आर्य

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th August 1919

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA..... Aurobindo Ghose
The Field and the Knower
THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G.
Chapter LVII The Yoga of Self-Perfection
A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE * (7)
THE FUTURE POETRY
Recent English Poetry (2)
THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... ..... Paul Richard
KARMA

* Previously entitled "A Rationalistic Critic on Indian Culture."

Essays on the Gita

THE FIELD AND THE KNOWER

The Gita in order to found on a clear and complete knowledge the way of rising of the soul from the lower nature to the divine way of being, restates in another form the knowledge the Teacher has already given to Arjuna. Essentially it is the same knowledge, but details and relations are brought out into prominence and assigned their full significance which were formerly alluded to only in passing or given generally in the light of another purpose. Thus in the first six chapters it was the knowledge necessary for the distinction between the soul in nature and the immutable self which was given prominence. The references to the supreme Self and Purusha were summary; to justify works in the world, it was assumed and affirmed to be the Master of being but the knowledge of it was not given. The next six chapters are devoted to the bringing out of this suppressed knowledge. There it is the Lord, the distinction of the higher and the lower nature, the vision of the all-originating and all-constituting Godhead in Nature, the One in all to which prominence is given in order to found the unity of works and love with knowledge. But now it is necessary to bring out more definitely the relations between the supreme Purusha, the immutable self, the Jiva and the action of Prakriti and the gunas. Arjuna is therefore made to

put a question which shall evoke this knowledge. He asks to learn of the Purusha and the Prakriti, the field of being and the knower of the field, knowledge and the object of knowledge. These things contain the sum of all that is needed to be known of self and the world for the soul to throw off its natural ignorance and rise by the right use of knowledge, of life, of works, of its relations with the Divine into unity of being with the eternal Spirit of existence.

The essence of the Gita's ideas in these matters we have already by anticipating the final evolution of its thought got to know in a certain measure; but, following its example, we may state them again from the point of view of its present preoccupation,—how, action being admitted, a divine action done with self-knowledge as the instrument of the divine Will in the cosmos being accepted as perfectly consistent with and an indispensable part of the Godward movement, that action being uplifted inwardly as a sacrifice with adoration to the Highest, this way practically affects the great object of spiritual life, the rising from the lower into the higher nature, from mortal into immortal being. All life, all action is a transaction between the soul and Nature. What is the original character of that transaction? what does it become at its spiritual culminating point? to what perfection does it lead the soul that gets free from its lower and external motives and grows inwardly into the very highest sense and power of the Spirit and of the works of its energy? These are the questions involved,—there are others which the Gita does not raise or answer, for they were not pressingly present to the human mind of that day,—and they are replied to in the sense of the solution drawn from a large-sighted combination of the Vedantic, Sankhya and Yoga views of existence which is the starting-point of the whole thought of the Gita.

The Soul which finds itself here embodied in Nature

has a triple reality : it is a spiritual being self-subjected by ignorance to the outward workings of Prakriti and represented in her mobility as an acting, thinking, mutable personality ; when it gets behind all this action and motion, it finds its higher reality to be an eternal and impersonal self and immutable spirit which has no other share in the action and movement than to support it by its presence and regard it as an undisturbed equal witness; but when it looks beyond these two opposite things, it discovers a greater ineffable Reality from which both proceed, the Eternal who is Self of the self and the Master of all Nature and all action, and not only the Master, but the origin and the spiritual support and scene of these workings of his own energy, and not only the origin and spiritual container, but the spiritual inhabitant in all energies, in all things and in all beings, and not only the inhabitant but, by the developments of this eternal energy of his being which we call Nature, himself all energies, all things and all beings. This Nature itself is of two kinds, a lower nature of the cosmic mechanism by association with which the soul lives in a certain ignorance of Maya, *traiguṇyamayî mâyâ*, conceives of itself as an ego of embodied mind and life, works under the power of the modes of Nature, thinks itself bound, suffering, limited by personality, chained to the obligation of birth and wheel of action, a thing of desires, transient, mortal, a slave of its own nature ; but also a higher divine and spiritual nature of its true being in which it is a portion of the Eternal and Divine, blissful, free, superior to its mask of becoming, immortal, imperishable, a power of the Godhead. To rise by this higher nature to the Eternal through divine knowledge, love and works founded on a spiritual universality is the key of the complete spiritual liberation. We now know so much ; but we have to see what farther considerations this change of being involves and especially what is the difference between these two

natures and how our action and our soul-status are affected by the liberation. For that purpose the Gita enters largely into certain details of the highest knowledge which it had hitherto kept in the background; especially the relation between Being and becoming, Soul and Nature, the action of the three gunas, the highest liberation, the largest fullest self-giving of the human soul to the Divine Spirit. There is in all that it here says much of the greatest importance, but it is the last thought with which it closes that is of supreme interest; for in it we shall find the central idea of its teaching, its great word to the soul of man, its highest message.

