary mortal cannot remain steady on such a seat—he cannot bear it. As a contrast, we go down if we partake of the remnants eaten by the unholy man or if we accept his charity. From times immemorial the Hindus have been performing religious rites and carrying on sacrificial rites and silent prayer (japaṃ) and worship etc., on the bank of the Ganges so that the water of the Ganges has become the store-house of abundant holy vibration ; therefore, the water of the Ganges is very sacred. All the impurities of the mind of a sinful man are washed away by a bath in the Ganges. Water is an excellent conductor of vibrations ; moreover, power is easily stored in

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1. "एतद् समस्त पापानां प्रायश्चित्तं सनिषिभिः ।
निर्नीतं भगवद्भक्तं पादोदकं निषेवनम् ॥"—Prapannāmṛta 95/75.
2. "श्रीकृष्णचरणाम्भोज सेवानिर्ह तचेतसाम् ।
एषां सोचाय भक्तानां न कदाचिद् स्पृहा भवेत् ॥"

the water in copper pots used in worship ; so the Hindus in great veneration partake of such water and anoint their whole body with it taking it to be nectar-like because it has washed the feet of the God. The deep mystery of "magic water" and the like by which incurable diseases are seen to be cured in many cases is verily the same—the spiritual vibrations that are initiated in that water during the chanting of *mantras* by a holy man of high mental and spiritual power brings the adverse vibrations of the whole mind of the patient to a normal condition and the disease is cured. The chief method of curing a disease is to strike a balance among flatulence, biles and phlegm ; this is possible by regulating the adverse vibrations of the mind and vital organs. This is the theory of *Āyurveda S'āstra* propounded by sages and seers. So the medicines prescribed in *Āyurveda* are to be prepared at auspicious moments determined by the position of stars and planets and in an extremely pure state. If it is whole-heartedly believed that the medicine is being prepared for the relief of the patient from disease and the utmost care and earnestness are bestowed by the physician in preparing it the medicine will not fail. The sincere will-power that is stored in each atom and molecule of that medicine for the cure of the disease regulate the adverse vibrations of the mind and vital organs of the patient and the disease is on the way to recovery. The use of the amulet and talisman is successful in the same process. Holy vibrations arise also out of some kinds of stone, roots of some trees and rosaries of the berries called *rudrākṣa*—so these are also able to lessen the adverse force of fate and the virulence of a disease. Moreover, as the vibration of those things increases greatly by the chanting of *mantras* during their purification good results follow from wearing them. As holy vibrations come out of frankincense and myrrh, sandal, kumkum, musk and particular flowers, they also create sacred feelings in the human mind.

Just as in the world we can see two types of men—educated and uneducated, civilized and uncivilized, the master of and slave to passions—so also in the astral world there are in different planes different types of living beings—the *yakṣas*, the *Rākṣasas*, the *Gandharvas*, the *Kinnars*, the gods and the subtle-bodied spirits of high spiritual order. On the earth there are not a few men who have more sanctity than the gods in heaven. The denizens of the lower plane like the *Yakṣas*, the *Rākṣasas*, the *Gandharvas* the *Kinnars* etc., living in the region designated *Bhubarlok* can be easily drawn to us by steadfast chanting of *mantras*, and with their help can be done many wonderful and difficult things. Many of us have heard about lower class of men who are invokers of spirits and malignant demigods. They control the souls in the lower plane by the power of *mantras* and are found to perform many arduous tasks and we are amazed. Many of the famous magicians possess this power; they achieved success in the art of controlling spirits in one or other bodiless souls. In this manner even the gods can be attracted. But in such cases more endeavour, steadfastness and purity of heart are required. When success is attained in the worship of gods of a lower plane it is possible to get some magical powers with the help of which we can advance in the material world and live in comfort and luxury. But those whose only aim is spiritual advancement should establish communion with gods of the higher order. Therefore, Lord Krishna has proclaimed in the Gita :

"Men of *Sāttvika* temperament (overflowing with peace and knowledge) worship the gods ; men of *Rājasika* temparament (overflowing with power and activity) worship the *Yaksas* and the demons ; men of *Tāmas* temperament (over-flowing with torpidity) worship the ghosts and malignant spirits".

Paramātman has revealed Himself through Prakriti. Prakriti too, manifests herself through the mysterious working

of *Sattva, Rajas* and Tamas, which are her component parts. These three *Guṇas* or factors reveal themselves differently in different names through difference in speech, language and ideas. If *Sattva* predominates in any man, his nature becomes marked by peaceful calmness in speech and manners. *Rajas* being predominant one displays arrogance, agitation and forcefulness in his nature, speech and manners. *Tamas* prevailing, one is stupid, hesitant and full of lassitude. If the flow of speech passes through the centre of life-principle and becomes charged with the essence of life, mind and feeling, it becomes captivating and far-reaching in its effects. Vibration of life-principle is an index to the condition of mind, and mental vibrations appear as sound through speech. Speech becomes charged with *Chaitanya* (consciousness and life) through the art of pronunciation giving life to the body uttered. A holy incantation becomes alive and kinetic or infused with life when it is charged with *Chaitanya*. It is seen now-a-days that the incantation produces no effect in *Puja* (religious performances). It is due to the want of devoutness and failure in proper pronunciation. When a musical note sounds in discord, it becomes unpleasant to the hearing, but when it vibrates in consonance by proper handling it attracts all. Those who were fortunate enough to hear the lectures delivered by late professor Jitendra Lal Banerjee and late Śrimati Sarojini Naidu, patriots and distinguised leaders of Indian National Congress, and those who have heard the recitation of the *Chandi* by Śri Birendra Bhadra through the Calcutta Radio must have realised how vigorous, touching, strong and deeply active can spoken words be if they are expressed in touching and fascinating language appealing to all. Any one stricken in pain moves the heart of all men except the arch-villain. Jokes provoke laughter, and stories of heroic deeds create the heroic sentiment in the mind.

Each one of the *mantras* is a combination of several letters. These letters are so woven by sages and seers that by the repeated and steadfast utterance of the *mantra*, one can produce a definite set of vibrations in the gross and the subtle worlds. Due to long-continued practice this vibration assumes a definite form in the subtle world. The chanting of different mantras creates different kinds of vibration, and each vibration creates a distinct figure. If some light, powder-like dust be thrown over a violin and a certain tune be played upon it, it will be seen that the particles of dust dance and take a definite shape. From this it is seen that vibrations have capacity to create a form. So if a *mantra*, favourite to a god, be repeated with the singleness of mind it is not impossible that a figure resembling that god shall be formed in the subtle ether. Then we may hold communion with that figure and be able to enjoy his grace. Therefore, the power of *mantras* is infallible. Possibly, the high spiritual personages of deep insight visualized the figures of gods and goddesses and accordingly imagined and described them.

The more the devotee of an image shines in excellence of purity, knowledge and loftiness of mind, the more is the deity awake. The sanctity of a holy place depends on the life-like character of the image. The vibrations of reverence and veneration in the devotee are so largely centred in that image that in due course the image comes to possess life. From all this it is proved that the devotee, the *mantra* and the deity are inseparable.

In the light wherein the seeker possesing knowledge can realize a cosmic truth the devotee given to sentiments can possibly realize eternal love and remain captivated.

Our subtle body is almost similar to our gross body. It is the vibrations of the material atomic particles of the subtle body that are manifested in the outside world as sexual appetite, anger, greed etc. Due to partaking of *Rājasika*

(activity-generating) food the material atomic particles of the material (consisting of food or matter) sheath multiply and due to their reaction the material atomic particles of the subtle body begin to vibrate as a result of which man becomes a slave to the six passions. On the contrary, if the atomic particles of the gross body multiply due to partaking of *Sāttvika* (purity-generating) food, the atomic particles of the subtle body do as well multiply as a result of which sublime vibrations like those of kindness, devotion, knowledge, conscience, renunciation, proneness to do good and power of judgment will be revealed in his character, conduct and manners. When thus the atomic vibrations of a higher order are generated, our organic powers do also similarly attain fineness ; our powers of sense-organs increase and we are able to receive the subtle vibrations of the external world. The more qualified a man is with subtle vibration-power, the more capable is he to gather knowledge of the subtle worlds.

To a musical instrument like *esraj*, several strings, thick and thin, are tied. If a sound is made near this instrument one or other, not all, of the strings, thick or thin, will begin to vibrate. This indicates that the particular string alone of all the strings is capable of receiving the waves of that sound. If the sound is very faint then no vibration will be noticed in the thick wires—only one thin string will be found vibrating. Among the numerous strings of this musical instrument the thin string alone has been able to receive that faint wave of the sound. So in order to receive the faint wave what is needed is a subtle body and mind with high vibrations which are capable of generating and receiving subtle vibrations from outside. In order to attain such a subtle body and mind control over food and movements is essential. The more will the atomic particles be stored in us due to partaking of *Sāttvika* (purity generating) food, purity of thoughts and meditation, the more capable shall we

be to receive the subtle vibrations of the subtle worlds ; and then clairvoyance shall enable us to visualize the subtle worlds.

Of the five primordial elements, ether is the most subtle and is the most potent. Hence the knowledge of sound may be described as the knowledge of force. The knowledge of the sound is the same as the knowledge of the latent energy which produces the sound. When any energy works through ether, a sound is produced and it is perceived through the faculty of our hearing. When this sound is heard, we seem to feel the impact of the energy itself. For this reason, the perception of sound is likened to the perception of energy. Second in importance to ether is fire. When the higher energy descending through ether reacts on the molecules of fire a form is produced. We get notions of different forms when the particles flowing along with its rays through ether reflects its lights on the retina. As air carries vapour, rays of light convey the various forms to the faculty of sight. When the celestial light is disentangled from every thing else except ether, it assumes the form of electricity which cannot be perceived by eyes. It can be perceived when the higher consciousness is awakened.

Ideas and knowledge are materialised when sound, touch, form, taste and smell carried through the mediums of five work organs produce vibrations in the five subtle primordial elements embedded in our sense organs. In order to form a sketch or an idea of any external object, the essence of the elements within us has to depend wholly on the five work organs. Accordingly, it is only when an object or sight comes in touch with our work organs, the essence of the five elements ingrained therein is roused to activity and our sense organ then takes the snap-shots of that external object and we get a true knowledge and clear idea about it. When energy is infused in the work organs,

action in the reverse order flows from the centre of the work organs. Direct knowledge of external objects comes when energy in a very subtle form coalesces with the primordial elements of the faculty of knowledge—the mind.

Two different kinds of sound arise within the human body ; (1) Spiritual sound which moves inwards and upwards and is highly attractive. (2) A material sound, produced either by the body or by the mind has its connection with external world and hence it draws the flow of consciousness outwards. The two kinds of sound bear the similar qualities and characteristics of their source of origin and the energy which originates them. When the words uttered are expressive of hatred, anger and surprise they sound accordingly. The emotions of heart are clearly reflected in the words spoken. But the spiritual sound, as referred above is, however, extremely subtle. These subtle sounds can be perceived by one in practising *Nāda-Yoga.*

If two *Sitārs* are strung to the same tune whatever notes are struck on the one are produced on the other too. Similarly, if we can utter *Mantras* (Hymns) attuned to the sound of the words uttered by a deity presiding over a certain higher plane then we naturally establish contact with that deity and acquire his power. In this way *Mantras* become charged with consciousness.

The journey from the world of illusion to the world of divine awareness is called emancipation. This emancipation is individual's ascent from the incomplete state of egoistic self to the complete state of the Soul Supreme. When by Yogic practices we are able to cross the plexuses within the body and carry our conscious energy to the upper cerebrum the fullest consciousness, knowledge and bliss will come under our control.

Thought generates a kind of subtle sound within. Those who can read out the thoughts in another's mind can experience the sensation of this subtle sound. A kind of

sound other than thought is generated and is called the mystic (*Anāhata*) sound. This mystic sound, replete with consciousness, is generated spontaneously without being struck from outside or without any thought-activity. The sound *OM* is a mystic sound. Since it is replete with the Being, Consciousness and Bliss of the power of Brahman, it is itself energised with consciousness. To respond to the mystic resonance of the sound *Om* is to get at the root of the power of Brahman. Realise within your heart this Sound-consciousness by religious and spiritual discipline and merge yourself in the sea of Supreme Bliss. *Japam* of *Praṇava* or the mystic syllable *Om* is the best incantation ; it is the sound-form of Brahman Supreme. "Repeat Om—the three worlds are in it" —enjoins our Sacred Text.

He who utters the *Gāyatri mantra* regularly in the right way even for a month at least, gets rid of the worst kind of sins like the snake giving up its slough. In the opinion of *Manu*, a *Brāhmin* can attain success by the force of repeating the *Gāyatri* verse and there is no doubt about it. The chanters of *Seed-mantras* like Aiṃ, Hṛṃ, Kṛṃ are invokers of different powers. The significance of attaining success in any mantra is to attain power similar to that exercised by the deity. In the religious practice to attain higher power the moment the power of the presiding gods or goddesses of that level is attained, divine power of the lower level is also attained perforce. If the devotee proceeds by resorting to some sentient Name or *seed-mantra* that name itself will escort the devotee to the Spirit named. During the practice of *Nāda-yoga* when the *mantra* given by the religious preceptor begins to vibrate like a mystic sound in the heart and when the individual consciousness is merged in that sound and by attaining communion with it assumes sound-form, one may conclude that the practiser has become a Mantra-adept.

Meditate within the mystic conscious-sound *Om* replete with Pure Existence, Knowledge and Bliss; that Sound-Brahman, even without any outside cause, will spontaneously vibrate in your heart-strings; your existence and consciousness will gradually merge into that spontaneously-rising mystic sound, *Om*. Then the merged state or state of ecstasy will automatically appear. In *Nāda-yoga* the spontaneously-rising mystical sound of the *seed-mantra* given by the spritual preceptor can be heard and sometimes the music of the flute of Śri Krishna comes floating to the ears. In the highest state can be heard the mystic sound *Om* rising out of the cardiac plexus. Brahman is realised when this mystic sound *Om* is heard. Reflect in the heart upon the nature of the mystic sound *Om* replete with Pure Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

The recital of *mantras* without sincerity bears no fruit as a dead seed cannot generate its sprout. It is safe to be initiated with the *mantra* from a preceptor who is a spiritual adept.

His Holiness *S'rimad Tailangadhara Swami*, the renowned Yogin of Northern India, who lived some time ago, declared, "Idols made of clay, marble or metal can be infused with life by a Yogin of high spiritual power. Such an idol can do all acts which a living man is capable of doing." An image can be energised by the simple touch of a yogin whose will-power enters into the image of worship and charges it from top to bottom with life-energy, as he chants the following life-giving mantra again and again "Prāṇaḥ iha prāna jiva iha tisthaḥ sarvendriyaṃ vāṃ manaḥ chakṣu tvak śrotraghana Prāṇa ihāgatya sukhaṃ chiraṃ tisthantu svahāḥ—let my life energy be established in the idol, let the power of my senses come down into it, and let them remain for long without interruption." At this stage the yogin must realise the oneness of his own life-energy

with that of the idol and the universe. The intensity of the life-energy varies proportionately with the degree of the yogin's faith, ability and concentration. At the highest stage of faith every particle in this creation appears to be charged with life. The Lord of the universe who is in the image will be manifest in every tree and creeper, bird and beast, mountain and river—nay, in all particles of this world. The *Bhāgavad*, II. 8. 3, states that the Lord Divine soon enters the hearts of those who recite and listen everyday to Lord's name and always sing His endless glory with faith and reverence.

After infusion of life in the image, merge your own consciousness in it. When in this way the idea of duality fully disappears, it is then only that the object of adoration, the yogin and the Supreme Soul become one and the same.

The great yogin Bāmā Kṣyāpā was once invited to Calcutta for the worship of the Goddess *Kāli*. He entered into the temple of the Goddess *Kāli*, drank off all the holy water from the water-pot (kośā) kept in front of the image, holding it with both hands and then sat down for worship. He did not utter a single *mantra*, but simply offered fruits, flowers and sweets to the image as a child does to its loving mother. Sometimes he put some of the articles of worship on his own head or inside his own mouth and called upon the Goddess to enjoy them. Thus, he finished the worship of the Goddess This is the way of one who has realised Brahman.

A yogin, having realised the Lord's existence in all things realises Him in his own Self too. At this stage the yogin rests fully in Him and declares, "Soham, Soham, Śivoham—I am He, I am He, I am Śiva."

THREE PATHS

Jnān, *Bhakti*, and *Karma* or wisdom, love and the performance of disinterested actions are the three paths open to the seekers of truth. We may follow any one of them to reach the feet of our beloved Lord. Knowledge, prayerful devotion and complete surrender are the means to realise one who is the source and embodiment of knowledge, love and bliss. A *jiva* descended from the region of *S'iva* becomes the follower of the path of knowledge, and one descended from the region of *Viṣṇu* is the follower of the path of devotion. The Brahman of the Vedas, the Ātman of the Upaniṣads and God of the *Purāṇa* are one and the same Being. Absolute knowledge, existence and bliss representing the Supreme Being, is *Kāli* to the *S'āktas*, *S'iva* to the *S'aivas* and *Viṣṇu* and Krishna to the *Vaiṣṇavas*.

In the age of Ṛṣis God was regarded as Supreme Truth and light. So to realise Him, faith and knowledge were prescribed. In the third *Yuga* of *Dwāpara* Lord Śri Krishna prescribed in the *Gita* love as the potent means of the realisation of God. From the *Pourānik* age disinterested actions, service and self-sacrifice have been regarded as the way to salvation.

Knowledge, love and work are inter-related. *Jnan-yoga* elevates the mental faculty; through *Bhakti-yoga* a man manifests his divine qualities inherent in him. The goal of the votary of knowledge is Brahman, that of the devotee is God. The path of knowledge leads yogin to the Absolute Brahman. The devotee makes the relation with God closer and God Himself opens the eye of intuition of a true devotee. Similarly, a true seeker after truth is drawn naturally towards God. Knowledge and love find their fulfilment in work. The complete Yoga is the union of knowledge, love and work.

The knowledge of a devotee is manifested in his faith, devotion and love, while the knowledge of the *Karma-yogin* is reflected in the excellence of his work.

The unregenerates are generally led by their instincts and emotional tendencies. Unless their tendencies are directed towards God, they lead to disastrous consequences. *Bhakti-mārga* or the path of love and devotion is best suited to the emotional persons. If the emotions find their expression through the love for God, they manifest as spiritual developments. It is reasonable and rather profitable, therefore, for a man of ordinary intellect and ability to take an aspect of Godhead for concentration and meditation. He may enter into a relationship with his personal God and behave in the same way as one does with one's parents, friends and lovers and even with the little sons or daughters. These diverse relationships naturally develop different sentiments which are called "*Bhābas*" by the Hindu mystics. When one cultivates any one of these "*Bhābas*", the path becomes easier, contact more direct and the spiritual progress gets accelerated. The intellectuals who have controlled their minds may follow the path of knowledge or *Jnān-mārga*. Without meditation higher consciousness does not manifest and without the control of mind and purification of heart by psychological and ethical practices meditation becomes impossible. Ethical living and meditative mood is a prelude to emancipation.

Unity is the aim of our life ; so all the ideas of duality and plurality must drop down. For the realisation of the Ultimate Reality which is second to none a Jnān-Yogin must forget even the consciousness of his own self. So long as the sense of body and mind or the consciousness of his separate existence persists, the reality is not realised. Forget Aham, ego or self and declare always "Not I, Not I, but Thou" by every word and deed and infuse your inner Self with the colour of the Supreme.

We are identical to Brahman when we are pure-hearted like a child, with mind simple, colourless and sincere. *Atharva Veda* enjoins that the purification of heart is a prelude to liberation. The Gita, IX. 27—28 states that disinterested action purifies heart and makes one free from the bondage of *karma*. This spirit of dispassion unites the Yogin with God. Thus work is also a means to liberation in an indirect sense. According to *Vyās*, divine knowledge is the only means to liberation ; because the true nature of *Ātman* is pure knowledge and not action. The *Vedas* and the Upaniṣads are replete with such views. The fruit of action is reaped here or hereafter but the fruit of knowledge is liberation. *Smṛti* observes : "Sacrificial actions, penance and austerities result in a kind of happiness which is not unalloyed with pain. Only true knowledge can afford us a state of eternal peace and unmixed bliss which is identical to Mokṣa." According to the *Mahānārāyana Upaniṣad*, VII. 14 and *Kaivalya Upaniṣad*, 1.3, immortality is attained neither by action, nor by offspring, nor by riches but by a spirit of renunciation which is a fruit of knowledge : Bondages are torn asunder by knowledge as light removes darkness.

Works are *Asat* ; because, they are the product of *Avidyā* and consequently they cannot produce any ultimate good. Desire inclines man to action and the impressions of action, good or bad, create rebirth. Man becomes bound by *Karma* and is freed by knowledge[1]. The deed done by jivas cannot bind Ātman ; it is *jivātman*, the embodied soul which is bound by action. According to the *Gita* and *Smṛti*, the consequences of action are consumed by the fire of knowledge. But *Prārabdha* Karmas which have produced this present life and which, in the form of destiny, control every thought and

1. "अविद्या च क्रिया: सर्व्वा विद्या ज्ञानं प्रचक्ष्यते ।
कर्म्मणा जायते जन्तुर्व्विद्यया च विमुच्यते ॥"—Smṛti.

action of a man, are not consumed by knowledge ; they have to be exhausted by enjoyment and sufferance. Before the dawn of self-knowledge man is inclined to action but when he realises the impermanence of heavenly enjoyment, he recoils from actions, good or bad. *Karma* counts until the awakening of knowledge and not after that. Self-knowledge, independent of action, brings final emancipation. Salvation cannot be acquired by mere study of the *Vedās* or by the power of intellect. When an aspirant takes shelter of *Ātman* for its realisation, *Ātman* is realised in its own light. He is the chosen one who adores God with faith, love and devotion and God reveals Himself before His devout worshipper in His full glory (*Katha* Up. 1.2.23). *Smṛti* observes : "As a man can distinctly see his image in a polished mirror, so, when the scum of mind by way of sinful impressions is washed away the knowledge of Self dawns in the pure heart[1]. The man who knows that both action and meditation can be taken up simultaneously, overcomes death by action, inspite of the fact that *Karma* is the result of *Avidyā*. By meditating on a deity, the worshipper may become like the deity, but it cannot give him salvation. "I know that heavenly attainments resulting from ritualistic performances are not permanent and that by the acquisition of such attainments no one can attain Me who is eternal"—said Lord Krishna.

The performance of religious rites has been prescribed for those who lack in Self-knowledge. Interested action takes one to the land of the *Devas* or gods and *vidyā* or *knowledge* alone can give one salvation (*Iśa Up.* 1. 10). One who wishes to go to the heavenly sphere may perform sacrifices like *Aśvamedh* Yajna and others : "Svargakāmaḥ *Aśvamedhena yajet.*" For the seekers of liberation there is no Vedic instruction to perform any sacrificial rite. This proves that

1. "यथादर्शतले प्रत्ये पश्यत्यात्मनमात्मनि ।"

the fruit of actions like *Yajna* is not salvation but points to some attainments. The Upaniṣads speak of final liberation. So it is not proper to attempt any interpretation of an Upaniṣadic utterance with the help of any aphorism pertaining to the Vedic *Karma-Kāṇda*. Whatever is produced by action is not permanent : 'Yad kṛtakaṃ tadanitym'. For this reason salvation is independent of action. Śaṃkara while commenting on the Tait Up. 1. 2. 1 says that action is means and not the end in itself : "When action is done disinterestedly and in keeping with rules as laid down in the Śruti and *Smṛti*, the knowledge of Brahman which is only attainable to a Ṛṣi, gradually arises in the heart of the worshipper,"

The practice of sacrifice called *Agnihotra* is meant for those who do not aspire after spiritual knowledge, but are very fond of their lives. A wise mendicant is not afraid either of birth or death, whereas it matters too much for a performer of sacrificial rites. *Karma* and renunciation also differ in point of their effects. *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* holds that renunciation is superior to action. *Karma* leads to the path of desire and attachment while renunciation is the suspension of all works and desires. "O *Agni*, lead us to the right track. As an effect to sacrificial performances we have suffered many times from the pangs of birth and death by passing away through the southern path and we are now disgusted with it. So now please lead us to the path of gods, called *Devayāna* and fulfil our heart's desire"—observes *Iśa Up.* 18.

According to the verse 1. 2. 5. of the *Mundakopaniṣad*, an *Agnihotri* reaches after death to *Indra*, the king of heavens. The Upaniṣads pertaining to *Atharvaveda* observe : "Knowing *Karma* and its fruits like the heavenly enjoyments to be transient, fix your mind on Brahman alone. Knowing action as not conducive to liberation, cultivate dispassion. Self-knowledge originates when the spirit of self-indulgence

evaporates. The knowledge of Brahman placed *Indra* and *Agni* on higher status than the other gods. Even the most powerful *Agni* had to acquire knowledge of Brahman with much difficulty". Śaṃkara comments thus on the verse IV. 32. 7 of the Kathopaniṣad : "They who desire salvaion must renounce all actions. When *Karma* and *Karmaphala* are abandoned, the knowledge of Brahman arises in the heart of the renouncer." The purport of the saying is that actions involve some amount of distraction of mind from the path of spirituality which is detrimental to Self-seeking. Besides, every action is actuated by some motive behind and so a spiritual sojourner is likely to be led astray from the path of *Sādhana*. When everything is given up, Self regains its original inheritance being isolated from world of thought and action.

The Upaniṣadic teachings are intended to destroy *Avidyā* and for the acquisition of Self-knowledge. Religious rites including *Aśvamedh yajna* are performed with some end in view which produces rebirth. By the performance of sacrificial rites an attributed god like *Hiraṇyagarbha* is known but by knowledge the Brahman Absolute is realised. It is stated in the *Smṛti* that descent of God in human receptacle becomes possible when, by the performance of selfless action, the body is made pure befitting the temple of God. When both kinds of actions are abandoned the knowledge of Brahman arises in *yogin*.

Ārtabhāga asks Ṛṣi Yājnavalkya : "Where does the *puruṣa* (individual soul) reside when on death the organ of speech enters into fire, *prāṇa* in air, eyes into the sun, mind in moon, the ears in quarters, the gross body is reduced to earth, the sky inside the heart becomes one with the space outside, the hairs of the body are born as grass and creepers and the hairs of the head grow as trees, blood and semen mix with water ?" Yājnavalkya replies that it is *karma* that lends

support to the *puruṣa* at that time. *Jaimini* holds *karma* to be the cause of jivas' becoming, the idealist buddhists take the sheath of intelligence to be the cause, the followers of the middle path of the Buddhism consider *S'unya* to be the cause, an astronomer recognises time to be the cause, and the followers of materialistic *Chārvāk* take nature and chance to be the cause.

Worldly minded men are born again and again in consequence of their *karma*. Without total extinction of *karma* salvation is impossible. In the opinion of *S'ruti* and *Smṛti* virtuous acts are the means to liberation, because salvation is an object of human pursuit and the end is reached by man's personal exertion. Freedom is the very nature of *Ātman*; it is ever established. By Self-exertion *Avidyā* is removed, true knowledge dawns and man becomes free. Wisdom removes all the obstacles from the path of a Yogin.

According to the Gita, verse III. 4 true knowledge cannot arise without the performance of disinterested action. While commenting on the verse IV. 33. 8 of the Kena Upaniṣad Śaṃkara reproduces the following saying from Smṛti: Jnānamutpadyate pumsāṃ kṣayāt pāpasya karmanaḥ". It means that when the seed of vicious acts is destroyed knowledge appears. By mere renouncing the world, a *Sanyāsin* cannot escape from the law of *karma*. Who else but he shall make harvest whose seed he himself has sown? He must reap the fruit of his own actions: *Mā* bhuktaṃ *kṣiyate karma kalpakotiśatairopi. Avaśyameva* bhoktavyaṃ kṛtaṃ *karma* śubhāśubhaṃ."

Salvation or the total extinction of worldly sufferings is acquired by Self-knowledge which is *parā-vidya* or the knowledge supreme; it directly unites *jiva* with Brahman (Mu. Up. 1. 5). The knowledge of Brahman is *Parāvidya* and all other branches of learning like Ṛg, Yaju, Sāma, grammer, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry etc. are the subjects

pertaining to *Aparāvidya* or indirect and inferior knowledge. In the Mu. Up. verse 1. 6, it is stated that the enlightened realise Brahman through *Parā-vidyā*. Śaṃkara holds that religious texts, the performance of religious rites and humanitarian works etc. belong to *Aparā-vidyā* (S. B. on Mu. Up 1. 4 and 1. 2. 11). Knowledge acquired through *Aparā-vidyā* is relative truth (S. B. on Mu. Up. II. 1. 1); the subject pertaining to *Parā-vidyā* reveals spiritual truth (S. B. on II. 1. 1.). When the fruits of *karma* resulting from *Aparā-vidyā* are exhausted in heaven by enjoyment, jiva becomes miserable and returns to the earth again : "*Tenāturā kṣinalokāscyavantye.*" *Aparā-vidyā* leads one to the world of attributed Brahmans. An illumined Soul, possessed of *Parā-vidyā*, directly merges in Brahman. When the Ṛgveda is said to impart *Aparā-vidyā*, its literal knowledge is indicated. But when its utterances and instructions are ably explained by a *Guru* well-versed in the *Vedas* and the real significance of the verses are clearly understood and the disciple is firmly established in the doctrine of non-duality, the Ṛgveda becomes a source of *Parā-vidyā* or supreme knowledge.

Every aspirant has to cultivate the spirit of dispassion which has two-fold facets : (1) *Para-vairāgya* and (2) *Apara Vairāgya.* The second aspect is defined by *Patanjali* as indifference to all pleasures of life. The first category is explained by him as the realisation of Self resulting from complete aversion even to the *Prakriti.* "When one sees none other, hears nothing else knows nothing but Self, that is *Bhuma* or the Infinite : *Yatra nānyat paśyati nānyandvijānāti sa bhumā*"—Chhā. Up, VII.4. "He realises the self flooded with Bliss" (Taitt. Up. II.8).

Sāttvik performance of religious rites leads the performer to the abode of the gods ; the ceremonial worship done in a *Rājasik* way creates rebirth for the worshipper as a human being ; while the sinners performing religious acts in a *Tāmasik* way are born as animals. When mind does not

feel inclined towards the performance of the three said modes of worship, mind does not take birth again, since the cause being extinct, no effect can be produced (Mā. Up. IV. 76). "The enlightened renounce the fruits of their actions, escape rebirth and reach the feet of the Lord (The Gita II. 51).

Since the *S'ruti* and *Smṛti* lay more stress on jnāna or the path of knowledge, one is likely to be inclined to give up *karma* or action. As a safe-guard against such eventuality, the Taitt. Up. 1. 20. shows that *karma* is equally essential to meet with the four ends of human life viz. virtue, wealth, desire and salvation[1]. The sacrificial rites as enjoined by *karma-kānda* of the Vedas is intended for common men and not for the illumined Souls. That nobody should renounce his daily duties would be evident from the following action of Lord Śri Krishna which becomes of a common householder : On His way to *Dwārakā* when the sun went down, Śri Krishna got down from the Chariot to offer evening prayer by the side of a lake (vide Bhāgavad 1. 10. 35). He Himself said in the Gita, verse III. 22 : "O' Pārtha, I have no duty to perform, because in the three worlds there is nothing unattainable to Me ; still I engage Myself to the daily duties." Again in the verse XIII. 17, He said : "A knower of Self has no duty to perform, because neither the performance of duty adds to his virtue nor by abstaining from duty he incurs any sin. He needs no help whatsoever from outside." Śri Krishna practised daily duties only to set example before the unregenerate people so that they might take lesson from that and be inclined to follow Him in His footstep : *Sa yat* pramānaṃ *kurute lokastadanuvartate (Gita. III. 21).*

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1. "अविद्यया कर्म्मना अग्निहोत्रादिना मृत्युं स्वाभाविकिं कर्म्मज्ञानं च मृत्युशब्दवाच्यमुभयं तीर्त्वा अतिक्रम्य, विद्यया देवताज्ञानेन अमृतं देवतात्मभावम् अश्नुते प्राप्नोति।" —इति ईशोपनिषदि शङ्करभाष्यम्।

Those who are indifferent from their very birth to the domestic life owing to the impressions of their past lives should renounce the world and enter into hermitage. Without the grace of God, austerity, mere performance of religious rites, meditation or prayer which only removes some obstacles from the path of *Sādhanā* cannot awaken the knowledge Absolute.[1]

The Brahman is known in three aspects : He is *Virāt* in His gross form. In His subtle form He is *Hiraṇyagarbha*. He is formless in His transcendental nature. The adorable Lord of the Hindu in general are the *Māyik* manifestations of the formless Brahman. He reveals Himself in different *Māyik* forms before the devout worshippers according to their sentiment. The attributeless Brahman taking different attributes unto Himself appears in different forms to favour His devotees. Man in his immediate environments is limited ; so he takes up one amongst His limitless forms as an object of his meditation and worship and becomes happy, satisfied, and blessed. If the prayer offered be sincere He cannot but appear before His worshipper in a luminous form. As a piece of iron is attracted towards a magnet, so does God come to the devotee attracted by his devotion. When the attainment of His divine powers is not our aim, He should be worshipped only in the eye of sentiment and devotion i. e., as a friend, son, husband or even as a servant, and He will make His appearance. God has served His devotee as a servant as well. He is the knower of all secrets ; there is nothing to fear or to be ashamed of our sin and faults in approaching Him. A sinner is forgiven when he repents for his sin, because the Lord is All-merciful. God has the sportive nature of a child. He loves to play hide and seek with his devotee but He is always ready to be

1. Taitt. Up. III. 4. 24—25.

overtaken. If chased, perhaps, with a mind to play with His devotee He will take to His heels laughing like a child. Do not cease running after Him, for after a short while He will surely halt all on a sudden and allow Himself to be within your reach with a smiling face.

Even in the path of love and devotion, the Brahman may be realised and the devotee ultimately gets emancipation. According to the Gita, the path of action is not to be undervalued, neither *Jnāna* or the path of knowledge is blamable, nor the path of love and devotion is to be abandoned. The Sāṃkhyas prefer the path of *jnāna* or knowledge, Yogin's path lies through *karma* (vide the Gita. III. 3). The performance of *Yajna*, practice of austerity and the act of gift should not be given up, because they purify mind (The Gita XVIII. 5). While performing religious rites, one should be free from the egoistic sense of a doer and one must not have any desire for fruits accruing from religious performances. He must not hanker after even heavenly attainments. This is the highest type of renunciation (The Gita. XVIII. 6.) When daily duty is performed merely as a part of one's own duty disinterestedly without having any attachment, such *karma* is considered as *Sāttvik* (The Gita. XVIII. 9). Path is to be followed according to one's own aptitude and ability. *Madhusudan Sarasvati* atttaches equal value and importance to the three paths. Divine knowledge and the spirit of renunciation run in parallel lines and they are found to arise in a heart full of compassion. Again, in a compassionate heart knowledge melts into love. There is no contradiction between *Jnāna* and *Bhakti*. When the fruits of *karma* are dedicated for the enjoyment of the Lord, *bhakti* grows in the path of *karma*.

The Gita, verse III. 4 states that as by refraining from action no one can achieve the state of non-action, so only renouncing the world no *Sanyāsin* can attain accomplishment.

Yājnavalkya opines that a man is born owing three debts in life : (1) debt to the gods, (2) debt to the Ṛṣis and (3) debt to the forefathers. If a person before repayment of these three kinds of debt adopts the life of a *Sanyāsin* (mendicant) he goes down. A man aspiring after the knowledge of Brahman should be simple like a child and contemplative like a sage. When discriminative knowledge dawns he should take the vow of silence and always remain absorbed in the meditation of Brahman (Bṛ. Ar. Up. III. 5. 1.). *S'ruti* enjoins that a true *Sanyāsin* should shave his head completely, give up sacred thread and wear red-ochre coloured cloth. He should have no desire whatsoever ; even the status of *Hiraṇyagarbha Iśvara* should not be his aim.

The Viṣṇuites and the Christians closely follow the path of love. The love for God forms the vital part of their worship and prayer. So striking is the similarity in the two cults that one is supposed to be borrowed from the other.

The three paths mentioned above are not isolated from one another ; on the contrary they all go together. The path of knowledge reveals to the devotee the truth, the path of devotion creates a love for it and in the path of action life is moulded into its right shape. Knowledge without the feeling of love turns a devotee to a heartless ascetic. Again mere emotion, not illuminated by the light of knowledge is nothing but madness. Actions done blindly are never done right. So it is evident that the three paths are interconnected like the aquatic plants that are found floating on the surface of water in a tank and which if dragged by one end, the entire mass will be on its move. It is clear, therefore, that when we follow the one path we also follow the other two unknowingly. The search for the Reality through knowledge, prayerful devotion to God or the faithful discharge of our duties —whichever courses we may adopt, the result is the same.

'First action, then knowledge"—Śaṃkarāchāryya admits this gradual ascent of order. Really, action ends in knowledge. A man of knowledge does not need any further action. Having realised Brahman, he surpasses all the stages of ritualistic observation. The rites of worship, sacrifice, the study of the Śāstras, meditation and contemplation etc., help in developing the knowledge of the Ultimate Truth. Success is inevitable if we go on with our practice with firm faith and strong determination. The indirect knowledge acquired through ritualism, study of the Vedas and other practices ultimately terminate into the direct knowledge of Brahman. According to the *Gita*, simultaneous progress in all the paths is necessary for the revelation of Ātman and the realisation of Brahman; otherwise, one can be but partially successful. It is quite clear, therefore, that all the courses being interwoven with one another, steady progress in any one of these paths is sure to be followed by perfection in the rest.

"Better indeed is knowledge than practice; than knowledge meditation is better; than meditation renunciation of actions."—States the Gita XII. 12. As only a few are fit to tread in the path of knowledge, Lord Krishna and Śri Chaitanya both exhorted that the path of devotion was the right path, best suited to the aptitude of ordinary men. When the devotee forgets his own self in love and devotion for his beloved Lord, the gate of knowledge opens before him, little by little, through the grace of God. It is said in the Gita that Lord Krishna blesses his votary with knowledge, who worships him with a loving heart: "*Dadāmi buddhi* yogaṃ taṃ *yena māmupayānti te*" (X. 10). For the growth of divine love, the devotee has to establish a relationship with his personal God: "*Ādou* Saṃbandha Sthāpanaṃ"—*Bhakti-Sutra*. It is necessary, therefore, that the devotee should first of all establish a relation as of a father,

mother, son or friend with his adorable deity. It will create an ardour of devotion in the devotee's heart. If the votary always bears in mind only the godly qualities of his deity, there cannot be any intimacy and naturally there will be a yawning gulf between the two. So the votary attributes human nature to his deity by bathing, dressing, feeding, and putting it to sleep. He plays the affairs of love and manners to create intimacy with his beloved Lord. With the increase of devotion and affection, the votary feels more and more attracted to the deity, the difference between the two is gradually narrowed down—they come closer and closer every day and at last they two melt into one like two candles burning side by side. Personal God makes his appearance before His true devotee and holds conversation with him. A true devotee like Pralhād finds his beloved everywhere in water, earth, fire and air. "With the dawn of such knowledge the devotee enters Me"—said Lord Krishna in the Gita, verse XVIII 55.

Sin does not touch and affect a knowing soul as a lotus leaf is not touched by water (The Gita, V. 10). Lord Krishna said in the same text, IV. 14, "Actions do not touch Me nor have I a desire for the fruit of action. He who knows Me thus is not bound by Karma". Śri Krishna is the fulfilment of all desires ; He cannot be actuated by a desire for action : "*Āptakāmasya kā spṛhā*"—(Mu. Up. *Āgama Prakaraṇa*, verse 9). The spontaneity of God's Nature is at the root of creation : "*Tat Svavāvād pravartata* ityadṛstaṃ" —(*Nyāya Bartika*. IV. 1. 21). *Brahma-Sutra*, II. I. 33 also echoes the same view. Śaṃkara as well opines ; "*Svavāvadeva* Kevalaṃ *lilā rupa pravṛttirvabiṣyati.*"

Since there is a sense of a doer in the performance of each act and that salvation is impossible without extinction of egoism, man may be deluded to give up work. But the very idea is mistaken. *Tāmsik* idleness, inertia and ignorance

can only be removed by the performance of right kind of work. A *Rājasik* mind takes a *Sāttvik* turn through legitimate and disinterested acts. A man goes down if he gives up ceremonial rites before self-knowledge dawns : "Ātmajnānaṃ binānyāsaṃ *pātityaiva kalpyate*"—*Sānti Gita*, IV. 42. The Gita in verse XVIII. 5—6 enjoins, therefore, the performance of all religious duties. According to the Vedas, *Yajna* means *Iśvara* : '*Yajno Vai* Viśnuḥ'. Sacrificial works do not bind a soul when it is performed with this end in viéw that such practices will please God (The Gita III. 9). Just as a servant serves his master only to please him, so, a devout worshipper serves his Master with a similar spirit (Gita III. 30). Sacrifice, performed with an eye to getting some return, holds the sacrificer in bondage. Actions done in a self-less spirit destroys Ahaṃ and the doer remains unaffected by the effects ; work done without any motive behind destroys past impressions. Such work is characterised *as Sāttvik*—pure and sincere. No new impression crops up in a pure heart and his past impressions are lost in eternity putting a stop to further germination of life. Always say : "Not I but Thou ; Thou art the doer, Thou art the enjoyer."[1] The correct procedure is to assign the fruit of Karma to God. Give up your vanity as a doer and look upon ego as a mere instrument of action like the body, mind and senses. There are clear indications in our sacred texts as to one's own duty—what is preferable and what is not. It is our bounden duty, therefore, to strictly follow the *S'āstric* injunctions (The Gita, XVI. 24). The man who neglects Śāstric dictum and pursues his own inclination losing self-restraint can neither attain knowledge, nor peace nor liberation (The Gita, XVI. 23). Performance of religious rites without

1. "यत् कृतं यत् करिष्यामि तत् सर्व्वं न मया कृतं ।
तया कृतं तु फलभुक त्वमेव मधुसुदन ॥"

devotion and devotion without *Karma* are both useless ; only husk without corn cannot sprout.

The practice of austerities steadies the restlessness of body, mind and senses. Ignorance and sin of the body and mind are destroyed when any one meditates on the light of the Self. According to the *Bhāgavad*, I. 2, 11, the knowledge of non-duality is the knowledge of the Self which is Brahman. The great sages realise Ātman in its own light through devotion resulting from the supreme knowledge acquired from the Vedās, combined with supreme renunciation (Bhāgavad 1. 2, 12). "The wise are regarded as my very Self"—said Śri Krishna. In the path of knowledge a *yogin* unites his individuality with the infinity of Brahman. *Jnāna* implies want of duality.

The meritorious action is the means of reaching the abode of the *pitṛs* (manes) and the divine acquisition is that higher knowledge which carries its possesser to the abode of God. So, through knowledge and absolute renunciation, freed from all *Vāsanā* or desire a yogin can attain *mokṣa* or emancipation. The path of *jnāna* overtakes that of *karma* when the *kārmic* path meets its end and thenceforth his course is one of unmixed *jnāna* in which he gets *Nirvāna*.

Such a man may, even when all his actions are ended or when he has no longer any necessity of doing any act, still continues to work with a view to inducing others in taking to the path of virtue. The knower of truth never considers himself the doer of any act, nor does he intend their consequences. The actions done by such an emancipated individual cannot be said a *Kāmya-karma* or the acts done to gain some desired end. "The man who beholds the universe reflected in himself and himself in others is never bound by his actions"—enjoins the Gita. He is fully convinced of the truth that attributes alone are attracted towards attributes, but the attributeless Ātman is an indifferent spectator. Action

and non-action are both the same to a knowing yogin. The sages perform actions for the purification of their *Sattva-guna* and worshipping Him by their own acts attain salvation. So the knowledge of the Self is the only means of *Kaivalya-mukti* or the total imersion in the Absolute or the amalgamation with God.

The *Bhakti-Sutra* of Nārada states : "*Anyasmāt* soulavyaṃ *bhaktou*." That is to say, God can be attained much more easily through the path of *bhakti* (love and devotion) than along other paths. Living faith grows out of direct realisation. The knowledge without any inner conflict of doubt about the existence of a certain thing is called living faith. There are three ways of growing faith in God—direct perception, inferential knowledge and knowledge through testimony. The faith which grows out of direct vision or direct realisation is direct knowledge. Just as we can infer the existence of fire from the appearance of smoke, so also it does not take us a long way to infer that there is one Supreme Artist behind the creation of this universe from the ingenuity and excellence of it. This is faith and its knowledge is based on inference. The utterances of the seers, sages and great men who have realised God are the authoritative utterances. *Bhakti* is the love mixed with veneration that we show Him when we are attracted by His glory and love. The supreme excellence of *bhakti* is *rati* or love. Love is an axiomatic truth ; it is innate in every human nature ; for, God Himself is of the nature of love and He dwells within all that exist. The six passions which are the enemies of man hide this jewel—love ; the light of love naturally shines through when their scums are removed off the surface of our mind. The way to attain God's love is to keep good company, read good books and to develop eagerness for God. This love for God is eternal and endless ; it is unique and unparalleled. That eternal love of His and His endless compassion are

flowing on the earth in different directions in torrents. Moved by the suffering of living beings, Lord *Buddha* voluntarily gave up the throne. Jesus Christ, compassion incarnate, begged mercy of the Supreme Father for his assasins even when crucified. Himself hurt, Śri Chaitanya embraced his own assailant. It was through them that the same divine love revealed itself as love for humanity. The manifestations of His love are innumerable—sometimes it melts in compassion, remains deep in affection and quiet in fellowship.

Śrutis have declared, "He is not revealed in the sun-light or in the soft radiance of the moon or the stars or in the brilliance of the lightning; He is self-revealed. In His eternal light has been revealed the entire universe movable and immovable. He is the Vast and the Great One. He is the Brahman Supreme." When an individual realises Brahman as such, he becomes an adept in the secret lore and is freed from vice and virtue, and attains oneness with the Brahman, because all doubts and conflicts of his mind are then totally dispelled. In the Vedic age when man, the believer, realised this, his faith in religious rites and ceremonies enjoined in the Vedas became slack and divided. As a result, Buddhism appeared in that period. The Buddhist creed circulated the view that every thing is momentary, full of misery and void. With the advent of Buddhism—there sprang up all over India numerous Buddhist *Sanghas* and *Bihārs* (monasteries) to shelter men and women desiring salvation. The doctrine of Buddhism was broadbased on kindness to all living beings, self-sacrifice and universal fellowship. Although this creed of Buddhism is a rare gift of the spiritual world, yet because it is founded on the belief that all is void, the root of it has not been able to strike deep into the soil of India. Due to the efforts made by learned philosophers like *Āchāryya* Saṃkara, *Āchāryya* Goudapāda, Sureśwar, Padmapada and Vāchaspati Miśra etc., the emotional drift of

the doctrine of Buddhism gradually lost its force before the intellectual drift inculcated in the Upaniṣadic precept: "Brahman is supreme truth, knowledge eternal and Infinite Himself." Finally, during the reign of Emperor *Ballal Sen* this doctrine of Buddhism or philosophical Nihilism was totally removed from the soil of India and spread in other directions, viz in Burma, Malaya, the Islands of Java, China, Japan and other parts of the continent. The influence of Buddhism was thus lost in India where *Bhagawān Tathāgata* (Lord Buddha) was born, preached and worked. But that emotional drift of Buddhism has not dried up; it has flown in a different channel and strengthend the cult of *Vaiṣṇavism* in India.

The worshippers of Lord *Viṣṇu* are known as the *Vaiṣṇavas* (*Viṣṇuites*). All-embracing mercy, universal love and other Buddhist feelings of high order are found in the *Vaiṣṇava* faith. To attain this universal love, prayer to the Supreme Lord has been inculcated in the hymn to *Viṣṇu* (Ṛgveda, *Viṣṇu-Sukta*).

In the Upaniṣads God has been described as the supreme sentiment (*Rasa*). In order to have a relish of that supreme sentiment, different kinds of *Rasa* have been introduced in the Vaiṣṇava faith. The sublime sentiments like *S'ānta* (quietude), *Dāsya* (servitude of the Lord), *Sakhya* (friendship of the Lord), and *Vātsalya* (parental love towards the Lord) are the fundamental tenets in the spiritual discipline of the *Vaiṣṇava* religion. It is towards that *Bhuma*, the ocean of supreme sentiment symbolised in the Great Joyful One that the river of love of the *Vaiṣṇava* faith meanders in all its emotional surge overflowing its banks. The Vaiṣṇava faith is the field of union of the two kinds of inspiration—one emotional and the other intellectual. The evolution of these two kinds of inspiration is the story of India's spirituality. He who is the goal of the intellectual

spirit of inquiry untouched by emotions is Himself revealed as consciousness and is the self-revealed Brahman. These are the fundamental tenets of Indian monism. The truth that is revealed in the clear consciousness of the devotee of an emotional type, who at the same time is intellectually inclined is the Soul of his soul—the Supreme Soul. This is the conclusion of the Yoga-philsophy of India.

The Truth that is naturally revealed in the sky of pure consciousness in the state of perfection attained through equal inspiration of knowledge and sentiment is God. This is the supreme finding of India's sacred texts of *Bhakti* or love. Lord Krishna has declared, "When the individual attains this supreme type of *Bhakti* or devotion, then alone he can realise who am I and what is My glory and greatness. Knowing Me in this way the *Bhakta* (devotee), having My nature finally, enters into Me after death."

The finding of the *Bhāgavad* and the *Brahma-Sutra* is that God cannot be attained only by efforts mainly intellectual. He is won over only through knowledge and love. It is mentioned in the *S'rimad Bhāgavad* that by the exercise of knowledge of Brahman the devotee may attain freedom even in his life-time, but if he be wanting in devotion (*bhakti*), his textual knowledge and all the austerities practised by him are in vain; for want of unflagging faith and great love for that Supreme Self compels the devotee to be born again on this earth and he fails to attain salvation. This view is supported also by the *Chaitanya Bhāgavad*: He who explains the *S'āstras* without love and worship of Krishna is unfortunate; he has no insight into the purport of the *S'āstras*. He who attempts to teach the *S'āstras* and yet does not know their import only carries the weight of the *S'āstras* as an ass carries a burden.

Due to the combined effect of the two tendencies—one intellectual and the other emotional—there arises the glowing

light of pure love, and under its glow we can realise the Supreme Brahman as the embodiment of Pure knowledge, Bliss and Existence. The supreme love for God arises in the heart of those who are fully devoted to one who is Sat-Chit-Ānanda. In the *Gita* Lord Krishna declared, "After many births the individual attains the knowledge—'All is *Vāsudeva*' (God)—and through love for all reaches the supreme domain of *Viṣṇu*."

As the *Prakriti* or Nature has given birth to the entire universe, the individual, being a part of it has something of the feminine disposition in his nature and the Lord Divine, Master of all, is the One and the Only Supreme *Puruṣa*. Therefore, the Viṣṇuites who take to the way of Gopinis[1] in their worship of the Supreme *Puruṣa* are ultimately endowed with female virtues and their nature is characterised as such. In the spiritual world they are regarded as real devotees. To have such devotion, as is marked by pure love, it is possible only for women and not for men. The fervent desire to bind Him with the ties of love and devotion and to be locked in His embrace always meditating 'I am *Rādhā*, and Thou art *S'yām*' is expressed in the process of Vaiṣṇava-worship. Such process of worship may also be called *Yoga*. The method which leads to the union of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul is called the process of yoga.

Lord Krishna says that salvation is possible even in the path of devotion i.e by the devotional worship of God : "I rescue and give salvation to one who offers Me the fruit of his actions and worships Me devotedly." The instructions of the *Gita* to the followers of the path of devotion is to surrender everything to the beloved Lord and fix their minds firmly on Him. Inspite of his being an idolator, Ram Prosad realised God as pervading the universe which is evident from his

1. The female devotees of Lord Krishna.

immortal song: "O Mind, you are mistaken. You do not realise my Mother. The three worlds are my Mother's appearance". Everybody knows that Śri Ram Krishna, an illiterate devotee, attained the highest Knowledge of spirituality through the worship and grace of Goddess *Kāli*. When by worship of one's personal God the mind becomes pure and moistened with love and devotion, the *jiva* is qualified for the practice of Yoga or deep concentration. In the path of knowledge, a Yogin withdraws his mental faculties inside, merges them into the soul and finally the soul into the Supreme Soul and attains salvation. In the path of devotion, a devotee surrenders his senses and mind, and even his individuality. The path of Yoga is inward and one of self-abnegation. A contemplative Yogin realises through introspection the worthlessness of this transient world and becomes indifferent to it. He comes to know that *Ātman* or the Soul is all in all and the only reality in creation. So by detaching Ātman or Soul from his own body, senses, mind and everything he possesses in the world, he merges himself in the Supreme Soul and attains liberation. A devotee, blind in love towards his Beloved, forgets his self and the world. In service, love and devotion he feels oneness with his deity. The ultimate aim of a *yogin* is complete emancipation while a devotee aims at a loving union with his personal God. In this apparently selfless state the "I", the "*Me*", the "*Mine*" though spiritualised, remain intact.

Hegel points out the "Three Paths" for limited beings to reach the Infinite, viz Art, Religion, and Philosophy. In the worship of personal God, the Hindus follow the same three fundamental principles. Beautiful scenes and sweet songs captivate our mind so perfectly that sometimes we forget our self without practising vigorous exercises of the Yoga-practice and our mind and senses become so much absorbed in the object of our vision or audition that eventually *Samādhi* is

attained automatically. We find in the biography of Śri Ram Krishna that by high thought and sweet notes of a song his mind was so much carried away that he soon fell into *Samādhi*. The great devotee Ram Prosad Sen composed many metaphysical songs of high excellence. He used to sing these songs so sweetly and charmingly that even the Mother of the Universe was attracted by his songs and came to his hut to hear it. Thus songs of a high order are equally helpful in bringing about the union with God. In the same way beautiful images also increase the intentness of the mind and senses. Human mind is naturally inclined to believe in God and in His existence. The word religion means the return of being to its eternal abode (Religion = re + ligion). Falckenberg says, "Religion is not merely a feeling of piety, but a thought of the Absolute".

Logical appreciation of an abstract subject is not possible without philosophical insight. Metaphysics being a very stiff and subtle subject, determination of its truth requires the discernment of a philosopher. The religious teachers and the preceptors of the world were great philosophers. The root dṛs' means to see. One who has seen or realised Him as truth is the true *Dārśanik* or philosopher. The path chalked out by these seers alone can lead us to the ultimate goal.

Ṛṣi *Sāthari* received the grace of the Lord Divine by following the method of worship broadbased on love and devotion instinct with sentiments as practised by *Brajagopinis* (the milkmaids of *Brajadhām*). Charmed at the singleness of love and devotion in the *Brajagopinis* who were god-intoxicated and love-incarnate, *Uddhava* remarked, "If I am reborn after death on this earth, I may be born as some herb or plant on which the dust of the feet of these *Brajagopinis* may fall." *Uddhava* was sent to *Brindāban* by Śri Krishna with the sole purpose of imparting knowledge about the Brahman to the *Brajogopinis*, suffering the pangs

of separation from Krishna, thereby infusing into their hearts the spirit of renunciation and diminishing the attachment for Krishna. This Uddhava was the direct disciple of *Bṛhaspati*. He was the best man in the *Yadu* dynasty, the seer of Truth and the dearest friend of Śri Krishna. Realising the depth of love for God in the Brajagopinis and fascinated by the sweetness of it, *Uddhava* himself was initiated into that approach through love. His knowledge of monistic truth was swept away before the flood-tide of spiritual love. In the Gita Lord Śri Krishna assigned a higher place to love as against knowledge. So the genuine *Vaiṣṇavas* look upon God as their husband and they worship that Supreme *Puruṣa* with womanly feelings of love. This womanly sentiment of love as followed by the *Gopinis* has been described in the *S'rimad Bhāgavad* as the supreme excellence of *Vaiṣṇavism*.

One day when *S'ri Chaitanya* was meditating aside, he suddenly cried out, "Where art Thou gone, O dear Krishna leaving me behind ?"—*Chaitanya Bhāgavad*, Chapter 12. From this it is understood that he dived deep into the sentiment of *Vātsalya* (parental love towards the Lord) and attained the Lord Divine as his son. Not even for a moment could he bear separation from this son. The thought of Krishna so occupied his mind that while teaching Grammar to his students he declared, "Śri Krishna is the probandum (root) of every grammatical rule: *Sandhi* (euphonic combination), *Kārak* (case), *Samās* (compound), *Kṛt* (root affix), *Tadhit* (name affix), Dhātu (root)—all these are name for Krishna." Being astonished at this unique and unprecedented explanation of the grammatical law the students gazed at their teacher's face with their eyes wide open and then concluding that the teacher must have been deranged in his brain, they left the *Tol* (school) of the erudite *Nemai* one by one.

"All sounds I hear are but the names of Krishna. All quarters point to the home of Lord *Govinda*. This is my

parting message to you all. I have nothing else to teach you from to-day."—Chaitanya Bhāgavad, Madhyam Khanda.

To realise and visualise God in all spheres and in all objects of creation is the true sign of the devotee of God; this is the state of the individual who has attained full knowledge of Brahman. The moment the name of the Lord was cited or heard the bodily changes of the high type of a true devotee such as *Stambha* (Suppression of the faculties), *Sveda* (perspiration), *Romāncha* (horripilation), *Aśru* (tears) etc., were manifestad in Śri Chaitanya Deva. Irrespective of caste and creed, he spread the name of God and proclaimed the love of God among all, high and low. From this it is understood that he did rise above the race-bias: "The low-born is not low-born if he recites the name of Śri Krishna. A *Brāhmin* is not a *Brāhmin* if he takes to the path of evil. If the poor and the low-born recite the name of Krishna then inspite of all his faults he goes to the domain of Krishna."—Said Śri Chaitanya. Endless was his compassion for the untouchables, the low-born, the neglected and the illiterate.

"He who is not devoted to Me is not dear to Me, though he may have studied even the four Vedas. Even if the low-born, illiterate be My devotee he is dear to Me. As I am to be worshipped My devotee, even if low-born, should also be worshipped in the same manner"—*Hari Bhakti Bilās, Sloka* 10. 91. It is so written in the *Vaiṣṇava S'āstras* that the erudite *Āchāryya Advaita Mahāprabhu*, learned in all the Śāstras, received the *Yaban Haridas*, the devotee of God, in place of a good *Brahmin* on the occasion of a Śrādh ceremony of his father, and it was *Haridas* whom he entertained with food and drink of the *S'rādh* ceremony. *Brahmā* said, "Even the low-castes, and untouchables who study the life of the great and the good with faith and devotion, realise His *māyā* and get liberation, not to speak

of those who meditate on Him with singleness of mind."—The *S'rmad Bhāgarad*, II. 7. 46.

Both Lord Buddha and Lord Śri Chaitanya renounced the world in the prime of their life at the age of 29 only. The love of *Gopā* and the affection for his new-born child *Rāhul* could not bind Buddha to the Saṃsār. Buddha's separation from his wife is a theme of an affecting tale. Śri Chaitanya also could not be attracted and chained to the domestic life inspite of deep love for his beloved wife *Viṣṇupriyā*. He renounced the world and in his youth he took to *Sanyās* (absolute renunciation of the world). He traced the God of love and he fully tasted the divine love. He was at all times swayed by love and his divine lips did always chant the name of God : "A child, dark in complexion, plays on the flute. Try to realise him and proclaim him in every way."—*Chaitanya Bhāgavad.*

One day *Āchāryya Advaita Mahāprabhu*, seated at home was relating the superiority of *Jnāna-yoga* and Sāṃkhya-yoga to the audience present there, when *S'ri* Chaitanya, the Lord Divine, appeared and being angry at his explanation put to him the following question: "O thou stubble, canst thou declare which of the two—knowledge and devotion—is the superior ?" *Advaita* declares that knowledge is supreme in all ages : Of what use is devotion to an individual who has no knowledge ? Hearing Advaita's view that knowledge is superior to devotion the son of *S'achi* was beside himself with anger and said, "I was resting on the ocean of milk. My sleep is broken, by thy act. It has been thy intention to proclaim *Bhakti* by bringing Me down. Now thou darest praise knowledge in preference to *Bhakti*. Why then hast thou made Me appear (as Incarnation)[1] ?"

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1. It is said that pleased with the worship of *Advaita Mahāprabhu*, *S'ri Viṣṇu*, the redeemer of the fallen, was born in *Nadia* as Śri Chaitanya to redeem the fallen.

It is clear, therefore, that Sri Chaitanya assigned a higher place to *Bhakti* (devotion) than to *Jnāna* (knowledge). With the awakening of divine feelings and devotion the awakening of knowledge is not impossible. Again, with the awakening of knowledge the fountain of divine feelings and devotion may automatically flow out. But it is not easy for the common run of people to attain knowledge. So it seems that both Śri Krishna and Śri Chaitanya realised this fully and inspired the general mass to follow the path of *Bhakti*—love and devotion.

Though the *S'rimad Bhāgavad* is an upholder of the doctrine of love and devotion it does not deny the utility of Kārmic Path of selfless action, the practice of austerity and Yoga. In the Bhāgvad II. 9. 23. God said, "Austerity is my Soul and power. I myself is the Soul of austerity. I create, maintain and destroy the universes by my own power resulting from the practice of austerity." Austerity is the best wealth of the ascetics. *Brahmā* told *Rudra* : "There is nothing, my dear, unattainable through the power of austerity. By the practice of austerity a man can realise his inner Self (*Antaryāmin*) which is the Supreme Light shining within every heart"—(Bhā, III. 12. 9.) Elsewhere, He says to Rudra, "Heart, senses, Prāṇa, sky, mind. fire, water, earth, sun, moon and austerity are your seats. I have created them all beforehand for you."—The *S'rimad* Bhāgavad III. 12. 11.

In the worship of God there is nothing to do with path, place, time or measure. We are at liberty to pray unto God through any path and anywhere under the sun. "God is in the East and West. Therefore, whichever sides you turn, you will see the face of God. He is within you. Why do you not see Him ?"—*Spirit of Islam*, P. 21, 2. "Churches, ceremonies and symbols are good for children. But when the child grows up, he will burst the Church or himself."—Said Vivekananda. The question of path or places of worship viz., Temple, Mosque, or Church

is not of vital importance. What are required most are the faith, devotion and earnest prayers out-pouring our hearts.

To taste and enjoy love of God in full, the Vaiṣṇava devotees maintain their own personal individualities ; they do not like to be merged into the Lord Divine. Therefore, the devotees freed in this life, are born again and again, by way of play, to experience the love and devotion of God through worship of the Lord Divine—this has been said by Āchāryya Śaṃkara and this utterance of his has been quoted in *Bhāba Sandarva* by Śri Jiva Goswami[1]. "After 32 years of my death I shall come again to Bengal. Again, after 70 years of My departure from that life I shall come again. In this way I shall re-appear eleven times."—Prophesied Ram Krishna.

Union of *Rādhā* with *Krishna* stands for the union of knowledge and love. The worship of *S'iva* and *S'akti*, Krishna and *Rādhā*, *Rādhā* and *S'yām* and *Sitā* and Ram is the same as the worship of *Puruṣa* and *Prakriti* and is helpful for acquiring the fullest expansion of love and knowledge.

A very happy and wonderful combination of love and knowledge is noticed in the personality of Ramkrishna Paramhansa Deva. He was the living emblem of perfection in the realisation of monism. His love for God was like the celestial flow of knowledge. The external appearance of this great Yogin represented 'Śāntaṃ Śivaṃ Advaitaṃ'—the ever peaceful *S'iva* who is without a second, and the inner Self of him was laden with eternal potential energy that was kinetic in Vivekananda. Vivekananda represented the revelation of the Goddess *Kāli* on the bosom of inert *S'iva*. The world of religious men was deeply touched by his personality and preaching. To speak the truth, another such powerful leader as the *Swamiji* and the *Netāji* did not

1. "Even the emancipated ones playfully assume human form and worship Him."—Said Śaṃkara.

appear in India during the last few centuries. Both were *Sanyāsins*—one in the path of spirituality and the other in the path of Karma. *Swamiji* and *Netāji* are bright examples of renunciation and ability in the religious and the political worlds respectively where they will shine for ever as the Polar star in the firmament of India for the guidance of her people

Paramhansa Deva was the incarnation of knowledge born of pure *sattva*. He needed, therefore, the help of Swami Vivekananda, a Karma-yogin possessed of the quality of *Rajas* or activity in order to awaken India from her slumber and lethargy of centuries past. Outwardly and inwardly the nature of Swami Vivekananda was opposite to the nature of his preceptor. Ram Krishna Deva was outwardly full of *Bhakti* or devotion but inwardly full of *jnāna* or knowledge. Swamiji was inwardly full of Bhakti (devotion), his heart was flooded with love and devotion like a subterranean river, but in his outward affairs Jnāna (knowledge) and *Karma* (action) predominated. Lest he should be swayed away by the excess of knowledge and *bhakti* Swamiji cautiously covered his self with the veil of *Karma* (work or action). With a tempestuous outside Swamiji's heart was full to the brim with the knowledge, love and devotion. Swamiji was like the revealed self of the mysterious being *Ramkrishna Deva* ; he was like the explanation of the theoritical self in Ramkrishna. India is today indebted for her awakening chiefly to Swamiji, and for India's independence we are grateful to *Netāji*. It was Swamiji who first introduced India to the committee of nations ; it was Swamiji who unravelled India's spiritual lessons before the World's Religious Conference and placed our motherland and her culture on a high pedestal in the eyes of the Western world. The message of his vibrant and resounding voice took shape in the life of *Netāji*. The ideal of sacrifice into which Swamiji initiated India found its fullest expression in the life of *Netāji*.

The inspired sacrifice Netāji made was initiated into the Indian Army which made it demand, fearless of consequences, the freedom of the Azad Hind Forces although the Indian Army-men were paid soldiers of the British Raj. Behind this demand for freedom was clearly expressed the Indian Army's strength of mind and high idealism that would usher in a great revolution in India, and having realised this the British Raj was terrified enough to quit the Indian soil in 1947.

"O India ! Forget not thy ideal of womanhood—your *Sītā*, Sāvitri and Damayanti ; Forget not that the all-sacrificing Lord Saṃkara (Śiva) is your only adorable deity.....Forget not that low-born men—dull, poor or ignorant, the cobbler, the sweeper etc., are all brothers of your own blood. O Hero ! Take heart ; covering your loins with a rag declare proudly, 'I am an Indian and all Indians are my brothers'. Declare this : 'The ignorant Indian, the poor Indian, the Brāhmin Indian, the low caste Indian are my brothers'. Declare this : 'The soil of India is my heaven, the welfare of India is my religion' and pray day and night, 'O Lord of *Gouri*, O Divine Mother, infuse into me manliness ; drive away, O Mother, my weakness and my cowardice ; make me a Man." These heroic words of courage and inspiration fallen from the lips of Swami Vivekananda found expression in the life of *Netāji* every hour of his life in all that he did or said. These divine words of initiation uttered by Swamiji created the uncommon power and inspiration in *Netāji* by virtue of which he could forego early prosperity, happiness, comfort and reputation as though these were no better than a handful of dust. And these were the divine words of initiation that created in him high and noble qualities like friendly treatment to all, high or low, unusual courage and a spirit of uncompromising struggle with injustice all through his life. The right kind of seed was sown in the right field.

DEVOTION, SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."—Coleridge.

Service to humanity is service to God. It is the only religion and the best kind of penance. A true lover is a true devotee and a true devotee is the true knower. Love grows in proportion a man can sacrifice himself. Love and devotion, according, to Śri Rupa Goswami, do not grow in a self-centred life. Self-interest brings misery in life and self-sacrifice is the source of true happiness. Attachment for temporal is *Kāma* or desire, the cause of our bondage, and love for eternal is *Prema*, the loving affection of a devout heart that brings salvation. A real devotee is he who serves both God and man alike with profound humility and genuine love. Love your fellowmen and you will be loved by God. Loving heart is a tuned harp that always plays the song eternal.

"God is Love and love is stronger than death"—said Plotinus. Love is the only means of apprehending unity in the midst of diversity. It shatters all barriers, even the barrier between 'me' and 'thee'. Love is the touch-stone that turns a brute divine. God is realised through love more easily and much sooner than through the path of either knowledge or action. "Intellect sets us apart from things to be known, but love knows its object by fusion"—observed Dr. Tagore in his '*Sādhanā*,' P. 159.

The love of man leads to the source of universal life. According to Aristotle when we wish the well-being of all, our mind rests in peace. The highest and the lasting happiness comes through the services rendered to the suffering

humanity. Bertrand Russel writes: "A truly happy man feels himself a citizen of the universe and the joy that it affords is untroubled by the thought of death, because he feels himself not really separate from those who come after him. After the fall of body he will survive through others. It is in such profound instinctive union with the stream of life that the great joy is to be found". Love alone can set the soul free. Buddha introduced 'love for others' as a substitute for stern ascetic life. Love for others is a pre-requisite condition to enter into *Arhatship*. In explaining *Arhatship*, Buddha puts it on par with love for others, enlightenment, blissfulness and the sum of human perfection which is the gateway to *Nirvāna*. He laid more stress on the simple way of living and loving than the chilly ideal of self-mortification. The prophet of Nazareth also preached the doctrine of love: "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

A dry and strenuous life is not the way to real happiness. Buddha renounced the world to know the truth of life. He studied sacred texts but mere book-reading could not satisfy his inquisitive mind. He then practised severe austerities which also failed to produce the desired result. At last he sat under the *Bodhi-tree* continuously meditating for seven days and nights on the cause of suffering and on the means of getting rid of it. Four truths arose in his mind and he became enlightened—the *Probuddha*. He realised the unity of the universe. He found that all beings are one in essence. On realisation of this truth, Buddha addressed his disciples in the following words: "O' *S'ramans*, start now and travel to the farthest end of the world for the good of many and for the gain of many."

Ātman has no weight of its own, so it soars freely higher up, transcending the law of gravitation. This is why when the soul is isolated from the body in *Samādhi* the Yogin overcomes the earthly gravitation and travels in the higher

celestial regions ; the law of gravitation fails to exercise its power over the Yogin. The upward attraction of his being is sometimes so intense that it even results in the levitation of his body from the seat. This upward attraction is due to the reciprocity of love between the lover and the Loved. God attracts His devotee with same amount of love which the devotee feels for God. The love is an end in itself and only in the highest culmination of love lies the perfect realisation of Self.

Love is not an emotional outburst but it is the very truth and nature of our being. It is a divine current that flows within us silently and secretly. When this stream of love overflows its banks, the lover feels within himself a tremor of the universal life, his heart beats in unison with the Supreme Heart and he himself becomes the heart-centre of all. Love ends in supreme joy. The fulfilment of human aims and mission is in love. If at-one-ment with Godhead be the goal of human life, man must embrace all in love His salvation depends on the cultivation of a spirit of love for all and freedom from passions. In egoistic life we are selfish and mean ; it limits our boundless being. We are by nature more inclined towards universal life. Man in his detached individual life feels the full impact of pains and sufferings but when his sorrows and sufferings are shared by all, the latter lose their weight. In this extended vision of life, all our personal losses, pains and sufferings prove insignificant. We are not isolated from others because our true being is the Self of all. Self-realisation is possible if we establish an identity with All through all. The vision of reality becomes more and more clear as we enter deeper and deeper into the essence of all. The *S'āktas* (Śakti-worshippers) seek to know God's transcendent aspect through the immanent. The Viṣnuites approach God through an all-embracing love for His created beings. *S'ākta* Ramkrishna observed that

the key to the door of the transcendental world lies in the immanent. Ignoring His immanent aspect, none can enter into the sublime realm of the highest heaven. A passionless mind is the seat of contentment and in a peaceful heart God resides. True happiness comes when the heterogeneous complexities of the world are harmonised by inner adjustment of a selfless and loving heart. Only through love all discordant elements disappear and a perfect harmony with Nature, Man and God is established. The Brahman of the *Vedās* is neither an abstraction nor negation of the world-creation, as alleged by some Western philosophers ; He is immanent in His creation.

The Supreme Brahman has three-fold power which is inward, outward and static. His outward power created numberless universes. By His inward power He draws the devotee towards Him. The material world where the *jivas* remain drowned in *Avidyā* and do not feel His divine attraction is the land of His static power. The attraction of dissolution also belongs to the third grade category.

