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Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,  
A new light breaks upon the earth,  
A new world is born.  
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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*“Great is Truth and it shall prevail”*

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**ARYA**

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15<sup>th</sup> August 1914

On the occasion of the Centenary of the publication of the *Arya*, we reproduce, as facsimile, the entire first issue of the English edition and also the cover page and inside cover of the French edition.

(A few stains in the yellowed pages of the scanned copy have been retained.)



N° 1

# आर्य

**A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW**

*(English Edition of the "Revue de Grande Synthèse.")*

**Editors :**

SRI AUROBINDO GHOSE — PAUL & MIRRA RICHARD.

15th August 1914

7, Rue Dupleix, Pondicherry.

INDIA.

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# “ ARYA ”

## MONTHLY REVIEW.

*The “ ARYA ” is a Review of pure philosophy.*

*The object which it has set before itself is twofold :—*

*1. A systematic study of the highest problems of existence ;*

*2. The formation of a vast Synthesis of knowledge, harmonising the diverse religious traditions of humanity occidental as well as oriental. Its method will be that of a realism, at once rational and transcendental,—a realism consisting in the unification of intellectual and scientific discipline with those of intuitive experience.*

*This Review will also serve as an organ for the various groups and societies founded on its inspiration.*

The Review will publish :—

**Synthetic studies in speculative Philosophy.**

**Translations and commentaries of ancient texts.**

**Studies in Comparative Religion.**

**Practical methods of inner culture and self development.**

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# The Life Divine

## BOOK I

### THE AFFIRMATIONS OF VEDANTA

She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond, she is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming,—Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awakening someone who was dead...What is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that now must shine? She desires the ancient mornings and fulfils their light; projecting forwards her illumination she enters into communion with the rest that are to come.

*Kutsa Angirasa. Rig Veda.*

## CHAPTER I

### THE HUMAN ASPIRATION

Threefold are those supreme births of this divine force that is in the world, they are true, they are desirable; he moves there wide-overt within the Infinite and shines pure, luminous and fulfilling...That which is immortal in mortals and possessed of the truth, is a god and established inwardly as an energy working out in our divine powers... Become high-uplifted, O Strength, pierce all veils, manifest in us the things of the Godhead.

*Vamadeva-Rig Veda IV. 1. 2. & 4.*

The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and, as it seems, his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation,—for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment,—is also the highest which his thought can envisage. It manifests itself in the divination of Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure Truth and unmixed Bliss, the sense of a secret immortality. The ancient dawns of human knowledge have left us their witness to this

constant aspiration ; today we see a humanity satiated but not satisfied by victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature preparing to return to its primeval longings. The earliest formula of Wisdom promises to be its last,— God, Light, Freedom, Immortality.

These persistent ideals of the race are at once the contradiction of its normal experience and the affirmation of higher and deeper experiences which are abnormal to humanity and only to be attained, in their organised entirety, by a revolutionary individual effort or an evolutionary general progression. To know, possess and be the divine being in an animal and egoistic consciousness, to convert our twilit or obscure physical mentality into the plenary supra-mental illumination, to build peace and a self-existent bliss where there is only a stress of transitory satisfactions besieged by physical pain and emotional suffering, to establish an infinite freedom in a world which presents itself as a group of mechanical necessities, to discover and realise the immortal life in a body subjected to death and constant mutation,—this is offered to us as the manifestation of God in Matter and the goal of Nature in her terrestrial evolution. To the ordinary material intellect which takes its present organisation of consciousness for the limit of its possibilities, the direct contradiction of the unrealised ideals with the realised fact is a final argument against their validity. But if we take a more deliberate view of the world's workings, that direct opposition appears rather as part of Nature's profoundest method and the seal of her completest sanction.

For all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity. To rest content with an unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man, but impossible for his fully awakened mind, and usually even his practical parts only escape from the general necessity either by shutting out the problem or by accepting a rough, utilitarian and unillumined compromise. For essentially, all Nature seeks a harmony, life and



matter in their own sphere as much as mind in the arrangement of its perceptions. The greater the apparent disorder of the materials offered or the apparent disparateness, even to irreconcilable opposition, of the elements that have to be utilised, the stronger is the spur, and it drives towards a more subtle and puissant order than can normally be the result of a less difficult endeavour. The accordance of active Life with a material of form in which the condition of activity itself seems to be inertia, is one problem of opposites that Nature has solved and seeks always to solve better with greater complexities; for its perfect solution would be the material immortality of a fully organised mind-supporting animal body. The accordance of conscious mind and conscious will with a form and a life in themselves not overtly self-conscious and capable at best of a mechanical or subconscious will is another problem of opposites in which she has produced astonishing results, and aims always at higher marvels; for there her ultimate miracle would be an animal consciousness no longer seeking but possessed of Truth and Light, with the practical omnipotence which would result from the possession of a direct and perfected knowledge. Not only, then, is the upward impulse of man towards the accordance of yet higher opposites rational in itself, but it is the only logical completion of a rule and an effort that seem to be a fundamental method of Nature and the very sense of her universal strivings.

We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled consciousness. And then there seems to be little objection to a farther step in the series and the admission that mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond Mind. In that case, the unconquerable

impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind and appears to be as natural, true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life. As there, so here, the impulse exists more or less obscurely in her different vessels with an ever-ascending series in the power of its will-to-be; as there, so here it is gradually evolving and bound fully to evolve the necessary organs and faculties. As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant up to its full organisation in man, so in man himself there is the same ascending series, the preparation, if nothing more, of a higher and divine life. The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say rather, to manifest God? For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realisation of that which she secretly is. We cannot, then, bid her pause at a given stage of her evolution, nor have we the right to condemn with the religionist as perverse and presumptuous or with the Rationalist as a disease or hallucination any intention she may evince or effort she may make to go beyond. If it be true that Spirit is involved in Matter and apparent Nature is secret God, then the manifestation of the divine in himself and the realisation of God within and without are the highest and most legitimate aim possible to man upon earth.

Thus the eternal paradox and eternal truth of a divine life in an animal body, an immortal aspiration or reality inhabiting a mortal tenement, a single and universal consciousness representing itself in limited minds and divided egos, a transcendent, indefinable, timeless and spaceless Being who alone renders time and space and cosmos

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possible, and in all these the higher truth realisable by the lower term, justify themselves to the deliberate reason as well as to the persistent instinct or intuition of mankind. Attempts are sometimes made to have done finally with questionings which have so often been declared insoluble by logical thought and to persuade men to limit their mental activities to the practical and immediate problems of their material existence in the universe, ; but such evasions are never permanent in their effect. Mankind returns from them with a more vehement impulse of inquiry or a more violent hunger for an immediate solution. By that hunger mysticism profits and new religions arise to replace the old that have been destroyed or stripped of significance by a scepticism which itself could not satisfy because, although its business was inquiry, it was unwilling sufficiently to inquire. The attempt to deny or stifle a truth because it is yet obscure in its outward workings and too often represented by obscurantist superstition or a crude faith, is itself a kind of obscurantism. The will to escape from a cosmic necessity because it is arduous, difficult to justify by immediate tangible results, slow in regulating its operations, must turn out eventually to have been no acceptance of the truth of Nature but a revolt against the secret, mightier will of the great Mother. It is better and more rational to accept what she will not allow us as a race to reject and lift it from the sphere of blind instinct, obscure intuition and random aspiration into the light of reason and an instructed and consciously self-guiding will. And if there is any higher light of illumined intuition or self-revealing truth which is now in man either obstructed and inoperative or works with intermittent glancings as if from behind a veil or with occasional displays as of the northern lights in our material skies, then there also we need not fear to aspire. For it is likely that such is the next higher state of consciousness of which Mind is only a form and veil, and through the splendours of that light may lie the path of our progressive self-enlargement into whatever highest state is humanity's ultimate resting-place.

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## THE WHEREFORE OF THE WORLDS

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### INTRODUCTION

Night, there is none, no night except the veil which we create for ourselves, no other obscurity than the darkness in which our eyes indulge.

The mind that looks deeply into existence, finds there no shadow but that of appearances, and the most obscure and infinitesimal of these can uncover to its search sovereign realities, once it has accustomed its gaze to the light of the mystery which every appearance conceals. Where the indifferent sees only a valueless object or a fortuitous and unimportant detail, the thinker whom no coverings can deceive, is able to detect one of the signs by which eternal laws yield up their secret. A stone that falls, a ripe fruit that opens, become to his vision initiating symbols, keys to a supreme knowledge. By relativities that all disdain, the Absolute delivers up to him the secrets reserved for the sages.

For him the very darkness becomes light, because all is light. But what light can be sufficient for eyes that keep themselves closed, for the mind which remains sealed ?

How often have the predestined messengers of knowledge, the circumstances privileged to bring to us supreme teachings, passed before our eyes, teaching us nothing ? The very abyss has opened without revealing to us the secret of its depths. We weep before a tomb. The sensations of our egoistic nature compel us to suffer where we might have thought and our affliction remains to us a barren experience. It has torn from us what we loved, but what it brought to us, we did not know how to receive. The tumult of the heart prevents the mind from learning these eternal verities, " There is no death ; there is no night."

\* \* \*

All is light, a lustre which blinds instead of enlightening us because it is too puissant for our gaze ; for all the veils in which our vision is enveloped, are only veils of dazzlement. There are for our eyes excessive splendours as well as insufficient gleams. The measure of every obscurity is the imperfection of our vision and the night is the symbol of our ignorance.

But nothing is really hidden ; for where shall anything whatsoever dissimulate its presence or its truth in the all that is universally self-evident ? The things that are visible to us are those which are in correspondence with the measure of clarity already acquired by our consciousness and our mind.

The progressive illumination of our faculties prepares them for the perception of things more luminous, because more real and permanent than those that are visible.

For that which is visible, since it is adapted to our special sense-faculties and itself dependent on the transitoriness of our being, is necessarily ephemeral. So also may be much that is invisible to us ; but things eternal are by their very essence alien to our perceptions and they escape in the proportion in which their modes of being differ from ours.

And even that which is visible may dwell beyond the range of our perceptions if it exceeds our proportions. The vaster it is in its totality, the less ephemeral in its duration, the less is it perceptible to us. Thus the earth which we inhabit is visible to our eyes solely in its details and we can compass the knowledge of it in its totality only by a method of abstraction and by an appeal to means that belong to the order of mathematical or geometrical perceptions and are borrowed, therefore, from faculties of consciousness which are supersensuous. The same law holds good with greater reason for that which we call, without knowing where it commences or ends, the universe.

And towards what does our Science tend, if not towards the indirect discovery, surpassing the means of

observation with which our senses provide us, of realities more and more essential and permanent, less and less incidental and, because incidental, therefore visible ?

From this point of view it would be true to say that things visible are transitory and things eternal invisible,—invisible at least for those of our senses that are constructed according to the laws of our ephemeral being, but not for that vision of the profundities of existence, present in us already in its rudiments, which we awaken to the perception of its proper world when we take cognizance within ourselves of that which is eternal.

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How has that sense-vision been formed of which our eye, gathering into a focus the rays of Light, is at once the symbol and the organ ?

To produce our conscious perceptions it was necessary that all the diffused clarities which the intelligence and the sense-faculty in our rudimentary being could assemble or could produce, should converge towards certain points in the vastness of infinity destined to form the field of our experience and of our progress, and each of our possible conquests in that field, always obtained by a greater concentration of light, has circumscribed around us, by the very act of giving it precision, the province of the visible.