First, the whole of existence must be regarded as a field of the soul's construction and action in the midst of Nature. The Gita explains the *kshetram*, field, by saying that it is this body which is called the field of the spirit, and in this body there is some one who takes cognizance of the field, *kshetrajna*, the knower of Nature; but it is evident from the definitions that succeed that it is not the physical body alone which is the field, but all too that the body supports, the working of nature, the mentality, the natural action of the objectivity and subjectivity of our being.* This body too is only the individual field; for in each embodied being there is the Knower; in each existence he makes this outward result of the power of his nature which he has formed for his habitation, *îsha vâsyam sarvam yat kincha*, each sustained knot of the mobile Energy the first base and scope of his harmony. In Nature he knows the world as it affects and is reflected by the consciousness in this body, the world exists to us as it is seen in our mind,—in the end, even, this seemingly small embodied consciousness can so en-

* The Upanished speaks of a fivefold body or sheath of Nature, a physical, vital, mental, ideal and divine body; this may be regarded as the totality of the field, *kshetram*.

large itself that it contains in itself the whole universe, *atmani viçva-darçanam*. But, physically, it is a microcosm in a macrocosm, and the macrocosm too, the large world too, is a body and field inhabited by the spiritual knower.

That becomes evident when the Gita proceeds to state the character, nature, source, deformations, powers of this sensible embodiment of our being. We see then that it is the whole working of the lower Prakriti that is meant by the *kshetra*: that is here the field of the action of the embodied spirit, which within us takes cognizance of its field. For a varied and detailed knowledge of all our world of Nature in its essential action we are referred to the verses of the Vedic seers in which we get the inspired and intuitive account of these creations of the Spirit, and to the Brahma Sutras whice will give us the rational and philosophic analysis. But the Gita contents itself with a brief practical statement of the lower nature of our being in the terms of the Sankhya thinkers. The indiscriminate unmanifest Energy ; the objective evolution from it of the five *bhûtas* ; the subjective evolution of the senses, intelligence and ego ; the five objects of the senses, the forms of sense cognizance of the world evolved by the energy from the five elemental states of the original objective substance, by which the ego endowed with intelligence and sense acts on the forms of the cosmos ; this is the whole character of the kshetra. Then there is a consciousness, there is a faculty by which the Energy holds together the relations of objects, there is a persistence of the subjective and objective relations of consciousness and the objects of consciousness ; these are the powers of the field, and all these are powers of the mental and physical Nature. Pleasure and pain, liking and disliking are the principal deformations of the kshetra. From the Vedantic point of view we may say that pleasure and pain are the deformations given by the lower energy to the spontaneous Ananda or delight of the spirit when

brought into contact with her workings, liking and disliking are the deformations given by her to the reactive Will of the spirit determining its response to her contacts. These things give the positive and negative terms in which the ego soul of the lower nature enjoys the world; but the negative terms are perverse, the positive terms are inferior to those of the true spiritual experience. That is the fundamental character of our original transactions with the world of Nature, but it is evidently not the whole of our being. There is something beyond to be known, *jneyam*, and it is when the knower of the field turns from the field itself to learn of all that is behind its appearances that the knowledge begins, *jnânam*. That turning inward alone delivers from the ignorance. Therefore, says the divine Teacher, it is the knowledge at once of the field and its knower, *kshetra-kshetrajnayor jnânam*, a united self-knowledge and world-knowledge, which is the real knowing and wisdom. For both soul and nature are the Brahman, but the real truth of the world of Nature can only be discovered by the liberated sage who possesses also the truth of the spirit. One Brahman, one reality in Self and Nature is the object of all knowledge.