God-head created mankind so that qualities like kindness, love and spirit of service can be cultivated by people who will love and help one another and also those who are in distress. It is through this spirit of 'Seva' or service to humanity that the idea of oneness of souls is established, and the highest realisation of jiva being *S'iva* is acquired ; and then one is blessed with love of God and this creation too. Yoga becomes absolute or complete when knowledge unites with love. Under the impulse of a faint idea of equality and unity of souls inherent in the subconscious mind of every individual a man is inclined to feel for others and he becomes benevolent. The more one brings this idea into practice, the more glorious becomes the manifestation of *Ātman* from behind the curtain of *Prakriti*. It is *Prakriti* that hangs like a curtain between us and the Absolute Truth.

Good deeds and holy thoughts produce an opening in that curtain through which we can get a glimpse of the Supreme Lord. With the gradual enlargement of this opening reaching the size of the curtain itself, you will see that there is absolutely no difference between you and the Supreme Lord—that you are exactly His image.

The sympathy of a man for another proves oneness of the souls. If this idea of oneness of souls is to be awakened by any one he should learn to feel for others and regard the troubles and sufferings of others as his own. *Siddhārta* left the throne when this feeling became too strong in him. It is for this reason that in later life, when he became enlightened, he began to preach to the world the removal of its sufferings. The world also recognised him and worshipped him as the incarnation of *Ahimsā* (abstaining from causing injury to others), kindness and love. It is said that one day Śri Śri Ramkrishna Paramhansa Deva was seated on the brick-built bathing ghat of *Dakṣineswar* temple of Goddess *Kāli* by the side of the Ganges, when he found some boat-men quarrelling with one another. One of them struck a severe blow on the back of another with a club. Paramhansa Deva cried out in pain at this sight and a deep and clear mark of wound was visible on his back. All those who were present there were surprised at this phenomenon, for none did actually hit him. This forms a bright example of oneness of souls. The Supreme Soul is the fountain of the centre of origin of all souls of individuals. Paramhansa Deva used to see *S'iva* in every *Jiva*. He found mother *Jānaki* (wife of Lord Rāma) in a fallen woman : "Mother in one form thou art in the street and in other from thou art the universe."—Said he[1]. He found Lord Krishna in a young European who stood leaning against a tree before him.

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1. Quoted from *Ramkrishna* by Romain Rolland.

He himself was one with God and gods and goddesses used to come out of him through the hair follicles in his body and again re-enter the body through them. One day, when Paramhansa Deva was looking at a picture of Christ hung up on a wall, the image in the picture became alive and approached him and finally disappeared in him. He was then infused fully with the feelings of a Christian and he even gave up the rites and practices of a Hindu and even his daily visit to the temple of the Mother. This condition lasted for several days.

"A humble seeker has to reduce himself to a zero before God will guide him"—said Mahātmā Gāndhi. If we can make ourselves free from all sorts of intellectual deceptions and surrender ourselves completely to the feet of the Lord, our burden will be much lightened. God rules the lives of those and acts through them who surrender themselves without the least reservation to Him. By complete surrender when our mind will be totally withdrawn from the external world, the eternal light will be visible, a voice from within—the dictates of reason will be heard, and eventually the identity of the human soul with the eternal flow of life will be realised. In our journey towards the ultimate goal, "we must try to walk in love the wide house of the world, to stand in propriety—the correct seat of the world and to work in the path of righteousness"—said Mencious Love for truth brings bliss in life. To the devotee undergoing disciplined spiritual experiences, will be borne by an unknown mysterious agency the image of the highest truth, ever perfecting and expanding itself. This will sustain his endeavour to reach the final goal with a heart full of hope and divine assurance.

"A loving heart is the great requirement! To regard the people as an only son; not to oppress, not to destroy, not to exalt oneself by treading down others, but to comfort and be-friend those in suffering."—Fo-sho-hing-Teang-king, V. 1632.

Swami Brahananda Maharaj used to say that serving the poor and the destitute and nursing the diseased bring about the effect of a million *Japam* (counting the sacred name). In rendering service nothing should be regarded as below dignity or hateful. Śri Ramkrishna Paramahansa Deva used to carry on his head the leavings of food of the low castes and drop them in the Ganges.

When *Mahāmāyā* intended to cast her spell on *Nāg Mahāsaya* (the well-known devotee) he made himself so small that *Mahāmāyā* did not succeed. The extinction of the ego-sense and the practice of humility is the only means to tear off the veil of illusion. The culture of the spirit of service removes from the mind anger, egoism, pride and selfishness ; the mind gets purified and broadness in outlook is created—the body turns into the seat of God. He who is a lover of mankind and is of a renunciatory spirit is God Himself in the form of a man. Honesty, purity, sympathy in others' distress and reliance on God pave the way to obtain His grace. It is purity that is religion—it is purity that is strength. The virtues of honesty and purity bring forth humility in the mind of the devotee, and his egoism is extinguished. Seeing a large number of brambles grown on the court of the *Matha* (monastery) Swami Śrimad Paramānandaji Maharaj, direct disciple of Paramhansa deva and Vice-President of Ramkrishna Mission, was once uprooting them with his own hands. To this his disciples objected at which Swamiji said, "Think of the great distances from which you come over here ; if these be on the roadside they cause you inconvenience ; so I am removing the thorns on your path. Am I here for you to take the dust off my feet and so entangle my own future ?" What uncommon love and sympathy in him for mankind is revealed in this trival work and humble utterance ! Fortunate is their advent into the world whose hearts remain attached to the service of

humanity. "When man hath love and devotion and is himself lowly, it is then, O' *Nānak*, that he obtaineth salvation."—Thus spoke *Guru Nānak*. We cannot see God but we have the blessed privilege of studying and serving these great men who are the living incarnation of God. So Christ said: "We cannot see God but we can know His beloved sons."

Just as a piece of mud-stained iron is not attracted by the magnet so also the mind of worldly-minded man soiled with desires is not attracted towards God. The greedy mind is never still—it wanders in all directions. The True One is found when mind cometh home.

The ambition to live a religious life, to render service to the country becomes fruitful if the individual character be properly formed. Individual character is nothing but the summation of the day-to-day good thoughts and good actions. If this basic foundation be not strong, all spiritual exercises will be useless. Even if he does something noble on a sudden impulse or impelled by the ambition to attain name and fame, he shall not be regarded as a man of character. It is the ambition to attain name and fame that brings his fall in the future and in order to maintain his *status quo* as a famous man, he does not hesitate to do any evil deed. This is why Swami Vivekananda used to say, "Reputation is like the dung of a swine." Renunciation alone can bring real peace to the individual's mind. Nothing will come out of worship, *japam* (repeating the mantras) and the practice of Yoga if he does not uproot the dirts of the mind in the form of wishes and desires but tries to hide them under flowers, *bel*-leaves, etc. Can the burning sensation of the evil desires of the mind be assuaged by anointing the body with sandal paste? To succeed in any piece of work character, honesty, purity and single-mindedness are required at the very outset.

Baburam Maharaj used to say, "It is not possible to be a *Sādhu* (pious man) simply by begging from door to door with

a piece of *gerua* (ochre-coloured cloth) on and quoting from memory like a parrot excerpts from the Gita and Verses from the Vedas only to deceive the householders. You have to give life to the messages of the Gita and the *Upaniṣads* in your own person ; you have to prove things by your own example in life so that men may understand the message of the *Vedās* and the *Upaniṣads*, listen to them with eagerness and follow them ; where is such endeavour ? You only wear a piece of ochre-coloured cloth and commit verses to memory. What a shame ! Be you all living embodiments of the *Gita* ; that is to say, be you all turned into *tagi* (tyagi) or renunciators. What good shall follow your not becoming self-sacrificing but your mere committing the Gita to memory ? Is not the Gita read by many people every day ? Why then their sorrows do not come to an and ? Why do they not attain salvation ? If you need liberation, remove the attachements of the mind and untie its knots." He concludes, 'Do not complain about the path, move on to the goal ; once you reach the goal, the confusion of the path will disappear.'

The great hero *Hanuman*, devoted to Śri Ramchandra, humbly prayed and appealed to *Raghupati Ram*, 'Truly speaking, I have nothing in the mind, no desire, but unalloyed *Bhakti*". Following the drift of thought of *S'ri Hanumān*, this great devotee and so possessed, *S'ri S'ri Ramkrishna Paramahansadeva* moved about among different branches of a tree in the manner of *Hanuman*.

The true devotee can declare without pretension, "I do surrender everything to Thee and with singleness of mind do become Thy maidservant. O Lord, this house is Thine, these children are Thine and even this body is Thine." The Gita, observes that Brahman, verily shall be seen by him who sees Brahman in every action. If we carry on our worldly life in a spirit of complete self-surrender, then our life will be tantamount to the ascetic life ; illusion will then

fail to tie us down. Bow down in lofty sentiment of devotion and love, and pray, "O Lord ! May each minute particle of my body be purified and attain sanctity. May I be free from the quality of *Rajas*. May my intelligence and decision be honest, may I be sinless. May this earth with all the living beings be holy and sacred. May we all be freed from dross. May my soul be freed from all sheaths and attributes and be sanctified and holy. May I give up the nature of *Rajas* and be established on the ground of purity." Extinguish your egoism, all of you, and be freed from *Rajas*. Swami Premānandaji Maharaj used to say, "Attain, you all, spiritual fruition—be you all humble—burn out all pride and egoism. If you want to be truly pious, then sacrifice your selfishness—your egoism."

Ramprosad, the great devotee, has sung :—

—"Life's day is done, fast falls the even-tide, why loiter in the world's market ? If you have a mind to reach the other bank and to end your grief, then cut down the knots of the mind". Without the rafts of God's name and without the kindness of the Compassionate One, the ocean of life can not be crossed. He sang :

"He is the object of our feeling ; can He be experienced without it ? The supreme Yogin practises Yoga for ages together for getting into that experience."

"God is within but we are without ; God is at home, we are in far off country."—Truly said Echart. The saints are few, deceit and the wranglings prevail in the world. So the world is full of woes and sufferings. The pious have light, day and night, but for the perverse there is only sable darkness. Sin is the root cause of all our sufferings and the name of God is the only antidote. Worldly maladies and afflictions are dispelled by taking His name. So Guru Nānak prayed : "Grant me only one thing—Thy name ; the poisonous things of the world please me not."

But the individual is ever running recklessly after worldly enjoyments ; though he is disappointed and deceived every moment, he cannot give up the temptation. In enjoying temporary sensual pleasures he thinks 'I am quite all right'. But the day on which this dream of happiness is shattered through adversity of fortune his sorrow knows no end. The worldly mind carefully avoids the picture of the fearful last moment when 'where shall remain his hearth and home, where shall remain his palace and where shall remain his children and relatives ?' "Wealth is not amassed without sin and it goes not with the dead. What hath man brought into the world ? What shall he take away when death drives him to his doom ?"—Thus spoke *Guru Nānak.*

Engage the conscience as the permanent guard of the mind's door, then shall impure thoughts be unable to appear in the mind. It is the impure thoughts that are the thorns on the path of spiritual life. Burn the mind in the fire of penance and renunciation and convert the mind into genuine gold ; then and then alone shall you realise the existence of God. To build up a pure life we need the proper conduct and genuine single-mindedness. To save the seedling a fence is required ; spiritual rites and single-mindedness make that fence. When the tree grows big it no longer requires fencing ; similarly, in the flood of the loving heart desires, rites and formalities drift away—none knows where.

"Seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you"—said Christ to his followers : "For everyone that asketh receiveth ; and He that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opend."—St. Mathew, 7. To take His name always : speaking, working, standing, walking, or lying down, is *Brahma-Vihāra i.e.,* living in God—immersion of our being in God. Seer is he who sees Brahman everywhere, within and without and whose very essence is the light and life of all—"*Sarvavyāpat Sa bhagwān*

tasmāt sarvagataḥ Śivaḥ". Prayer of a true devotee should be : Lead me, O' Kind Lord—from unreality to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality, "*Asatomā Sadgamaya, tamasomā jyotirgamaya mṛtyormā mṛtangamya,*"

In our meditation on Brahman we have to dive deep into the ocean of Brahman like an arrow completely penetrating its target. Spirituality works in a yogin silently gaining momentum every day through each revelation. Like life within the seed it grows on till it grows into a mighty spiritual tree. The simplicity of our lives which should be strictly maintained will help the unfolding of the eternal truth within us. Soul is the fundamental reality. When the Ātman is realised, our individual existence comes to an end.

Truth can only be realised by a subtle sense or faculty awakened by long and devoted practices. Therefore, in order to establish contact with the subtle world, it is necessary that our mind and body should be purified and made subtler still. Surrender to God with utmost eager and devotion in the practice of yoga leads to fulfilment and reveals the highest truth. Truth is beauty and beauty is truth. Beauty is not a matter of flesh and blood, but it is the shining of the eternal Self. Man has a natural liking for beautiful things. God is the most beautiful. To be attracted by His beauty, to love Him and to adore Him is the easiest form of devotion. He is an object of greater endearment than a dear son and more fascinating than an invaluable possession. God is love and he that lives in love lives in God.

Love is the great teacher—love is the great developer. We are capable, if we are willing to submit to that teaching and be simple, of being persevering and receptive. Verily the Lord is loving, gracious and merciful. Love and anxiety of God for His children on earth are more intense than that of a mother bird for her young ones. For the love of man, God Himself becomes manifest.

Deep attachment to God is *Paramānurukti. Param* is the highest and *Rukti* is affection. The prefix '*Anu*' before *Rukti* is knowledge of the Infinite. Affection or love for God is the divine call of the Supreme. This love is one unique amalgamation of beauty and joy arising out of the self renunciation. So a complete detachment and full self-surrender is essential. We have to efface the very conception of our self to be blessed with divine union. "A personal surrender not only of finite but of bride to bridegroom, heart to Heart"—enjoins Ruysbroeck. True love for God is more pervading than the sky and deeper than the ocean. Beginning with small things human love spreads from one's kith and kin to the outside world and then to the whole universe and what is even beyond that which is God. There is no greater trainer than true love. It makes the mean-minded magnanimous, the unmanifest manifest and the void full. Mounting on the highest peak of love, the devotee realises that love, lover and the beloved are one and the same. So let us surrender ourselves completely to His lotus feet and say, 'O Love, I give myself to Thee, Thine ever, only Thine to be." When a *jiva* attains true knowledge, his angle of vision is changed and he no longer cherishes greed or hatred but the highest and holiest feeling for all. "Of all we know in life, only in love is there a taste of the mystical, a taste of ecstacy. Nothing else in our life brings us so near to the limit of human possibilities beyond which begins the Unknown."

—Said Ouspensky.

Love knows God. If we cannot love his creation, his grace will be automatically withdrawn. Human perfection is to be attained here and now or never. Faith in the existence of God and a firm conviction in the ultimate spiritual transformation of all beings induce us to render humanitarian services to the world. "Indeed, the son of Man came not to be served, to serve and to give his life as a reasom for

many"—*Mark*, X. 45. "Whosoever wants to serve me, let him attend to the sick"—said *Buddha*. It is said that until all the jiva-selves get liberation, complete deliverance of a particular soul is denied Swami Vivekānanda said that in his life-long *Sādhanā* he had realised this truth that there is no other God except *Sevā*—the service to humanity. Through self-sacrifice in humanitarian services our self-effacement becomes complete, body and mind become so pure and transparent like glass that the divine Soul within shines through them. They can no longer keep its lustre shut up behind their walls. The frame remains intact so long as the indwelling Spirit chooses. He gets liberation though still living within this mortal frame.

But the means must not be confused with the end. Though the service to mankind is a potent means of God-realisation, yet we should not forget that our aim is God. Actions, however good and virtuous, create new impressions that may place us in higher sphere of heaven but the deliverance of soul from its enigma, demands something more. According to the Praśnopanisad, 1. 9, humanitarian works lead a humanist after death to the region of the moon and he returnes again to the earth. We may begin with humanitarian services, but for the achievement of our final aim, we have to pass through the ordeal of meditation to *Samādhi*. 'Know thyself first'—this is the instruction of the Upaniṣads. Without Self-knowledge and unless the universal love grows in you, your act of charity or service to humanity is sure to be defiled by selfish motive. The urge for humanitarian services born of Self-knowledge brings perfection in life. The mere redress of other's earthly grievances is not enough, the manifestation of divinity in man is of paramount importance. If we ignore the spiritual side, however humanist and philanthropic we may be, our aim will never be realised. So long as the Soul is not revealed in its full serenity, the

kingdom of heaven will be denied to us. Human perfection or the supreme blessedness is to be acquired here in this life. Standing on the threshold of Nirvāna, Lord Buddha declared : "Verily I live and move in the land of eternal bliss, though still living within this mortal frame."

Religion and humanism do not clash each other in their operation—rather one supplements the other. To be religious, it is not required of us to be indifferent to the world of duties, which is evident from Lord Śri Krishna's exhortation to *Arjuna* in the battle-field of Kurukṣetra. Service to humanity is a condition for the awakening of God-consciousness. Love for neighbours and compassion to all created beings are the noblest attributes that every religious man should possess. God is bound by regard. He has to judge our merits and demerits in order to determine our future destiny. Bṛ Up. III, 2, 13, observes. "Man acquires merit by good works and demerit by bad acts." Śri Krishna says in the Gita, IV. II, "I serve men in the way in which they approach me."

Commenting on 'action' and 'contemplation', St. Thomas Aquinas writes, "Action should be something added to the life of prayer, not something taken away from it." The life of good actions that promote the growth of spirituality in man, has its origin in the motive of doing good to others. Such actions create broadness of mind and purity of heart that go to unfold man's divine nature. So the benevolent actions done in a spirit of renunciation—far from diverting our attention from the path of spirituality adds to our perfection. 'The friend of man is the friend of God.' Jesus calls such men as 'the salt of the earth.' The society is practically saved from corruption and ruin by their exemplary divine nature revealing itself through their social services rendered to it. Inspired by their selfless activities and the divine life they lead, some of their admireres tend to think over the real purpose of human life and ultimately a few of

them at least are transformed into 'the salt of the earth. In this way their number will go on multiplying till this very earth itself is turned into heaven and we hail, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." God's kingdom has already come with our first advent on earth—we are His children ; so wherever we live, it is heaven. That the earth appears otherwise is due to our own fault. We have forgotten that we are the children of God, and that we carry within us His living presence. We have defiled His temple—our body and mind, doing evil deeds and thinking vicious thoughts. So the world which would have been a heaven has been made a hell of it. We are no longer the worthy sons of our great Father. Let us unfold our divine nature, realise our identity and act as the worthy sons of our heavenly Father ; His kingdom will automatically come with the perfection of humanity.

If mind remains fixed upon God, there is no harm to be a family man, social worker or a philanthropist. The spiritual leaders like Buddha and Swāmi Vivekānanda were the best friends to the suffering humanity. When the higher value of life is understood, the knower is inclined out of his own accord to feel sympathy for all. The world is served nobly when it is overcome spiritually. Good-will is God-will. Good-will to others bears a Christian name, called Charity. It is only in the spiritual level that charity can be practised disinterestedly. Charity is the disinterested sympathy of our will with others. When spiritual insight is gained, our sympathy flows impartially and spontaneously to all irrespective of friends and foes without any attachment or abhorrence.

While engaged in social service or philanthropic work, one thing to be observed is that we do not lose the sight of our goal. Jesus in his first Commandment said : "And thou shall love the lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all

thy strength, with all thy mind and with all thy soul." His next Commandment was : "Thou shalt love thy neighbours as thyself"—*Mark* 12 : 30, 31 + *Math* 20 : 37, 39. It is obvious, therefore, that more importance has been given to the first Commandment than to the second. Service to mankind may be the means but not the end In itself. Means must not be confused with the end. Means without the end in view leads us nowhere. Our aim is God ; bearing this truth in mind, work and worship may be practised simultaneously.

Hedonism is at the root of all our mental conflicts and unhappiness. Peace cannot be restored to the mind so long as hedonistic philosophy is followed. It makes man selfish and narrow and as a result, frustration and conflict become inevitable. Self-interests and inordinate desires of all forms and proportions have to be curbed to the lowest possible minimum, if one wishes to establish one's identity with the Universal Being. Self-sacrifice is the condition for the fulfilment of the highest aim in human life. To be united with something better, the sacrifice of something good is involved. In embracing a greater good, we have to sacrifice some or all of our former affections. Surrender of all good for the sake of one good is an infallible proof of love and devotion to the Supreme Lord ; it sets before the world the highest example of a dedicated life. The sense of dependence of a devotee entirely takes away the sense of his egoism, and thus all his cares and anxieties vanish. The more this spirit grows, the more God is inclined to take upon Himself the responsibilities of His devout worshipper.

Love of God should be absolutely pure i. e., without any tinge of personal gain or loss. You cannot carry on the business of love with a balance of personality, nor can you barter love for enjoyment in return. Spiritual practice prepares the mind for meeting the Lord. It is said that Christ freed the churches from the hands of those who

bartered God. We should not disbelieve in His existence if we do not get any response to our prayers immediately. Ramprosad, a soul emancipated, says: "I am sitting on my raft, waiting for the tide to carry me up."

Desireless devotion to God is genuine devotion. Devotion with an eye to getting something in return is not pure devotion; because it is actuated by purely egoistic motive. Devotion may be of three kinds—(1) *Tāmasika*, (under the influence of *Tamas*), (2) *Rājasika* (under the influence of *Rajas*), and (3) *Sāttvika* (under the influence of *Sattva*). The lowest kind of devotion, as found in the lowest class of men, is devotion No. 1. Devotion offered in expectation of wealth, fame and power is of the second order. Devotion which leads one to the path of spirituality is pure devotion and belongs to the third or the highest order of it. Devotion mixed with desire may also earn the reward of His grace. Indirect or inferior type of devotion sometimes turns into selfless devotion. To gain a mighty kingdom, *Dhruba* performed *Tapasyā* for a long time. Pleased with his austerities, God appeared before him to grant him a boon but *Dhruba* told him, "I find before me One who is not realised even by the Yogins in their meditation for ages together. Thy very sight has extinguished all my desires. I have nothing more to pray".

"True love is a durable fire,
In the mind ever burning,
Never sick, never dead, never cold;
From itself never turning."

Universal love grows when personal love is attributed to *Ātman*. Love of Soul apart from that of the self secures supreme deliverance. Through selfless love alone, man realises his oneness with others as well as his own transcendental divine nature. Truth, love and knowledge are identical; they are organically united together. The principle

of love is the same as the principle of truth and wisdom. True lover is he who is truly wise. Love, truth and wisdom are the triad aspects of one Reality. The confluence of the three streams, Love, Truth and Knowledge is *Bhumā* i. e., the land of eternal bliss. The eye of wisdom opens when love reaches its culmination.

He who is blessed with divine grace, does neither hanker after the attainment of eight kinds of supernatural power which comes of itself to one in the search of the All-Merciful Lord, nor even desire to enjoy heavenly pleasures in the life hereafter. All the enjoyments here or hereafter pale into insignificance to the eternal bliss that a successful devotee enjoys in the communion with the Supreme.

In pure devotion, there must not be any cry for worldly pleasures, not even the thought of securing personal emancipation. Ramkrishna prayed to the Holy Mother for the grant of pure devotion in the following words :—"Here are my merits and demerits, my knowledge and ignorance, purity and impurity—take all these and give me pure devotion." Unalloyed devotion is the best kind of devotion. Desire is for fruit—for some worldly gain, aspiration is for the Lord. Desire is related to the finite but aspiration is always directed towards the Infinite. The pure feeling of a true devotee is beautifully reflected in a verse of the *Vaiṣṇavā Text* which means, "My eyes weep for His sight, my heart is saturated with love for Him and every limb of mine thirsts for His embrace." When the loftiest feeling of devotion is generated by such unquenchable thirst for divine union, the moment for dedicating oneself to God draws near and the lover is lost in the bosom of All-Love. Let the two—the part and the whole unite and be one today and remain as such for eternity to come. "Make my soul Thy bride. I will rejoice in nothing till I am in Thine arms."—Said Saint John of the Cross,

The lover is better than the devotee. The devotee may go to the vicinity of God, but God Himself comes to the lover. God grants even impossible prayers of the devotee. It is said that in the precincts of His temple a worshipper of Krishna, an inhabitant of *Kumar Hatta*, was one day making a comparative estimate of the physical appearance of Ramprosad Sen's deity, the Goddess *Kāli* and his own deity Lord Śri Krishna. During the discussion he told Ramprosad, "Whatever you may say, Sen Mahasay, the naked figure and the protruding tongue of your deity *S'yāmā* are very odd looking. As a contrast, look into that temple and see how fascinating is the figure of my *S'yāmsundar*. It seems, as though, that figure has been constructed with all the beauty of heaven." At this, Ramprosad, devotee of *S'yāmā*, said emotionally, "Ramprosad will not cast his eyes towards that figure, neither Ramprosad must glance at it, where art Thou my Mother ? Where art Thou, Oh, where ?" Bathed in emotions and with these words on his lips, Ramprosad came to the door of the temple. All those present there were astonished to see that Sri Krishna, the installed deity of that temple has given up his flute and wielded the sword ; He is totally changed from the figure of Krishna to the figure of *Kāli* in all Her glory. At this supernatural event the worshipper of Krishna hailed Ramprosad as a great man, gifted with godly power and a successful devotee. So he knew not how to offer an apology to Ramprosad for his previous comments.

Lord *S'yāma* and Mother Śyāmā are aspects of the same Being. By whatever name you may invoke Him, if your call and prayer are earnest and sincere, He cannot but make His appearance in the figure you like to see Him. "The pious men belong to my heart and I belong to the hearts of pious men."—Said Lord Krishna.

The sentiment of spiritual bliss and peace manifests itself in three different forms, (1) Sentiment of devoted service, (2) Sentiment of devoted friendship, and (3) Sentiment of devoted love. The sentiment of devoted service is very suitable in the beginning for a devotee. Devotion, as it progresses, removes gradually all notions of self. Devotion cannot spring in the absence of mental peace. One who is affected neither by pleasure nor by pain is a true devotee.

Many of us must have read in the biography of Ramprosad that one day while he was repairing the fence of his house, the Mother of the universe helped him in the act in the guise of his daughter. Goddess *Annapurnā* Herself one day came from Benares to Ramprosad's house at *Hālisahar* and heard songs about *S'yāmā*, composed and sung by Ramprosad. Before departure, she requested Ramprosad to go to Benares and again to sing before Her his divine songs about Śyāmā. This goes to show that the lover-worshipper is better than the devotee-worshipper. But in devotion, born of love and divine anxiety there must be a genuine constancy.

The devotees of God are unattached to worldly affairs. Their nature is childlike in simplicity. They always live in the company of their beloved Lord and in His kingdom. The heart of the pious is verily the kingdom of God ; it is there that God dwells. "Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo here ! Or Lo there ! For, behold the kingdom of God is within you."—The Bible.

A true devotee considers no work as mean, no praise as high and no blame as disgraceful. To him censure and applause have equal hold. He who devotes himself perpetually to the attainment of the knowledge regarding the supreme reality, his very existence is brought to a close as a separate entity. He who does not trouble the world, nor is troubled by the world, always unmoved by pleasure or pain, dread and jealousy, is loved by God. In their heart there is no

difference between high and low, friend and foe, caste and creed. To them all the world is one family. It is not possible for ordinary men to understand them and their varying conduct. Sometimes, they raise external barriers to shield themselves from the eyes of the curious. Some devotees look insane. Some others are given to drinking. Poet Ramprosad Sen, the staunch and successful devout son of the great Mother *Kāli* has sung: "Liquor is not what I drink; it is nectar that I take in the name of *Kāli*." Some of the devotees drink wine, but wine drinks the common men—this is the difference. As the devout Ramprosad Sen was given to drinking, one Aju Goswami living in his native village Halisahar, hated him very much and used to speak ill of him. One day while Ramprosad was passing by the house of Aju Goswami, he felt thirsty and asked Goswami for a glass of water. Goswami hurried inside the house to bring water but he was astonished to find that the water of each pitcher and each water-container had turned into wine. It is said, Jesus also turned water into wine. Goswami was at his wit's end to get water; he walked out through the back door to the house of his neighbour. There also he did not get drinking water; for the neighbours regretfully informed him that all the water in their house was emitting the nasty odour of wine; it was not fit for any one to drink. Goswami tried to find water in several other neighbouring houses but everywhere he met with the same ill luck. Then there awakened the truth in him and he realised that he was taught this lesson because it was his habit to propagate against Ramprosad's love for drinking, little knowing that he was a successful devotee and favourite son of *Mahāmāyā Kāli*. However, thus humiliated, Goswami apologised to Ramprosad. It is, therefore, not proper under any circumstances to condemn or hate any real devotee for what he takes or for what he does.

None can progress in the path of spirituality without a tenacity of purpose and intentness in devotion. He who thinks that he will shake off in future the evils crept into his character, is a dupe of tomorrow ; because the law of *Karma* tells a different tale. Each individual being will be dragged down by the law of *Karma* in the successive births and his present actions and conduct will control his life in the next. So be up and doing now and work in the living present with heart within and God overhead.

Paramhansa Deva used to say, "Engage only one hand in carrying out the business of the world holding His lotus feet with the other and clasp him with both hands when the other hand has been freed. The musician harps on the string with his fingers while his lips remain busy for singing. Similarly, go on working with both hands while you pray at heart with the holy name on your lips."

The heat in the space immediate to the sun is intense but as the sun's rays move farther and farther away from the centre their heat decreases. Likewise, the more we stay away from God, the more shall we be deprived of divine attributes, namely, celestial joy and divine consciousness. Man has not directed his mind towards God but to worldly affairs and so he is a victim to wants and diseases, sorrows and sufferings. The New Testament echoes the Vedantic views that man was perfect at the beginning and he acquired impurity by his own actions. To regain his original divine nature, it is necessary first of all to be His worthy son so that one day we may unite with our heavenly Father. So Jesus Christ said, "Be ye perfect as your Father in the heaven is."

When political subjection hangs like a nightmare over a country, its inhabitants are anxious beyond measure for freedom. When the oppression is excessive and the foreign yoke seems suffocating, the hankering for freedom by the ruled becomes keen. Similarly, when man falls from his

eternal abode in the kingdom of heaven and is harrassed and distressed by the extreme sorrows and sufferings of the world and he looks at his life as a cursed one, then alone does man sincerely want a change for the better in the running mode of his life ; he then endeavours to regain that lost kingdom of heaven. To recapture that lost kingdom faith, love, knowledge, intentness, deep meditation and complete self surrender are necessary. "Throw yourself under My protection by all means, O, descendent of Bharat,"—said Lord Krishna.

As the protons and electrons whirling in the ether go to form a solid substance, so the different individuals, though they think themselves separate from one another, go to form an entire unit of humanity. We feel the greatest delight when we realise our existence in others. Conception in multi-personal unity in humanity is a guarantee for salvation. An entire lotus has an universal appeal, but when torn to pieces, it losses its charming beauty. So a man in his separate existence is not true and divine. Universal life shines more splendidly and divinely than an individual life. The universal life is the life eternal which stands as a sure guarantee for human salvation.

When we expand the sphere of our life by service to humanity and scatter it in the life of all so as to cover the whole world, we create a unity with the universal life which results in the realisation of eternal Self. "Truth is revealed to one who finds himself in all,"—declare our Upaniṣads. So expand yourself to the fullest degree until it reaches the Infinite. Expansion of consciousness is an imperative necessity for one's corporeal forgetfulness which is indispensable for the quick advance in the path of spirituality. The supreme God is impersonal ; we have to go beyond personal to Impersonal. To attain Him we are to shake off our individuality. Without scaling it, if we try to comprehend the Impersonal Self, the light of the infinite will recede

in the horizon. Our sense of individuality is an obstacle to the way to the infinite perfection.

It is declared in the *Puruṣasukta* of the Ṛgveda : "The Supreme Being sacrificed Himself for the purpose of creation." The book '*Revelation*' of the Christians records—"The sheep was sacrificed for the creation of the world." When the world was not even created where did God find the sheep ? It is only an allegory. This sheep was but the symbol of His power. It is written in the ancient religious book *Zarathrustra* of Iran—"When the earth was not Ahur Mazda, Creator of the Universe, appeared with the great religious sacrifice of *Zarvan*," Thus it is found that in order to create the Universe God sacrificed Himself in that Great Sacrifice. This is admitted in all religions ; there is no difference of opinion about this.

The Supreme God is *Yajneśwar*—He is the Lord of sacrifice. Enjoy him through sacrifice. Sacrifice yourself for the good of others. Give solace in other's grief, courage in their weakness, hope in their despair and light in their darkness. Remove tears from the weeping, sobs from the sighings, cries from those who have lost all. Set example for humanitarian services in every walk of social life and advance the cause of social and spiritual upliftment. Services tendered to others is actually rendered to yourself ; because what you sacrifice for others returns to you a thousand-fold. Our task is among the lowliest and the lost. Feed the hungry millions, educate the countless illiterates, clothe the naked multitudes, and nurse the sick and suffering humanity. "When we learn to look upon suffering humanity as only God in different forms, we find that the consciousness of the divine in men is the motive of service and such service becomes a potent means of God-realisation."—writes Romain Rolland. In fact, service to humanity is the shortest cut to reach the vicinity of God. No sacrifice indeed will be too

great to create a link between man and Man the eternal. Friend of man is a friend of God.

Individual emancipation is not of much value to achieve the human end. Personal salvation secured by the detachment from the world is an imperfect salvation. Oneness with the universal Being becomes impossible until and unless the devotee melts his personality in the world of beings. So, to receive divine grace in full and to be completely liberated the craving for individual emancipation should be abandoned ; otherwise, however higher he may have climbed up to the ladder of spiritualism, his rebirth will be inevitable. Hankering after individual salvation is selfishness. So we find Śri Ramkrishna censuring Śrimad Vivekananda, for his eagerness to obtain salvation : "You are so selfish that instead of seeking salvation for others, you are mad after your own emancipation !" Sri Aurobindo holds the view that though the individual salvation is possible by detaching our Self from life, mind and material body, still for world-salvation an all round transformation of life, mind and matter is essential. The quest of emancipation must be cosmic and not individual. This explains why the world is still groping in darkness, though thousands of yogins in different parts of the world, in different ages, have obtained their personal salvation. For the salvation of the world at large, the perfection of Spirit does not suffice but mind, life, and matter require to be made perfect as well. We brought them with us and we cannot leave them imperfect behind. So, many liberated souls come down to the earth to effect perfection of the rest. "Before immersion in the Absolute, I will be born again and again eleven times more in all. Thirty-two years after my physical death I will come again after seventy years. In this way I will appear in the world eleven times more. My seat for meditation, is under the shade of five sacred big trees at Dakşineśwar Garden,

across which stretches a big branch of a fig tree. When I shall appear in Bengal for the first time that branch will fall off its trunk and clear my seat."—prophesied Śri Ram Krishna to *Annadā Thākur* in a dream. For the love of mankind and for their spiritual benefit, these adepts will come down again and again until the very dust of the world gets transformed into Spirit as *S'ri Aurobindo* desired.

The descent of higher light into our material portion is equally indispensable so that a thorough transformation of matter into spirit may become possible and then and then only the hour for world-deliverance will be imminent. The end of evolution is not an individual salvation, but it marks a cosmic release.

The world-deliverance will be possible only when an identity between Brahman and the world will be established. The liberated devotees remain with God, so long God does not merge in Godhead. God can enter into Godhead only when all the individuals become perfect like Him. The shepherd cannot return to his master until all the sheep return with him.

"Salvation through renunciation is not my ambition—salvation replete with perfect joy I shall taste in the midst of numberless commitments"—said Rabindra Nath who like the world preceptor Ramkrishna, wanted to continue to live by sharing the joys and sorrows of mankind. To serve humanity, Ramkrishna Deva rejected even the offer of salvation of his own soul. One day, while absorbed in deep meditation, the Mother of the universe was about to draw him within Her ownself, Ramkrishna made this fervent appeal to Her : "Mother, permit me to remain among men." The Mother of the Universe granted him his heart's desire. Mahatma Gandhi said, "I want salvation, but I being a member of the society, do not want salvation for myself alone but I want salvation for all. That is why

I join the public prayer meeting every day." Lord Śiva drank poison for the redemption of mankind. The history is replete with striking instances of voluntary sufferings of Buddha, Christ and others. Sufferings for the love of mankind is the common lot of all the favourite sons of God. Śri Krishna regretfully said: "Not knowing Me, entered into human receptacle, the ignorant masses disregard Me[1] !"

Ramprasad, the great devotee, sang: "O Mind, you do not know the art of cultivation; so, your valuable life is lying unproductive like a plot of waste land. It has not been brought under plough by you and tilled with care in which case it could produce a golden crop." In this act of cultivation faith is the seed, humility is the plough, urge for work is the shower of rain, love and devotion are two bullocks and knowledge is the stick with which the bullocks are driven ahead. With the help of these a true devotee attains salvation by tilling carefully the field of life.

"The only blessing I crave for is not to forget Thee"—said *S'ri Chaitanya*: "I only crave that in every birth of mine, *bhakti* may grow in me towards Thee, O Lord." Thus all the true devotees of the world drank deep in the divine love to reach the "Rose Garden of Union." Love Lord as a lotus loves the Sun and aspire after Him as the bird *Chātak* becomes thirsty for rain. His love-call—the sweet notes of Krishna's *Murali*, (the flute) is echoing and re-echoing in hills and dales, in the forest and riverside. It is irresistible; none can keep himself steady when he hears the love-call from the ocean of All-love. It ravished the hearts of the blessed shepherds and Gopinis and they could not but rush out of their homes because they heard the flute-call of their friend, lover and redeemer. His flute doth call and go they must.

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1. "अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्।
परं भावमजानन्तो मम भूतमहेश्वरम्॥"—The Gita, IX. 11.

THE MYSTERY OF RAS-LILA

In connection with *Rās-Lilā* the contemptuous remarks made about Śri Krishna are the outcome of a totally false notion. At that time Śri Krishna was just twelve years old. During the Brazen era a man lived for more than thousand years, and so in that age the urge of youth in a boy of twelve was practically impossible. The very idea is ridiculous. Moreover, if Śri Krishna was a debauch, sages and ascetics would not certainly worship Him as a perfect symbol of Brahman. He used to meet the Gopinis (female devotees) in cane-groves, because such places being lonely were proper for contemplative exercises. In some books there is a direct suggestion that Śri Krishna used to unite with the Gopinis physically. But it was in fact the union of the human soul with the Supreme Soul so as to attain Self-identification with God ; it was not the ordinary affairs of a carnal desire. The love of Gopinis for Śri Krishna never suffered deterioration : it was not sensual love—love of the senses and flesh : "Behold the countenance of Krishna. Does it resemble a man's face or a woman's ; is there a shadow of sensuality in it ? It is a tender female face that Krishna has ; in it is the fullness of boyish delicacy and girlish grace".—The Thiestic quarterly review for Oct, 1897.

Śri Krishna is the Brahman Absolute ; He is the Supreme Being—Paramātman (Bhā, 1. 3. 28). He is a great Yogin, philosopher and a great spiritual teacher. He Himself is the centre of a philosophic theology. Through intense love and devotion for Śri Krishna, the latent divine consciousness of the Brajagopinis became revealed. This is the mystery of Rās-Lilā. It is a general belief that in a moonlit night His Lilā is still enacted on the beach of the *Jamunā* and only the blessed devotees can visualise it. To express the deepest mystic

significance of His *Lilā* some writers took the help of allegory. In an allegory an idea assumes a concrete shape which, in the haze of legends, deviates to a great extent from its original meaning. So Professor Lightfoot observes. "It seems that the form of the earthly, no less than that of the heavenly Christ is far the whisper of His voice; we trace in them but the out-skirts of His ways." It is no wonder, therefore, that the innocent *Rās-Līlā* of Śri Krishna with the milk-maids of *Brajadhām* would be portrayed in the Pauranic age as an amorous sport.

Śri Krishna was God incarnate, difficult of attainment by gods even and the sight of Him would be held a fortune by the sages even in their contemplative vision. Having Him in their midst, the Gopinis or cowherdesses of Brajadhām, vexed with worldly worries, dedicated their sorrows and sufferings to His auspicious lotus feet and extinguished the pangs of their heart. Śri Krishna, on his part, showed them the path of worship and meditation for their spiritual uplift. He got up to the top of the tree of knowledge on the sandy beach of *Yamunā* and what he did steal was the veil of ignorance which enveloped like a dress the mind of the Gopinis. He did not steal their wearing apparel. He did not tend cows with a flute on his lips but the love notes of His *Murali* created religious feelings and love for the All-Love in the hearts of its listeners. The melodious tune of His flute captivated their minds and this love-call turned them out of their worldly homes to proceed towards the path, leading to their eternal abode. His flute doth call and they must go. Not only the residents of Braja were besides themselves in listening the melodious tune of the flute of Śri Krishna, but all Nature overflowed with joy—the water of the *Jamunā* flowed against current, the withered trees and creepers blossomed forth and the beasts and birds danced in joy.

The Mahabharata is one of the very ancient historical and religious books of India. In this book the life of Śri Krishna has been portrayed in all minute details. In it although stories of Lord Śri Krishna's activities in His early age have been comprehensively discussed, there is no mention of His amorous pastimes with the Gopinis in *Rās-lilā*. Even in that part of the Mahabharata where *S'iśupāl* has entertained Krishna with such chosen epithet as a cow-killer he has refrained from any calumny about *Rās-lilā* ; and it is no small surprise. Therefore, the doubt arises naturally that the topic of *Rās-lilā* was interpolated in the *Purāṇas* in a later age.

Rās-lilā was true but it was not an amorous sport. It was a circular dance of the children of *Brindāban* with Krishna at the centre. It was something like that of Maypole dance of mediaeval Europe. In all countries, in ancient times, dance and music constituted a distinctive part of worship. The only duty of the *Deva Dāsis* in a temple was to dance and sing before the deity. Everybody is aware of Śiva dancing as *Natarāj*. On the urge of emotions *S'ri Chaitanya*, *Pralhad* and *Nārada* used to dance. Even now when the glory of God is recited in a *Kirtan*, the gathering starts dancing. Jesus Christ said to his disciples ; "I would pipe. Dance ye all."

S'rimati Rādhā is the *Prakriti* of Śri Krishna, the Supreme Being. She is the medium through which Krishna reveals Himself. The relation between the two is that of the container and the contained. Śri Krishna is condensed, as it were, in the person of Śrimati Rādhā. That is why a *Vaiṣṇava* devotee regards himself as Rādhā, the container and longs after the covetable touch of Śri Krishna, the contained. Is it possible to form any idea of the contained without that of the container ? Can it be possible for anybody to enjoy the company of *Rādhānāth* or Śri Krishna unless he himself

becomes just like *Rādhā* ? So it was that in *Vaiṣṇava* texts the sentiment of love as manifested in Śri Rādhā was taken as an easy means to relish the sweetness of the company of Śri Krishna. For sometime Śri Ramkrishna dressed himself as a milkmaid so that he might taste the sweetness of that divine love which the Gopinis of Brajadhām had experienced in their love for Krishna. How much would Śri Krishna Himself be charmed by His own mind-fascinating beauty has been exquisitely described in the *Chaitanya-Charitāmrita* : "As He beholds His own charms on the mirror, He is drawn to taste them but He fails. In thinking out the means to taste them He feels inclined in His mind to assume the form of Rādhā". Śri Krishna, as a matter of fact, is not separated from His container. He plays hide and seek with *Rādhā* only to increase her attachment.

Beauty is the attribute of the realm of happiness. So, everybody is fond of a thing of beauty. God has supreme beauty. So it was only natural for the cowherdesses of *Braja* to be fascinated with that supremely beautiful Lord, replete with Love. To enjoy the beauty of the Lord, therefore, what alternative is there for us but to be steeped in the spirit of a woman ? The easy way to attain the feet of Krishna lies in the relation of husband and wife. It was to reveal this truth that Śri Chaitanya appeared in Nadia. Śri Chaitanya was Śri Krishna Himself as Śri Rādhā in spirit. So the *Viṣṇuites* worship the Lord as their husband ; for He is the ruler of His paradise and the master of the Universe. It is natural, therefore, they try to establish the relation of a bridegroom and a bride between the deity and the worshipper. We find in the part of the Vedas dealing with *Mantra-Vidyā* that the Vedas also do not find any fault with the worship of the adorable God in the sweet sentiment of love. Apālā, daughter of the sage *Atri*, was attacked with a contagious skin disease of a virulent type. She practised severe austerities

and prayed unto Indra[1] for her recovery. Moved by her prayer, Indra brought with him an apparatus, placed Apālā inside it and thrice turned round the wheel of the machine. Apālā came out of the machine completely cured with her whole body shining in golden hue. Knowing that Somā-juice[2] was a favourite drink to Indra, Apālā desired to offer him a glass of the juice and so she herself went to the jungle to collect the creeper. Since her mind was captivated by sweet memory and love for Indra, instead of offering *soma* to her guest first, Apālā on her way back unconsciously put some of the creepers into her own mouth and began to chew them when Indra appeared before her. Addressing *Soma*, Apālā said to the creeper in her mouth : "O' *Soma*, give out juice for Indra." Indra too being affectionately attached to Apālā drank the juice oozing out of her mouth. This proves that through a long practice of meditation there grew love between the two—*Apālā* and *Indra*. They were mutually attracted towards each other ; otherwise neither Indra would accept the leavings of Apālā nor Apālā could dare offering him the same. It is stated in the Ṛgveda (*Apala-sukta*, VI. 8) that ultimately Apālā got Indra as her husband. So we may infer that the love of the *Gopinis* who worshipped Krishna as their husband was in keeping with the dictum of the Vedas. The assured fruition, the proper end of love is the oneness with the Beloved.

Ruysbrock observed : "Our work is the love of God. Our satisfaction lies in submission to the divine embrace—a personal-surrender not only of the finite to the Infininite, but of bride to Bridegroom—heart to Heart." So *Narottam*

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1. Indra is the God of the highest heaven and identical with *Mitra*, *Varuna* and *Agni* : "इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुः।"

2. A thrilling draught much drunk in the Vedic age.

Thākur exclaimed : 'When shall I give up the male body and become a woman ?'

It is said that once *Mirābāi*, the great devotee, desired an interview with *Rupa Goswami*, the direct disciple of Śri Chaitanya but as she was a woman, Goswamiji declined to meet her and sent the message, "I do not see the face of a woman. Please, therefore, forgive me. I shall not be in a position to meet you." At this *Mirābāi* sent the sarcastic reply : "My idea was that in *Brindāban* everybody is a female, the only Male Person being Śri Krishna. Since when has Goswamiji become the Male Person (Puruṣa) ?" Whipped with this sarcasm Goswamiji came to his senses and he respectfully welcomed *Mirābāi*. Even the mystics of the West admit now-a-days that the best way to obliterate the distance between the deity and the devotee is to establish a kinship as between the lover and the loved : "If thy soul is to go higher spiritual blessedness, it must become woman—yes, however manly you may be among men."—Said Newman.

The ocean of love between the lover and the loved in the *Rās-lilā* in which the Gopinis of *Braja* drowned themselves to the neck was purely the symbol of a friendly feeling subsisting between two intimates. This is clearly written in the *Chaitanya Charitāmrita* : "The heart is transfixed with the sportive graces and the beauty and charm of dalliance, and there arises the passionate intimacy of friendship."

Śri Rādhā is the type of the Grand Passion. So she has been the medium of expression of the best stage of illicit love. The high ideal of love without desire in the *Rās-lilā* subsisting between the devotee and his God, as between the lover and the loved, is unique in the world. Charmed with the high sentiment of this divine love, Gertrude More has said—"Never there was nor can be imagined such a love as there was between this humble soul (*Rādhā*) and God." It is the *adhirurah* stage of love that has been called spiritual

marriage by the mystics of the West : "The soul's ascent to God begins with adoration and ends in spiritual marriage." This spiritual marriage is the identification of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul which is the common end of all the true lovers of God : "Prepare thyself to receive the bridegroom." – Markos, the Gnostic.

The Grand Passion has twofold manifestation : (1) *Mohan* (stupefaction) is the state of separation—"In separation Krishna is revealed, and the individual identifies himself with Krishna." (2) *Madan* is the state of divine frenzy. The two lofty states of *Mohan* and *Madan* were noticed in Śri Rādhā and Śri Chaitanya. In the *Chaitanya-charitāmrita* it is so written about Śri Chaitanya :

"With the occurrence of the state of divine frenzy the Lord rises up, runs hither and thither, shouts, smiles, dances and sings. Everyone is charmed at the sight of such bodily changes under the emotion of love as tears, horripilation, perspiration and shouting. The eyes are suffused with tears like water coming out of a syringe and everyone around takes his bath in that stream of tears."

Śri Rādhā suffering from the pangs of separation from Śri Krishna fancied a *tamal* tree as Krishna and embraced it passionately.

Whatever may have the reason, in the third cycle, the Dwāpara Age, the low-born and womenfolk were not eligible for the study of the *Vedas* or for following the path of knowledge. Therefore, Lord Krishna showed the inhabitants of *Braja* the path of love and devotion. He Himself appeared in Brindāban as the symbol of *Love* and taught people of all classes and conditions from the highest to the lowest the philosophy of *Love*. The inhabitants of *Braja*, bathed and purified in the celestial current of that divine Love, were initiated into the philosophy of Love ; the seed of love germinated in their pure hearts. Due to their passionate love

for Krishna the cowherdesses of *Brajadhām* did forget even their own existences. Firmly grounded in monism, they realised Krishna in themselves and in every minute particle of the entire Universe, mobile and immobile. These simple-hearted cowherdesses, their identities merged into Krishna, realised that they were not different from Krishna and so they behaved like Krishna Himself. From this we can come to the only conclusion that those simple-hearted *Gopa* damsels attained without any pretence of higher knowledge, the supreme end of monism, the ultimate ideal of the *jnana-yogins* through the medium of love and devotion. For this reason the *Gopinis* of *Braja* were more fortunate than even Goddess *Lakṣhmi* in *Vaikuntha*—this has been repeatedly declared by Śri Chaitanya Deva. And the Vaiṣṇavas of *Gauḍiya* School have placed illicit attachment higher than lawful love. They declare :

"Unless the love is directed to a woman not lawfully married there cannot arise the true passion ; for, with the apprehension of separation the pain ripens into passion every moment ; but, the case is different with a woman who is lawfully married. And as such, the true passion cannot arise in the case of a married woman."

Again,

"There is a heightening of exultation where love is experienced illicitly. There is nowhere the scope for such experience except in the *Braja*." But we have to bear in mind that the love of the *Gopinis* is desireless and is without the least touch of carnality ; this is *Platonic Love*. Their union is not physical but spiritual. So, what doubt is there that this illicit love of the cowherdesses is something divine deserving to be called *Yoga* ? The readings *Ātmani abaruddha souratah*, *Mahitāstasya Māyayā* and *Yoga-māyāmupāsrita* etc., which are to be found in sacred texts are open to criticism. The statement that He had recourse to *Yoga-māyā* goes against the desire for physical union.

He who gets enamoured of Him alone is a self-contented person. Devotion is twofold—*bidhyānuga* (mandatory and selfish) and *magānuga* (spontaneous and selfless). One consists mainly of equipments enjoined by the Śāstras and the other is pure and selfless. This pure, unalloyed *bhakti* is Love or *Prema* : "Devotion considered as a means to an end creates attraction and affection ; and when the affection grows deep it is called Love or *Prema*".—*Charitāmrita.* Love has two stages—*bhāba* and *Mahābhāba* (Passion and Grand Passion), *rurah* and *adhirurah* (diffused and concentrated) or *swakiya* and *parakiya* (lawful and illicit). In the play of love between God and the devotee God is the husband with regard to the *Swakiya* and the paramour with regard to the *parakiya*. The *Swakiya* (lawful wives) of Śri-Krishna are the *Lakṣmi* of *Vaikuntha* and *Rukmini* and *Satyabhāmā* of *Dwārakā* and His *Parakiyā* (Mistresses) are the *Gopinis* with *S'ri-Rādhā* in *Braja*. Of the five kinds of sentiments of Love, namely, *S'ānta*, *Dāsya*, *Sakhya*, *Vātsalya* and *Madhura* or the love pertaining to the lover and the loved, Śri-Chaitanya has declared the love pertaining to the lover and the loved as the highest. Swayed by the last kind of love, one can give up everything for the beloved. In the relation of the lover and the Beloved there awakens in the devotee the feeling of oneness with God. An utterance of *S'ri Rādhā* bears testimony to this view :

"I am at my wit's end to find out what I can give you, dear. Whatever treasure I can give you, the same treasure art thou."—*Charitāmrita.*

It is observed from the *Padāvali* literature that as a result of complete self-surrender the identity of the devotee merges into the identity of God and they become one. "It is a passive and joyous yielding up of the virgin Soul to its Bridegroom ; a silent marriage-vow. It is ready for all that may be asked of it—to give itself and to lose itself to wait upon the pleasure of its Love."—Underhill.

Condemning the Rās-lilā's catechism, replete with descriptions of erotic passion *Swami Premānanda Mahārāj* said, "It is neither conducive nor good for unholy and worldly-minded men, given to sensuality and lucre to listen such catechisms—it does harm to them. How can unholy family men understand the inner significance of Rās-lilā? Had I not witnessed *Thākur* (Paramahansadeva) would I myself understand the significance of the Rās-lilā of Śri-Krishna? At most I would think—'Nothing can do harm to the spiritually strong".

M. M. Pandit Śri Madhusudan Saraswati, a staunch monist of Bengal, who composed *Bhakti-Rasāyān* on the lines of *S'rimad Bhāgavad*, admitted that he could not conceive of any other higher Being than Śri Krishna : *Krishnād* paraṃ *kimapi* tattvaṃ *na jāne.*" So, he worshipped Śri Krishna who incarnates both God and man on earth.[1]

By characterising the love of the *Gopinis* as *Parakiya* (unlawful love) the authors of different texts have in no way belittled the episode of *Rās-lilā* ; rather they added greater beauty and higher significance to it. By ascribing human characteristics to the episode of *Rās-lilā*, the authors wanted to attract and lead the common run of men towards the divine shore through the path of worldly enjoyments.

The teachings of the Vedanta Philosophy prove more or less very stiff and incomprehensible to men of ordinary talents. So, in later age, *S'rimad Bhāgavad* was written with a view to bringing out the essence of the Vedantic doctrines in a lucid and attractive form. *Nārada*, in describing the manner in which the *Bhāgavad* is to be dealt with advised *Maharṣi Vedavyās* : "See that your treatment of the subject is saturated with the sweet sentiment of love and not confined to a dry discussion of the *S'āstras* alone".

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1. "पराकृतमनइन्द्रं नराकृति परब्रह्म ।
सौन्दर्य्यसार सर्व्वस्वं नन्दात्मजमहं भजे ।"—Bhakti Rasāyan.

A loving heart is a great requisite ; because, true knowledge dawns in such a heart and self-realisation follows. Love is spiritual and God is spiritual too. So to realise one who is All-love, we must resort to the path of spirituality. The sky of pure consciousness reveals in the heart of a pure being. As the glowing sun rises from the heart of a formless sky, so does the image of our adorable God arise from the depth of a formless and infinite ocean of pure consciousness. A pious heart is a full-blown lotus on the surface of an ocean of quintational bliss. God rests Himself within the heart of a devotee, full of love, in the same way as a bee lives in the heart of a lotus, full of honey. The sweet and higher sentiments of love, as reflected in The *Bhāgvad*, was fully revealed through the life and activity of Lord Śri Krishna, Śrimati Rādhā and *S'ri Chaitanya*.

In the esoteric vision of a *Vaiṣṇava* devotee, *Rās-lilā* is the profoundest and the sublimest of God's endless plays. In it the love of God revealed itself in its full glory. Bathed in divine love and bliss, the Gopinis of Brindāban, the female devotees of Lord Krishna, danced with Krishna in an ecstatic joy. *S'ukdeva Goswami* says in the *Bhāgavad* that the devotee who narrates, hears and thinks of *Rās-Lilā* with patience and reverence attains the love of God and is thereby able to uproot the wicked desires of the mind. The *Chaitanya Charitamrita* states that love of Gopinis for Krishna is free from the least trace of lust—it is as pure as a piece of gold dazzling in its own lustre. The attraction and love of Krishna for the Gopinis is a revelation of His friendly affection. According to the commentator of the *S'rimad Bhāgavad*, : "Though Śri Krishna spent the whole night with innumerable young Gopinis, he did not lose any strength—'*Tasya Charam dhātu na tu skhalitam.*" How was it possible ? It is clear from this description that their union was not physical but spiritual. This view is supported by the saying "*Bhāba dehena*

tat kṛtam" which occurs in the fifth chapter of the *Ras-Lila Tantra* It means that their union was through subtle bodies i.e., they united spiritually. This declaration removes all shades of doubt. Such union can only be identified with 'Yoga' in its true significance, as described in the mystical science of the Hindus. Yoga is the mystical process of practising abstract meditation with a view to communing with God. In the sacred texts of the *Vaiṣṇavas*, Śrimati Rādhā has been described as Mahābhāvamoyee i. e., one charged with mystic emotion.

To attain divinity one may follow any of the three paths viz., *Jnana*, *Bhakti* and *Karma* i. e., knowledge, love and action. The *Gopinis of Brajadhām* preferred the middle path. Absorbed in love for Krishna, these *Gopinis* lost their selves and entered a state of *Samādhi* which ensued, as if automatically. Lord Tennyson sang :

"Love took up the harp of life and smote
the chords with might,
Smote upon the chord of self, which trembling passed
in music out of sight."

In *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, verse 5. 13. 21 we find that the Gopinis, the female devotees of Lord Krishna who could not attend *Rās-Lilā* owing to the opposition of their husbands or guardians remained indoors meditating upon Krishna and got emancipation. *S'ridhar Goswami* while commenting on this episode, said that the Gopinis attained through abstract meditation the knowledge of Self and became emancipated. It is evident, therefore, that the description of physical union in the Rādhā-Krishna legend as occur in different books are all fictitious and imaginary and if any value is at all to be attached to them, it is because of an allegorical significance, other than containing a sensuous symbolism.

Once upon a time *Nanda*, accompanied by baby Krishna, was tending cattle in the *Bhāndāri* forest when all on a sudden there began to blow a stormy wind, the sky was

covered with dark clouds and the earth was enveloped in deep darkness. Nanda grew anxious for the safety of the child when, by chance, there came young *Rādhā*. Nanda handed over the child to *Rādhā* and asked her to carry him home with haste. *Rādhā* holding the baby Krishna in her bosom, ran to the house of Nanda and on reaching it addressed *Yaśoda* : "O good lady, the baby is frightened, console him with your breast's milk—'Stanaṃ dattvā prabodhaya". *Yośoda* took the child from *Rādhā* and kissed it and Krishna began to suckle her breast. This is another instance, sufficient to denounce the gossip of physical union. The very idea of such a possibility is nonsense and absurd.

Lord Gauranga (Śri Chaitanya) when he caught the vision of Krishna, exclaimed : "I have found out one for whom I have been long burning with a feeling of passionate love—"*Madan dahane dahinu*". Passionate love here cannot imply carnal lust. The word 'passionate love' here can only mean the extraordinary intensity of the flowing of love experienced by Śri Chaitanya. This is felt when the persons suffer separation from the beloved. So the maddening love of the Gopinis is pure in thought and expression. Realising the mystery of this divine love, *Chandi Das*, the Vaiṣṇava Poet sang : "Dive deep into the sea but do not touch water". Love is divine when it is not polluted with lust. The love untainted by sexual desires can attain the sublime grandeur of divine love as was symbolised in Rās-Lilā.

It is only through the medium of pure love that we can overcome the influence of our passions and reach the abode of the Soul and the Soul Supreme. A few lines from Byron's *Don Juan* may be cited below to support the view :

"Love was born with them
in them so intense
It was their very spirit
not a sense."

When human love is raised to the highest degree, it resembles love divine. "Those that took it devoutly and drank it all, became straightway shining like the sun··· whereby they were more deeply gazed into the abyss of the infinite light divine."—Firratti Cap, XLVIII. The love of Śri Rādhā is the prototype of the love divine. So Gertrude More observed : "Never there was nor can be imagined such a love as there was between this humble soul Rādhā and God." He who is a true lover of God declares like the St. Catherine of Genoa : "O' Love, I do not wish to follow thee for the sake of these delights, but solely from the motive of true love."

Perhaps to illustrate how intense our hankering after GoP may be, descriptions of earthly love with its erotic pictures were used in the *Purāṇas*. The authors unable to describe the actual state of ecstasy and bliss derived from the Supreme Union, employed an oblique method with which the common men and women are familiar.

Vaiṣṇava, Sufi and Christian mystics are found using the same medium as no language is known which can convey celestial happiness in its purest form. *Suso* said : 'When the good and faithful servant of God enters into the joy of the Lord, he is inebriated, for he feels in an inebriated degree, which is felt by an inebriated man."

In the sacred texts of devotion, *Purāṇas* and other treatises written on the topic of Rās-Lilā, we come across a word *Raman* abundantly used, which is not vulgar at all as the common people think. Buddhists hold this 'Raman' as the source of all our happiness—it is *'Prajnāpāramitā'* that gives salvation. So there is not the least shade of doubt that this 'Raman' is 'Yoga' or the process to commune with God.[1]

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2. "संयोगो योग इत्यक्त जीवात्मपरमात्मनो ।"

Raman or the union with *Rupa, Rasa, Gandha, Sparśa* and *Sabda* is of five kinds which again can be divided into two classes—external and internal. *Raman* or the process of union of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul falls under the latter class and confers excellent result[1]. This is *Yoga*, the cult of union as stated in the *Yoga-Śāstras.*

Brahman is One but His powers are infinite. These powers have been portrayed in the *Bhāgavad* as sixteen hundred *Gopinis* and their relation with Brahman has been described in connection with *Rāslilā. Rādhā* is the chief playmate of Śri Krishna and other *Gopinis* are only His companions. *Śri Rādhā* is the supreme or primary energy of Śri Krishna[2] while the rest are secondary. Śri Rādhā is the divine manifestation of the delightful mood (*Hlādini Śakti*) of Śri Krishna. It is by such interpretation alone that the real import of the theory of *Rās-lilā* can be maintained. According to Sanātan Goswāmi, the term *Rādhā* means an attribute of Brahman which refers to the state when engaged in *Upāsanā.* Śri Śukdeva has made no mention of the *Gopinis* anywhere in the *Bhāgavad.* As an explanation for such omission, Sanātan Goswami says that Śukdeva did not mention their names simply because the readers' mind might be carried away by the divine sentiment of love. The *Gopini* maddened with divine love as visualised by *Uddhava* referred to in the verse X. 47. 11 of the *Bhāgavad* and the goddess, named *Gāndharbikā* as mentioned in the *Gopāltapani Upaniṣad* are treated by the ancient commentators as identical with *Śri Rādhā.* Śri Rupa Goswami adored this goddess as Śri Rādhā herself. The mode of worship of Rādhā-Krishna is found

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1. "ततो रूपप्रपञ्चस्य पञ्चधा रमनं मतम्।
बाह्याभ्यन्तरभेदेन आन्तरं तु परं फलम्॥"

2. "सुराधा शोभना मुख्या राधा सा सुराधा।"—
Observes *Nilkatha*, the commentator of the Mahabharat.

in the treatise of Pancharātryāgama which is thought to be written before the birth of Christ. The Great *Māhāmāyā* of the Vedas and Upaniṣads appears in *Purāṇa* as *S'ri Rādhā*. The proneness of the mind to find out the ultimate cause is, according to the *Vaiṣṇava S'āstras*, identical with *'Dharma-buddhi'* or deep attachment of Śri Krishna which is conducive to final union of the devotee with Krishna.

With the passing of time the innocent *Rās*-dance consistent with our downfall has become full of eroticism in this Iron Age. In the Mahabharata there is no mention of Rās-lilā ; there is of course mention of a kind of circular dance called *halliś* in *Haribanśa*, the Mahabharata's supplementary section written in a later age, but that is totally free from the touch of eroticism. And in that dance the absence of *S'ri Rādhā* is particularly remarkable. How did *Rās*-dance become interesting by excluding the presiding deity of *Rās* ? Does the performance of Hamlet appeal without the Prince of Denmark ? It appears from this that *Rās-Lilā* was conceived of in a later age. After this the more we proceed to the *Paurāṇic* Age the more do we notice newer erotic touches to the description of *Rās-lila* and newer erotic elements combined to condense the inner sentiments (*Ras*) so much so that while reading the description those religious books are mistaken to be sexology. It is clear that although in the books like the Mahabharata, written in the *Dwāpara* Age there was complete absence of the description of this *Rās-lilā* all the talent and the creative power of writers were applied to the wrong line in the attempt to attract the public mind with sex-appeal in books written in a later age. As a result, the spiritual aspect of *Rās* has been so overshadowed by the odious dust and scum that it seems almost impossible to restore it. By reading this kind of composition full of sex-appeal we have been completely infatuated and have almost forgotten that *Rās-lilā* is not an erotic display but a spiritual allegory.

To the educated class of the present age, preaching high-sounding morals, the nude figures carved on the walls of the temples at Konārak and Puri are certainly not the index of good taste. But surely there is some underlying purpose or meaning behind those sex-manifestations which weak-minded and corrupt men like us cannot follow. There are those who even after seeing those figures can enter the temple with unexcited minds ; their visit to the God bears fruit. The Bhāgavad states that he alone who can sacrifice before the Gracious Lord sexual passion, anger, fear, affection, kinship or fellowship is entitled to attain Him (vide 10/29/13-15).

God is not separate from his devotee. "Whoever in Love's city enters, finds but room for one and in oneness union." The person of a true devotee may be possessed by a being higher than himself but identical with his adorable Lord. Ganges's Upādhāya in his *Iśvarānukram Chintāmani* admits the possibility of such a phenomena. Udayanāchāryya also supports this view : *Pradipavad Darśayati*. Mrs. Annie Besant enquired of Krishnamurti how he felt when he was possesed by Samkarāchrāyya. The reply was that his first experience was of one in a daze and then he felt an awaking, as it were, from a deep sleep. When the body is taken possession of by a higher being the permanent tenant viz. the *Jivātman* is to leave the body for the time being and to make room for the new-comer. Through intense love for Krishna, the Gopinis lost their separate individualities and became possessed by the being of Śri Krishna.

Rās-lilā is no amorous activity. In later ages, fancy made it symbolic of excessive lust in the *Purāṇas*. Ṛṣi Tolstoy said, "The more mystical grew the apprehension of Christ's teaching, the more miraculous elements entered into it ; and the more miraculous it became, the more remote it was from its original meaning ; and the more complicated, mystical and remote it was from its original meaning

the less intelligible it became." So what wonder that in this way Śri Krishna's innocent Rās-dance should be portrayed as an amorous sport. There is nothing strange in the gradual degeneration of the idea of that holy communion of souls with the Supreme Soul (as represented in *Rās-Lilā*). Such divine union and Rās-dance have degenerated into an orgy of lust! Śri Krishna is Brahman in His fullness ("कृष्णस्तु भगवान् स्वयम्।"); He never falls. He is free from all sorts of desires, not to speak of lust. It is a great sin even to dream of such degeneration in the character of one representing the Almighty.

In *Satya Yuga* or the golden age, two Ṛṣis, *Nara* and *Nārāyana* were born of *Dharma*, the mind-born son of *Brahmā*. They practised severe austerities for thousand years. At this Indra apprehended his lordship at stake and sent some *Apsarās* (celestial damsels) to divert their minds. When the *Apsarās* encircled the two Ṛṣis and tried to allure them, the sage *Nārāyana* created the most beautiful *Urvasi* form his thigh through the power of his austerities and sent her to Indra as a presentation. Seeing this the *Apsarās* were very much ashamed of their inferior charms and prayed to *Nārāyana*: "O Lord, we are attracted by your beauty and power. Please do accept us as your wives." The sage replied. "This body has now been dedicated to penance; in my next birth I shall be your husband (Protector). In *Dwāpara*, Nara and Nārāyana were born as *Arjuna* and Krishna respectively and the *Apsarās* as the Gopinis in Brindābon. *Brahmā* himself said that Krishna is *Mahāviṣṇu*—the Supreme Being. *Viṣṇu Puraṇa* recognises him as the *Turiya Brahman*: "*Jāgrad-svapna-suṣuptir* binirmuktaṃ tvāṃ namāmi Gadādharaṃ." There can be no second opinion about the character of Śri Krishna who has been portrayed in a different colour in connection with the *Rās-Lilā*.

The world rests in our mind. As the potentiality of a huge banyan tree with its sky-rocketing tops and wide-spread branches is latent in its minutest seed, or an invisible potential energy generates a tremendous motion in a locomotive, so the idea is virtually the potency of something actual to be formed. To materialise an idea or to actualise it, some driving force behind is indispensible. This force unmoved itself, moves everything and without undergoing any change in itself, changes everything. It is the *First Cause* from which everything came into existence. So far as the human mind can form an idea of this *Premier Intensity*, it is a conception of a Being possessed of universal mind—omniscient, omnipotent and all-pervading. As Soul, it is the inward intensity, the driving force in man—the Lord of the body, mind, and senses. Soul remains awake when mind sleeps in stagnation and body sustains no perception. It witnesses everything, itself remaining invisible. It is the eternal seer, knower and dispenser of all our needs. The Upaniṣadic idealism abounds in thoughts of this Immortal Being.

The ideal laid down in the Vedās and Upaniṣads is purely mystical. According to these texts, Soul is the only reality and it is realisable through spiritual exercises. When the spiritual nature of an ideal reveals, it confirms no longer as a mere mental idea but as a spiritual revelation. Prof. Backwell rightly observes that idealism approaches reality when it has the sanction of self-spontaneous Spirit. An idealist starts with his mind, no doubt, but as he rises higher and higher in consciousness through spiritual exercises, his imaginative ideal gradually takes a spiritual turn. Idealism in spiritual plane is Absolutism. Upaniṣadic idealism is ripe with spiritual thoughts and so the ideal they teach is essentially universal. Ātman is Brahman, so the ideal of

Ātman is ideal of Brahman—the highest God. *Mahāvākyas* or the Logias like '*Tattvamasi*', 'Ahaṃbrahmāsmi' and the similar utterances of the Vedās and the Upaniṣads constitute the main drift of Vedantic and Upaniṣadic thoughts. These sayings teach that there is no difference between man and Brahman—i.e., man is identical to Brahman. The Upaniṣadic philosophy is the guide to higher life.

The Vedās are divided into two branches : The first part comprises *Karma-Kānda* concerning rituals and the sacrificial ceremonies and the other part constitutes *Jnāna-Kānda* which forms the *Āraṇyak* portion of the *Upaniṣads* containing the higher thoughts that lead to Brahman. But mere study of *Āraṇyak* Upaniṣad is not conducive to emancipation. Likewise, no amount of purification or ceremonial action can liberate a soul. Ego is only purified to some extent by purifactory action and performance of rituals. The study of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads gradually removes the darkness of mind and then one is inclined to the path of spirituality. A selfless spirit, divine knowledge and purity of heart go to form an ideal life. A man may be a great philosopher and a spiritual sojourner but if his moral character be not elevated, if he be not a celibate ascetic and if he himself does not follow the ideal of life he preaches to the world, he will not be held in high esteem by the public ; sooner or later he will be exposed and his glorious career as a great philosopher and spiritual leader will be nipped in the bud.

Sādhanā does not end or reach its perfection so long the Yogin is in the plane of duality. So the Indian idealism is based upon '*Advaitavād*' or the doctrine of non-duality, the last word of the *Vedānta*. Śaṃkara more closely follows the Upaniṣadic views in his commentaries than *Rāmānuja* and other sectarian interpreters of the *Vedānta* whose works are more or less tinged with sectarian views. Śaṃkara is the true expositor of Vedāntic doctrine because his

system hinges on *Advaitavād*. He admits the existence of the world-appearance but holds at the same time that the world is all māyā. So, Śaṃkara is an absolutist or absolute idealist. Though the doctrine of non-duality was not unknown to the Indian philosophers like *Bādrāyan*, *Bhartṛhari*, *Goudapāda* and others, still it is to be admitted that Śaṃkar was the first to propound the *Advaita view* of the Upaniṣads in a systematic way. He strictly follows *S'rutis* or the *Vedās*. So Śaṃkara is a traditional interpreter of the Upaniṣads. *S'ruti* refers to the Vedas and Smṛti to the *Epics* and *purāṇas*. When *S'ruti* and *Smṛti* conflict and the views of the latter go counter to those of the former, the former is authoritative. Śaṃkara's commentaries are, therefore, held in high esteem ; *Rāmānuja* on the other hand, in order to keep up his own view that the personal God is the Highest, is alleged to misinterprete certain *Sutras* (aphorism) of the Upaniṣads.