In the beginning there was the immense penumbra of the uniform Inconscient and when the Spirit said, "Let there be light," the lightning broke forth from it and the Night settled with a greater weight of darkness over all that the flashes did not illumine. Thus the day was born out of the shadows and night had the day for its cause.

But now the day which the luminous point of the conscious ego has created in us, can extend itself beyond our limits over the whole universe. For that extension it is enough that we should learn to enter once more into communion with all that we have rendered alien to us.

There is not in the whole of infinity a single reality, be it object or being, on which our internal gaze, once clarified, cannot shed its pure illumination.

But how do these realities, when we so regard them, differ from their appearances ! Truly has it been said, " Things are not what they seem."

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What we see is not the universe. What we see is our personal universe, the world which we fashion for the use of our needs, in the measure of our means, by the play of our faculties, a symbolic, schematic universe which our sense-perceptions cut out upon the infinite, profound, moving and living reality.

That which we call phenomenon is only the relation between the veritable reality and our modes of subjective perception.

It is the manner—such as our senses understand it—in which a totality of particular activities reacts in relation to the all, that is manifest to our eyes in each element of the reality, whether that element be an object or a being. So too it is the relation between their modes of action and ours that permits us to differentiate ourselves from all that is other than ourselves and determines for us the character, the forms, the values, the accidents of all that environs us.

The attempt to explain the world by the things that we see, is therefore vain ; it is these, on the contrary, that find their explanation in those that we do not see. To find the causes of thing we must turn our regard not on the visible, but on the invisible.

This world of phenomena which we call the universe, is only the apparent figure, the image in us of the real world ; it is the myth which covers a truth too profound for us. All philosophy consists in the discovery of its hidden sense, and it is the more and more veridical interpretation of it that we call knowledge.

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May its illumination render the human mind master of the shadow and the mystery and open to us the paths of the unknown!

But how shall we discover the paths that lead to an unknown? And how shall we discover that unknown itself if we do not first know the paths? Therefore these two, the way and its goal, must manifest themselves together and each must reveal the other.

On the knowledge that we attain of the supreme realities, depend all the steps that we shall take towards them, and on our courageous self-orientation towards the highest point of truth of which we have caught a glimpse, whatever it may cost to our thought, depends our progressive conquest of the Light.

It is the most disinterested effort that will bring us to the most considerable result; it is the steepest way that will permit us to ascend to the highest summit.

And again, is it not by directing our march towards supreme goals, towards those that seem inaccessible to us, that we shall be able step by step to trace out the straightest roads?

Now, among all the inquiries possible to the human spirit, those which are concerned with the very origin of being and of the universe are surely the most disinterested. What profit comparable to the results of our utilitarian Sciences can we reap from the discovery, even if that discovery be possible, of the first reasons of things? Among all the questions that the mind can present to itself, this is, in appearance, the least useful; for that very reason it is in reality the most fertile. It is the most transcendent, the most daring of all, and for that reason we choose it in preference to all others.

For the boldest, the highest Wisdom! For the pioneers of action and thought, the heroic march through the paths of the unknown!

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# The Secret of the Veda

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## CHAPTER I

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### THE PROBLEM AND ITS SOLUTION

Is there at all or is there still a secret of the Veda ?

According to current conceptions the heart of that ancient mystery has been plucked out and revealed to the gaze of all, or rather no real secret ever existed. The hymns of the Veda are the sacrificial compositions of a primitive and still barbarous race written around a system of ceremonial and propitiatory rites, addressed to personified Powers of Nature and replete with a confused mass of half-formed myth and crude astronomical allegories yet in the making. Only in the later hymns do we perceive the first appearance of deeper psychological and moral ideas—borrowed, some think, from the hostile Dravidians, the "robbers" and "Veda-haters" freely cursed in the hymns themselves,—and, however acquired, the first seed of the later Vedantic speculations. This modern theory is in accord with the received idea of a rapid human evolution from the quite recent savage; it is supported by an imposing apparatus of critical research and upheld by a number of Sciences, unhappily still young and still largely conjectural in their methods and shifting in their results,—Comparative Philology, Comparative Mythology and the Science of Comparative Religion.

It is my object in these chapters to suggest a new view of the ancient problem. I do not propose to use a negative and destructive method directed against the received solutions, but simply to present, positively and constructively, a larger and, in some sort, a complementary hypothesis built upon broader foundations,—a hypothesis which, in addition, may shed light on one or two important problems in the history of ancient thought and cult left very insufficiently solved by the ordinary theories.

We have in the Rigveda,—the true and only Veda in the estimation of European scholars,—a body of sacrificial hymns couched in a very ancient language which presents a number of almost insoluble difficulties. It is full of ancient forms and words which do not appear in later speech and have often to be fixed in some doubtful sense by intelligent conjecture ; a mass even of the words that it has in common with classical Sanskrit seem to bear or at least to admit another significance than in the later literary tongue ; and a multitude of its vocables, especially the most common, those which are most vital to the sense, are capable of a surprising number of unconnected significances which may give, according to our preference in selection, quite different complexions to whole passages, whole hymns and even to the whole thought of the Veda. In the course of several thousands of years there have been at least three considerable attempts, entirely differing from each other in their methods and results, to fix the sense of these ancient litanies. One of these is prehistoric in time and exists only by fragments in the Brahmanas and Upanishads ; but we possess in its entirety the traditional interpretation of the Indian scholar Sayana and we have in our own day the interpretation constructed after an immense labour of comparison and conjecture by modern European scholarship. Both of them present one characteristic in common, the extraordinary incoherence and poverty of sense which their results stamp upon the ancient hymns. The separate lines can be given, whether naturally or by force of conjecture, a good sense or a sense that hangs together ; the diction that results, if garish in style, if loaded with otiose and decorative epithets, if developing extraordinarily little of meaning in an amazing mass of gaudy figure and verbiage, can be made to run into intelligible sentences ; but when we come to read the hymns as a whole we seem to be in the presence of men who, unlike the early writers of other races, were incapable of coherent and natural expression or of connected thought. Except in the briefer and simpler hymns, the language tends to be either obscure or artificial ;

the thoughts are either unconnected or have to be forced and beaten by the interpreter into a whole. The scholar in dealing with his text is obliged to substitute for interpretation a process almost of fabrication. We feel that he is not so much revealing the sense as hammering and forging rebellious material into some sort of shape and consistency.

Yet these obscure and barbarous compositions have had the most splendid good fortune in all literary history. They have been the reputed source not only of some of the world's richest and profoundest religions, but of some of its subtlest metaphysical philosophies. In the fixed tradition of thousands of years they have been revered as the origin and standard of all that can be held as authoritative and true in Brahmana and Upanishad, in Tantra and Purana, in the doctrines of great philosophical schools and in the teachings of famous saints and sages. The name borne by them was Veda, the knowledge,—the received name for the highest spiritual truth of which the human mind is capable. But if we accept the current interpretations, whether Sayana's or the modern theory, the whole of this sublime and sacred reputation is a colossal fiction. The hymns are, on the contrary, nothing more than the naive superstitious fancies of untaught and materialistic barbarians concerned only with the most external gains and enjoyments and ignorant of all but the most elementary moral notions or religious aspirations. Nor do occasional passages, quite out of harmony with their general spirit, destroy this total impression. The true foundation or starting-point of the later religions and philosophies is the Upanishads, which have then to be conceived as a revolt of philosophical and speculative minds against the ritualistic materialism of the Vedas.

But this conception, supported by misleading European parallels, really explains nothing. Such profound and ultimate thoughts, such systems of subtle and elaborate psychology as are found in the substance of the Upanishads, do not spring out of a previous void. The human mind in its progress marches from knowledge to knowledge, or it renews and enlarges previous knowledge that has been

obscured and overlaid, or it seizes on old imperfect clues and is led by them to new discoveries. The thought of the Upanishads supposes great origins anterior to itself, and these in the ordinary theories are lacking. The hypothesis, invented to fill the gap, that these ideas were borrowed by barbarous Aryan invaders from the civilised Dravidians, is a conjecture supported only by other conjectures. It is indeed coming to be doubted whether the whole story of an Aryan invasion through the Punjab is not a myth of the philologists.

Now, in ancient Europe the schools of intellectual philosophy were preceded by the secret doctrines of the mystics; Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries prepared the rich soil of mentality out of which sprang Pythagoras and Plato. A similar starting-point is at least probable for the later march of thought in India. Much indeed of the forms and symbols of thought which we find in the Upanishads, much of the substance of the Brahmanas supposes a period in India in which thought took the form or the veil of secret teachings such as those of the Greek mysteries.

Another hiatus left by the received theories is the gulf that divides the material worship of external Nature-Powers in the Veda from the developed religion of the Greeks and from the psychological and spiritual ideas we find attached to the functions of the Gods in the Upanishads and Puranas. We may accept for the present the theory that the earliest fully intelligent form of human religion is necessarily,—since man on earth begins from the external and proceeds to the internal,—a worship of outward Nature-Powers invested with the consciousness and the personality that he finds in his own being.

Agni in the Veda is avowedly Fire; Surya is the Sun, Parjanya the Raincloud, Usha the Dawn; and if the material origin or function of some other Gods is less trenchantly clear, it is easy to render the obscure precise by philological inferences or ingenious speculation. But when we come to the worship of the Greeks not much later in date than the Veda, according to modern ideas of chronology, we find a significant change. The material

attributes of the Gods are effaced or have become subordinate to psychological conceptions. The impetuous God of Fire has been converted into a lame God of Labour ; Apollo, the Sun, presides over poetical and prophetic inspiration ; Athene, who may plausibly be identified as in origin a Dawn-Goddess, has lost all memory of her material functions and is the wise, strong and pure Goddess of Knowledge ; and there are other deities also, Gods of War, Love, Beauty, whose material functions have disappeared if they ever existed. It is not enough to say that this change was inevitable with the progress of human civilisation : the process also of the change demands inquiry and elucidation. We see the same revolution effected in the Puranas partly by the substitution of other divine names and figures, but also in part by the same obscure process that we observe in the evolution of Greek mythology. The river Saraswati has become Muse and Goddess of Learning ; Vishnu and Rudra of the Vedas are now the supreme Godhead, members of a divine Triad and expressive separately of conservative and destructive process in the cosmos. In the Isha Upanishad we find an appeal to Surya as a God of revelatory knowledge by whose action we can arrive at the highest truth. This, too, is his function in the sacred Vedic formula of the Gayatri which was for thousands of years repeated by every Brahmin in his daily meditation ; and we may note that this formula is a verse from the Rig Veda, from a hymn of the Rishi Visvamitra. In the same Upanishad, Agni is invoked for purely moral functions as the purifier from sin, the leader of the soul by the good path to the divine Bliss, and he seems to be identified with the power of the will and responsible for human actions. In other Upanishads the gods are clearly the symbols of sense-functions in man. Soma, the plant which yielded the mystic wine for the Vedic sacrifice, has become not only the God of the moon, but manifests himself as mind in the human being. These evolutions suppose some period, posterior to the early material worship or superior Pantheistic Animism attributed to the Vedas and prior to the developed Puranic mythology.

in which the gods became invested with deeper psychological functions, a period which may well have been the Age of the Mysteries. As things stand, a gap is left or else has been created by our exclusive preoccupation with the naturalistic element in the religion of the Vedic Rishis.