The Gita then tells us what is the spiritual knowledge or rather it tells us what are the conditions of knowledge, the marks, the signs of the man whose soul is turned towards the inner wisdom. They are the recognised and traditional characteristics of the sage; a turning away of the heart from attachment to outward and worldly things, an inward and brooding spirit, a steady mind and a calm equality, a settled fixity upon the real and eternal greatest truths. First, there comes a certain moral condition, a sattwic government of the natural being,—an absence of wordly pride and arrogance, a candid soul, a tolerant, long-suffering and benignant heart, purity of mind and body, a tranquil firmness and steadfastness, self-control and a masterful government of the lower nature, and the

heart's worship given to the Teacher, whether to the divine Teacher within or to the human Master in whom the divine Wisdom is embodied,—for that is the sense of the reverence given to the Guru. Then there is a nobler and freer attitude towards the outward world, an attitude of perfect detachment and equality, a removal of the natural being's attraction to the objects of the senses and a freedom from the claims of that clamorous ego-sense which tyrannises over the normal man: there is no longer any clinging to the attachment and absorption of family and home, but instead an unattached mind, a perception of the defective nature of the ordinary life of physical man with its aimless and painful subjection to birth and death, disease and age, a constant equalness to all pleasant or unpleasant happenings,—for the soul is seated within and impervious to the shocks of external events,—and a meditative mind turned towards solitude and away from the vain noise of the crowds and the assemblies of men. Finally, there is the strong turn towards the things that matter, a philosophic perception of the true sense and large principles of existence, a tranquil continuity of inner spiritual knowledge and light, the Yoga of an unswerving devotion, the love of God, the adoration of the universal and eternal Being.

The object on which the mind of spiritual knowledge is turned, is the Eternal by fixity in whom the soul clouded here by the mists of Nature recovers and enjoys its consciousness of immortality. To be fixed on the transient, to be limited in the phenomenon is to accept mortality; the constant truth in things that perish is that in them which is inward and immutable. The soul when it allows itself to be tyrannised over by the appearances of Nature, misses itself and goes whirling about in the cycle of the births and deaths of the bodies: passionately following without end the mutations of personality and its interests, it cannot draw back to the possession of its

impersonal and unborn self-existence. To do that, to find oneself is to get back to one's true self which assumes these births, but does not perish with the perishing of its forms. To enjoy the eternity to which birth and life are only outward circumstances, is the soul's true immortality. That Eternal is the Brahman. This Brahman is transcendent being and universal being, the free spirit who supports this play of soul with nature and assures the eternal oneness of soul with nature; it is at once the mutable and the immutable, the All that is the One. In his highest being Brahman is a transcendent Eternity without origin or change far above the phenomenal opposition of existence and nonexistence, persistence and transience between which the outward world moves. But seen in the being of this eternity, the world also becomes other than it seems to the mind and senses; then we see the universe no longer as a whirl of mind and matter or a mass of the determinations of energy and substance, but as this Brahman. A spirit who includingly surrounds all this movement with himself and throws on all that is finite the splendour of his garment of infinity, the spirit whose hands and feet are on every side of us, whose heads and eyes and faces are those innumerable visages which we see wherever we turn, whose ear is everywhere listening to the silence of eternity and the music of the worlds, is the universal Being in whose embrace we live.

All relations of Soul and Nature are circumstances of his eternity. Sense and quality are the supreme Soul's reflections of the working of his own energy. He is himself beyond the limitation of the senses, sees all things but not with the physical eye, hears all things but not with the physical ear, is aware of all things but not with the limiting mentality. Not determined by any qualities, he determines in his being all qualities, enjoys all this

qualitative action of his Nature. He is attached to nothing, bound by and fixed to nothing that he does, but in a large and immortal freedom supports all the action and passion of universal Nature. He becomes all that is in the universe ; that which is in existent beings is he and all that we experience outside ourselves, is he ; the inward and the outward, the far and the near, the moving and the unmoving, all this he is at once ; he is the subtlety of the subtle which is beyond our knowledge, even as he is the density of force and substance which offers itself to the grasp of our minds. He is the indivisible One, but he seems to divide himself in beings and appears as all these separate existences ; all things can get back in him, in the spirit to the indivisible unity of their self-existence. All is eternally born from him, upborne in eternity, taken eternally back into his oneness. He is the light of all lights and luminous beyond all the darkness of our ignorance ; he is knowledge and the object of knowledge. The spiritual knowledge which floods the illumined mind, is this spirit manifesting himself to the soul which he has put forth into the action of Nature. The eternal Light is in the heart of every being ; it is he who is the secret knower of the field, *kshetrajna*, and presides as the Lord in the heart of things over this province, over all these kingdoms of his manifested becoming and action. When the soul sees this eternal and universal Godhead within itself, when it becomes aware of the soul in all things and discovers the spirit in Nature, feels all the universe to be a wave mounting in this Eternity and all that is the one being, it puts on the nature of Godhead and stands free in the midst of the worlds of Nature. A divine knowledge and a turning with adoration to this Divinity is the secret of this great spiritual liberation. Freedom, love and the spiritual knowledge raise us from mortal nature to immortal being.