The Vedantic idealism points straight to the achievement of Reality. Prof. John Mackenzie rightly observes that true idealism lays more stress upon abstract perfection than concrete representation. Prof. Backwell in defining idealism says : "We come nearest to a description of reality when we regard it as a community of self-active spirit". Ideal is actualised in spiritual level because reality is spiritual. Hegel rightly remarks that true philosophy starts with one who reaches the highest stage of consciousness. The sages of the Upaniṣads rose to the highest altitude and were competent to describe the mystery of the worlds beyond. So by following the old tradition we have not been led astray from our final goal.

Kant opines that the fact whether our ideas are true or false is to be judged in the light of the ideal experience of reality. Upaniṣads unanimously maintain that reality is of the nature of pure consciousness. So idealism and realism are not

widely apart. Idealism comprises both the philosophy of value and reality. Value and reality differ in our normal consciousness, but in the higher level the difference is transcended ; they are perfectly reconciled there. The value determined by a scientist is not final ; since the more he proceeds with his experiment of an element, the more the element itself becomes invisible in the long run leaving no trace behind. With the disappearance of the element, the scientist's duty is finished. What is essential at this stage is to change the instrument of knowledge. In point of this view it is observed in 'The Universe of Science', P. 203 : "Truth is an absolute notion that Science which is not concerned with any such permanancy, had better leave it alone". Science is concerned with natural truth whereas Mysticism deals with supernatural truth.

Idealism is a theory of value that approaches reality. Value in its fullness is reality. The ultimate reality transcends and at the same time contains every grade of value. Bradley is an absolute idealist. He says : "The relational form implies a substantial totality beyond relations and above them". So the value of an object is to be judged in term of its relation to the Ultimate Reality. If we try to ascertain the ultimate value of a thing raising our consciousness higher and higher we reach at the very core of the thing which is reality. Reality and value though differ in normal consciousness, are identified in higher consciousness. Finite value becomes infinite in the highest strata of consciousness which is similar to God-consciousness. Ideas are pre-suppositions of human mind. If the experience of the external objects is admitted, the ideas also should be admitted to have existence and value. The reality is the same as existence, because existence is the very nature of Brahman. The existence of Brahman or the highest God is a pre-supposition of human mind, and on that account His existence is not denied.

God or the ultimate reality is of the nature of pure consciousness. He must be realised in pure consciousness alone. Since mental impurity has obscured our true nature to some extent, we, in human level, are not pure consciousness. Mind is discursive ; pure consciousness, on the other hand, is divested of all sorts of determination ; it is simply a void or *sunya*. We cannot picture anything upon void. So Hegel observes that as pure Being is free from determination, our categories of understanding when put to pure reason pass into nothing. Kant opines that if we try to determine absolute truth by senses and mind, the realisation will be partial. Pure reason directs us from phenomena to noumena and not from God to the world. It is natural, therefore, that our determination about Brahman should fall short of reality. Brahman is the *Dharma* or law of everything finite. The finite pre-supposes infinite. So reality is the ideal of the unreal. The ideality of the finite is at the root of all idealism. Hegel says : "In philosophy, idealism consists of nothing else than the recognition that the finite has no veritable being. The opposition of idealistic and realistic philosophy is, therefore, without meaning. Realistic is one who believes in the existence of all objects independent of mind." There is not much difference between idealism and realism. "The realist in epistemology is an idealist in metaphysics"—observed Prof. Clifford.

According to Plato, ideal alone is real and existent. To make the ideal fruitful, it is necessary to transcend the level of intellect. Bradley rightly observes that thought can be the ideal of perfect truth and transcended to reality if our thinking faculty ceases to function. Thought is transformed into reality when thought itself is uprooted. Human mind is discursive and dividing ; it is prone to conceive plurality in unity. To realise reality, therefore, which is one without a second, we have to shift the level of our consciousness from intellect to intuition that apprehends unity in diversity.

Unity is the standard of truth. Though the idea creates ideal, still on account of mind's oscilating nature, the realisation of the ideal becomes impossible by any aspect of mind. The ideal to be actual, requires something more than mere thought process. Prof. N. K. Smith views idealism as "covering all those philosophies which agree in maintaining that spiritual values have a determining voice in the ordering of the universe." Spiritualism is beyond the ken of both mentalism and materialism. An idealist starts with his mind but soon he discovers himself shut up in a half-way house.

Ideas constructed by mind—if they can pass the test of reason by direct experience—may be said to have got idealistic value. When such ideal is faithfully followed, the thought which contrived it, is transcended to reality. Kant holds that this kind of transition is possible only in aesthetic feeling. In ecstatic condition, mind fades away in pure consciousness and different grades of reality melt into one Absolute Reality. Bradley also believes that reality is realisable in pure feeling. In pure feeling, intuition or Ṛtambharā *Prajnā* shines forth that apprehends Reality. How the Reality is realised in ecstasy by going out of the body, above the mental plane, is beautifully illustrated by St. Augustine in the following lines : "I entered into my inmost Soul, Thou being my guide. I entered and beheld with the eye of my Soul, above the eye of my soul, above my mind, the light unchangeable.....He who knows the truth, knows that light and he who knows that light, knows eternity. Love knows that light." Wordsworth holds that in poetic imagination, higher thought takes the from of pure reason :

"I saw eternity in other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All came as it were bright :
And round beneath it time in hours, days, years
Like a vast shadow moved."

This world pre-supposes its higher existence beyond its present scene and in this point of view the value of the worldly objects is to be estimated. We are rooted above and the earth has its real existence in heaven. "Every truth is a shadow except the last",—says Quaker Issac Penington "yet every truth is a substance in its own place, though it be but shadow in another place. And the shadow is true shadow, as the substance is true substance." Almost all the schools of Indian philosophy admit the emperical reality of this world to some extent and in this point of view they do not ignore the phenomenal world as absolutely unreal. Yogāchāryya attaches even ontological reality to the world-appearance. Tagore goes so much as to say that even illusion is true as illusion. Lutharat voices Penington : "Everything visible conceals one invisible mystery, and the last mystery is God." This last mystery cannot be sensed but can be intuited alone. The different grades of reality correspond to the different grades of consciousness. At the highest level of consciousness, the Absolute Reality or the Brahman is realised. In this realisation, the law of entropy is suggested : If jiva-consciousness is left to itself i. e. when it is freed from mental function, it tends to increase until it becomes identical with God-consciousness. "Anybody, who doubts the law of entropy, puts himself out of court as a man of science"—observes Sir Arthur Edington. "The key to God-consciousness is in the consciousness of the Soul."—says Dr. Tagore in his *Sādhanā*, P. 30. Buddhists hold consciousness (*Vijnāna*) to be the highest reality and call it *Dharma* or their highest law. This law being the efficient cause of creation is identified with the Law-Giver. Intuition or pure consciousness forms the essential feature of Indian *Yoga-Philosophy*.

In the opinion of Śaṃkara, there is only one, eternal universal consciousness which is Brahman. Śaṃkara is a

monist or absolute idealist. His idealism is not mentalism. He sees absolute identity between Brahman and the world. Śaṃkar does not deny the existence of the external world; he recognises its emperical reality and attaches to the objective world a pragmatic value. 'The objective world is imagined by mind to meet practical needs'—says *Bhāmati*, II. 2. 28. So Deussen observes: "Just as Kant, along with transcendental idealism, maintained the emperical reality of the external world and defended it against Berkeley, so that *Vedāntines* are not prevented by their doctrine of ignorance as the foundation of all being expanded in name and form for maintaining the reality of the outer world against the Buddhists of the idealistic tendencies".—*The system of the Vedanta*, P. 241. For Śaṃkara, the external world is *māyā* in standpoint of the Brahman, and so unreal; but in our worldly life as the objects of the world serve our practical purposes, they are real to some extent. Plato held ideal to be the only truth and that external objects, as we apprehend them, are pale copies. In the Platonic idealism, ideals are real. The ideas that give rise to ideals of spiritual nature are impregnated with reality. In realisation of such ideal, the subject-object distinction is dissolved. This type of idealism is absolutism which is Reality itself

Idealistic view of the social and political life may change from time to time but the Upaniṣadic ideal of the ultimate as set up by the seers, remains immutable. The Vedantic idealism has never been put to question and we still now prefer to stick to the philosophy of the Vedās than to be swept away by the materialistic thoughts of the West which is at present so rampant upon us. It is our inherent and inborn tendency to lean by it.

To divert one's attention from the path of his passionate living, some suggest the practice of art, music or painting as

a substitute. But such suggestions do not often prove very effective, because when the man in some unlucky moments comes across any incentive cause, he relapses to his former bad habits. All other ideals except the ideal of God fail to bring a thorough change in the life of a man and ensure permanent result. Man has a natural craving for pursuing a religious life. Here is no question of compulsion or consequent repression : Man inclines on his own accord to the religion and spirituality ; because he is essentially divine and spiritual. Only an initiative is necessary. Man's destiny is not cast once for all. Hindus are not fatalists—they believe that man is the creator of his own destiny and he can shape it best, only if he wills it. By applying strong will-power primitive urges can be modified to the higher aspiration of life. Even a wild animal gives up its ferocious nature when brought up in a docile environment.

The ideal of God is the ideal universal and it can be followed safely and successfully by all men, irrespective of caste, creed and colour. Family ideal and national ideals may be at times beneficial to some extent but ultimately they prove futile resulting in disastrous conflicts and ill-feelings among the members of the same family, society, or different nations. Such ideals far from restoring peace and happiness to the individual, social and national life create restlessness that gives rise to conflict and consequent havoc and destruction. "If you take up" says Swāmi Vivekānanda "either politics or society as the vitality of your national life, the result will be that you will become extinct"—*Works*, iii—220. Whereas if the ideal of God be taken as the *sumum bonum* of human life once for all, the sense of universal brotherhood will inevitably grow in man. The highest good is the most universal. Plato and Hegel in order to arrive at an idea identical to the highest good had to give up all the ideas of finitude. Chhā. Upaniṣad declares in verse VII, 23,

that there is no peace and happiness in finitude : "*Nālpe Sukhamasti*". None is rest content with the finite world of his self-centred life as it is now. So man is always trying to ascend to what life ought to be and in consequence thereof, a continuous struggle of the temporal to arrive at the eternal—the finite to become Infinite, goes on and it will continue until the goal is finally reached. The union with the highest good is our aim which brings eternal peace and celestial bliss. Only a redeemed Spirit—an emancipated Soul can be said to have entered into the realm of such blessedness. His mind is pacified, his taste and tendencies become sublime and his unified will tends to act for the good of all, the man being transformed divine.

Śri Aurobindo came to show that negation is not the only way to God-realisation, but He can be realised positively as well. In Śaṃkarāchāryya's writings also can be detected this idea here and there. The life of Śri Ramkrishna and his disciples is the living illustration to this ideal. The Ram Krishna Mission is still rendering humanitarian services to the world at large by raising others from their fallen condition. It is not by running away from the world but by embracing it in love and goodness that man can safely reach his eternal home. According to Plato, the highest universal is the highest ideal. The Absolute is to be humanised with all his purity and consciousness. It was the ideal which Śri Aurobindo held before us.

The advent of Supermen who are gifted with divine power introduces a drastic change towards the betterment in the outlook of the worldly-minded people. The Supermen are *Nara-Nārāyana* i.e., God humanised. So the ideal set by them before mankind should be followed in good faith. "I and my Father are one"—St. John, X. 30. Again, "Father is in me and I am in Him."—St. John X. 38. These two Biblical quotations go to prove that adepts are identical with God. Supermen

incarnate God on earth and if we can faithfully follow in their footsteps we shall be identical to our heavenly Father : "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect."—Mathew, V. 58. We cannot know God but we can know His son. But the ignorant men fail to measure their greatness and realise true identity of these divine personages ; they do not find any distinction in them from the common men. The regenerate people think that these men also eat, drink and sleep as the common men would do. If anyone speaks of Jesus or Śri Chaitanya as incarnattons of God the ignorant mass would be loath to hear it and phoo phoo away its possibility to a dead certainty.

Both Socrates and Plato believed that behind this world-creation there is an intelligent power which directs it towards a good end. Plato admits only one reality which he calls *Good*. This *good* implies to what we call God and for Plato God is the Soul. In Timaeus we come across a craftsman who is thought to have created this universe out of the residue of the previous creation. The craftsman symbolises a Soul which is the only reality and each thought and action of our everyday life should be conscreted to the Soul or *Ātman*. As for the knowledge of the inner world, the external material eyes have to be closed, so for the realisation of the higher Self which is purely spiritual, the material lower self has to be sacrificed. Self-surrender is essential. If a man can think himself as a mere instrument in the hands of God, the consequence of action can no longer bind or torment his mind ; because, he is not then the doer or the superintending ego. "When I saw that God doeth all that is done, I saw no sin, and then I saw that all is well."—Says Jullian Norwich.

Higher principles of life can be taught to others by one who is established in it, and sets example in his own life. "I cannot help my neighbours to keep their gardens in proper order unless I keep my own garden in order"—remarked

Prof. Jung. A true spiritual leader is true to his thoughts, words and actions. He himself leads the life of the ideal he preaches to the world, otherwise his utterances fail to impress public minds. The *Sermons* preached by Buddha and Christ still appeal to and attract our minds though they were uttered more than two thousand years before. The ideal they held before the world—the secrets of their individual life and living still inspire us to-day, simply because those adepts materialised their ideal in their individual lives. None can question the bonafides of their *Sermons* nor hesitate to follow them in their footsteps. Those great teachers of mankind are still alive in our hearts through their *mahāvākyas* or *Sermons* they preached and will continue to live and infuse religious fervour into all generations to come.

Since we are finite beings, Brahman who is 'bhūmā'—the infinite and 'mahato mahiān'—the greater than the great, can be our ideal. The superman of the monstrous type, the wielder of brute force, cannot be the ideal of man. Nietzche's superman totally differs from the ideal of an Indian superman. His superman is a tyrant who creates hatred and terror in the minds of men ; but the symbol of our superman is Christ, Buddha, Śri Chaitanya and Gāndhi—the incarnations of love, truth and peace. The superman of the former type is extremely egoistic. As such, pure reason or consciousness of the higher order cannot manifest in him. The world can expect nothing from such a despot excepting havoc, chaos and destruction. They tried to establish their supremacy in the world with the sword and by the sword they were perished. To become a superman, it is not enough to have power in command to rule the world but he must be strong enough to control his abnormal passions.

In a famous article on *The doctrine of sword*, Mahātmā Gāndhi observed : "The non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brutes. I believe that non-

violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment." Under his able leadership, India won her independence not through horror and bloodshed but by a unique method which was adopted in consistent with her traditional ideal. She set an ideal method as well as a new strategy in war unknown before. We are essentially divine and so there is an inherent urge within us to unfold our divine nature. This urge, according to Spinoza, is the motive power which acts behind all our enterprises, whether we are conscious of it or not. Good qualities like renunciation, humanitarian services rendered in a selfless spirit and love for all, are not the products of natural law. Man is perfect in his universal life. In the self-centred egoistic plane we are separated from others which is not at all congenial to the awakening of a sense of universal brotherhood. There is an inherent tendency in man to be universal. Self-renouncement and righteousness feed the food of Soul-life. When higher value in life is appreciated and its philosophy is put into practice, it transforms the primitive instincts into master urge of bliss. This relieves us of mental tension and restores mental equilibrium. "When philosophy ends in experience ideas are lost in one ideal. Then, all at once, the peace which we were seeking but which always fled from us, comes of its own accord and it is well with us."—Said Schopenhauer.

The extravagant type of other-worldliness as postulated in the *Sermon on the Mount* was also in vogue in the East. But at present the outlook of renunciation has been changing from negation to affirmation. The seers of the modern world proclaims positiveness to be also a way to God-realisation. Śri Aurobindo is perhaps the pioneer who experimented the positive method in his own life. Those who believe that God is immanent in the universe cannot but render help to the suffering humanity and work for the spiritual transformation of the world. Plotinus said: "Do not suppose that a man

becomes good by dispensing the world and all the beauties that are in it. Those who despise what is so nearly akin to the world yonder, prove that they know nothing of the world yonder except in name." The extreme form of negation that we come across in St. Jeromi's writing is rather shocking: "Should your little nephew hang on your neck, pay no regard to him. Should your mother with ashes on her head and garments rent show you the breast at which she nursed you, heed her not; should your father prostrate himself on the threshold, trample him under foot and go your way"—*Ecclesiastical History*. We cannot understand, where the soul is to rest if the heart is so dried up and destroyed. If such a heartless ascetic wishes to unfold the divinity within him, a monster will come out. Other-worldliness certainly does not demand annihilation of all good qualities that characterise a man divine. Heartless morality divested of all humane qualities is not conducive to deliverance, rather it proves a stumbling block on the way to the spiritual progress. Indian idealism is based on the philosophy of heart and not on the stern puritanism.

Man is a Tripartite creature: The animal in him is the combination of physical body and life-energy; the man in him is the union of soul with mind and the Soul in him is the divine essence hidden within his heart chamber which opens by the development of love, knowledge and bliss to their fullest extent. Taking part in the field of *māyā*, man has forgotten his divine origin; he is content with shadow and finds little time to look back upon Reality. Very few, however, knows how to realise it and what to do with it. Alas! O Lord, what a pity that a man is as ignorant of his potential power as the cloud is of the mighty thunder concealed in it or as air is of fire hidden in it.

THE QUEST OF THE INFINITE

PART II

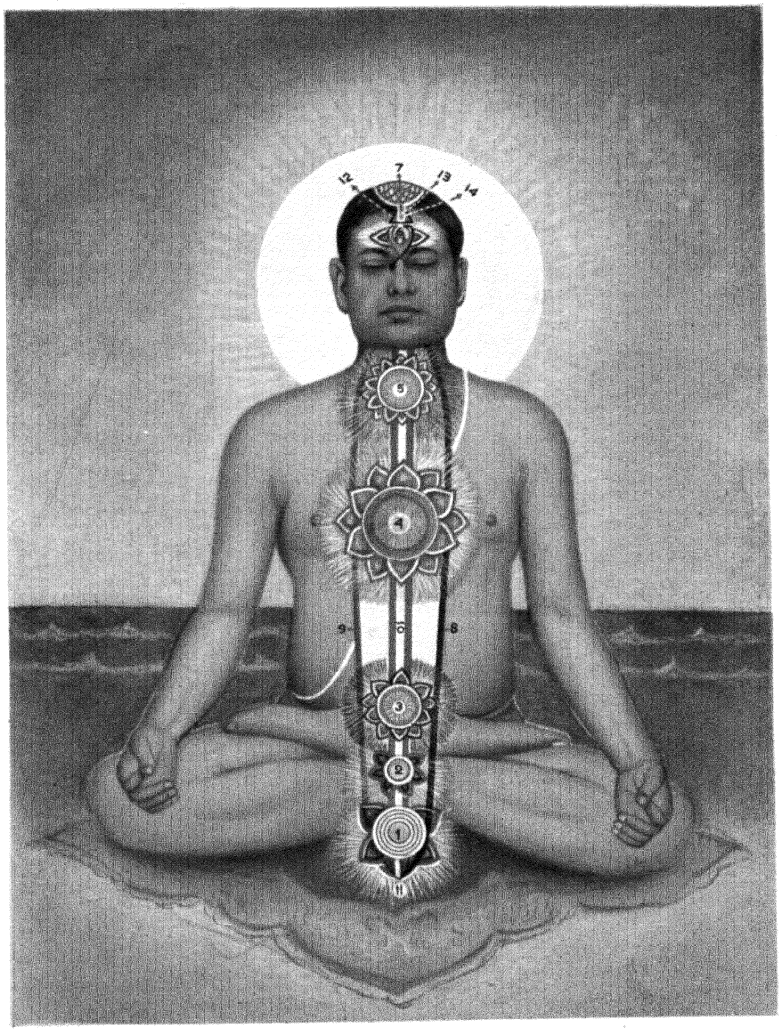
THE PRACTICE OF YOGA

BY
KAVIRAJ A. P. ROY

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SIDDHĀSANA

Or the sitting posture during the practice of Yoga.

It yields success in Sādhanā.

For particulars see overleaf.

THE QUEST OF THE INFINITE

1. *Mulādhāra* : The first circle from below wherein lies the *Kundalini* like a coiled up serpent.

2. *Sādhisthāna* : The second circle at the root of the generative organ.

3. *Manipur* : The third circle at the navel.

4. *Anāhata* : The fourth circle around the heart-centre.

5. *Visuddhā* : The fifth Chakra encircling the throat-centre

6. *Ājnā* : The sixth circle between the two eye-brows

7. *Sahasrāra* : The seventh and the highest circle inside the brain-matter.

8. *Idā* : It is a nerve on the left of the spinal cord

9. *Pingalā* : It is a nerve on the right of the spinal cord.

10 *Susumnā* : It is the divine nerve flowing through the centre of the spinal column.

11 *Triveni* : It is a triangular area below *Mulādhāra*.

12. *Upper Triveni* : It is called *Brahma-Yoni*, the triangular area, lying above the *Ājnā-Chakra*

13. *Brahma-Nādi* : This nerve is situate inside *Chitrā-nādi* and through it nectar drips down from *Sahasrāra* or the thousand-petalled lotus which is the highest centre of consciousness and the seat of *Paramātman*

14. *Chitrā-Nādi* : The portion of the nerve *Susumnā* inside the *Brahma-Yoni* is called *Chitrā*. The nerve *Chitrā* emanates brilliant light and hence it is a great resort to the contemplative Yogins.

AN INTRODUCTION TO YOGA-PRACTICE FOR THE BEGINNERS

A beginner willing to learn the practice of Yoga is advised first to study *The Quest of the Infinite*, Part I, with rapt attention. When by repeated readings, he is equipped with a thorough knowledge of the subjects dealt with therein, the Second Part, i.e., *The Practice of Yoga* may be taken up. If the first part is read carefully and attentively with a devotee's sincere earnestness, it will go a great way to calm down the urges of his passions and in creating a deep thirst for the world beyond and unknown. When this condition of his being is attained, the practice of Yoga will be found to be easy, pleasing and encouraging.

The Gita, IV. 37. observes that as a log of wood is reduced to ashes in contact with fire, so does the fire of knowledge reduces all works. Pure Ātman is like a wheel and the body together with mind and senses constitute another wheel. *Karma* is the piece of log that connects the two and only the axe of knowledge can cut the log in twain when the two wheels get separated from each other. "Immortality is attained through knowledge alone"—says *Iśa* Up. II. He who has acquired the power of discrimination between the Soul and not-soul, i.e., between the eternal and the transient, though he be a house-holder, is entitled to tread on the path of knowledge as King *Janak* and others actually did. For the attainment of that unattainable knowledge which is the only cause of emancipation many are seen to struggle but only a few come out successful. He who is blessed with the four-fold qualifications is entitled to travel in the path of knowledge, entrance whereto is the result of thorough discrimination between the transient and the eternal. Remember that Soul as a divine fragment is the only reality

in heaven and earth and everything else is perishable. This power of discrimination is the *First Great Condition of Success.*

The Second Condition is the total indifference to all pleasures of life here or hereafter. This absence of thirst for anything on earth or in heaven is the second qualification which a student of *Yoga* must possess.

The Third Condition is the possession of six-fold attributes —*S'ama, Dama, Tapas, Kṣānti, S'raddhā* and *Samādhān* which I shall presently explain. The control of mind is *S'ama.* The control of sense-organs is *Dama.* The practice of one's own duties is *Tapas.* The endurance of happiness and misery, heat and cold, and all these contradictory qualities is called *Kṣānti. S'raddhā* is faith in the teaching of the *Guru* and in the *Vedānta. Samādhān* or *Samādhi,* the concentration of mind on one thing is the last of the six qualities.

The fourth condition is a strong desire to escape bondage. In some places *Uparati* is mentioned in the place of *Tapas. Uparati* is the cessation of attraction of worldly pleasures and worldly pursuits. Any one following the said conditions faithfully can attain the full knowledge of Brahman in spite of the fact that he lives like a worldly man and has got a family of his own to maintain and a business to look after.

In some religious books there is recommendation of renunciation in the place of penance. Renunciation is nothing but detachment from objects of enjoyment. It consists in deep concentration on God and its external visible sign is spontaneous aloofness from worldly matters. The highest state of renunciation is reached in complete indifference even to such a boon as the attainment of the high position of the Creator of this universe.

To learn the practice of yoga the beginner will first have to control his diet and to be of good behaviour, as otherwise it will not be possible to make definite progress in it; for

our body and mind are influenced by the food we eat. The food we take is converted into our physical and mental energy and builds our future character. That is to say, much of what we shall be in the future depends upon the food we take now. Particular kinds of food bring particular changes in the mind. It becomes difficult to control the mind if we partake of such provoking and sensitizing things as fish, meat wine etc. A habitual drunkard loses his will-power, and rich food causes excitement of body, mind and senses, as a result of which the observance of celibacy becomes impossible. So if diet and mode of living are *Rājasik* and *Tāmasik* in character, i.e., if they are determined by passion and the darkness of ignorance, then good qualities cannot grow in the human heart, for the mind is not thereby purified and made still; consequently the practice of yoga turns into a farce. So to attain spiritual progress, we must be on our guard to see that the quality of *Sattva* gets upperhand in our nature and character.

The *Bodhi Tree* under which Lord Buddha attained enlightenment is held in the highest reverence, but it is a matter of deep regret that no attention is paid to the process of meditation which Buddha adopted to acquire the light. For the attainment of that divine light, a student of yoga is to maintain a certain standard of life: He is to be a vegetarian, he is to avoid rich food, he is always to be careful, and he is to be non-violent. He must be benevolent and truthful. He shall have no greed and he must control his passions. He who has controlled his senses is truly pious; others only pretend to be so. The human mind is fascinated by many tempting articles of enjoyment. If the temptations are checked altogether, mental balance will be automatically established. The devotee is to eat only to live, and he must have no longing or greed for any kind of food. Those who intend to take to the path of

yoga should be satisfied with such food as sunned rice clarified butter, milk, fruits and sweetmeats. A half of the stomach is to be filled with edibles, one fourth of it with water and the rest one-fourth is to remain empty. During the practice of *Prūnāyāma*, it is proper to take fat-contained food like milk, thickened milk, Ghee (clarified butter) etc. It is advisable to sit and to sleep on straw-mats, deer-skin, blanket or uncovered earth. Do never sit for Yoga-practice and meditation by checking nature's calls like motion or urination. The greedy and the glutton have no religion, and the path of yoga is not meant for them. To eat too much or to fast, to sleep too much or to keep waking late hours, to labour too hard or to be averse to labour are not conducive to the practice of yoga-meditation or *Sādhanā*.

S'rimad Tailangadhara Swami, a great and godly *yogin*, gave this injunction : "Food does not harm one's religious belief but delays the progress to salvation which lies in foregoing desires. Talking much is wasting energy. Do not nurse feelings of enmity against other religions. A person shall attain salvation through whichever religion he believes in." Paramhansa Deva observed : "That which the Hindus call *Jal*, the Muslims call *Pāni* and the Christians call water —do they make any difference ?" Similarly men have adopted different means to reach God and have fancied various names and forms of God according to the variety of clime, country, age and environments.

An aspirant must neither indulge in tasteful dishes, nor accept any gift from others nor obeisance of others. According to *Muṇdakopaniṣad*, the body of a Yogin is to be maintained by such food and cloth as are obtained by chance. A Yogin must be a celibate ascetic because virile power is the only asset of a spiritual sojourner to progress in the practice of Yoga. Due to the predominance of a certain type of impressions the outlet for seminal fluid may be choked. In

some persons, celibacy is inborn with them– Swami Vivekananda is the best example to this. Some others, though living in a family do not feel any sex-urge. Lord Kitchener's aversion to womenfolk is well known. Any way, a Yogin who can retain his virile power, is identified with God : "Urdharetā bhabedyastu sa devo natu mānabaḥ."

Any one aspiring after spiritual fruition should keep himself aloof from fruitless gossips. Śaṃkara, in his *Vivek-Chuḍāmani*, P 370, opines that the suppression of speech is the first step towards successful meditation and Yoga-practices. The control of speech removes all obstacles from the path of Yoga : "*Yogāntarāyan mounena*"—The Bhagavad, VII. 15. The Mahabharat, Śantiparva, as well supports this view. The Yogavāśiṣtha Ramayan, Revākhanda, 120, declares that the restraint of speech is the best of all vows : "Iṣtabratānāṃ paramaṃ mounaṃ sarvārtha sādhakaṃ". According to the Bhāgavad, XI. 23. 28, to determine a truth we must keep silent like a crane, controlling the faculty of speech. The Mahabharat, Śantiparva. Ch. 276, advises indrawing of mind by controlling the organ of speech which is the best means to rest in peace : "Ekarupaḥ praśāntātmā mouni svātmamukho bhaba." Muktikopaniṣad states that without the control of speech and supreme renunciation, a high stage in *Sādhanā* cannot be attained. The *Vivek-chuḍāmani*, P. 536, also observes that the spirit of dispassion and the vow of silence bring the highest bliss in life.

Word is Brahman ; use words rightly. Any wrong use of it is wilful dishonour to the Lord. The first word uttered by Brahman was *OM*. *OM* is the sum total of all sounds represented by the alphabets. So each word is indeed Brahman. Be careful not to pollute it. This is the connecting link between the Lord and His creation. The holy word *OM* created this universe and we are to go back to the Creator with the help of proper and devoted recitations and

meditation of this holy Vedic verse *OM*. Since the time of creation the Holy '*OM*' is lying imprisoned in the heart-centre (*Anāhata Chakra*) of all the living beings. Liberate it from its fettered condition by deep meditation on it and constant repetition of the same devotedly. Complete freedom of this mystic syllable '*OM*' will mean nothing but *Nirvāṇa* or total emancipation of your own soul.

A careful study of the scriptures removes all shades of doubts and misgivings and creates an apathy towards wordly enjoyments. *Yama*, the god of death says that the thought of other-worldliness does not arise in the minds of the people given to enjoyments, especially in the minds of those who are rich, because of their minds being always stupified. They do not believe in the existence of any higher world and consequent on their inability to overcome the power and spell of *Yama* ; they repeatedly fall a victim to birth and death[1]. It is useless to preach the theory and utility of renunciation to them. So Christ says : "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast pearls before the swine." Higher knowledge should not be imparted to one whose passions are not subdued or to one who is neither a son nor a disciple (*S'veta* Up, VI. 22). A compassionate preceptor reserves nothing but tenders everything he has to offer. After initiation, a *Guru* blesses his *S'iṣya* : "I sacrifice my peace for you. Be peace with you". A *S'iṣya* (disciple) also must in his turn be always ready to sacrifice his life in the interest of the *Guru* : "*S'iṣ dhare bhuin utāre tav s'iṣya hui.*" Śaṃkara enjoins that a *S'iṣya* after completion of his study must worship his *Guru* with his head touching

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1. "ना साम्पराय प्रतिभाति बालम् ।
प्रमाद्यन्तं वित्तमोहेन मूढ़म् ॥
अयं लोकः नास्ति पर इति मानी ।
पुनः पुनर्वशमापद्यते मे ॥"

the Guru's feet before he takes leave of his preceptor. According to the *S'iva-Siddhānta*, a qualified *Guru* is an incarnation of God.

Yoga-Sāstras hold that during the practice of *Yoga*, some supernatural powers may arise in the Yogin with the help of which he can command the natural forces and gods of lower heavens to act as per his sweet will. But if he tries to exercise that power thus attained to his own worldly interest or try to exhibit it, he will make suicide of his spiritual career—his Sādhanā will be nipped in the bud. *Bāmā Kṣepā*, an adept, while seated one day encircled by his devotees and disciples, pointed to his pet dog *Kelo* and said : "This *Kelo*, in his previous birth was a Yogin when he acquired some spiritual powers, but unluckily he was tempted to exercise that power in gratifying his infernal desires. He indulged in sensual pleasure so much that he was no better than a beast. He is now dragging an animal existence in the person of *Kelo*. God has spared a litile memory of his past life. You can find him always lying at the door of the temple and tears running down his cheeks. Thus he atones for his past misdeeds. When the bell rings for vespers, *Kelo* retires to the burning ghat everyday and there gazing at the sky laments piteously. Did you not hear him crying ?"

These attainments resulting out of Yoga-practices are but the common place occurances in the intermediary stages of *Sādhanā*. Some malicious demi-gods of lower heavens with a view to diverting the devotee's attention from his practice may allure him with something that would place him in a better stead in his wordly life. If the devotee yields to this temptation, his *Sādhanā* will be brought to a disastrous close. They may impose their own thought and will to fulfill their own ends which cannot be satisfied for want of their physical body and senses. If the *Sādhak* mistakes them to be that of his own, he will be led astray. To avoid this catastrophe,

the trainee is advised to consult his spiritual guide or some advanced Yogin.

Experiences obtained during the first stage of spiritual exercises like meditation and contemplation occur in the mental plane Though not so insignificant as to be ignored, these experiences cannot be looked upon as evidences of remarkable progress in the spiritual quest ; because they are often false and are apt to mislead the beginner. But the experiences of deep meditation or in the state of *Samādhi* arising in the plane of intuition are always true and dependable. Therefore, before accepting such experiences as true one should look at their place of origin, otherwise, one may be easily misled. Those who feel gratified with such experiences of the mental plane or those who have acquired only a little psychic power by yogic culture and take pleasure in them and even try to impress others and draw simple people to them by the exhibition of these powers, are confronted with utter failure in their progress along the path of spirituality, nay, even meet with sure downfall from yogic life. Before you accept anything as true, examine it well in the touch-stone of your own conscience. You must accept a view, not because it is so written by an erudite scholar, not because it is the saying of a spiritual leader, not even if your spiritual guide be a recluse, but if you feel consent of your Soul in it.

In supra-mental regions, the experiences of the *Sādhak* cannot but be genuine, true and dependable. Luckily in this plane, the *Sādhak* may meet with a good soul who may help him in his spiritual quest and lead him up to border smoothly. By dint of further *Sādhanā*, when the last barrier falls, the *Sādhak* is thrown, as it were, into the world of the Absolute Brahman—the brightest, the most peaceful, blissful and exalted of all. To enter this highest state the devotee must possess as pre-requisite, strong aspiration for the highest realisation, purity of heart, whole hearted devotion

and a spirit of complete self-surrender. By a mere pose of apparent egolessness, he cannot become one with the Supreme, because, 'truth is not realised by untruth and highest good is not attained by an act of cleverness'—said Swami Vivekananda.

There is no nobility even in moral snobbery. Some philosophers of high intellectual flight pretend to be spiritual leaders but their activities in every-day life betray their emotional nature giving vent to selfishness, greediness, hatred and malice which characterise a man living under the influence of *Avidyā*. These philosophers may be intellectually giants but morally and spiritually they are very yoor. Morality is the very foundation upon which the spiritual life stands. An immoral life is a house built upon quick-sand—a boat without a helm. Pretention is the biggest stumbling block on the path of spirituality than physical indulgence, passionate living or even earthly possessions. "No satisfaction based upon self-deception is solid".—Rightly observes Russel. These so-called spiritual leaders are themselves over head and ears in passionate indulgence and ask others to follow the philosophy they create out of their own imagination. If one is not to be doomed, one must look for a contemplative saint for help and guidance.

"So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity,
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angles lacky her,
Driving off each thing of sin & guilt."

—*Comus Line*, 453.

"The mind knows by becoming one with what it knows. The mind becomes what it thinks"—observes A. H. Armstrong. It is the experience of the Yogins that in certatin higher stage of super-normal perception, mind does not exist as mind but is replaced by some other higher faculty of perception. In the depth of our being, mind is not the only instrument

of perception : "Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing"—enjoins Thomas Huxley. God dwells within you as Ātman and He is your guide. He knows better where to lead you and how.

When a devotee tries again and again to fix his mind on his Beloved Lord, he succeeds in the long run and his being is ultimately absorbed in Him. "Let it be your business"—enjoins St. Lawrence "to keep the mind in the presence of the Lord. If it sometimes wanders and withdraws itself from Him, do not much disquiet yourself for that. The will must bring it back in tranquillity".—*The Practice of the Presence of God*, P. 32. In "*The Eternal Companion*", P. 127, Swāmi Brahmānanda Mahāraj says : "When you sit in meditation, first think of a blissful divine form. This will have a soothing effect upon your nerves, otherwise meditation will become dry and tedious. Think of the form of your chosen ideal smiling and full of joy." For successful meditation, the great Swami suggests : "Remember when you eat, when you sit down and when you lie down. If you practise in this way, you will find that when you sit down to meditate, your mind will naturally become absorbed in its meditation, a fountain of joy will spring forth from within"—Ibid P. 143-44. We cannot jump at the spiritual summit ; we are to evolve towards it. To mount to Godhead is to descend into oneself. Concentration is the sure path and safer stairs. In a secluded place, sit down cross-legged, calm and quiet, meditating upon God and a moment will come when the whole mental faculty will be hushed into silence ; the body will be motionless as if dead and gone ; only in the depth of your being the consciousness will remain ever awake, alive and alert fixed upon the object of your meditation. The hairs stand erect, the body loses its weight and owing to an

upward attraction it may even rise from the seat. As the *Jivātman* rises higher and higher through *Suṣumnā*, the spiritual nerve within, the bonds of it fall off one after another and the free Soul reveals itself shedding its light all around. The experiences first come in intuitive glimpses, then in the form of visionary experiences and they come at last in an oceanic flood of transcendental light and knowledge.

Activity of mind is limited by space and time. The knowledge derived through mind is therefore inevitably finite. So we cannot realise the infinite Reality with the help of a finite mind, which is not endowed with the power of omniscience and omnipotence. Man moves and has his being in normal consciousness, so his activity is also within the limit of time, space and relativity. Through deep meditation man rises to the plane of higher consciousness when he has supernatural visions and realisations *Jayanta Vatta* holds that such power can be acquired by constant meditation. If we concentrate our mind on a particular object, constantly meditating upon it, mind will naturally get tired and ultimately fall into a swoon resulting in a total inactivity of mind. At this juncture the real Self emerges and floods everything with the light of its own consciousness. Miss Underhill observes that superhuman knowledge is obtainable by illumination (Mysticism, P. 394).

Mind works within its own limit and when it reaches its last halt, it is at its last gasp and finding no other alternative, it makes over its charge to Ātman. Ātman is of the nature of pure consciousness which awaits the taking of charges from the lower self or mind and the mission of human life is fulfilled. The higher Self takes the responsibilities of the lower upon ownself only when the self-surrender is volitional and complete. Morality, austerity, love, devotion and deep meditation are pre-requisites to induce the lower self to surrender itself volitionally reserving nothing. Morality lays

the foundation of a religious life, austerity or asceticism befits the body and mind to undertake Yoga-practices which again in their turn create a mood for meditative exercises. Meditation and intense love for God contact the lower self with the higher which is the Ātman—the *Brahman*.

Through deep meditation spiritual insight or illumination is won. The spiritual fruits are gathered in the moments of insight. The lower self comes nearer to the higher at these moments and gets illumined and transformed. This illumination brings for Yogin the knowledge of the Brahman and the knowledge of this highest God is a prelude to emancipation. All these steps in the high ladder of emancipation must be practised by him who aspires after final liberation. The goal is reached where the three paths—knowledge, love and action (practice of Yoga) terminate and meet. One is useless without the other. Disinterested action creates love of God and this love brings knowledge of the Brahman. Chhāndogya Upaniṣad, 1. 10. 11, declares that only rituals without knowledge is of no use. The Hindu sacred texts speak of *Tapas* in high terms of praise. The *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*, goes so much as to say that the attainment of divine knowledge is possible if one leads an ascetic life in strict discipline (III. 1.5.). It cannot be denied that subtlety of both body and mind is acquired through asceticism and in consequence thereof subjective results follow. It creates a super-normal power of thought and will, by the help of which the ascetic can ascend to higher consciousness through meditation and gain higher knowledge. The *Jains* are of opinion that pure knowledge or *Vidyā* is attainable through asceticism. Almost all the sects in India attach an unusual importance to the ascetic life. In Bṛhadāraṇyak Upaniṣad, V. II. I, it is urged that if sickness and sufferings can be endured patiently taking them to be penance or *tapasyā*, the sufferer wins the reward of an ascetic life. What is required of an ascetic is to renounce the world with

all its pleasures, live a simple hermitic life, take food only to keep himself alive and always fix his mind on God through constant meditation. Such a life reveals higher truths. The ascetic and contemplative life is held in India as an ideal.

Sādhanā begins with the help of both body and mind. If the trainee rudely strain his body and mind to get a quick response, the latter become tired soon failing to secure the desired result for the *Yogin*. That mere self-mortification is not conductive to emancipation is evident from the Buddha's early ascetic life. He observed afterwards that self-mortification is an act of madness on the part of an *Arhat* who aspires after *Nirvāṇa*. He rejects both self-torture and self-indulgence, and asks his followers to follow the middle path : Do not thirst for anything worldly, lead a simple life, practise *Satya* and *Ahimsā*. This, in main, is the *middle path* which Buddha showed to his followers and the world at large. Pious aspiration, right action and whole-hearted devotion constitute the 'middle path' and Buddha is sanguine that if this path is faithfully followed, the *Arhat* will taste the bliss of *Nirvāṇa* in this very life.

To the materialist West, asceticism is a mere waste of vital energy. But in the East it has got a moral significance and importance. To an advanced *Yogin*, the externalities of religion may have no utility but to the beginner, preliminary rituals, practices and asceticism form the very basis of spiritual life. So Sat-karma and tapasyā cannot be ignored as altogethor unimportant and useless effort. The very outward appearance of a *tapasvi* shows that he has acquired divine grace. His indifference to the worldly enjoyments, his equanimity and tranquillity of mind, clearness of conscience, his ever-cheerful disposition, indicate that he is a citizen of a higher world.

Union with God is secured by constant meditation. "Since Jiva is a part, to regain its fullness it must meditate on

Brahman who is the whole".—Says Ballavāchāryya (Vide Suddhādvaitamārtanda, P. 16). For an all-round improvement, it is necessary to undertake the practice of Yoga, devotional exercises, incantation and meditation simultaneously[1]. In the Gita, II. 66, Lord Krishna says : "Without meditation there can be no peace in mind and without peace how a man can enjoy celestial bliss ?" In the verse 64, He further says that the man who is capable of controlling his mind, can move in the sense-world, unaffected by its allurement and tribulation ; because, his mind rests in peace. Pleasure or pain, good or evil belongs to the relative plane, i.e., they are phenomenal having no factual existence. They are obverse and reverse of the same coin. To a restraint mind these are but passing phases without any solid foundation. This view enables the knower to sustain the peace of mind amidst the accidents of life and tribulations of the world. "All men desire peace but few are there who desire the thing that make peace"—regrets the author of *'Imitation'*. Surrender your self-will to the will of God. It is the safest way to reach the permanent abode of peace and bliss.

Spiritual progress commensurates with the growth of sincere love and eagerness for God. God is merciful ; He listens to the sincere prayer of a devotee and Himself opens his eye of wisdom—the yogic vision when the devotee becomes endowed with eight kinds of attainment. Love grows by prayerful devotion ; so prayer forms an essential part of worship. Through constant prayer, incantation and meditation when body, mind and heart are made pure and sublime, the godly qualities and the higher sentiments of heart become manifest in the devotee. God is pleased with the man each word and action of whom are prone to declare His glorious

1. "तस्मै तपो दमः कर्म्मेति प्रतिष्ठा वेदाः सर्व्वाङ्गानि सत्यमायतनम् ।"
—Kena Up, III. 7. 15.

existence. God wills that mankind would bring down heaven to the earth by their noble and pious deeds. Śri Subhas Chandra Bose emphasised : "I have great confidence in the goodness of mankind. If it is possible for an individual to lead the holy life, there is no reason why mankind as a whole cannot be holy and divine. I do not agree with those who hold the contrary view.' Rabindranath also observed : "It is a sin to lose confidence in man ; to admit his defeat as final is a great offence." To Śri Aurobindo, the *summum bonum* of human life lies in transcending the barriers raised by material prakriti and transforming it into a life divine. He who sincerely works for the fulfilment of God's will, merges in Him after death. Man is perfect and divine when his will follows the will of Providence. Devotion to God is the highest acquisition in the life of a true devotee : "*Bhaktireva bhuyasi*". *Purṇa-Yoga* of Śri Aurobindo can be identified with the *Bhakti-Yoga* of the *Viṣṇuites*. The term *Yoga* implies in reality the *Bhakti-Yoga* ; other exercises pertaining to Yoga-practice are seccndary—they are auxiliary. The ideal of love is spiritual, but the path lies through material. Its purpose is to lead devotee to the monistic truth through dualistic idea. It is along this path of love and devotion that Ramprasad and Ramkrishna proclaimed the glory of dualistic worship by converting it into a monistic realisation.

The object of *Yoga* is union with Brahman. For the attainment of this highest acquisition, the *Yoga-Sutra* advocates a complete isolation of Soul from body and mind, and points out methodically the means to attain the end. Man is a *Tripartite* creature of body, mind and soul. The soul which is purely a spiritual entity encaged within the human body must come out of its present limitations. By the practice of Yoga, it can burst out of its physical and mental covers and remain in an isolated condition, freed from all its bonds. The first aphorism of the *Yoga-Sutra*

enjoins suppression of all sorts of mental restlessness *i. e.* mind must remain aloof from discursive and useless thoughts. Once it is done, a greater power rises from the depth of man's being and carries in its train the normal consciousness of the *jiva* to the higher spheres evolving a new personality in man. In the culmination of this upward ascent, the soul abides in its true nature. The *Yoga-Sutra* abounds in emphatic assertions of similar view, and in India, it is undoubtedly the authority on the subject. *Yoga* involves both physical and psychological exercises. By physical practices which include also the Saṭ-karma, *i. e.*, six-fold duties of a Hindu, both body and mind are made calm and pure and by mental training which covers the four-fold practices of Sama, Dama, Niyama and Saṃyama, mind is made subtler and subtler till it disappears at last into nothing, leaving the Soul in perfect isolation. *Sarva Darśana* Saṃgraha (Chap. IX) holds that physical exercises like the six-fold practices (Saṭ-karma) of the Hindus as adopted by them for the purification of body and mind result in spiritual awakening.

The Mahabharat, Śāntiparva, 219, prescribes worship and practice of religious vow (*Vrata*) as substitute for the costly sacrificial rites : "*Alpabittaścha pujārupabās vratastathā*". Through the performance of *Yajna* the sacrificer is inclined to give up worldly objects. The practice of austerity enables one to give up all pleasures of life and endure the inclemencies of nature. Renunciation of everything and union with Brahman is the aim of Yoga.

The ritualistic worship started in the Vedic age. The Vedas hold that such worship leads one to heaven : "Yatra Jyotirajasraṃ trināke tridive divaḥ". The worship of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Maheśvara* was not in vogue in the Vedic age ; the practice originated from the Pourānic age. In the days of the Vedas, Ṛṣis worshipped *Hiraṇyagarbha Iśvara* and the gods like Indra. Hiraṇyagarbha was the first manifested

God whom the sages accepted as an object of their meditation and adoration : "*Hiraṇyagarbhaḥ samabartatāgre viśvasya* jātaḥ *patireka āsit*"—the Ṛgveda. *Sāmkhya-Yogin Maharṣi Kapil* interpreted the true nature of attributeless Brahman and his interpretation was finally accepted by the *Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas* and the *Tantras*[1]. The sage Kapil himself has been identified in the Mahabharata as *Hiraṇyagarbha* : Yamāhuḥ Kapilaṃ Śāṃkhyā paramarṣiṃ prajāpatiṃ" (Śāntiparva). Hiraṇyagarbha Kapil was the speaker of *Yoga-Śāstra* : "Hiraṇyagarbha Yogasya baktā nānyaḥ purātanaḥ." For the realisation of the Brahman without attribute, Maharṣi Kapil compiled treatises on *Yoga*. Hearing, discrimination, practice of Yoga and meditation were prescribed for the purpose. Those who realised Brahman in the path of renunciation, knowledge and meditation were known as *Jnāna-yogins* whereas those who followed only the practice of Yoga were called simply *Yogins*. The Yoga of meditation was inunciated by the great sage *Patanjali*. Nyāya and *Vaiśeṣika* schools hold *Yoga* to be the means to salvation. Śri Krishna said to Arjuna : "The Yogins are superior to ascetics and even superior to men of knowledge who are versed in the Vedic lore. They are also superior to men of action. Therefore, Arjuna, be thou a Yogin" (The Gita VI. 46). He also observed that the path of knowledge is for the Sāṃkhyas (wise) and the path of action (practical Yoga) is for the Yogins (vide the the Gita III. 3). Again the same Text, V. 2 states : "Both Yoga-practices and renunciation bring bliss in life ; but the practice of Yoga is superior to the renunciation of action". Elsewhere it is observed : "*Karma*-Yogins reach the same place which the Sāṃkhyas attain. He is the real seer who

1. "ज्ञानं महद् यद्धि महत्सु राजन् वेदेषु सांख्येषु तथैव योगे।
यच्चापि दृष्टं विविधं पुराणे सांख्यागतं तन्निखिलं नरेन्द्र।"
The Mahabharat, Śāntiparva, 301. 108-10.

sees no difference between Sāṃkhya and Yoga (The Gita, V. 5).

Like meditation prayer is also a mystical act. In prayer, the devotee feels the presence of his Lord and dedicates all his desires to His feet so that the individual will merges in the will of the Lord. He regards himself as an instrument in the hands of his Beloved. He works through love of God, so the law of *Karma* cannot bind him. The work done in this spirit is a form of worship which ends in God-realisation.

When a Yogin thoroughly surrenders himself to the feet of the Lord by sinking his individuality in the Divine Personality, his individual self completely merges in the divine. All his activities are thus regulated by the will of God. All the acts of such a Yogin are the reflected acts of God Himself. Such a Yogin looks at things in their correct perspective and his judgment errs not. His voice is the voice of God.

Śaṃkara does not under-value work and devotion but he insists on the acquisition of transcendental knowledge to attain final liberation. Śaṃkara himself has composed many hymns wherein faith, love and grace are recognised as means to salvation. Though the phenomenal universe is a *māyā* to Śaṃkara, he did not refrain from rendering humanitarian services to the world. He was the most untiring social and religious worker of his time. According to all Hindu philosophers, action, faith, love and knowledge pave the way to God-realisation or final liberation.

The spirit of self-effacement helps man to forget his physical existence and the sense of dependence on his Lord takes away from him the worries and anxieties of worldly life and makes the law of *Karma* inactive; so the gulf between the worshipper and the worshipped is gradually narrowed down and finally, he unites with his adorable Lord. St. Paul is of opinion that the knowledge and the love of God descend in the quiescent heart. *Swami Prabhāvānanda* echoes Christ when he says: "The more you knock, the

more you ask and pray, the more this world will be seen to be a mere appearance and the reality of God's presence will show through". Pray in faith and with love and the divine grace will automatically come. Implicit faith in God ends *Sādhanā* in experience. Christ says : "If thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light." This means that if we are unflinching in our faith and our sole attention be directed towards God alone, we shall be spiritually blessed and be able to receive His grace.

The mystical acts like prayer and meditation are not to be put on the par of inactivity and passivity as escapism. Ritualistic worship, prayer and meditation involve some sort of action—physical or mental. They are not inaction but inward action which requires integration of mind, unification of will, tenacity of purpose and personal effort to get at the aim. So mystical acts do not imply inertia and escapism.

The prime motive of all the religious and spiritual practices is to turn the direction of consciousness and to set it a-flowing. While thus flowing in the contrary course, the mind reaches at last a stage which is its culminating point beyond which begins a vast and transcendental void. Nothing can be perceived in that colourless and trsnscendental void. Yet the adventurer's penetrating vision flickers into the obscure region and gets glimpses of the unknown. Spiritual texts abound in such descriptions of Spirit's flight from the realm of phenomena to noumena which can also be seen in the definition of *Mokṣa* or Salvation in different philosophical and mystical treatises. After all, the definition of *Mokṣa* is the same everywhere. *Mokṣa* exclusively belongs to *Puruṣa*—its release or isolation from *Prakriti*. It is attained beyond time, space and causation.

The *Sutra* (Aphorism)—"Kaivalyārtham Pravṛtteścha" proves that besides thought-process and mental faculty there is an entity for the liberation of which enjoyment and renuncia-

tion are necessary. Mr. C. F. Winchester observes in his *Principle of Literary Criticism*, P. 118 : "It is evidently the power to see and show things in the concrete, as if they were real, that holds the key to our emotions." In Cornhill Magazine, Vol. V. P 411, it is rightly observed that "On physiological ground some power which acts from above may be reasonably postulated." Aristotle's '*Pneuma*' is analogous to *Prāṇa-vāyu* or the vital air which carries sensation and perception to *Jivātman*. After death, this *Prāṇa-Vāyu* as etherial vehicle of the soul leaves the physical body and the weight of the body decreases a little thereof. This decrease in weight is not due to the departure of the soul from the body because the soul has got no weight of its own.

Mokṣa is infinite in itself. But analogous to it, there is another infinite glory belonging to *Prakriti* which is limited by time and space and so it must not be confused with the former. The old method of spiritual exercises deals with the preparation of Prakriti itself. Śri Aurobindo's Yoga-Philosophy claims entire transformation of life and existence. In ancient usages, descent of spiritual power is in reality an accessory to the attainment of individual emancipation and the descent terminates in ascent. In the integral Yoga of Śri Aurobindo, ascent is the first step towards *Sādhanā* and a prelude to descent. *Sādhanā* comes to its fruition when the divine power comes down in human receptacle and is allowed to work there freely for the transformation of our whole being.

Mokṣa or salvation is of five kinds : (1) *Sālokya*, (2) *Sārupya*, (3) *Sāmipya*, (4) *Sārṣti* and (5) *Sāyujya*. In Sālokya-mukti, the devotee resides in the paradise of his Lord. Sārupya-mukti implies the attainment of Lord's attributes. In the third category of emancipation i.e., Sāmipya-mukti, the devotee becomes a companion of his Lord. The devotee, in Sārṣti, attains some powers identical to those of his adorable Lord. In the last category of emancipation i.e., Sāyujya, the devotee

merges in God. Śri Rupa Goswami holds, the individuality of the devotee in the first four types of salvation, remains in tact and he continues offering love and devotion to his Lord. So, in this type of liberation, the connection between the Lord and the devotee being not severed the path of love and devotion is the right approach to a devotee ; "*Sālokyādistathāpyatra bhaktyā nāti virudhyate.*"—*S'ri Rupa.* But even the grace of God cannot distract the mind of the devotee whose aim and ideal is Sāyujya-mukti or immersion in God : "Yeṣām sriśa-pra sādopi manohartuṃ na śaknuyad."

According to the *Tāntrists* and the *Viṣṇuites,* the release from the cycle of birth and death is considered as the termination of *Sādhanā.* But in the integral Yoga of *S'ri Aurobindo,* total transformation of life and existence is the aim. Integral Yoga does not aim at individual emancipation but at cosmic release. Its aim is to bring down the super-human consciousness in man and to allow it to act freely for the transformation of self and the universe.

Though the terms 'I exist' and 'I am' convey the same idea of one existence, their aspects are entirely different. In the first case, time is motionless because "I exist" in all times and beyond it ; and in the second, I am progressing in time. *Sādhanā* comes to an end, if I reach the sphere of pure existence and reside there for eternity. If I can transcend this state and evolve into glory, *Sādhanā* will continue ad-infinitum. The question of ability arises even after the attainment of emancipation. In fact, the Soul's existence is ever-established in certitude, but the evolution of *Prakriti* requires further development. These two bring in the perfection of our life. Equal importance is attached to these two ends in the practice of integral Yoga. So the cessation of the immortal Soul and the inclination of the ever-changing *Prakriti* get reconciled.

The unfoldment of higher consciousness and its final transformation are identical to a seer. While we look upon the consciousness as self-established, the finite consciousness of the jiva that undergoes trsnsformation is reckoned with matter. Though some philosophers refute this doctrine, it is accepted by the Sāṃkhya and it has an uncommon influence over the Vedāntists. In Logic, *Tantras* and in the religions of the *Bhāgavatas*, the pure transformation of *Prakriti* has been enumerated and they also conceive of a pure state of existence in the midst of the agitated *Prakriti* and attributeless Brahman. All these are the philosophical basis of integral Yoga. Life does not end in emancipation ; on the other hand liberation from all bondages makes life overflowing with peace and bliss. This sort of exuberance is possible only in divine consciousness. So even after emancipation an integral Yogin aspires after transformation which is a new way to life. Here is the novelty of integral Yoga ; it gives the full significance of the term. As the world is pervaded by an infinite consciousness, there flows an unending current of life. Life and consciousness which are the two aspects of one and the same existence are interlinked together. The doctrine of non-duality is based on this principle and the *Sādhanā* in the line of integral Yoga follows thls outlook.

The divine thought of one creates similar waves in others' mind. But there are also different forms of divine thoughts : "Let others be free as I am"—this is one form of divine thought arising out of the fervent desire of an emancipated soul. Another form is, "Let the emancipation of the soul bring transformation of the nature and that transformation and emancipation be directed towards the whole universe." So the duties of an emancipated Yogin are two-fold : (1) transformation of the self-nature and (2) the awakening of the potential energy latent in worldly consciousness. Needless to say his is the aim of integral Yoga.

When the body, mind and senses are brought under control by practice of Prānāyāma, mind is to be concentrated upon a single object. By deep meditation when jiva-consciousness gets much intensified and one pointed, the concrete form of the object is to be replaced by its mental image. By deeper concentration, that imagery is to be converted into an abstract one ; and it is the formless meditation. In this ecstatic state of pure consciousness, the Soul manifests itself emanating its celestial light which sweeps away all ignorance and doubts, finitudes and distinctions, and the Yogin lands in the land of infinite existence, endless peace and eternal bliss. For the attainment of such a unique position, it would be necessary to diffuse our consciousness to the infinite space around, so that it may merge in the universal consciousness to become universal itself. Incessant meditation of this type takes away all the senses of body and mind and what is left at that moment of perfect ecstasy is a boundless Jyoti or gleam of pure consciousness that unfolds Reality.

Mental concentration is a prelude to *Sāmādhi* or perfect rapture. Meditation is conducive to this ecstatic state. Referring to this blissful state, Russel observes : "It is such profound instinctive union with the stream of life that the great joy is to be found." The constant prayer and meditation steep mind in an ineffaceable profound peace. Miss Underhill in her 'Mysticism' P. 394, says : "Its (contemplation) results feed every aspect of the personality : Minister to its instincts for the good, the beautiful and the true. Psychologically, it is an induced state in which the field of consciousness is greatly contracted ; the whole of the self, its connative power being sharply focussed, becomes concentrated upon one thing We pour ourselves out or as it sometimes seems to us, in the act we know it, as we cannot know it by any ordinary device of thought." To control will-power and pacify mental restlessness is not an easy task. There are passions to excite

them. The will pursues its own course rather obstinately and the mind is often pre-occupied with irrelevant thoughts, worries and anxieties which rob the peace of mind. To do away with all these disturbing elements, *dhāranā* or the fixation of mind on one object has been prescribed. By this practice, the concentration deepens and the practiser becomes fit for meditation. Constant meditation brings *Sāmādhi*. The Yoga aims at a complete isolation of the Soul from all its covers, physical and mental. When mind stands apart like a peaceful antelope, jiva-consciousness, assisted by *Kundalini-S'akti* makes its own way through *Suṣumnā* canal and as it rises higher and higher above *mulādhāra*, the lower parts of the body become as cold as ice and lose their sensation. When the rapture is over it takes time to restore heat, sensation and consciousness to the limbs thus affected. If the jiva-consciousness happens to pass out of the *Brahma-randra* or the supposed aperture at the crown of the head, the whole body becomes cold and rigid like a corpse.

Mind, intellect and ego are the different aspects of one internal sense. Mind connects Soul with non-souls. Of the acceptance, acceptor and the acceptable objects, intellect is the acceptor, mind with senses are instruments of acceptance and the worldly objects are acceptable things. In the matter of sense-perception, mind directs *Prāṇa* or the vital air to every part of the body, and senses energised by it carry the sensation to Aham or ego. Five airs including *Prāṇa* are the evolutes of *Asmitā* or ego. Contact between *Puruṣa* and *Prakriti* is the cause of ego's coming into existence. Since mind is made up of three qualities *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, it has three characteristics—divulging, active and static respectively. *Asmitā* (ego) in its static state is known as *Prāṇa*. For internal and external perception the five sense organs—the ear, the eye, the nose, the skin and the tongue are evolved out of *Asmitā*. Due to mind's active nature, five work-organs

and owing to its statical nature, *Prāṇa* evolved. The function of five airs constituting *Prāṇa* is to preserve and nourish the material body : "Ahamevaitad panchadhātmānaṃ pravivajaitadvānamavaṣtavya Vidhārayamiti."—Praśnopaniṣad. The five airs digest food which is transformed into juice and blood and the latter in their turn nourish fat, flesh, nerves and bones. Another function of vital air is to help inspiration and respiration of the living. Of the five airs *Udāna* helps perception, *Vyāna* directs senses to their respective duties and helps the circulation of blood through the veins regularly ; *Apāna* works for the excretion of stool and urine ; duty of *Samāna* is to build up material body out of the food taken and air inspired. The active agent of *Asmitā* or ego is *Prāṇa* and *Asmitā* determines everything through intellect or *buddhi*. The power of perception, activity and maintenance are respectively related to sense-organs, work-organs and *Prāṇa*. These are expressive of and endowed with *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* respectively. The vibrations in life-principle set mind and senses to function. So through the practice of Prānāyāma, *Prāṇa* becomes steady, the calmness of mind is restored and senses are thinned out and ultimately merged in *Prāṇa* (Vide the Gita IV. 27).

The mind of a *Rājasika* temperament is always restless and so it is not fit for meditation. Mind is blinded by passions so long as it is engrossed in sense-objects. Distracted mind is sometimes steady and sometimes restless. This steadiness also does not last long ; it is soon overtaken by restlessness and the man becomes unhappy again. So distracted mind also is not congenial to successful meditation. The singleness of mind i. e., the mind which is fixed on a single thought is really concentrated. *Saṃprajnāta Samādhi* easily ensues in such a concentrated mind. But as in this state of mind there is a support to meditate upon, it cannot be said to be perfectly blank. *Asaṃprajnāta Samādhi*

ensues when functioning of the mental faculty ceases altogether and so mind is then without any support. *Samādhi* reaches its acme when mind is lost in the object of meditation and becomes empty : "Tadarthamātra nirvāsaṃ svarupa sunyamiva Samādhiḥ" (Pātanjal Darśan, Bibhutipāda, Sutra 3). *Samādhi*, as defined in Hindu Yoga-philosophy, bears an analogy to the mystic union of the Christian doctrine. So in *Samādhi*, the aspirant unites with his Lord. *Samādhi* or right rapture is the crown and fulfilment of a meditative life and meditation is the right way to achieve this end. In *Nirvikalpa* or *Asaṃprajnāta Samādhi*, the discriminative power dissolves and it is a seedless one in which the sense of duality disappears and the meditator becomes one with the Brahman. The fruit of *Karma* cannot bind such an emancipated soul : "*Viniṣpannaḥ Samādhistu mukti tatraiva janmani. Prāpnoti Yogi Yogānidagdha Karmachayo chirāt.*' In *Nirodh Samādhi*, when the activity of mind is suspended, *buddhi* or intelligence is apprehended as distinct from *Chiti-S'akti* or consciousness.

Mind persists upto the state of *Savikalpa* or *Saṃprajnāta Samādhi* comprising in main *Sāsmita*, *Savitarka* and *Savichāra* which are the conscious and determinate ecstasies. Mind at that stage is very subtle, one-pointed and concentrated ; it may be identified as *buddhitattva* or the principle of intelligence. "It is another mode of seeing, an ecstasy, a simplification, a desire for immediate contract, a stability, a deep intentness to unite oneself with what is to be seen in the sanctuary"—observes Eneads, VI. 9. 7. In a still higher stage when Yogin enters into *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* or the indeterminate ecstasy, mind with its different aspects ceases to function—it becomes perfectly blank and the Yogin enters into the realm of transcendental consciousness and merges in Brahman.

Salvation does not come even when through the study of sacred texts Jiva realises that world is full of misery and

that the extinction of it also does not bring liberation. Self-realisation must be tested in the touch-stone of meditation. Wisdom resulting from constant meditation brings Self-realisation. *Nididhyāsan*[1] implies meditation of wisdom. The knowledge that is gained in deep Samādhi is Ṛtambharā or full of truth, there is no shade of doubt in it. The highest knowledge born of supreme renunciation is identified with *Agrābuddhi* of the Kathopaniṣad in the light of which Yogin realises himself as identical to Brahman and gets emancipation. Proper means is to be adopted if accurate result is to follow. The spirit of renunciation grows in a Yogin when he has entered into *Saṃprajnāta Samādhi*. Entrance into *Asaṃprajnāta Samādhi* is subject to the condition that the aspirant must banish from mind even the thought of his own salvation. This state of steady unswerved mind is reckoned with *Para-Vairāgya* or supreme renunciation. The Śāstras observe that the Yogin who is established in *para-vairāgya* attains *Kaivalya-mukti* or emancipation of soul from all its bondages. The Upaniṣads not only insist on the realisation of Truth but also enjoin on us to mould our lives according to the realisation. "When truth is known no knowable exists"—says *Subala Upaniṣhad*, V. 15. On the realisation of ultimate Truth, the knower, knowable and the knowledge become one. Śveta Up. I, 12 observes: "The enjoyer, enjoyment and the object of enjoyment taken together is nothing but Brahman". Being established in the doctrine of non-duality, the knower himself becomes the effulgent Brahman; nothing remains unknown

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1. "ताभ्यां निर्व्विचिकित्सेऽर्थे चेतसः स्थापितस्य यत्।
एकतानइमेतद्धि निदिध्यासनमुच्यते॥"

Which means: When a Śāstric teaching is determined by ntelligent discussion and discrimination and finally, when mind is absorbed in the meditation of its truth, it is called *Nididhyāsan* or the meditation of wisdom.

to him—his every thought and action is suffused with love and wisdom. "No sin ever touches him"—says *Chhā Up*, IV. 14. 3. The consciousness, 'I am the Brahman'—never forsakes him ; his wisdom is unshaken. So long as he lives, he lives doing good to the world.

The negative description of Brahman, i.e., the method of *neti neti* as given in the *Vedanta* shows that the Brahman cannot be realised either by mind or by senses. Therefore, Bṛ. Up. iii. 6, negates everything having a name and a form and follows the data *neti neti*[1]—not this, not this. Knowing full well that Brahman is not an object of sense-perception, the Vedic Seers chalked out and prescribed the Yogic path for the realisation of Brahman. Yoga itself is described as the Brahman, because, Brahman is realised in the path of Yoga. Through spiritual discipline, the ignorance and weakness of mind are removed and the ultimate Truth is realised. Brahman dwells in all and all dwells in Brahman ; so a seer does not see anything apart from Brahman.

Knowledge of the gross elements is the root-cause of worldly happiness and misery. When true knowledge of the worldly things is gained, the attraction for the gross is lost in our estimation. The subtle knowledge of elements comes through subtle senses in the way of form, touch, smell etc. The essence of an element is called *Tanmātra*. *Tanmātric* knowledge is achieved at the atomic stage of an element. Subtle mind and senses alone can apprehend *Tanmātra* or the essence of an element. When a gross object becomes the prop of our mind, the mind takes the form and nature of the object and turns to be gross. Likewise, the mind is subtle like an atom when it is absorbed in the thought of the *Tanmātras*. The thought of God reduces the mind to a cypher. The consciousness of an individual existence is lost when

1. "अथात आदेशो नेति नेति, न ह्येतस्मादन्यत् परमस्ति ।"

divine thoughts completely occupy the mind in *Samādhi* i.e., when mind becomes concentrated and one-pointed towards God. According to *Patanjali*, *Samāpatti* is that state of the mind when it is absorbed in the object of meditation. (Vide *Pātanjal Darśan*, *Samādhi Pāda*, *Sutra* 41). Realising that *Samāpatti* is not final or an end in itself, the Buddhists placed *Nirvāna* above *Samāpatti*. *Samapātti* is the state of single-mindedness in which grows *Prajnā* or wisdom. This happens in *Saṃprajnāta Samādhi*. In Saṃprajnāta Samādhi the Yogin reaches upto the principle of intelligence (*Buddhitattva*) but not *Ātman*; because at that stage of meditation, mind still persists having a support of meditation —it does not become extinct. *Asaṃprajnāta Samādhi* ensues only when mind dies out and even the thought of 'I am meditating' disappears altogether. *Asaṃprajnāta Samādhi*, implies cessation of all thought-processes. There is a point of fusion at the climax of *Saṃprajnāta Samādhi* when the meditator, the act of meditation and the meditated become one; so who will then meditate and on whom? *Asaṃprajnāta Samādhi* begins where *Saṃprajnāta Samādhi* reaches its culmination. When the Yogin enters into *Asaṃprajnāta Samādhi* he is thrown into an ocean of bliss and the bliss is Brahman.

A restless mind acquires knowledge of an object in its gross form because different charactistics of the object present themselves simultaneously. When we see a piece of sapphire, its colour, weight and appearance simultaneously appear in mind. Discarded of all other qualities, if mind is fixed on its colour alone, it is tinged blue and as a result, the elementary knowledge of the sapphire and its other characteristics are lost. At that time the whole world appears as blue. *Tejatattva* or the essence of splendour of a substance is realised in this way. It is the *Tanmātric* knowledge of a substance. *Tanmātric* knowledge of ether is gained when mind

becomes so absorbed in the *Anāhata* sound arising out of the heart-centre that no sound of the external world is heard and the whole world appears as full of sound. If mind can be fixed at the point of a needle, *tejatattva* of the metal i. e. the essential quality of its brightness is realised. When the splendour of the metal appears to be all-pervading, consciousness is to be concentrated to a small part of the luminous region. Repetition of the process makes the mind perfectly still and then in the tranquil mind, *Rupatanmātra* or luminous principle of the metal is known. In *Samādhi*, when all the sense organs are inoperative—if any one of them is allowed to be a little active, the Yogin gets *Tanmātric* knowledge i. e. he knows the essence of the substance. In *Samādhi*, as the work-organs are made inactive, the knowledge of the gross becomes extinct and *Tanmātric* knowledge enters through a single subtle sense-organ. In *Samādhi*, mind and senses become subtle and pure. If one of the five qualities of an element be selected as a support for meditation, *Tanmātric* knowledge of the element is known. As for an example, the quality of ether being sound, the ether-tanmātra is realised when mind is concentrated on Anāhata sound, and the sky appears as full of sound. Similarly, when the essence of the luminious principle of a substance is known, *Rupatanmātra* which is the revealing cause of the substance is perceived: "Sabdalakṣanamākāśam, vāyusthu sparśa-lakṣanaḥ, jyotiṣām lakṣanaṃ rupaṃ, *āpaścha* rasalakṣanāḥ, *dhāriṇi* sarvabhutānām, *pṛthvi gandhalakṣnā*". In *Sāsmita Samādhi* or the conscious ecstasy if four sense organs are alternately suppressed and the fifth remains a little open, the *Tanmātric* knowledge of *Sabda-S'parsa-Rupa-Rasa-Gandha* is obtained.