I suggest that the gulf is of our own creation and does not really exist in the ancient sacred writings. The hypothesis I propose is that the Rigveda is itself the one considerable document that remains to us from the early period of human thought of which the historic Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries were the failing remnants, when the spiritual and psychological knowledge of the race was concealed, for reasons now difficult to determine, in a veil of concrete and material figures and symbols which protected the sense from the profane and revealed it to the initiated. One of the leading principles of the mystics was the sacredness and secrecy of self-knowledge and the true knowledge of the Gods. This wisdom was, they thought, unfit, perhaps even dangerous to the ordinary human mind or in any case liable to perversion and misuse and loss of virtue if revealed to vulgar and unpurified spirits. Hence they favoured the existence of an outer worship, effective but imperfect, for the profane, an inner discipline for the initiate, and clothed their language in words and images which had, equally, a spiritual sense for the elect, a concrete sense for the mass of ordinary worshippers. The Vedic hymns were conceived and constructed on this principle. Their formulas and ceremonies are, overtly, the details of an outward ritual devised for the Pantheistic Nature-Worship which was then the common religion, covertly the sacred words, the effective symbols of a spiritual experience and knowledge and a psychological discipline of self-culture which were then the highest achievement of the human race. The ritual system recognised by Sayana may, in its externalities, stand; the naturalistic sense discovered by European scholarship may, in its general conceptions, be accepted; but behind them there is always the true and still hidden

secret of the Veda,—the secret words, *ninya vachansi*, which were spoken for the purified in soul and the awakened in knowledge. To disengage this less obvious but more important sense by fixing the import of Vedic terms, the sense of Vedic symbols and the psychological functions of the Gods is thus a difficult but necessary task, for which these chapters and the translations that accompany them are only a preparation.

The hypothesis, if it proves to be valid, will have three advantages. It will elucidate simply and effectively the parts of the Upanishads that remain yet unintelligible or ill-understood as well as much of the origins of the Puranas. It will explain and justify rationally the whole ancient tradition of India; for it will be found that, in sober truth, the Vedanta, Purana, Tantra, the philosophical schools and the great Indian religions do go back in their source to Vedic origins. We can see there in their original seed or in their early or even primitive forms the fundamental conceptions of later Indian thought. Thus a natural starting-point will be provided for a sounder study of Comparative Religion in the Indian field. Instead of wandering amid insecure speculations or having to account for impossible conversions and unexplained transitions we shall have a clue to a natural and progressive development satisfying to the reason. Incidentally, some light may be thrown on the obscurities of early cult and myth in other ancient nations. Finally, the incoherencies of the Vedic texts will at once be explained and disappear. They exist in appearance only, because the real thread of the sense is to be found in an inner meaning. That thread found, the hymns appear as logical and organic wholes and the expression, though alien in type to our modern ways of thinking and speaking, becomes, in its own style, just and precise and sins rather by economy of phrase than by excess, by over-pregnancy rather than by poverty of sense. The Veda ceases to be merely an interesting remnant of barbarism and takes rank among the most important of the world's early Scriptures.

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 SELECTED HYMNS \*
 

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 The Colloquy of Indra and Agastya  
 RġgVeda I, Hymn 170.
 

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*Indra.*

1. It is not now, nor is It tomorrow; who knoweth that which is Supreme and Wonderful? It has motion and action in the consciousness of another, but when it is approached by the thought, It vanishes.

*Agastya.*

2. Why dost thou seek to smite us, O Indra? The Maruts are thy brothers. By them accomplish perfection; slay us not in our struggle.

*Indra.*

3. Why, O my brother Agastya, art thou my friend, yet settest thy thought beyond me? For well do I know how to us thou wilt not to give thy mind.

4. Let them make ready the altar, let them set Agni in blaze in front. It is there, the awakening of the consciousness to Immortality. Let us two extend for thee thy effective sacrifice.

*Agastya.*

5. O Lord of substance over all substances of being, thou art the master in force! O Lord of Love over the powers of love, thou art the strongest to hold in status! Do thou, O Indra, agree with the Maruts, then enjoy the offerings in the ordered method of the Truth.

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\* These translations are offered here only in their results for the interest of the general reader and as an illustration of the theory advanced. Their philological and critical justification would demand a space not available in this Review and would be interesting only to a limited circle. A few indications, however, may at a later stage be given which will illustrate the method.



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**COMMENTARY**


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The governing idea of the hymn belongs to a stage of spiritual progress when the human soul wishes by the sheer force of Thought to hasten forward beyond in order to reach prematurely the source of all things without full development of the being in all its progressive stages of conscious activity. The effort is opposed by the Gods who preside over the universe of man and of the world and a violent struggle takes place in the human consciousness between the individual soul in its egoistic eagerness and the universal Powers which seek to fulfil the divine purpose of the Cosmos.

The seer Agastya at such a moment confronts in his inner experience Indra, Lord of Swar, the realm of pure intelligence, through which the ascending soul passes into the divine Truth.

Indra speaks first of that unknowable Source of things towards which Agastya is too impatiently striving. That is not to be found in Time. It does not exist in the actualities of the present, nor in the eventualities of the future. It neither is now nor becomes hereafter. Its being is beyond Space and Time and therefore in Itself cannot be known by that which is in Space and Time. It manifests Itself by Its forms and activities in the consciousness of that which is not Itself and through those activities it is meant that It should be realised. But if one tries to approach It and study It in Itself, It disappears from the thought that would seize It and is as if It were not.

Agastya still does not understand why he is so violently opposed in a pursuit which is the eventual aim of all being and which all his thoughts and feelings demand. The Maruts are the powers of Thought which by the strong and apparently destructive motion of their progress break down that which is established and help to the attainment of new formations. Indra, the Power of pure

Intelligence, is their brother, kin to them in his nature although elder in being. He should by their means effect the perfection towards which Agastya is striving and not turn enemy nor slay his friend in this terrible struggle towards the goal.

Indra replies that Agastya is his friend and brother,—brother in the soul as children of one Supreme Being, friend as comrades in a common effort and one in the divine love that unites God and man,—and by this friendship and alliance has attained to the present stage in his progressive perfection; but now he treats Indra as an inferior Power and wishes to go beyond without fulfilling himself in the domain of the God. He seeks to divert his increased thought-powers towards his own object instead of delivering them up to the universal Intelligence so that it may enrich its realisations in humanity through Agastya and lead him forward by the way of the Truth. Let the egoistic endeavour cease, the great sacrifice be resumed, the flame of the divine Force, Agni, be kindled in front as head of the sacrifice and leader of the march. Indra and Agastya together, the universal Power and the human soul, will extend in harmony the effective inner action on the plane of the pure Intelligence so that it may enrich itself there and attain beyond. For it is precisely by the progressive surrender of the lower being to the divine activities that the limited and egoistic consciousness of the mortal awakens to the infinite and immortal state which is its goal.

Agastya accepts the will of the God and submits. He agrees to perceive and fulfil the Supreme in the activities of Indra. From his own realm Indra is supreme lord over the substances of being as manifested through the triple world of mind, life and body and has therefore power to dispose of its formations towards the fulfilment, in the movement of Nature, of the divine Truth that expresses itself in the universe,—supreme lord over love and delight manifested in the same triple world and has

therefore power to fix those formations harmoniously in the status of Nature. Agastya gives up all that is realised in him into the hands of Indra, as offerings of the sacrifice, to be held by him in the fixed parts of Agastya's consciousness and directed in the motion towards fresh formations. Indra is once more to enter into friendly parley with the upward aspiring powers of Agastya's being and to establish agreement between the seer's thoughts and the illumination that comes to us through the pure Intelligence. That power will then enjoy in Agastya the offerings of the sacrifice according to the right order of things as formulated and governed by the Truth which is beyond.

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II

**Indra, Giver of Light**

**RigVeda I. 4.**

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1. The fashioner of perfect forms, like a good yielder for the milker of the Herds, we call for increase from day to day.
2. Come to our Soma-offerings. O Soma-drinker, drink of the Soma-wine ; the intoxication of thy rapture gives indeed the Light.
3. Then may we know somewhat of thy uttermost right thinkings. Show not beyond us, come.
4. Come over, question Indra of the clear-seeing mind, the vigorous, the unoverthrown, who to thy comrades has brought the highest good.
5. And may the Restrainers <sup>1</sup> say to us, " Nay,

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1.—Or Censurers, Nidah. The root nid bears, I think, in the Veda the sense of *bondage, confinement, limitation*, which can be assigned to it with entire certainty by philological deduction. It is the base of *nidita*.

forth and strive on even in other fields, reposing on Indra your activity."

6. And may the fighters, doers of the work,<sup>2</sup> declare us entirely blessed, O achiever ; may we abide in Indra's peace.

7. Intense for the intense bring thou this glory of the sacrifice that intoxicates the Man, carrying forward on the way Indra who gives joy to his friend.

8. When thou hast drunk of this, O thou of the hundred activities, thou becamest a slayer of the Coverers and protectedst the rich mind in its riches.

9. Thee thus rich in thy riches we enrich again, O Indra, O thou of the hundred activities, for the safe enjoyment of our havings.

10. He who in his vastness is a continent of bliss,—the friend of the Soma-giver and he carries him safely through,—to that Indra raise the chant.

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bound, and nidāna, tether. But the root also means to blame. After the peculiar method of the esoteric diction one or other sense predominates in different passages without entirely excluding the other.

2.—Arih Krishtayah may also be translated, " the Aryan people," or " the warlike nations." The words Krishti and Charshani, interpreted by Sayana as " man " have as their base the roots Krish and Charsh which originally imply labour, effort or laborious action. They mean sometimes the doer of Vedic Karma, sometimes, the Karma itself,—the worker or the works.

(SAYANA'S INTERPRETATION)

1. " The doer of (works that have) a good shape, Indra, we call daily for protection as (one calls) for the cow-milker a good milch-cow.

2. " Come to our (three) libations, drink of the Soma, O Soma-drinker; the intoxication of thee, the wealthy one, is indeed cow-giving.

3. " Then (standing) among the intelligent people who are nearest to thee, may we know thee. Do not (go) beyond us (and) manifest (thyself to others, but) come to us.

4. " Come to him and question about me, the intelligent one, (whether I have praised him rightly or not),—to the intelligent and unhurt Indra who gives to thy friends (the priests) the best wealth.

5. " Let of us (*i. e.* our priests) speak (*i. e.* praise Indra),—and also, O you who censure, go out (from here) and from elsewhere too,—(our priests) doing service all about Indra.

6. " O destroyer (of foes), may even our enemies speak of us 'as having good wealth,—men (*i. e.* our friends will say it of course); may we be in the peace (bestowed) by Indra.

7. " Bring this Soma, that wealth of the sacrifice, the cause of exhilaration to men, (the Soma) that pervades (the three oblations) for Indra who pervades (the Soma-offering), that attains the rites and is friendly to (Indra) who gives joy (to the sacrificer).

8. " Drinking of this, O thou of many actions, thou becamest a slayer of Vritras (*i. e.* enemies led by Vritra) and didst protect entirely the fighter in the fights.