The subltest state of earth is its atomic state which is the pure essence of smell or the *gandha-tanmātra*; that of water is *Rasa-tanmātra*; that of metal its brightness or *Rupatanmātra* (splendour); that of air its touch and that

of ether or sky is its sound in the subtlest form. Subtler than these tanmātras is Ahaṃkāra or ego. The subtler and purer form of ego is *Buddhitattva* or the principle of intelligence. *Mahat-tattva* or the cosmic self is the first principle evolved out of *Prakirti*. So subtlety of matter culminates in *Prakriti*. Ātman is above Prakriti and it is beyond the twenty-four entities of creation, changeless and imperishable. The Gita, XV. 16 recognises two *Puruṣas*—imperishable and perishable. All beings are perishable and *Ātmam* alone is imperishable. *Ātman* is the efficient cause and *Prakriti* is the material cause of creation. The efficient cause being the conscious Ātman, there is nothing absolute unconscious in creation. That matter is also endowed with consciousness is suggested by the following utterances of the *Upaniṣads*: "The earth spoke (Sat Brā VI. 1-4) and fire thought, water thought (*Chhā Up* VI. 2-4)." Br. Up. VI. 1.7 attributes consciousness and intelligence to *Prāṇa*: 'These *prāṇas* quarrelling with one another as to their superiority went to *Brahmā*.'

The source of tanmātric knowledge is the subtle mind, so *Ahamkāra* which is an aspect of mind is subtler than the *tanmātras*—the essences of the elements. Following the subtle trend of mind when the thought of 'I am the doer, I am the knower' is firmly established in mind, Ahaṃkāra or ego is known. The subtle state of Ahaṃkāre is *buddhi* or intelligence. Prakriti is the subtle material cause of *buddhi*. When intellect is meditated as doer or knower, pure *Asmitā* which is a technical name for *Buddhitattva* becomes known. By whom the act of hearing and seeing becomes possible is *Asmitā* or ego. It turns itself into instruments of perception and percieves various things. The same *Asmitā* plays different parts in the matter of perception and itself becomes the perceptible objects. In *Sāsmita Samādhi*, wherein self-consciousness persists, the thoughts like 'I am happy or unhappy', 'I am bodied or incorporeal' arise in mind. The

only thought in the form of 'I exisit' which is feebly perceived in consciousness during *Samādhi* is *Buddhitattva* or the principle of intelligence.

The one that knows or sees within us is not the true Self but the self in differentiation. It is *Asmitā* or ego—the fictitious self. According to *Kārikā* II. 12, the idea of an individual ego is conjured up by Ātman through *Māyā*; otherwise on the rational ground, ego is empirical—it has no factual existence. True Seer or the Self requires no instrument of perception; whereas for the knowledge of something, ego needs an instrument. The worldly knowledge is subject to the reflection of Soul-consciousness in *buddhi*. Due to this reflection, ego appears as the knower and the doer. *Chaitanya* or consciousness is independent of anything and it is self-established. So, ego is to be apprehended as an entity separate from Ātman. According to the *Chhā. Up.* VIII. II. I, when a man falls in profound sleep and sees no dream, such a state is called the Self. Meditation on this peaceful state of mind enjoyed during sleep is, therefore, helpful to attain inactivity or rather tranquillity of mind and for the realisation of Self.

Ego in the light of Ātman shines as the knower and the doer in the same way as a Government Officer exercises the powers vested in him by Government. That man is deluded to take intellect for Ātman is due to the reflection of Ātman in *buddhi* or intellect. *Buddhi* is inert it appears as conscious only due to the reflection of the conscious Ātman. Ātman is consciousness itself and *buddhi* is its reflection. *Buddhi* is changeable and perishable but Ātman is eternal. *Buddhi* consists of three qualities—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* but Ātman is free from them.

As an enjoyer, the soul within the body is called *Jivātman* and as witness of the enjoying soul, it is Ātman. Paramātman, the Supreme Soul is the infinite sum-total of

Sat, Chit and *Ānandam.* When the individual soul is looked upon as being beyond the three stages of existence, beyond this mortal coil and five-fold sheaths, a witness of all, it is also *Sat-Chit-Ānandaṃ.* Whatever exists through all times past, present and future is *Sat.* Whatever is ever conscious is *Chit* and *Ānandaṃ* is bliss. Hence eternal existence, consciousness and blissfulness are the true significance of the term Soul. Dispel your grief by acquiring knowledge of the Self which is such.

The absolute existence of the Soul is due to *Sandhini S'akti,* absolute consciousness to *Saṃvit S'akti* or *Chit-S'akti* and absolute bliss to *Hlādini S'akti. Sandhini S'akti* is the power to become kinetic, *Saṃvit S'akti* is the power of knowledge or consciousness and *Hlādini S'akti* is the power of will. The dormant power of volition becomes kinetic through *Annamaya, Manomaya* and *Prāṇamaya Koṣas* or sheaths. When the Yogin advances successfully in the path of spirituality, he realises *Saṃvit S'akti* through *Vijnānamaya Kośa, Hlādini S'akti* through *Annamaya Koṣa* and *Sandhini S'akti* through *Hiraṇmaya Koṣa.* Thus the true nature of the Soul gets revealed.

It is then that the *Jivātman* becomes identified with the Supreme Soul. The sage Āruni, while teaching *Brahma-Vidyā* or the knowledge of the Absolute to his son *S'vetaketu,* said : "*S'vetaketu,* all this is Brahman who is the absolute truth : He is the Soul, and you are also that."

That ego or *Asmitā* is not *Ātman* is proved when *Jiva* finds that it cannot remove its wants and miseries even by applying the utmost power and intelligence. *Ātmik-S'akti* or the conscious energy of the Soul is the cause behind all the successful achievements. Through ignorance this success is attributed to *Asmitā* or ego and as a result of this ingratitude, Jiva-consciousness is curbed and man's power becomes crippled. When a person, puffed with egoism fails to overcome danger,

then and then only he clearly understands that ego is not his whole being : Besides ego, there is a much higher existence denying which he has brought upon himself worldly troubles and misfortune. Man's real power rests in *Ātman* and not in *Asmitā* or ego. *Puruṣakāra* is the power of the *Puruṣa* or Soul which is consciousness itself. If Soul-consciousness is not enveloped by self-consciousness, if the former be allowed to work freely, adverse circumstances will be modified for the better. Egoism is man's greatest enemy, it hides man's true Self which is *Ātman*. So the *Udāna*, 30, V. 20 enjoins on subduing the selfish thought of 'I'.

Sāttvik or the pure part of the mind is *buddhi* or intelligence, its *Rājasik* portion is *Ahaṃkāra* or ego and *Praṇa* forms the *Tāmasik* part of the mind. In the utterance of 'Ātmano eṣa praṇo *jāyate* i. e, *Prāṇa* is born of 'Ātman' here Ātman stands for a technical name of *Asmitā*. Pure *Asmitā* is *Buddhitativa*. Finite consciousness expressed as 'I am the doer' and 'I am the knower' etc., envelopes the knowledge of of the higher Self. 'Only I exist and there is no body else'—this sort of knowledge helps Self-realisation. Existence, knowledge and Self-realisation being complementary to one another, Self-existence, Self-knowledge and Self-realisation are synonymous.

The centre of the Self-knowledge is to be meditated as a luminous region behind the head and the Yogin should drown his consciousness in that light and take the light to be that of his Ātman ; Self will be realised.

To know *Buddhitatva* or pure *Asmitā* a Yogin has to meditate on the luminous sky inside the heart-chamber. The bliss that is enjoyed in the pool of this celestial light takes the enjoyer to pure *Asmitā*. 'I am this ocean of pure light'—such consciousness has been designated in the treaties of *Yoga* as *Jyotiṣmati* or *Viśoka* (vide 'Pātanjal Darśan, Bibhutipāda, Sutra 25). This celestial light is the reflection of Ātman in

buddhi or intelligence. When the limited 'I' or the finite self is fixed on the thought of 'I am meditating—I am feeling' *Asmitā* is realised. As there is a sense of a doer in such meditation, the *Samādhi* that ensues is called *Sāsmita.*

The experiences gained in the higher stage of *Samādhi* do not come through mind and senses but they are perceived in the light of the Soul. As a master is automatically rendered inactive on account of the non-co-operation of his servants, so does ego stand still when mind and senses do not co-operate. "I will hear nothing, I will see nothing—I will think nothing"—when the Yogin with this determination withdraws his mind and senses inside, ego is rendered inactive. To achieve this tranquil state of self one may meditate successively on the gross elements, senses, *tanmātras*, mind and the intellect. By the meditation on a gross element when mind is concentrated, it should be fixed on the *tanmātric* principle of the element such as the *Rupa-tanmātra, Gandha-tanmātra* etc. A material thing has five qualities : Sound, touch, appearance, liquidity and smell. Elemental knowledge is derived through the gross senses when they are active and the element is known in its gross form. According to the sage *Goutama*, the knowledge that we acquire through the sense-data is secular : '*Indriyārtha Sannikarṣotpannaṃ jnānaṃ*". In deep trance the Yogin acquires knowledge of the facts which cannot be achieved by any normal means. So a Yogin is nearer to the truth than a man of normal consciousness.

By the above type of meditation, senses, mind and intellect ultimately cease to function and the Yogin enters into *Asmprajnāta Samādhi.* Meditation rises to its acme by replacing the object of meditation from grosser to the subtler. When Arjuna aiming at a bird on the branch of a tree was ready to shoot an arrow, Dronāchāryya, his *Guru*, asked him : "What do you see on the tree ?" In reply Arjuna said, 'I see a bird'. On a second query Arjuna described the

appearance of the bird. Whereupon Dronāchāryya advised him to look at the bird more closely. Thus being repeatedly asked by the preceptor to be more and more attentive, Arjuna said at last : 'Now I see only an eye." Much delighted with the disciple's answer, the *Guru* said to him : "Your gaze has been fixed. Now you may shoot the arrow."

When *Buddhitattva* is reached the light of supreme consciousness that enlightens *buddhi* has to be isolated from the material *buddhi* and the Yogin then merging his own consciousness into that light reaches the reservoir of consciousness which is Brahman. As a result of this phenomena the transcendental unobstructed Yogic vision spreads everywhere and in all directions. Some philosophers of the West admit now-a-days that the perception without the help of mind, senses and intellect is possible : "However astonishing, it is now proved beyond all rational doubts that in certain abnormal states of the nervous organism, perceptions are possible through other than the ordinary channels of senses."—Note by Sir William Hamilton in his edition of Dr. Read's Works. It is through this divine vision that Mahātmā Vijay Krishna Goswāmi brought within half an hour the information of a sojourner staying thousands of miles abroad.

According to the *Māndukya Upaniṣad*, VI. 2, *Jiva* sees the objective world through its right eye and the dreamer experiences through the mind. The small *ākāśa* within the heart is recognised as *Prājna* ; *Prājna* is identical with *Iśvara* which is the causal aspect of Brahman. When *Iśvara* is seen free from causality it is Brahman. So both *Iśvara* and *Prājna* being subject to causality are not the knower of Brahman. *Turiya* is distinct from *Prājna* on the point that the former is illumined and omniscient whereas the latter has a little touch of *Māyā*. So Brahman is free from *Māyā*, but *Iśvara* or *Prājna* is said to be conditioned by *Māyā*. There is no causality in Supreme Brahman.

Pure consciousness shines in steady mind and pure heart. By the practice of *Yoga* when the mind becomes still like the the unflickering flame of a candle within a closed chamber, everything is realised as Brahman. That mind itself is Brahman becomes evident from its non-dual nature during sleep and *Samādhi*. The practice of *Prānāyāma* or the concentration on *prāṇa* secures tranquillity of mind and makes it pure, subtle and one-pointed. The universe rests in mind, and if the mind rests in Brahman the duality disappears and the mind itself becomes Brahman. Where Brahman is, there is neither duality nor plurality. Mind is different from Brahman when it is stranded in the plane of causality. Rising above the subject-object relationship, mind becomes identical with Brahman. Nothing is independent of Brahman. So from the standpoint of Ultimate Reality whatever is perceived to exist is nothing but Brahman.

Through the grace of God, transcendental knowledge is attained, divine eye is epened to see the invisible and a divine ear is gained to hear the heavenly voice. Miss Underhill believes that such favour was awarded to the Western mystics like *Suso*, *St. Francis of Assisi* and *St. Catherine* (Mysticism, P. 332). The mystery of Christian hell, purgatory and paradise revealed in their intuitive vision. Some Christian mystics, it is said, used to receive heavenly messages. A messenger from Heaven appeared before *Suso* while he was fasting and forbade him not to mortify himself. Moses also had communion with God who favoured him with the Law. Mahātmā Gāndhi fasted several times to have dictates of his inner being. Lost in ecstasy, Elizha entered into the invisible world and acquired supernatural wisdom.

The inactive mind is the same as *Prājna* or unconscious mind during deep sleep. 'To rise to higher consciousness or to enter into *Samādhi*, the mind is to be made inactive'—this

implies mental stillness and one-pointedness. To arrive at a discriminative knowledge, a subtle, sharp and wise mind must work within controlled by the will-power of the Yogin. Mind is to be completely inactive only to the worldly affairs. Non-attachment and discriminative awareness take one to the land of higher consciousness. In higher stage of *Samādhi* mental consciousness merges in *Ātmik* consciousness. Through deep meditation and discrimination when the external world is negated from jiva-consciousness and *Prakriti* is merged into Ātman, pure consciousness reveals, Ātman is beyond cause and effect ; so, it cannot be made to merge into anything else. This is the way to reach Ātman which is non-dual Brahman.

'Except Ātman everything is unreal and transient'—such knowledge is conducive to liberation. The Yogin who has realised this truth ignores *Asmitā* and even *buddhitatta* or pure *Asmitā*, and declares : "I do not want to merge myself into *Prakriti*." With this end in view he completely suppresses his mental faculty and established in supreme renunciation enters into *Asaṃprajnāta Samādhi* and transcending *Prakriti* directly merges himself in Ātman. In the higher stage of *Samādhi* mind becomes perfectly blank and the mind having no support is merged along with its different aspects in its cause viz. the *Prakriti*, Ātman thus freed from all attributes reveals itself when Self-realisation follows. Self-realisation is not a matter of theoretical experience, i.e., Self cannot be realised by the study of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, lying in an easy chair, but it is subject to strenuous practices of Yoga, meditation and devotion. The procedure to be followed is purely practical. Theoretical knowledge acquired by the study of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads furnishes only the first-hand information of the unknown ; if we want to have direct experience of the noumenal worlds, the theretical knowledge must pass through the ordeal of meditation to

Samādhi. Self-knowledge, as acquired in *Samādhi*, has to be borne in mind even when the *Samādhi* breaks. This highest wisdom becomes so deep-rooted in mind that its consciousness never forsakes him—he always lives in Soul-consciousness. Mind, bathed in the light of this supreme illumination, always appears as if lost in *Samādhi*. This is the state of a soul emancipated, though still living and having a material frame.

The consciousness of non-duality never dies out in an accomplished Yogin. It lingers even when the Yogin comes down from *Samādhi* and enters into his worldly life. A controlled mind is identical with Brahman. No *Samaskāra* ever clings to it impelling the Yogin to take birth again. According to the *Goudapāda Kārikā* III. 36, such a Yogin has no duty to perform here or hereafter. The mind should be detached from the objects of enjoyment and fixed on non-dual Ātman by the practice of *Rāj-Yoga*. Constant meditation and discrimination pave the way to Supreme Truth. When the unreality of the world is understood through discriminative knowledge, the knowledge of the Real originates and it always remains vivid and alive in the mind of the knower. He never deviates from the doctrine of non-duality. The mind of such a Yogin takes the form and nature of Brahman. On death, he is installed as the Lord of a universe but soon he becomes averse to such a Lordship and finally merges in Brahman. The Upaniṣad describes it as the reversion of a face, reflected in a mirror, to the owner of the face when the mirror is smashed.

Smṛti observes that responding to the practice of *Yoga* and meditation some powers arise in Yogin. These attainments are conducive to worldly happiness ; but the texts forbid to exercise the powers, thus attained, with an eye to secure worldly good. Even the temptation to enjoy the inner bliss arising out of *Samādhi* should be checked. Śri Ramkrishna often forced his mind to come down from that blissful state

of *Samādhi* and engaged himself to instruct others who were still groping in the dark. Buddha, when he became *Prabuddha* i.e. enlightened, refused to enjoy the bliss of *Samādhi* and offered himself to the service of humanity. The objective success of *Yoga*-practice may make one arrogant. To avoid this situation, he is advised to practise mediation and worship along with humanitarian services so that he might not lose the sight of his goal and his ideal is not lowered down. Our ideal is the realisation of Self and not the acquisition of non-self. Hour for emancipation draws near when the *Sādhak* rises from non-self to Self and from law to love continually harping upon the glory of All-Love.

Yājnavalkya suggests that a Yogin with an undivided attention should realise in *Samādhi* the Supreme Soul as his own self and merge *Jivātman* in *Paramātman.* This absorption ends in *Asaṃprajnāta Samādhi.* First of all, the Yogin is to control his senses and to concentrate his mind on *jivātman* which ultimately to be fixed on *Paramātman*, the Supreme Soul. By continued practice his whole being merges in *Paramātman* and the sense of his separate individuality is is lost to him—he becomes Brahman himself (vide S. B. on Śveta Up. 1. 7.)

Since *Prāṇa*, senses and mind are the instruments of perception and *jivas* exhibit egotism through them, these are related to *Asmitā* or ego. The principle of a sense-organ is realised when through the practice of *Prānāyāma*, the sense of the physical body is gone and mind remains fixed on a particular sense-organ. The Yogin understands that the knowledge acquired through the senses is material knowledge and that it pertains to the lower self—*Asmitā* or ego. Mind-object contact agitates *Asmitā* and the knowledge of the object in the form of sound, touch, smell etc., enters through the senses and their sensations are transmitted to the *Asmitā.* Seer and the sight are brought into contact with each other

through the activity of *Rajoguṇa* present in the object itself. Ego is known when mind is turned inward and fixed upon *Asmitā*. When the seer is isolated from sight, the doer from the deed, the knower from the known, only a sense of 'I exist' lingers in the depth of our being. If consciousness can be concentrated on this purified ego, *Buddhitattva* or the principle of intelligence is realised. *Buddhi* or intellect is made conscious and enlightened by the light of the Soul. In this light man exercises his discriminative power and accepts or rejects a thing. 'Intellect is not self-revealing'—this clear understanding grows *Vivek-khyāti* or discriminative knowledge as to the Soul and non-soul. When the aspirant realises the distinction between Soul and non-soul i. e., when he knows Soul to be the only reality and everything else as dross, he steps in the path of renunciation. According to the Gita V. 6, it is very difficult to practise renunciation without practising Yoga. In a Yoga-harmonised ascetic the spirit of renunciation easily grows and he soon attains Brahman. *Para-vairāgya* or supreme renunciation silences the activity of intellect i.e., the intellect then stands aside—it desists from applying its discriminative power. Intellect is then realised as changeable and transient. The only duty left for the Yogin at this stage is to constantly meditate on Self which is Brahman. As the *Samaskāras* of *Vivek-khyāti* or the impressions born of a discriminative knowledge persist in *Samprajnāta Samādhi*, salvation is barred. The impressions born of a renunciating spirit also retard final emancipation. In *Asamprajnāta Samādhi*, even the thought of one's own salvation dies out and the mind with all its impressions at this stage having no support at all dissolves altogether in the eternity and the *Samādhi* becomes a seedless one. Such a Yogin, accomplished in *Samādhi* obtains emancipation. *Asamprajnāta Samādhi* involves great spiritual exercises.

The knowledge of such a seer does not come through the senses but floats on the mirror of pure consciousness and

instead of showing itself as the doer or the knower, the ego is turned into the act of doing or knowing. As a consequence, knowledge increases and knowable decreases. *Vivek-khyāti* or the perfect cognizance of the distinction between Soul and not-soul makes the aspirant absolutely indifferent to the world and then and then only he turns to *Ātman*. Mere discriminative knowledge and the spirit of renunciation cannot free a soul. He must realise Ātman. According to the *Mā. Up.* IV. 91, worldly knowledge is born of *Avidyā*. The true nature of Ātman is knowledge transcendental; so the knowledge of Ātman never gets extinct. Without Self-realisation, salvation becomes a dream. A Yogin who has not realised Ātman in *Samādhi* cannot surpass the territory of *Prakriti* but remains absorbed in one of the diverse modes and manifestations of *Prakriti*[1] and on death merges in *Prakriti*: "*Vairāgyād Prakritilayaḥ*"—*Sāṃkhya Kārikā*. *Prakritiiteens* (Those who merge in Prakriti) can go to higher heavens after death but they are not entitled to salvation; they emerge in the next creation as lords of different spheres. When mind is merged in Prakriti it is Laya or minor dissolution and Pralaya or major dissolution takes place when Ātman is realised.

In the course of *Samādhi*, a man of concentrated mind realises *Paramātman* as his own self and merges his being into the former resulting in complete absorption. In pointing out the means to be adopted for the attainment of *Samādhi*,

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1. Five modes of Prakriti are as follows: (1) *Panchatan-mātras* or the five subtle elements. (2) *Ahaṃkāra* (ego). (3) *Buddhitattva* (Principle of intelligence). (4) Mahattattva (Cosmic Self) and (5) Mulā-Prakriti (Primordial matter or the Prakriti unmanifest.)

Sixteen manifestations of Prakriti are the five elements, five work organs, five sense organs and the determining mind.

Yājnavalkya observes: "The person, who by restraint of senses has acquired the eight-fold virtues like *Yama*, *Niyama* etc., has to merge his mind in *Jivātman* and ultimately the *Jivātman* in *Paramātman*. Jivātaman merged in Paramātman becomes identical with the latter. Mystic is he who transcends both the planes of mind and intellect and is established in pure consciousness which is intuition. *Jiva* transcends conceptual spheres, when absorbed in the meditation of the Formless. The present is open to the mind but the past and future are grasped by higher consciousness in an Eternal Now. To awaken the intuitive consciousness in man, concentration, pure contemplation and absorption in higher consciousness are essentially necessary. "When both the intellect and will are quiet and passive, the eternal hearing, seeing and speaking will be revealed in thee"—said Jacob Boehme, Intuition is the mysterious eye of the Soul that sees everything celestial and terrestrial. *Ātman* resides within the hidden cave of the human heart: '*Guha Yatra nihitaṃ Brahma S'āśvataṃ*'. So heart being the seat of Brahman, the feeling of heart is higher than the perception of brain. Brain within the head is the sensorium and sense-perceptions are the functions of the brain.

"Intellect involves the distinction between the subject and object; in intuition two are one".—*Idealistic Thought of India*, P. 340. It is aptly stated in the *Idealistic view of life*, P. 143, that 'the reality of the object is what distinguishes intuitive knowledge from mere imagination.' The Jewish prophets tried to impress the minds of their hearers but Christ touched their very heart which is the seat of intuition. Buddha also appealed to their intuition. Intuitive inspiration flashes forth all on a sudden. The appearance of some persons incur our displeasure while others appear agreeable to us. This is due to our inborn instinct turned to intuition. In lower animals, instinct is turned towards action. According

to Bergson, intuition is a sublimated form of instinct which, in the ecstasy of the contemplative genius, is raised to the highest pitch of efficiency. The skill of an artist is more revealed through intuitive inspiration than through the activities of his imaginative mind. Supreme knowledge is gained in an ecstatic intuition (*Katha* Up. II. 12, II. 24. and as also Mu. Up. III, 1. 8). For the awakening of intuitive faculty in man, the expansion of his being and consciousness is imperative. It is possible only when body, *prāṇa*, mind and senses are calm and quiet and consciousness flows in one direction which is God. The practice of *Prāṇāyāma* and *Yoga* is the only means to achieve this end.

Consciousness remains confined within the body and it has got to be liberated from the state of its imprisonment. It can be freed from the shackles of the body and mind if we but take to Yoga. By the force of Yoga, consciousness rises higher and higher, passes out of *Brahmarandhra* and becomes concentrated above the crown of the head. This freedom of consciousnes from its material imprisonment indicates, no doubt, a higher stage of our existence. The consciousness stationed there, may unfold itself towards the universal Being and unite with supra-mental consciousness awaiting above. It is then no longer considered as mental consciousness but is transformed into Soul-consciousness. When Jiva-consciousness is sunk and lost in the Abyss of Soul-consciousness it ascends to the apex of Spirit and enters into the more extended life beyond the universe. Freed from body and mind, this higher consciousness takes the name and form of Witnessing-Soul. It may ascend to the still higher sphere or desend into the unconscious region of our receptacle, elevate a part of the latter to the higher plane and come down again to lift up another. In this way the material part of our being is raised to the spiritual level by gradual transformation when all the baser impulses and inclinations are purified and take a spiritual turn.

Mulādhāra is the centre of physical consciousness and below it is the unconscious region. Though the material body has some traits of heredity, the major portion of our nature i.e. what we would be in future owes much to the past and present impressions lying dormant in the sub-conscious depth. Sub-conscious mind which is the repository of all the past impressions is situate between the conscious and unconscious minds. The realm of unconscious mind extends even below the physical body. The descent of supramental consciousness in the physical plane or the ascent of the normal consciousness to the higher plane is subject to higher spiritual exercises involving intent love, the whole-hearted devotion, a strong will to escape bondage and to unite with the Supreme. Reliance on God, complete surrender of personal will to the will of Providence and an unquenchable thirst for the Absolute remove all the obstacles from the path of *Sādhanā*. Uncover yourself, stand face to face with the Supreme Truth and expand your consciousness towards the higher and vaster field of it when the divine consciousness will flood your being and beyond. God will reveal Himself sometimes as peace and bliss, sometimes as supernatural power and sometimes as the luminous figures of your adorable deity, your *Guru* or even in your own image.

The *Bhāgavad* II. 2. 14, enjoins meditation on the figure of Lord Viṣṇu i.e., on His gross form until a higher stage in spiritual life is attained. Appearance of Lord's feet occurs to the mind more easily than other parts of His body. It is advised, therefore, to take his feet first as an object of meditation. Then we may gradually raise our gaze to the higher parts ; this will make our mind more and more concentrated and pure (*Bhā.* II. 2. 13). God steals away the mind of His devout worshiper, tills it well and sows in it the seed of love and plays hide-and-seek with him to increase his attachment to Him. Lord says, 'I always reveal Myself

before those who recite *My* name, take shelter of *Me* and never turn their attention to others'. Jesus ironically said : "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them : for I, the Lord, thy God am a jealous God"—Exodus : 20. V.

None can be truly religious without service to the distressed humanity, love, devotion and attachment to God and faithfull discharge of one's own duty. Practice of religious vow and pilgrimage to the sacred places without devotion are nothing in comparision to the purity of heart which is the only means of escape from worldly bondages.[1] Constant recitation of Lord's name destroys false ego and purifies heart. By always taking his name devotedly we can achieve spiritual fruition. Adore God as father or mother, as friend or lover, as son or daughter. In response to our sincere devotion, the merciful Lord will surely make His appearance before us in the manner and form we adore Him and the mission of human life will be fulfilled. 'Though Christ a thousand times in Bethelham be born, unless he be born in you, you are forlorn.'

Samādhi or right rapture resulting from deep meditation is the crown of success in a mystic life. The Spirit has its Iyric triumph in *Samādhi*. "Mysticism finds its working expression not in intellectual speculation but in prayers"—observes Dom Butler. Constant prayers and deep meditation steep mind into ineffaceable peace. A mystic never returns empty-handed. His experience of the world hitherto unknown grows more and more day by day and the vistas of higher heavens open before him with the gradual unfolding of his higher consciousness. Mystic life is pre-destined to life eternal. The future religion of the world claims to be Mysticism.

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1. "बहिस्तीर्थात् परं तीर्थमन्तस्तीर्थं महामुने ।
अन्तस्तीर्थं महातीर्थमन्यतीर्थं निरर्थकम् ॥"—Mahānirvāna.

PERCEPTION FROM DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Perception is of three kinds :—(1) abnormal, (2) normal and (3) super-normal. In the first case, the things are perceived in confused state, incoherently and sometimes illusorily. The perception by a deranged mind is an instance to the point. Things are normally perceived when the peripheral and central organs are not affected. Normal perception is natural to the man of normal consciousness. Super-normal perception is super-sensuous and is possible only in transcendental consciousness i. e., in yogic meditation. Gross mind and senses are restricted within their own limits ; they cannot apprehend supra-mental objects and future events.

Saṃkara and his followers believe that the reality of an object is realised in three graduated stages of existence through three different grades of consciousness. The three stages of reality which they attach to an object are as follows :—(1) Ontological reality or *Paramārthik* Sattā, (2) Emperical reality or *Vyāvahārika Sattā* and (3) Illusory existence or *Pratibhāsika Sattā*. Brahman belongs to the first kind of reality. An worldly object limited by time, space and causation comprises the second. This in relation to the world has got some value but intrinsically it has got none. When an object is falsely ascribed to the other, the reality is of the third grade category i.e. illusory.

Perception, memory and dream are all creations of mind. We get direct perception of the thing that is present before us. In memory, we recollect something of which we had knowledge in the past. But in dream, experiences involve only past and future events, seldom of the present. In dream, things are experienced internally, and in wakeful state things are perceived, as if existing outside.

As the vital air flows out of the nostrils up to a certain distance, so does mind as a mental function move out and is modified as external objects. The process of object consciousness is, therefore, not from the object to cognition but from cognition to an object. Cognition itself takes the form of an object. This led Berkely to conclude that an object is identical with its cognition.

To the Vedantins, things are thoughts. The impression of a past cognition starts from within as a mental wave and passing out of the sense-organs becomes materialised in the outside world. As the mind projects diverse appearances outside, the latter also reacts in their turn on the root instincts embedded in the sub-conscious mind and their mutual actions and reactions give a concrete shape of the world-appearance. The germ of all cognitions and cognised objects inheres in the sub-conscious mind as *Samaskāras* or seed potential that come out manifested as an object or thought when the former happens to be excited by an external stimulus. The elements of subjective mind that project the objective world outside are supplied by sub-conscious depth, the seat and prop of *Kundalini*.

Sense organs are stimulated by their physiological sites; they only serve the purpose of medium through which sensation is carried. Had they been identical with their end-organs, the man whose ears have been cut off could not hear. The subtle bodies are the seat of feelings, not *Ātman* which is beyond all material affections. *Buddhi* is the *Upādhi* or vehicle of Ātman. *Upādhi* is that which saddles another with its qualities. Ātman is the witness of *buddhi*. An object is an effect of a cause and any object which has a cause is an illusion. The cause only is true, the only reality being the original causeless Cause.

Śaṃkara in his commentary on *Māndukyopaniṣad*, IV. 67, observes that neither mind nor sight exists as they witness

each other ; moreover waking and dream experiences, being figments of mind, are unreal. The worldly objects are perceived so long as the senses and the intellect function ; the illusory objects persist so long as their consciousness lasts ; dream-objects are valid so long as the dream continues. The *Yogavāśiṣtha* holds that this visible world never existed before, nor does it exist at present, neither will it exist in future. *Mandana* and *Prakāśānanda*, the staunch followers of *Dṛṣti-Sṛṣti* school, advocate the theory of non-existence of the world on the ground that the world disappears from view when we withdraw our senses inside. They maintain that worldly objects are of perceptual character ; because the phenomenal world rests only in our mind : *Antarviśvamidaṃ Sarvaṃ*. The world of duality and plurality is only the effect of mental vibration (S. B on Mā Up, IV 71).

Bṛ Upaniṣad, IV, III. 9, states that jiva-consciousness in waking state, associated with external objects, acquires their impressions which the mind ruminates in dream. As the dream-experiences are considered hallucinations, similarly waking-experiences are to be taken as illusory from the standpoint of deep sleep and *turiya*. Dream-experiences are contradicted by waking phenomenon (Vide *Goudapāda* Kārika, II. 7). A man, for instance, may feel hungry in a dream, although he might have had a sumptuous feast in his wakeful state. The mental state which perceives an elephant in a dream, ceases to exist as soon as the dreamer wakes up along with the elephant itself. These prove the falsity of dream-experiences. Similarly in the realm of time and space, the world-experiences vary and as such they are also unreal. These phenomena led Śaṃkara to put the world-appearances and dream-experiences under the same category. In other words, he holds both of them as unreal. *Māndukyopaniṣad*, IV. 68 declares, therefore, that as the *jivas* are born and die in dreams, so do they in waking state. "Dream is a

hallucination in sleep and hallucination is only a waking dream"—observes Frank Padmore in his *Apparitions and Thought Transference*, P. 186. The only difference between dream-hallucination and worldly perception is that the perception in the latter case is more complete, clear and lasting thān that in the former. When a small fraction of *Kundalini S'akti* enters into a nerve-current and reacts on the end-organs such reaction results in a dream or in an imagination. What is called memory in wakeful state is a dream in partial sleep. The nerve (*Svapnabahā nāḍi*) carrying dream-sensation is a branch of *manobahā nāḍi* that carries all sorts of sensation in wakeful state to the sensorium which is the seat of all perceptions in the brain.

The influence of desire behind dream-construction is admitted by Saṃkara and Madhusudan Sarasvati Desires finding no scope for fulfilment in wakeful state try to find expression in dreams. *Praśastapada* urges that dream-cognitions are produced without any real cause behind them. So the causeless dreams being the whimsical play of mind are hallucinations. Koṇād holds that in partial sleep the egoistic self ruminates its past experiences which are recollected by mind and then cognised as dreams. Dream-hallucinations are mere echoes of past experiences reproduced by the revival of the subconscious impressions—(Vide Nyāyamanjari, P. 182, 545). Though the dreams are not peripherally excited yet it is to be admitted that the incidents experienced in dreams actually happened in the past and perceived through sense-organs. The impressions of that perceptions remain stored in the sub-conscious mind and later on when mind is perverted by sleep excite them to reappear in consciousness as dreams. Saṃkara like the most of the ancient writers advocate the representative character of dreams or the theory of recollection in dream-cognition (Vide S. B. on *Brahma Sutra* II, 2. 29).

According to the sage *Charak*, during sleep when centrally excited sensation passes through *manovahā nāḍi*, *jiva* dreams. In dream-cognition, no real object is present before the sense-organs. While dreaming, the mind remains busy in an extraordinary way, though the external sense-organs remain inactive. *Charak* holds that mind is disturbed by the unbalanced humours (vāyu, pitta and kaf) of the body and dreams are dreamt according to the preponderance of the particular humour. When the phlegmatic humour is upperhand, man dreams watery-dreams e.g., crossing of a river, bathing and drinking or seeing a snow-clad mountain. Man suffering from bilious disorders, experiences fiery dreams—as if surrounded by fire, walking in the mid-day sun, seeing towns and forests on fire or enjoying golden mountain. When the flatulent humour predominates, man dreams such dreams as are common in the activities of a lunatic. He sees himself aimlessly wandering about or flying in the air. Sometimes a man dreams, as if he is nearing the grave. According to *Charak*, such a morbid dream is a signal to his impending death. In such cases the balance of the humours is entirely lost and these unbalanced humours flow furiously within the *manovahā nāḍi* and under their tremendous pressure the vital air is expelled out of the body causing death.

The restlessness of the mind is the only obstacle towards Self-realisation. Mind is made still and the *Ātman* is realised when we take to Yoga (S. B. on *Yoga Sutra*, III. 2. 24). The author of *Panchadaśi* also supports this view. *Patanjali* holds that if our sole attention can be concentrated upon the reflected light of true Self, the *Ātman* is realised as an occean of pure light. When Jiva-consciousness is fixed upon this divine light, the former by constant meditation merges into the latter and gets transformed into universal consciousness. This light is seen to emanate through the point between the two eye-brows when the whole attention is concentrated there. The real

Self is neither an object of mental perception nor of self-consciousness. *Ahaṃkāra* or ego as super-imposed on Ātman is realised in the consciousness of the self. The self-consciousness is the limited consciousness of the individual which is a wonderful combination of shade and light. Jiva consciousness is a mere reflected light of universal consciousness in *Ahaṃ* or empirical ego and as such it can apprehend the latter.

Both the subjective and objective consciousness are mere adjuncts of pure consciousness, falsely super-imposed on the latter. They operate only in the phenomenal plane. No consciousness of lower order can grasp a higher one in the same way as standing at the foot of a mountain, we cannot see the peak. "Ātman is the witness of ego, so ego-consciousness cannot comprehend *Ātman* which is pure consciousness."—Says *Bhāmati*, II. 4. When both the subjective and objective consciousness are fused in pure consciousness, the knower, knowledge and the known become one. As adjuncts to pure consciousness, mental consciousness imparts only partial and often misleading knowledge.

Śaṃkara identifies consciousness as the very nature of the Soul: "*Jnaḥ Nityachaitanyo Yamātmā* (S. B. on *Brahma Sutra* II. 3. 18). In defining consciousness, he approaches Sāṃkhya-view and differs from *Naiyāika* and *Vaiśeṣika* schools who hold consciousness to be a quality of *Ātman*. Quality can be attributed to a material substance but *Ātman* is spiritual and so attributeless. A substance is identical with its *guṇas*. *Guṇa* or property of a substance is known by analysis but Ātman or pure consciousness which is spiritual in essence cannot be put to analysis or sub-divided into a series of its component parts. Pure consciousness limited by certain adjuncts is termed as *Jivātman*—the individual soul confined within the body ; it is self-consciousness. Only in *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*, consciousness is absolutely pure, differenceless, eternal, infinite and unconditional.

In the state of peaceful slumber, the senses merge in *Prāṇa*, *Prāṇa* in the individual soul and that again in *Chidākāśa* or the inner sky of consciousness. During sleep, for this reason, the individual soul, endowed with senses, life and mind, remains inactive. Jivātman cannot enter the plane of dream without quitting the plane of wakefulness, i.e., without temporarily quitting the mortal body. Nor can it come down to function in the material body without quitting the plane of dreams.

After *Suṣupti* or dreamless slumber, a peaceful sleep, when the soul comes back to the lower stage of dream, it experiences various kinds of feeling, e.g., pleasure, happiness, grief, fear, etc., and then returns to the stage of wakefulness. This is like passing of the individual soul from one body to another.

The difference between *Samādhi* and sleep is that the consciousness which is present in sleep is of a lower order belonging to the sub-conscious stratum while the consciousness during *Samādhi* is the one-pointed wakefulness or concentration of individual consciousness. One experiences a peculiar feeling of peace and bliss after rising from samādhi just as in the case of *Suṣupti* or deep dreamless slumber. *Samādhi* which is marked with the elevation of the soul does not produce any untoward effect on the mind but, on the contrary, produces a feeling of comfort, purity and happiness lingering for sometime after the termination of *Samādhi*.

Nothing is experienced in slumber. According to the *Kārikā*, III. 36, slumber is the state of non-apprehension, and dream is the state characterised by wrong apprehension. During deep sleep mental consciousness and internal ideas are resolved into *Chitta* or mind-stuff. During sleep, *Chitta* persists as a homogeneous mass of consciousness, covered under a thin layer of *Avidyā*. The mind being at rest, Jiva enjoys peace and repose and at this state

it is called *Prājna* or wise. When a man wakes up from sound sleep he comes down from Soul-life to the egoistic plane. This explains his inability to describe his state in slumber and this phenomenon proves as well the existence of a separate entity apart from ego. The level of consciousness differs in different states of our being. Pure consciousness is not suspended in the aforesaid three states—waking, dream and dreamless slumber but it retains its unitary position as Ātman. Empirical consciousness is limited and is not all-knowing and all-pervading like Soul-consciousness which is pure, infinite and all-penetrating. In different states the reflected light of pure consciousness seems to change its level according to its revelations conditioned by the adjuncts it assumes.

An idea in wakeful state when carried to the spiritual plane is actualised as a truth ; it takes a concrete shape and becomes an existential aspect of Reality. In the estimation of *Goudapāda* concept, idea and reality are the successive steps in the path of realisation. "Percept without concept is blind and concept without percept is empty."—Says Kant. Spinoza observes that idea crops up in man and that human body cannot exist without idea. "Ideas analogous to the Absolute are more vital parts of religion in India."—*Hinduism and Buddhism*, P. C III. Ātman is in the background of all pious thoughts and it gives existential value to all such ideas. According to Plato, Soul is the source of all motions and change in everything, living or dead (Vide *Phaedrus* 244, C 5 ff). Aristotle's theory of unmoved mover is a corollary to the Platonic doctrine in respect of the self-spontaniety of Soul and its activity through the non-soul.

On rare occasions a dream-cognition proves the existence of one real Self besides the empirical one. Sometimes, it occurs to the dreamer that the object of his dream is not true, but a mere dream. Such an experience goes to prove that besides

man's egoistic self which remains busy as a dreamer, there is some body else within that sees and realises the actual state of our being. Suppose a man dreams that he is dying but in the depth of his consciousness he is quite aware that he is not actually dying but dreaming so. This dual nature of perception is a proof of the existence of two selves within us—the real and the empirical. In dreamless slumber the conscious self or ego is dissolved in nescience and reappear on waking. What persists in dreamless sleep is *Ātman*. *Ātman* is *Jiva-Sākṣin* which keeps always awake. *Govindānanda* in his '*Ratna Prava*' II, 3. 38 elaborates this view. M. M. Pandit Ananta Krishna Śāstri in his '*Vedanta Paribhāsā*' P. 31, opines that during deep sleep Ātman persists as an indifferent spectator.

Yājnavalkya told king *Janak* that nothing could be seen in a dream if there were no light besides the material body. A dreamer moves in a dream from one place to another, though his physical body lies motionless on the bed. In the case of a Yogin his consciousness may remain active in deep sleep and acquire higher realisations of the spiritual worlds. To an ordinary man his consciousness in slumber remains petrified. A purified ego, freed from all knots which bind matter and spirit together may enjoy Yogic experiences in sleep as he experiences in Samādhi Jiva-consciousness in such cases is sunk and lost in the abyss of Soul-consciousness ; it ascends to the apex of Spirit and enters into the more extended realm of universal consciousness and gains knowledge of the worlds beyond and unknown.

In deep sleep, *Jivātman*, isolated from the physical body, may enter into other subtle covers and have diverse novel experiences and bliss. When the sleeper feels a stream of profound peace and enjoys heavenly bliss flowing within, such a state may be reckoned with *Samādhi*. So in sleep, Yoga-activity may continue spontaneously as in waking state.

Such experiences in slumber are not to be considered as dream-hallucination but as spiritual revelations. The prophetic dreams are aptly equated with spiritual realisations. 'Future events cast their shadows before.' The truth of this saying is confirmed when future events cast their shadows in our dreams. Sometimes due to the merits and demerits of a dreamer, he gets hints of future events in dream. Prophetic dreams are experienced when some enlightened Spirit out of sympathy or pity forecastes the fact of some coming event likely to put the man into trouble and he also advises him how to get rid of it.

When sleep breaks man returns from spiritual to mental plane. This is why a man after a restful sleep cannot recollect what happened in sleep. Mental consciousness cannot account for a spiritual state in the same way as the body and senses cannot comprehend the movements of the mind. Consciousness in slumber is that of Ātman whereas waking and dream consciousness belongs to the Jiva-mind. There is no hard and fast difference between waking and dream states. So when Jiva awakes from partial sleep he can relate his dream experiences. In sound sleep *Jiva* comes very close to *Ātman*, but as the seed of *Karma* is not then destroyed, it cannot merge in Ātman ; it is compelled to revert to its earthly life again. The consciousness of *Jiva* during slumber remains completely veiled by an inscrutable layer of *Māyā*. So, a thief and a saint have the same experience in sound sleep.

During profound sleep *Jivātman* enters into cause-body and is identified as *Kutastha Brahman* ; in effect it is *Hiraṇyagarbha*. Though the casual body is attributive still it has no form. A casual bodied being is the enjoyer of sound sleep. In slumber, mind merges in *Avidyā* but during *Samādhi* it becomes one with the fearless and self-revealing Ātman. When a man enters into a deep *Samādhi* the quality

of *Sattva* is enhanced and Jiva-consciousness is lost in pure consciousness[1]. In order to enhance the power of internal perception a Yogin willfully shuts the doors and windows of the mind and senses against the external world. He merges his senses in mind, mind in intellect and ultimately intellect in unitary Ātman[2]. When it is done *Samādhi* ensues.

The difference between deep sleep and *Samādhi* is that the consciousness in the former state is veiled by *Māyā* in the way of drowsiness but in the latter, consciousness of *Jiva* remains always alive and alert, which grows in intensity and subtlety as the meditation deepens. Meditation starts with mind. Blank mind is not capable of meditating anything. Mental activity persists upto the stage of *Savikalpa samādhi* which is determinate. At this stage, the activity of mind feebly lingers and dies out completely when the yogin enters into *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* which is indeterminate. This is the *Turiya* or the fourth and the highest stage of transcendental consciousness. Make your mind introspective and grow it subtler and subtler, concentrating it on more and more subtle objects until it completely dies out and intuitive consciousness takes its place. The consciousness at human level is that of the ego, for the dawn of God-consciousness, man's must go.

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2. "लीयते हि सुषुप्ते तन्नीग्रहीतं न लीयते।
तदेव निर्भयं ब्रह्म ज्ञानालोकं समश्नुते॥" Mā up III. 35.

2. "यच्छेद् वाङ्मनसी प्राज्ञस्तद् यच्छेद् ज्ञान आत्मनि।"—Śruti.

Yājnavalkya suggests.

"इन्द्रियानि वशीकृत्य यमादिगुणसंयुतः।
आत्ममध्ये मनः कुर्य्यादात्मानं परमात्मनि॥
परमात्मास्वयं भूत्वा न किञ्चिच्चिन्तयेत्ततः।
तदातु लीयते तस्मिन प्रत्यगात्मन्यखण्डिते।
प्रत्यगात्मा स एव स्यादितुक्तं ब्रह्मवादिभिः॥

—Quoted in S. B on *S'veta* Up. 1. 7.

The unmanifested, the prolific and manifested condition of Supreme Being can be compared with the three states of human being—dreamless slumber, dream and wakefulness. Individual beings assume these states under the influence of *Avidyā*. The state in which perception by sense organs become possible is called wakeful, for the individual soul remains immediately connected with the gross body and its sensation. Individually taken, this soul is called *Viśva* and collectively it is called *Vaiśvānara* or *Virāt*. In His prolific state i.e., as Hiraṇyagarva, He dreams to devise various plans for the creation of the universes So does an individual recollect in dream the things experienced or going to be experienced in wakeful state. In this state, the self has direct connection with the subtle body. The self at this state regarded individually. is called *Taijasa* and collectively as *Hiraṇyagarva*—the prolific nature of the Supreme being. According to the Praśnopaniṣad IV. 6, *Jivātman* or the individual soul associates in the state of sound sleep, with *Paramātman* and its consciousness of the external world is lost. In deep sleep *Jivātman* enjoys the nearness and bliss of Brahman. The state of dreamless slumber is that state of sleep in which the mind neither dreams nor receives any sensation from the external stimulus and at the termination of which becomes conscious only of a restful sleep. In this state the soul remains directly connected with the causal body or *Avidyā* only. Individually, the soul is known as *Prājna* or wise and collectively as omniscient. So the three stages of the individual soul, as *Viṣva*, *Taijasa* and *Prājna*, corresponding to wakeful, dream and dreamless slumber resemble the three stages of qualified Brahman as *Virāt*, *Hiraṇyagarbha* and *Avyakta* (unmanifest Prakriti) respectively.

Viśva is nothing but what is experienced by the Jiva, associated with the body in the state of wakefulness. He who dreams and recollects within us is called *Taijasa*

and the being during slumber is *Prājna*. Mind, associated with Soul has the technical name *Taijasa*, a luminous being, the Lord of the body. *Taijasa* experiencing the sense-world, while awake, is called *Viśva* or the Jiva. *Hiraṇyagarva* represents *Taijasa-selves*. He is the collective mind of all i.e., Universal Mind. *Prājna* is identical with the unmanifest Prakriti. *Viśva* and *Taijasa* are conditioned by time and effect and *Prājna* by cause alone. This causal state is characterised as *Avidyā*, the mental darkness which envelopes man's higher consciousness in the same way as the darkness of night envelopes everything. In *Samādhi*, neither time nor effect nor cause exists. This state is called *Turiya* or the fourth and the highest. During sleep, Jiva-consciousness merges in parental darkness and this state is reckoned with minor dissolution whereas in *Samādhi* it is lost in pure consciousness when *Mahāpralaya* or major dissolution takes place. There is return from *Pralaya* or minor dissolution but when Jiva-consciousness completely merges in God-consciousness there is no emergence. As creation follows dissolution, so a *Jiva* wakes up on the break of sleep and enters into worldly life again. One who enters into *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* never returns or reincarnates.

In *Turiya*, *Jiva* becomes identical with Brahman and it is possible only when consciousness in the three states as explained before is made to merge in the fourth or *Turiya*. Release from all qualifications and attributes is a condition precedent to the awakening of pure consciousness which is transcendental or *Turiya*.

Pure consciousness is the true nature of *Jiva*, but owing to Jiva's false identification it remains covered under a veil of ignorance. When pure consciousness comes down to the plane of causality and seeks subject-object relationship it takes the nature and form of an active mind. Again this mental consciousness working through the senses appears as the

world. It is inferred, therefore, that when mind becomes inactive, the world disappears and what persists at that time is pure consciousness which is *Ātman* or *Brahman*. So for the realisation of Self, the passivity of mental faculty or in other words the eclipse of mental consciousness is essential.

As the sun sets, it draws within it all its rays. Likewise in deep *Samādhi* Ātman draws within itself the power of mind and senses. In this *Samādhi*, *Jiva* enters into *Ānandmaya Koṣa* or the sheath of Bliss and on account of its proximity to *Ātman*, *Jiva* enjoys the bliss of Brahman. But a thin layer of ignorance in the form of a seed of *karma*, acquired in his normal life, still persists which brings the Yogin to the worldly life again. The perfect peace and cheerfulness of mind that a Yogin feels when he comes down from *Samādhi* proves that for man there is a much more higher existence.

Mrs, Rhys David reproduces the following beautiful lines from *Anguttara Nikāya*, a Buddhist text, in her introduction to *Dialogues of the Buddha*: "Verily, I declare to you, my friends, that within this very body, mortal as it is and only a fathom high, but conscious and endowed with mind, is the world." Past, present and future all exist in the self: 'That which is past is hidden in life and that which is to come.' The *Sāṃkhyas* hold that the past and future exist in the present. According to Patanjali, what a man was and what he will be, can be determined from his present activity. His tendency at present is the outward expression of his inner nature and the nature of a man is wrought according to the impressions acquired in the past. Man is a bundle of *Samaskāras* that constitutes his nature. So the life of a man is mainly controlled by the impressions of his past actions. The present is a link between the past and the future. Both the past and future lie potentially in the present and they are true as much as the present. When the mind is concentrated upon the present tendencies, past and future are

known. A past incident floats up on our surface mind when we try to remember it. Sub-conscious mind carries the record of past actions. The impressions of the past actions try to float up when any incentive i.e., a cause outside occupies our surface mind. The surface mind and sub-conscious mind are so closely connected together that when a particular kind of thought occupies the former, the impressions of similar type in the latter respond. The thoughts and impressions are, therefore, co-relative. If the interactions and cross fertilisation of thoughts and impressions can be checked, the realisation of our true nature becomes possible. Empty your surface mind, the sub-conscious mind will be automatically silent and dead failing to create new impressions and hence new birth. Complete suppression of mental restlessness (*Chitta vṛtti nirodh*) can be brought about by the practice of *Prānāyāma*. Christ refers this tranquillity of mind to the purity of heart: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"—said Christ. When both the surface and sub-conscious minds are subdued and made inactive, the gate of the realm of pure consciousness is flung open.

So, not only the surface mind but the sub-conscious and unconscious minds as well should have proper avenues of our careful study. Concentration of mind is the means to dive into the sub-conscious depth. Through deep meditation on an object, the mental waves are collected together and if this integrated mind is made to converge on the sub-conscious region, the latter would unfold its mystery. Supramental perception is realised in intuitive level, when consciousness is integrated and will unified. Jiva-consciousness touches both the ends of sub-conscious and super-conscious planes. The Western psychologists are concerned in main with the normal consciouness of jiva-mind but the Hindu psychologists take in their account every grade of consciousness. As one-ninth of a lump of ice remains floating on the surface of water and

the rest is submerged within, similarly the human intelligence which is active in a man of normal consciousness is only the one-ninth of the total consciousness and the eight-ninths of it lie dormant in us. By the practice of Yoga, this dormant part, which is pure consciousness, is awakened. The hightening of normal consciousness is the aim of psychological practices.

Strong will-power takes jiva-consciousness to the higher level. The power of will increases when mind is concentrated. According to the Hindu psychologists, when mind is subjected to the discipline of Yoga-practice, the nerve-tissues receive a soothing tone and mental and physical force become refined, integrated and stronger than before; as a result of this, the will-power of the Yogin becomes dynamic in its operation. *Prānāyama*, which is a method of pure rythmic breathing, if practised properly, gives complete relaxation to the system, calms down mental restlessness and strengthens the weak nerves. Psychic powers grow in a strong and concentrated mind only.

Human will is a phase of the dynamic mind. If this dynamic state is subordinated to the higher principle of life, the will of the Providence, no amount of worldly obstacles, pleasure or pain, however stubborn, can distract our minds; the peace of the mind will be intact, baser impulses, passions and uncontrolled emotions will lose their foothold and fail to rob a man of his mental peace and happiness. An unified and integrated will, sub-servient to the Cosmic will, takes our mind beyond the realm of Jiva-Consciousness and the devotee rises above the level of his self-conscious life and becomes more volitional and approaches nearer to the Supreme. His life becomes so much saturated with love and peace that any one coming in his contact, feels the magnetic attraction of his divine personality.

Since man is a bundle of good and evil impressions, a villain may at times be seen doing great things. In an

auspicious moment some good impressions may float on the surface mind and induce a villain to do noble deeds. A man can alter the decree of his fate only if he exerts his free-will and turns it towards good. God never interferes with the free-will of a man. Free-will cannot be denied because in that case man's redemption becomes impossible and faith in the existence of God and in a higher Self is annihilated for ever. Man's freedom of will acts up to the point where mind ceases to be a mind. Human will at this stage is no longer the self-will ; it is then possessed and governed by the will of Providence. The freedom of will is unlimited when man transcends his self-imposed limitations and his will is attuned to that of God.

The knower of Ātman, according to the Chhā Up. VIII. 6, enjoys freedom in all the worlds. So long as the lower self is not surrendered to the higher and the higher sits at the helm to steer across the life's boat, man wanders in the path of uncertainty. Self-exertion is an initiative to unfold divine power and consciousness lying dormant within us. There is a point of fusion where human will and consciousness are absorbed in the divine. "God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven"—this Biblical sermon assures the possibility of turning this earth into heaven if we but will it and exert ourselves in right earnest to achieve the end.

When the senses become subtle and refined by practice of yoga, the power of occult perception grows in a yogin. *S'ridhar* holds that by constant practice of meditation upon Self or Ākāśa, a transcendental power or *dharma* is born. This divine power enables the yogin to visualise and arprehend all objects—distant, past and future. It is the gateway to all super-sensuous knowledge—(*Nyāyakandali*, V. S. S. Benares 1895, P. 196). In the opinion of *Jayanta Bhatta*, a yogin rising above the categories of time, space and causation, name, form and concept apprehends intuitively the reality at a glance

(*Nyāyamanjari*, P. 197). In *Praśastapāda Bhāsya*, P. 187, it is urged that in ecstatic state the yogin is omniscient but when he comes down from *Samādhi*, (though his power of omniscience is withheld), he can realise distant objects by a little concentration of mind. This view has been supported by *Viswanath*, the author of *Siddhānta Muktābali* (Vide Javal's Edition, Bombay 1916, P. 204). The subtle senses, in co-operation with the special merit that a yogin acquires through *Sādhanā*, help him to visualise distant objects and future events. The yogin of the first order is known as *Yukta-yogin* or the yogin united with Brahman and the second type is called *Yunjana* i.e., one who is trying to be united. A *yukta-yogin* has no desire to be fulfilled except his own emancipation. So the importance of mind and senses is lost to him. His activity now is in the super-sensuous world, so his faculty of perception also has to be of super-sensuous character. The knowledge of such an united yogin is called *Ārṣa-jnāna* or the knowledge of a Seer. His prediction proves always true, because he is a Seer of Truth. He perceives everything intuitively. A *Yunjana* yogin is a trainee living in the mental plane and so earthly desires still lurk in his mind. As he progresses in the path of *Yogic Sādhanā* his mind and senses grow subtler and subtler day by day and step by step till they attain the highest degree of excellence by entering into the higher realm of consciousness through which alone the perception of objects, distant, past and future becomes possible. The prediction made by a *Yunjana* yogin is not always correct because the object of his knowledge is not intuited in pure consciousness. Further, he analyses the object into its diverse categories which are the common features of discursive and discriminative mind and as a result, the object is realised in parts and not as an integrated whole.

When a yogin comes down from Samādhi, his perceptions are both determinate and indeterminate. His perception is

indeterminate i.e., real, because he is a seer of truth and sometimes determinate because he enters into normal consciousness (Vide Nyāyatātparyyadipikā, P. 68). In normal consciousness of a yogin and also in his conscious ecstasy the truth may be known owing to the fervent desire of the yogin. By a little effort of concentration he can apprehend truth (*Nyāyakandali* of Śridhara, P. 195-6). Praśastapado recognises the momentary flash of intuition revealing truth in ordinary life—(*Praśastapādo Bhāsya*, P. 258). Jayanta Bhatta also maintains that intuitive cognitions of future and unknown objects sometimes follow in anxious mood (N. M. P, 106). The story of Mr. Churchil best illustrates this view.

As the mind of a *Yunjana* Yogin remains associated with time, space and causation, he cannot surpass the territories of the latter,—he cannot touch the reality of an object because the reality is spiritual. In *Saṃprajnāta Samādhi*, the seed of *Karma* is not totally destroyed and so it is called *Sabija Samādhi*. *Sabija Samādhi* is not conducive to emancipation. The discriminative power which a *Yunjana* Yogin exercises during perception hides the real nature of the object. His mind remains busy with the husk rejecting the corn. Still the subtlety of mind and senses a yogin acquires in *Saṃprajnāta Samādhi* is not to be undervalued. *Saṃprajnāta* or determinate *Samādhi* is the stepping stone to *Asaṃprajnāta* or indeterminate *Samādhi*. To enter into *Saṃprajnāta Samādhi*, ego, sense-organ or any subtle material objects may be taken as a support for meditation. The semi-ecstatic condition a *Yunjana Yogin* attains at times by partial concentration of mind is *Saṃprajnāta* or conscious ecstasy. The perceptions in *Saṃprajnāta Samādhi* are of determinate character (*Savitarka* and *Savichār*) because the conscious self still persists with its discriminative mind. 'I am perceiving'— this sort of sense goes on tickling in the depth of his being and the discriminative knowledge burdens

his mind. In perfect ecstasy or *Asaṃprajnāta Samādhi*, the sense of 'I', 'me' or 'mine' disappears altogether and perceptions at this stage are of indeterminate character, being not acquired bit by bit in its diverse aspects but realised indeterminately as a whole losing all its differential characters.

According to the difference of perceptions, *Samādhis* have got different names. *Sānanda Samādhi* is an ecstatic state of determinate mind having a feeling of ecstatic bliss owing to the preponderance of Sattva at that time. *Vāchaspati Miśra* and *Rāmānanda Jyoti* hold *Sāsmita Samādhi* or conscious ecstasy to be also a determinate state of mind and in this state of conscious *Samādhi* mind enters into *buddhi*. *Buddhi* in this ecstatic condition is pure *Sattva*, divested of *Rajas* and *Tamas*. In *Sāsmita Samādhi*, the problem of distinction between Soul and non-soul (*Puruṣa-Prakriti Veda*) is not solved as the mind associated with *Ahaṃkāra* or empirical ego still hovers in the higher regions of this phenomenal world. The mind of a *Yunjana Yogin* remains engrossed in *Rupa-dhyāna* and he enjoys the scattered visions of the invisible world through his subtle senses. The etherial beings have got forms made up of ether. They are not immaterial beings. So the meditation upon these higher beings are also considered as *Rupa-dhyāna* or figurative meditation. These etherial beings are not emancipated souls ; they are also the slaves to passions and as such they feel and desire as we, the worldly men, do. So these higher spheres of phenomenal existence cannot be the aim and end of a real yogin. He must transcend these phenomenal worlds.

Yoga-phenomenon known as Kāya-byūha in which an individual can simultaneously live in several bodies also proves the distinction of *dehi* and *deha* or the soul and the body. Two kinds of knowledge, higher and lower as postulated by the Vedas, belong to Ātman and Jivātman respectively. Higher knowledge is the very nature of Ātman.

Jivātman differs from Ātman in point of its limiting adjuncts. The knower of Self realises Ātman in each perception[1] and such knowledge brings liberation. Ātman is the inner Self—the *Pratyagātman* of all living beings. The knowledge of Ātman is indeterminate and so it is gained in the intuitive level of consciousness. Though in deep sleep the Jivātman enjoys the nearness and the bliss of Ātman, it again becomes limited by organism and assumes the name and form of a jiva when the sleep is interrupted. The vision of Soul is never absent (*Praśnopaniṣad*, IV. iii. 23). Ātman never changes its colour now and then like jivātman with diverse cognitions and perceptions. The sense that *I am perceiving* is always present in all its perceptions. This limited 'I', though conscious of the worldly objects, is not conscious of consciousness : it is conscious of itself alone. *Jivātman* is a phenomenal knower and without it the world becomes extinct. According to *Govindānanda* what is known by self-consciousness is the consciousness of the lower self or Jivātman (*Ratnaprava*, II. 3. 8). Just as a piece of iron rod when made red-hot with fire has in itself the property of both iron and fire, so due to proximity of Ātman, Jivātman assumes the duel nature of both the subject and object. *Prakāśātman* maintains that Jivātman super-imposed on the Ātman becomes an object of self-consciousness (*Panchapadika Vivaraṇa*, P. 49). "Soul is the eternal seer ; it cannot be an object of self-consciousness"—observes Bhāmati, P. 134. According to *Ballavāchāryya*, Ātman is eternal and not born (Vide *S'uddhādvaita Mārtanda*, P. 9).

Ātman is not affected by coming and going of the world ; it feels itself a stranger here and looks everything indifferently. Audulomi recognises *Ātman* or Soul as pure consciousness. 'It is light—it is truth'—states *Chāndyogyopaniṣad*, III. 14. 2.

1. 'प्रतिबोध विदितं मतममृतत्वं हि विन्दते ।
आत्मना विन्दते वीर्य्यं विद्यया विन्दतेऽमृतम् ॥"—Kena Up II. 1. 4.

KUNDALINI OR THE ENERGY POTENTIAL IN MAN

When the Supreme Being desired creation He entered into millions and millions of creatures. At that time they as divine fragments, were innocent and free from stains of previous impressions. It is from the silver age that sin has entered the human mind and it has culminated in this iron age in such heinous conduct as theft, secret murder, adultery etc. The iron age will continue for 426, 948 years from now on. Who knows what lies in the future? According to science man existed even sixty lakhs of years ago. The golden age comprised 86,4000 years, the silver age was 1,296,000 years and the brazen age had 86,4000 years. So the good impressions gathered during the period from the commencement of the Golden age up to the middle of brazen era have been suppressed in *Mulādhāra* (Sacrococeygeal plexus) by the mixture of the impressions of good and evil carried down up to this time. These ineffaceable collective impressions of endless births generate a tremendous energy in man and this potentised energy embedded in the *Mulādhāra* is *Kundalini S'akti*.

The power of senses and mind is derived from *Kundalini*. She is the powerhouse within the human body. As vital air, *Kundalini* works through all the organs from tongue to feet : "*Sā Devi Vāyavi S'aktiḥ*" (*Rudra-Yāmal*). The spoken words owe their origin to *Kundalini* : "*Puruṣeṣu Chetaneṣu Yā Vāk-S'akti*".—Comments Ānandagiri. Inspiration, respiration and utterance of words are controlled by *Kundalini*. The little reaction in the shape of contraction we feel while uttering a word is *Parā*. Next, the reaction due to the contraction of belly at the second circle, *Sāddhisthāna*, is called *Paśyanti-vāk*. Then the reaction produced at *Anāhata-*

Circle owing to the contraction of lungs is *Madhyamā*. At last what is uttered through the gullet is *Vaikhari vāk*.

The thoughts which spring up in our mind and are translated into action, leave a permanent impression on our mind like a seal on wax. The sum-total of all these impressions is the capital with which each *jiva* starts its business in the world. Our character and destiny are moulded in accordance with these impressions. These impressions of numberless births go on accumulating in the *Mulādhāra*. This accumulated energy of vast magnitude is *Kundalini* which lies coiled-up like a serpent at *Mulādhāra*. Human mind takes great delight in eating, drinking etc., when *Kundalini* lies with her face downwards but when her face is turned upwards, higher thoughts concerning God and emancipation rise in the mind. When the wick of a lamp is lighted oil flows upwards. So when we take to the path of spirituality our consciousness is drawn upwards. When *Kundalini*, awakened by the force of meditation, enters *Suṣumnā*, the spiritual nerve and tries to make her way upwards the yogin feels clearly as though a coiled-up serpent is beginning to straighten up and rise upwards.

The unenjoyed *Samaskāras* or the collective past impressions, stored in *Mulādhāra Chakra*, frequently come out of their dens on the faintest opportunity, attack the mind and compel it to work according to their own tendencies; as a result, the man suffers the consequences. The seat of mind is the third circle called *Manipur* at navel. The space between the two stations from *Mulādhāra* to *Manipur* is governed by six passions. These six passions dissuade the mind from working under good directions given by the intellect. Pure intellect is situate at *Ājnā Chakra* or the sixth circle between the two eyebrows. A worldly mind resides at *Manipur* circle. So long as it cannot rise up to the higher circles *jiva* remains drowned in worldly enjoyments.

In higher circles mind feels no attraction for enjoyable objects. The minds of the *Yogins* and of the true devotees always move in the *Brahma-Kunda* or the world of *Brahmā* i.e., in *Ājnā Chakra*. When any impression comes out of *Mulādhāra* and reaches the cerebellum in search of the mind, the latter becomes mad with rage to find the mind resting in the *Brahma-Kunda* instead of its own place at *Manipur*. The impression, not knowing the consequence of own its action, jumps into the *Brahma-Kunda* and is itself burnt to ashes. In this way the past-impressions in the yogins are made inactive and totally destroyed. By the practice of yoga when *Kundalini* begins to unfold herself, the mixed impressions of good and evil come out one after another like a screen and thus their seat, the *Mulādhāra* is purged of all the mixed impressions in the same way as stated above. Then only the good impressions will appear one by one till they are all exhausted. Thus finally, we shall have no impressions or in other words, we shall return to our original status of innocence. "From God we have come and unto God we return." Absolute Brahman is without any attribute, form or impression. So in the above manner when all our previous impressions are obliterated we resemble Him in every respect and consequently are lost in Him ; because God-like merges in God.

Every congenial impression has its own momentum. The amount of good impression that we shall be able to earn by the performance of good and virtuous deeds will determine the extent to which we shall cross the limitations due to the evil impressions acquired in the previous births. If we are to defeat the negative momentum of an evil impression or our harmful instincts we have to develop and increase good impressions. When we generate a host of beneficient impressions, the evil impressions will be defeated and they will make room for the good impressions or else the harmful instincts will turn into good instincts.

It is said that there are thirty-five millions of nerves in human system of which the principal nerves are ten in number. Three of these ten again are of supreme importance: (1) *Iḍā* or *Gangā*, (2) *Piṇgalā* or *Jamunā* and (3) *Suṣumnā* or *Sarasvati*. Of these again, *Suṣumnā* occupies the first place of importance. This is the course of meditation of the yogins as expressed in the passage: "*Suṣumnā śunya padavi Brahmarandhraṃ* Mahāpathaḥ." *Iḍa*, *Piṇgalā* and *Suṣumnā* pass along the spinal cord. *Iḍā* lies on the left, *Piṇgalā* on the right while Suṣumnā, a hollow pipe, lies in the middle and it enters straight to the brain. *Iḍā* is the path of desireful action, *Piṇgalā* of desireless inaction and *Suṣumnā* is the spiritual path of Brahman.

Suṣumnā, the spiritual nerve, flows inside the backbone as a luminous current of energy: "*Merohmadhye nāḍi Suṣumnā*" (*ṣaḍ-chakra*). It is the sensory nerve that carries sensation to the brain and we get knowledge of the object producing sensation. 'Kirk's Philosophy, P. 636, states: "A grey matter is continuous from spinal cord to the optic thalamus and through this certain afferent impulses such as those of pain travel upward." Within the Suṣumnā canal there are six esoteric circles and these spiritual centres are related to the corresponding heavenly spheres. The seventh circle is situated inside the brain and it is related to the world of the Absolute Brahman. By the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* and through the strong power of meditation *Kundalini* reaches *Sahasrāra* accompanied by the *Jivātman*. *Kundalini* is to be meditated as a bright stream of white light ascending upwards along with jiva-consciousness through the *Suṣumnā*. *Suṣumnā* rises from *Mulādhārā* to *Sahasrāra*: "*Suṣumnā Chordhagāmini*." According to the *Bhāgavad*, II. 2. 24, this spiritual nerve *Suṣumnā*, flows as a stream of white light even above the crown of the head. When steady, mind rests at *Ājnā-chakra* (the sixth circle). *Ājnā* is the sensorium.

Sahasrāra is situate at the appex. When body and mind are made still, the Yogin is to carry his consciousness higher and higher through the *Suṣumnā* canal piercing the different centres one after another until *Saharsrārā* is reached. The circles are to be meditated as luminous.

Suṣumnā is very fine at the lower end of the spinal cord. The nerves of the lumbur region are situated close to it. The centres of these nerves are known as so many different *Padmas* or *Chakras* (circles) situated within the Suṣumnā path. They are as follows :

(1) *Sahasrāra* or *Sahasra-dala-kamala or padma*—the thousand petalled lotus situated in the highest place of the brain matter The great *Maheśvara* is in a state of meditation there. The sound of OM can always be heard at *Sahasrāra*. This is the *Brahma-Parampada* or the final station beyond creation, the place of Brahman—the acquisition of which means emancipation. Withdraw consciousness upwards by simultaneous pull of *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* and merge it in Brahman at *Sahasrāra* or *Sahasradala padma* and you will taste the bliss of Nirvāṇa. *Puraka* and *Kumbhaka* or the process of taking in and holding of breath within cause the inherent *S'akti* in jiva (*Kundalini*) to wake up and meet *S'iva*, her Lord—the fountain of the *S'akti*. During *Rechaka* or giving out of breath, *Kundalini* recoils to her original abode at *Mulādhāra*.

(2) *Ājnā Chakra*—or the sixth centre is situated between the brows—about one inch inside from the root of the nose. The divine eyes will be opened if by meditation the stream of consciousness be carried upwards and fixed to this spot. This spot between the two eye-brows is as sacred as Benares ; it is the seat of God. The devout worshippers and the knowers of Brahman fix their minds to the point and offer evening prayers : "*Etadvai Sandhiṃ Sandhyāṃ brahmavid upāsate.*"—*Rāmottara*. In the *Jāvāla Upaniṣad*, this *Triveni* has been described as the real *Bārānasi* (Benares).

(3) *Viśuddhā Chakra*—The fifth circle lies in throat centre and controls final respiration.

(4) *Anāhata Chakra*—The fourth circle lies in the region of the heart and controls the feelings of pleasure and pain. *Viśuddhā Chakra* is the centre of subtle life and *Anāhata*, of subtle mind.

(5) *Manipur*—The third circle at the navel controls function of digestion, nutrition and growth.

(6) *Svādhisthāna Chakra* or the second circle from below lies at the root of the generative organ and controls the act of procreation.

(7) *Mulādhāra Chakra* is an equilateral triangular space within an area of $2'' \times 2''$ at the lowest extremity of *Suṣumnā* about one inch above the anus and also about an inch below the root of the generative organ. This is the first *Chakra* (circle) which is called *Mulādhāra* and at a point below it *Iḍā*, *Piṇgalā* and *Suṣumnā* unite. This place where the three nerves meet is called *Triveni*. In the triangular area above the *Mulādhāra* is the location of the passions of flesh and hence called *Kāmāpitha* or the seat of *Kāma*, the desire. At this place is located the Svayaṃbhu Lingaṃ of the self-existing Lord infused with the living energy of life. *Kundalini* remains encircling this phalic symbol three and a half times around it. Kundalini, like a sleeping serpent is in a flood of celestial light, more glorious than the lusture of a million flashes of lightning. The lotus centres inside the *Suṣumnā* of worldly people remain sleeping with their petals drooping downwards. When quiting the path of desire or attachment which goes downwards one retraces his steps and moves upwards along the path of *Nivṛtti* (detachment) which leads towards emancipation, all the lotus centres turn up and blossom with their petals turned upwards. *Iḍā*, *Pingalā* and *Suṣumnā* again unite at the sixth centre or *Ājnā Chakra* just below the centre of *Sahasradala kamala* or the centre of

thousand petalled lotus. This point of confluence is also called *Triveni* or *Brahmayoni*. The *Suṣumnā* reaches the *Sahasrāra* through the triangular *Brahmayoni* and the portion of *Suṣumnā* within the *Brahmayoni* is called *Chitrā*. *Chitrā* shines with light and is the resort of the yogins. *Paramātman* descending through this triangular place and stepping into *Iḍā* creates *Jiva* with the help of *Prakṛiti*. As *Iḍā* is the course of desire or *pravṛtti*, flowing downwards, the individual soul, blinded by ignorance, cannot perceive the real state of things and feels itself separate from *Paramātman*.