9. " O Indra of many actions, for enjoyment of riches we make thee abundant in food who art strong in the battles. <sup>1</sup>

1.—Note that Sayana explains Vājīnam in v. 8 as "fighter in the fights" and the same expression in the very next verse as "strong in

10. " Sing to that Indra who is a protector of wealth, great, a good fulfiller (of works) and a friend of the sacrificer."

### COMMENTARY

Madhuchchandas, son of Visvamitra, invokes in the Soma-offering Indra, the Master of luminous Mind, for increase in the Light. The symbols of the hymn are those of a collective sacrifice. Its subject is the growth of power and delight in Indra by the drinking of the Soma, the wine of immortality, and the consequent illumination of the human being so that the obstructions of his inner knowledge are removed and he attains to the utmost splendours of the liberated mind.

But what is this Soma, called sometimes amrita, the Greek ambrosia, as if it were itself the substance of immortality? It is a figure for the divine Ananda, the principle of Bliss, from which, in the Vedic conception, the existence of Man, this mental being, is drawn. A secret Delight is the base of existence, its sustaining atmosphere and almost its substance. This Ananda is spoken of in the Taittiriya Upanishad as the ethereal atmosphere of bliss without which nothing could remain in being. In the Aitareya Upanishad Soma, as the lunar deity, is born from the sense-mind in the universal Purusha and, when man is produced, expresses himself again as sense-mentality in the human being. For delight is the *raison d'être* of sensation,

the fights" and that in the phrase *vàjeshu vājīnam vājayāmah* he takes the base word *vāja* in three different significances, "battle," "strength" and "food." This is a typical example of the deliberate inconsistency of Sayana's method.

I have given the two renderings together so that the reader may make an easy comparison between both methods and results. I enclose within brackets the commentator's explanations wherever they are necessary to complete the sense or to make it intelligible. Even the reader unacquainted with Sanskrit will be able, I think, to appreciate from this single example the reasons which justify the modern critical mind in refusing to accept Sayana as a reliable authority for the interpretation of the Vedic text.

or, we may say, sensation is an attempt to translate the secret delight of existence into the terms of physical consciousness. But in that consciousness,—often figured as *adri*, the hill, stone, or dense substance—divine light and divine delight are both of them concealed and confined, and have to be released or extracted. Ananda is retained as *rasa*, the sap, the essence, in sense-objects and sense experiences, in the plants and growths of the earth-nature, and among these growths the mystic Soma-plant symbolises that element behind all sense activities and their enjoyments which yields the divine essence. It has to be distilled and, once distilled, purified and intensified until it has grown luminous, full of radiance, full of swiftness, full of energy, *gomat*, *ashu*, *yuvaku*. It becomes the chief food of the gods who, called to the Soma-oblation, take their share of the enjoyment and in the strength of that ecstasy increase in man, exalt him to his highest possibilities, make him capable of the supreme experiences. Those who do not give the delight in them as an offering to the divine Powers, preferring to reserve themselves for the sense and the lower life, are adorers not of the gods, but of the Panis, lords of the sense-consciousness, traffickers in its limited activities, they who press not the mystic wine, give not the purified offering, raise not the sacred chant. It is the Panis who steal from us the Rays of the illumined consciousness, those brilliant herds of the sun, and pen them up in the cavern of the sub-conscient, in the dense hill of matter, corrupting even Sarama, the hound of heaven, the luminous intuition, when she comes on their track to the cave of the Panis.

But the conception of this hymn belongs to a stage in our inner progress when the Panis have been exceeded and even the Vritras or Coverers who seclude from us our full powers and activities and Vala who holds back the Light, are already overpassed. But there are even then powers that stand in the way of our perfection. They are the powers of limitation, the Confiners or Censurers, who, without altogether obscuring the rays or damming up the energies, yet seek by constantly affirming the defi-

ciencies of our self-expression to limit its field and set up the progress realised as an obstacle to the progress to come. Madhuchchandas calls upon Indra to remove the defect and affirm in its place an increasing illumination.

The principle which Indra represents is Mind-Power released from the limits and obscurations of the nervous consciousness. It is this enlightened Intelligence which fashions right or perfect forms of thought or of action not deformed by the nervous impulses, not hampered by the falsehoods of sense. The image presented is that of a cow giving abundantly its yield to the milker of the herds. The word *go* means in Sanskrit both a cow and a ray of light. This double sense is used by the Vedic symbolists to suggest a double figure which was to them more than a figure; for light, in their view, is not merely an apt poetic image of thought, but is actually its physical form. Thus, the herds that are milked are the Herds of the Sun,—Surya, God of the revelatory and intuitive mind, or else of Dawn, the goddess who manifests the solar glory. The Rishi desires from Indra a daily increase of this light of Truth by his fuller activity pouring rays in a rich yield upon the receptive mind.

The activity of the pure illuminated Intelligence is sustained and increased by the conscious expression in us of the delight in divine existence and divine activity typified by the Soma wine. As the Intelligence feeds upon it, its action becomes an intoxicated ecstasy of inspiration by which the rays came pouring abundantly and joyously in. "Light-giving indeed is the intoxication of thee in thy rapture."

For then it is possible, breaking beyond the limitations still insisted upon by the Confiners, to arrive at something of the finalities of knowledge possible to the illuminated intelligence. Right thoughts, right sensibilities,—this is the full sense of the word *sumati*; for the Vedic *mati* includes not only the thinking, but also the emotional parts of mentality. *Sumati* is a light in the thoughts; it is also a bright gladness and kindness in the soul. But in this



passage the stress of the sense is upon right thought and not on the emotions. It is necessary, however, that the progress in right thinking should commence in the field of consciousness already attained; there must not be flashes and dazzling manifestations which by going beyond our powers elude expression in right form and confuse the receptive mind. Indra must be not only illuminer, but a fashioner of right thought-formations, *surupakritnu*.

The Rishi, next, turning to a comrade in the collective Yoga, or, perhaps, addressing his own mind, encourages him or it to pass beyond the obstruction of the adverse suggestions opposed to him and by questioning the divine Intelligence progress to the highest good which it has already given to others. For it is that Intelligence which clearly discerns and can solve or remove all still-existing confusion and obsuration. Swift of movement, intense, energetic, it does not by its energy stumble in its paths like the impulses of the nervous consciousness. Or perhaps it is rather meant that owing to its invincible energy it does not succumb to the attacks whether of the Coverers or of the powers that limit.

Next are described the results towards which the seer aspires. With this fuller light opening on to the finalities of mental knowledge the powers of Limitation will be satisfied and of themselves will withdraw, consenting to the farther advance and to the new luminous activities. They will say, in effect, “Yes, now you have the right which we were hitherto justified in denying. Not only in the fields won already, but in other and untrod provinces pursue then your conquering march. Repose this action wholly on the divine Intelligence, not upon your lower capacities. For it is the greater surrender which gives you the greater right.”

The word *àrata*, move or strive, like its congeners *ari*, *arya*, *àrya*, *arata*, *arani*, expresses the central idea of the Veda. The root *ar* indicates always a movement of effort or of struggle or a state of surpassing height or excellence; it is applied to rowing, ploughing, fighting, lifting,

climbing. The Aryan then is the man who seeks to fulfil himself by the Vedic action, the internal and external *karma* or *apas*, which is of the nature of a sacrifice to the gods. But it is also imaged as a journey, a march, a battle, a climbing upwards. The Aryan man labours towards heights, fights his way on in a march which is at once a progress forward and an ascent. That is his Aryahood, his *arete*, virtue, to use a Greek word derived from the same root. *Arata*, with the rest of the phrase, might be translated, " Out and push forward in other fields."

The idea is taken up again, in the subtle Vedic fashion of thought-connections by word-echoes, with the *arih kristayah* of the next verse. These are, I think, not the Aryan nations on earth, although that sense too is possible when the idea is that of a collective or national Yoga, but the powers that help man in his ascent, his spiritual kindred bound to him as comrades, allies, brothers, yokefellows (*sakhayah*, *yujah*, *jamayah*), for his aspiration is their aspiration and by his completeness they are fulfilled. As the Restrainers are satisfied and give way, so they too, satisfied, must affirm finally their task accomplished by the fullness of human bliss, when the soul shall rest in the peace of Indra that comes with the Light, the peace of a perfected mentality standing as upon heights of consummated consciousness and Beatitude.

Therefore is the divine Ananda poured out to be made swift and intense in the system and offered to Indra for the support of his intensities. For it is this profound joy manifest in the inner sensations that gives the ecstasy by which the man or the God grows strong. The divine Intelligence will be able to move forward in the journey yet incompleated and will return the gift by fresh powers of the Beatitude descending upon the friend of God.

For it was in this strength that the Divine Mind in man destroyed all that opposed, as Coverers or besiegers, its hundredfold activities of will and of thought; in this strength it protected afterwards the rich and various

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possessions already won in past battles from the *Atris* and *Dasyus*, devourers and plunderers of our gains.

Although, continues Madhuchchandas, that Intelligence is already thus rich and variously stored we seek to increase yet more its force of abundance, removing the Restrainers as well as the *Vritras*, so that we may have the full and assured possessions of our riches.

For this Light is, in its entire greatness free from limitation, a continent of felicity ; this Power is that which befriends the human soul and carries it safe through the battle, to the end of its march, to the summit of its aspiration.

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# Isha Upanishad

## I. THE TEXT

1. All this is for habitation <sup>1</sup> by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion. By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy; lust not after any man's possession.

2. Doing verily <sup>2</sup> works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years. Thus it is in thee and not otherwise than this. Action cleaves not to a man." <sup>3</sup>

1. There are three possible senses of *vasyam*, "to be clothed," "to be worn as a garment" and "to be inhabited." The first is the ordinarily accepted meaning. Shankara explains it in this significance, that we must lose the sense of this unreal objective universe in the sole perception of the pure Brahman. So explained the first line becomes a contradiction of the whole thought of the Upanishad which teaches the reconciliation, by the perception of essential Unity, of the apparently incompatible opposites, God and the world, Renunciation and Enjoyment, Action and internal Freedom, the One and the Many, Being and its Becomings, the passive divine Impersonality and the active divine Personality, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, the Becoming and the Not-Becoming, Life on earth and beyond and the supreme Immortality. The image is of the world either as a garment or as a dwelling-place for the informing and governing Spirit. The latter significance agrees better with the thought of the Upanishad.

2. *Kurvanneva*. The stress of the word *eva* gives the force, "doing works indeed, and not refraining from them."

3. Shankara reads the line, "Thus in thee—it is not otherwise than thus—action cleaves not, a man." He interprets *Karmani* in the first line in the sense of Vedic sacrifices which are permitted to the ignorant as a means of escaping from evil actions and their results and attaining to heaven, but the second *Karma* in exactly the opposite sense, "evil action." The verse, he tells us, represents a concession to the

3. Sunless <sup>4</sup> are those worlds and enveloped in blind gloom whereto all they in their passing hence resort who are slayers of their souls.

4. One unmoving that is swifter than Mind, That the Gods reach not, for It progresses ever in front. That, standing, passes beyond others as they run. In That the Master of Life <sup>5</sup> establishes the Waters <sup>6</sup>.

ignorant ; the enlightened soul abandons works and the world and goes to the forest. The whole expression and construction in this rendering become forced and unnatural. The rendering I give seems to me the simple and straightforward sense of the Upanishad.

4. We have two readings, *Asùrya*, sunless, and *Asurya*, Titanic or undivine. The third verse is, in the thought structure of the Upanishad, the starting point for the final movement in the last four verses. Its suggestions are there taken up and worked out. The prayer to the Sun refers back in thought to the sunless worlds and their blind gloom, which are recalled in the ninth and twelfth verses. The sun and his rays are intimately connected in other Upanishads also with the worlds of Light and their natural opposite is the dark and sunless, not the Titanic worlds.

5. *Matarisvan* seems to mean " he who extends himself in the Mother or the container " whether that be the containing mother element, Ether, or the material energy called Earth in the Veda and spoken of there as the Mother. It is a Vedic epithet of the God Vayu, who, representing the divine principle in the Life-energy, Prana, extends himself in Matter and vivifies its forms. Here, it signifies the divine Life-power that presides in all forms of cosmic activity.

6. *Apas* as it is accentuated in the version of the White Yajurveda, can mean only "waters." If this accentuation is disregarded, we may take it as the singular *Apas*, work, action. Shankara, however, renders it by the plural, works. The difficulty only arises because the true Vedic sense of the word had been forgotten and it came to be taken as referring to the fourth of the five elemental states of Matter, the liquid. Such a reference would be entirely

5. That moves and that moves not ; That is far and the same is near ; That is within all this and that also is outside all this.

6. But he who sees everywhere the self in all existences and all existences in the self, shrinks not thereafter from aught.

7. He in whom it is the Self-Being that has become all existences that are Becomings<sup>7</sup>, for he has the perfect knowledge, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief who sees ever ywhere oneness ?

8. It is he that has gone abroad.—That which is bright, bodiless without scar of imperfection, without sinews, pure, unpierced by evil. The Seer, the Thinker<sup>8</sup>, the One who becomes everywhere, the Self-existent has ordered objects perfectly according to their nature for years sempiternal.

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irrelevant to the context. But the Waters, otherwise called the seven streams or the seven fostering Cows, are the Vedic symbol for the seven cosmic principles and their activities, three inferior, the physical, vital and mental, four superior, the divine Truth, the divine Bliss, the divine Will and consciousness and divine Being. On this conception also is founded the ancient idea of the seven worlds in each of which the seven principles are separately active by their various harmonies. This is, obviously, the right significance of the word in the Upanishad.

7. The words *Sarvani bhutani* literally, " all things that have become," is opposed to Atman, self-existent and immutable being. The phrase means ordinarily " all creatures," but its literal sense is evidently insisted on in the expression *bhūtani abhūt* " became the Becomings." The idea is the acquisition in man of the supreme consciousness by which the one Self in him extends itself to embrace all creatures and realises the eternal act by which that One manifests itself in the multiple forms of the universal motion.

8. There is a clear distinction in Vedic thought between *Kavi*, the seer, and *manishi*, the thinker. The former indicates the divine supra-intellectual Knowledge which by

9. Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone.

10. Other, verily<sup>9</sup>, 'tis said, is that which comes by the Knowledge, other that which comes by the Ignorance; this is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed That to our understanding.

11. He who knows That as both in one, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, by the Ignorance crosses beyond death and by the Knowledge enjoys Immortality.

12. Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Non-Birth, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Birth alone.

13. Other, verily, 'tis said, is that which comes by the Birth, other that which comes by the Non-Birth; this is the lore we have received from the wise who revealed That to our understanding.

14. He who knows That as both in one, the Birth and the dissolution of Birth, by the dissolution crosses beyond death and by the Birth enjoys Immortality.

15. The face of Truth is covered with a brilliant

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direct vision and illumination sees the reality, the principles and the forms of thing in their true relations, the latter the labouring mentality which works from the divided consciousness through the possibilities of things downward to the actual manifestation in form and upward to their reality in the self-existent Brahman.

9. *Anyadeva*.—*Eva* here gives to *anyad* the force, "Quite other than the result described in the preceding verse is that to which lead the knowledge and the ignorance." We have the explanation of *anyad* in the verse that follows. The ordinary rendering, "Knowledge has one result, Ignorance another," would be an obvious commonplace announced with an exaggerated pompousness, adding nothing to the thought and without any place in the sequence of the ideas.

golden lid ; that do thou remove, O Fosterer<sup>10</sup>, for the law of the Truth, for sight.

16. O Fosterer, O sole Seer, O Ordainer, O illuminating Sun, O power of the Father of creatures, marshal thy rays, draw together thy light ; the Lustre which is thy most blessed form of all, that in Thee I behold. The Purusha there and there, He am I.

17. The Breath of things<sup>11</sup> is an immortal Life, but of this body ashes are the end. Om! O Will<sup>12</sup>,

10. In the inner sense of the Veda Surya, the Sun-God, represents the divine Illumination of the Kavi which exceeds mind and forms the pure self-luminous Truth of things. His principal power is self-revelatory knowledge, termed in the Veda Sight. His realm is described as the Truth, the Law, the Vast. He is the Fosterer or Increaser, for he enlarges and opens man's dark and limited being into a luminous and infinite consciousness. He is the Sole-Seer, Seer of Oneness and Knower of the Self, and leads him to the highest Sight. He is Yama, Controller or Ordainer, for he governs man's action and manifested being by the direct Law of the Truth, *Satya dharma*, and therefore by the right principle of our nature, *Yathatathyatah*. A luminous power proceeding from the Father of all existences, he reveals in himself the divine Purusha of whom all beings are the manifestations. His rays are the thoughts that proceed luminously from the Truth, the Vast, but become deflected and distorted, broken up and disordered in the reflecting and dividing principle, Mind. They form there the golden lid which covers the face of the Truth. The Seer prays to Surya to cast them into right order and relation and then draw them together into the unity of revealed truth. The result of this inner process is the perception of the oneness of all beings in the divine Soul of the Universe.

11. Vayu, called elsewhere Matarisvan, the Life-Energy in the universe. In the light of Surya he reveals himself as an immortal principle of existence of which birth and death and life in the body are only particular and external processes.

12. The Vedic term *Kratu* means sometimes the action itself, sometimes the effective power behind action represent-



remember, that which was done remember! O Will, remember, that which was done remember.

18. O god Agni, knowing all things that are manifested, lead us by the good path to the felicity; remove from us the devious attraction of sin.<sup>13</sup> To thee completest speech of submission we would dispose.<sup>14</sup>

ed in mental consciousness by the will. Agni is this power. He is divine force which manifests first in matter as heat and light and material energy and then, taking different forms in the other principles of man's consciousness, leads him by a progressive manifestation upwards to the Truth and the Bliss.

13. Sin, in the conception of the Veda, from which this verse is taken bodily, is that which excites and hurries the faculties into deviation from the good path. There is a straight road or road of naturally increasing light and truth, *rijuh pantha*, *ritasya pantha*, leading over infinite levels and towards infinite vistas, *vitani pristhani* by which the law of our nature should normally take us towards our fulfilment. Sin compels it instead to travel with stumblings amid uneven and limited tracts and along crooked windings (*duritani*, *vrijinani*).

14. The word *vidhema* is used of the ordering of the sacrifice, the disposal of the offerings to the God and, generally, of the sacrifice or worship itself. The Vedic *namas*, internal and external obeisance, is the symbol of submission to the divine Being in ourselves and in the world. Here the offering is that of completest submission and the self-surrender of all the faculties of the lower egoistic human nature to the divine Will-force, Agni, so that, free from internal opposition, it may lead the soul of man through the truth towards the felicity, *Raye*. That state of beatitude is intended, self-content in the principle of pure Love and Joy, which the Vedic initiates regarded as the source of the divine existence in the universe and the foundation of the divine life in the human being. It is the deformation of this principle by egoism which appears as desire and the lust of possession in the lower worlds.

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# The Synthesis of Yoga

" All life is Yoga "

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE CONDITIONS OF THE SYNTHESIS

#### I

### LIFE AND YOGA

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There are two necessities of Nature's workings which seem always to intervene in the greater forms of human activity, whether they belong to our ordinary fields of movement or seek those exceptional spheres and fulfillments which appear to us high and divine. Every such form tends towards a harmonised complexity and totality which again breaks apart into various channels of special effort and tendency, only to unite once more in a larger and more puissant synthesis. Secondly, development into forms is an imperative rule of effective manifestation ; yet all truth and practice too strictly formulated becomes old and loses much, if not all, of its virtue ; it must be constantly renovated by fresh streams of the spirit revivifying the dead or dying vehicle and changing it, if it is to acquire a new life. (To be perpetually reborn is the condition of a material immortality.) We are in an age, full of the throes of travail, when all forms of thought and activity that have in themselves any strong power of utility or any secret virtue of persistence are being subjected to a supreme test and given their opportunity of rebirth. The world to-day presents the aspect of a huge cauldron of Medea in which all things are being cast, shredded into pieces, experimented on, combined and recombined either to perish and provide the scattered material of new forms or to emerge rejuvenated and changed for a fresh term of existence. Indian Yoga, in its essence a special action or formulation of certain great powers of Nature, itself specialised, divided and variously formulated, is potentially one of these dynamic

elements of the future life of humanity. The child of immemorial ages, preserved by its vitality and truth into our modern times, it is now emerging from the secret schools and ascetic retreats in which it had taken refuge and is seeking its place in the future sum of living human powers and utilities. But it has first to rediscover itself, bring to the surface the profoundest reason of its being in that general truth and that unceasing aim of Nature which it represents, and find by virtue of this new self-knowledge and self-appreciation its own recovered and larger synthesis. Reorganising itself, it will enter more easily and powerfully into the reorganised life of the race which its processes claim to lead within into the most secret penetralia and upward to the highest altitudes of its own existence and personality.

In the right view both of life and of Yoga all life is either consciously or subconsciously a Yoga. For we mean by this term a methodised effort towards self-perfection by the expression of the potentialities latent in the being and a union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence we see partially expressed in man and in the Cosmos. But all life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast Yoga of Nature attempting to realise her perfection in an ever-increasing expression of her potentialities and to unite herself with her own divine reality. In man, her thinker, she for the first time upon this Earth devises self-conscious means and willed arrangements of activity by which this great purpose may be more swifty and puissantly attained. (Yoga, as Swami Vivekananda has said, may be regarded as a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few years or even a few months of bodily existence.) A given system of Yoga, then, can be no more than a selection or a compression, into narrower but more energetic forms of intensity, of the general methods which are already being used loosely, largely, in a leisurely movement, with a profuser apparent waste of material and energy but with a more com-

plete combination by the great Mother in her vast upward labour. It is this view of Yoga that can alone form the basis for a sound and rational synthesis of Yogic methods. For then Yoga ceases to appear something mystic and abnormal which has no relation to the ordinary processes of the World-Energy or the purpose she keeps in view in her two great movements of subjective and objective self-fulfilment; it reveals itself rather as an intense and exceptional use of powers that she has already manifested or is progressively organising in her less exalted but more general operations.