Rajas and *Tamas* are supreme in the three lower centres of *manipura* (Naval), *Svādhiṣṭhāna* (centre of procreation) and *mulādhāra* (centre of purgation and urination) respectively. Sattva predominating, the upper three centres *Anāhata*, *Viśuddhā* and *Ājnā Chakra* are the fields of *Karma* (action), *Bhakti* (love and devotion) and *Jnāna* (knowledge) respectively.

The *Mulādhārā Padma* or the first circle in the human body from below consists of four petals each with a different hue. These four petals encircle the *Kundalini* with a view to serving the purpose of her wearing apparel. *Kundalini*, the energy potential in *Jiva*, aspires to unite with Supreme Being dwelling in *Sahasrāra*, a thousand petalled lotus which is the seventh and the highest circle in the human body and situate inside the human brain. *Kundalini* is always trying to approach and merge in *Param S'iva* at *Sahasrāra* like a chaste wife who is ever desirous of her husband's loving union. The desire of *Kundalini* can be crowned with success by the practice of *Prāṇāyāma*. She likes to drink the nectar that drips from the *Sahasradalapadma* (Medula oblongata) on the root of the palate when the tip of the tongue is made to touch it by the practice of *Khechari Mudrā*. In the stages of deep concentration and divine love, the blood inside the brain is converted into a nectar-like fluid which percolates

through *Brahma-Yoni* (Passage of the Brahman) to *Ājnā-chakra.* A yogin tastes it through the mouth of Kundalini by performing *Khechari Mudrā.* Drinking this nectar, the Yogin is absorbed in a blissful ecstasy, peculiar to the communion of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul—a sort of spiritual intercourse through *Yoga.*

The radiant *Brahma-Nāḍi* is situated inside the shining *Chitrā Nāḍi.* Drops of nectar ooze through the *Brahma-Nāḍi* from the centre of Sahasrāra. When *jivātman* or the individual soul rises up to reach the *Ājnā Chakra* along with *Kundalini* by practice of *Yoga,* the yogin drinks that nectar and falls into a trance-like condition called *Samādhi.* Such a Yogin has been rightly described as "One who drinks the divine wine and is freed from rebirth". *S'āstras* say that such a Yogin drinking that nectar becomes so much intoxicated with heavenly joy that he loses all sense of ego and the world and is ultimately released from the bondage of birth and death[1]. So the divine wine of the *S'āstras* is not the ordinary wine of an Excise vendor that a Trantrist Sādhak drinks but the nectar that oozes in drops from the *Sahasrāra.*

The higher the *Kundalini* rises from centre to centre, the subtler and finer experiences are obtainted—amazing visions are seen by the yogin who happens also to acquire uncommon and divine powers. As the *Kundalini* passes through the different higher centres, the yogin looks upon them as full of extra-ordinary scenes of pleasure gardens, plains, meadows, mountains, rivers or populated area of the heavenly spheres. I have said before that these celestial regions and their denizens shine with unearthly light. So a yogin experiences them in the light of higher consciousness

1. "पीत्वा पीत्वा पुनः पीत्वा पीत्वा पतति भूतले ।
उत्थाय च पुनः पीत्वा पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥"—Tantra.

awakened during *Samādhi*. In the final stage, *Kundalini* takes the individual soul through *Suṣumnā* to the *Sahasrāra* when the individual soul merges into Supreme Soul. The bubble of water bursts and mingles into water of boundless ocean.

It has already been said that the human body is the universe in miniature. There is a close connection and similarity between the structure of human body and the universe. There are seven divisions in this universe, corresponding to the seven spiritual centres (*Chakras*) within the human body with a presiding deity ruling over each centre and corresponding divisions. *S'ri Ganeśa* is the presiding deity of the lowest centre i.e., *Mulādhāra Chakra* of the human body and as also of the lowest division of the universe. When *Mulādhāra* is roused to activity by practice of yoga, we come to possess full knowledge of the lowest plane of the universe and is infused with the divine power and blessing of *S'ri Ganeśa* which help us to prosper in every sphere of our worldly life. The knowledge of higher worlds goes on increasing as the stream of inner consciousness flows upward from centre to centre and the yogin becomes endowed with the divine power of the respective presiding deities. Thus when the yogin in course of his journey reaches *Ājnā Chakra* i.e., the sixth centre in the human body, he becomes omniscient lord of creation, preservation and destruction. In still higher stage when he reaches *Sahasrāra* his separate individuality is lost in Supreme Individuality which is Brahman.

The entire space may be divided into two hemispheres—terrestrial and celestial, according to the development of consciousness of the denizens residing therein. Invididual mind has free access to the terrestrial or lower hemisphere where the worldlings are content to live. The heavenly spheres in the upper hemisphere are the regions of the Overminds and the Superminds. The circles *Mulādhāra*, *Sāddhisthāna* and *Manipur* correspond to the terrestrial

hemisphere; while the upper part of it comprising the celestial regions is related to the circles called *Anāhata, Viśuddhā* and *Ājnā*. The world of pure consciousness extends from and beyond the realm of superminds which correspond to the circles called *Ājnā*. *Saharāra* or the highest circle within the human body is related to the *Nirmal Chaitanya Deśa* which is situated at the apex of the upper hemisphere —the world of *Sacchidānanda Brahman*. The superminds are liberated souls no doubt but they may retain their separate individuality and may occasionally come down and incarnate only to enlighten and lift-up the less fortunate degenerated people.

By the practice of yoga, the Jiva-consciousness of the lower hemisphere can be carried step by step to the summit of the upper hemisphere. While ascending this long path through different circles, a *Sādhak* experiences every higher circle as more luminous than the lower one and he gains in higher consciousness and knowledge than before. At the Ājnā Chakra or the sixth circle, his consciousness is universal —finite Jiva-consciousness of the devotee becomes infinite. He becomes identified with *Brahmā, Viṣṇu* and *Mahesvara*. As he steps into the world of Absolute Brahman, his whole being is swept away by a spiritual flood and lost in a Nameless Vast—the *Bhumā*, the Brahman. He becomes Brahman himself—the part attains its fullness.

The luminous regions comprising the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars represent the lower planes of creation and is included in the material world. The infinite space beyond this material world is *Brahmāṇda* or the Universe. So long as the faculties of mundane mind flows outwards, none is entitled to enter the sublime celestial regions. The devotee whose consciousness rises above the sixth circle of the human body has already passed even the third stratum of *Brahmānda* or the three universes presided over by

Brahmā, Viṣnu and *Maheśvara*, and entered into the transcendental realm of pure consciousness which is the kingdom of the Absolute Brahman. Even in the kingdoms of *Brahmā, Viṣnu* and *Maheśvara* there is a slight touch of Māyā and these planes with their presiding deities are subject to annihilation in the hour of total dissolution. *Pralaya* (minor dissolution) and Mahā-pralaya (major dissolution) take place in these universes below the plane of pure consciousness but such things are unknown to the world of Absolute Brahman. As submarine fire approaches water, so do the attributed gods like *Brahmā, Viśṇu* and *Maheśvara* follow destruction[1]. That is why the seekers of Supreme Truth are called upon to meditate on the formless Brahman discarding all sorts of figurative worship : "*Tasmāchhreyaḥ Samāchared*—so practise what is of Ultimate Good"—enjoins *Kulārṇava Tantra.*

The *Tāntrik Yoga-Sādhanā* of the Hindus which comprises in main *ṣaḍ-chakra-veda* i.e., the piercing of the nerve centres within the *Suṣumnā* cord has also been unknown to the western mystics. The mystery of this divine path was never made a subject of either phisiological or psychological experiment in the West. *Saḍ-chakra-veda* constitutes a process of carrying Jiva-consciousness through the *Suṣumnā* piercing these lotus circles to higher planes by the force of *Prāṇāyāma* and deep meditation. In normal consciousness of the jiva, *Kundalini*, the energy potential in man lies asleep in the lowest circle—*Mulādhāra.* When one takes to yoga, *Kundalini* awakes and makes her way through the *Suṣumnā* canal penetrating the nerve-centres within the *Suṣumnā* one after another and finally reaching *Sahasrāra*, the highest circle above, merges in Brahman. Jivātman or the individual self

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1. "ब्रह्माविष्णुश्च रुद्रश्च सर्व्वा वा भूतजातयः ।
नाशमेवानुधावन्ति सलीलानीव वाड़वम् ॥"
—The Yogavaśiṣtha Ramayan.

accompanies Kundalini in her upward journey and gains in illumination as it passes through the realms of higher consciousness corresponding to the higher circles. A trainee is instructed to meditate on Lord *S'iva*, seated in a meditative posture at *Sahasrārā*. The energy lying at *Mulādhārā* is called Śakti and a Yogin is required to merge this *S'akti* or energy in *S'iva*. This is the cult of *Tāntrik Sādhanā*.

In the state of *Samādhi* (deep contemplation) the individual soul shatters the frail house of *Avidyā* or causal body and rises higher up to be one with the Supreme. So the state of *Samādhi* or trance is undoubtedly the best state of human existence. The cerebellum, laryngeal plexus and the cardiac plexus are the seats of the three kinds of human consciousness. These seats are again related to the three higher spheres of the universe, whereas the lower circles in the body inside the *Suṣumnā* from *Mulādhāra* to *Manipur* have relation to the three nether spheres. The higher divisions of the universe are ruled over by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva—the three aspects of Brahman who incarnate *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* respectively. Thus the six esoteric circles in the *Suṣumnā* have relation to the six spheres of the universe. These circles of the human body are the nerve centres of our physical body. So in order to reach the higher circle or the centre, the convulsions of the nerve fibres should be pacified. This can be done by the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* or breath-control and *Pratyāhār* or the restraint of the sense-organs by withdrawing them inside. The power concentrated in upper cerebrum has connection with the power of Brahman and consequently, *Sahasrāra*, the uppermost circle inside the *Suṣumnā* is related to the world of Absolute Brahman—it is the realm of pure consciousness. So, in order to have contact with that divine region and to become the Master of all the universes, our consciousness has to be taken to the upper cerebrum where lies the gateway to salvation.

Individual mind is badly entangled in worldly ties ; but when it turns towards God it is roused to activity for attaining the desired goal. *Kundalini* can be roused by practice of *Prāṇāyāma*. In some cases it awakens by love of God or simply by the touch or will power of a Yogin of high spirituality. Whenever a super-natural power is exhibited through an individual, know it for certain that some amount of *Kundalini*, the potential energy in man, has been awakened in him.

All the physical, psychical and vital powers are ground in Ātman ; so if we can control or suppress the activity of mind, *prāṇa* and senses we resort to higher consciousness other than the normal and we reach Ātman. To attain this *summum bonum* of human life, a Yogin is to transfer his consciousness from the gross to the subtle. The consciousness of subtle elements is then to be merged in the undifferentiated *Mulāprakriti* (Prakriti unmanifest, the primordial matter) which in its turn is made to merge in pure *Mayā* or *Vidyā*. The illumined Soul merges *vidyā* or wisdom at last in *Ātman* and attains the highest acquisition.

When the higher consciousness dawns on a man from the above it reveals itself as a sense of higher inspiration or illumination. Each spiritual revelation fills the devotee's heart with greater hope, light and joy. Though the first-hand realisations are like a flash of lightning, a luminous figure or a voice from within that a *Sādhak* experiences on the way of his *Sādhanā* indicateing his successful advancement, yet the realisations of this kind are not the proof of his final attainment. The end of his spiritual journey is still at a far-off distance. Bearing this truth in mind, the devotee should try to overcome all charms following the data 'neti neti' of the Upaniṣads which means that it is not the same object towards which his *Sādhanā* has been directed. Such realisations are subject to variation, because the experiencer

is still a phenomenal creature limited by time, space and the law of causation. So, these experiences may not bear the stamp of finality. The visions may be the thought-bodies of his own ideas that lurk within; they may present some aspects of his own desire. So, before taking them as final truth, we must apply our power of discrimination. It is not equally true that the realisations in the primary stages of *Sādhanā* are all false. During meditation in some intuitive moments we may catch the glimpses of truth that go a great way in expanding our consciousness so as to ultimately touch Reality.

Those who are always absorbed in the thought of God and meditate upon Him and pronounce His holy name continuously enjoy the touch and feeling of His divine company with every breath, in every droplet of blood and in every particle of the body. In this way their body and mind become consecrated and they dedicate their whole existence to their Lord. When death comes in, they merge themselves in Godhead—the rivers are led back to the ocean. This is the final union with Brahman when the finite becomes Infinite—the parts attain their fullness.

Our brain consists of grey and white matter. The spiritual centres in the human body are also comprised of these two kinds of matter. There are minute openings or doors in them. If, by the force of meditation, the stream of consciousness be carried through the openings in the white portion of the brain matter in *Sahasrāra*, the yogin by so doing enters the world of Absolute Brahman or the *Nirmal Chaitanya-loka* where he can attain communion and oneness with the Brahman. It is for this reason that the opening in the white portion of *Sahasrār* is called the *Brahma-randhra*—the gate-way to the world of Absolute Brahman. Yogin blessed with the highest knowledge of Brahman passes through this passage called *Brahma-randhra* at the time of death and unites with Brahman. "He disappears and loses himself in Godhead like a drop of water, lost in a cask of strong wine"—Tauler.

S'UDDHI OR PURIFICATION OF BODY AND MIND

"आमकुम्भमिवाम्भःस्थो जीर्य्यमानः सदा घटः।
योगानलेन संदह्य घटशुद्धिं समाचरेत्॥"

—The Gheranda Samhitā.

If a Kunchā earthen jar is filled with water it melts away soon but if it is burnt in fire it becomes hardened and serves the purpose of a good container. The human body will similarly survive longer if it is burnt by the fire of *Yoga* and made purified. Even in this iron age, Śrimad Tailangadhara Swami, the godly Yogin, is said to have survived for four hundred years; Yogins lost in Samādhi for thousands of years may also be found in the solitary caves of the Himalayas. When body is purified and hardened by the practice of Yoga, the yogin can live within it as long as he wills. He gives up his material body at his own sweet will. Purity of body and mind and determination of will are the great assets in the performance of spiritual exercises. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that one should possess purity of mind and body before attempting to take to spiritual practices. A piece of dirty linen cannot be properly dyed. Mind, life-principle and the gross as well as the subtle bodies have generally coats of dirt on them and it is necessary to cleanse them. There is no free movement of inner breath when the inner passages are blocked with dirt. *Prāṇāyāma* or the practice of breath-control being impossible at this stage, no one can smoothly progress in the path of spirituality; therefore, one should pay attention to the flushing of the inner passages before commencing *Prāṇāyāma*[1].

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[1] "मलाकुलासु नाड़ीषु मारुतो नैवगच्छति। प्राणायामः कथं सिद्धस्तत्त्वज्ञानं कथं भवेत्। तस्मादादौ नाड़ीशुद्धिं प्राणायामं ततोऽभ्यसेत्॥"—Gherenda Samhitā.

Physical dirt is of three kinds—(1) gross, (2) subtle and (3) subtler. The dirt of the body is gross, that of the mind or subtle body is evil thought and the dirt of the causal body is Avidyā and inertia.

Purity can be classed under five different heads: (1) Purity of food, (2) of deeds, (3) of judgment, (4) of speech and (5) of impressions or belief. The gross body is consecrated by a restraint over food and enjoyment. The sheaths of life and mind are purified by purity of deeds and thoughts. Purity of judgment removes all errors and doubts and influence of evil company. The sheath of knowledge is enlightened by restraint on speech. Sheath of *Ānanda* or the causal body is purified and made holy by the attainment of love and devotion to God. At this stage the yogin becomes unified with God and remains lost in divine ecstasy.

The muttering of holy *Oṃkāra* (*OM*) removes all sorts of internal dirt. This holy *Praṇava* (OM) muttered properly, produces purity of speech, removes the poisonous and inimical influence of the external world and converting them into chaste, friendly, happy and blissful brings the whole life to a happy close: "Madhu Vātā Ṛtāyate Madhu Kṣaranti Sindhavaḥ—Sweetly blow the breezes, sweet is the flow of rivers." Truth is revealed in Ṛtachhanda, Mitrachhanda makes the circumstances favourable and *Madhuchhanda* showers bliss. A happy combination of these three is the same as *Samāvṛtti* or returning to Brahman. *Samāvṛtti* = *Sama* (Harmonious) plus *Āvṛtti* (Return) i.e., returning to Brahman in the proper way and merging into Him.

Purification of the body can be classified under six heads:

1. *Dhauti*—or washing of the skin all over the body.
2. *Basti*—or flushing of the rectum.
3. *Neti*—or cleansing of the nostrils by soft threads.
4. *Louliki*—or Bilateral movements of abdominal muscles.

5. *Trātaka*—or gazing steadfastly on any particular object in spite of trickling down of tears.

6. *Kapālbhāti*—or inspiration and expiration and taking in water through the nostrils and pouring out of the same through the mouth and its reverse.

By these acts of purification the physical body is awakened to consciousness and spirituality.

Antardhauti or purification of the Interior :

1. *Vātsār*—Drawing in of cool air inside the stomach through the passage of the mouth pointed and narrowed in the shape of a crow's beak. This generates the power of clairvoyance and clairaudience and becoming invisible at will.

2. *Bārisār*—The taking in of water in stomach and giving it out through upper and lower passages. This is a process for the attainment of divine body.

3. *Agnisār*—Touching the vertebral column one hundred times with the base of the navel and with breath stopped. This leads to the attainment of yogic powers.

Dhauti or *Washing*—This includes washing of teeth, tongue and ears ; cleansing the external ear-passage with the fore-finger and fourth finger. These develop clairaudience and perception of various sounds.

Kapal randhra prayoge—Rubbing the depressions of the skull with the right thumb after rising from bed, in the evening and after the taking of meals.

Jala Basti—Sitting in water and contracting the rectum alternately.

Netiyoga—Nine inch long narrow thread entered into and passed through the nostrils and brought out through the cavity of the mouth. By this process can be obtained power of divine vision which is also known as *Khechari Siddhi*.

ASANA AND MUDRA : POSTURE AND SIGN

The lower parts of the body concern with *Āsana* or sitting postures while the *Mudrās* are the exercises of the upper limbs. The *S'āstras* speak of various seats and postures. There are indeed as many different kinds of seats as there are varieties of living beings in this world. But it seems to me that any particular seat which is easy and comfortable to the beginner may be adopted with benefit. Later on, a definite seat for a definite purpose may be taken up. The beginner may adopt the posture of sitting cross-legged on the floor as a gentleman sits in polished Indian society. Three kinds of sitting posture are demonstrated here :

1. *Padmāsana*—The right foot is to be placed on the left thigh and vice versa, with the back of both the palm turned downwards and kept over them. This is *Mukta-Padmāsana* ; while resting in this posture, the yogin must fix his gaze at the tip of the nose with the end of his tongue touching the root of the teeth. According to capacity he should also draw in breath, hold it within for sometime and finally discharge it. This is *Padmāsana.*

2. *Siddhāsana*—The beginner should place the heel of one leg firmly between the anus and the root of the generative organ while the other should be placed above the generative organ. Toes of the two legs must be held between the knees. With the lower part of the body as placed, the beginner should hold the upper part of the body erect and in a straight line. He should fix his attention midway between the two eyebrows at the *Ajnā-chakra.* This is *Siddhāsana* which opens up the divine passage of *Yoga.*

3. *Yogāsana* : The practice of this sitting posture consists in the planting of two legs on two thighs with the palm of the feet turned upwards. The palm of the two hands

are to rest on the latter. Sitting in this posture air is to be drawn through nostrils, suppressed within and the gaze should be fixed at the tip of the nose.

The air inhaled through both the nostrils and flown up to the navel is *Prāṇa Vāyu* or the vital air. The air designated *Apāna* flows between the navel and the perenium ; it functions in the lower abdomen and passes out through the anus. *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* are separated by *Samāna* Vāyu at navel. When *Apāna* is drawn up it pierces through *Samāna* air and unites with Prāṇa. Death occurs if Prāṇa united with *Apāna* passes out of the nostrils. But by the practice of Yoga the combined air is made to open the closed door of *Suṣumnā* and to flow up through the canal.

Both *Praṇa* and *Apāna* vāyus attract each other[1]. Just as a falcon fastened by a string tries to fly away but is compelled to come down by a pull from underneath, similarly the *Prāṇa* being attracted by Apāna recoils and enters into the nostrils[2]. During respiration, *Prāṇa*, when inhaled, spreads up to the navel. At the time of inhalation, both the *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* airs accumulate on the either sides of the navel and on exhalation they move in opposite directions i.e., *Prāṇa Vāyu* goes towards the nostrils and *Apāna Vāyu* to the perenium. Rapid respiration shortens longivity. By the practice of breath-control when respiration slows down one can live longer[3]. *Prāṇāyāma* or the breath-control is to be practised steadily and cautiously as, otherwise, the practiser

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1. "अपानः कर्षति प्राणं प्राणोऽपानञ्च कर्षति ।"—*The Yoga--S'āstra.*

2. "रज्जुबद्धो यथा श्येनो गतोऽप्याकृष्यते पुनः ।
तथा चैतौ विषब्बादे सम्बादे सन्त्याजेदिमम्" ॥—*Satchakra Tikā.*

3. "यावद्वायुः स्थितो देहे तावज्जीवितमुच्यते ।
मरणं तस्य निष्क्रान्तिस्ततो वायुं निबन्धयेत् ॥"—*The Yoga-S'āstra.*

is likely to be attacked with diseases like Asthma, Hiccup, Headache, Earache etc.[1]

According to the *Gheranda Saṃhitā*, *Mudrās* are twenty-five in number. *Hathayogadipikā* enumerates only ten of them.

Jalandhar Bandha : Performance of *kumbhaka* with the chin touching the uppermost part of breast. *Kumbhaka* is holding of breath after inspiration.

Yoni-Mudrā : Pressing the heel against the anus and drawing up of *Apāna Vāyu* and uniting it with the *Prāṇa Vāyu*.

Uddiyān-Bāndha : It can be performed by holding the breath for a long period with contraction of abdominal muscles.

Mahābandha—This is done by performing *Kumbhaka* after drawing in of *Apāna*, *Samāna* and *Prāṇa vāyus* inside the abdomen. The *Vāyu* or air enters the *Suṣumnā* by this process.

Khechari Mudrā—Fixing the gaze between the eyebrows and touching the base of the palate with the tip of the tongue turned upwards. At this stage the mind loses its restlessness and becomes steady though not fixed on any particular object and the mind can then flow anywhere it likes.

Biparitikaraṇ Mudrā—Planting of the head on the earth with palms touching the ground and the legs raised up. At this stage the tasting of the flow of nectar from *Sahasradala Kamala* by means of *Chandra Nāḍi* at the base of the palate can confer divinity and immortality.

Aśvini Mudrā—Sitting in *Padmāsana* posture and alternate release and contraction of the anus.

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1. "अयुक्ताभ्यासयोगेन सर्व्वरोग समुद्भव: ।
हिक्काश्वासश्च कासश्च शिर:कर्णाक्षिवेदना: ।
भवन्ति विविधा रोगा: पवनस्य प्रकोपत: ॥—*Hathayogadipikā*.

Vastrikā Mudrā—Rapid inspiration and expiration through mouth and nostrils to the fullest extent in the manner of the bellows of the smith. This improves digestion and is invigorating.

Mula Bandha—The anus is to be contracted closed by the heel with simulteneous drawing up of *Apāna vāyu.*

S'akti Chālani Mudrā—After mastering thoroughly the three *mudrās*—Aśvini, Vastrikā and Mulabandha, pressure is to be applied with the heel against the part between the anus and the base of the generative organ and the drawing up then of *Apāna Vāyu.* This is the process to awaken *Kundalini.*

The practice of *Jalandharbandha Mudrā* affords good exercise for the brain, the neck and the spinal column. The nerve-fibres of these places become finely active. Seated in the Yogic posture, designated as *Siddhvāsana,* bend the head and the neck just a little, bring your chin in contact with the neck or the place of the chest just below it. Practise *Prāṇāyāma* once in this posture. Then withdraw the posture, allow one or two natural breathings and then again practise *Jalandharbandha.* If you practise *Uddiyāna* and *Mahābedha* along with this there is excellent exercise of all the muscles, nerves and glands from the cortex to the toe; as a result, all the seven Plexuses inside the body become active. If these three *Mudrās* are practised together nectar will ooze out of the thousand-petalled lotus (i.e., *Sahasrāra* in the brain) and the Yogin will attain immortality by drinking that nectar through the opening of the *Brahma-nāḍi* (the mysterious canal). If during retention of breath the eyes be fixed in between the two brows the work of the *Mudrā,* designated as *S'āmbhabi* will also be effected.

In practising *Mohābandha* and *Mahābedha,* first of all, stretch forward both the feet and then placing the right leg on the left thigh and resting the left heel on the region in

between the base of the pelvis and the anus, contract the opening of the anus and the opening of the urethra again and again so that the nerve-current *Apāna* moves upwards and is united with the nerve-current *Samāna* in the navel. Then direct the nerve-current *Prāṇa* downwards and unite it with the nerve-current *Apāna*. Now draw the nerve-current *Apāna* and *Prāṇa* upwards. This is *Mahābandha*. Seated in this posture practise *Jalandharbandha* by inhaling air through both the nostrils and bringing the chin in contact with the hollow of the neck or with the chest below it. This will check the movement of the air inside the body ; that is to say, this will be retention of breath. This is called *Mahābedha*. The combined practice of the three *Mudrās*—*Uddiyāna*, *Jalandhara* and *Mahābedha* brings wonderful results. After practising each *Mudrā* perfectly well for at least two months make an endeavour to practise the three *Mudrās* together.

The Mudrā *Mulabandha* is chiefly connected with lower abdomen. The practice of *Mulabandha* excites the nerve-fibres resting in the *Mulādhāra* (sacral plexus) and that awakens the mysterious serpent-power viz. the *Kundalini*. Seated in the Yogic posture *Siddhāsana* fix firmly the left heel on the region in between the opening of the anus and the base of the pelvis. Then contract again and again the opening of the anus and the opening of the urethra, and then drawing the nerve-current *Apāna* upwards direct it towards the nerve-current *Prāṇa*. This is called *Mulabandha*. If this *Mudra* is practised the work of excretion of stool and urine is done quite satisfactorily resulting in good-health. This prevents spermatorrhoea and the power to retain semen increases, and man becomes a perpetual celibate.

The practice of *Mahabandha* opens the closed door of *Suṣumnā Nāḍi* and facilitates easy flow of air through this divine path. Practising of *Mahābandha* and *Mulabandha*

proves easier and useful if *Mahābedha* is practised beforehand. The gods of different circles within the *Suṣumnā* are afflicted by the surge of air-current flowing up the canal. *Mahabedha* is practised by filling the stomach with inhaled air and suppressing the same inside with frequent strokes on the hip.

The process designated *Uddiyānbandha* may be regarded as chiefly the exercise of the abdomen. During its practice contact all the muscles in the frontal muscles of the abdomen first and then give out deep breath and check the breathing air outside. While in this state of *Kumbhaka* (retention) make mock inhalation four times. This will give the muscles and nerves of the abdomen a good exercise. When it will appear to be painful to remain with retention of breath outside slacken the contraction of the abdomen and take in breath slowly. Thus you practise one *Uddiyāna*. In this process the two kinds of nerve-currents designated *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* are united with the nerve-current *Samāna* resting in the navel and the nerve-current *Prāṇa* tries to enter the fibre designated *Suṣumnā*. The practice of *Uddiyān-bandha* removes diseases like inactivity of the stomach and liver troubles.

Yoni-mudrā becomes successful when it is practised along with *S'aktichālani Mudrā*. Sitting on *Siddhāsana* the Yogin is to draw in air through both the nostrils, unite the same with *Apāna* and go on contracting the perenium following the *Aśvini Mudrā* until the air enters into *Suṣumnā*. This procedure awakens *Kundalini* and she rises through the *Suṣumnā path* and ultimately merges in *Paramātman* at *Sahasrāra*. This is *S'akti Chālani Mudrā*.

Jiva is subject to birth and death as it drinks through *Suryya Nāḍi* the nectar oozing out of the *Sahasrāra*. The opening at the gullet is closed by the Yogin who performs *Khechari Mudrā* and drinks that nectar through *Chandra Nāḍi*; he becomes immortal. There are some again who

drink the nectar by the performance of *Biparitikaraṇ Mudrā*. This Mudrā is practised by planting the head on earth and raising the legs up ; the palm of the two hands rest on the ground supporting the body. Finally, air is inspired and retained within for sometime.

Piṇgalā or *Suryya Nāḍi* is at the navel and *Iḍā* or the *Chandra Nāḍi* is inside the gullet. The flow of air through the left nostril (*Iḍā* or *Chandra Naḍi*) is auspicious and it makes one fortunate and prosperous. *Piṇgalā* flows through the right nostril and time is favourable only for doing acts of cruelty. It is generally found that during respiration air flows through both the nostrils with different flow-rates and one with greater flow-rate is to be considered as active at the time.

If the intensity in the flow of of *Prāṇa* through the left nostril is felt greater than that flowing through the right, it is to be understood that *Iḍā* is active at that time and vice versa. The flow of *Prāṇa* through *Iḍā* or *Piṇgalā* continues at a time for an hour and then changes its route. During respiration, when air flows through both the nostrils equally or if it flows once through the right and next moment through the left it is to be taken that *Suṣumnā* is active and at that time no work, good or evil, should be done. This hour is suitable only for practising Yoga ; all other works, except Yoga, is sure to be baffled. *Iḍā Nāḍi* is called *Chandra Nāḍi* while *Piṇgalā* is *Suryya Nāḍi*. The flow of air during day-time through *Iḍā* or the left nostril makes one fortunate because all the deeds done at that time, especially on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, are surely to be crowned with success. *Iḍā* is more active in the *S'uklapakṣa* or in the fifteen bright nights of the month. If the right nostril is plugged with cotton during day-time, the *Prāṇa* will be flowing through the left. If sleep breaks in the morning with the flow of *Iḍā*, it will indicate that the day

will pass peacefully. One should not go to the east or north when *Iḍā* is active. Similarly, going to the south or west is harmful to one if his right nostril be flowing at that time. While going out, the setting of foot is to be right or left according to the air flowing at that time through the right or left nostril. Rising from bed one should rub one's face with the palm of that side in which the vital air is flowing through the nostril. While speaking with a superior officer or any one whose favour is sought, one is to stand by the opposite side of the person i.e., keeping the person on the right or left as the flow of air through the nostril may be.

Seated cross-legged and by following the *Mudrā* designated *Sāmbhabi*, if the tip of the tongue be introduced into the small opening in the cavity of the roof of the mouth, the Yogin can drink the nectar oozing out of the upper cerebrum. This is the *Mudrā* designated *Khechari*. This *Mudrā* brings all-round success. A Yogin accomplished in *Khechari Mudrā* is never thirsty nor hungry or tired. There is a small cavity inside the gullet. *Khechari Mudrā* is practised when the tongue is reversed and its tip is made to touch the mouth of the cavity and the gaze remains fixed between the eyebrows[1].

Seated during the day in the Yogic posture designated *Siddhāsana*, draw in breath through both the nostrils and bring it into contact with the nerve-current *Apāna*, and till that nerve-current enters the nerve-chain *Suṣumnā* go on contracting the opening of the anus by taking recourse to the *Mudrā* designated *Aśvini*. By this the confined air will awaken the mysterious serpent-power designated *Kulakundalini* and attract it upwards. This is called the *Mudrā S'aktichālani*.

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1. "अन्तःकपालविवरे जिह्वां व्याहत्य वर्त्मयेत् ।
भ्रुवोर्मध्ये दृष्टिरप्येषा मुद्रा भवति खेचरी ॥"—*Dattātreya Saṃhitā*.

To contract and expand the anus again and again is the *Mudrā Aśvini.*

Shaping the mouth after the beak of a crow breathe in pure air slowly. This will make the body free from diseases, and the supernatural power of distant-hearing will accrue.

During the practice of *Yoga* designated *Nāda-yoga* the mystic sound will arise from a certain locale of the body. If the mind is concentrated in that locale the state designated *Rasānandayoga Sāmādhi* will be achieved.

Contemplate your desired deity with great reverence in your heart. In the super-abundance of *bhakti* and eagerness tears of love will flow and there will be horripilation of the body and the mind will attain ecstatic continuity. This is designated *Bhaktiyoga Sāmādhi.*

The preceeding instructions are to be followed with great care. One should abstain from the practice of such Mudrās or processes as will be found to be too difficult to perform. In fact, purity of body and mind, simplicity of thoughts, pure love free from passion, deep concentration and a strong urge within to escape bondage are the most essentials for the *Yoga.* In the absence of these essential qualities the practice of *Āsana* and *Mudrā* is liable to be reduced to mere routine work and physical gymnastics. No amount of spiritual progress can be made in this way. Inordinate pressure upon body and mind for hasty success in *Yoga* may produce a very undesirable reaction and subject the body and mind to various ailments. If in consequence of the practice, the body and mind become fatigued, practice of breath or *Prāṇāyāma* and Yoga-postures should be given up at once. A ferocious and powerful animal like the lion or the tiger cannot be subdued and tamed easily and quickly. It takes time. If the unwise tamer makes undue haste and persists in the application of force he may be disillusioned in no time and something very

tragic may happen.[1] Similarly when the yogin in his eagerness to achieve success all on a sudden, forgets his normal limit and goes beyond them he may meet with overwhelming disaster, nay, even death.

There is no greater *Tapasyā* than truthfulness, no greater sin than untruth. God resides only in a truthfull heart[2]. He who desires long life should abstain from slaughter of animals. He who is desirous of wealth must increase virtue. He who is fond of dancing should dance before the idol of Lord *Govinda*. The duty of a singer is always to sing the glory of *S'ri Ramchandra*. He who wishes renouncing of ceremonial duties may give up evil deeds and he whose aim is to advance onward must approach *S'ri Ramchandra* and take shelter of Him[3]. Go ahead, go ahead without looking behind—*Charaibati Charaibati*.

Communion with God is possible even without performing the afore-said yogic practices but the above mentioned qualities of head and heart are absolutely necessary for success in the attempt. This is the result of my own experience. It is my request, therefore, to all pilgrims walking on the path of spirituality not to neglect the culture of the aforesaid essential qualities and attach undue importance to the routine performance of *Yoga* and practices.

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1. "यथा सिंहो गजो व्याघ्रो भवेदश्यः शनैः शनैः ।
तथैव सेवितो वायुरन्यथा हन्ति साधकम् ॥"—*Hathayogadipikā*
2. "साँच बराबर तप नहा है, झुट बराबर पाप ।
जबको हिरदै साँच है, ताके हिरदै आप ॥"
3. "जीया यो चाहे त, जीवको रचा करीरे ।
धन यो चाहे त, धरमको बाढ़ाओ रे ॥
नाचा यो चाहो त, नाच गोविन्द आगे ।
गाओया यो चाहो त, रामगुण गाओरे ॥
भागा यो चाहो त, भागो बुरा करमसे ।
आया यो चाहो त, राम शरणमे आओरे ॥"

PRANAYAMA OR THE PRACTICE OF BREATH-CONTROL

Our usual breathing keeps only one-sixth of the lungs active, and because the remaining five-sixth parts remain inactive, infectious and impure germs may create diseases like Asthma, Pneumonia, Tuberculosis, etc. Due to the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* the lungs and the thorax are fully dilated ; and due to this the Yogin enjoys very fine health and strength. The contraction and dilatation of the muscles of the stomach and the lower abdomen caused by the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* bring about pressure on the stomach, kidney and intestines and set up tremors whereby these organs become strong, healthy and very active. As a result, dyspepsia, constipation and diseases of the kidney are checked. Dr. Irving Fisher says, "Deep breathing causes the brain's contraction and dilatation as a result of which there is more circulation of blood in the brain". Deep breathing purifies the blood by enabling it to take oxygen in abundance and this increases vital strength. Thus, skin and heart diseases and nervous debility disappear. The pressure set upon the blood-carrying veins due to deep breathing causes the blood of the arteries move on to the heart and adds strength to it. Mr. E. A. Fletcher, auther of the book *The law of Rhythmic Breathing* states : "Due to deep breathing, electrical energy is generated inside the lungs and it circulates into the blood." Moreover, there is electricity in the air-belt. It is from this electricity that the life-giving Ozone comes out. It is three times more vital than life-giving oxygen. In the Kenopaniṣad, it is electricity that has been declared as the Brahman—(II. 5. 8.) "Make yourself strong by storing this electricity by taking to *Brahmacharyya* (continence) and

by the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* you will then attain the Brahman"—*Chhāndyogya* Up, VIII. 4. 3.

Mental activities are the highest and the subtlest manifestations of life-principle. Peace of life is disturbed by mind which can be restored by the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* controlling mind. The practice of *Prāṇāyāma* constitutes the four conditions of *Rāja-Yoga.*

According to the *Mahabharat* and *Dattātreya Saṃhitā*, Cha.1, the eight limbs of Yoga are as follows : *Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*[1].

1. *Yama* or abstaining from sexual intercourse, non-acceptance of gifts, abstaining from commission of theft, non-violence and truthfulness in words and deeds.

2. *Niyama* or internal and external purification, cheerfulness, asceticism, reading of spiritual books and resignation to the will of God.

3. *Āsana*—sitting in different postures for the fulfilment of different objects by practice of yoga.

4. *Prāṇāyāma*—the process for the control of *Prāṇa* or the life-principle or drawing and suppressing of breath inside the body.

5. *Pratyāhāra*—turning the mind inwards.

6. *Dhāraṇā*—concentration of mind on a particular object : *Deśabandhaśchittasya dhāraṇā* (*Pātanjal Yoga-Sutra.* III. 1.)

7. *Dhyāna*—meditation of God. When consciousness flows in one direction *dhyāna* ensues : "*Tatra pratyaikatānatā dhyānaṃ.*"—Pātanjal Yoga-sutra, Bibhutipāda, sutra 2.

8. *Sāmādhi*—burial of the mind and intellect in the object of meditation. During samādhi, respiration is totally stopped : "*Samādhirniśchalā buddhiḥ śvāsochchhāsādi varjitā.*"—Ādi Yāmal.

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1. "वेदेषु चाष्टगुणितं योगमाहुर्मनीषिनः ।"—The Mahabharat.

This is the last and highest stage in concentration. It consists in the complete shutting of the senses and elevation of consciousness to the highest plane. Complete merging of the self in the Infinite is *Sāmādhi*. It is a state indescribable but comprehensible as bliss in the depths of being.

The gross and subtle bodies are purified by *ṣatkarma*. The steadiness of both body and mind is acquired by practising *Mudrās*. *Āsana* makes the limbs firm, *Pratyāhāra* develops discriminative knowledge and the body becomes light by the practice of *Prāṇāyāma*. By continuous *Dhyāna* mind remains fixed on the object of meditation and through Samādhi Ātman is revealed[1].

The nerve-currents inside the body are of ten kinds of which only three kinds need circulation during the practice of Yoga. They are *Prāṇa*, *Apāna* and *Samāna*. The nerve-current designated *Prāṇā* is located in the mouth, the middle of the nasal cavity, the heart and the big toes. The nerve-current designated *Apāna* is located in the anus, genitals, the two knees and the two thighs. The nerve-current designated *Samāna* is located in the navel. The joints of the two feet and the two hands are the locations of the nerve-current designated *Udāna*, and the nerve-current designated *Byāna* operates all through the body.

The period of inhalation should be half the period of exhalation That is to say, the amount of air that we shall inhale in 10 seconds in drawing breath should be exhaled slowly in 20 seconds. Thus the rate of motion at which we shall exhale air shall be double the rate of motion at which we should inhale air. From this we understand at what

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1. "षटकर्म्मणा शोधनञ्च, आसनेन भवेद्दृढ,
मुद्रया स्थिरताचैव, प्रत्याहारेण धीयता,
प्राणायामाल्लाघवञ्च, ध्यानात् प्रत्यक्षमात्मनि।"

rate of motion we should take in and give out air during inhalation and exhalation. As a matter of fact, the direction of the *S'āstras* is that inhaled air should be exhaled so slowly that even a piece of cotton, one inch away from the tip of the nose, will not move. In fact, the slower the exhalation the safer.

One full exercise of *Prāṇāyāma* (control of breath) consists of three parts—*Puraka* (inhalation), *Kumbhaka* (retention of breath) and *Rechaka* (exhalation). To draw air through the nostril is *Puraka* or Inhalation, to retain the air inside for sometime by closing the nostrils and the mouth is *Kumbhaka* or Retention, and to give out that air finally through the nostril is *Rechaka* or Exhalation.

In fact, the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* brings about very good exercise of the body's nerves, arteries, glands, muscles, lungs, heart and entrails etc. Consequently, the body gains in much physical power and mind acquires quite unprecedented thinking power and life-principle is thoroughly vitalized.

To be pure and loving in thought, deed and word seems to be impossible for the people who live in the busy towns carrying on their profession. Side by side of the buyer's and the trader's mentality, a spirit of renunciation and self-sacrifice is almost difficult to thrive. So the poet John Drinkwater had it: "In a crowded street flowers never grow. In the big cities many have died there." The great sons of God are lilies of the field. They sang the songs of life not in the crowded cities but in the silence of woods and streams, hills and dales. Hue and cry of the big cities are not congenial to spiritual exercises like deep meditation. In the busy cities we can hardly afford to spare time for the betterment of our spiritual life. So a mystic observes, "It is my heart's desire to sit at Thy feet in solitude and speak to Thee alone to the Alone and hear Thee in whispers amid the solemn stillness of the inner sanctuary."

A pleasant spot and a beautiful forest are soothing to the senses and stimulating to the mind. It is the traditional idea of the Hindus that holy life is led most easily in peaceful and beautiful natural landscape which lends a sense of repose and inspiration. That is why most of the temples and monasteries in India are situated on the banks of the rivers and on the tops of hills.

Take refuge in a secluded spot far away from the din and bustle of the world and you will feel His touch. Close down the devil's workshop for a while and you will hear His voice clear and distinct in that silence. In quest of Him, cast your searching glance which penetrates through the darkness of ignorance and you will see His shining and divine form manifesting itself before your inner vision. Stretch your ears and you will hear the sweet and melodious sound of His foot-falls as they produce vibration in the strings of your heart. Merge your attention in the music of the strings of your heart and start the practice of *Brāmari Kumbhaka Yoga* and establish communion with God.

All the Yogic practices, therefore, should be undertaken in a secluded place where mind is not to be disturbed by any external element. For the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* the beginner may take up any sitting posture as described in page 771. In the preliminary stage he may sit simply cross legged. Seated in this posture he must keep the upper part of his body erect. Before entering into the practice of *Prāṇāyāma*, the practiser should devote a quarter of an hour to the reading of the *Gita* or *recitation* of *S'ivāṣtakaṃ Stotram* or any verse, hymn or similar prayer. This will calm down the restlessness of his mind to some extent. After that he is to pray to God for the well-being of all including friends and foes and then make a moving appeal for his own spiritual advancement.

In the first step to *Prāṇāyāma* only the *Puraka* (inhalation of air) and *Rechaka* (exhalation of air) are involved. Sitting

in a Yogic posture close the right nostril with the tip of the right thumb by applying a little pressure on the right side and slowly draw air in by the left nostril as far as possible. After inhaling a full breath close the left nostril by the middle finger of the right hand and without losing any time give out the breath through the right nostril. Then continuing pressure on the side of the left nostril by the right middle finger slowly draw in air through the right nostril as far as possible. When the inhalation is complete, close the right nostril again with the right thumb, take away the third finger from the left side and breathe out slowly. This practice of alternate inhalation and exhalation is to be continued at least for one quarter of an hour. Follow this practice four times daily in the morning, afternoon, evening and before day-break and it will be found very beneficial. This system practised for a month will purify the internal passages, regulate respiration and bring the mind under partial control. Success in it will enable the beginner to take up higher steps in the practice of *Prāṇāyāma*.

Success in Yoga can be attained, if performed with the utmost care and alertness. A successful yogin is almost divine. He comes to possess amazingly uncommon powers viz, clairvoyance, clair-audience, power of flying through the air and walking on the waves, power of perceiving minute things which are beyond the reach of human senses, the power to read what is passing in others' minds, power to enter into and live in other bodies—the eight coveted attainments or *Siddhis* viz, *Animā*, *Laghimā*, etc. i.e., the powers by which one can become as minute as an atom or as light as air.

Bondage means connection with external objects. Freedom from that is emancipation. When the true nature of things becomes known the mind remaining no longer under

illusion acquires spiritual power of perception which is emancipation.[1]

Mind, indeed, is the cause of bondage and emancipation[2]. It is of vital importance, therefore, to control the mind first. The nature of the mind is constantly to fly from one place to another—from one subject to the other. It is always on its wings. This restless bird is to be caged and made still. The mind flowing in a thousand directions is like a moving torch throwing light on all sides. If we can stop the restlessness of mind and focus its energy on one point only the inside will be ablaze with light. The focussing of mental energy on one point which is called concentration is the only means of acquiring and developing spiritual knowledge and power.

If we hold a convex lens in the sun all the rays falling on the lense converge on the other side of the lense at a particular point which is called the focus. The accumulated heat of the sun's rays at the focus may be powerful enough to set easily any combustible thing on fire like a piece of dry grass or paper It is exactly so when the scattered energy of the mind and senses are turned inwards and made to converge and concentrate by the practice of *Prāṇāyāma*. The tremendous accumulation of energy enables the inner vision to pierce into the invisible world. The inside of our bodies may be photographed by means of the X'Ray which is finer than the ordinary ray and subtler in action. Similarly, when the scattered energy of our mind and senses is concentrated in *Ājnā-chakra* the closed door of infinite light and unrevealed knowledge is thrown open. At this stage, no mystery, either

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1. "दृश्यसंवलितो वन्धस्तन्मुक्तौ मुक्तिरुच्यते ।
द्रव्यदर्शनसम्बन्धे यानुभूतिरमायया ॥"
2. "मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः ।"

of this world or that, remains unexplored. It was in this way that the hidden truth was revealed to *Arjuna*. Great men who are regarded as adepts can infuse any one with a high degree of spirituality if they like and open the inner eye to perceive truths never known before. This was the case with *Arjuna* whose third eye which remains closed in a normal man was awakened by Krishna. It was then that the darkness and doubts vanished and *Arjuna* rushed to his duties at the direction of his Master.

When consciousness encased in a cover does no longer know itself it appears in the form of fragments of thoughts and behaves like a continuous flow of ripples and waves. The vibrations of mind or thoughts are, therefore, really like the ripples and waves on the bosom of the sea.

As objects at the bottom of a transparent sheet of water can be seen very clearly so every thing of the inner and outer world can similarly be visualised if the mind be sufficiently concentrated. It is only the concentrated mind which can reach the world beyond the senses.

One day during his morning walk in America Swami Vivekananda saw a number of American young men shooting at some egg-shells floating on river water. Seeing all of them fail in the aim he took the gun from a young man and hit twelve of the egg-shells with bullets one after another. At this the young men observed that he was well trained in the art of shooting. Swamiji told them, "Never before in my life have I touched a gun. My success is due to mind-control."

When a fatal blow comes to an unfortunate man he points out to a spot on the forehead to indicate his misfortune as if to say that the fate would have it. One inch inside the spot lies *Ājnā Chakra*, the gate-way to the end of all human sufferings. But the man does not know this secret and quite unconsciously knock at its closed door under the impulse of an unknown power. This power unknown is the

power of the Soul which acts silently through every individual being. It is ever ready to show us the proper way but we the unfortunate fellows fail to understand its beckoning and are thus led astray.

Deeply absorbed in the thought of anything, man rubs or strikes unconsciously on the same spot with his finger. A student being unable to work out a difficult sum or solve a difficult problem rubs the same place or hit between the two eyebrows by the end of his pencil. All this they do quite unconsciously, not knowing that instead of rubbing or hitting any other part of the body why they are striking between the two eyebrows. At the inspiration of *Ātman* they unconsciously hit at the entrance to the eternal light divine. By this act some amount of their consciousness is concentrated at that point which partly breaks open the closed door of intuition and as a result their intellect gets illuminated by the divine light of the Soul for the time being. In that light divine even the most difficult proposition is then solved easily. With a view to opening the mystic eye of Śri Ramkrishna, a yogin named *Totāpuri* put the sharp end of a broken glass at the centre of his (Ramkrishna's) eye-brows and asked him to concentrate his mind on that point. When deep concentration was reached the form of his gracious Mother *Kāli* appeared before his inward eye.

Human mind being a part and parcel of the Divine Mind is identical with the latter in essence and nature. It is not omniscient because of its relation to the world-phenomenon. In the noumenal world the existence is one and so there is no agitation in the Divine Mind : Its quietude was disturbed when the thought of creation occupied it. Our mental vibration was very low and mind's activity was insignificant when we first sojourned to the earth. Human mind in the beginning was as calm and pure as the Cosmic Mind. This tranquillity and purity of mind enabled the Ṛṣis of the old to

declare : "*Soham*—I am the Brahman." Jesus said : "I and my Father in heaven are one." But now owing to man's intimate relation with the objective world his mental activity has increased to the extreme and as a result his divinity has been withheld perforce.

Pure consciousness in man remains covered under a smokescreen, as it were, by the over-activity of mind which considers only the *pros* and *cons* of a situation. Human mind is an unfettered horse ; it is made still when put to the discipline of Yoga and man's each thought and action is harmonised in love. 'Love of God makes Jerusalem and love of world makes Babylon.'

As nature is separated from God by her own law of limitation, similarly, ego imposes limit on man's will-power beyond which human will is crippled. When a devotee submits to the Almighty, saying, 'Thy will be done,' his will surpasses all limitations, being transformed Divine. Then his will commits no error or sin. Intuitive power that apprehends reality reveals when mind itself is dissolved in the thought of the object meditated. Intuitions are the moments of Spirit. The past, present and future, distant and near, here and beyond are intuited immediately and directly. The realm of intuitive consciousness begins where the plane of jiva-consciousness ends.

Jiva-consciousness is not pure ; it is mental consciousness defiled by mind and senses. When by practice of *Prāṇāyāma* the fetters of mind and senses are broken, our normal consciousness is transformed and transcending its present limitations it ascends to the higher sphere of super-sensuous consciousness where eyes do not see, ears do not hear and mind ceases to function. There everything is realised in apprehending consciousness which is pure, all-comprehensive and all-pervasive. When jiva-consciousness is carried to the cerebrum it becomes fused with divine

consciousness at *Sahasrāra* and the Yogin is united with Brahman.

The events of the world appear unceasingly in our consciousness like waves on the bosom of the sea. We are accustomed to look upon them as events of the material world. Any reality, however, being reflections in our consciusness, cannot be regarded as material. Consciousness which is the hidden plane of this creation appears as different existence in the material world; it enjoys from its own plane.

The seer and the seen are but two aspects of the same thing and appears as such to a mind which has realised the truth; it is free from doubts being transcended to pure consciousness. When the flow of consciousness is turned inwards by practice of *Yoga* all these categories disappear altogether—the whole creation then merges in consciousness and all feelings of duality vanish. This quiet state of consciousness can then be compared to the tranquil ocean from which all agitations have disappeared. In this plane of consciousness divine existence, greatness and grace are spontaneously revealed. The Yoga-system thus clearly teaches us the way by which the whole material creation can be looked upon in its true perspective i. e., as a world of consciousness. Herein only lies the secret of realisation.

To concentrate one's mind for this purpose one has to withdraw it from all external objects and turn it inwards upon one particular thing. Then it merges into *Prāṇa* and the latter into tranquil consciousness. The senses at this stage appear to be quite inactive and dead. Rising of thoughts or vibrations of jiva-consciousness having ceased, the vast and calm field of consciousness takes the appearance of the tranquil sea. Practice of *Prāṇāyāma* is necessary for attainment of this condition. *Prāṇāyāma* consists in controlling movement of respiration. When the life-principle

or *Prāṇa* is controlled by means of *Prāṇāyāma*. Kundalini lying at Mulādhāra is awakened.

A Yogin offers *Prāṇa* or the vital air to *Apāna* as a sacrifice and then suppressing the flow of both the airs he carries on the practice of *Prāṇāyāma*[1]. Others control diet and sacrifice the four airs unto Prāṇa[2].

Expansion and contraction are the two phenomena of nature perceivable everywhere. One represents the positive and the other negative aspect of creation. Between the two there is something which has a tendency to move this way and that way. This something may be called *Kalā*, a part in which there is an inherent tendency to attain the fullness of the whole. It extends towards both the poles This *Kalā* extends on one side to the farthest end representing the *Nāda* (sound) in its fullness and on the other side receding back to the farthest end of the negative pole which is indicated by the *Vindu* or dot. The process of expansion goes on uninterruptedly till the final stage when the contraction begins. And this process of contraction also goes on till it is nearly reduced to a dot. The universe is maintained in its position by these double act of alternative contraction and expansion which have a simultaneous effect upon it. In the bright fortnight the crescent of the moon gradually goes on waxing till it becomes full and after the full moon it goes on waning till it disappears altogether. The whole creation oscillates between the *Nāda* and the *Vindu* like the fullness and disappearance of the moon. There is a constant pull between the *Nāda* and *Vindu*, the two poles. This results in the union of the two.

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1. "अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे।
प्राणापानगतिरुद्धा प्राणायामपरायणाः॥"—The Gita IV, 29
2. "अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुह्वति।"—The Gita IV, 30

The universe with a view to unfolding itself, expands towards the positive pole or *Nāda* and with a view to dissolution contracts towards the negative pole or *Vindu*. OM is $A + U + M + Nāda + Kalā$[1] $+ Vindu + Kalātita$ (The entirety beyond the whole). *A*, *U*, *M*, are obtained by analysis of the sound creation *OM*. *Nāda* is the fully expanded state of creation or the positive pole, while Vindu (dot) is the state just before dissolution of the universe. *Kalātita* is the Supreme Being which transcends creation.

Contraction and expansion are not only visible in the external world but they are manifest in the function of the living body as well. Respiration is the effect of this two-fold action on the human system. With increase in respiration restlessness of the mind increases. In the normal state the air breathed out flows to a distance of twelve finger-breadth[2]. Breath becomes deeper and quicker on account of excitement and may flow to longer distances. The result of this is deterioration of longevity. Physical exercise and sexual inter-course may cause the breath to flow out to a distance of 40 finger-breadths. It is for this reason that immoderate exercise and sexual intercourse shorten longevity.

Respiration slows down in breath-control by *Prāṇāyāma*. Creation rests upon inspiration and expiration which are nothing but expansion and contraction. When the individual soul came out of the Universal Soul, expansion began to work. It was quite slow in the beginning but quickened as time went on. It is quite evident that to regain the condition of inactivity which existed before creation, it is necessary to calm down the agitation of mind and life-energy by exercising control over them.

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1. *Kalā* = *Ka* (Brahman) *liyate āchhādyate yayā sā Kalā* i.e., by which Brahman remains hidden from view.

2. "देहाद्बहिर्गतो वायुः स्वभावाद्द्वादशांगुलिः ।"

Emancipation is not the thing which can be found in heavens, on earth or in the nether regions. It is nothing but the tranquil state of mind produced by the control of breath[1]. *Patanjali* in his *Yoga-Sutra* says, "Yoga is the control of mind[2]" Mind undergoes five different conditions viz, (1) Restlessness, (2) Stupidity, (3) Distraction, (4) Concentration and (5) Suppression.

When the beginner has acquired a good proficiency in the practice of the first step to Prāṇāyāma, as described before, he may take to the second step which I am now discussing here. The beginner is now to close the right nostril by the pressure of the right thumb and inspire through the left nostril for four seconds. After this he should keep both the nostrils closed by the right middle finger and the thumb for 16 seconds during which inhaling and exhaling through mouth are prohibited. At the end of 16 seconds remove the thumb and give out breath slowly and uniformly in 8 seconds. Then putting the right middle finger in the same place draw in air through the right nostril for 4 seconds and then close it with the thumb. Hold the air in for 16 seconds and then slowly and uniformly expel it through the left nostril. In this way practice of *Puraka* or drawing in of air in 4 seconds, *Kumbhaka* or holding of breath for 16 seconds and *Rechaka* or giving out of the air in 8 seconds should be repeated.

The practice of *Prāṇāyāma* or the regulation of breath ensures calmness of the body and mind, makes one forgetful of one's physical existence, thus creating a mood suitable for meditation. Though this practice of *Prāṇāyāma* is mostly carried out by the Hindus and Buddhists in India and

1. "न मोक्षो नभसः पृष्ठे न पाताले न भूतले।
सर्व्वाशासक्षये चेतःक्षयो मोक्ष इतीष्यते॥"
2. "योगश्चित्तवृत्तिर्निरोधः"—*Pātanjal Darśan*

abroad, it is unknown to the Christian mystics. Prayer and meditation play the main part in the religious and spiritual activities of the Western mystics. Both in the East and and West, mystics are unanimous in their views as to the result of meditation. The higher experience of the Western mystics like that of St. Ignatius, St. Teresa and many others run in parallel lines with the experience of the mystics in the East. The silent prayers offered by the Christians bear close resemblance to the method of meditation adopted by the Hindus. A Christian prayer streams out from the bosom of a devout heart wholly dedicated to the Lord in the same way as a *Vaiṣṇava* Hindu surrenders himself entirely to the feet of his Beloved.

Mere practices of psychological methods may seem at times monotonous and dry to the trainee and dissuade him from the path of his quest. To avoid this possibility he is advised to read sacred texts, practise devotional services, incantation and meditation—along with the practice of *Rāja-yoga*. Swami Brahmānanda Mahārāja advocates *Japam* or mental incantation which constitutes the practice of chanting the name of God mentally along with the practice of Prāṇāyāma and meditation. *Ajapā Japam* or constant incantation creates a rhythmic vibration in every nerve within and induces mind towards meditation. Swāmiji says: "In the beginning the practice of *Japam* and meditation seems dry. It is like taking bitter medicine. You must forcibly pour the thought of God into your mind. As you persist, you will be flooded with joy."—The Eternal Companion, P. 175.

OM is the sound-form of Brahman. The entire eloquent world phenomenally evolves out of the sound *OM*. The sound *OM* is the source of the *Gāyatri Mantra*[1]. This

1. ओं भूर्भुवः स्वः तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गोदेवस्य धीमहि धीयोयोनः प्रचोदयात् ओं।"
The Gāyatri Verse.

Gāyatri is the source of the *Vedas*. And the entire movable and immovable vocal world is held within the *Vedas*. The sound *OM* is the living symbol of Brahman residing within every heart: "*Praṇavāṃ hiśvaraṃ vidyād sarvasya hṛdi saṃsthitaṃ.*" So meditate on *OM*. Viśva or the waking self is realised when *A* or the first part of *AUM* (OM) is meditated. *U*, the second part imparts knowledge of *taijasa* or the subtle body and *Prājṇa* or the sleeping self becomes known by the meditation on *M*. Ātman or the Brahman is realised when we meditate on the silent part of *Praṇava* (Māndukya Up. Āgama Prakaraṇa, 23). Viśva experiences the gross, Taijasa the subtle and Prājna the blissful. *Prājna* or *Iśvara* represents the causal aspect of Brahman.

Listening on the recitations of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads is technically called *S'ravaṇa* (hearing). A thoughtful study of these is what is called *Manana* (thinking). Realisation of that divine existence, one without a second, by constant meditation is what is called *Nididhyāsana* (meditation of wisdom). In the practice of *Nāda-Yoga* the supreme sound *OM* as heard internally is indeed Brahman.

Sit every day on the same seat at the same place with your face turned towards the East and perform your daily practice of *Dhyāna* devotedly. Read the same hymn daily with devotion and that will improve concentration. Repeating of the holy name with every breath and at every step, at all times, and in the midst of favourable or unfavourable and holy or unholy surroundings is *Ajapā Sādhanā* or spontaneous repetation of Holy Name. The sound '*Saḥ*' is produced by taking the breath in and '*Haṃ*' by giving it out. '*Haṃ*' represents *S'iva* while '*Saḥ*' represents *S'akti*. These two combine to complete the sound '*Haṃsaḥ*' which when inverted becomes '*Sohaṃ*' and represents *Ajapā Gāyatri*. *Haṃsa* is the flow of prāṇa while *Sohaṃ* asserts 'I am He.' We breathe

in and out 21,600 times a day, which is, therefore, the number of *Ajapā Japam.*

"*OM Bhurbhubaḥsvaḥ Tatsabitur Vareṇyaṃ Bhargodevasya Dhimahi Dhiyoyonaḥ Prachodayād OM.*"

The verse quoted above is the famous *Gāyatri* verse which is a holy verse from the Vedas. The whole creation rests on *Gāyātri.* This Vedic verse is called *Gāyatri* as it helps in controlling the *Gayas* or the eleven senses and work organs. *Gāyatri* is life. He who repeats the *Gāyatri* during meditation has the plane of his consciousness raised up above the level of mind and intellect. The meaning of the above verse is : "We meditate upon the glorious light of the sun, the adorable diety of this earth and also of the other universes. May He confer on us full knowledge in our intelligence." The monosyllable *OM* is attached to the verse in the beginning and at the end. While performing *Prāṇāyāma* care must be taken to see that during the period of one complete *Prāṇāyāma,* the *Gāyātri* verse is recited thrice ; optionally the reading of the *Gāyatri* may be replaced by the muttering of *OM* only. The time taken in muttering *OM* may be regarded as one second only. It follows then that during *Puraka* or filling in of air *OM* should be mentally uttered four times in 4 seconds, 16 times in 16 seconds during *Kumbhaka* or suppression of breath, and 8 times in 8 seconds during *Rechaka* or giving out of air. During *Puraka* the beginner may imagine that the sound 'OM' is dancing in the air and entering his body in a continuous stream of succession. During *Kumbhaka* (suppression of breath), he should think as if the sounds are making for the *Mulādhara* and knocking at the closed end of *Suṣumnā* to open her door. During *Rechaka* or expiration he should think as if those sounds have been successful in breaking open the door of *Suṣumnā* and were marching up through her like a victorious soldier with measured steps.

The beginner should then gradually increase the time of *Prāṇāyāma* by increasing the duration of *Puraka*, *Kumbhaka* and *Rechaka* i. e., by proportionate increase of the number of '*OM*' repeated in each case. The increase should always be of one in *Puraka*, four in *Kumbhaka* and two in *Rechaka*. At each sitting one may continue to practise *Prāṇāyāma* from 12 to 48 minutes.

Prāṇāyāma is of three classes according to duration of *Kumbhaka* in the performance. *Puraka* or drawing in of air may be done in 12, 16 or 20 seconds followed by Kumbhaka in 48, 64 or 80 seconds and Rechaka in 24, 32 or 40 seconds respectively. *Prāṇāyāma* is of the lowest order when it is attended with perspiration. Horripilation is the characteristic feature of the second order. The highest order of *Prāṇāyāma* is marked by a feeling of lightness of the body. At this stage the body moves upwards from the seat against the attraction of gravitation. "It raises the body above the surface of the earth. It is by the successful practice of this order of *Prāṇāyāma* that the arial *Brāhmin* of Madras is supposed to have supported himself in a miraculous posture which puzzled the ingenuity of the spectators."—Writes Dr. N. C. Paul.

Prāṇāyāma should be regularly practised every day in the morning, at mid-day, at night-fall, at midnight and at the closing part of night i. e., before dawn. *Prāṇāyāma* being practised thrice a day in morning, at mid-day and in the evening, the countenance of the practiser becomes fair and good-looking, breath becomes steady and regular, mind peaceful, voice attractive and words sure and reasonable. He who practises *Prāṇāyāma* five to eight times a day gets his latent power stirred up ; *Kundalini* becomes kinetic in three months. When *Kundalini*, thus roused moves upwards through *Suṣumnā* from centre to centre, one is blessed with sights of the other world, the world beyond the senses. He

clearly sees that all sights about become lighted up and luminous forms of gods and goddesses become visible in succession.

Clairvoyance and clair-audience can thus be developed in six months and the Yogin's will-power increases to such an extent that storms and torrential downpours may cease and moving engines stop at the bidding. Practising *Prāṇāyāma* one may attain power and sight to pass through the sky. It frees him from all kinds of diseases. Through steadiness and regularity of breath activity of the lungs gets controlled and breath gradually becomes slow and steady till it stops altogether. In the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* when the breath is held within for fifteen minutes a distant sound of a bell is heard.

The room where one sits in his daily practices must be neat and clean. Portraits of holy men, spiritual adepts and saints like Śri Chaitanya, Ramkrishna Paramhansa Deva, Tailangadhar Swami, Swami Vivekananda etc., may be put up on the walls to create an atmosphere of purity and spirituality in the chamber. A pure and serene atmosphere is helpful for generating pure religious sentiments. There must be arrangements for the burning of incense and sprinkling of holy water on the floor both in the morning and evening. Special care must be taken to see that no one pollutes the sanctity and serenity of the place by carrying on conversations, discussions or altercation on worldly matters.

The proper place for the practice of yoga and offering prayer should be in a secluded and holy spot, preferably a place of pilgrimage, a retreat on the bank of a river, a nook or corner of a garden, the foot of a Bael tree, a temple or one's own room set apart for the purpose. To avoid disturbance by flies and mosquitoes a curtain may be used.

Bath is to be taken daily before the first sitting. Washing of hands and feet only at other times is enough. After bath the yogin should put on clean clothes and should

sit with a cheerful and hopeful heart on his seat and take the holy name with devotion and love. He should sit comfortably and erect with the spine, neck and head in a straight line and perpendicular to the seat.

In his *Yoga-sutra*, Patanjali, the great sage, enumerates four varieties of *Prāṇāyāma* according to the difference in nature of *Kumbhaka* or the retention of breath :

1. To check the air outside the nose without taking in breath again when exhalation is complete ; this is *Vāhya kumbhaka* (External Retention).

2. To check the air inside the system for sometime after taking in a full breath ; this is *Ābhyantara kumbhaka* (Internal Retention).

3, 4. In the third and the fourth varieties of *Prāṇāyāma* there is no inhalation or exhalation. The practice of internal and external retention of breath successively in the intervals of natural breathing is recommended.

Elsewhere, *Prāṇāyāma* has been mentioned as eightfold, namely, (1) *Sahit*, (2) *Suryyaveda*, (3) *Ujjāyi*, (4) *Sitali*, (5) *Bhastrikā*, (6) *Bhrāmari* (7) *Murchhā* and (8) *Kebali*.

(1) *Sahit* : *Prāṇāyāma* of *Sahit* variety is twofold. The practice of *Prāṇāyāma* with the recital of the *Vijamantra* (the mystic syllable whispered in the ear by a spiritual guide) is designated *Sagarbha* (1) ; and *Prāṇāyāma*, bereft of the recital of the *Vijamantra* is designated *Nigarbha* (2). Undoubtedly *Prāṇāyāma* no. 1 is superior to *Prāṇāyāma* no. 2. It should not be forgotten that mental repetition is superior to oral. Seated in the Yogic posture go on inhaling air through the left nostril while reciting the mantra *ang*, sixteen times and after that close both the nostrils with the thumb and the ring-finger and retain the inhaled air inside so long as it takes to recite the mantra *ung*, sixty-four times. After that exhale that retained air fully through the right nostril while reciting the mantra *mang*, thirty two times. Go on practising

inhalation alternately through the left and the right nostrils. In the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* designated the *Nigarbha* there is no need to recite *mantras*; see only that you maintain the ratio 1 : 4 : 2 during inhalation, retention and exhalation.

(2) *Suryyabheda*: Seating erect in either the posture designated *Siddhvāsana* or the posture designated *Padmāsana* inhale the air through the right nostril and then retain that inhaled air according to your capacity—and finally exhale it slowly. Repeat the process of inhalation through the left nostril, retention in the *Suṣumnā* (the hollow canal running through the centre of the spinal cord) and exhalation by the right nostril. This process is to continue successively. Seated in the same posture practise first this *Prāṇāyāma* designated *Suryyabheda* twenty times. Later on, you may increase the number. One exercise of inhalation, retention and exhalation is to be regarded as one full exercise of *Prāṇāyāma*. The practice of *Prāṇāyāma* designated *Suryyabheda* increases the heat of the body; so it is convenient and useful to practise it during the winter and the spring.

(3) *Ujjāyi*: Seated in the Yogic posture designated *Padmāsana* take in breath through both the nostrils; then bring the in-drawn air to the inside of the mouth with the help of the throat and the heart and practise its retention within the mouth with the *Mudrā* designated *Jalandharbandha*. The *Jalandharbandha* consists in the chin being drawn towards the throat or downwards. Because of the *Jalandharbandha* the exit of the air from the lungs is checked. After the practice of retention according to your capacity raise up the chin and withdraw the *Jalandharbandha Mudrā* when the air will find a natural outlet through the nostrils. Like *Suryyabheda* this also increases heat of the body. The practice of *Prāṇāyāma* of the *Ujjāyi* variety cures diseases of the lungs and the stomach and the mysterious power *Kundalini* is awakened

(4) *Sitali* : Seated erect in the Yogic posture designated *Yogāsana* make the two lips pointed by bringing them together in the manner of the beak of a crow and then extend the tongue through the lips just a little outside the mouth in the manner of a pipe. Then closing both the nostrils draw in the air slowly with the help of the tongue and the lips and fill in the stomach. Retain that air according to your capacity and exhale it slowly through both the nostrils. Practise the *Prāṇāyāma* of the *Sitali* variety 20—100 times everyday in the morning and evening. The practice of this *Prāṇāyāma* makes the body cool and peaceful and powers of distant-hearing, distant-sight and subtle perception are acquired. The practice of this *Prāṇāyāma* is improper for those whose physical constitution is highly phlegmatic.

(5) *Bhastrikā* : The bellows of the smith are called *bhastrā* in Sanskrit. Since in this *Prāṇāyāma* the process of inhalation and exhalation of air in both the nostrils is quick like the bellows of the smithy it is designated *Bhastrikā Prāṇāyāma*. Expanding the chest sit erect in the Yogic posture designated *Padmāsana* and draw in air by both the nostrils again and again (20 times if possible) and practise retention of this air in the stomach. Then give out the retained air through both the nostrils in the manner in which the smith expels the air of the bellows. Bhastrikā can be practiced 3—9 times daily. In the beginning practise inhalation and exhalation and not retention. The *Prāṇāyāma* designated *Bhastrikā* can be practised in all the seasons and it is not much painful to practise it. *Bhastrikā* is capable of curing all diseases. The process of deep breathing in the practice of this *Prāṇāyāma* leads to the opening of the closed door of *Suṣumnā Nāḍi*.

(7) *Murchhā* : Seated in the Yogic posture designated *Padmāsana* the chin is to be brought into contact with the hollow of the throat or downwards and then inhalation and

exhalation are to be practised. During retention, fix your consciousness on the sixth Plexus and merge it into the Supreme Soul resting at Sahasrāra. This yields supreme bliss.

(8) *Kebali Kumbhaka* : In this *Prāṇāyāma* there is no inhalation and exhalation ; there is only retention. After natural breathing practise retention of air at any time inside the body or in the fore-part of the nose. During retention recite mentally the *mantra* '*Soham*' 1—64 times according to your capacity. This *Prāṇāyāma* can be practised 1—8 times daily at different hours. *Vaśiṣtha*, the great sage, said that if the devotee attains success in this *Prāṇāyāma*, nothing in the three worlds remains unknown to him or difficult of attainment. In the *Kebali Kumbhaka* air can be retained for one hour and fifteen minutes.