Yogic methods have something of the same relation to the customary psychological workings of man as has the scientific handling of the natural force of electricity or of steam to the normal operations of steam and of electricity. And they, too, are formed upon a knowledge developed and confirmed by regular experiment, practical analysis and constant result. All Rajayoga, for instance, depends on this perception and experience that our inner elements, combinations, functions, forces, can be separated or dissolved, can be new-combined and set to novel and formerly impossible workings or can be transformed and resolved into a new general synthesis by fixed internal processes. Hathayoga similarly depends on this perception and experience that the vital forces and functions to which our life is normally subjected and whose ordinary operations seem set and indispensable, can be mastered and the operations changed or suspended with results that would otherwise be impossible and that seem miraculous to those who have not seized the rationale of their process. And if in some other of its forms this character of Yoga is less apparent, because they are more intuitive and less mechanical, nearer, like the Yoga of Devotion, to a supernal ecstasy or, like the Yoga of knowledge, to a supernal infinity of consciousness and being, yet they too start from the use of some principal faculty in us by ways and for ends not contemplated in its everyday spontaneous workings. All methods grouped under the common name of Yoga are special psychological processes founded on a fixed

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truth of Nature and developing, out of normal functions, powers and results which were always latent but which her ordinary movements do not easily or do not often manifest.

But as in physical knowledge the multiplication of scientific processes has its disadvantages, as that tends, for instance, to develop a victorious artificiality which overwhelms our natural human life under a load of machinery and to purchase certain forms of freedom and mastery at the price of an increased servitude, so the pre-occupation with Yogic processes and their exceptional results may have its disadvantages and losses. The Yogin tends to draw away from the common existence and lose his hold upon it; he tends to purchase wealth of spirit by an impoverishment of his human activities, the inner freedom by an outer death. If he gains God, he loses life, or if he turns his efforts outward to conquer life, he is in danger of losing God. Therefore we see in India that a sharp incompatibility has been created between life in the world and spiritual growth and perfection, and although the tradition and ideal of a victorious harmony between the inner attraction and the outer demand remains, it is little exemplified. In fact, when a man turns his vision and energy inward and enters on the path of Yoga, he is supposed to be lost inevitably to the great stream of our collective existence and the secular effort of humanity. So strongly has the idea prevailed, so much has it been emphasized by prevalent philosophies and religions that to escape from life is now commonly considered as not only the necessary condition, but the general object of Yoga. No synthesis of Yoga can be satisfying which does not, in its aim, reunite God and Nature in a liberated and perfected human life or, in its method, not only permit but favour the harmony of our inner and outer activities and experiences in the divine consummation of both. For man is precisely that term and symbol of a higher Existence descended into the material world in which it is possible for the lower to transfigure itself and

put on the nature of the higher and the higher to reveal itself in the forms of the lower. To avoid the life which is given him for the realisation of that possibility, can never be either the indispensable condition or the whole and ultimate object of his supreme endeavour or of his most powerful means of self-fulfilment. It can only be a temporary necessity under certain conditions or a specialised extreme effort imposed on the individual so as to prepare a greater general possibility for the race. The true and full object and utility of Yoga can only be accomplished when the conscious Yoga in man becomes, like the subconscious Yoga in Nature, outwardly conterminous with life itself and we can once more, looking out both on the path and the achievement, say in a more perfect and luminous sense: "All life is Yoga."

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# The Eternal Wisdom

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## INTRODUCTION

### I

#### THE SONG OF WISDOM

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- 1 We fight to win sublime Wisdom ; therefore men call us warriors.
- 2 Put Wisdom at the head of the world ; the world will fight its battle victoriously and will be the best world that men can constitute.
- 3 This Wisdom is the principle of all things.—
- 4 This mysterious Wisdom is the supreme principle of all.

\* \* \*

- 5 I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions . . . . Counsel is mine and sound knowledge. I am understanding. I am strength. By me Kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. I love them that love me. And those that seek me shall find me. Riches and honour are with me ; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold ; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment, that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance ; and I will fill their treasures . . . . I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning before ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth ; when there were no fountains abounding with water, before the mountains were settled, before the hills were, I was brought forth.—
- 6 I am the mother of pure love and of science and of sacred hope.

\* \* \*

6

7 Wisdom is a thing of which one can never have  
8 enough.—Wisdom is the most precious riches.—  
9 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold!  
10 and to get understanding rather to be chosen than  
silver!—To have wisdom is worth more than pearls.

11 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the  
man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise  
of it is better than the merchandise of silver and the  
gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious  
than rubies and all the things thou canst desire are  
not to be compared unto her. Her ways are ways  
of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She  
is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her,  
12 and happy is everyone that retaineth her.—The  
possession of wisdom leadeth to true happiness.—  
13 In this state of pure felicity the soul is enlarged and  
the material substance that is subject to her profiteth  
14 also.—Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than  
ten mighty men which are in a city.

15 Wisdom is greater than all terrestrial sciences and  
than all human knowledge. She renders a man in-  
different to the joys of the world and permits him to  
consider with an impassive heart their precipitous and  
16 tumultuous course.—A happy life is the fruit of wisdom  
achieved; life bearable, of wisdom commenced.

17 Wisdom is a well-spring of life unto him that hath  
18 it.—Who loves her loves life and they that keep  
vigil to find her shall enjoy her peace. Whosoever  
possesses her, shall have life for his inheritance.

19 Of all our possessions, wisdom alone is immortal.  
20 The desire for wisdom leads us to the Eternal King-  
21 dom.—Wisdom is full of light and her beauty is  
not withered.

22 Wisdom is like unto a beacon set on high, which  
23 radiates its light even in the darkest night.—And when  
the benevolence of benevolences manifests itself, all  
things are in her light and in joy.



25 That which satisfies the soul is the wisdom which governs the world,

26 Honour to the high and sublime excellence of wisdom!

\* \* \*

27 But where shall wisdom be found? and where is  
28 the place of understanding?—As the light of a  
torch illumines the objects in a dark room, even so  
the light of wisdom illumines all men, whosoever they  
29 be, if they turn towards it.—Those who love her  
discover her easily and those that seek her do find  
30 her.—Wisdom is a thing vast and grand. She  
demands all the time that one can consecrate to her.

31 To find our real being and know it truly is to  
32 acquire wisdom.—Only by falling back on our better  
thought, by yielding to the spirit of prophecy which  
is innate in every man, can we know what that  
wisdom saith,

33 The beginning of wisdom is the sincere desire for  
instruction. To observe attentively, its laws is to  
34 establish the perfect purity of the soul.—Behold  
the beginning of wisdom; therefore get wisdom; and  
with all thy getting, get understanding. Exalt her and  
she shall promote thee. She shall bring thee to honour,  
when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine  
head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she  
35 deliver to thee.—Thou shalt invest thyself with  
her as with a raiment of glory and thou shalt put her  
on thy head as a crown of joy. Say unto wisdom,  
36 "Thou art my sister", and call understanding thy  
37 kinswoman.—For wisdom shall enter into thine  
heart and knowledge be pleasant unto thy soul.

\* \* \*

38 Having thought of these things, meditating on them  
in my heart and having considered that I shall find  
immortality in the union with wisdom, I went in  
search of her on all sides, that I might take her for

- 39 my companion.—I have preferred wisdom to kingdoms and thrones and I have believed that riches are nothing before wisdom, for she is an endless treasure
- 40 for men.—I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and behold, all was vanity and pursuit of the wind and there was no profit under the sun. And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness and folly ... Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.
- 41 I have learnt all that was hidden and all that was yet undiscovered because I was taught by wisdom herself that created everything. For there is in her a spirit of intelligence which is holy, unique, multiple in her effects, fine, copious, agile, spotless, dear, soft, friendly to good, penetrant, which nothing can prevent from acting, benevolent, friendly to men, kind, stable, infallible, calm, that achieves all, that sees all, that can comprehend all minds in itself, that is intelligible, pure and subtle.
- 42 Eternal wisdom builds: I shall be her palace when she finds repose in me and I in her.

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1) Book of Wisdom.—2) Carlyle.—3) The Zohar.—4) id.—5) Proverbs.—6) Ecclesiasticus.—7) Minokhired.—8) Chinese Buddhistic Scriptures.—9) Proverbs.—10) Job.—11) Proverbs.—12) Porphyry.—13) Theng-Tseu.—14) Ecclesiasticus.—15) Fa-khen-pi-u.—16) Seneca.—17) Proverbs.—18) Ecclesiasticus.—19) Socrates.—20) Book of Wisdom.—21) id.—22) Buddhist Meditations from the Japanese.—23) The Zohar.—24) id.—25) Lalita Vistara.—26) Formula of devotion of Mahayanist Buddhism.—27) Job.—28) To-shu-hing-tsan-king.—29) Book of Wisdom.—30) Seneca.—31) Porphyry.—32) Emerson.—33) Book of Wisdom.—34) Proverbs.—35) Ecclesiasticus.—36) Proverbs.—37) id.—38) Book of Wisdom.—39) id.—40) Ecclesiasticus.—41) Book of Wisdom.—42) Angelus Silesius.

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II

WISDOM AND THE RELIGIONS

- 1 All wisdom is one : to understand the spirit that
- 2 rules all by all.—Being but one, she is capable of  
all ; immutable in herself, she renews all things ;  
she diffuses herself among the nations in saintly souls.
- 3 The dayspring from on high has visited us, to give  
light to them that sit in the darkness and in  
the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way
- 4 of peace.—Whatever things were written aforetime,
- 5 were written for our learning.—True knowledge  
does not grow old, so have declared the sages of all  
times.
- 6 May the partisans of all doctrines in all countries  
unite and live in a common fellowship. For all alike  
profess mastery to be attained over oneself and purity  
of the heart.
- 7 There is only one Ethics, as there is only one  
geometry. But the majority of men, it will be said,  
are ignorant of geometry. Yes, but as soon as they  
begin to apply themselves a little to that science, all  
are in agreement. Cultivators, workmen, artisans  
have not gone through courses in ethics ; they have  
not read Cicero or Aristotle, but the moment they  
begin to think on the subject they become, without  
knowing it, the disciples of Cicero. The Indian  
dyer, the Tartar shepherd and the English sailor  
know what is just and what is unjust. Confucius did  
not invent a system of ethics as one invents a system  
of physics. He had discovered it in the heart of  
all mankind.
- 8 The sage's rule of moral conduct has its principle
- 9 in the hearts of all men.—There is a primary law,  
eternal, invariable, engraved in the hearts of all ; it is  
Right Reason. Never does it speak in vain to the

- virtuous man, whether it ordains or prohibits. The wicked alone are untouched by its voice. It is easy to be understood and is not different in one country and in another ; it is today what it will be tomorrow and for all time.—Language is different but man is the same everywhere. That is why spoken Reason is one, and through its translation we see it to be the same in Egypt, in Persia and in Greece.—But in what circumstances does our reason teach us that there is vice or virtue? How does this continual mystery work? Tell me, inhabitants of the Malay Archipelago, Africans, Canadians and you, Plato, Cicero, Epictetus! You all feel equally that it is better to give away the superfluity of your bread, your rice or your manioc to the indigent than to kill him or tear out his eyes. It is evident to all on earth that an act of benevolence is better than an outrage, that gentleness is preferable to wrath. We have merely to use our Reason in order to discern the shades which distinguish right and wrong. Good and evil are often close neighbours and our passions confuse them. Who will enlighten us? We ourselves when we are calm.

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12. In order to live a happy life, man should understand what life is and what he can or cannot do. The best and wisest men in all nations have taught it to us from all times. All the doctrines of the sages meet in their foundation and it is this general sum of their doctrines, revealing the aim of human life and the conduct to be pursued, that constitutes real religion.
13. The man who does not think about religion, imagines that there is only one that is true, the one in which he was born. But thou hast only to ask thyself what would happen if thou wert born in another religion, thou, Christian, if thou wert born a Mahomedan, thou, Buddhist, a Christian and thou,

- Mahomedan, a Brahmin. Is it possible that we alone with our religion should be in the truth and that all others should be subjected to falsehood? No religion can become true merely by thy persuading thyself or persuading others that it alone is true.
- 14 No man has a right to constrain another to think like himself. Each must bear with patience and indulgence the beliefs of others.—To compel men to do what appears good to oneself is the best means of making them disgusted with it.
- 15
- 16 As one can go up to the top of a house by means of a ladder, a bamboo or a flight of stairs, so are there various means for approaching the Eternal and each religion in the world shows only one of such
- 17 means.—A truly religious man ought to think that the other religions are also paths leading towards the Reality. We should always maintain an attitude of
- 18 respect towards other religions.—Decry not other sects nor depreciate them but, on the contrary, render honour to that in them which is worthy of honour.—
- 19 The Catholic is our brother but the materialist not less. We owe him deference as to the greatest of believers.
- 20 At a certain stage in the path of devotion the religious man finds satisfaction in the Divinity with a form, at another stage in the formless Impersonal.
- 21 The man who proclaims the existence of the Infinite accumulates, in this affirmation, more of the supernatural than there is in the miracles of all the religions. So long as the mystery of the Infinite weighs upon human thought, temples will be raised for
- 22 the cult of the Infinite.—Bow down and adore where others bend the knee; for where so great a number of men pay the tribute of their adoration, the Impersonal must needs manifest Himself, for He is all
- 23 compassion.—The ordinary man says in his ignorance, "My religion is the sole religion, my religion is the best," But when his heart is illumined by the true

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knowledge, he knows that beyond all the battles of sects and of sectaries presides the one, indivisible, eternal and omniscient Benediction.

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- 1) Heraclitus.—2) The Book of Wisdom.—3) St. Luke.—4) Epistle to the Romans.—5) Buddhist Canons in Pali.—6) Inscriptions of Asoka.—7) Voltaire.—8) Tseu-tse.—9) Cicero.—10) Hermes.—11) Voltaire.—12) Tolstoi.—13) *ibid.*—14) Giordano Bruno.—15) Ramakrishna.—16) *ibid.*—17) *ibid.*—18) Inscriptions of Asoka.—19) Antoine the Healer.—20) Ramakrishna.—21) Pasteur.—22) Ramakrishna.—23) *ibid.*
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## VARIETIES

**The Soul of a Plant**

The title sounds like a phrase of idealistic or even fanciful poetry fit to precede some reverie or ethereal dream of the imagination ; but actually it is no more than the final idea which naturally suggests itself after a perusal of the accounts given in English journals of the strictly controlled and severely careful experiments and results demonstrated by Dr. J. C. Bose in London and Vienna. This distinguished scientist was one of the earliest experimenters in that field of research which has brought about the use of wireless telegraphy. But he turned aside subsequently to a deeper line of original experiment and one likely to be more fruitful in its results to human knowledge. Following an absolutely original line, inventing his own apparatus, of the most simple yet subtle delicacy, and constructing them by the hands of Indian artisans, working without collaborators and with the smallest modicum of recognition by his fellow-scientists, he has pursued his investigations to a result so complete and impeccable that the scientists of Vienna are said to have exclaimed, when they saw his demonstrations, " You have left us nothing to do ! " The nature of these results may be best understood by an interesting account in one of the London dailies which brings out very clearly the import of Dr. Bose's discoveries. They are of such importance that we think it well to quote the whole article *in extenso*.

" In these days it seems to be impossible to live for more than a few weeks at a time without receiving some more or less serious mental shock. Soon after you have recovered from seeing an aeroplane weighing half a ton leave the ground, you are called on to make a mental adjustment which will reconcile you to travelling in a train hanging in mid-air, and in another day or two you may find yourself face to face with the adventure of speaking to someone fifty miles away without the aid even of a wire. It is getting a little difficult to keep up with Science.

Just now Professor J. C. Bose—a Hindu scientist who has been sent by the Government of India to lay the results of his discoveries before the Western scientific world—is giving people shocks in Maida Vale. If you watch his astonishing experiments with plants and flowers, you have to leave an old world behind and enter a new one. The world where plants are merely plants, becomes mercilessly out of date, and you are forced abruptly into a world where plants are almost human beings. Professor Bose makes you take the leap when he demonstrates that plants have a nervous system quite comparable with that of men, and makes them write down their life-story. So you step into yet another world.

Perhaps the most amazing experiment is one showing the actual death of a plant. This does not sound very wonderful—but have you ever seen a plant die? You have seen it gradually die, fade and wither; but it actually died long before it faded. Have you ever seen it die abruptly, as a man dies? Have you seen the death-struggle of a plant? That is what Professor Bose shows you—and it is a disturbing thing to watch. It gives a plant a human quality.

The experiment is not easy to describe; but this is briefly what you see. In a darkened room you see a strip of light on the wall, and this light moves slowly to the left. Quite suddenly it hesitates and quivers and struggles, and then moves slowly to the right. It is when the light hesitates and quivers and struggles that you are watching the death of the plant.

One of the Professor's great difficulties was to know how to kill a plant suddenly enough. When you pick a rose you kill it, but not abruptly. There is still a little nourishment for it in the stem, and its collapse is gradual. Such a death does not lend itself to dramatic demonstration. But Professor Bose found that water at a high temperature—say, 140 degrees Fahrenheit—would kill a plant suddenly, and he worked out a very ingenious way of showing this. First, he cuts the stem of a plant so that it forms a spiral, and on the outside of the spiral he fixes a little piece of glass which will reflect light that is thrown on to it. Then he puts the stem



in warm water. Under the congenial influence of the warmth the tendency is for the stem of the plant to expand. It enjoys the stimulant of the warmth, just as a man will enjoy the stimulant of a hot bath, and it shows its appreciation by expanding.

Being cut in the form of a spiral the stem is bound to turn slightly, as it expands, and this movement is thrown by the little piece of glass through a lens on to the wall. As the temperature of the water is gradually increased, the movement, shown so dramatically by the strip of light on the wall, increases. But there comes a moment when the heat of the water is too much for the plant—when, in fact, it is in danger of being scalded to death just as a man would be scalded if he were held in water which was gradually heated to boiling-point. And the plant's nervous system collapses just as the man's system would collapse. The strip of light on the wall pauses and quivers for a second, and then returns along its path. It has died suddenly—scalded to death—and the backward movement of the light is but a dramatic reproduction of the contraction of its body—that contraction which immediately follows death."

So far the phenomena noted are those of vital activities associated with the physical states we call life and death; but then there come others which are usually associated with mental consciousness, so that the writer of the article is induced to use such phrases as "the feelings of plants," "the perception part of the plant," "the plant's power of perception."

"Other experiments showing the feelings of plants are equally surprising. Professor Bose employs a compulsive force which causes the plant to give an answering signal—a twitch in reply. These signals are automatically recorded on the delicate instruments the Professor has invented and the records reveal the hidden feelings of the plant. Some idea of the delicacy of the instruments may be gained from the fact that they can record a time interval so short as the 1,000th part of the duration of a heart-beat.

The Professor connected a plant with the instrument, and then lightly struck one of the leaves. At once it was clear that the plant felt the blow. That is, its whole nervous

system was affected, and its pulse, written down by the ingenious recorder, varied with the severity of the blow. The Professor gave the plant a little stimulant. At once the height of the pulse was increased. It was given a depressing drug and the effect was quickly seen in the feebler beating of the pulse.

There was something almost humiliating in this sensitiveness of a mere plant to the very same agents to which men and women respond. No one would object to a plant being refreshed by water; but what right has it to enjoy, as it were, a cup of tea? When Professor Bose gave the plant a dose of alcohol, its response through the recorder was ludicrously unsteady. One had the humiliation of watching a drunken plant. The plant is, indeed, always too "brotherly." Too much food makes it lethargic and incapable of reply, but the removal of the excess removes the lethargy.

The resonant recorder indicates the time taken by the plant to perceive a shock, and here again there is considerable likeness to humanity, for a stoutish plant will give its response in a slow and lordly fashion, but a thin one attains the acme of its excitement in an incredibly short time—in the case of mimosa in the six-hundredth part of a second. The perception part of the plant becomes very sluggish under fatigue. When excessively tired or bored it loses for the time all power of perception, and requires a rest-cure of at least half an hour to restore its equanimity.

That the too sheltered life is no better for plants than for man is suggested by another interesting experiment. A plant which was carefully protected under glass from outside blows looked most sleek and flourishing, but its conducting power was found atrophied or paralysed. Yet when a succession of blows were rained on this effete and bloated specimen, the stimulus canalized its own path of conduction, and the plant soon became more alert and responsive, and its nervous impulses were very much quickened.

It is impossible for a spectator of the Professor's experiments to make any attempt to separate himself from the rest of life. In the matter of automatic heartbeats the Indian plant *Desmodium Gyrans* shows remarkable activity, and Professor Bose, by obtaining records of these pulsations,

shows that the throbbings in the plant are affected by external agents in precisely the same way as the heart-beats of an animal. Thus, in plant, as in animal life, the pulse-frequency is increased under the action of warmth and lessened under cold. Under ether the throbbing of the plant is arrested, but revival is possible when the vapour is blown off. Chloroform is more fatal. There is, too, an extraordinary parallelism in the fact that those poisons which arrest the beat of the heart in a particular way arrest the plant pulsation in a corresponding manner. Also, taking advantage of the antagonistic reactions of specific poisons, Professor Bose has been able to revive a poisoned leaf by the application of another counteracting poison.

To find whether the plant varies in its state of responsiveness, Professor Bose has subjected mimosa (a plant especially sensitive and useful for this line of work) to uniform shocks repeated every hour of the day and night. And he was rewarded by the discovery that plants keep very late hours. Contrary to current views, the plant is awake till early in the morning, falling into deepest sleep between 6 and 9 a. m. when it becomes quite insensitive. It wakes gradually, and by noon is fully awake, becoming lethargic as the afternoon passes, to sleep again in the early morning."

Finally, following out the inevitable suggestions of all these remarkable phenomena, the writer proceeds to draw the moral,—the lesson which Nature is always lying in wait to give to the self-confined egoism of man.

"The superiority of a man must, in fact, be established on a foundation more secure than sensibility. The most sensitive organ by which we can detect an electric current is our tongue. An average European can perceive a current as feeble as 6.4 microamperes (a microampere is a millionth part of the unit of current). Possibly the tongue of a Celt may be more excitable. But the plant mimosa is ten times more sensitive than this, and it is not in the case of special plants that this sensitiveness is felt. Nothing could appear more stolid than the common radish. But under the persuasion of Professor Bose's instruments it responds vigorously to stimuli,

That the establishment of this similarity of responsive actions in the plant and animal will be found of the highest significance is evident from the enthusiastic reception of these discoveries at Oxford, Cambridge, London and Continental scientific centres. By study of the vegetable organisms the more complex physiological reactions of the human being may be understood. Thus, as Professor Bose says, community throughout the great ocean of life is seen to outweigh apparent dissimilarity. Diversity is swallowed up in unity."—

Diversity swallowed up in unity!—It might have been a phrase from some free rendering of an ancient Upanishad. But how much precisely are we justified in deducing from these results produced by the severest tests of physical research, accepted by the scientific opinion of Europe and considered by thinkers of distinction to be of great importance for the future development of the Science of Psychology? Dr. Bose, then a young and unknown scientist, set out to prove the existence of nervous life in metals and plants by showing that they return precisely the same responses to the same stimuli as human beings. In the vegetable kingdom his thesis has been triumphantly proved. These are, obviously, successful experimental observations in the physiology of plants, their vital habits, their nervous responses, and we are now justified by them in saying that man and the plant are one body and one life. Can we go farther and say that they are also to a certain extent observations in plant psychology or that Dr. Bose has gone beyond his original thesis and established between man and the plant a unity of the incipient mind?