Kebali Kumbhaka may be practised in two ways : (1) With air between inhalation and exhalation and (2) without air between exhation and inhalation. So the *Kumbhaka* (No. 2) involves only retention unattended with *Puraka* and *Rechaka*. Two kinds of sound—*Haṃ* and *Saḥ* are produced during exhalation and inhalation respectively. The combination of these two sounds which is *Haṃsa* represents the flow of life. When air is checked by *Kumbhaka* (No. 2), the sound *Haṃsa* is changed into *Soham* and is repeated spontaneously within the central canal of *Suṣumnā*. This is the highest stage in the matter of repetition of the holy mantra OM during the practice of *Prāṇāyāma*, because ultimately the whole being of the Yogin merges in this *Anāhata* sound and he becomes liberated. By means of *Kumbhaka* (No. 2) a yogin can live under the earth for an indefinitely long period of time and he can even control death.

THE PRACTICE OF YOGA

"नास्ति माया समं पाशं नास्ति योगात् परं बलम् ।
नास्ति ज्ञानात् परोबन्धुर्नाहङ्कारात् परो रिपुः ॥"—*Gheranda Saṃhitā.*

Just as there is no bondage more severe than *Māyā* (nescience and ignorance due to it), no friend more helpful than knowledge, no enemy more deadly than *Ahaṃ* or notion of ego, similarly there is no power greater than that of Yoga. Yogic exercises should be taken up in the prime of life when the physical body is strong and stout and senses along with the mental faculties are acute and active. *Sādhanā* is possible and successful only with the help of a sound body and a resolute mind. A trainee can subdue six passions and enter into heroic practices only if his mind is strong and fearless.

Autumn and Spring are the proper seasons to begin the practice of Yoga. Usually, we keep physically fit in these two seasons. Practice of yoga from midnight to the auspicious hour of dawn is very helpful. During this period mind becomes easily concentrated as the whole world is drowned in pin-drop silence. Moreover, the successful yogins who are in heaven, come and stand by the devotee to help him in his practice of Yoga. Establish a relation of grandfather with *S'rmad Tailangadhara Swami*, the great yogin like Maheśvara ; establish the relation of preceptor with Paramhansa Deva and the relation of elder comrade with *Swami Vivekananda.* During contemplation invoke their aid with singleness of mind. Make a fervent appeal to them, call them and entreat them most humbly to help you ; make all sorts of demands of them with a child-like simplicity. Tell them, "I am in darkness ; I know nothing of this path. Thou art my only hope and refuge. Forgive my sins and weakness

and do me favour. Graciously show me the path—there is deep darkness ahead—show me the light. I have none but Thee to look upto. I am so unfortunate—I have none to fall back upon save Thou; take pity upon me and be merciful."

Repeat these words once and again while invoking some divinity and keep his figure in the heart. If your prayer and invocation be sincere it will not at all be possible for them to remain unmoved. Then you will find that the darkness before you will melt away and a white radiant light will surround you on all sides. They will reveal themselves before your contemplative vision and lead you to your desired goal. In this way before my initiation, I myself was fortunate to invoke the blessing and mercy of His holiness Swami Śrimad Vivekananda who helped me in various ways towards the path of spirituality. So I request all the beginners to try this easiest and the simplest process.

Admit your short-comings and pray unto the Lord: "O God, Thou art my only refuge, I know not any *mantra* nor its meaning nor do I know how to invoke and worship Thee, nor the process of practising religious rites is known to me, nor can I claim to have sincere devotion to Thee. Thou art all-merciful. Have pity on me, accept and fulfil my worship and prayer in whichever way they may be offered[1].

In Hinduism, meditation tops the list of all the religious practices including even sacrifices and prayers. Though prayer

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1. "आवाहनं न जानामि नैव जानामि पूजनम्।
विसर्ज्जनं न जानामि क्षमस्व परमेश्वर॥
अन्यथा शरणं नास्ति त्वमेव शरणं मम।
तस्माद् कारुण्यभावेन क्षमस्व परमेश्वर॥
मन्त्रहीनं क्रियाहीनं भक्तिहीनं जनार्द्दन।
यत् पूजितं मया देव परिपूर्णं तदस्तु ते॥"

is a mystical act in the same sense as meditation and though a devotee can progress to a certain stage through prayer, meditation stands as an indispensable factor to the awakening of higher consciousnes and for the acquisition of divine knowledge. In Yoga-practices meditation occupies the highest place. The superiority of meditative activity has been highly spoken of in the Vedās, Upaniṣads and theological texts of India. In India, the practice of *Yoga* has been in vogue from time immemorial. *Atharva Veda* speaks of Yoga-practices, *S'vetaśvatara* Upaniṣad illustrates how and where to sit in meditation and *Chhāndyogya Upaniṣad* shows how to withdraw the senses inside and concentrate mind on one object only, namely Soul. The method of concentrating mind on the single subject is purely Indian and it is hardly followed in any part of the Christian world. Meditation is placed above all sorts of rituals. It is the common belief with the Indians that final union and emancipation is subject to meditation. Yoga-philosophy and meditative exercises have been elaborately discussed in the *Yoga-Sutra* of Bādrāyan. Later on *Patanjali* codified and interpreted the *Sutras* (aphorisms) and thus made them intelligible to all. During the Buddhist period with the rise of Yogāchāryya, *Yoga-S'āstrā* of India got a new phase and meditation became the chief occupation of the Buddhists.

The word *Setu* which means a bridge has its derivative meaning. The root *si* which formulates the word *setu* means to bind together. An attributed god as a *setu* or a link between the jivas and the Brahman becomes an object of our adoration and meditation ; He is *Amṛtasya-setu*—the bridge to immortality. A *māyik* Lord is the cause of everything and the adorable god of all sects. But when we think of Him as an incarnation of love and meditate on Him as such, our meditation is a formless one. The power that is generated in the Brahman out of the desire for creation is the Lord

Hiraṇyagarbha, the World-Soul or the *Logos* (God as the Word). He is the *Verbum* of the Christians. According to them, "He is eternally in the bosom of his Father." The gods who are revealed in consequence of the repetition of different mantras formulated for invocation of each of them also rest in the Imperishable : '*Yasmin devā adhiviśve niṣeduḥ*'. Being established in *OM*, *Brāhmins* acquire knowledge of everything : '*Vedoyaṃ Brāhmanā Vidurvedāinena Yadveditavyaṃ*'. A Brāhmin may have studied the four Vedas but unless he knows the import of *Praṇava* or *OM* he is compared to a beast of burden.

By taking His name devotedly, we can achieve the highest acquisition in religious and spiritual life which cannot be obtained by pilgrimage, gift, austerity, *yajna* and observance of religious vow[1]. The very utterance of *S'iva's* name removes all fears from the mind. So always take the name of *S'iva* and meditate on Him[2]. Those who recite the name of *S'iva* go to heaven or obtain salvation, whatever they like : "*Teṣāṃ svargaścha mokṣaścha bhabiṣyati na chānyathā*".—*Kedārkhanda*. God appears before his devotee who meditates

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1' "विश्वस्युतानि बह्वन्येव तीर्थानि विविधानि च ।
कोट्यांश नापि तुल्यानि नामकीर्त्तणतो हरेः ॥"

S'āśvata Tantra States :

"तीर्थदानैस्तपोभिश्च होमैर्जाप्यै व्रतैर्सु खैः ।
न यान्ति मानवोस्तद्वै नामकीर्त्तणमात्रतः ॥

Guru *Nānak* said.

"सरव रोगका औषध नाम । कलियान रूप मङ्गल गुणगाम ॥
पवित्र पवित्र पवित्र पुनीत । नाम जपै, नानक मन प्रीत ॥"

2. शिवेति द्व्याक्षरं नाम त्रायते महतो भयात् ।
तस्माच्छिव चिन्त्यताञ्च अर्च्यताञ्च द्विजोत्तमैः ॥—*Kedār Khanda*,

on Him in the inner sanctuary of silence. "Be still, be still and know Him"—said Christ. They who loudly recite the name of *S'iva* are the blessed and accomplished devotees ; they have no duty to perform[1]. Those whose lips always chant the name of *S'iva* are themselves *Rudra* (*S'iva*).—*Kedārkhanda*. "*O Tulsi*, let your tongue be saturated with the name of *Rāma*—the inside and outside of your whole body will be illumined as a lamp placed at the front door of a house lights up the ins and outs of it."—said Tulsidās. "All names are thine, how then shall I invoke Thy name, Alone Nameless ?" asked St. Gregory of Nazianzen. God is one but thousands are His names. By whatever name we may call Him, we are sure to get His response to our calling because gods are one and they all rest in the Supreme who is one without a second. "Lord saith, call upon Me and I will hear you."—Al Qurān. "Go and repent and then come with a heart full of sincerity ; thou shalt be heard."—The Bible. "I ask perdon of God hundred times a day"—said Muhammed, the prophet.

The same Being is both personal and impersonal. The impersonal assumes personality on account of the devotee's intense love, devotion, prayer and concentration. The frozen pieces of ice are nothing but the water solidified. When the sun rises, the pieces of ice again melt into water. Likewise with the dawn of true knowledge, the personal melts into the impersonal. The Impersonal is an object of higher knowledge, whereas the personal is the God of love. In perfect *Samādhi*, the Supreme Brahman is realised and in ecstatic moments born of love and devotion He is visualised in His personal aspect. All existing objects of this creation

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1. "शिवेति द्व्याचरं नाम यै रुदीरितमुच्चकैः ।
ते वन्द्या ते महात्मानः कृतकृत्यान्त एव च ॥—*Kedārkhanda*.

are like different waves of the sea which is Brahman. The idea of separateness of the individual soul from Brahman persists so long as the sense of duality prevails. We are all like lighted electric bulbs while *Paramātman* is the source of electricity from where the current flows to the bodies of living beings. The current which shines in the bulb is the same as that which flows from the source. Fire is not separate from the energy of heat. The idea of duality exists so long as ignorance prevails. This is *Avidyā* or *māyā*. The individual soul attains emancipation and is freed from the cycle of births and deaths when it gets rid of this knowledge of duality that lies in *Avidyā* or *Māyā*[1]. "O Lord, when the sense of duality disappears, I am Thine ; still I know, Thou art not mine. The waves originate from the sea and the sea never originates from waves"—supplicated Śaṃkara to Lord *Visnu*[2]. Whatever exists is one, there is no duality. The same Being is our father, mother, friend or lover. He is the only Lord in our worship[3].

The Supreme Soul and individual soul are as if two birds seated on the different branches of the same tree—the one on the top and the other below. The Supreme Soul sitting topmost is quite indifferent to the enjoyments of life. So, it does not eat fruits of the tree—sweet or bitter

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1. ह्रैतावज्ञा सुस्थिता चेद ह्रैता धीः स्थिराभवेद्।
स्थैर्य्यं तस्याः पुमानेष जीवन्मुक्त इतीर्य्यते ॥

2. सत्यापि भेदापगमे नाथ तवाहं न मामकीनस्त्वम्।
सम्मुद्रो हि तरङ्गः क्वचन समुद्रो न तरङ्गः ॥"—*Śaṃkarāchāryya.*

3. "त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव।
त्वमेव बन्धुश्च सखा त्वमेव ॥
त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणं त्वमेव।
त्वमेव सर्व्वं मम देव देव ॥"

and consequently it is neither happy nor unhappy. It is immersed in its own Self. Whereas the other bird seated on the lower branch eats in turn sweet and bitter fruits and becomes happy or miserable in turn. When it eats an exceptionally bitter fruit, it gets disgusted and throws it away. Out of curiosity it looks up and finds the bird above sitting majestically. Hopping from branch to branch it approaches the bird above to know the secret. As it draws nearer and nearer, wonderful changes overtake it and at last it comes to know that there is little difference between them. Ultimately when it comes close enough to touch the bird above its individuality melts away—it is totally lost in Him (*S'veta Up*, IV. 6).

Meditation on an idol or image is recognised as *Sthula* (gross meditation) while without symbol it is *Sukṣma* or Subtle. Meditation of image of different gods and goddesses constitute the third or the lowest kind of meditation which is *Sthula*. Meditation of different centres that lie along the *Suṣumnā* canal, as clothed in light, forms the second type, viz. *Sukṣma* or *Tejodhyāna*, while the first and the highest kind of meditation is of formless Para Brahman[1].

Agne naya supathā rāye asmān—O Agni, lead us to the right path (*Iśa*. 18). *Agni*, the presiding diety of fire, is the adorable God of the *Brāhmins* or the twice-born ; God of the sages resides at the heart centre ; the image is the symbol of worship of people of meagre intellect, while one who has known Brahman, sees the Lord everywhere[2]. Those who are unable

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1. "स्थूलं मूर्त्तिमयं प्रोक्तं ज्योतिस्तेजोमयन्तथा ।
सूक्ष्मं विन्दुमयं ब्रह्म कुण्डली परदेवता ॥"

2. "अग्निर्हि वो द्विजातिनां मुनिनां हृदिदैवतम् ।
प्रतिमा खल्पबुद्धिनां सर्व्वत्र समदर्शिनाम् ॥"

Also : "वह्निमध्ये स्मरेत् रूपं ममैतत् ध्यानमङ्गलम् "—*The Bhāgavad.*

to concentrate their mind, may first try to meditate on the image of some diety or the picture of some great saint,—(Mu. Up. 1.19). But he who is advanced intellectually may practise meditation by fixing his consciousness on the internal light or on the unqualified formless Brahman.

With real earnestness, even the idol worship may produce some result and the beginner may make progress in the path of spirituality. *Atharva Veda*, II. 3.4, enjoins invocation of a deity in a piece of stone and adoration through the same : Ehyasmānamatisthāśmā bhabatu te tanu—come down, O Lord, into this stone ; let it be your body." The *Vedanta Sutra*, III, 2.34 observes that God reveals Himself through a a suitable medium : Sthāna viśeṣad prakāśādivad. Yogins like *Ramprosad Sen* and *Paramhansa Deva* are bright examples of this. *Mahātmā Kabir* has said, "the God with form is my mother, the God without form is my father—whom should I adore and whom ignore, for both are equal to me."

When the beginner reaches the higher stage of spirituality, he will spontaneously give up worship of images. An infant takes pleasure in playing with dirt, but as he gains in age such habits disappear automatically. Ramprosad, the devoted Yogin, sang, "I like not to taste sugar—I wish to be sugar itself," He preferred the state of oneness with God to that of duality.

For successful progress in the path of spirituality an aspirant must practise the following steps of *Yoga* : (1) *Trātaka*, (2) *Manasthira*, (3) *Pratyāhāra*, (4) *Dhāraṇā*, (5) *Dhyāna*, and (6) *Samādhi*. They are explained below with the process of practising them.

Trātaka or *Steadiness of sight* : Taking his seat in front of a picture or image of *S'iva* absorbed in meditation, the beginner should fix his gaze upon the holy form till tears trickle down from the eyes. This is called *Trātaka-yoga*[1].

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1. "निरीक्षेन्निश्चलदृशा सूक्ष्मलक्ष्यं प्रयत्नतः ।
अश्रुसंपातपर्य्यन्तं वाटकं तन्महेश्वरि" ॥—*Dattātreya Saṃhitā*.

The sight becoming steady in this way, mind also becomes steady and then the breath automatically slows down. While practising *Trātaka-Yoga* the beginner should pray from the core of his heart to Lord *S'iva* for his grace; this course makes the mind steady and fixed on one object. Instead of the figure of *S'iva* one may practise *Trātaka* by fixing his gaze on any other form or object as he likes best.

The left eye is the moon and right eye is the sun of the spiritual regions, while the seat of fire or the light of Brahman is in between the two eye-brows. Practice of *Trātaka* yoga or the practice of the process of constant gazing at a point in between the two eye-brows after practising *Kumbhaka* for six months awakens the Third eye of intuition.

Manasthira is the steadiness of mind. Mind is always restless owing to its connection with the world, but when it is withdrawn and turned towards its Lord, worldly thoughts do not arise and the jiva becomes entitled to salvation[1]. Just as a wine jar, even if it is washed for hundred times, does not give up its nasty odour, similarly, the mental impurities are not cleansed by mere bath and visit to the sacred places of pilgrimage[2].

Pratyāhāra: It is the withdrawal of the flow of sense-currents from external objects and turning it inward to the centre within from which the currents flow. *Pratyāhāra* is withdrawal of the mind from sense objects, its concentration within and keeping it away from assuming the forms of

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1. मोक्षो मेहस्त्विति चिन्तान्तर्जाता चेदुत्थितं मनः।
मनोनाथे मनः खेषबन्धः सांसारिको हृदः॥

2. "चित्तमन्तर्गतं दुष्टं तीर्थस्नानैर्न शुद्धयति।
शतशोऽपि जलैर्धौतं सुराभाण्डमिवाशुचि॥"

diverse mental activities. This is possible only when the mind has been freed, to some extent, from the influence of *Māyā* (ne-science), *Moha* (stupefaction), *Lobha* (greed), *Vāsanā* (inordinate desire) and *Kāma* (lust). Thus one can be a person of ideal character by the practice of *Pratyāhāra*. When by proper concentration, the senses are withdrawn in mind, mind in *buddhi* or intellect, *buddhi* in *prāṇa* or life-principle and *Prāṇa* in calm and quiet consciousness, the individual soul inclines towards the Supreme for merging into it. This is the best way of practising *Yoga*. When the mind is withdrawn from the external world by the practice of *Prāṇāyāma*, it rises from centre to centre till it reaches the plane of *Vijnāna* and from there to the final vicinity of God. So then withdraw the mind from the outside world to the world within. When the mind is fully withdrawn and kept steady, *Bodhi* or light of divine consciousness dawns.

Chaitanya or consciousness has two aspects—(1) *Chit* or knowledge of self and (2) *Tapas* or creative power. Knowledge has always a tendency towards expansion and is never satisfied with keeping within bounds. It is for this reason that there is *chaitanya* in every creature and every object of creation, as a result of which, they are always restless and give rise to vibrations, as if to give expression to something by way of action. Consciousness of unqualified Brahman which is all-existence, all-knowledge and all-bliss is peaceful and pure.

Dhāraṇā : It is a term which means a particular passive condition of mind produced by withdrawal and concentration of the mind for 12 seconds and keeping it steady on the *Sahasrāra*, the *Ājnā chakra*, the *Viśuddhā* or the *Anāhata* or any part of the body for 12 seconds. Deep-rooted *Dhāraṇā* produces the condition of *Dhyāna* or deep contemplation.

Dhyāna or meditation is the continual flow of the mental current upon one object of thought without any break like

the uninterrupted flow of oil, according to Ramkrishna Deva. Meditation for two minutes and 24 seconds by fixing the concentrated mind upon God along with total forgetfulness of the external world is *Dhyāna*. Practice of *Prāṇāyāma* for 144 times at one sitting with thought on God may also be looked upon as one unit of *Dhyāna*.

When all the functions of the mind are at a stand still, when it is firmly fixed on the object of meditation like the steady flame of a lamp undisturbed by wind, the state of *Dhyāna* ensues (The Gita, VI. 19). Meditation is of two kinds—(1) figurative and (2) the formless. When the mind resting on the object of meditation takes the form of the object and becomes identical with it losing consciousness of its own existence, that may be called *Nirguṇa Dhyāna* or formless meditation. What remains in the mind at that time is merely the object meditated upon and nothing else. To speak the truth, what is popularly known as *Dayāna* is not *dhyāna* at all. *Dhyāna* is not possible when there is no object in the mind to meditate upon[1].

The full value of the mental conditlon of a creature is the sum total of the conscious and sub-conscious states of the mind. Conscious or active mind is the regulator of all actions. When conscious mind lies in a passive state, the dormant impressions of sub-conscious mind wake up. All this is *Kundalini*. The waves of desire originate from the things of desire and floating from the outside world they enter us and sink into sub-conscious depth and ultimately rise up to the surface mind when we become aware of them and think them as if they were part and parcel of our being. The fact that they are external objects imposed upon our mental consciousness

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1. "न ध्यानं ध्यानमित्याहु ध्यानं शून्यगतं मनः।
तत्त्व ध्यान प्रसादेन सोऽयमीचो न संशयः॥"

is realised when jiva-consciousness is raised above the mental plane. Longing for worldly objects betrays one's consciousness to be in the normal i. e., mental plane ; it is neither elevated nor free.

The door to the sub-conscious state of mind opens up slowly when the outward flow of consciousness is checked by the power of *Yoga* or paralysed by disease or old age. When the restlessness of superficial consciousness is totally lost, one goes deep down into this sub-conscious plane and gets impressions of things beyond the reach of the senses. Rabindranath says : "In the twilight of sub-merged consciousness, self floats down along the dark stream of the *Kālindi*, carrying clusters of peeping shadows brought to light"[1].

There is a faculty for divine vision in every one of us but it remains dormant as a rule. Just as there are external eyes to see external objects, that internal eye is for seeing internal things and it can be awakened by practice of *Yoga*. Purity of mind, concentration, control of tongue, increasing efforts for success and thirst for communion with God are essential for this purpose. Sooner or later one is blessed with the awakening of this faculty which is in proportion to the amount of earnestness and sincerity with which a devotee dedicates himself to God. Like candle like light. God reveals Himself through a suitable and *Sāttivik* medium. The divine power which is revealed through the receptacle is not of the receptacle but it belongs to God. *Manusaṃhitā* observes that one can be a twice-born through the study of the Vedas but to be a real Brāhmin one must awaken the third eye and

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1. "দেখিলাম অবসন্ন চেতনার গোধূলি বেলায়,
দেহ মোর ভেসে যায়—
কাল কালিন্দীর স্রোতবাহি
নিয়ে অনুভূতি পুঞ্জ।"
—A Bengali verse from Rabindranath

realise Brahman : *Vedapāthād bhabedvijaḥ. Brahmaṃ jānāti yaḥ saḥ brāhmanaḥ*". When the spiritual eye opens, the brāhmin is reborn to a higher level of consciousness ; he ascends from natural to the spiritual plane. "Thy published words I have read ; Thy secrets, O Lord, reveal unto me."

Dhyāna or meditation is of three kinds—(1) Meditation of the ordinary object of nature perceived by senses. (2) Meditation of internal light emanated from the centres within and (3) meditation of subtle objects which are beyond the reach of human perception. They are adapted to the slow-witted, the average intellect and the strong minded (*Uttama Adhikāry*) respectively. Meditation is the process by which thought takes the form of the object thought of. *Samādhi* or deep meditation is the stage in which the mind rests like the unflickering flame of a lamp in the realisation of oneness of the meditator, meditation and the object of meditation. Meditating on *Para-Brahman*, the reading of holy books, discussions on spiritual topics and concentrating on the Supreme Soul are among the methods of attaining Brahman.

Though meditation on an attributed God is not conducive to liberation, yet it brings the concentration of mind which is a means to salvation. Even meditation on the figure of a man of a saintly character is equally fruitful. *Kathāmṛta*, II. 222, observes : "If idolatry is permissible, there can be no reason, why godly men, living or dead cannot be worshipped". According to the *Yoga-Sutra* II. 44, the acquaintance with the favourite deity results from the study of the Vedas. The gods, accomplished Yogins and the emancipated souls appear before the meditative vision of a devotee who is well-versed in the Vedic lore : '*Svādhyāyādiṣṭā devatā saṃprayogaḥ*' (Pātanjal Darśan, Samādhipāda, Sutra 44.) Meditation is effective when mind flows in one channel and becomes concentrated on the object of meditation. In the opinion of Patanjali, of all the external objects, the figure

of an emancipated soul is the best support for meditation : "*Vāhya dhyeyeṣu mukta-puruṣaḥ.*" *Samādhi* is attained quickly and easily when we meditate on the figure of a Yogin lost in *Samādhi* : "*Samāhita puruṣe pravartitā bhābanā śighraṃ samādhimānayedati.*"

God resides in every heart ; merge your being into the existence of your adorable deity residing within. Concentration at the heart-centre appears to be very pleasing. Divinity latent in man becomes manifest when one takes the above idea as a support for meditation. Heart is the seat of all perceptions. When the deity within the heart is meditated as a luminous being, the gross and subtle feelings of mind are lost and jiva-consciousness rising higher and higher reaches a seed state, a phase of potentiality which is more penetrating than the consciousness in normal state. Luminous figure of an accomplished Yogin is visualised if mind is concentrated at *Sahasrāra* and the latter is meditated as radiating white light.

When meditation ripens, the space around will shine as an ocean of gleam. If the *Sādhak* be an idolator, the luminous region will condense into a luminous form of his adorable deity or that of his *Guru* or the spiritual guide. By applying his will-power he should attempt to merge his individual existence into that figure i.e., he should try to enter into it. If he succeeds, the sense of duality will disappear and the doctrine of non-duality will be clearer to him. He becomes one with his deity ; his whole being is swallowed up in the existence of his Lord. Merge your individual soul which is like the sky contained in a pot into the limitless sky that is *Ātman* or Brahman and attain fullness of your being[1].

In the *Vedanta Sutra*, 1. 1. 22, *ākāśa* or ether is mentioned as the Brahman, so meditation on *ākāśā* is enjoined in the

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1. "घटाकाशं महाकाश इवात्मानं परमात्मनि ।
विलोप्याखण्डभावेन तुष्णीं भव सदा मुने ॥"

Vedas. *Chhāndyogya Upaniṣad*, VIII. 14 states that ether is the revealer of all names and forms ; *ākāśa* is therefore identical to Brahman. Bṛ. Up. III.8.8-7, observes that ether is imperishable. This ether is the inner sky of consciousness within the human heart and it is not to be confused with elemental ether. As the same ether pervades the ins and outs of all the minutest particles of creation, so does *Ātman* or the witnessing Soul shine through every thing and being[1].

The imperishable *Para Brahman* is identified with *Param Vyom* or the inner sky of consciousness and the *Vyom* is *OM* (vide the Ṛgveda II.3.21, *Atharvaveda* IX. 10. 18 and the *S'veta Up.* IV. 8). In a commentary on *Brahma-Sutra*, Śaṃkarāchāryya observes that the Brahman, *Param Vyom* i.e., the subtle ether and the word *Kha* are synonymous : *OM Khaṃ Brahma. OM* of the Vedas implies both the *Para* and Apara Brahman (Bṛ. Ār. Up, V. 1.2.). According to *S'ākpuni*, the word *Akṣara* is one with *OM* and the Mundakopaniṣad, 1. 2. 13 attributes the epithet *Akṣara* to Brahman : *'Tenākṣaraṃ Puruṣaṃ Veda Satyaṃ.'* The epithet *Akṣara* or the imperishable is applicable to Brahman alone, because, except Brahman, all His manifestations are *māyik* and hence subject to annihilation. All the Vedic *Mantras* are comprised in *OM*. So without uttering *OM* in the beginning of any recitation the repetition of the *Mantra* loses *Urjas* or urge, failing to produce the desired result. OM is the matrix of all words : *Omkāreṇa Sarvā Vāk Saṃtṛṇṇā*. The Brahman means the Vedas because the Vedas are the manifestations of *OM* : The measured word of the Vedas is the sound-form of Brahman. *Bṛhadāraṇyak.* Up, V. 1. 2 enjoins the meditation on *OM* as the inner sky of consciousness. Meditate on OM as your own Self : *'Omitevyaṃ Dhyāyatha*

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1. "बहिरन्तर्यथाकाश: सर्व्वेषामेव वस्तुनाम् ।
तथैव भाति तद्रूपे आत्मा साच्चिस्वरूपत: ॥"—Mahānirvān Tantra.

ātmānaṃ'. Make yourself one with OM : *Omityātmānaṃ Yuṇjita.* The Brahman is pleased with him who selects OM as the best support for meditation. The meditator of '*OM*' reaches the world of Brahman and unites with Him. *S'ruti* forbids incantation and meditation of a *mantra* which is not monosyllable. *Bṛ Ār Up*, V. 14. 8, declares that all the sins of one who recites *Gāyatri* verse and knows its full meaning are destroyed. OM is the first word of the *Gāyatri Mantra.* Pure knowledge is kindled by the repetition of holy *Praṇava.* The Praṇava or *OM* consists of three letters A, U and M. The first letter A which represents the earth and the waking state is the very soul of the Ṛgveda. The second letter *U* which represents the intermediate space and the dream-state is the heart of the *Yajurveda.* 'M', the third letter is the life and light of the *Sāmaveda* and it represents celestial regions and slumber. When we try to utter any word, A is the first sound that comes out of the mouth. The second letter *U* is the urge that gives an impetus to the pronunciation. *M* is the last sound that is produced in the utterance of the mystic syllable *OM* and when it is uttered, the lips are automatically closed. *OM* is the substratum of all sounds and Brahman is the substratum of the world-appearance. Substratum, being the only reality, OM and Brahman are identical. The three states of waking, dream and dreamless slumber correspond to the letters *A*, *U* and *M* constituting the holy mantra *OM.* The fourth quarter of the syllable is silent and so without any letter. This silent part of *Praṇava* is transcendental i.e., *Turiya.* When the first three quarters are merged in the fourth which is *Turiya*, Ātman i.e. Brahman is realised. The three letters *A*, *U* and *M* form the three feet of the *Gāyatri* verse. *A* represents the first foot of the *Gāyatri* : '*Tat Saviturvareṇyam*—we meditate on the glorious light of the sun'. The second foot stands for '*Bhargo devasya dhimahi*—the adorable deity of the gods and also of the

other universes'. From *U* comes out the third foot, '*Dhiyo Yonaḥ Prachodāyad*—may He awaken our consciousness'.

When the luminous form of the sun is meditated inside the *Suṣumnā*, the knowledge of the seven spheres comprising heaven and earth is attributed to the meditator. One may concentrate one's consciousness on the bright flame of a candle at the fourth spiritual centre viz. the *Anāhata* circle within the *Suṣumnā* and meditate as if the rays radiating therefrom are illuminating the *Suṣumnā* path. The meditator is to proceed steadily along this illuminated path carrying his consciousness to the higher and higher circles. When he reaches the Ājnā Chakra, the sense of the external world is totally forgotten : The whole universe then becomes saturated and flooded with the light of Soul-consciousness. The awakening of unfettered consciousness and birth of descerning knowledge mean nothing but salvation.

Success in the path of *Yoga* is achieved through constant repetition of OM : "*Japād Siddhiḥ*". *Prāṇava* or *OM* is expressive of God's identity : "*Tasya Vāchaka praṇavaḥ*" (Pātanjal Darśan, Samādhi pāda, Sutra 27). *Sutra* 28 of the same text enjoins meditation of the true significance of OM : "*Tajjapādsthadarthabhāvanaṃ*". *Praṇava* being the sound-form of the Brahman the incantation and meditation of *OM* have been prescribed to achieve oneness with God Supreme. Musing of *Praṇava* along with meditation of the tutelary deity at heart ensures rapid progress in the way to God-realisation. Meditate on God while you repeat *OM* and when you utter the last part of the syllable i.e. *M* merge your existence in God. Continued repetition of *OM* and meditating its inner meaning at the same time steep mind in an ineffaceable peace and silence. In the primary stage of practice mind at times may fly away from the object of meditation or the object may be apprehended in its differentiation. To avoid such contingency one should

abondon from mind the different aspects of the object by analytical discrimination and accept only one quality as the support of meditation. According to Patanjali, the thought of 'I exist' serves the purpose of a good support for meditation : "*Ekatattvālambanāya ahaṃbhābaḥ śreṣthaḥ*".

Meditation on etherial sky, aura or a vacuous state of mind is found helpful in ensuing *Samādhi*. In the practice of *Kumbhaka* (Retention of breath) by suppressing vital air one may retain one's breath inside or outside of the body and concentrate the mind on an object taken as a support for meditation. When breath is suspended inside, it absorbs air from the lungs. During inspiration one should imagine as if the inhaled air is spreading to the every part inside the body. While exhaling it is to be imagined that inhaled air is getting accumulated at the heart-centre and thence it is passing out through the nostrils very slowly. This practice purifies arteries and turns the body more and more *Sāttvik*. As a consequence, the Yogin feels himself very light and a blissful feeling overtakes him. Odyle emanates from the body and it becomes visible to others when each atom of the body is meditated as full of the quality of *Sattva*. "The body is full of air"—such a perception causes levitation of the body. Yogin should meditate as if the inspired air is entering into cerebrum as a stream of white light. If mind can be concentrated on the movement of air inhaled, the duration of *Kumbhaka* (supression of breath) will be longer and that of inspiration and respiration will be shorter. In the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* it is to be observed that air should enter in and pass out very slowly. Practising *Prāṇāyāma* without meditation is harmful. Far from establishing mental equilibrium such a practice makes the mind more restless due to the excessive accumulation of air in the system. So the correct procedure is to practise *Prāṇāyāma* and meditation simultaneously. The sense of the physical body is lost during

breath-control. If mind is fixed on a single object much of the drawbacks are removed from the path of Yoga : *Tatpratiṣedhārhamekatattvābyāsḥ* (Pātanjal Darśan Samādhipāda, Sutra 32). The sense of duality i e. thought of separate existence between the mediator and the meditated disappears altogether when mind is lost in the object of meditation. During repetition of *OM* the *Sādhak* should meditate as if his whole being is merging in the sound *OM* arising out of the *Anāhata* Circle. In the meditation of a divine figure, the devotee is to imagine that his own consciousness is slowly sinking down in the aura or the bright light radiated from the crown of the figure.

Samādhi : During meditation if the individual soul merges into the Universal Soul and remains so for at least half an hour causing total forgetfulness of the outside world, the condition of *Samādhi* is produced. Paramhansa Deva used to say, "Mature meditation is samādhi" which is possible only when restlessness of mind ceases altogether. Samādhi ensues when respiration is totally stopped and *Buddhi* or the discriminative faculty stands still. It is then that the eternal light of true knowledge dawns. Hindu philosophy calls this light Ṛtambharā Prajnā or bodhi Pure Reason of Kant. So the functions of the mind are required to be brought under absolute control in order to attain the state of Samādhi. When this is done, the superficial self compels itself to be still so that another more deep seated power may be revealed. Practice of yoga is the only means to that end and it consists of *Dhyāna* (meditation), *Dhāraṇā* (concentration) and Samādhi (the ecstasy or right rapture).

During *Samādhi* or deep ecstasy, a beam of white light emerges from the interior of the brain, which scatters into the vast space in the limitless sky. When this light is carried by etherial waves far and wide into the world beyond the senses, we clearly perceive objects of the other world that

lie beyond the reach of human knowledge. When this stream of light is focussed on any distant object, full knowledge of the same is derived by means of inner eye of the Soul.

Samādhi or perfect trance which is the only means to God-communion does not follow in the restless mind of a man who is always engrossed in worldly enjoyments and is of a buyer's and trader's mentality[1]. Supreme truth is reflected on a quiet heart and dedicated mind ; contrastedly, a fickle and unquiet mind loses everything. To invite drowsiness one has to relax himself completely banishing all his worries and anxieties and await with a mind absolutely vacant, calm and quiet. Precisely, by following the same procedure we can attain *Samādhi*.

When immersed in the thought of anything we become totally absorbed and lost in it and when the whole thinking power becomes focussed on one point only, the object of thought becomes more and more distinct and our mind dyed with the colour of that object and withdrawn from everything else becomes fully concentrated on it. When concentration reaches the state of *Samādhi* and the string of consciousness vibrates with one tune only, the light of *Bodhi* or intuition flashes forth The awakening of intuition does not take place bit by bit as is the case with the intellect, but appears all on a sudden like a flood of light. Intuitive revelation is possible in a vacant mind. It is said that creative thought on the divergence of character came upon Darwin all on a sudden when he was returning home on a horse back. Intuitive revelations are the moments of Spirit. The light of divine reality shines as a sudden flash of light, an amazing discovery of a scientist or a priceless and unerring truth unfolded by a philosopher or like a unique spiritual revelation of the seer.

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1. "भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥"—The Gita II. 44.

The case of the yogins is different altogether ; in them the light of intuition may continue to shine for a long period as they like, for they are accustomed to the bath of this light divine in their daily practices.

A little above the *Ājnā-chakra* (sixth centre), there is the sign of 'OM'. Above this lies the vault of the sky and below the earth. There are two dots lying in a perpendicular line in the sky above OM. The centre of *Sahasrāra* lies below that and the moon shines inside the centre. *Brahman* lies in a triangular area inside the most hidden part of the moon. From this earth we look upon Brahman stretching our gaze through the field of space, time and causation. But the region of Brahman lies beyond all these. Evidently the infinite Brahman appears in the form of this finite universe on account of limitation produced by time, space and causation. *S'iva* and *S'akti*, stability and motion, creation and dissolution are but two different aspects of the same Being. Unlimited Brahman takes the form of the limited universe at the other extremity of creation.

S'iva is self-shining and *S'akti* is the active power (*Kriyā-śakti*) in *S'iva*. This conscious Self with the help of its active power gave rise to the jiva-world. Since pure consciousness is functionless, the Brahman, for the purpose of creation, associated Himself with *Māyā* and assumed the name of an attributed God like Brahmā, the Cosmic Mind who contemplated diverse creation. *Māyā* signifies the fragility of the universe. Padmapada defines *Māyā* or *Avidyā* as a material cause having a material power viz. *Jaḍātimikā avidyāśakti*. In the *Tantras*, *S'iva*, His creative power *S'akti* and Jiva are indicated by three dots—white, red and black respectively. The black is to return to the white through red. '*S'āśvataṃ S'ivaṃ Advaitaṃ*—the perfect rest in peace and truth, the perfect goodness in each work and perfect union in love are the means for a jiva to become *S'iva*. Those who hold that

S'iva is the God of the non-Aryans and that there is no mention of Him in the *Vedas* may read the Chapter dealing with the Lord *Rudra* in the *S'ukla-Yajurveda*, XVI.

One day Mathur Babu, son-in-law of *Rāni Rāsmani*, was seated in the temple of the Goddess *Kāli* at *Dākṣineśvar* with his eyes resting on *Paramhansa Deva* who was walking to and fro along the verandah. As he was pacing up and down, Mathur Babu found him alternately assuming the forms of *S'iva* and *Sakti*. i.e., *Kāli*. Paramhansa Deva's face assumed the two different forms with change of direction. Thus the unqualified Brahman who is one, appears as many in the field of time, space and causation. So long as the individual soul is confined within the physical body and mind, Brahman appears as qualified ; He becomes unqualified as the *Jivātman* gives up its physical and mental connections. Waves appear on the bosom of the sea but the distinction of name and form disappears as soon as the sea becomes tranquilled by the merging of the effect (waves) into the cause (sea). Time, space and causation combine to from *māyā* which is responsible for the illusion of creation. Brahman is individual soul in the lower centre of the living body but is Supreme Soul in the *Sahasrāra*.

"*Akāmo Viṣṇukāmova*"—The worship of Lord *Viṣṇu* without any motive behind is passionless and hence unblamable. "God is like a doll of thickend milk ; it will taste sweet whether we eat its head, hand or leg."—Said Ramkrishna. When through intense love and devotion the being of the devotee is merged into the existence of his Lord the *Upāsanā* is neither attributive nor desireful. *Upāsanā* in the light of true *Knowledge* reveals Brahman[1] and He is realised as bliss[2].

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1. "ननु विद्यासंयुक्तानां नित्यानां कर्म्मानां च ब्रह्मादिभावश्चेत् ।"
Also : "ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म्मसमाधिना ।"—The Gita, IV. 24.
2. "तद्विज्ञानेन परिपश्यन्ति धीराः आनन्दरूपममृतं यद्विभाति ।"—Mu Up.

Whenever we think of somebody, his name and appearance first float up before our mind's eye. To create intimacy with God, therefore, we have no other alternative but to attribute a name to Him and picture His appearance firmly in heart. Amidst the trials and tribulations of life's accidents it is faith and reverence alone that keep up one ordering everything to one's eternal welfare. "Those who are directed towards Him, God will grant them ample directions and He will instruct them what to do."—*Āl Quran.*" "Take my refuge by all means, O' descendent of Bharat."—said Lord Krishna[1].

The formless Brahman is realised in the path of knowledge; God with a form is the God of love and so He is attained in the path of love and devotion. The Supreme Brahman responding to the devotee's intense devotion takes form of a worshipful Lord. A devotee in the preliminary stages of *Sādhanā* takes fancy to an attributed God, possessed of great power and majesty. As the *Sādhanā* advances and love deepens, his attraction for divine attributes slips away and the formless Brahman reveals Himself as an ocean of soul-captivating light or as a stream of molten silver or like a lake of pure mercury. Bathed in this divine light the devotee is lost in *Samādhi.*

Jiva is so weak and powerless! He naturally remains drowned in ignorance. God voluntarily gives up His majesty so that He may be easily intelligible and accessible to the devotee. God humbles down Himself so that the devotee may easily overtake Him. Though king of kings, He comes to a devotee in the guise of a destitute and lowly. God appears before His devotee, when his heart is pure and regard sincere. Devotee's mind being constantly occupied with divine thoughts, his body is turned into a temple of God and ultimately he incarnates God in person.

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1. "तमेव शरण' गच्छ सर्व्वभावेन भारत।"—The Gita, XVIII. 62.

"Have you seen God. ?"—Asked Narendra to Paramhansa Deva who replied : "Not only do I see Him but I eat, speak and sleep with Him as well." "Can you show Him to me ?" —Asked Narendra again. Ramkrishna told Narendra that he himself would be able to see Him in time without requiring anybody's help. "An angler cannot expect catching fish as soon as he casts the fishing rod in the water. He must wait patiently for sometime. After a while bubbles will float up from the bed of water where the bait for fish has been thrown. This will convince him that there is fish in the tank. Within a few minutes the fish will nibble at the hooked food and ultimately when it swallows the bait the angler drags it to the shore"—said Ramkrishna.

The kinetic energy of Brahman which is active behind all creation is *Mahāmāyā Kāli.* The formless Brahman pervades the whole creation through *Ādyāśakti Kāli*—His first energy manifisted in creation. She being the energy of Brahman, *Kāli* is identical with Him. She is both formless and formful, finite and Infinite. Mother *Kāli* became Krishna in Brindāban but at the approach of *Āyān* she assumed the form of Goddess *Kāli* in order to remove all suspicion from the mind of *Āyān.* The human heads strung together after decapitation and making Her waist girdle represent *Vindu.* '*Jātlvaṃ Asi*' —since jiva is identical with Brahman and will ultimately merge in Him, Mother *Kāli* does not forget to keep the severed heads still in touch with Her. She will do so with every being and get them all merged into Her own unique existence. Once Brahmānanda Keshab Chandra asked Ramkrishna why the Goddess *Kāli* looks so black. Ramkrishna told him that the Goddsss is so because she is at a far off distance from us. Mother *Kāli* appears black but when realised she is the light of the universe.

If you really desire to have a vision of the Mother *Mahāmāyā,* search for her in your own Self. You cannot

find her in any temple. Dive deep within your own Self and you will then be blessed with the beatific vision of the Divine Mother of the universe. Cast your penetrating glance into the deeper and deepest region of the ocean of consciousness and behold the true colour of the Mother. Resign yourself to the will of the Divine Mother and you will be carried to the divine shore. Surrender everything to Her and seek protection in her lotus-feet—you will then realise that the goal before you is "*Sāntaṃ S'ivaṃ Sundaraṃ*". Repeat the holy name of the Mother without break. This name will reveal before you the paramount beauty of the Mother. While lying down prostrate on your bed think that you are making obeisance to the Mother ; while sleeping meditate on Her and moving about on business you circumscribe the Divine Mother.

Mother is always anxious for her weak and stupid children and her mercy to them knows no bounds. Since we are poor, Mother *Kāli* has dressed herself poorly. However lowly we may be, we are the treasure of her heart. Affection of a mother never deteriorates. A bad son there may be but a bad mother never is. She is ever-ready to pardon all our guilts. We are safe when we are on her lap. Ramkrishna said : "If I think of Mother as formless I am deprived of her affectionate lap. The adoration of God as mother is the easiest way in the path of *Sādhanā*." One day he affectionately placed *Rākhāl* on his lap and the latter lying there felt himself as if an infant of four years, sucking the breast of the Universal Mother. Addressing his disciples, Śri Ramkrishna once said : "Look here my boys ! don't behave like a monkey-cub but be like a kitten. The cub of a monkey clings to its mother but a mother-cat clasps her offspring. Sometimes, when the monkey jumps from one tree to another, her cub falls to the ground and sustains injury ; but a mother-cat holds fast her kitten by its neck with her teeth and when

the mother carries it from one place to another, the kitten has no fear of falling down. So, pray unto Mother to treat you as a kitten and to take you on her lap so that you may avoid downfall".

How sweet is the utterance—*Mā*. Ramkrishna's adorable deity is Mother *S'yāmā* and the mantra in his incantation is *Mā*. *Mā* is also a monosyllablic mantra like *OM* of the Vedas. Ramkrishna induced and initiated Brahmānanda Keshab Chandra and Vijoy Krishna Goswami, the *Brahmavādins*, into the mantra—*Mā* and they adored the Brahman of the *Upaniṣad* as the Divine Mother. A true devotee is like a helpless child and consequently an affectionate mother is indispensable to guard, to protect and to nurse him. As all-through his life Śri Ramkrishna behaved like an infant, Mother *S'yāmā* took upon herself all his responsibilities and led him to the gate of salvation. "Mother watches over Her children. She knows how to obtain true freedom and knowledge for them. The child knows nothing. Its mother knows every thing. All is ordered according to her will"—observed Ramkrishna.

The Brahman exercises His power through *Kāli*. *Vaidhi-bhakti* is mandatory love which leads one to the Father whereas *Rāgānugā-bhakti* is spontaneous and selfless ; it flows towards Mother. Love and devotion, born of true knowledge are divine. *Vaidhi-bhakti* or mandatory love results through fear of Śāstric injunctions and it is valid so long as *Rāgānugā-bhakti* does not arise in the heart ; it grows spontaneously through selfless devotion. Sentiment of pure love develops when mind is solely directed to the realisation of God alone. Deep thirst for divine union is *Rāga*. A Sādhak forgets his physical consciousness and is united with God when *Rāgānugā-bhakti* fills his heart. Love is the gate-way to liberation. Selfless love easily grows in heart by invoking God as mother. There is no other competent person to love as

endearingly as mother. All the sins of a sinner are destroyed if tears trickle down his cheeks with the utterance of the word *Mā*. "Divine Mother is expected to come only when the path is washed clean with tears"—said Ramkrishna.

The possibility of some communion with God and man is not a thing of illusion. If God is fully real He is also fully knowable. The great Yogin *S'rimad Bālānanda Brahmachāri* said: "God exists and a man can commune with Him if he tries in right earnest. I will introduce you with God if you follow my instructions and exert yourself". "The Self is Brahman and verily the Self is to be seen"—(Bṛ. Up. II, 4. 5). "God has left a little point wherein"—says Echart "the Soul turns back upon itself and finds itself. In our spiritual quest, when the finite consciousness is transcended we jump upon a realm where everything is unlimited *I*". Ātman is Brahman and there is no other seer but He. Ātman is deathless, limitless and eternal. So, Spinoza says: "We feel and know that we are eternal." To realise this eternal one, the empirical must be sacrificed. But the self that has to be lost in our spiritual quest is not the Self that is realised at the end of our journey.

The highest is known when the less valuables lose their weight in our estimation. If earthly things are considered to be so valuable and attractive to you, just think how much more precious and covetable should be their source viz. God who dispenses everything to your need[1]! Do I myself know what really I want? I may be immensely rich but at the same time deprived of mental peace and happiness. I may have the luxury of a costly bedding but peaceful sleep may be denied to me. God knows better which will make me truly happy. He dispenses everything

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1. "दृश्यदर्शनसम्बन्धे यत् सुखम् पारमार्थिकम्।
तदतीतं पदं यस्मात् तन्न विद्मदिदैव तत्॥"

to meet the real need of a true devotee wedded to Him. "*Teṣāṃ nityāviryuktānāṃ Yoga-Kṣemaṃ bahāmyahaṃ*"—said Krishna in the Gita, IX, 22. We cannot enter the Infinite unless we outgrow finite possessions. The finite possessions make us worldly-minded—they do not allow our mind soar higher up. We are nature's children; so according to the law of nature we, the common people, grow by acquisition; but in the world above our growth is spiritual which demands self-renunciation. By self-effacement and through renunciation our outward man gradually dies out and the inner man manifests itself day by day. The spirit of acquisition and accumulation is the characteristic feature of the finite self, whereas the true Self which is Brahman is an *Ātmadā*—it always gives up itself: Brahman is the Lord of sacrifice. So it is not by acquisition and accumulation but by renunciation that we can become God-like. Man's deepest nature thirsts for the Infinite; it cannot remain satisfied for ever with the worldly possessions which are finite and fleeting. God is '*Anoraṇian*'—smaller than the smallest; so we are to reduce ourselves to the lowest possible minimum before we can aspire after uniting with Him. The worldly possessions, body and mind, taken together constitute such a heavy load that we can hardly move with it towards the Infinite. The lighter the burden, the easier and more comfortable will be the journey.

The spiritual quest and knowledge of the Absolute run parallel. The higher we rise in spirituality, the nearer we approach God. All the advanced Yogins feel a strong upward attraction during meditation. There is a reciprocity of attraction between the meditator and the meditated. God attracts us upward with that amount of love which we grow in us for Him. "We are complete in Godhead"—said St. Augustine. When completion is attained, the mutual attraction ceases. We then become God-like; so

who will then attract whom? To know God, knowledge is to melt in love, because it is love alone that can unite us with God. "If we desire to taste God in our own selves, we must pass beyond reason."—said *Ruysbroeck.* Truth can be revealed by only one who has created here on earth an intimacy with God through love and devotion. "I devoutly trust, O Lord, Thy inspiring dove will some day bring me glad tidings from above. I shall meet with Thee in heaven, O Lord, if I be united in spirit here on earth."—The Bible.

We live in the surface-life, the depth remaining unknown. Love is universal in the depth of our being. To taste divine love, therefore, we have to dive into the very core of our being. To have the beatific vision, a descent from the superficial to the inner Self is essential which demands an incessant struggle within for better and juster leading of life: 'Except a man be born anew, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'—said Christ. If a divine life is to be formed we must control speech and practise the right use of kind words,[1] our present must be based upon meekness, simplicity, goodness, purity and truth.

The easy way to love God is to love His creation. The Upaniṣads hold that we love others not for their sake but for the satisfaction of our own selves. Doing good to others, we do good to ourselves as we are not essentially separate from others. The same divine essence indwells every one. The knower of Self cannot but love others. "Each lives in the other and each is the other and two are made one in a

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1. "इये रसना वश कर, धर गरिवी वेश।
शीतल बुलि लिके चलो, सबहि तुम्हारा देश॥"

Tulsi Das says:

"बुलि बोल् अमूल्य ह्याय यो जाने बोल्।
बुलि एयसा बलिये—काटे अन्दर तौल॥"

transformation of love"—said St. John. In the isolated life of self love is selfish; in an universal life love is truth that apprehends Reality. So always pray unto God: "Let me O' kind Lord, be friendly to others and free from hatred and jealousy[1]. Let my mind and heart be united with others"[2].

"He who realises his own Self in all Creation and all creation in his own self does not hate anyone; for with this feeling all his illusions and sins are destroyed. What is illusion and what is sorrow to the person who has the knowledge 'The Soul is verily the creation ?'—The *Iśopaniṣad*, 6-7. "The contented man who realises himself in all things and beings in creation and who has no sorrow, unhappiness, greed or desire achieves Supreme devotion towards Me. Knowing My true Self through *bhakti*, verily that devotee finally enters Me[3]."—this has been declared by Lord Krishna in the Gita, XVIII. 55.

"Know thyself first"—enjoin our Upaniṣads. Brahman is Ātman; so the knowledge of Self is knowing God. Of all the worldly possessions that have been graciously bestowed upon us, Soul is the most valuable. Everything, sentient and insentient of the world is permeated by His living presence. Even the finite pleasures that we enjoy in life have momentary touches of the Infinite. God is revealed in the finite; when we realise Him in the finite, God is apprehended. So the Upaniṣads declare: "He who sees God in everything and everything in himself is a true Seer". He who finds the will of God in all the activities of the world attains calmness. Having experienced his oneness with all, the Ṛṣi enters into

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1. "सहृदयं सांमनस्यमविद्वेषं कृणोमि वः।"
2. "अहं ग्रभणामि मनसा मनांसि मम चित्तमनुचितेभिरेत।"
3. "ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम्।"

the life of the universe and becomes united with the universal Soul. Knowing the one essence manifested in a multiplicity of forms, he attains abiding joy and peace. God is All-peace, love and bliss. He is known by pure joy and love of a peaceful heart. "Personal love" says Heartman : "touches, like a soft light, the primal source of spiritual life and it raises the spiritual source into pure consciousness. A life of love is a life spent in the knowledge of what is best worth knowing, a life of participation in the highest that is in man." The highest love i.e., the love for the Absolute does not grow all on a sudden ; it has to pass through different stages. A beautiful person attracts our admiration and we begin to love him. But the outward beauty cannot keep our mind enthralled long ; it turns towards a beautiful soul and ultimately his love is shifted to the supreme beauty of the All-Beautiful. This is the way of Platonic love which gets intensified by degrees and rises from terrestrial to celestial, from material to the spiritual level. "God did not deprive thee of co-operation of His love, but thou didst deprive His love of thy co-operation. God would never have rejected thee, if thou hadst not rejected Him."—regretted St. Francis. "Pure Love" says Ruysbroeck "frees a man from himself and his acts." The love for beautiful object is born with us and is spontaneous in our nature. We are prone to love, as sun is to shine, river to flow and the apple to fall on the earth. Without love, our life would be a barren desert, lonely and miserable. When we cannot but love, it is desirable to love one who is eternal and the Most Beautiful.

A devotee passes through the following three graduated stages : (1) *I am Thine* ; (2) *Thou art mine and* (3) *I am He.* In the first stage the *Sādhak* surrenders himself completely to his Lord and becomes free from fear and anxiety : *Abhayaṃ Sarvabhutevyo dadāmyetadbrataṃ mama.* His sense of ego is lost and his attention is drawn to the second

stage when the *Sādhak* thinks himself a servant of God. Jiva-consciousness in this stage tends to unite with universal consciousness. Jiva-mind is a fragment of the Universal Mind. During deep meditation mind dissolves into witnessing Soul. *Sādhanā* comes to an end when the *Sādhak* reaches the third stage and in its culmination he declares : '*Soham*— I am He'. At this highest stage the dualism is blotted out, the universe is extinguished and nothing remains but existence. It is the final union with Brahman. *Hanuman* said : "As a jiva I am a divine fragment, in physical aspect I am His servant and in the eye of true knowledgs I am He'. Racejac, the Western mystic, observes : "In its early stage, mystic consciousness feels the Absolute in opposition to the self. As mystic activity goes on, it tends to abolish the opposition. When it has reached its turn, the consciousness finds itself possessed by the sense of a Being at one and the same time greater than the self and identical with it, great enough to be God and intimate enough to be I. In this condition of consciousness all barriers are obliterated, the Absolute flows in on us and we rush out to His embrace." Give Him a power-of-attorney, dedicate all actions to Him and detach yourself from the world.

The eight-fold practices that remove the impurities of mind born of Avidyā and pave the way to God communion are as follows : (1) Right views, (2) Right livelihood, (3) Right effort, (4) Right speech, (5) Right conduct, (6) Right aspiration, (7) Right mindfulness and (8) Right rapture. Buddha holds that if these are faithfully followed, new powers arise in Yogin and new light shines through him ; he acquires a spotless eye of truth. With the destruction of ne-science true knowledge dawns and if the devotee finally dedicates the knowledge, thus acquired, to God he becomes accomplished. God takes upon ownself all the responsibilities of such an accomplished devotee. The *Sādhak* reaches the source

of all attainments ; he has no duty to perform here or hereafter. A truly wise Yogin is identical with God : "*Jnāni tātmaiva me matam*"—said Krishna in the Gita, VII, 18. The knower of Brahman is Brahman Himself : "*Brahmaveda Brahmaiva bhabati*".—States *Mu. Up*, III. 2. 9.

As a matter of fact, an accomplished saint is he whose heart melts with pity when he finds anyone in distress. Addressing Iśvara Chaddra Vidyasagar, Śri Ram Krishna once said : "Who else but you can be more accomplished ? You are the perfect symbol of love, kindness and renunciation". Vidyāsāgar possessed the heart of an affectionate mother. Rich men there are many but a kind heart is very rare.

It is not the power of understanding but implicit faith, reverence and simplicity of heart that apprehend God. Pedantry is unpleasant like the sound of drum which is agreeable only when it is stopped. "The books are knots. O Mother ! Cast hell-fire on my power of reasoning."—supplicated Śri Ramkrishna. In a gathering where a chapter from the Gita was being recited, a man was found shedding tears of joy. Śri Chaitannya Deva enquired of him whether he had understood the inner significance of the recitation. The man replied : "I grasp little of the recitation but I see before me the chariot of *Arjuna* inside which the Lord *Krishna* and *Arjuna* are talking !"

Mind is at rest when it is not agitated by the waves of passion and occupied by worldly thoughts. Entire mental faculty can be divided into two parts—functioning and functionless. If by the practice of Yoga we can isolate the latter from the former and abide by the functionless part of mind we are automatically raised to the higher plane of consciousness.

The wise mind, freed from all impurities and at rest is identical with pure intellect ; consciousness at this stage is truly divine and it is no longer jiva-consciousness. When

jiva-consciousness is carried to the *Sahasrāra* (Medulla oblongata) it is fully transformed into Soul-consciousness. In a state of consciousness higher than the normal it is perceived that a stream of celestial light and peace is descending from above within the receptacle and possessing our whole being. This peace and light is nothing but the divine grace showered by God upon His devotee. To receive His grace cordially we must relax each and every limb of the body and open our heart wide enough. The purer the body and mind and the more pervasive is the consciousness, the more is the receptive capacity of the receptacle. A perception of a vast ocean of peace taking possession of the being is a mile-stone on the path of spiritual progress. When Jiva-consciousness comes in contact with divine consciousness descended from above it is itself transformed and the whole being of the Yogin appears to be gradually sinking into a vast ocean of profound peace and blissful tranquillity. Divine consciousness when descends, permeates, perfumes and transforms mental consciousness, the latter unfolds itself towards a higher and vaster field of consciousness. Jiva-consciousness when becomes possessed and assimilated by supramental consciousness, the Yogin, acquiring the power of clairvoyance, can then gaze up and down the different planes of consciousness. His consciousness at this plane assumes the status of a witnessing Soul and it beholds everything in creation and beyond that. We must not be anxious for a quick response—it will take time because an all-round transformation of nature is not possible within a month or two.

Consciousness generally concentrates inside the brain, heart and navel. Heart is the seat of mind, feeling and senses. Consciousness is free from the shackles of body and mind when it is wholly concentrated at *Sahasrāra*. Consciousness of the lower centres can be carried to *Sahasrāra* by the practice of *Yoga*. *Sahasrāra* is the highest centre of

consciousness which is situate below the crown of the head and its region extends even above it. *Mulādhāra* is the lowest centre of jiva-consciousness. Below this circle is the region of the unconscious mind and the latter extends also below the human body. The regions of supramental consciousness and unconciousness are vertically opposite to each other. The seat of supramental consciousness lies between the heart centre or the cardiac plexus and cerebrum and above that; whereas the plane of sub-conscious mind is situate between that of unconscious mind and *prāṇa*. For an all-round divine transformation of our being higher light and consciousness must descend even into sub-conscious and unconscious portions and be allowed to work there freely. With the descent of higher consciousness within the human receptacle the material part of the body and the region below it are made conscious and get illuminated. Human mind, being of material origin and unaccustomed with such supernatural phenomenon cannot stand to it and so gets tired soon. Mind is related to the material body whose basis is *Tamas* or inertness. Inertia is the very nature of matter. So body and mind feel uneasiness and get tired soon when higher light descends within. But it creates no untoward effects if consciousness descends in the form of peace and purity. Higher power may be evoked to come down within the receptacle only by the advanced Yogins; it is not safe for others. Meditation is the only means to overcome such mental uneasiness and inertness. This will pacify mind and make it more receptive. When the mind and *prāṇa* are not much elevated some peculiar traits of their inborn nature by way of ignorance and inertia hinder the progress of *Sādhanā*. The descent of higher power and consciousness from above within the human receptacle and acquirement of power to bear their surge are essential to remove these obstacles from the Yogic path. The practice of Yoga does not only aim at mergence of *jiva*-consciousness in

divine consciousness but a thorough transformation of the material portion of our being is also aimed at.

During *Savikalpa Samādhi* or conscious ecstasy, ego clings, though very feebly, to thoughts of the inner world and a faint shadow of ideas linger in the obscure depths of being. Yogin is on the verge of *Savikalpa Samādhi* when all other thoughts are banished from the mental field and only the single thought of God flows in one direction. With the cessation of this thought-current as well, Yogin enters into *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* and *Jivātman* precipitates itself beyond realm of the conditioned. What remains at this transcendental state of consciousness is infinite existence, boundless joy and all-pervasive consciousness. In this highest state of supreme ecstasy Yogin may merge his being in Brahman or remain in *Bhāba-mukha*, lost in *Samādhi* when the world is blotted out, sense of dualism lost and the solitary Soul floated in an ocean of eternal bliss which is *Satchidānandaṃ*.

The Vedantines speak of seven spiritual planes ranging from *Mulādhāra* to *Sahasrāra* and perceptions from higher planes differ from that of the lower. The activity of the mind is limited within the three lower spheres of enjoyment viz: *Mulādhāra*, *Sāddhisthāna* and *Manipur*. Through the power of Yoga, when jiva-consciousness rises to the fourth circle or the heart-centre, worldly attachment ceases. The Yogin becomes wedded to God and can speak nothing but of God when his consciousness reaches *Viśuddhā-Chakra* or the throat-centre which is the fifth circle of consciousness within the human body. Consciousness reaching the *Ājnā-Chakra* or the sixth circle drowns the Yogin in a drunken ecstasy and self-realisation follows. There is a transparent screen, as of glass, between this sixth and the highest centre of consciounsness at *Sahasrāra* inside the brain. That screen is the last barrier obstructing the final union of Yogin with the Brahman. Śri Śri Ram Krishna Deva said that in this

condition a Yogin lost in *Nirvikalpā Samādhi* survives only for twenty-one days. When the last barrier falls the Yogin ascends to the seventh sphere and merges in the Brahman. *Kathiābābā*, a great Yogin, used to say that in the fourth plane, *Jiva* becomes averse to worldly enjoyment and turns towards God ; a deep attachment to *Guru* and pilgrimage develops in the aspirant. In the fifth plane, a spirit of inquisitiveness to know the Creator and the Regulator occupies the devotee's mind. In the sixth sphere the Yogin realises his oneness with Brahman. When he enters into the seventh and the highest plane *Sahasrāra* his individual existence is lost into the unique existence which is one without a second to be unique itself.

All the motions end in one static existence which gives rise to each motion and controls its movements. The same *S'iva* is on His move as *S'akti* (energy) in creation. The movement of the world-process is a play of *S'iva* and *S'akti*. Dissolution and creation are the two plays of the same energy, *S'akti* of *S'iva*. According to the *Tāntrik Sādhanā*, *Laya* or the Yoga of mergence in *Param-S'iva* is the highest and the happiest termination of human existence. *Kundalini S'akti* which is the creative power of *S'iva* leads *Jivātman* to the higher centres of consciousness through the *Suṣumnā* canal and ultimately *Jivātman* is merged in *Param-S'iva*—the Supreme Being at *Saharsrār*.

It is stated in the *S'rimad Bhāgavad* that *Mahārajā Pṛthu*, before leaving his physical body, firmly united *Jivātman* with *Paramātman* (IV, 23. 13). First of all he pressed the rectum with the heels of his leg, carried air from *Mulādhāra* to *Manipur* circle at navel and thence he raised the same to the heart-centre called *Anāhata Chakra*. Then from this cardiac plexus he drew up the air to the throat centre, the *Viśuddha*, and then closing seven apertures of the body—ears, nose etc. he carried it to the *Ājnā Chakra* or the sixth centre

of consciousness which is situate between the two eye-brows. He placed at last the same vital air at *Sahasrāra*. Finally, he left the physical body through Brahma-Randhra, an aperture supposed to be at the the crown of the head. The air within the body was united with air outside, physical elements with earth, heat and splendour with divine lustre (*Bhā*, IV. 23. 14-15) : Watery substance of the material body was absorbed in water, earth element was merged in water, water in splendour, the principle of splendour in the air and air in ether. He steadied mind in senses, fixed the latter to the *Tanmātras*, their cause. Then the *Tanmātras* were merged in the ego and ago in *Mahat-tattva*, the Cosmic Self, (*Bhā*, IV. 23. 16-17). After the mergence of *Mahat-Tattva* in Nature, *Pṛthu* entered into subtle body and gave up the name and attributes of a *Jiva* (*Bhā*, IV. 23. 18).

"It is through the heightening of our consciousness into love and extending it all over the world that we can attain *Brahma-Vihāra*, communion with the infinite joy"—observed Rabindranath in his 'The Religion of Man', P. 107. The presence of divine consciousness in all creates a feeling of unity with the Universal Soul. To reach the Universal Spirit, therefore, we have to meditate upon this essence indwelling us which is of the nature of pure light. Meditate on this light. Just as a particular type of impressions of the past floats up in memory from the sub-conscious depth owing to the over-activity of surface-mind in the field of thought, capable of producing similar types of impressions, in the same way by constant meditation of pure light, pure consciousness may be made to float up. Purity and pure consciousness is within us but they are now hidden from our views in consequence of the influence of *māyā*. By the dawn of true knowledge when the veil of *māyā* is torn asunder pure consciousness dawns. In some auspicious moment the sub-conscious plane may send forth above the vibration of

pure consciousness revealing our true nature. You may start by concentrating your mind on a flame of light as if burning within your heart or fixing your mind on a luminous figure there. By such practice the *Jyoti* or the light of pure consciousness underlying the sub-conscious plane will get excited and try to come out of its obscurity and make its way through the *Suṣumnā* canal. "The way to ascend God" says St. Victor Hugo "is to descend into oneself".

"Let him that thirsts to see God clean his mirror, let him make his own spirit bright."—observes Richard of St. Victor. Upaniṣads enjoin that to reach the inner Self it is essential to shut the doors and windows of our mind and senses. Constant meditation and ecstatic musing lead to the indeterminate ecstacy or *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*. When the mind is concentrated upon subtler and subtler objects, it finally passes into nothing and mind becomes *S'unya*—vacant. Thus rising above mental plane, the devotee is carried to the realm of pure consciouenss which is potentially and essentially his inner Self. *Bṛhad Upaniṣad* says in verse I. 4. 15: "Let a man worship the Self only as his true state" and in verse I. 4. 7: "Let a man worship Him as Self." "He who knows this eternal Being, becomes Brahman himself"—says *Muṇdak Up.* Verse III. 2. 9. From all these *S'āstric* injunctions and the sayings of the saints and seers, it is followed that the object of our worship and meditation is our true Self which is of the nature of pure consciousness and light.

Mode of Yoga Practice:—A devotee should completely detach himself from the external world before he enters into the Prayer Chamber. He should feel that outside the chamber there is no work waiting for him, no attraction of any kind, no religious duty, not even emancipation. No one, no relation or friend, no business indeed, no thought of any kind should be there to disturb and distract his mind.

You come to the prayer room with only one object which is emancipation. In this way, the devotee should cut off his connection with the external world. The descriptions of *Siddhāsana* and *Padmāsana* have been given in detail in the chapter on seats and postures (Vide P. 771). Make yourself familiar with them while practising yoga. *Siddhāsana* yields success in *yoga*. The Yogin should sit in this posture and go through practices. It is necessary that he should practise *Prāṇāyāma* for fifteen minutes in order to calm down the natural fickleness of body and mind. *Prāṇāyāma* removes physical and mental lethargy and restores them to their normal healthy condition. The head should be inclined a little to the left so that the breath may be taken in and given out by the right nostril, i. e., through the *Piṇgalā Nāḍi*. The *Piṇgalā* is active on the path of detachment. Hence, when any one breathes through the right nostril he experiences an increase in the feeling of detachment or aloofness from the world. A mind which is free from restlessness of desire is a steady mind. This is the condition of detachment which is marked by tranquillity and peacefulness and is very favourable to the practice of meditation[1].

Before the break of dawn the act of respiration is generally carried out through *Suṣumnā Nāḍi* ; so *Brāmha-muhurtā* or the period before dawn is the best time for Yoga-practices and meditation. While practising meditation the devotee should not yield to the pleasurable attractions of sleep, thoughts of worldly enjoyments, worldly conversations, various sensations of pleasure and vacant feeling of forgetfulness but should devote himself to steady practice in the pursuit of his object[2]. Withdraw your sense-organs from

1. "अवासनं स्थिरं प्रोक्तं मनोध्यानं तदेव च।
तदेव केवलीभावः शान्ततैव च तत् सदा॥"
2. "निद्राया लौकवार्त्तायाः शब्दादेरात्मविस्मृतेः।
क्वचिद् नावसरं दत्त्वा चिन्तयात्मानमात्मनि॥"

the external world and keep them steady in the inner world of consciousness like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs into the body—the mind then remains steady like the unflickering flame of a candle in a closed room where there is no access of air-current from outside. In this condition of mind it is gradually withdrawn and merged in intelligence, intelligence in life-energy and life-energy in Soul.

The abandonment of all sorts of desire, good or bad, constitutes internal withdrawal. Cherish this belief in the heart of your hearts that all this universe is floating in the consciousness of your own Self. *Dhyāna*, *Dhāraṇā* and *Samādhi*—these three make up *Saṃyama* or concentration. So long as the life-energy is not withdrawn along with mind in the sixth centre (*Ājnā-chakra*), the notion of duality prevails but as soon as they reach the sixth centre, perfect one-ness between *Puruṣa* and *Prakriti*, *Jiva* and *Brahman*, *Ātman* and Paramātman is established.

Sit erect in the posture of *Siddhāsana* or *Padmāsana* (See Page 771) and press the two thumbs against the two orifices of the two ears and place the tips of the fore-fingers between the two eyes and practice *Kumbhaka* in the that posture and fix your steady gaze on the the sixth centre (*Ājnā-chakra*), the latent power of *Kundalni* will be awakened and as an indication of it tremulous flames shining with the lustre of lightning will become visible.

Mind and life-energy are so closely related to each other that they are always found linked together. With the steadiness and concentration of mind, life-energy also becomes steady and with the steadiness of the life-energy, strength and vigour are maintained.

When the life-energy is withheld in *Brahma-Nāḍi*, the external flow of breath stops and the vacant condition of the merging of breath is produced and mind and life-energy merge in *Jyoti*. There are two conditions within the body,—

Dynamic and static. The dynamic condition is the condition of activity while the static is that of rest. There are two pauses in the act of breathing, (1) between inspiration and expiration and (2) between expiration and inspiration. If the mind be made steady at these two momentary pauses, we can discover the resting place of life-energy also. We can then make the life-energy steady and merge it in the Soul and produce the condition of *Samādhi* by doing so. *Kundalini* remains inactive during the two pauses. The sleeping *Kundalini* wakes up when we become aware of them.

The duration of the pauses is lengthened by the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* and *Kundalini* gives up its coiled form and enters into the passage of *Suṣumnā* as a snake does when hit with a piece of stone. A very long pause in the act of breathing is Kumbhaka. Mental waves crop up one after another due to the accumulated impressions of the past. Between the rise and fall of a thought-wave there is a small pause or break. If mind is suppressed during this short interval by the practice *Prāṇāyāma* both the impressions and mental functions become inoperative. By its repeated practice even *Āsmi* or the thought of *I exist* evaporates and at this stage only a fai, ı sense of distinction as between light and its shade persists between jiva and the Brahman. In a still higher stage of *Samādhi* this separateness is dissolved and the Yogin is established in his unitary position as the Brahman.

When *Kundalini* wakes up, the awakening of *Chit* or consciousness is felt in the central canal of *Suṣumnā*. As the *Kundalini* proceeds higher and higher and from centre to centre and reaches the sixth centre (*Ājnā-Chakra*), the Yogin realises his own unity with the consciousness of his adorable deity. His sense organs become more and more inactive as *Kundalini* rises higher and higher along the central canal. The dynamic forces within the body give up their dynamic nature and become static.

By such practice what is known as *Hathayoga* one can acquire wonderful powers and give interesting exhibitions of the same as a gymnast can of his physical powers. Through *Hathayoga* only the physical laws are controlled. If a yogin, in addition to the acquisition of such powers, can realise the truth about *Ātman* and *Paramātman* then the term Yogin can be really applied to him in its full singificance.

"*Āvṛttachakṣuramṛtattvamichhan*"—says *Kathopaniṣad*. So seekers of immortality should close their eyes to cut off connection with the external world. Any one who does not do so, i.e., does not close the external eye, cannot aspire after awakening the internal eye. Now, then, close your eyes, sit in your prayer chamber and ardently pray to God for success in *Yoga*. Just think that you are seated immediatey before twilight on the bank of a holy river with the boundless sky above, the volumes of water rolling down at your feet and the crimson colour of the setting sun playing on the bosom of the river. Fix your attention on this charming scene of evening and concentrate within ; or imagine that the glorious full moon is shining in the clear cloudless sky, her cool and soothing silvery rays have filled the sky, flooded the earth and made the sheets of water sparkle with reflection and flow like a stream of molten silver before you. Enjoy the fascinating scene with undivided attention. Simultaneously with this, think of the grace and greatness of the Lord and offer your prayer and devotion to him. Gradually, you become so absorbed in meditation that you will lose all consciousness of self and surroundings. You will forget that you have got a body with two hands, two legs etc. and feel as if all your limbs and senses have deserted you and disappeared beyond the farthest end of this world.

Close your eyes for a moment, and imagine a picture in your mind : Under the blue canopy of *Brindāban*, the cow-herd boys of the place have been tending cattle at the pasture

lands. Out of his unbounded love for man, the Lord took the form of a human being and has been playing pranks with the said cow-herd boys. Imagine further that your heart is the said pasture land of *Brindāban*. Look at the Lord playing pranks with the simple boys. Enjoy this sacred scene Your mind will be composed ; the quaking of your heart will come to an end and you will be transported with heavenly ecstasy.

You should meditate on the formless Supreme Being with your consciousness rivetted on *Sahasrāra* and along with it imagine, as if the whole earth were merging into water, water into fire, fire into air, air in ether, ether in ego, ego in *Mahat-Tattva*, *Mahat-Tattva* in nature and nature in Brahman. Thus when the entire creation is obliterated everything will seem to be vacant. At that very moment the light of intuition will dawn and the mystery of the world beyond will be revealed in your inner vision.

I have observed from my own experience that it is easier and more comfortable to concentrate the consciousness upon the crown of the head in the air outside the body than to hold it fixed on the *Ājnā-chakra* (cerebellum) or on any other plexus in the body. Since the limits of our body and the plexuses inside the *Suṣumnā* are not accustomed to the new kind of Yogic perceptions, they generate, in the beginning, a kind of local and uncomfortable reaction because of which there appears agitation of mind in the Yogin very soon ; as a result, concentration is lost. Therefore, I suggest that those who will feel it painful to concentrate the consciousness on any part of the body may fix it on the dazzling figure of some god or goddess, dear to them, in the air over the head ; this will remove the cause of the bodily agitation. So long as the entity of our consciousness shall be agitated by the principles of body, life and mind, it is futile to hope for the attainment of the state of a calm and real ecstasy. To remove this agitation the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* proves beneficial.

Purity of intellect, firmness of will, unflinching faith and keen aspiration for God remove all obstacles in the path of Yoga. The purer the heart, the sharper the intellect and the keener the aspiration, the more comprehensive is your consciousness. That apprehending consciousness will then help establishing connection with the transcendental consciousness. Thus the limited consciousness of the individual assumes the form of the limitless consciousness of the Supreme Soul. Our material body, mind and heart gradually become so placid by bathing in the divine light due to the grace of a higher power descended within by the practice of Yoga that nothing in the external world can then agitate them—just as a flock of birds flying across the heart of the sky, placid and windless and fishes swimming under water do not leave behind a single trace on the surface of the air or water. In the midst of this placid silence you will be able to hear the voice of silence and discover the finer worlds beyond this material creation : You will attain the supernatural powers of distant-sight, distant-hearing, subtlety of perception and unique divinity.

Miss Underhill in her 'Mysticism' P. 69 says : "The concentration of a burnished pewter dish and of running water induced ecstasy in Jacob Boehme and Ignatius Loyla." Concentration at the vessel brings ease and full relaxation of the whole body and a sudden flash of white light is seen. The light lingers so long as the concentration lasts. Open your mouth wide in front of a looking glass and mark the appearance and colour of the region between the palate and the gullet. When you think that yon are in a position to picture the same in your mind, even without the looking glass, sit down in Yogic posture, close your eyes and carry your consciousness to the spot mentioned above. Just think that you are looking at the region round the soft palate. Stretch your gaze up to the gullet. When your consciousness is

firmly concentrated at the spot and you see nothing else but the region, the sense of other parts of the body will disappear and a sky of white light will flash before your inward eye.

Invoke and attract with the singleness of mind the halo and power above to descend in your ownself and establish it within your own heart or merge your own consciousness into that higher consciousness and light descended from above—your personal consciousness will then be lost in a vast—impersonal silence ; you will enter the state of *Samādhi* (ecstasy). Open your heart fully so that the divine power may enter it unperturbed and that this abode of Brahman may truly be the seat of God. It is this divine power so established, that will bring about complete metamorphosis in your body, mind and heart. Go on watching silently—merely as a witness how that power works and you will see that it is this power which by filling the human receptacle with its own being and consciousness will finally convert it into true house of God. With complete self-surrender and continuous self-dedication all obstacles in the path of Yoga will disappear. Extend your own consciousness into Eternity, allow it to manifest itself peacefully with all its fruition and you will be well-established in the supramental level by crossing the mental plane.

Articulate speech is capable of being heard ; after audition it is to be reflected upon analytically, after reflection it is to be meditated upon : this may be designated as *Nididhyāsana*—the meditation of wisdom ; this is the third part of articulate speech and is designated *Paśyanti Vāk* —the seeing word of the Upaniṣads. Just as the transcendental state *Turiya* follows the awakened, dreaming and sleeping states, so also transcendental speech follows *Vaikhari*, *Madhyamā* and *Paśyanti Vāk*.

Just as there is a second half-syllable occurring even after the sounds *A*, *U* and *M* giving the half-syllable of *Praṇava* (the

sound designated *OM*), similarly, there exists beyond ordinary speech the Transcendental Speech. In meditating upon and in realising the significance of this Transcendental Speech the mind of the devotee is merged in it when the state of emotional ecstasy appears and the devotee can visualise Self and realise Truth. One fourth of the Brahman has been manifested in Creation and the other three-fourths are transcendental. The transcendental being of Brahman is beyond the reach of mind and intellect; in the state of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, the *Turiya* or transcendental being of Brahman is realised. His transcendental being cannot be described with the kinds of speech designated *Vaikhari*, *Madhyamā* and *Paśyanti* and so it is not within the reach of knowledge. The Buddhists call this state *S'unyā* or Void. The state we reach by repeating 'Not this, Not this' found in the *Nyāaśāstra* (Indian Logic) is also a Great Void. Therefore, the Brahman of the Hindus and *S'unya* or the Void of the Buddhists are identical. When in the ecstasy (*Samādhi*) designated *Laya-yoga* the entire sense-manifold disappears and only the Void is left then in that Vast Void is manifested the presence of Brahman. The *S'unya* is the *Purṇa* itself, the Void is Fullness (Bṛ. Ār. Up. V. 1. 1). If we can transcend the influence of this Quarter we shall be able to reach the other three Quarters and attain full knowledge of Brahman; that which is part shall attain the whole. So it is stated in the Tantras: "*Kalāpurṇa Kalāchāṃśa Anuchāṃśacharāchare*". It is that which is void is full. That which is called void is immeasurable. Therefore, the fruition of *Nirvāṇa* is not total annihilation but is perfect Fullness and Bliss. (*Sukha-baggo, 8*).

Mystic consciousness which is the way to mystic union is produced by *Arupa-dhyāna* or meditation of the formless. During such meditation the meditator is not required to try to visualise anything but that he is required to believe in

the existence of God who pervades everywhere, within and without and remember his glory in the very core of his heart. A devoted and faithful heart leads to God. William James in his "The Varieties of Religious Experience" P. 381, observes : ' When mystic consciousness once sets in, the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power."

Yoga means conjunction of God's knowledge, love and power with those of Yogin. God-head, though formless, is realised in the eye of wisdom as *Satchidānandam*. Just as we can experience pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, love and hatred, though these are formless, so also we can realise Brahman Who is invisible and intangible. Since there are material eyes to see material objects, similarly, there should be a spiritual eye in man to realise the spiritual truth. This spiritual eye is intuition of pure consciousness. Two persons entering into a dark room cannot see each other, though they feel each other's presence. Similarly, we need not try to visualise or think of anything during meditation on formless Brahman. Believing in His existence let us repeat mentally : O Brahman, Thou exist, Thou exist, Thou exist." Along with the incantation let us offer Him an unflinching faith, love, devotion and reverence outpouring our heart. His presence is sure to be felt as the appearance of the morning sun which rises repelling the darkness of night. You will realise His existence even in the minutest particles of creation. A true devotee enjoys Brahman through each act, word and thought. God whispers to the devotee and the latter acquires a prophetic vision. Such *Pratyādeśa* or supernatural instructions come not through ears but are intuited to the *Ātman*.

While engaged in meditation, just think that a colossal column of light stands from the earth to the world of the

Absolute Brahman ; that column penetrates the subtle worlds and extends up to the world of the Absolute Brahman. When by continued practice this becomes clear, distinct and fixed, your inner being will be merged in the effulgence of that pure light and the entire Universe, mobile and immobile and the subtle worlds too will disappear from your view.

The All-pervading universal *Chit* or consciousness is *Iśvara*. Universal consciousness extending over all beings from great Brahman to a mere blade of grass is represented by a column of celestial light—a remarkable illustration of Aryan wisdom. The Yogins of a higher order visualise it inside the canal of *Suṣumnā* in the form of a column of light extending from the *Mulādhāra* to the *Sahasrāra* and beyond that. Now, merge your individual consciousness into this celestial light and carry it aloft.

The seed of spirituality does not germinate unless the pride of finite consciousness dies out ; a seedling does not sprout unless the seed itself is destroyed. Ātman reveals only when *Avidyā* is removed, because the latter hides the former and perpetuate individuation. The hour for salvation draws in when a single moment is not lost without taking His name in every breath ; it is Ajapā Japam. They are the sons of Immortality—Amṛtasya Putrāḥ whose lips always chant the name of God.

The highest sentiment of love is awakened by constant meditation on God and repetition of His holy name day in and night out without any break. Yoga or union is complete when knowledge, love, power and consciousness of God enter into the receptacle of the Yogin. Since human knowledge can determine the position of stars and planets in the sky, nothing remains unknown to a Yogin if wisdom of God is added unto him.

So long as your renouncement is not complete and so long as attachment and worldly desires lurk within even in

the minute form, you cannot be blessed with knowledge of Self and revelation of the Supreme light. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God".—said Jesus. (Vide Luke. 9. 62.) Elsewhere he said : "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?"—Jesus : Math. 16. 26. *Paramahansa Deva* used to say, "Renouncement is essential. If any valuable article be concealed under a heap of rubbish, the rubbish must be removed in order to recover it ; it can be expected that in the act of searching for it all the dirty rubbish should be carefully examined so that the search may be crowned with success." All idea about the body and its needs must disappear before the knowledge of Self can be realised We cannot devote our attention simultaneously to two things which are diagonally opposite to each other. According to the *Bhāgavad*, IV. 23. 12, so long mind is not attracted to Lord's name, it cannot be indifferent even to the attainments resulting from Yoga-practice. Moreover, existence is not two-fold or manifold but *One* only. Knowledge of Self follows only when the knowledge of the world has been entirely obliterated and personal existence—the separate individuality is lost in the one Existence.

"If the soul were stripped of all her sheaths, God would be discovered all naked before her view and would give Himself to her, withholding nothing. As long as the soul has not thrown off all her veils, however thin, she is unable to see God[1]"—*Echart.* The Vedantines reject everything as dross and regard Soul as the only Reality[2].

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1. "यावद् सर्व्वं न सन्त्यक्तं तावदात्मा न लभ्यते ।
सर्व्ववस्तु परित्यागी शेष आत्मेति कथ्यते ॥"—Echoes *Mahanirvān.*
2. "सर्व्वं सत्त्वं परं ब्रह्म न चान्यदिति या मतिः ।
तच्च सत्यं वरं प्रोक्तं वेदान्तज्ञानपारगैः ॥"

Paramātman reveals Himself before you and take you in His arms when your renouncement has become complete, detachment perfect, the self freed from all adjuncts and the subtle covers destroyed. "Naked follows the naked Christ". When Enoch, a saint entered into the heavenly kingdom after death, Lord said unto Michael, "Remove his earthly garments and clothe him in glorious garments"—*The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*, P. 206.

If the connection between the Soul and the bodies, subtle or gross, physical or mental be severed by the practice of Yoga, if the subtle covers within be destroyed, union between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul will take place. This removal of covers is suggested in the episode of Krishna stealing away the garments of the *Gopinis* on the bank of the *Yamunā*. An ardent desire for the removal of covers has been expressed by *Sādhu Vāsvani* in his following prayer :

"And I shall at thy lotus feet,
Stripped, self emptied, naked sit—
To see the naked truth of Love
The love that steals and sanctifies,"—*Vāsvani*.

When the covers of an onion are peeled, one by one, we reach a stage when no more cover is left and the whole onion disappears, leaving its form in our memory and its existence in name only. Similarly, following the data *neti-neti* when all the qualifications and covers of the Soul have been removed, one by one, the unqualified, invisible and formless Soul alone survives. "So, if thou wilt be a spiritual pilgrim, thou shalt strip thyself naked of all thou hast."—says Hilton. This subtle *Ātman* becomes visible to the Yogin's internal eye in the form of a bright steady flame in the centre of the heart which has been identified with the fourth centre in yoga literature. Fix your attention on this bright and steady flame-like form and repeat the mantra "ॐ द ष त ॐ" again and

again. This *mantra* is infallible in its effect and it produces steadiness of mind. Repetition of this holy *mantra* causes forgetfulness of the external world and puts a stop to the train of ideas and thoughts which crowd in the mind. Thoughts and ideas have their origin in the experience of the external world and are never at rest and always ready to create disturbance in the mind. The Creator in creating the sense-organs made them turn outwards. That is why the *Jiva* (individual) is prone to see external objects; he does not turn to his inner Self. The wise, desiring liberation, turn their look away from the external world and fix it on the internal world and thus achieve Self-realisation[1]. It is very necessary, therefore, that a beginner should withdraw the mind from the external world. Withdraw, then your mind to the fourth centre or the sixth centre or to the *Sahasradala Kamala* and meditate on the meditative form of Lord *S'iva* or on a luminous form of any other adorable god or goddess dear to you, or on that of an adept or any great personality in whom you have great faith, attraction and reverence

The Yoga system looks upon *OM* as the bow, the individual soul as the arrow and the supreme Soul as the target. The *Guru* is *OM* and *OM* is the bow. The *Guru* helps his disciple with speedy progress and success in the attainment of his goal. The repetition and meditation of *OM* removes the accumulated coats of dirt on the gross, subtle and cause bodies and destroys the innert condition of the five sheaths and generates spiritual energy in the body. The notion of difference between *Jiva* and Brahman which

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1. "पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयम्भू-
स्तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मान्।
कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्ष-
दावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन्॥"—Katha Up. II. 1. 1.

is the result of ne-science (ignorance) should be hit hard by the arrow discharged from the bow. The arrow does not pierce Brahman for the simple reason that Brahman cannot be pierced. Unity of the individual soul and Supreme Soul becomes established when the cover of *Avidyā* is destroyed. It is then that we become lost in the soul-captivating beauty of the Supreme and attain absolute salvation.

Along with meditation the Yogin should repeat "*om haṃsaḥ.*" The utterance of the mantra *OM* rouses the latent energy of *Sahasradala.* The mantra 'Haṃ' stirs up the dormant condition of *Svādhisthāna, Monipur, Anāhata, Viśuddhā* and *Ājnā-chakra.* The *mantra 'Saḥ'* awakens the potential energy of *Kundalini* resting in *Mulādhāra.* The six centres are pierced through and through by this *mantra.* The whole creation sprang from *OM*; *OM* is not only the creator but the maintainer also of this universe. Since the evolution of the world began with the sound *OM* and the conscious and blissful flow of *OM* came down from the highest heaven to this material plane, it is clear that the journey back should also proceed along the same line i.e. by tracing back towards the centre. Spiritual practice with *OM* is the only way to cut off connection with the world and to move towards the goal. The *Gāyatri* is the rythmic vehicle of *OM* and fire is the presiding deity. This universe is the external form of *OM* and the practice of *OM* aims at unfolding this truth through the rythm of *Gāyatri. OM* can be analysed to A + U + M or অ + উ + ম. The first syllable *A* (অ) has the power to make the mind steady and ready for practice. The body and mind are naturally inclined towards the external objects of enjoyment and this external attraction is an obstacle to internal progress. The *mantra* like a seed requires an urge within for further development. *A* (অ) contains the urge in it. The sound *M* (ম) sustains the spiritual seed and the syllable *U* (উ) has the power to

remove all obstacles to the growth and lends power to progress. The holy syllable *OM* leads the Yogin to the fulfilment of his object and from day to day he makes a definite progress on the path of spirituality. After *OM* we pick up the sound *AU* (औ) and with the increase of mental restlessness we pass beyond it to *A* (अ) and then having gone beyond the vowel sounds we reach the sounds of consonants which end in *H* (ह). The vowel *A* (अ) is the last of the vowels read from the end and no consonant can be pronounced without its help[1]. Man may be said to belong to the plane of '*A*'. In consequence of increasing vibrations and unsteadiness of the mind when the plane of consonants under the plane of sound *A* (अ) is reached man becomes a lower animal and acts likewise With further increase of impressions and mental unsteadiness a *Jiva* takes the form of plants, trees and creepers. The *Guru's* place is in the plane of *U* (उ). The plane of *U* (उ) is marked by greater steadiness of mind, and hence with the decrease of mental activity, when we reach the plane of *AU* (औ) from *O* (ओ) mental function ceases altogether. This is the controlled state of a steady mind—the rest of human soul in 'OM' or its own Self. So long as the human mind is in the plane of *A* (अ) this world and worldly pleasures appear engrossingly attractive to him A fall from this stage i.e., reaching the plane of *U* makes the mind free and the notion of this world as a separate existence disappears.

With the decrease of mental activity the internal faculty becomes more alert but the world of sensation becomes blurred and hazy and gradually passes into oblivion. The increase of mental activity in other directions is an obstacle to concentration, for the mind becomes unsteady and hazy ;

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2. "अकारो वै सर्व्वावाक ॥—Śruti. Śri Krishna said :
"अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि"—of all the alphabet I represent *A* (अ).

so the clear perception and even the correct idea of the external world become almost impossible. The condition of an insane mind is an illustration to the point. An insane mind is the work-shop of a devil. Trains of contradictory thoughts and ideas crowd the mind without rest for a moment. We see neither any harmony nor any concord in them.

The obstacles, that still persists even after the pronouncement of *A* (অ) are all removed at the utterance of the next syllable *U* (উ) by the *Guru* of the place of *U* (উ) and then the utterance of *M* (ম) brings *Ānanda*—Bliss. In addition to the three parts of *OM* (*A*, *U* & *M*), there is still another portion which is the '*Nāda*' and '*Vindu*'—the Brahman limited and the unlimited. When a Yogin rises to the plane of '*Nāda*' and '*Vindu*' all his doubts disappear. A Yogin by the control of life-energy and mind rises to a plane where everything enjoys peace, calmness and tranquillity. When all the obstacles are removed the serene Soul freed from bondages becomes united with the Supreme. This is known as the highest elevation of the soul. This takes the Yogin to the other shore of the sea of births and deaths. Then comes the termination of all duties and the holy syllable *OM* is established within firmly leaving no scope of doubts.

The internal spiral structure of a conch must have been noticed by many. When the latent power of *Kundalini* is awakened by the practice of *Yoga*, it goes on mounting upwards in a spiral course within the central canal or *Suṣumnā*. When the first portion of the holy syllable *OM* i. e., "*A*" is uttered, the Yogin feels a circular motion inside. The utterance of the second portion i. e. "*U*" adds harmony to it and the utterance of the third portion i. e. *M* converts the circular motion into a kind of movement in accordance with the spiral pattern.

When by muttering *OM* with deep attention, the circular motion of the awakened energy within *Suṣumnā* is made to

assume a spiral pattern, the holy sound *OM* is heard within. A yogin then should try to change the circular motion of the awakened energy within him into a spiral motion so that it may move upwards and pass through the centres one by one till it reaches the highest.

The entire creation is divlded into two parts : Microcosmic (Subjective) and Macrocosmic (Objective). Subjective world is *Adhyātma* or spiritual. The objective world comprising the spheres of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the earth etc., is the material universe. The consciousness of *Prājna* and *Turiya* is related to the noumenal world while the consciousness of Jiva-mind is confined within the *Viśva* or the phenomenal universe. Microcosom is superimposed on *Ātman* or Brahman and Macrocosm on *Jivātman*.

The primordeal earth element is conceived to be yellow in colour, its shape is quadrangular, the mantra is Laṃ and the presiding deity is *Brahmā*. Meditate on it in the heart as such, suppressing the vital air inside for five hours. This Mudrā imparts knowledge of the essence of earth-principle which makes the knower invincible in the world. The conception of the principle of water is white, its shape is like that of half-moon, the seed mantra of it is *Baṃ* and the presiding deity is Lord *Viṣnu*. Meditate on it as before. The seat of the fire-principle is navel, its colour is red, shape triangular, seed-mantra *Raṃ* and the presiding deity is *Rudra* i.e., Śiva. Meditate on it as before and you will gain mastery over the fire-element. The principle of air is smoky, its seed mantra is *Yaṃ* and the presiding deity is *Iśvara*. Air-principle is full of *Sattva*. Meditate on it as before and its knowledge will enable you to fly in the air. The principle of ether or *Ākāśa* resembles the colour of pure sea-water ; its seed-mantra is *Haṃ* and the presiding deity is *Sadāśiva*. Meditate on it according to the process stated above. It will give you salvation. Meditation in all these cases is to be practised

in the state of *Kumbhaka* i.e., with vital air suppressed at heart-centre. The Tanmātric knowledge of five elements is attained in this way.

The mantras *Haṃ* (हं), *Yaṃ* (यं), *Baṃ* (बं), *Raṃ* (रं), *Laṃ* (लं) are essential *mantras* and represent the five subtle elements which exist in *Ākāśa* or sky of ether. The Yogin should, in course of his meditation, look upon the *mantra* as representing the element. OM, meditated as Earth, removes all obstacles which may arise from the body; meditated as water, it removes the unsteadiness of life-energy and mind. Meditated as Fire, it makes the organs friendly. Meditated as Wind, it wins the support of *Buddhi*. Meditated as etherial space in existence, it exercises such an influence on primal matter that a situation is created which is on all sides exceedingly favourable to the practice of Yoga. Success in meditation can be obtained by repetition of the holy *mantra* in one particular way, with deep attention and devotion. If attention be poor and the Yogin remains conscious of himself, the *mantra* and the practice which he is performing will produce no result. In the ultimate stage of repetition of the holy *mantra*, both name and form, should be excluded and the mind should be made to lose itself, as it were, in the meaning of the *mantra*. Repetition of the holy name produces a particular vibration and a particular sound which are transmitted to the mind-sheath of the Yogin. Then they pacify the agitated life-energy and the pacified life-energy merges in the Soul.

At this stage, the external organs become senseless, still and inactive i.e., almost dead. They become functionless altogether. When all the external and internal organs become like this, the state of *Samādhi* ensues. It is known to many that Lord *Tennyson* would attain the state of *Samādhi* and lose all external consciousness simply by muttering repeatedly his own name "*Tennyson*". The name of God and the God

bearing that name are identical ; indeed the name is *S'abda-Brahman* or the sound-form of God. The muttering of the same *mantra* repeated for a long time produces a sweet environment of sound, a cover of vibrations for both body and mind—a happy condition, in which all the senses tend to move towards one direction. This movement upwards rises higher and higher till it touches the Soul and then, by a pull from the Supreme Soul, it is attracted to the lotus centre of *Sahasradala*. The Lord is attracting you upwards—this is the secret at the bottom of the upwards attraction of your being which is felt by every Yogin given to the performance of *Yoga*. The Vaiṣṇavas give the name "*Hladini S'akti*" to this joyful attraction. "When the love of God arises in thy heart God also feels without doubt love for thee."—said *Rumi*. The love of God attracts the devotee towards Him and this explains the upward ascent of the devotee's body during the practice of *Yoga*.

There are three knots in the central canal of *Suṣumnā* (1) the first knot which is known as *Brahmagranthi*, is situated in *Mulādhār Chakra*, (2) the second knot which is known as *Viṣṇugranthi* is situated in *Anāhāta chakra* (the heart centre) and the third knot which is known as *Rudragranthi* is situated in *Viśuddhā* or *Kantha Chakra* (throat centre). If these three knots are not unloosened the passage of *Kundalini* upwards cannot be easy and free. The three knots can be unloosened and the passage opened by the practice of *Bhastrikā Kumbhaka*. I have spoken about *Bhastrikā Kumbhaka* in a previous chapter (Vide P. 802). When the functions of mind will be subdued, *Brahma-granthi* or the Knot of the mind between *Brahmā* and *Jiva* is unloosened and the individual soul becomes manifest in the sky of pure consciousness. The *Viṣṇu-granthi* or the tie between mind and Lord *Viṣṇu* is unloosened when the individual soul merges into the universal Soul and the Yogin at this stage

realises his own essence to be all-pervading. The Yogin pierces the *Rudra-granthi* or the knot between the mind and the Lord *Rudra* or *S'iva* when he ascends the highest step of spiritual realisation and feels the whole creation to be within his own Self. It is then that he is blessed with the beatific vision of the Supreme Lord.

A Yogin is to meditate upon the five Gods, *Brahmā. Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Iśvara* and *Sadāśiva* who preside respectively over earth, water, fire, air and ether in the five respective centres starting from *Mulādhāra* to *Viśuddhā Chakra.* Inside the *Anāhata* centre there is an eight-petalled lotus of various colours. In this eight-petalled lotus individual soul of the size of the thumb and of the shape of the flame, is ever-engaged in listening to the internal and incessant repetition of the holy *mantra OM* which is going on spontaneously. The Yogin should, by the practice of *Yoga,* carry the soul along with *Kundalini* to the *Viśuddhā* Centre and then concentrate it on the subtle plane of ether. The *mantra* or sound of this plane is *Haṃ* which is formless but of great brilliance. When the Yogin rises to the plane of *Ājnā-Chakra* or the sixth centre he meditates upon *OM* in the light of the Soul. The Yogin should concentrate upon *Ājnā-chakra* and repeat the *mantra—Haṃsaḥ* with deep attention. This will make the *Prāṇa* or the breath steady. At this stage, the *mantra—Haṃsaḥ,* read from the end, and thus converted into '*Soham*' will be spontaneously repeated in the *Suṣumnā* canal without anything like inspiration and expiration in the system.

The *Sahasradala* is situated above the sixth centre (*Ājnā-chakra*). There the thousand petalled lotus of the Centre is in a blooming condition but all its petals turned downwards. There meditate upon *S'unya Niranjana* or formless Brahman in the triangular area within the lotus. You will obtain knowledge of Brahman, and *Kundalini* along

with the individual soul will reach the centre of *Sahasradala*. The individual soul merges into *Param-S'iva* along with *Nirvāṇa-S'akti* and oneness between *Jiva* and *S'iva* is established.

Through the culture of *Yoga* when the hidden spiritual centres of the human body wake up and become kinetic they emanate various melodious and harmonious sounds characteristic of the respective centres. The sound *OM* that is heard in the *Sahasrāra* is the sound-form of *Para-Brahman*.

In *Sānanda Samādhi*, a Yogin experiences *Anāhata* sound of *OM* in the midst of a blissful tranquillity. *Anāhata* sound, as heard during the practice of *Nāda-Yoga*, is the sound of vibration of the unitary knowledge of *Ātman*. Ātman reveals itself when the Yogin is lost in the ocean of bliss resulting out of *Anāhata* sound-waves of *OM*. Even Creation does not start so long as *Mahāmāyā*, the Divine Mother, remains enthralled to the listening of this mystic sound of *Praṇava*.

Through the culture of *Yoga* or through the grace of a capable Yogin who has been successful in attaining the goal of life, when the third eye of a beginner is opened he beholds the celestial luminous form of *Para-Brahman* in the *Dvidala-chakra* (sixth centre) and *Chitrā Nāḍi*. The Yogin is blessed with vision of the divine form of bliss and love in the state of *Samādhi*. The ecstasy of celestial bliss which is experienced in *Samādhi* and the flood of eternal joy experienced in the bath of celestial light and bliss may be taken as the experience of *Brahman* Himself.

By the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* make your mind and vital air full of harmony and free from restlessness. Unite *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* by means of *Kevali Kumbhaka* and draw them inwards and upwards. At the time of repetition merge your existence in the holy name, in pure *Praṇava* or *Anāhata* sound *OM*. What is necessary for attaining a state of *Samādhi* is a straight unswerving singleness of purpose and

pursuit. Merged in this divine sound *OM* your existence will be swept away by it. As the trail of a long-drawn sound of the bell melts in the sky with the mind following it, the mind gradually gets concentrated and becomes absorbed into the sound and is ultimately lost in it. This mystic sound will finally assume the form of a *Vindu* or *dot*. Following this *Anāhata* sound your existence with mind and vital energy will become minute and more minute and ultimately lost in the *Vindu*. This is the condition of *Laya* or Mergence in which the Yogin loses all idea of external worlds and his mind takes the form of the object meditated upon. This is the way in which Jiva-consciousness merges into God-consciousness and becomes all-pervading.

Anāhata S'abda or sound caused not by friction between material objects is *Nāda* or mystic sound and is produced spontaneously by the flow or activity of spiritual energy. Various other sounds produced in our system by the movement of muscles etc., circulation of blood and such other functions as digestion etc., are quite different from *Nāda*. When the mind is concentrated at the sixth centre or the *Ajnā-chakra* the Yogin experiences the sound of *OM* which is an *Anāhata sound* and which we are speaking of *OM* produces vibrations in the sky of consciousness. Gradually, these vibrations become subtler and subtler, rise higher and higher enter into the regions of *Madhyamā*, *Paśyanti* and *Parā*, and ultimately become transformed into a *Vindu* and at last lose themselves in the internal sky of consciousness when *Joyti* or divine light becomes visible.

The sound of an anklet is heard when mind is concentrated on the right-side of the head. And the vision of the Lord is obtained if mind is lost to the listening of this sound. The sound of *OM* drowns the Yogin's mind into an ocean of *Jyoti* or gleam. *Jyoti* is of different colour—red, yellow, white, blue etc. The waves of gleam increase as the intensity of

Nāda decreases. These gleams of different hues are changeable ; at last the Sādhak is blessed with steady and constant *Jyoti* of pure light.

Vaikhari sound is vocal sound that is produced by the organ of speech. Repetition of *mantra* by mouth audible or inaudible, as also *mantra* repeated mentally form *Vaikhari* sound. Repetition of holy sound is superior to retualistic performances. 'Mental repetition is far superior to *Upānśu-Japam* which is audible to one sitting very close but inaudible to others' is the view of *Manu*. In fact, the Yoga-activity begins when the field of *Vaikhari* is transcended. *Madhyamā* is the second stage of the sound when it is perceived by the auditory organs of the *Yogin* after utterance. Paśyanti is the stage in which the significance of the sound becomes clear. When the meaning of the *mantra* becomes clear to the Yogin through his intuitive faculty which is subtler than his mind and senses, the sound is in the plane of *Paśyanti*. The vibrations at the stage of *Madhyamā* enter the *Saṣumnā* Canal traversing it upwards and then ascending spirally through the different *Chakras* or plexuses they enter into the field of intuitive level when the import of the *mantra* becomes clear to the Yogin in the stage of *Paśyanti*. It is at this stage that the Yogin catches a glimpse of the Soul and attains success in *Samādhi* through effective practice of *Bhrāmari Kumbhak Yoga*.

Sound is the lock and sound is the key. *Mantra* or the spiritual sound gradually awakens the ultimate sound *OM*, the subtlest *mantra* to confer emancipation on the devotee. Whoever knows the mystery of sound may be regarded as Brahman Himself. To practise *Nada-Yoga*, the Yogin at dead of night, should take his seat in a solitary place, close his ears with the palms of his hands and practise *puraka* and *kumbhaka* inside the cavity of the ears when he will hear various sounds produced in the body by circulation of blood

etc. The first is the sounds of beetle or the sound of a whistle. Gradually, the sound of the flute and the thundering of the clouds, the humming of bees, the sound of the bell and of drums etc., will be heard. When the sound of a storm with rain is experienced during the practice of *Nada-Yoga* it appears to the Yogin that there is actually a tempest and heavy rain-fall outside. Lastly, the Yogin will perceive the mystic sound *OM* arising from the *Anāhata* centre.

"Anāhatasya śabdasya tasya śabdasya yo dhaniḥ,
Dhanerantargata Joyti jyoterantargataṃ manaḥ,
Tanmano bilayaṃ Yāti tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padaṃ,
Sadā paśyanti śurayaḥ dipiva cakṣurātmataṃ".

By deep concentration when individual mind will be merged into that mystic sound, *Jyoti* or the light of the Soul that lies in the heart of the *Anāhata* sound, will shoot forth. Mind being totally annihilated the Yogin is lost in the eternal light of the Lord Supreme. This is *Vrāmari Kumbhak Yoga*. Success in this Yoga leads to the attainment of success in *Samādhi*.

Human body is the temple of God and the presiding deity of this temple is Ātman. There goes on a ceaseless worship of Ātman inside this temple. So, within the human body the conch, bell and anklet are sounding and resounding every moment. These different sounds are called *Anāhata Nāda* or the sound produced without any stroke. *Anāhata* sound is heard when the Yogin seated in a silent and secluded place becomes absorbed in deep meditation. Everywhere within the body, especially within the heart, head and *Suṣumnā* this *Anāhata* sound can be heard. *Kundalini* cooes sweetly and the *Anāhata sound* is produced. During the practice of *Nāda-Yoga*, a Yogin listens to it. *Anāhata* sound becomes audible when by the practice of *Kumbhaka*, breath is suppressed for fifteen minutes. *Kundalini* is roused when one takes to Yoga. Constant practice of *Prāṇāyāma* and the repetition of *Praṇava* settle mind and this concentration helps Yogin to listen

to *Anāhata* sound arising out of the *Anāhata* circle. During meditation the Yogin should imagine as if the sound is originating from the heart-centre and passing through the *Saṣumnā* canal and finally disappearing in *Sahasrāra* just in the same way as the sound of a bell gradually fades away in the horizon. Thus following the movement of this subtle sound one can reduce oneself to a *Vindu* or dot. The disappearing of this *Vindu* in *Sahasrāra* is designated in the *Yoga-S'astra* as the union of *S'iva* and *S'akti*. To concentrate one's mind on *Anāhata* sound one should think his body as empty and full of sound. When the concentration reaches its culminating point, the sound takes a luminous form and this vision makes the aspirant sanguine that he is proceeding along the right track and this perception fills his heart with courage and certitude. Finally, the Yogin merges his consciousness into that *Jyoti* and reaches the lotus feet of Supreme Lord. This *Jyoti* is Brahman Himself[1].

Meditation of *Nāda* is the best of its kind ; because, salvation becomes secured when *Anāhata* sound of *OM* is heard within. *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* or indeterminate ecstasy results through the practice of *Nāda-Yoga*, as ultimately the whole mental faculty merges in the *Anāhata* sound *OM*. This is why the meditation on the sound *OM* has been prescribed as the best and the last support of all meditative practices. The name of the Lord during incantation, is transformed in the long run into *Nāda* itself. The name is turned into *Nāda* i.e., begins to sound spontaneously when *Japaṃ* reaches the field of *Madhyamā*. *Ajapā-Japaṃ* or constant repetition of a holy name is therefore a means to liberation.

Perception takes place in the plane of life. The individual soul of a Yogin merges into the Supreme Soul when the

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1. "ज्योतिरेव परं ब्रह्म ज्योतिरेव परं सुखम्।
ज्योतिरेव परा शान्ति ज्योतिरेव परं पदम् ॥—*Rāma Gita.*

idea becomes deep rooted that it is the same spiritual energy of the Lord that swells up as thought in the heart centre and then spreads out everywhere in the external world. This process of withdrawing the life-energy to the Heart-Centre and allowing it to spread out in the whole of creation is spontaneous *Prāṇāyāma* that ultimately leads to the Realisation of universal *Prāṇa*. Fix your consciousness above the crown of the head beyond the physical body and thence diffuse the same all around and everywhere to reach the Infinite. Believe with all your heart that your vital energy permeates all things and beings of creation. Withdraw your mind, life energy and your senses from the external world and turn them inwards. By doing so the plane of consciousness will be visible.

The Lord exists everywhere and in every form, and is, therefore, formless. He is the Lord of three *Guṇas* and is therefore, beyond the reach of the three *Guṇas* and is justly called *Nirguṇa* or unqualified. He is without any form, for no form of this creation can bear likeness or comparison to His Holy Form. He has a form of His own—a form of celestial light with which nothing of this world can bear any resemblance. Ignorant people are charmed by His gross form which is this visible universe and are not drawn towards the realisation of His internal form of light or *Joyti* which is visualised by a *Yogin* as an infinite ocean of Light and Bliss. Alas ! they hanker and run after a piece of glass neglecting the most valuable gem i.e., *Ātman* which is in their possession[1]. Ritualistic worship is of the lowest order,

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1. "आत्मस्थं तीर्थमुत्सृज्य वहिस्तीर्थादि यो व्रजेत् ।
करस्थं महारत्नं त्यक्त्वा काचं विमार्गति ॥"—*Śivā Dharmottara.*
Gandharva Tantra also reflects the same view :
"आत्मस्थं देवतां त्यक्त्वा वहिर्द्वेवं विचिन्वते ।
करस्थं कौस्तुभं त्यक्त्वा भ्रमते काचदृष्टया ॥"

meditation is superior to idol-worship but communion with and merging in Para-Brahman is the highest of all[1]. Externality of religion, practice of *Yoga* and the meditative practices will no longer be required for one who has realised that 'Everything is Brahman'[2].

Practise *S'āmbhabi Mudrā* at the centre of *Ājnā-chakra* by fixing your attention in between the two eyebrows and see the radiant form of Brahman. Sit in the posture of *Padmāsana* and fix your gaze at the tip of your nose. Gradually, your sight will become hazy and the tip of the nose will not be visible. Withdraw your gaze from there to the point in between the two eyebrows, the seat of the Soul or the sixth centre and then your eyes will become half closed and the pupils of the eyes will move up as in the eyes of Lord *S'iva*. At this stage you will be blessed with the vision of Divine Light.

Before practising this *S'āmbhabi Mudrā* you should practise *Trātak-Yoga* for sometime. The description of Trātak has been given elsewhere. One accustomed to the performance of *Trātak-Yoga* finds it easier to attain success in *S'āmbhabi Mudrā* and is blessed with the vision of Divine Light in much shorter time. When the gaze becomes steady through practice of *Trātak* and *S'āmbhabi Mudrā*, the *Prāṇa* enters the canal of *Suṣumnā* through *Kevali Kumbhak* and the mind gets concentrated at *Ājnā-Chakra* or the sixth plexus through *Prāṇāyāma*, the mind of the Yogin attains an unswerving condition of a successful Yogin. Lord Krishna said in this connection, "Concentrate your mind at the tip of the nose where the *Prana* or the vital air comes out in the act

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1. "उत्तमो ब्रह्मसद्भावो ध्यानभावस्तु मध्यमः ।
स्तुति जपोऽधमो भावो बाह्यपूजाऽधमाधमा ॥"—Katha Up.

2. "योग जीवात्मनोरैक्यं पूजने सेवकेशयोः ।
सर्व्वं ब्रह्मेति विदुषो न योग न च पूजनम् ॥"—Katha Up.

of expiration". When attention is fixed at this spot the flow of *Prāṇa* comes to a stand-still within the nasal cavity. At this stage *Prāṇa* leaves the *Iḍā* and *Piṇgalā* Canals and enters into the central canal of *Suṣumna*, thus starting *Kevali Kumbhaka Yoga*. This leads to spontaneous performance of *S'āmbhabi Mudrā* as a result of which *Kundalini* along with the individual soul enters into the light-emanating *Chitrā Nāḍi* producing a vision of Divine Light which is called '*Bodhi*' or intuition—the Divine Eye of the Soul. Here *Hatha-Yoga* combines with *Raj-Yoga*. The fusion of these two processes of *Kevali Kumbhaka* and *S'āmbhabi Mudrā* enables the Yogin to have a vision of the celestial light or Realisation of Self.

There is a transparent belt between *Sahasrāra* and *Ājnā-Chakra*. Love and earnest desire to meet the Lord together with complete self-sacrifice at the holy feet of the Supreme God, unite one with *Paramātman* and confer *Nirvāṇa*. The seven spiritual regions as described by the Vedas are thus traversed one by one by the *Jivātman* which mounts on the 7th and the topmost region and is freed from the bondage of rebirth. A salt doll that descends into water never comes back to report the depth of the ocean. This is a state of infinite bliss and the individual soul like the doll of salt never returns from the sea of infinite bliss :

"*Parama rasamayin Parmātmasattvāṃ*
Jalagata saindhabakhandabanmahātmā".

He who has attained success in the practice of *S'āmbhabi Mudrā* may be regarded as Lord Brahman Himself. The awakening of the mysterious eye of the Soul that lies between the two eye-brows leads to the visualisation of glorious light of the Lord. On attainment of this the Yogin is born anew in spirituality and may be rightly called as a twice-born or *Dvija*. "No one can be a *Brāhmin* by dint of mere birth in a *Brāhmin* family"—says *Manu*, the Hindu Law-giver :

"One attains *Brāhminism* by one's knowledge of the Vedas and becomes a *Brāhmin* by one's knowledge of Brahman". He is thus reborn to a higher level of consciousness; he ascends from natural to the spiritual plane. When *Kundalini* awakened by the force of austere meditation rises upwards her moving form cannot be perceived. Hence, the Yogin should practise *S'āmbhabi Mudrā* at this state for getting a vision of Her. This is *Sukṣma dhyāna* or subtle meditation.

Success in the meditation of the gross and luminous forms of qualified Brahman leads to merging in *Nirākāra* or formless Brahman who is unqualified. The mind and *Prāṇa* (Life-principle) become more and more subtle through progress in Yoga. *Virāt Brahman* is reflected in gross mind, while qualified Brahman is reflected in subtle mind and unqualified Brahman is realised by annihilation of mind. The sky inside the jar merges into the sky outside when the jar is broken. Similarly, annihilate your mind and merge your self in the Absolute. During meditation expand your consciousness and make it co-existent with the infinite sky. Spread out your self and immerse it in the universal existence and imagine yourself as even more minute than an atom. Imagine the boundless sky of your consciousness as extending to infinity and you will feel as if your body has lost all its weight and become lighter than a feather. Thus you will be absorbed in deep meditation and ultimately become lighter and lighter and lost in *Samādhi*. At this stage all idea of limitations will cease to exist, individual soul lose its individuality and become universal and individual existence will be drowned in the limitless depth of the infinite ocean of the *Primal Cause*.

Spiritual realisation depends upon one's ability to maintain calmness and peacefulness of mind. This brings peace to the soul which helps in the descent of the divine current of light and power in man from above. Round about is the

ocean of peace for the Yogin to dive in. The holy mantra "*OM S'ānti, OM S'ānti, OM S'ānti*"—should be repeated internally. This banishes all cares and anxieties of this world and the mind becomes calm and enjoys perfect peace. The bright flame-like form mentioned before is the form of the soul. At the centre of *Mulādhāra* where *Kundalini* is coiled up like a serpent, the flame-like form of the individual soul should be meditated upon at the heart centre as Brahman. This is *Tejo-dhyāna* or *Jyotirdhyāna* or concentration on the light-form of the soul. Imagine in the midst of this flame-like form a luminous sky and merge your consciousness there. This luminous sky is the Lord Supreme.

Worldly charms and their attractions are the causes that wipe out memory of previous births. The clear knowledge that the objects of the world have no importance save and except maintaining the physical body makes mind disgusted with the physical body and as a result of this abhorence, body and mind get separated from each other. In such an indifferent mind, its purity and tranquillity is attained and the memory of the past lives revives. While taking rebirth mind with its past impressions enter into a new body and loses its past memory. By the practice of Yoga if mind can be isolated from the body the memory of the past existences will be revived. The revival of memory in an impure mind is impossible. Purification of body and mind, non-injury, taking of moderate vegetable food, non-intoxication, celebacy, non-covetousness, truthfulness and whole-hearted devotion to God are the essential requisites. Our relation with Māyā hides our divine nature and screens the memory of the past. God created Māyā only to ascertain if man would forget his own Self which is divine in essence, infinite and eternal. We must sweep away the dirts of our mind, tear asunder the veil of *Māyā* and see the successive events of our past lives as is the case in a film-picture.

Memory revives when the inner significance of *S'āstric* injunctions are intaken with faith and reverence and mind is fixed on God. Constant meditation on God is *Smṛti-Sādhan.* Meditation on the experiences gained in course of the practice of *Nāda-Yoga* and the *Jyoti* or light experienced in *Samādhi* may be taken as support for *Smṛti-Sādhan.* The best type of *Smṛti-Sādhan* involves in meditating on the aureole or the celestial light as if radiating from the posterior part of the head, similar to that emanating from the head of the gods and accomplished saints. For the practice of *Smṛti-Sādhan* in the first stage one should take as a support of meditation the objects like a tranquil state of body, senses or mind. The feeling of the physical body as very subtle and light, may also serve the purpose of a support. The thought that 'I am incorporeal' when occupies a meditative mind, the sense of body gradually slips away. A truth realised in *Samādhi* may be taken as a support for meditation. One may concentrate one's mind on a subject matter of an auspicious dream dreamt before. 'I have fallen into a deep sleep'—this thought, when meditated takes one to *Samādhi* (*Pātanjal Darśan, Samādhi-pāda,* Sutra 28). In any way concentration of mind is essential to create a field for successful meditation.

The memory of the past lives can be revived by the practice of Yoga as described in the following procedure : Seated in a Yogic posture at a secluded place, the Yogin is to think over the latest event which took place i.e., his taking seat for meditation. Then in a retrograde order he will meditate on all that he said and did during the day and night before and so backward month after month and year after year. Thus following the trend of his earlier thoughts and actions he reaches at last a point which is between the moment of his taking birth and departure from the previous life. At this moment it apears as if a veil of thick darkness is spread before him. By repeated practice and through

deeper meditation the darkness melts away at last and his consciousness precipitates in the life beyond. The luminous phenomena of the past life will unfold themselves one after another before the Yogic vision. Through still deeper meditation the veil of forgetfulness uncovers itself and the Yogin sees the coming into and going from different bodies in previous existences of the remote past. Deep meditation enables Jivātman to enter into *Ānandamoy Koṣa* or the sheath of bliss When this blissful state is over, there prevails a higher sense of equanimity and as a result the Jivātman becomes separated from the body and it visualises the events of its previous births. To revive the memory of his past existences, Buddha dived deep into the current of time and following the above procedure unfolded the past aeons.

The Brahman is one with the unmanifest Prakriti. When Yogin transcending Prakriti enters into the Prakriti unmanifest he enjoys the bliss of Brahman and the sense of all attributes is lost (Bhā. II. 2. 31). The Yogin who concentrates steadily at *Ājnā-Chakra* passes through an ocean of celestial light, resembling the lustre of sparkling diamonds. He visualises the subtle charming spiritual regions that are inhabitated by gods and goddesses and holy Spirits and are illuminated by a light that originates neither from the sun nor the moon.

It is difficult for ordinary men to follow the process of meditation as described in the *S'āstras*. Hence I have attempted some processes in this book which have been adopted and followed by me with satisfactory results. I pray to God that people seeking to attain knowledge of Self may walk along this easy line and reach their cherished goal. The Yogin according to his ability may increase or decrease the time-limits mentioned for the performance of the various processes of *Yoga*.

NADA—YOGA—SADHANA

It has been pointed out in the previous chapter that besides *Vaikhari*, *Madhyamā* and *Paśyanti Vāk* there is a transcendental part of speech which is *Parāvāk*. *Praṇava* or the Śabda-Brahman OM, inactive at *Mulādhāra* is *Pārāvāk*. It stands, therefore, that the *S'abda-Brahman*, *Para-Nāda*, *Praṇava* and the *Kundalini* are identical. Śabda-Brahman *OM* descending from *Sahasrār* enters into *Mulādhāra* as Anāhata Nāda—OM and assumes the name of Kundalini. Parāvāk resting at Mulādhāra or carried to the Sahasrār is soundless and motionless. Saguṇa Brahman is Śabda-Brahman[1].

In Yoga-literature *Nāda* is reckoned with the mystic sound *OM*, though, literally, it simply means sound. Divine knowledge and the highest good cannot be achieved without practising *Nāda-Yoga* and unfolding the mystery of *Nāda*[2]. *Nāda* is not only the spontaneous sound of *Pranava* but is also the light of Brahman[3]. Celestial jyoti of Lord Viṣṇu lies hidden in the womb of *Nāda*. *Nāda* is the very Self of God[4].

The movements of conscious energy are two-fold : One is towards creation and it is called *Nāda* and the other towards Brahman and it is Nādātita—beyond Nāda i.e., soundless. In the silent part of *Praṇava* there is neither any movement nor sound. *S'akti* or energy at this state is latent and exists as a *Sphota* ; it is the state of *Nāda* before creation. According to Pāṇini, *Sphota* or the eternal sound is Brahman. In the work of creation *Nāda* manifesting itself proceeds from *Parāvāk* ; in the practice of Yoga direction of sound is from *Vaikhari* to *Parāvāk* at Mulādhāra through *Madhymā* and *Paśyanti* and carried again to Sahasrār. Practice begins with

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1. "सगुण: स्यात् सदा ब्रह्म शब्दब्रह्म तदुच्यते ।"
2. "न नादेन विना ज्ञानं न नादेन विना शिव: ।"
3. नादरूपं परं ज्योतिर्नादरूपी स्वयं हरि: ॥'।
4. "नाद एव सद्वद ब्रह्म परमात्मा पर: पुमान् ।"

incantation and recitation of Lord's name uttered through mouth which involves *Vaikhari-Vāk.*

Anāhata sound is the source from which all the letters originated[1]. The rythmic flow of *Nāda* results in creation[2]. Since *Haṃ* (Puruṣa) combined with *Saḥ* (Prakriti) forms the word *Haṃsaḥ*—the latter has both the characteristics of *Puruṣa* and *Prakriti* ; and as the world is a manifestation of Haṃsaḥ (divine life-energy) it is made up of spirit and matter[3]. Haṃsaḥ is the first evolute of pure consciousness. So *Haṃsaḥ* may be taken as the point of transition from the motionless Brahman to the moving world. This is why *Haṃsaḥ* or the subtle *Prāṇa* is identified with *Hiraṇyagarbha* or the cosmic *Prāṇa.* Hiraṇyagarbha is the sum-total of *A, U, M,* representing Praṇava or *OM.* The letter M (म) is full of conscious sound. *Haṃsaḥ* and *Nāda* represent Puruṣa and Prakriti respectively. In course of its downward movement the *Nāda—OM* or *Soham* is transformed into *Haṃsaḥ.* The texts observe that a man who attains the knowledge of Self by repetition of *Haṃsaḥ* becomes really a liberated Soul : "*Soham haṃseti paśyati jivanmuktaḥ sa uchyate'.*

As respiration of *jiva* goes on with the sound *Haṃsaḥ*[4], *Prāṇa* is called *Haṃsātman or Jivātman.* Every created thing and being vibrates with the sound *Haṃsaḥ.* Being directed by the soul the mind strikes the fire called *Mitra* ; and the vital air near *Mulādhāra* or *Brahmagranthi* begins to vibrate rapidly and being impelled by the fire, the *Prāṇa* moves upwards

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1. "एकोनादात्मको वर्णः सर्व्ववर्णाविभागवान् ।
सोऽनन्तशक्तिरूपत्वात् अनाहत इवोदितः ॥"

Also: "शब्दः प्रकृतिः सर्व्ववर्णानां ।"—Taitt Up.

2. "छन्दांसि ततो विश्वरूपाणि ।"

3. "हकारो पुरुष इत्युक्तो विसर्गः प्रकृतिर्मता ।
पुंप्रकृत्यात्मको हंसस्तदान्तकमिदं जगत् ॥"

4. "हंसेति परमोमन्त्रो जीवो जपति सर्व्वदा ।"—Niruttara Tantra

through *Suṣumnā*. In its upward movements it produces five kinds of sound : subtler at the navel, subtle at the heart-centre, developed at throat, lean inside the head and gross in the mouth. The Anāhata sound which is produced first at navel in the form of *Paśyanti* is very feeble and so it becomes audible only to the advanced *Yogins*.

During evolution of sound-energy i.e., *OM* it is divided into three entities—*Puruṣa*, *Prakriti* and *Kāla*, or *Vindu*, *Nāda* and *Vija*. Vindu (dot) represents Śiva, *Nāda* (sound) representing both spirit and matter taken together as Prakriti and Vija (Seed) stands for energy alone. Of the three letters *A*, *U* and *M* which form the mystic sound *OM*, *A* produces vibration, *U* the *Prāṇa* and *M* the *Nāda* or sound. The material part of *Vindu* is *Vija* or the seed of material creation. Apart from *Nāda* and *Vija* what remains of Vindu is pure consciousness. From *Vindu* flows *Nāda* and *Prakriti* or Śakti (energy) evolves out of *Nāda*[1]. Vindu is the door to enter into the Infinite and it is the first Void, as pointed out by the Yogins. *S'abda-Brahman* includes both *Vindu* and *Nāda*[2]. Prakriti impregnated with the conscious energy of Brahman may be identified with *Nāda*. The manifested vibrant energy is Prakriti.

The aim of Yoga-practice is from the gross to the subtlest. From the will and effort of a man to say or to think of anything the vital air at Mulādhāra begins to vibrate and this vibration of air awakens *Parāvāk* from its inactive state. When *Kundalini* leaves *Mulādhāra* and enters into *Suṣumnā* she assumes the form of *Nāda* (Sound). *Nāda* at *Manipur Chakra* is subtle and forms the *Paśyanti Vāk*. The word in its Paśyanti stage is known in its generic character. In Madhyamā

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1. "आसीद् विन्दुस्ततो नादो नादाच्छक्तिः समुद्भवः।"
2. "अक्षरो परमो नादः शब्द-ब्रह्मेति कथ्यते।"

it associates with *Buddhi* or intellect and becomes discriminative. Spoken word is Vaikhari, audible to others.

In the preliminary stage of incantation, the will of the *Jāpaka* (incantor) is active behind such repetition. When *Japam* deepens there arises a stage which does not require any effort or will on the part of the *Jāpaka* ; it comes out, as if mechanically, or vibrates within spontaneously. On initiation the conscious *Iṣtamantra* (a few holy letters whispered to the ears of the disciple) begins to repeat itself, provided the body and mind of the initiate are purified beforehand.

Haṃsaḥ means destroyer of ignorance, it is the causal aspect of the Brahman. Repetition of the mantra *Haṃsaḥ* kindles fire and awakens *Kundalini*. Mental incantation opens the closed-door of Suṣumnā. When the vibrant Prāṇa-Vāyu enters into Suṣumnā the Yogin experiences various sounds and his heart leaps up with joy. In further advanced stage when incantation goes on spontaneously the sound *Haṃsaḥ* is heard to be repeated in the reverse order i.e. as *Soham* or simply *OM*. Ultimately, in still higher stage the sound *Soham* merges in the sky of pure consciousness and there is an end of *Nāda* ; Ajapā-Japam is heard no more.

Anāhata Nāda is heard when the mantra *Haṃsaḥ* is repeated mentally for one crores of time. *Haṃsaḥ* is an afferent stream of consciousness ; the repetition of this *mantra* takes Jiva-Consciousness inward and upward. Following the stream of this conscious sound the Yogin is to enter into the innermost depth of his being. The sound will be more and more subtle and ultimately, it will be reduced to a dot. By the practice of *Bhastrikā Kumbhaka* when the doors of Suṣumnā are opened, the awakened Kundalini moves upwards through the hollow tube and makes various sounds inside it : These are really *Anāhata Nāda* ; some of them are distinct and others faint. When the divine sound of *Praṇava* or *OM* appears it silences all other subordinate sounds.

At the final stage of *Paśyanti*, mind dies out and the adorable deity of the *Mantra* becomes visible. As the *Kundalini* rises higher, the gates of Pure Consciousness are flung open and the luminous orbs are visualised.

According to the *S'ruti*, there is a continual long-drawn sound of a bell in *Para-Praṇava* beyond the realm of *Nāda, Vindu and Kalā.*[1] When Kalā attains its fullness the Yogin steps into the world of Absolute Brahman. *OM* is the first *Nāda* that sprang up from the heart of the Supreme Brahman ; so Brahman is superior to *OM*. The fourth quarter of *OM* beyond *Nāda, Vindu* and *Kalā* is known as *Mātrā* representing Para-Brahman. Mātrā does not denote any part but it is the Thing-in-itself. *Mātrā* is *Turiya* or the transcendental state of Brahman. With the penetration of the three aforesaid realms the *Turiya* is reached. The first half-syllable of *Praṇava* consisting of *Nāda, Vindu* and *Kalā* represents the attributed Brahmans —Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Maheśvar respectively. *Nāda* leads the Yogin to *Vindu* because sound itself is reduced to a *Vindu* in the long run. Mind concentrated to the hearing of *Anāhata-Nāda* loses the sense of ego, time and space and gradually assumes the form of a Vindu or dot. It is the subtlest state of mind. Above *Vindu* is *Kalā* which looks like a subtle line of lightning. Above *Kalā* is *Kalātita*, the Mātrā which is Para-Brahman. It follows, therefore, that *Vindu* is not the last stoppage in the long way to the spiritual world. In course of meditation the bright dot of golden hue which is visualised above *Ājnā Chakra* is Maheśvar. From the depth of *Nāda* flickers out this luminous *Vindu*. Out of this *Vindu* emerges *Niranjan* Puruṣa having the lustre of a diamond. When this *Hiranmoy Puruṣa* is realised the Yogin incarnates Eternity himself.

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1. "तैलधारामिवाच्छिन्नं दीर्घघण्टानिनादवत् ।
विन्दुनादकलातीतं यस्तं वेद स वेदविद् ॥"

The narrow and the dark passage above *Ājnā-Chakra* leading to the *Sahasrār* is called *Bankanāl*. It flows from *Mulādhāra*, rises up by the left side of the *Manipur Chakra*, touches the heart centre and penetrating *Rudragranthi* at Ājnā enters into *Brahmarandhra*. From Brahmarandhra it hangs a little downward and rises again to form a semi-circle. Because of this curvature, the nerve is called *Bankanāl*—a curved vein. At the highest extremity of this nerve is *Vramarguhā*—a Void above the universe. The sound *Soham* can be heard inside this Great Void. The divine eye of the Yogin opens when he enters into this cave. The Yogin enters this *Guhā* or cave through a very subtle opening like the point of a needle at the end of *Bankanāl*. Above *Vramarguhā* is *Satyaloka*—the world of attributed Brahman or the *Brahmā*. Next to *Satyaloka* are Alakh and *Agamaloka* which are rather inaccessible. For the realisation of Supreme Brahman the Yogin must acquire the knowledge of Śabda-Brahman first and then transcend these heavenly spheres as well[1].

Seated on *Siddhāsana* in a solitary place, the Yogin is to fix his gaze at the tip of the nose, close the two orifices of ears by two thumbs, eyes with forefingers, nostrils with third fingers and the lips with little fingers when *Nāda* will be heard. This practice is called *Parāṇmukhi Mudrā*. The Yogin is to unite *Prāṇa* with *Apāna*, and carry them aloft to the supposed apperture at the crown of the head by the force of Kevali-Kumbhaka and meditation. *Bajrā Nāḍi* is a branch of Suṣumnā near Brahmarandhra. Through *Bajrā* jiva-consciousness is to be merged in *Param S'iva at Sahasrār*.

None can attain any high position in spiritual life without penetrating *Brahmagranthi* at Mulādhāra and liberating Parāvāk. Parāvāk is the sun of Praṇava which is penetrated by the arrow of *Prāṇāyāmā* and meditation.

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1. "शब्दब्रह्मणि निष्णातः परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति।"

When *Prārabdha Karma* is exhausted and the seed of *Saṃskaras* is burnt to ashes *Ātman* reveals in the form of a light from the womb of *Nāda*. The *Jyoti* or gleam which lies in the depth of *Nāda* and becomes visible when mind is concentrated to the hearing of *Anāhata sound OM*, is verily the *Ātman* or Soul[1]. Deep but subtle *Nāda* is *Jyoti*. *Jyoti* or gleam is *Praṇava* itself and *Nāda* is its body. *Nāda* moving towards *Sahasrār* is identified as *Jivātman*. The Śastras, therefore, observe : "*Nādaḥ Praṇaścha Jivaścha Ghosaśchetyādi Kathyate.*" Jivātman longs to meet its Lord *Paramātman* and rises along the Suṣumnā canal with the sound of *OM*.

The thundering of clouds and the sound of a drum are heard when *Prāṇa-Vāyu* enters into *Anāhata Chakra* ; in the still higher circles or when the air reaches *Brahmarandhra*, sweet and melodious notes of a flute are heard ; the mind is to be drowned in it. The *Anāhata Nāda* reaching *Ājnā Chakra* is contracted to a *Vindu* and mind following the sound is also reduced to a dot. Such a successful Yogin becomes omniscient. The sound of thunder merges the Yogin's mind into the boundless sky and he acquires the power to fly in the air. *Anāhata-sound* makes the Yogin as light as ether because the quality of the sky (ether) is sound. *Nāda* ultimately merges in the sky of pure consciousness. Since *Anāhata sound* rises spontaneously it is *Nirguṇa*. As Paramātman is attributeless, so is His name. Above *Ājnā Chakra*, *Nāda* bursts forth into *Jyoti* which is the luminous form of Lord Viṣṇu. Mind at this stage is perfectly blank, and so no sound is heard : The Yogin becomes *Praṇaba* itself. When *Prāṇa-Vāyu* rests in *Sahasrār*, the nectar drips down from the thousand-petalled lotus and the Yogin drinking that nectar falls into *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*, never to return to his conscious life again.

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1. "चक्षात् दृश्यते ज्योतिस्तद् ज्योति परमात्मनि ।"

The mental repetition of *Mantra* along with meditation on a divine figure creates a sentiment of Grand Passion. Through *Hatha-Yoga* the Yogin by meditating on *Jyoti* becomes enlightened and the knowledge of the *Self* dawns on him. *Samādhi* is induced when the Yogin concentrates his consciousness on the *Vindu*. According to *S'aṃkara*, the practice of *Nāda-Yoga* is the best means to silence the restlessness of mind and Prāṇa, and in inducing *Samādhi*. When mind is concentrated to the hearing of *Anāhata sound*, *Buddhi* or intellect becomes steady and introspective; the waves of thought do no longer arise, mind ceases to function and senses do not work. The meditator is thrown, as it were, in a vacuum full of sound. When *Anāhata-sound* ceases to be heard, it indicates a complete suspension of mental faculty.

It is the practice of *Nāda-Yoga* alone that can successfully lead the followers of different paths of Knowledge, Yoga and Devotion to their desired ends. Mother *Mahāmāyā Kāli* manifests Herself as *Nāda* towards creation. The *S'āktists*, the worshippers of the Divine Mother, hear as well in course of their *Sādhanā* the mystic sound *OM*; OM is the call of the *Divine Mother*. She is calling Her sons incessantly with Her love-call *OM*. She will take us in Her arms if we but pay heed to Her affectionate calls. *Anāhata-sound OM* is verily that call of the Divine Mother. The sweet notes of *Krishna's Murali* are also heard when mind is concentrated to the hearing of *Anāhata-Nāda*. This note of *Krishna's Murali* (Flute) is the Divine attraction indeed! None can surpass its irresistibility. It is actually heard while listening the *Anāhata-Nāda*. By following the trend of *Nāda* we can reach the source of *Nāda* which is Brahman. The note of the flute will surely take us to *S'ri Krishna* who plays on the flute.

LACK OF HARMONY

The path of spirituality is not strewn with roses. The higher we rise in spiritualism the more austere should be our conduct and practices and greater and greater exertions will be required to get at the goal; because the higher we rise the load becomes heavier. Each realisation is a mile-stone in the onward march towards spiritual perfection. It has immense spiritual possibilities. In the beginning the Yogic visions are rather faint and scattered. But as we proceed ardently, these faint and fleeting visions before our contemplative eyes will take clear forms and they will last longer and the eyes of suspicion will be turned into those of appreciation.

Just as the full moon is not clearly reflected on the bosom of the sea agitated by waves but is fully reflected on the surface of the quiet sea, so also knowledge of God is reflected on the quiet mind and in a pure heart when we feel His presence. On the contrary, that is, if the mind is restless, everything becomes topsy-turvy; consequently, the perceptions are disorderly. Because of gaps in his feelings the devotee is disappointed and declares: "Why can I see you now and then, but not always?" Unless he is absorbed in trance-like meditation through long-continued practice, visualisation and realisation of God on the horizon of his consciousness cannot be permanent. When mental disturbance disappears and consciousness of the outside world becomes obliterated so that meditation of the desired deity culminates into the object of meditation itself and then in that trance-like state, visions and feelings of the Divine become more enduring. In the first stage of *Samādhi*, the devotee attains mastery over the earth-element of nature, on the higher planes of *Samādhi* he can exercise control over the other elements of Nature like water, fire, air and ether; then he realises God-head.

After this realisation there is no fear of loss or separation ; for then he feels the presence of the Lord in water, earth, fire, air or anywhere in the universe. The devotee realises that the same identical Existence is radiating beauty through the rivers and the rivulets and the ocean and that His infinite mercy is manifesting itself through numerous created beings.

The light of consciousness flashes forth proportionately as the *Knndalini S'akti* is roused ; the higher the energy rises up the greater is the light. Sometimes it happens that through an intense desire and one-pointed attention, *Kundalini* ascends to such an unexpected height that all on a sudden a flash of white light streams out and blinds the meditative vision of the trainee. This light like the glow of a fire is agreeable to those who stand at a reasonable distance and consumes others who are close to it. Sister Margarete Marie at the sight of this all-embracing light exclaimed : "Hold back, O' my God, these torrents overwhelm me or else enlarge my capacity for their reception"—*Varieties of Religious Experience*, P. 343. St. Ignatius got terrified and perplexed when he witnessed the vision of Jesus disappearing into the infinitude of the Absolute.

A regular practiser seldom feels the pangs of separation from his Lord because he always dwells in the company of his Lord. Only to test the loyalty, fidelity and intensity of the trainee's devotion the Lord may at times play hide and seek but He never forsakes His devotee for ever. The progress towards spiritual enlightenment, far from being embarrassed by such withdrawal, increases the aspirant's zeal all the more. The Christian mystics call this period of *Viraha* or separation as 'the dark night of the soul'. In their opinion this feeling of separation makes the individual more adventurous. *Viraha* of the Hindu mystics and the Christian's 'dark night of the soul' are the common experiences in the mystic lives all over the world and in all ages.

Even *Viraha* or pangs of
which a true devotee suffers
mercy. The Lord withdraws
to increase his attachment
that the good lies somet
Niśumbha were killed,
Chandi and addressed
enemies, O Mother, re
this will set an exa
from committing
We cannot relish
there been no e
appear to be so
any play of li
Sādhanā, ther
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have neither father nor mother,
y friend or any companion,
S'iva, I am *S'iva*, who is
here is neither merit nor
appiness, neither *mantra*
r sacrifice, neither the
ment itself. I am
ed Bliss"[1].
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e food beyond a
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over it will shine forth afresh with a greater and higher revelation. The later experiences may not be similar to those obtained before, because the earlier experiences generally merge in the later developments.

During the practice of *Yoga*, feeling of dryness, vacancy and separation from the Beloved are essential to Yogic progress. It is stated in the Śrimad Bhāgavad that when Lord's vision disappeared from sight, *Nārada* got much perple d and agrieved. To console him the voice of God said 'O' *Nārada*, I became visible to you for a moment onl crease your devotion and attachment to Me." Love of ... annot develop into divine madness without the pangs of separation from the Lord being felt and hence one cannot rise to a higher spiritual plane. It is for this reason that the Lord often plays hide and seek with His lover with a view to raising him to the highest peak of spirituality where the lover and adorer of the Lord merges into His existence. Saint *Vāsvani* said, "In the dark night of sorrow and separation comes Krishna to Rādhā."

You must keep patience during such periods of separation from Him and rest assured that the night of darkness will soon pass away with the rise of the glorious morning sun. Even the darkest cloud has a silver lining. So, you should not lose faith in the unbounded mercy of the Lord ; for such trials have been put on your way by the Lord Himself in order to test your patience and increase your mental stability. He only allows these trials for your greater good. You have not necessarily lost His grace, because you lost the taste and feeling of it. The obstacles on the path of spirituality that a devotee faces are necessary for the sake of his advancement.

Such moments of separation from the Lord are often met with, specially, after some spiritual realisation or just before being raised to the next higher spiritual strata. Sometimes,

the Yogin is disheartened by a sudden stop in further spiritual advancement. He might have hoped that he could take daily bath in the flood of celestial light; but alas! he does not know that darkness follows light almost always: "When basking in the sunbeams of the uncreated light he forgets that he has not yet reached the 'Perfect Land' which is yet far removed from the true end of Being So the light withdraws itself and the *Dark night of the Soul* sets in."— *Spiritual Exercise.* It appears at this stage to the Yogin as if a wall like a barrier has appeared between him and his Lo This may be due to two causes—(1) increase of *Rajas* the harmony in Yogic advancement becomes dynamic, (2) increase of *Tamas* when it becomes static. Harmony is marked by absence of discordance. Hence, it means progress free from obstacles. Ṛta is harmony in creative evolution through which the universe has already passed. Advancement of Ṛta is always harmonious. Easiness and simplicity of movement is manifestation of Ṛta in matter.

Just as *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* combine together by the force of *Kevali Kumbhaka* and from the pacified and quiet condition of both a state of peaceful harmony is produced and the Yogin comes to a very happy and successful termination of his career, similarly, the rythm of repetition proceeds along Ṛta *Chhanda* (see before) to the pure *Praṇava*, or to the real spiritual sound of *OM* and then it merges there. It is necessary to observe that during the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* and repetition of *mantra*, the mind should be free from any kind of disturbance, agitation, dullness and lethargy and the mental rythm be not affected, changed or destroyed by it. The quality of *Sattva* (light and peace) wakes up in the mind by the practice of *Yoga*; but as it shows any sign of increase, the other two hostile qualities of *Rajas* (activity) and *Tamas* (ignorance and lethargy) make their appearances and try to subdue *Sattva* and create obstacles in the way of

Sādhanā. At this stage, restoration of mental peace is effected by the controlling power of *Prāṇa-yoga*. *Samāvṛtti* is obtained by putting *Saṃ* (peaceful and harmonious flow) and *Āvṛtti* (return) together, meaning the return of individual soul (which is like a ray) to the bosom of the Supreme Sun of spirituality.

It happens frequently that Yogins, taking to the muttering of the holy syllable consisting of the three parts $A+U+M$, are confronted with difficulties mentioned above and being unable to surmount them are compelled to return from midway. As a result of the hostility of the two qualities, the Ṛta *Chhanda* is converted to *Arichhanda* or *Viṣachhanda* i.e. the rythmic flow takes an inimical course of discordant notes. We should then strive hard to reach the highest peak of *OM*—the *Nāda* and *Vindu* by greater control of mind and life-energy. As soon as we reach the *Nāda* and *Vindu*, the land of peace and bliss, we know what *Samādhi* is. If we do not make proper and prompt use of this elevation of the soul, the portals of the land of peace and bliss become closed again and we miss that excellent opportunity of stepping into the region of immortality.