If we accept the method of the modern psychologists who hold the physical and the nervous life to be the basis and the material of mind, we are practically compelled to say, Yes. The responses of the plant are evidently identical with those which in man are translated in mental values as physical and nervous sensations; there is in the plant an incipient mind, a rudimentary soul; for it not only lives and dies, wakes and sleeps, but it makes the responses which in us would be pleasure and pain. Is there nothing, then, in the plant which corresponds to the perceptive

element in man? Has it, if we may say so, nervous sensation only and not mental perception? Naturally, a rudimentary organisation of perceptive faculty which not being coupled with conception, the second of the two bright horses of Indra, would not imply a self-conscious Ego.

Scientifically, perhaps, we are not warranted to go so far, but that intuitive logic which is, after all, as often justified by result as the experimental, certainly demands the presence of such a faculty, however much it may linger on the verge of the sub-conscious. The question, at any rate, is raised irresistibly by Dr. Bose's experiments and demands a solution. It is doubtful, however, whether it can ever be solved by any method which comes within the limits of scientific orthodoxy. We reach a border-line where the demands of increasing knowledge begin to cry out for an enlargement in the means and methods of enquiry.

In any case, a great step has been made towards the unification of knowledge. A bridge has been built between man and inert matter. Even, if we take Dr. Bose's experiments with metals in conjunction with his experiments on plants, we may hold it to be practically proved for the thinker that Life in various degrees of manifestation and organisation is omnipresent in Matter and is no foreign introduction or accidental development, but was always there to be evolved. Mind, which modern Science has not yet begun rightly to investigate, awaits its turn.

The ancient thinkers knew well that life and mind exist everywhere in essence and vary only by the degree and manner of their emergence and functionings. All is in all and it is out of the complete involution that the complete evolution progressively appears. It is only appropriate that for a descendant of the race of ancient thinkers who formulated that knowledge, should be reserved the privilege of initiating one of the most important among the many discoveries by which experimental Science is confirming the wisdom of his forefathers.

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## The Question of the Month

*What is the Synthesis needed at the present time ?*

Undoubtedly, that of man himself. The harmony of his faculties is the condition of his peace, their mutual understanding and helpfulness the means of his perfection. At war, they distract the kingdom of his being; the victory of one at the expense of another maims his self-fulfilment.

The peculiar character of our age is the divorce that has been pronounced between reason and faith, the logical mind and the intuitive heart. At first, the declaration of war between them was attended by painful struggles, a faith disturbed or a scepticism dissatisfied. But now their divorce has created exaggerated tendencies which impoverish human life by their mutual exclusiveness, on the one side a negative and destructive critical spirit, on the other an imaginative sentiment which opposes pure instinct and a faith founded on dreams to the sterile fanaticism of the intellect.

Yet a real divorce is impossible. Science could not move a step without faith and intuition and to-day it is growing full of dreams. Religion could not stand for a moment if it did not support itself by the intellectual presentation, however inadequate, of profound truths. To-day we see it borrowing many of its weapons from the armoury of its opponent. But a right synthesis in virtue of a higher and reconciling truth can alone dissipate their mutual misunderstandings and restore to the race its integral self-development.

The synthesis then of religious aspiration and scientific faculty, as a beginning; and in the resultant progress an integrality also of the inner existence. Love and knowledge, the delight of the Bhakta and the divine science of the knower of Brahman, have to effect their unity; and both have to recover the fullness of Life which

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they tend to banish from them in the austerity of their search or the rapture of their ecstasy.

The heart and the mind are one universal Deity and neither a mind without a heart nor a heart without a mind is the human ideal. Nor is any perfection sound and real unless it is also fruitful. The integral divine harmony within, but as its result a changed earth and a nobler and happier humanity.

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## The News of the Month

### "L'IDÉE NOUVELLE"

In close connection with the intellectual work of synthesis undertaken by this Review a Society has been founded in French India under the name of the New Idea, (L'Idée Nouvelle.) Its object is to group in a common intellectual life and fraternity of sentiment those who accept the spiritual tendency and idea it represents and who aspire to realise it in their own individual and social action.

The Society has already made a beginning by grouping together young men of different castes and religions in a common ideal. All sectarian and political questions are necessarily foreign to its idea and its activities. It is on a higher plane of thought superior to external differences of race, caste, creed and opinion and in the solidarity of the spirit that unity can be realised.

The Idée Nouvelle has two rules only for its members, first, to devote some time every day to meditation and self-culture, the second, to use or create daily at least one opportunity of being helpful to others. This is, naturally, only the minimum of initial self-training necessary for those who have yet to cast the whole trend of their thought and feeling into the mould of a higher life and to enlarge the egoistic into a collective consciousness.

The Society has its headquarters at Pondicherry with a reading-room and library. A section has been founded at Karikal and others are likely to be opened at Yanaon and Mahe.

### AN INDO-FRENCH COMMITTEE IN PARIS

An Indo-French Committee (Comité Franco-Hindou) has been founded in Paris and M. Pierre Loti has been



invited to become its Honorary President. The Committee proposes to develop intellectual, scientific, artistic and economic relations between France and India. It is a good deal for one Committee! Let us at least hope that it will be able to carry out the first item of its programme. No doubt, everything that brings men and nations nearer to each other helps in the formation of a general intelligence more synthetic and comprehensive than the old divided mind of humanity; but it is above all in the realm of thought and by the exchange of ideas and the deeper experiences that the best fruits are likely to be borne. Every new tie, especially every tie of the spirit between Europe and India, between the West of to-day and the East of yesterday and to-morrow, is a welcome sign of the times for those who know how much the world's progress depends on their union.

M. Pierre Loti, in a letter addressed to the President of the Committee, thus expresses his veneration for India:—

“And now I salute thee with awe, with veneration and wonder, ancient India of whom I am the adept, the India of the highest splendours of Art and Philosophy, the India also of monstrous mysteries that terrify, India our cradle, India where all that has been produced since her beginnings was ever impetuous and colossal. May thy awakening astonish that Occident, decadent, mean, daily dwindling, slayer of nations, slayer of gods, slayer of souls, which yet bows down still, ancient India, before the prodigies of thy primordial conceptions.”

We cannot but subscribe to the sentiment, if not to all the phrases, of this fine piece of literature.

But what are these monstrous and terrifying mysteries of which M. Loti speaks? Terror is no longer in the mode, the age of mysteries is over and the age of monstrosities has never been. Ignorance is the only monstrosity.

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 MR. TILAK'S BOOK ON THE GITA.

In an interview with the representative of an Indian journal Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak has given a brief account of the work on the Gita which he has been writing during his six years' internment in Mandalay. He begins:—

"You know that the Gita is regarded generally as a book inculcating quietistic Vedanta or Bhakti. For myself, I have always regarded it as a work expounding the principles of human conduct from a Vedantic ethical point of view, that is, reconciling the philosophy of active life with the philosophy of knowledge and the philosophy of devotion to God."

Mr. Tilak then expresses his belief that before Shankara and Ramanuja, the great Southern philosophers, wrote their commentaries, the Gita was understood in its natural sense, but from that time forward artificial and sectarian interpretations prevailed and the element of Karmayoga in the Song Celestial was disregarded. His book is intended to restore this natural sense and central idea of the famous Scripture. It will contain a word for word rendering preceded by an introduction of some fifteen chapters in which he discusses the Vedanta and the ethics of the Gita and compares the ethical philosophy of Western thinkers with that of the Indian schools of thought. Although the book will be published first in Marathi, we are promised a version also in English.

We look forward with interest to a work which, proceeding from a scholar of such eminence and so acute an intellect, one especially whose name carries weight with all Hindus, must be considered an event of no small importance in Indian religious thought. We welcome it all the more because it seems to be conceived in the same free and synthetic spirit as animates this Review. It is a fresh sign of the tendency towards an increasingly liberal movement of religious opinion in orthodox India, the dissolution of the old habit of unquestioning deference to

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great authorities and the consequent rediscovery of the true catholic sense of the ancient Scriptures.

Those who have studied the Gita with a free mind, still more those who have tried to live it, cannot doubt for a moment the justice of Mr. Tilak's point of view. But is not the tendency of the Gita towards a supra-ethical rather than an ethical activity? Ethics is, usually, the standardising of the highest current social ideals of conduct; the Song Celestial while recognising their importance, seeks to fix the principle of action deeper in the centre of a man's soul and points us ultimately to the government of our outward life by the divine self within.

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## Our Acknowledgments

*We take the first opportunity to thank publicly those friends who have from the beginning helped us with their support and countenance, the subscribers who have hastened to register themselves on the faith of our prospectus without waiting for our first number and the many journals which have favourably noticed our undertaking. And among the latter we cannot forbear from quoting the article which has appeared in "La Vie", a French monthly conducted by M. M. Marius and Ary Leblond, in special reference to our French edition.*

### "THE FIRST FRENCH REVIEW IN INDIA"

"We have received the prospectus of a new Review, Arya,—a review of large philosophical synthesis, published at 7, Rue Duplex, Pondicherry.

It is the first French Review in India.

The painter, Albert Besnard, delegate of the Academie des Beaux-Arts to the annual session of the five Academies at Paris, 1912, thus concluded a discourse delivered on his return from a voyage to India:— 'Perhaps, gentlemen, you would desire from me some description of that India saffron-robed and vermilion-stained...whose gods, sombre-hued or azure-tinted, are ever mitred with gold, the domes of whose trees are so lofty that they seem to be offering their flowers to heaven and whose sanctuaries, strange or formidable, seem to invoke the Impossible. Perhaps it is of these marvels that I should have spoken to you... But Pondicherry, heroic, poor and forgotten, has left in me a memory so poignant that I could not resist the desire to make it live before this assembly of the elite of France. By doing so it seems to me that I have better deserved your indulgence."

"It is from Pondicherry that now there comes to us this new Review, rich in knowledge and ideas, addressing

itself to philosophers by its studies speculative and synthetic ; to historians and linguists by its translation and commentaries on the sacred books of the Hindus, the Vedas, and the treatises of Indian philosophy, the Upanishads, which complete the Vedas ; to theologians and savants by its studies in Comparative Religion ; to men of letters by its original collection, under the title of the Eternal Wisdom, of the finest thoughts taken from sages of all times and lands and assembled in a homogeneous continuity ; to psychologists and educationists by its statement of a new method of internal self-development ; to all, in fact, who are curious after new things and also to all who are glad to welcome an initiative which proceeds from that France beyond the seas where is budding the New Idea. "

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*ERRATUM*

Page 27-line 35. For : *arata, arani*, read : *arati, arana*.

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