Whenever there arises any doubt or difficulty during practice of *Yoga*, one should always seek help and advice from his spiritual guide or any other Yogin who is well-advanced in the path of *Yoga*. Inspite of full knowledge of the *S'āstras* and absolute belief in the Supreme Lord, proper help from a spiritual guide becomes often necessary. It is at this time that, if such help be not available, harmony in advancement becomes static. Without the help of a qualified *Guru* an aspirant cannot proceed far by his own effort alone. The Guru is like an engine and disciple is a car attached to the engine. The car acquires the speed of the engine when the former is chained to the latter. If you want rapid progress in the path of spirituality take shelter of a Guru. Ramkrishna

assured his disciples on the event of his departure from life : "My boys, I have a return ticket. Don't worry. I will come again. How can I be at rest so long as you need my help ?"

S'ruti enjoins that so long as we live, we should engage all our limbs and senses to the service of the *Guru* who is well-versed in the *Vedas* and knower of the Brahman[1]. However advanced a disciple may be in the path of spirituality, he must never think himself equal to his preceptor. He is to cultivate the sense of non-duality, but the texts forbid expressing the same through words and deeds[2]. *A Guru* or the spiritual guide is even superior to the father[3]. *Brahmachārins* are of two type : (1) *Upakurvāṇ* and (2) *Naiṣthik*. After the celebration of wearing sacred thread an *Upakurvāṇ-Brahmachārin* retires to the hermitage of his *Guru*, studies all the *Vedas*, learns the practice of Yoga and then returns home and enters into domestic life. At the age of fifty he leaves his hearth and home and adopts a secluded forest recluse. *A Naiṣthik-Brahmachārin* on the other hand, does not enter into the worldly life again after the completion of his study.

To attain success in Yoga just as it is necessary to keep a strict vigilance on the mind and speech, it is equally important that real interest and care should be taken for the harmonised performance of religious rites and when uttering *Mantras* or the holy verses or prayer the articulation should

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1. "यावद्वायु स्तावद वन्द्यो वेदान्तगुरुरीश्वरः ।
मनसा कर्म्मणा वाचा श्रुतेरेवैष निश्चयः ॥"

2. "भावाद्वैतं सदा कुर्य्यान्न कुर्यात् क्रियया द्वैतम् ।
अद्वैतं त्रिषु कालेषु नाद्वैतं गुरुणा सह ॥"

3. "उत्पादक ब्रह्मदातो गरीयान् ब्रह्मदः पिता, तस्मान्मन्येद सततं पितुरप्यधिकं गुरुम् ।"

be performed properly with infusion of life in them. For absolute success the whole performance must be conducted with due care. There should not be any fault, either of commission or of omission in the function. You should proceed along the path of Yoga with full preparedness for faultless effort, otherwise your advancement is sure to become static.

During practice of Yoga the shadow of doubts overcasting the sky of reasons becomes very unpleasant and disheartening. This condition must be removed and in order to make your spiritual journey easy, consume them as *Samidh* (fuel) in the fire of *Yoga*. While you do so, mutter the following mantra :" *"OM Yadidaṃ mayi Samārambhakaṃ dourbalya-rupaṃ māndyaṃ tadahaṃ havyaṃ Kalpayāmi, tatcha (S'ri S'ri Iṣtadevatā) Param Jyotiṣi juhomi om bhuḥ svāhāḥ."*

When the obstruction is removed from the path, your Yogic journey will be smooth and clear. If you apprehend loss of devotion and faith, mutter the following mantra : *"OM Yadidaṃ mayi aśraddhānatvarupaṃ māndyaṃ tadahaṃ havyaṃ Kalpayāmi tatcha S'raddhāmayoyaṃ Puruṣa iti (S'ri S'ri Iṣtadevata) Sraddhārupopalakṣita Param Jyotiṣi juhomi. Yā devi Sarvabhuteṣu S'raddhārupena Saṃsthitā, namastasyai namastasyai namastsyai namonamaḥ."*

Samābṛtti or the journey back of the soul to its own region is the unobstructed gradual progress of a Yogin in the attainment of Brahman. The harmony in the rythm of truth is the only guide for the successful termination of the journey. But obstacles in the way are sometimes met with on account of discord in time, space, causation and rythm. This unharmonical curvature or *Vyājabṛtitā* in the path of spiritual progress is an obstacle due to lack of harmony. As a result of this, the Yogin falls from truth to untruth, from reality into unreality and from happiness to unhappiness. This is called *Vyājavṛtti* and this can be

removed by *Samāvṛtti*. The unfulfilment in the attainment of the object is unharmony complex. In the absence of equillibrium in the three *gunas*—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, various obstacles confront the Yogin on the path of spirituality. One should closely watch whether the repetition of the holy *mantra* is going on properly. With disharmony in the rythm and absence of life-force in the repetition the progress is hindered and it does harm to the *Jāpaka*[1]. For this reason there is a practice of adding the holy syllable *OM* to the beginning and the end of the *mantra* to add force to it. Harmony is destroyed by lack of force and power (*Urjas*) in the act of repetition. *Sattva* is brightness which causes illumination. Hence, with increase of *Sattva* this obstacle is removed. *Urjas* is faith and vigour. Increase of *Urjas* adds life and vigour to the rythm. With absence of *Varchas* (light) the harmony becomes blind. When *Tamas* disappears this rythm becomes forceful and bright. Rythm lacking in vigour is dull. At this stage, a mixture of *Rajas* is necessary to avoid dullness. With increase in vigour the rythm becomes kindled and full of light again.

In order to have a smooth progress, a Yogin has, according to the *Vedanta*, to overcome four obstacles : (1) *Laya* (trance-like state), (2) *Vikṣepa* (Distraction of mind), (3) *Kaṣāya* (attachment), (4) *Rasāsvād* (taste, bliss and visionary perceptions). Yoga-Śāstras prescribe discrimination and detachment as means to overcome them.

The difficulties and obstacles which a devotee has to face in the practice of spiritual exercises are sometimes overcome so suddenly and splendidly by some casual events or chance that he perceives therein an unsought for blessing and grace of the preceptor or an emancipated soul or of a Soul unknown.

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1. "मन्त्रोहीनः स्वरतो वर्णतो वा मिथ्याप्रयुक्तो न तमर्थमेति। स वाग्वज्रो यजमानं हिनस्ति यथेन्द्रशत्रुः स्वरतोऽपराधात्।"

Our heart is filled with joy and gratitude when we thus realise the excellence of the path of religion and spirituality.

The three nerves, *Iḍā*, *Piṇgalā* and *Suṣumnā* unite at *Mulādharā* and *Ājnā Chakras* and their point of confluence is known as *Triveni*. A Yogin who takes his seat on *Padmāsana* and concentrates his mind at heart and meditates attentively on God unites with *Kundalini* at lower *Triveni* near *Mulādhāra* and proceeds along the *Suṣumnā* path. The confluence at *Ājnā* is nearer to the *Sahasrāra*. An advanced Yogin seated on *Siddhāsana* concentrates his mind at *Ājnā Chakra* and dashes directly through *Chitrā Nāḍi* and unites with *Param S'iva* at *Sahasrāra*. *Chitrā* is self-illuminating; so when the Yogin enters into *Chitrā Nāḍi* all his doubts are dispelled and he becomes flooded with light and bliss. He sees nothing but a dazzling light of celestial gleam all around. Gods, goddesses and souls of high spirituality all bathed in celestial light reveal before his Yogic vision. The denizens residing in these spiritual regions are peaceful, blissful and friendly to all. The earth is a pale copy of these celestial regions. By the power of Kundalini the Yogin is driven ahead through *Chitrā* just as a piece of straw is carried away by the tremendous current of water. On the eve of his entering into *Chitrā* he feels within himself making an about-turn, as it were, and a screen of shadow moving away. When the Yogic attraction begins it does not stop very soon and it may appear unbearable to him. At this stage he is required to fix his attention firmly on the *Ājnā Chakra* and meditate on his *Guru*. The light of Supreme Consciousness reflected in *Jivātman* will help him as his *Guru;* it is the Supreme light of the Supreme Self. Always try to keep contact with this divine preceptor by the practice of *Sāmbhabi Mudrā*. The Yogin who takes this *Jyoti* as his guide passes through the Yogic path with the speed of a shooting star. When the mind is fixed at *Ājnā Chakra* the

Yogin experiences less fear and obstacle on his way. But he who concentrates his gaze at the tip of the nose is daunted by fearful sights and may encounter insurmountable obstacles. In the subtle worlds of the lower sphere there are evil spirits and jealous gods who may try to divert a Yogin's mind by gestures. If they try to frighten him he should repeat the *mantra* given in the foot-note[1]. Even the heavenly damsels may allure him and try to attract his attention to them. The gods of the lower heavens may tempt him with the promise of *Siddhi* or attainments like supernatural powers. A Yogin must not cast his glance on anyone or speak with anybody on his way. In course of his meditation the integrity and strength of mind of the disciple is sometimes put to test by his *Guru*. The *Guru* may at times leave his disciple alone in the midway—just to test him while the disciple traversing the subtle worlds in his company. The denizens of the lower heavens taking advantage of the situation at that time create disturbances on his way and if the Yogin is not sufficiently advanced or on his guard, his onward journey becomes impossible. But by dint of unflinching faith and devotion to *Guru* the disciple overcomes all such obstacles ; even the mountains and rivers on the way recede back and make path for him. Only a fearless devotee who is like Rudra Himself is elligible for the worship of Lord Rudra : *'Nā Rudro Rudramarchate'*.

To remove obstacles from the path of *Sādhanā* the trainee may repeat the following peace chant : *"OM S'ānti, OM S'ānti, OM S'ānti*. Let the Sun-God and *Varuna*, the deity of waters do good to me. Let *Aryamā*, (Sun) give power to

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1. "अभयं नः करोत्यन्तरीक्षं अभयं द्यावापृथिव्यी उभे इमे ।
अभयं पश्चादभयं पुरस्तादुत्तरादधरादभयं नो अस्तु ॥
अभयं मित्रादभयममित्रादभयं ज्ञातादभयं पुरो यः ।
अभयं नक्तमभयं दिवा नः सर्व्वा आशा मम मित्रं भवन्तु ॥"

my sight. Let *Indra*, the God of power, *Bṛhaspati*, the God of speech and intellect, and Lord *Viṣṇu*, the God of love, master of all acquisitions be favourable and graceful to me. O *Vāyu*, thou art really Brahman ; I shall speak only of thee. I bow down unto thee once and again. I will utter nothing but truth as enjoined in the *S'āstras*. Thou art the regulator of all spoken words and so they are identical with you. Thou art all-pervading. Do please give me and my preceptor power and strength to overcome these obstacles. Save me, O' Kind Lord[1]." 'Let that transcendental Rudra maintain and relieve me of all troubles'[2].

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1. "ॐ शं नो मित्रः शं वरुणः। शं नो भवत्वर्य्यमा। शं न इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः। शं नो विष्णुरुरुक्रमः। नमो ब्रह्मणे। नमस्ते वायो। त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि। त्वामेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म वदिष्यामि। ऋतं वदिष्यामि। सत्यं वदिष्यामि। तन्मामवतु तद्वक्तारमवतु। अवतु माम्। अवतु वक्तारम् ॥ ॐ शान्ति ॐ शान्तिः ॐ शान्ति ॥"—*Taittiriya Upaniṣad* 1.

2. "रुद्रे यत्ते दक्षिणं मुखम्।
तेन मां पाहि नित्यम् ॥"

THE POWER OF YOGA

During the practice of Yoga Yogin may acquire various powers such as *Animā* or the power of becoming as minute as an atom, *Laghimā* or the power of becoming light etc., and even the excellent qualities of God Himself. By the performance of *Kevali-kumbhaka* i.e. holding *Prāṇavāyu* (vital air) inside the nasal cavity, the lotus at the centre of *Mulādhāra* becomes blossomed with its petals upwards. Meditation on yellow light during this *Kumbhaka* (supression of breath within the nasal cavity) removes all kinds of diseases. Meditation on Lord *Varuna* who is all white at *Svādhisthāna Chakra* wipes off all sins and bestows the power of walking on water. Meditation of the bright Sun-god along with *Kumbhaka* at the centre of *Manipur* crowns one with power which can defy the burning capacity of fire and the Yogin, by so doing, also acquires the power of seeing from a distance. One attains the power of moving through the air by meditating on Yellow *Ākāśa* at *Anāhata-Chakra*. While meditation of white *Ākāśa* at *Viśuddhā-Chakra* imparts the faculty of clair-audience.

Siddhi or attainment of powers by the performance of *Yoga* follows the Yogin like a faithful follower. But the lover of the Lord who is a real seeker of emancipation is neither desirous of the treasures of *Siddhi* nor eager to make any display. The *Aṣtasiddhi*[1] or the eight kinds of powers attained by performance of *Yoga* are :

1. *Animā* or becoming *Anu* i.e. as minute as an atom.
2. *Laghimā* or becoming *'laghu'* or light.
3. *Prāpti* or acquiring anything and everything at will.

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1. "अनिमा लघिमा प्राप्तिः प्राकाम्यं महिमा तथा।
ईशित्वं च वशित्वं च अष्टौ कामावसायिता ॥"

4. *Prakāmya* or freedom of will and irresistibility of will.

5. *Mahimā* or becoming *Mahat* or great (opposed to *Animā*).

6. *Iśitva* or becoming as powerful as God.

7. *Vaśitva* or becoming master of himself and passions.

8. *Kāmavasāyitva* or power to thoroughly subdue all desires.

Buddha admits that during the practice of Yoga some supernatural powers called *Siddhis* originate spontaneously in a Yogin, but he attaches little importance to them. *Spinoza* also discourages all sorts of hankering after such attainments. He lays more stress on the acquirement of virtue for virtue's sake. Miss Underhill writes in P. 333 of her Mysticism, that the European mystics like *St, John* of the Cross, *Madame Guyon*, *Walter Hilton* and many others did not attach any importance to visionary perceptions. This is said that *Suso*, *St. Francis* and *St. Catherine* were gifted with divine ears to hear heavenly voice. In the Ṛgveda, X 136 it is admitted that the *Munis* (sages) can fly through the sky, reach heavenly spheres and come in contact with the gods. Man may gain divine powers by dint of his self-exertion in the path of Yoga, but emancipation is achieved by self-knowledge alone. Knowledge of Self begets knowledge of Brahman and vice versa (Katha Up. 1. 2. 24). The worshippers of attributed gods who have not been able to enter into *Nirvikalpa Samādhi* attain immortality. Immortality and merging are not one and the same thing. *In Brahma-Purāṇa* immortality is defined as having existence until *Pralaya*: *Ābhuta Saṃplavaṃ Sthānamṛtaṃ hi bhāṣyate.* Gods in heavens are said to possess this kind of immortality. "When the knots of human heart are torn asunder the mortal become immortal"—says *Kathopaniṣad* II. 3. 14-15.

The spiritual advance of those devotees who pay attention to *Siddhi* is impeded. That is why Lord Śri Krishna told

Arjuna : "Oh Arjuna, the devotee who, attracted by my divine powers, seeks them from me cannot realise my divinity. Therefore, the devotee who wants me should not hanker after my powers." He further said : "Go on working without looking to the fruits thereof. Do not wish for results. I know the things you need and it is not necessary for you to pray for them. I will carry them on my head so that they may reach you." Jesus Christ also said just the same thing to his disciples.

When engaged in any work, do not desire that you would profit by its performance. The work which is not actuated by any desire is true and motiveless action. Work should be done without desire behind it, but not without a purpose. Aimless work is tantamount to lunacy. Therefore, one cannot attain salvation by such work. When doing any work, you should think that God has entrusted it to you and that by the performance of the work you are fulfilling the mission of your life. God will be pleased if you accomplish the task which is dear to Him and you will be blessed by winning His love and grace without your seeking for it. The desire for love of God is not an earthly passion, because Divine Love does not fluctuate, nor can it be bought or sold.

Tvaṃ natasi nanuvāmaivabibhutā—Divine grace comes in a tortuous way[1]. God is the greatest jocose and His truth is an object of the highest witticism : '*Raso Vai Saḥ*'. Pleasure and pain whatever Thou may be pleased to bestow upon us is of equal value to us. Thine gift of pain is felt in heart given by Thee. The heart is Thine

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1. "তোমারে পাছে সহজে বুঝি
তাই কি এত লীলার ছল।
বাহিরে যবে হাসির ছটা
ভিতরে থাকে আঁখির জল ॥"
—A Bengali verse from Rabindranath.

and the feeling also. May we keep our belief steady in the truth of it in the hour of sorest distress. 'Thy will be done. Let us, O kind Lord, do as Thou bidest us to do'. If we can totally surrender ourselves to His lotus feet and act up to His will all the egoism, filth of mind and differences will be brushed away and what will remain in us will be God Himself, embracing our individual self which, then, so to say, practically merges in the Universal Self.

The utility of the practice of Yoga is to increase mental and vital powers. All spiritual activities like recital, worship, *Prāṇāyāma*, meditations etc. are needed to make body, mind and senses subtler or capable of higher vibration. It is through wide ether waves that we get light. The telegraph, the radio, the X' Ray and the Ultra-violet Rays are also the effects of ether waves of the highest vibration. It is because the Yogins can make the body, mind, life and senses capable of the highest vibration that they control esoteric powers of invisibility, diminutions, far-seeing, far-hearing, omniscience etc. Our subtle bodies are revealed by the practice of Yoga and with their help the Yogin acquires the power of travelling in vacuum and subtle worlds.

Subtle ether pervades each atom of the material body. The higher the ether vibration within us, the less conscious we become about our physical existence. Yogic *Sādhanā* is a *Tapasyā* and *Tapaḥ* means heat. The practice of *Prāṇāyāma* particularly generates heat in the system. Due to the accumulation of heat inside, the ether particles within the body get more and more rarified and under their tremendous pressure, the Kundalini begins to rise up and the Yogin feels an upward attraction.

How the upward ascent of the body is made possible? Like the air-belt, ether also has its own pressure and ether-pressure is far greater than the pressure of the air-belt. If some part of the pressure can be displaced from above an

object the latter will naturally begin to go up due to the pressure of ether surrounding it. During the practice of Yogic exercise designated *Prāṇāyāma* a kind of white ray emanates from our brain. When the trance-like state is almost attained during the process of *Kumbhaka* (retaining breath), then that highly powerful ray or energy radiating from the brain is able to displace some amount of ether from over the head. As a result, due to the ether-pressure, on other parts of the body, the body begins to ascend in the air. It is in this way that the Yogins can fly in the air and cross the water. On such occasions they displace the ether in front of them by exercising their will-power. This is similar to the process by which scientists empty a vessel with the help of an air-exhausting pump, but no instrument is used in this.

Human body is the sum-total of an infinite number of protons and electrons which are respectively the positive and negative charges of electricity. The vacant space within an atom made up of protons and electrons is very great. According to scientists, if all the protons and electrons in a human body be pressed together, the mass product will assume such a minute form that it will be hardly visible through a microscope and the weight of the man will be negligible. This is why in deep *Samādhi* when the sense of the body is lost, it weighs nothing and as a result levitation of the body takes place Consciousness of the body acting on its constituents makes it heavy, otherwise the weight of the constituents is as light as ether. Now one can understand how an accomplished Yogin can fly in the air or walk across a river. When the body is meditated as light as ether the Yogin acquires mastery over ether element and this phenomenon enables him to fly in the sky. Mind takes the form of ether by its constant meditation on the latter. If this etherial mind can be isolated from the physical body, the Yogin acquires the power to enter into other bodies. By this sort

of meditation the sense of the coarse material body is lost to the Yogin and he enters into other receptacle by means of a subtler sheath which is mental. The Yogin has the power to go out of the physical body when in *Samādhi* he realises himself as incorporeal. In *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*, a Yogin appears as if altogether dead : "*Mṛtavad Tiṣthati Yogi Nirvikalpa Samādhinā.*"

Electron, proton and neutron are not the ultimate ingredients of material creation. These also disappear in the vibrating waves of an all-pervading ocean of light and gleam. Science cannot say anything about the ultimate cause producing the vibration. The one eternal existence behind this act of vibration is an entity which is invisible, intangible and all-pervading. The enlightened believers of the world are gradually becoming aware of the existence of an entity apart from electron, proton and neutron. The *Sāṃkhya Darśan* of Patanjali identifies this invisible principle of creation with unmanifest Prakriti. Prakriti energised by the conscious power of *Puruṣa* is the cause of vibrations that give rise to all material objects. *Puruṣa* is all-pervading like the boundless sky. Since it is full in itself it is called *Puruṣa*. It was the belief in the past that the metals like gold, silver, iron, copper etc., were each an original element, but recently it has been proved that these are compounds. There is only one original element which the scientists call Protyle. This Protyle is ether. Different combinations of ether-atoms make compounds. The Yogin who has achieved mastery over ether knows how many ether atoms combine to produce gold. So it is not at all difficult for Yogins to prepare gold from copper or iron. He will first split up the copper atom and convert it into Protyle ; later on he will take a definite number of those Protyle atoms and arrange them in such a manner that they together will produce gold. Thus they can create everything. So the production of gold from copper

is not fantastic ; the process of such production is known to Yogins who are spiritual adepts. It is said that Swami Trailangadhara took a sword from the prince of an Indian state and threw it into the Ganges ; later on as the prince expressed dissatisfaction Swamiji at once placed before him three swords all looking like the *Mahārajā's* sword and asked him to pick up his own. But the *Mahārajā* failed to pick up the right one, for each of the swords was similar to that of his own. Thus the Yogins can create anything according to their will. Those who have not attained success in Yoga can as well make impossible things possible with the help of their desired deities.

By the power of Yoga the Yogin brings the soul out of the material body and effects many kinds of impossible things according to his will. Many of us have heard of various kinds of supernatural works done by Śrimad Trailangadhara Swami and Śrimad Vijoy Krishna Goswami. They could appear within half an hour before a person, thousands of miles away and they could as well collect from that place information helpful to material use. Many of us have known the story of *Bābā Gambhirnāth* and the student living in England and the story of *Swāmi* Vijoy Krishna Goswami's visit to a Doctor living far away and his request to the doctor to visit a patient. The Yogic practice of retention and confinement of breath within the body enables a person to live under the earth for several days. And you yourself may have seen such an event in some places or read about it in the newspaper. It is heard that when the East Indian Railway Line was founded, such Yogins in the state of *Samādhi* were discovered in several places under the earth. Meditation interrupted, one of them wanted to know whether *S'ri Ramachandra* had become the king. Another Yogin, on interruption, claiming a lakh of rupees shouted, 'Bring forth the lakh of rupees.' It appears that he laid a wager for

a lakh of rupees with a noble man and then took Samādhi under the earth. But it was unfortunate that the noble man did not raise up the Yogin from below the earth in time for fear of making payment. The Yogin said that at the time he sat for meditation Emperor Akbar was ruling over India.

According to *Vātsāyan*, the virtues resulting from Yoga-practices develop superhuman powers in Yogin : '*Sākṣāt kṛtadharmatā* (*Nyāya Sutra*, II. 1. 68). The utterance of those who are truthful and have restrained their speech and cultivated the spirit of equanimity is infallible : '*Keṣāmamogha-vachanaṃ ye cha punaḥ satya-mouna-samaśilāḥ*'. Lord *S'iva* told *Pārvati* that the utterances of saints and seers always come to be true (vide *Kumar Sambhabam*, Canto III, verse 63). Christ said : "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, if you say unto this mountain, 'be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea', it shall be done".— *Mathew*, 21. 12.

So, an accomplished Yogin has the power of sooth-saying. What falls from his lips, willingly or in a careless moment, proves true in future. As he is always used to rightful conduct, even an untruth spoken by him, when he is off his guard, turns to be true. For, the utterance of a person through whom God speaks can never be untrue or ineffective —because his utterance is authentic. Many Yogins can cure even incurable diseases by their will-power or the power of their very touch. A disciple of *Bāmā Kṣepā*, the accomplished saint of *Tārāpit*, brought to *Tārāpit* a friend's dying son-in-law, attacked with Tuberculosis, with the hope of his recovery through the mercy of the accomplished saint. Seeing them *Bāmā Kṣepā* addressed, "Hallo brother-in-law ! for what purpose have you brought this patient here ? Do you mean to leave him in the burning ghat of this *Tārāpur* ?" And so he began to laugh aloud. A relative of the patient said, "O

father, why should we leave him here? When we have brought him to your lotus feet he will certainly be cured." *Bāmācharan* did not pay heed to these words, but he began to drink every moment and shout *'Tārā, Tārā'* at the top of his voice and tears trickled down his cheeks. Thinking that there was a change in the mind of *Kṣepā*, the patient began to weep and said, "If you are kind, father, every thing is possible." At this *Bāmācharan* throttled the neck of the weak patient with both hands all on a sudden. The relatives of the patient, frightened at this, flung aside the hands of *Kṣepā* and said, "What is this, father, what is this? He will die of this!" Thus prevented, the saint of sanctified speech said, "Good heavens, brother-in-law, you are saved this time!" In whatever manner he may have uttered those words the utterance of an accomplished saint can never go in vain; and as a matter of fact the patient was cured within two or three days. "Lay thy hands upon the sick and they shall recover."—The Bible.

At *Tārāpit* a pilgrim sat to eat the leavings of food partaken by the Goddess but he was unable to eat on account of *Mumps*; so he regarded himself as unfortunate and began to weep. Seeing him in that condition *Bāmā Kṣepā* took pity on him and caressed the ear-root with his lotus hand. All his pain at once disappeared, as if water were poured over fire. Astonished at this, the man exclaimed, "Father! Are you God?" *Bāmā Kṣepā* smiled and said, "If God touched you, would you be so impatient to eat? I am no being like God—I am only the dust of His feet."

S'ri S'ri Chaitanya Deva Mahaprabhu appeared to enliven seven parties singing *Kirtan* at the same time. It is known to all that he had disappeared from the holy *Jagannāthdhām*. *Mirā Bai* disappeared within her desired deity *Giridhāriji*. It is said that Trailangadhara Swami, the supreme yogin, entered a stone chest for supreme meditation to attain final

salvation. While the chest was being submerged in water it appeared to be light. His disciples in suspense opened the lock of the chest and found that the body of Swamiji was not inside it—there were only his squatting mat and his garland of flowers.

S'rimad Trailangadhara Swami, a great saint, who had attained freedom from future birth used to travel with a naked body in the streets of Benares. At that time the magistrate of Benares who was an Englishman used to stroll with his wife every afternoon. While walking, one day he was very angry to see *Swamiji* in that naked condition and kept him in the lock-up at the local *Thānā*. But while returning after his evening walk he saw the naked *Fakir* again at the same place. To punish the police Inspector for having let off the *Fakir* he went to the Police Station at once and demanded explanation. The Inspector in charge informed him that the *Fakir* had not been let off but he was in the lock-up. The magistrate did not believe him. He went to the lock-up and was surprised to see that the naked Fakir was really sitting inside the cell. Realising that it was meaningless to detain Swamiji in the lock-up the magistrate let him go. Swamiji now told the magistrate, "No body's life can be confined within a lock-up. If it were possible, a dying man, sent to the lock-up, would not die. You have not that power ; so it is futile for you to be angry."

During sleep or *Samādhi* or loss of consciousness produced by any cause the soul can quit the physical body but it still maintains a subtle connection with it by means of a very fine string of consciousness resembling the umbilical cord of a new-born baby. Death occurs when this link is severed. In the above mentioned stages except in the case of death, a very faint connection is maintained with the body through superconscious harmony. Individual ego lies in an inactive state in all these conditions. So, each day for

some time at least the self in us remains outside the body and bestows on this body of matter an opportunity to enjoy perfect material rest.

A free soul still living in a human body (*Jivanmukta*) can maintain his body or give it up at his sweet will. So long as he is in the body, he gets experiences as in the wakeful condition. When he is without a body his experiences are like those of a dream. Such a soul can enter into any living body at pleasure. "*Pradipavad aveśastathā hi darśayati.*'— Such a possessed body can then be compared to an extinguished lamp lighted again and it behaves exactly like a living body. Both *Gangeś Upādhyāya* and *Udaynāchāryya* admit the possibility of a human being to be possessed by a higher being or God.

Viśvarupa, elder brother of *S'ri Chaitannya*, possessed for sometime the body of Śri *Paramānanda Puri*; so *S'ri Chaitannya* had great respect for *S'ri Puri*. Christ descended in the natural body of Jesus as a spiritual power and lived in the body of Jesus only for three years (*Vide* '*How a World-Teacher Comes*'). The fact that the divine power was neither inborn in Jesus nor did it ever continue to last is evident from the following incident : one day Jesus, while going to a distant place, felt hungry. Finding a fig tree on his way, he approached it to get some fruits, but owing to his ill luck it was not the season for such fruits. He grew angry and cursed the innocent tree with the following words : "No man will eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." His disciples heard it (Mark, XI).

Just before the soul departs from the physical body all the magnetic and electric energy within concentrate in brain. As a result, the head is surrounded on all sides by a fine luminous cloud within which is formed a subtle structure of a full-fledged being. Both *Vyāsdeva* and *Nārada* saw the passing away of the soul of an old dying woman from her

material body, while sitting very close to her. They observed that before her death, the *Jivātman* pervaded her whole being in the form of a light which was being diffused from all parts inside. On the eve of her death the gleam rushed towards the brain and began to scatter outside, ultimately taking form of a cloudy but luminous substance which may be called *ectoplasm*. It covered an area of 6'x6' and inside this cloud was formed at first a beautiful face and then a neck, breast, waist and the work-organs became gradually visible. Thus when death occurred a complete subtle structure of a human being was formed. In the *Āśramik Parva* of the Mahabharat it is stated that after the battle of *Kurukṣetra*, *Vyās* and *Nārada* showed the departed ones to *Dhṛtarāstra*, *Gāndhāri* and other afflicted women who had lost their husbands and sons in the battle. With full concentration of mind they invoked the spirits of the departed warriors and also asked the unfortunate women to fix their minds on the departed souls. The spirits appeared before their bereaved relatives and remained with them till day-break.

The Aryan sages of ancient India traversed the finer worlds in subtle body. Regarding entrance into a foreign body it is observed in the Yoga-Philosophy of *Patanjali* that body, *prāṇa* (vital principle) and mind are closely connected with one another and their connection is cut off by *Saṃyama* or deep concentration when the Yogin can enter another body, living or dead : "*Bandha-karaṇ saithilyād prachāra-saṃvedan-chittasya para śarirābeśaḥ.*" By the practice of Yoga the Yogin has to be acquainted with the routes (nerves) through which the mind moves within the body. This passage of mind is known from Yoga-literature and also from *Nāḍi-Nirṇaya* written by *Yājnavalkya*. A mental wave issues from heart-centre, travels through *Chittavahā Nāḍi*, goes out of the body and finally assumes

the form of an object in the outside world. When the passage of mind is determined, the soul passes out through the same and enters another body, dead or alive. It can withdraw as well itself from the latter and re-enter into its own. Lord Krishna told *Uddhava* that the transference of soul from one body to another can be effected by the exercise of divine powers latent in man.[1] The full knowledge of the passage of mind enables a Yogin to direct his *Prāṇa* and mind in whatever direction he likes. He concentrates his mind, directs it through the *Chittavahā Nāḍi*, leaves the material body and enters another following the similar process. The work-organs of the latter then function according to the will-power of the Yogin. *Prāṇa* and senses of the Yogin follow him when he enters another receptacle. A hearsay story about such entry into a foreign body is given below.

In ancient times all the Pundits (learned men) of India were defeated by a princess, an erudite scholar, in debate on the *S'āstras* (sacred texts). Requested by them, *S'aṃkarāchāryya*, the world-preceptor, unwillingly entered into the contest with the princess. Finding such a scholar, almost equal to *Bṛhaspati* in intellect, prepared to debate on the *S'āstras*, the princess apprehended that it was impossible to defeat him in such a debate. So, she attacked *S'aṃkarāchāryya* in a circuitous way and questioned him on the erotic science. Facing such a totally unknown subject, Śaṃkarāchāryya who was a self-denying devotee, bachelor ascetic all through his life, considered himself to be in a great predicament and the hope of his victory appeared to be very remote. After some thought he told the princess, "Let us close this discussion on the *S'āstras* to-day.

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1. "अनिमामहिमामूर्त्तेर्लघिमाप्राप्तिरिन्द्रियैः।
प्राकाम्यं श्रुतदृष्टेषु शक्तिप्रेरणमीशिता॥"—The *Bhāgavad*, XI. XV. 4.

I shall come back to you after six months when I shall answer your questions." With this he went away to his religious abode. After several days he learnt that King *Amaraka* had died. At once he advised his disciples to preserve his own body carefully and secretly and then by the process of entry into a foreign body he entered the dead body of the king. Concentrating his mind *S'aṃkarāchāryya* moved the breath of life from the thumb of his hand and feet to the tenth (highest) aperture at the crown of his head when the breath of life passed out through it and entered the king's body through that of the latter and spread himself upto the fingers of the king. As *S'aṃkarāchāryya* thus entered the body, the king's heart began to throb, his hands and feet shook, his eyes opened and the king regained life. Living in the king's body for several months *S'aṃkarāchāryya* acquired proficiency in the erotic science. Then he left the king's body and entered into his own. After this he gave proper answers to the questions of the princess and defeated her. It is said that realising that some Yogin must have entered the body of the king, the queen of *Amaraka* ordered the burning of the dead bodies of all Yogins in the realm. The king's men began to search for dead bodies in every religious abode and every cave. The disciples of *S'aṃkarāchāryya* secretly transferred the body left behind by him from place to place and tried to preserve it by all means. Meanwhile, *S'aṃkarāchāryya* understood the motive of the queen. So he left the king's body one day and re-entered his own body.

YOGIC EXPERIENCE

प्रथमे चिञ्चिनी गात्रं द्वितीये गात्रभञ्जनम् ।
तृतीये स्वेदनं याति चतुर्थे कम्पते शिरः ॥

On initiation or during the practice of Yoga when spiritual current enters into human body, the Yogin first of all has the feeling of twinging sensation all over his body ; then the relaxation of his limbs and after that perspiration and in the fourth shaking of his head.

The primary signs of progress in *Yoga* are summed up in the following : (1) Peace of mind, (2) Attractive improvement in complexion, (3) Reasonable conversation, (4) Love of God, (5) Pursuit of truth etc. The Yogin then notices at the time of concentration sudden appearance and disappearance of smoke-screens, fogs and shining bodies like fire-flies, stars, moon and the sun. They do not become lasting due to the fact that neither mind nor *Prāṇa* could develop the power to retain these impressions. It is for this reason that in the beginning such perceptions are very irregular. During the first stage of meditation, feelings of heat and shakiness of body are produced by our inability to receive and retain the divine current that we want to draw in and develop through *Yoga*. Our *Indriyas* or the senses not being familiar with the peculiar experiences of the spiritual current the body shakes and becomes hot. Sometimes, a cry, a crash or cracking sounds are heard. They are caused by the removal of internal obstacles by *Yoga*, when the soul shouts in joy at the unexpected release from the bodily imprisonment.

When concentration is mature, the body becomes rigid like a block of stone but light as feather. This is a mark of special progress in *Yoga*. It is also realised that the whole body evaporates at this stage like camphor. This

is a sign of increase of Yogic attraction upwards. The Yogin feels as if he were being pulled up by the hair to higher and subtler regions. This is caused by the upward movement of *Kundalini* along the canal of *Suṣumnā*, traversing the different *Chakras* on the way when the individual soul becomes eager to unite with the universal Soul. As the individual soul pierces the centres and enters the *Chitrā Nāḍi* inside the *Brahmayoni*, the Yogin loses his senses completely and his mind becomes calm like the clear sky, the reflections of events in the past existences revive. While traversing through the ocean of celestial light, at this stage, the Yogin comes across the shining forms of gods and goddesses and other great personages; the veil of ignorance drops down and the whole structure of illusions of this creation crumbles to dust. Says Tauler, "His spirit is so sunk in divine union that he loses all sense of distinction.....and there remains a secret, still unknown, without cloud or colour". This 'secret' of Tauler points to the stage prior to merging of individual soul in Paramātman.

If the luminous images visualised during *Samādhi* cannot be recollected after its break, it is to be understood that the Yogin has passed that stage and that he is now eligible for meditation on the Formless. If, on the contrary, the images are vividly stamped on the mind, the Yogin may take it for granted that his success in Sādhanā shall come through meditation on his adorable deity having a form. He will attain success in the path of *S'aivism* or *Viṣṇuism* if the figure seen in trance be a male one; the path of *Sāktism* will prove beneficial to him, if the figure is that of a female. When luminous figures, perceived in deep Samādhi, merge in the infinite ocean of Jyoti or gleam, it is to be understood that there will be no longer any visionary perception. It indicates that the Sādhaka has transcended the plane of duality.

During meditation, if any day it so appears that all the forms of different gods and goddesses get mingled and united to make a single celestial form, you may take it as a sign of success in your spiritual advancement in monotheism. The Yogin is then regarded as being in communion with the Supreme Soul. He has become honey-like and so the hankering for honey has disappeared.

Meditation of unqualified Brahman produces no vision. Infinite Brahman spreading through infinite space is formless and unqualified existence. Believing in the existence of the attributeless Lord try heart and soul for realisation of the same with firm faith. If you are really earnest, Brahman will one day appear before you as sure as the rising of the morning sun : "*Māmevaisyasi satyaṃ te pratijāne priyosi me*"—declared Lord Krishna : "A devout follower is very dear to me—he will one day surely attain me". This declaration breathes consolation in the heart of even the greatest of disbelievers. If any Yogin loses his life before attaining final goal he is promised rebirth in the midst of suitable surroundings, when he may carry on his spiritual exercises to a successful close (Vide the Gita, VI. 41-43).

In the first epistle of John, God has been described as light. In deep *Samādhi*, when the sense of the body is gone and mind ceases to function, there floats before our inward vision an ocean of pure consciousness in the form of pure light, boundless and dazzling. It is the life and light of our being the Ātman which is Brahman. This state is much higher than the plane in which the mystical visions are seen. Still the spiritual value of the latter is not to be slighted away as altogether unimportant, since every such realisation is a mile-stone on the upward path of spiritual progress. Equally, the devotee must be cautious against accepting such vision as a mark of final attainment. There is higher and vaster field beyond the realm of mystic vision. Moreover, the

visionary may be misguided by false presentation. *Smṛti* discourages all sorts of visual realisation : "O *Nārada* ! that thou seest Me appeared before thee is not Me in person, but thou beholdest a *Māyik* form created by my power. Do not regard this illusory appearance to be I"—said the invisible God.

The following passage of the *Buddhistic Sect of Japan*, P. 143-4, discourages all sorts of visionary perception : "If on your way you meet *Buddha*, kill him : If you meet the patriarchs, kill them : If you meet the saints, kill them all without any hesitation. That is the only way of reaching salvation. It is not *Buddha*. First liberate your Spirit. Open your eyes, O, moles ! *Buddha* is within you". So long as the image of anybody, be it that of *Krishna*, *Christ* or *Buddha* stands before you obstructing your Yogic vision, the highest truth cannot be reached because still then you are in the dualistic plane. To rise above this plane of duality *S'ri Ram Krishna* had to cleave with the sword of discrimination the gracious form of his adorable deity *Kāli*, the Divine Mother of the universe, who stood before him while he was lost in *Samādhi*. The last barrier being shattered down, *Ram Krishna* stepped into the world of the Supreme Brahman who is one without a second.

In deep Samādhi, the Yogin loses all sense of the external world and he forgets even *Asmitā*. When he comes down from *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*, he realises the entire creation contained in his ownself. He feels that the Lord is in the ocean, in the earth, in the sun and the moon. God is everywhere, in all the objects of creation and in every atom of it :

"He is the axis of each star,
He is the sparkle of each spar,
He is the heart of every creature,
He is the meaning of each feature,
And His mind is in the sky,
Shall all it hold more deep, more high."

Feel it heart and soul that your very unitary Self within, is always active as a source of vital energy, directing the senses, mind and intellect. It is the motion in matter, current in water and life in all living beings. Imagine that your very Self is materialised as various objects of phenomenon in the outside world. The sentiments of your heart, the seat of all feelings of joys and sorrows being objectified are playing in all the minutest details of the vast world outside. There is one and only one all-pervading Entity in the universe which is your Self or *Ātman*. It is the light of your Self which illuminates all objects of the creation and it is your life-force which gives life to the world of beings. Duality disappears when one sees *Ātman* i.e., Brahman everywhere[1]. What is bondage and what is salvation to one who knows that it is Brahman who has assumed the form of the universe[2]. There is no duality; the one and the same Being exists both before creation and after dissolution. He is eternal and never undergoes any change whatsoever. Under delusion you cherish the sense of duality in vain[3] Banish from your mind the idea of duality by all means.

When the above conception becomes firmly established and you find yourself in the whole of creation and the entire creation within your Self, egoism will disappear and the power of discrimination between the Self and the non-self, between the eternal and the transient follow. Then and then only *Bodhi* or the intuitional wisdom illumines the inner sky of your consciousness. In the light of that pure wisdom

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1. "सर्व्व आत्मैव कौ दृष्टौ भावाभावौ क्व वा स्थितौ।
क्व बन्धो मोक्षकलने ब्रह्मैवेदं विजृम्भते॥"

2. "सर्व्वमेकं परं व्योम को मोक्षः कस्य बन्धता।
ब्रह्मेदं ह्रंहिताकारं ह्रहृद् हृदवस्थितम्॥"

3. "मनागपि न भेदोऽस्ति क्वापि सङ्कल्पनोन्मुखः।
आदावन्ते च शंसन्ति स्वरूपमविनाशि यत्॥"

all sorts of doubts and disbeliefs of your mind are effaced altogether ; you realise your truer Self and find yourself to be identical with the *Paramātman* and declare unhesitatingly—"I am Brahman—I am no other than Brahman. I am ever-free, ever-existent and the inner Self of all, animate or inanimate." When a river falls into an ocean it loses its separate individuality with its specific name and form.

Every individual being is endowed with a basic divine nature or a latent divine consciousness which unfolds itself through different bodies in successive births and in a certain birth when it is fully revealed he is re-united with *Paramātman*. 'Ramkrishna Deva sang the joy of the flying kite of the soul, launched by the Mother, while She keeps it attached to Her by the string of illusion. It is Her pleasure to let slip from illusion one or two flying kites among the thousands.' A bird fastened to a thread can fly in the air for some time and is then compelled to come back to the holder of the string for rest when it gets tired. Similarly, a living being undergoes many births to realise the nothingness of this illusory world. At last, tired, exhausted and bored, he returns to the peaceful fold of the Creator.

The individual self has two-fold movements—one towards the material world or the world of enjoyments and the other towards *Paramātman*. One is centrifugal or towards the material universe and the other is centripetal or towards the Supreme Being. When the centripetal movement gains in momentum over the centrifugal, then the individual is naturally drawn towards *Paramātman*. So, Tolstoy said, "A man's life is controlled by two indestructive forces : His animal nature and his consciousness of a filial relationship to God. The divine consciousness urges a man to his fuller recognition—to its complete emancipation from all that fetters it." However engrossed we may be in the outward charms of this illusory world, when a fatal blow comes, we

pause for a moment to think over the end of our present existence.

Under the influence of *Māyā*, all living beings shift from one material body to another. An individual soul goes on attaching itself like a leech to different receptacles one after another in the successive births (Bṛ Ār Up. IV. 4. 3). But inspite of this, the individual soul in response to the centripetal attraction moves also at the same time towards *Paramātman* and after many births it unites at last with the Supreme Soul. Like a piece of iron before a magnet *Jivātman* is being always attracted towards *Paramātman*. So Rabindranath observed, "What a strange ingratitude is expressed through occasional out-burst of mental restlessness to run away from its own environment like a patient in delirium !" "The unconditioned Being eludes us. We nibble at its outer shell but there is a point of fusion when it takes us into its mouth and absorbs us into itself."—said Romain Rolland. Eucken, the German mystic, is of the view that 'there is a definite transcendental principle in man. It is the core of personality. There God and man initially meet'.

When a ship, sailing in the ocean, comes too close to a hill of magnet, it cannot proceed any farther in the direction it was moving, but remains motionless for a time, till at last the iron parts of it—nails, plates etc., get loose and fly to the magnet hill where they get stuck and remain fixed for ever; while its wooden planks beaten by the waves are swept away by the current and disappear never to unite again. Similarly, communion with God in which the individual soul is amalgamated with the Supreme, leaves no scope for the mental body and its component parts to unite together again and to build a fresh body in which the soul may be born and confined once more. Like the vessel which is lost for ever, the existence of that emancipated individual in the plane of *Māyā* comes to termination.

The fundamental reality is the Soul of man. The Soul of man is the candle of God ; in it is contained the true revelation of God. Realising the fundamental unity of individual and Supreme Soul Jesus Christ said, "You will then know that I am in God, you are in me, and I am in you. I and my Father in heaven are one." *Āl Halaj* said—"I am He whom I love ; and He whom I love is within me—the two souls dwelling in one body. When thou seest me thou seest Him ; and when thou seest Him, thou seest me. The world is pervaded with one existence only. In the world of spirituality—*I and thou* have no place." Individual soul is the true image of the Supreme Soul and the Supreme Soul is the Eternal Truth. "God has made man to partake of His own divine nature and to be as immortal as Himself"—The Bible.

The *Sufis* like the Hindus hold the same view : 'The individual soul has no separate entity from the Absolute'. As the Hindu monist declares 'I am He', so do the Sufis assert, "*Ānal Haque*—I am that Supreme Lord who is all Truth." According to *Sufism* the end of human existence is oneness with God. A Persian poem presents a beautiful description, the unique of its kind, of the union of the individual soul with that of the Supreme : 'He was man and I was woman. With the growth of mutual love we drew nearer to each other ; the separation between us gradually faded away, my separate entity was lost in the abyss of All-Love and eventually, the two hearts locked in embrace to be one—never to be parted again." God-like merges in God through love and devotion. We find an echo of this in *Chaitanya Charitāmrita*, the sacred text of the *Vaiṣṇavites* : "Neither then He exists as a man nor do I as a woman. The two souls are then made one by the love of God." "The Fathers compare it to the union of two waxes melted into one and mixed together"—said Saint Cyriel of Alex. In this way the world of plurality retraces back to unity. The

Yogin ascends the highest step of spiritual evolution on realisation of Brahman, and it is then only that like *Prahlād* he declares with full confidence, "Everything has come out of me ; I am everything and everything is in me—I am eternal : *Mattaḥ sarvaṃ ahaṃ sarvaṃ mayi sarvaṃ sanātane.*

When self-identification follows the *Sādhaka* declares unhesitatingly : I am the One-Self which pervades the universe and there is nothing but myself. I am unmanifest indestructible, unborn and undecaying, the ever-existent, the ever-conscious, self-revealing, blissful and immortal[1]. I am the eternal seed and mainstay of all objects. I am the liquidity of water, the light of the sun and the moon and the *OM* of the *Vedās*. I am the sound of the sky and heat of the fire. I am the living energy of all living beings. From Brahman down to the tiny blade of grass, all denizens of the air and dwellers of the earth—all that are either visible or invisible that am I.

S'aṃkarāchāryya, the great spiritual leader and world-teacher, was one day passing along a street on the back of a dog and eating cakes while doing so. At the sight of this when passers-by began to laugh at him, he said quite unabashed, "Why do you, oh *Viṣṇus*, laugh at me ? *Viṣṇu* is seated on the back of *Viṣṇu* and is eating *Viṣṇu*. Is not this universe pervaded by *Viṣnu* only ?" Those who have actually realised Brahman look at every individual and every object of this world in this light.

The same spiritual essence appears as thought in the mind of men and as external objects in the outside world. This realisation arises out of the Yogin's firmness in practice.

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1. "नित्योऽहं निरवद्योऽहं निराकारोऽहमच्चरः ।
परमानन्दरूपोऽहमहमेवाव्ययः ॥"

Also : "स्वयं प्रकाशरूपोऽहं चिन्मयः परमोऽप्यहम् ।
अहं तानन्दरूपोऽहमहमेवाव्ययः ॥"

The rythm of the Supreme Soul is active everywhere, in all actions of the animate world—in the beatings of the heart, in the act of digestion, in the picking up of food grains by the sparrow and the careless rumination of the bovine animals. The same essence as is in the waves of thought in your mind are transformed into objects of senses in the world of matter.

The power underlying your existence and your activity is giving life and existence to all creatures and plants of this creation. With the help of your imagination try to spread out your consciousness, both inside and outside. By successfully carrying out this practice the entire field of consciousness will appear to you like a vast and tranquil sheet of water where every ojbect of the external and the internal world is present in the form of thought. This being practised for some days you will see that all your thoughts and all these forms have disappeared in the sky of consciousness illuminated with the Divine Light. This stage is highly rapturous. And this sky of consciousness flooded with divine light is nothing other than *Paramātman*.

The Knower, the known and the knowledge make up a triad which is dissolved at the time of *Mahā Pralaya* or major dissolution of the universe as also on realisation of Brahman. Loss of equillibrium in the condition of the *Guṇas* constituting *Prakriti* is the cause of creation which undergoes dissolution on re-establishment of equillibrium. Creation melts into oneness at the time of dissolution. During dissolution solid becomes liquid, liquid becomee gaseous and that again transforms into ether. Forces of nature such as repulsion and contraction etc., all merge in the universal *Prāṇa*. This whole process may be compared to the act of the spider which withdraws into itself all the silk it produces[1]. With dissolution, the universal *S'akti* or energy, so long kinetic,

1. Vide Mundakopaniṣad 1. 7.

reverts to its potential condition and remains withdrawn in the *Prakriti* to spring into activity again when the time of fresh creation comes. The sage, *Panchaśikha*, says, "During *Pralaya* or dissolution ne-science goes back to rest in *Prakriti*". *Sānandāchāryya* says, "During *Pralaya* even in the absence of a subtle body the ne-science peculiar to it continues its existence in *Prakriti*. Just as a necklace of gold, when melted, loses its shape but continues to retain its nature of gold with no change in weight etc, similarly, the whole creation though dissolved remains in another form i.e., in the form of a germ in *Prakriti*." Even the gods in heaven remain merged in *Prakriti*; they are also subject to dissolution : *Kāla-Biplutaṃ*. But there is no return for him who merges in Brahman.

The whole universe has sprung from *Prakriti*. Unmanifest *Prakriti*, becoming manifest, has given birth to this visible universe. All objects of this universe—from the trifling particles of dust to the all-pervading universal consciousness or qualified Brahman—have evolved from *Prakriti*. Ātman or the Soul is foreign to *Prakriti* and is identical with *Paramātman*. The realisation of this truth leads one to liberation. The illusion of creation disappears but the free soul continues to live in a material body, though in no way influenced by it any more. This is *Jivan-mukti* or emancipation or emancipation of the embodied soul.

The two goals which are always before a Yogin are (1) *Kaivalya-Mukti* or complete emancipation of the bodiless soul, and (2) *Jivanmukti* or emancipation of the embodied soul, i.e., the soul which is still confined in a body. Both these goals can be achieved by the practice of *Yoga*. The first may be called immersion in the Absolute or amalgamation with God, in which the Soul is oned with Bliss, i.e., it becomes one with God. An emancipated soul lives in this world as the representative of God, stainless, awakened and completely free. This is attainment of goal No. 2 which is *Jivanmukti*.

When the Yogin passes from the stage of duality to that of non-duality and when the worship of qualified Brahman leads him to the attainment of unqualified Brahman, the guide and master who has so long been adored by the Yogin in the form of a human being reveals Himself to his adorer as Reality—Absolute unfolded in the eternal and undivided existence of which all else of this universe are immersed and lost. Simultaneously with this supreme realisation, the narrow limitation of individuality disappears and the self of the Yogin shines in the unlimited, all-pervading and eternal glory of his own. The true import of such Vedic passages as "*Tat Tvaṃ Asi*" etc. is then realised and the Yogin becomes *Jivan-mukta.*

In this way when all the past deeds of a free but embodied soul are consumed by the fire of knowledge a very faint and feeble vibration of past impressions still persists within. There is a statement "*Chakra Bhramivad Dhṛtaśariraḥ*" which explains the situation very nicely. It means that when the potter's wheel is once set in motion it goes on revolving for a long time, though no further attempt is made to renew or increase the speed. Similarly, the physical body which is the abode of a free soul continues to remain in existence, though all his desires and impressions of his previous lives have been consumed. It is like the fragrance of flowers lingering on the flower-pot, though the flowers have been taken away. "The word incarnate retains His Humanity and Divinity, yet always communicates both the person receiving Him."—Manresa. Two days before his demise, Śri Ramkrishna declared : "He who was Ram and who was Krishna is now Ramkrishna in this body lying here."

A free soul living in this plane feels in the heart of his hearts that his existence has been completely merged in the existence of God. This wonderful experience becomes distinct and clear day by day and he declares with perfect

confidence, "There is no difference between my beloved and me—we have two bodies but one mind and one soul."—said *Chandidas*. When a man walking on the spiritual path is favoured with such experiences all his chains fall off and he becomes free. According to the Gita, the knower of the secret truths to whom God reveals Himself is the very Soul of God. Such a free soul lives on the earth as the manifest and embodied form of the Supreme Lord.

Faith in monotheism or non-duality becomes stronger and stronger from day to day as faith in duality decreases. With the total disappearance of the sense of duality the soul is freed from all bondages and the yogin becomes known from that moment as *Jivan-Mukta* and he declares : "I live yet not I but God in me—He and I become one—we are two in one" He becomes emancipated though still living and possessed of a mortal frame. This is *Brāhmisthiti* or living in God (*Brahma Sutra*, 1. 2).

According to the *Vedanta*, He is really wise and truly an emancipated soul who, through discriminative knowledge, sees himself only as a witness—an indifferent spectator[1]. He is motionless like a tree : *Jnāni bṛkṣa iva stabdhaḥ*. He looks with an equal eye on caste and outcaste, men and animals[2]. Finite consciousness never touches such an emancipated soul[3]. The moment a Yogin realises Self, he obtains salvation[4].

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1. "अहं साक्षीति यो विद्याद् विविच्चैव पुनः पुनः ।
स एव मुक्तो विद्वान् स इति वेदान्तडिण्डिमः ॥"
2. "इहैव स विमुक्तः स्यात् समदर्शनः ।"
—Śiva Dharmottara. Vide also the Gita, V. 18 & III. 17.
3. "योगी देहाभिमानी स्यात् भोगी कर्म्मणि तत्परः ।
ज्ञानी मोक्षाभिमानी स्यात् तत्त्वज्ञो नाभिमानिता ॥"
4. "यस्मिन् काले स्वमात्मानं योगी जानाति केवलम् ।
तस्मात् कालात् समारभ्य जीवन्मुक्तो भवेदसौ ॥"—Brahma Purāṇa.
Also : "य एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ।"—Śveta Up. III. 1.

Such a person never misses the sense of non-duality, not even at the time of his death. For the maturity of knowledge in him he becomes truly divine and there remains no duty for him to discharge. He is now past the stage of mundane life and consequently worship, meditation, repetition of the holy *mantra* and breath-control etc., are no longer necessary for him. He has no more any duty to perform[1] : "In whose mind dwells, Oh darling, the eye-soothing Lord of the colour of dark rain-clouds, what has he to do with worship and adoration and what has he to do with the counting of beads ?" This is the verdict of the *Vedānta* that duty ceases to exist with the dawning of the knowledge of the Absolute. The path of the Yogin which leads to true knowledge has no more any value for him. With the dawning of the consciousness that Brahman is the only reality and that the entire creation is unreal, what desire may still lurk in the heart of the *Jivanmukta* person to urge him to activity ? He is no longer a man of this world, though he may seem to be still engrossed in it. He is like a tree with its roots cut off, destined to perish soon, though outwardly still rich in green foliage and beautiful flowers.

Paramhansa Deva used to say, "No duty remains to be done by a person who, at the very mention of the holy name sheds tears and gets horripilation all over the body." When the Lord's grace remains for ever with his servant, where is the necessity of prayer ? *Bāmākṣepā* used to say, "My Mother is never away from me. She never deserts me." Obviously, there is no necessity of prayers in such a situation.

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1. "इहलोके परे चैव कर्त्तव्यं नास्ति तस्य वै ।
जीवन्मुक्तो यतस्तस्मात् ब्रह्मविद् परमार्थतः ॥"—Linga Purāṇa.

Also : "न मे पार्थास्ति कर्त्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।"
—Said Krishna to Arjuna.

The shoutings of any devotee at the top of his voice indicate that the devotee is far off from God. For, in truth, when God reveals Himself in his full grace to any devotee he becomes mute with joy and wonder at the sight of His soul-captivating form.

Madame Blavatosky describes in the following lines how she realised truth by awakening Bodhi : "Knowledge came in visions, first in dreams, then in pictures presented to the inner eye during meditation. Thus have I been taught the whole system of evolution, the law of being and all else that I know the mysteries of life and death, the working of *Karma*. Not a word was spoken to me of all this in the ordinary way, except perhaps, by way of confirmation of what was thus given me, nothing taught me in writing. And the knowledge so obtained is so dear, so convincing, so indelible in the impression it makes upon the mind, that all other sources of information, all other methods of teaching with which we are familiar, dwindle into insignificance in comarison with this. One of the reasons why I hesitate to answer off-hand some questions put to me is the difficulty of expressing in sufficiently accurate language things given to me in pictures, and comprehended by me by the pure reason, as *Kant* would call it[1]".

Lord Tennyson describes in the following lines how *Samādhi* frequently came upon him : "A kind of waking trance comes upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seems to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words where death is an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were)

1. Vide 'How a world Teacher comes'.

seeming no extinction but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words ?"

A brief account from the harvest of my personal experience in the path of spirituality is given below.

In the beginning when absorbed in meditation, an illuminated space used to spread before me. Surrrounded by soft light on all sides, it looked like the figure of a mirror. Within that illuminated area there appeared some gods, goddesses and saints in luminous figures. Thus it continued for some time, the body and the mind definitely improved and I could then realise the feeling of other men and foresee some thing of the future. On many occasions the facts of my family-life made me think that those facts happened also in the past but I could not at once recall when it was so. Later on, I remembered that a similar vision appeared within the illuminated sky during meditation in the past by way of prescience.

Immediately before *Mahātmāji* started the last campaign against British Rule in India I saw him within that realm ; he was walking very quickly with a stick in hand and only with his loins covered, and behind him was a vast sea of human heads. Within three or four days of this vision *Māhatmāji* was imprisoned with the distinguished leaders of the country ; Indians, without leadership, became zealous to free Mother India from bondage. This has been famous in history as the mass-agitation of August, 1942.

A few days before the release of the leaders I had seen a large iron gate opened and from within it came out leaders like *Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru* and *Moulana Abul Kalam Azad* etc. I had not seen *Mahātmāji* with them. About sixteen years ago I told my friends that it was the auspicious moment for India—within half an hour the sun would rise in the Indian sky—the freedom of India was sure to follow

within five or six years. Our one hour is equivalent twelve years of national life.

Engaged in the practice of Yoga one day, I reached the middle of a vast sea of halo ; from all sides an ocean of the brightest gleam was about to devour and drown me. It seemed that I would never be able to come out the sea of that bright light. For this I was much frightened—there was a confusion in the brain. I was afraid my brain would be shattered to pieces ; so I was terribly afraid and shouted at the top of my voice for relief. My concentration was broken and I woke up like a man awakened from sleep. When I had the experience I was a new-comer in this field and I did not know everything about *Yoga* very well. That is why I was nervously in fear of losing my life. If at that time I could firmly concentrate my consciousness in the cerebellum i.e., between the two brows, and recant the formula of entering the sixth mystical circle in the body, then that unsettled condition would disappear and the experience would be joyful to me. But as I had no prior experience of those things I was thrown into perplexity.

About two years after my starting the practice of Yoga one morning I practised *Prāṇāyāma* for a few minutes and then duly concentrating my mind in the cerebellum began meditation. First I began to recite mentally the mantra ॐ द ऋ उ ॐ[1] and within ten to fifteen minutes my body and mind became peaceful when I began to recite with singleness of mind the mantra *OM Haṃsaḥ* praying fervently to the saints at the same time that they might favour me and show me the path. Gradually, my meditation deepened when I saw that I was standing on an open space and over my head was the clear blue sky. Suddenly my attention was drawn to a space at a distance of five or six cubits where I saw Swami Śrimad

1. OM (ॐ) DA (द) AWE (ऋ) U (उ) OM (ॐ).

Vivekananda standing. He had on his person a cloth coloured with ochre, on his head was a turban of the same colour and in his hand was a staff. As my eyes were cast upon him he beckoned me to him and when I approached him he beckoned me to follow him. I followed him along a luminous footway on both sides of which were flower-gardens bathed in light. There was no sign of human habitation and we did not see any living being on our way. Thus both of us walked about three miles. During the walk I asked Swamiji nothing and he told me nothing. Finally, at the farthest end of the path an old monastery was seen. We two reached the door of the monastery. The door of the *Math* was circular in the upper part like the door of a temple. Swamiji opened this door and entered into it. He signalled me to get in. I entered the monastery as desired by him. That *Math* was like a big hall ; there were many altars on both sides at distances of four cubits. Although the monastery seemed to be an old one it was quite neat and clean and had an atmosphere of sanctity. Entering inside I saw a Yogin of placid mien, absorbed in meditation on an alter to my left. His tall figure and splendour of the body made him appear an up-country Yogin. I was closely watching that Yogin when Swamiji again signalled me to follow him and I followed him. There were many altars inside the *māth* and on each altar was seated a Yogin. Swamiji stopped before an altar ; I stood behind him and as the passage was narrow I could see nothing in the front. As Swamiji stepped aside just a little I saw the world-preceptor, Śri Śri Ram Krishna Paramhansa Deva, seated on the altar before me. It seemed that he had just then taken his bath and partaken of morning meal and was now chewing something to cleanse the mouth. As our eyes met he smiled a little. I was so delighted to see Paramhansa Deva in person seated before me that I was mute with joy and the whole of my body thrilled violently in joy. It seemed

that I was unable to hold this current of joy in the body As my body thrilled in this manner my *Samādhi* was broken. I was so unfortunate that even having this world-preceptor before me I could not bow down to him in reverence.

Five years after this I saw a photo which reminded me of that Yogin in meditation. Both had the same figure. The only difference was that the body of the figure I saw in the photo was a little fatter than the Yogin in meditation. Below the photo was written the name—*Swami S'rimad Ābhedananda Maharaj*. Before this I had never seen Swamiji Maharaj living or photographed. The appearance of the Yogin in meditation was so deeply impressed on my mind that if I were an artist I could have drawn a faithful picture of his appearance when my *Samādhi* was broken.

One day Śri Śri Ramkrishna Paramhansa Deva described before his disciples his own experience of *Samādhi* as follows :

In the state of *Samādhi* he saw that he was going up into an upper world along a luminous path. Gradually, he left behind this world and entered a subtle region. As he ascended higher and higher from the subtle to the subtler and thence to the yet subtler sphere he saw on both sides of the path gods and goddesses. When he went still higher up he saw an illuminated fence. It seemed that as if that fence had separated the lower sphere from the world of Absolute Brahman. He crossed the barrier and entered the world of Supreme Brahman but he could not see any god or goddess there. On his way he saw seven sages in the state of *Samādhi*. It occurred to him that those seven sages were superior even to the gods in regard to knowledge, love, sacrifice and purity. When he was thinking about their greatness most reverentially he saw that a portion of that illuminated area condensed and turned into the figure of a divine child. The celestial child approached a sage and throwing his soft hands round the neck of the sage began to call him in a sweet voice in order

to awaken him from the state of his *Samādhi*. His magic touch terminated the *Samādhi* of the ascetic and he cast his half-opened eyes upon that wonderful divine child. The face of the ascetic beaming in joy suggested that the child was the treasure of his heart. Brimming with joy, that wonderful divine child told the sage, "I am going to the earth, you too shall have to accompany me." The sage said nothing but his affectionate looks suggested that he accepted the child-like whim of the boy. Next moment the sage was lost in meditation again with his eyes cast upon that divine child. Paramhansa Deva was astonished very much to see that the body and mind of the sage descending to the earth in the form of a luminous light.

The moment Paramhansa Deva saw Narendra (later on Swami Vivekananda) for the first time at *Dakṣineśvar* he recognised Narendra to be the sage. The divine child was Śri Śri Ramkrishna Deva himself. Really, all along he was a simple-hearted child like the infant Christ and through out his life he sucked the milk of his Mother's breast.

CONCLUSION

May that supremely Merciful God of gods Who is One and without a second, Himself beyond all descriptions, Who has created various kinds of living beings by His powers and is prescribing whatever is desirable for them, unite us all with the bond of truth, love and fellowship. Let that Brahman of the Upaniṣads be revealed before me. May I not deny His existence nor may He deny nor forsake me. Let there be an eternal relation between Him and me. O Lord, manifest in me all the virtues, as enjoined by the *Upaniṣads*. It is out of His will that we come to this earth and are blind-folded by *Māyā*. Let us now enjoy the Joyful Self of the Lord Supreme and look at Him with eyes full of divine love. With peace in mind let us fix our hearts on the graceful feet of that Supreme Being. May we thus beguile the few limited days at our disposal in the ecstacy of His love till the termination of our present existence. Salvation is inevitable ; let us make ourselves fit for it. Forgive, O kind Lord. Make us free from malice and disease. Make us strong and happy Have pity on us. *OM S'ānti, OM S'ānti, OM S'ānti*—OM Peace, OM Peace, OM Peace.

ॐ सर्व्वं ब्रह्मौपनिषदं माहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्य्यां मा मा ब्रह्म निराकरोदनिराकरनमस्त्वनिराकरणं मेऽस्तु। तदात्मनि निरते य उपनिषदसु धर्म्मास्ते मयि सन्तु, ते मयि सन्तु ॥ ॐ सह नाववतु। ॐ सह नौ भुनक्तु। ॐ सह वीर्य्यां करवावहै। ॐ तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै। ॐ शान्तिः ॐ शान्तिः ॐ शान्तिः ॥

सर्व्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः। सर्व्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ॥

ॐ तत् सत्। ॐ तत् सत्। ॐ तत् सत्। ॐ हरिः ॐ। ॐमख ॥

ERRATA

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
19	Foot note, 2	Kāṭha	Katha
39	14	Abhāsa	Ābhāsa
45	7	Abhāsa	Ābhāsa
46	10	consciosness	consciousness
	12	God-censciousness	God-consciousness
75	15	observer	observes
97	1	Abhāsa	Ābhāsa
	3	etāt	etat
	6	objects"s	objects"
109	30	is	are
110	28	carcāram	carācarṃ
114	13	Brahmān	Brahman
117	31	objcct	object
119	14	Ahaṃpratyaya hi...	Ahaṃpratyaye hi...
	15	caitanyaṃavabhāsati	chaitanyama-vabhāsate
129	28	dssolved	dissolved
143	28	disappar	disappear
149	34	I	It
151	11	to	tu
153	18	Mahammad	Mohammed
155	30 & 31	*Tanmataras*	*Tanmatras*
159	2	never	ever
172	23	distruction	destruction
178	20	elemet	element
218	27	gridha	gṛdhaḥ
287	9	bighna sukheṣuvigata-spṛha	bighnamanāḥ sukheṣuvigataspṛhaḥ
361	31	But it a	But it
373	23	taxt	text
386	20	*Āvṛtascakṣu*	*Āvṛtascakṣur*
432	8	Westcotta" is	Westcott "is
511	23	witten	written
756	5	latter	former
	8	own its	its own
766	27	indicateing	indicating
827	23	*Jātlvaṃ*	*Tattvam*
III	17	through	thorough
	18	towarde	towards

Sanskrit Errata

Page	Foot note Line	Incorrect	Correct
22	1	गुणा प्रकृतिसम्भवा	गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः
31	2	किञ्चन	किञ्चन
32	1	भेदः	भेदः
42	3	सद्भावः	सद्भावः
62	1	प्रकरीति	प्रकरोति
79	2	पुजापतिम्	प्रजापतिम्
87	2	III. 10. 13	III. 10. 20
95	2	डिण्डिभः	डिण्डिमः
117	1	सुप्रतिष्ठाऽचरञ्च	सुप्रतिष्ठाऽचरञ्च
120	3	मृत्यमाप्नोति	मृत्युमाप्नोति
120	8	सम्भय:	सम्भूयः
178	1	तमोऽभूत:	तमोऽभूतः
773	1	मसुइव:	ससुइवः
475	1	अस्तीति वतो	अस्तीति ध्रुवतो
692	1	ना	न
778	2	भ	भू
805	6	तदस्तु	तदस्तु
887	1	नै	नो
887	4	शान्ति	शान्तिः
906	5	सङ्कल्पनोन्मख:	सङ्कल्पनोन्मुखः

N. B. The letter S in the words—Samkar Samkarāchāryya, Siva, Sakti, Sri, Srimati, Sruti, Sveta, Svetaketu, Sukdeva, Parāsara, darsan, Susruta, Ākāsa, Isvara, Sabda, Sāntiparva, Sānti, Visokā should be taken as Ś or ś as the case may be. Similarly, the letter 'n' in words—Guna, Saguna, Nirguna, Parināma, Punya, Prānāyāma, Varna, should be taken as 'ṇ'.

Abbreviation	For
Śveta Up.	Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad
Bṛ Ar Up.	Bṛhadāraṇyak Upaniṣad
Katha Up.	Kathopaniṣad
Taitt Up.	Taittiriya Upaniṣad
Chhā Up.	Chhāndogyopaniṣad
Mu. Up.	Mundak Upaniṣad
Mā Up.	Māndukya Upaniṣad
S. B.	Saṃkar-Bhāṣya
Bhā	Śrimad Bhāgavad

APPRECIATION

Dr. Sri Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan.

the great philosopher of our country and
Vice-President of India writes :—

Dear Kaviraj Abhaya Pada Roy,

I have now looked through your book "THE QUEST OF THE INFINITE". It is a noble attempt to explain with great learning and insight the fundamental principles of our philosophy. Your learning in the literature and philosophy of the East as well as of the West is vast and your devotion to the cause of our culture is intense. I do hope that the readers of the book will catch a little of your enthusiasm and piety.

VICE-PRESIDENT'S LODGE
2, King Edward Road,
New Delhi,
June 28, 1958.

Yours sincerely,
Sd. S. Radhakrishnan

Dr. Sri Kalidas Nag M. A. (Cal.) D. Litt (Paris)

President, West Bengal Adult Education Association and Ex-Member, Council of States—New Delhi, writes :—

The book entitled "THE QUEST OF THE INFINITE" by Kaviraj Abhaya Pada Roy is a precious gem in the region of Hindu religio-philosophy. In it the author has revealed the essence of the most difficult Vedantic doctrine in a very easy, lucid and attractive manner. It is a source of our gratification that men of modern culture who are not conversant with the Sanskrit language, will be able to grasp the sense of the Vedanta and Yoga-philosophy by perusal of this book. Each chapter of the book deals with different topics, touches on the main points of the Vedantic doctrines and closely follows the Upaniṣadic tenets. The succeeding

chapters take the reader, step by step, to the higher realms of the Ultimate Truth unfolding the doctrine of Non-Duality. The author does not ignore the path of Dualism, though his writing is directed towards the realisation of the monistic truth. He wants to lead the aspirants to the domain of the Ultimate Truth, which is one without a second, through the path of Duality. The path shown is, undoubtedly, easily intelligible and approachable to the mediocre intellect. This shows his liberal views and sympathy for the common run of people.

The book is divided into two parts :—theoretical and practical. In the first part, the author has sought to make the reader acquainted with the deep mysteries of the Vedantic teachings and in the second part of the book he demonstrates the easiest way to the realisation of God through the practice of Yoga and devotion. The book speaks of the author's intimate knowledge of the Vedanta-philosophy as well as of the intricacies of the mystic philosophy of the East and West. A thorough reading of the book will convince the reader what a Herculean labour the author has had to undertake in compiling this unique philosophical treatise.

His suggestions for introducing the practice of the *Āsana* and *Prāṇāyāma* of Yoga in school and college curriculum require careful consideration, specially, in this age of mental restlessness among the young students. The authorities of the Indian universities should accept this proposal as the most befitting to the need of the present time. In the mazy paths of the world with the dark clouds hanging over us the book is a light to guide the seeker after eternal truth, life, peace and happiness. I recommend the study of this book in our universities along with the prescribed texts on Oriental philosophy.

I congratulate the author on producing this invaluable book which will doubtless prove a great boon to those who are after the Quest of the Infinite.

Calcutta
25. 6. 58.

Sd. Kali Das Nag M. A. D. Litt.