The Soul and Nature are only two aspects of the

eternal Brahman, an apparent duality which founds the operations of his universal existence. The Soul is without origin and eternal Nature too is without origin and eternal; but the modes of Nature and the lower forms she assumes to our conscious experience have an origin in the transactions of these two entities. They come from her, wear by her the outward chain of cause and effect, doing and the results of doing, force and its workings, all that is here transient and mutable. Constantly they change and the soul and Nature seem to change with them, but in themselves these two powers are eternal and always the same. Nature creates and acts, the Soul enjoys her creation and action; but in this inferior form of her action she turns this enjoyment to the figures of pain and pleasure. Forcibly the soul is attracted by her qualitative workings and this attraction of her qualities draws him constantly to births of all kinds in which he enjoys the variation and vicissitude, the good and evil of birth in Nature. But this is only the outward experience of the soul mutable in conception by identification with mutable Nature. Seated in this body is her and our Divinity, the supreme Self, Paramatman, the supreme Soul, the mighty Lord of Nature, who watches her action, sanctions her operations, upholds all she does, commands her manifold creation, enjoys with his universal delight this play of her figures of his own being. That is the self-knowledge to which we have to accustom our mentality. Once it is fixed, no matter how the soul in us may comport itself outwardly in its transactions with Nature, whatever it may seem to do or to assume this or that figure of active being and personality, it is in itself free, no longer bound to birth because one through impersonality of self with the inner unborn spirit of existence. That impersonality is our union with the supreme egoless I of all that is in being.

This knowledge comes by an inner meditation through

which the eternal self becomes apparent to us in our own self-existence; or it comes by the Yoga of the Sankhyas, the separation of the soul from nature; or it comes by the Yoga of works in which the personal will is dissolved through the opening up of our active being to the Lord who assumes to himself the whole of our action in nature. The spiritual knowledge may awaken in us from the urging of the spirit within us, its call to this or that Yoga, this or that way of oneness; or it may come to us by hearing of the truth from others and the moulding of the mind into the sense of that to which it listens with faith and concentration. But however arrived at, it carries us beyond death to immortality. Knowledge shows us above the mutable transactions of the soul with the mortality of nature our highest self to be the supreme Lord of her actions one and equal in all beings, not born in the taking up of a body, not subject to death in the perishing of all these bodies. That is the true seeing, the seeing of eternity, of immortality. When we perceive this equal being in all things, we grow into that equality; when we dwell in this universal being, we become universal beings; when we grow aware of this eternal, we put on our own eternity. We identify ourself with the eternity of the self and no longer with the limitation and distress of our mental and physical ignorance. Then we see all our action to be an evolution and operation of Nature and our real self not the doer, but the witness and unattached enjoyer of the action. All the surface of action is a diverse becoming of natural existences in the one eternal Being, all is extended, manifested, rolled out by the universal Energy from the seeds of her Idea in his being, but the spirit even though it takes up and enjoys her action in this body of ours, is not affected by its mortality because it is eternal beyond birth and death, is not limited by the personalities which it multiply assumes in her because it is the one supreme self of all these personalities, is not changed by the muta-

tions of quality because it is itself undetermined by quality, does not act even in action, *kartâram api akartâram*, because it supports natural action in a perfect spiritual freedom from its effects, is the originator indeed of all action, but in no way changed or affected by the play of its Nature. Even as the all-pervading ether is not affected or changed by the multiple forms it assumes, but remains always the same pure subtle original substance, so this spirit when it has done and become all possible things, remains still and through it all the same pure immutable subtle infinite being. That is the supreme status of the soul, *parâ gatih*, that is the divine being and nature, *madbhâva*, and whoever arrives at spiritual knowledge, rises to that supreme immortality.

This Brahman, this eternal and spiritual knower of the field of his own natural becoming, this Nature, his eternal energy, which converts herself into that field, this immortality of the soul in mortal nature together make the whole truth of our existence. The spirit within when we turn to it, illumines the whole field of Nature with the truth of his being. In the light of that sun of knowledge the eye of knowledge opens in us; then we perceive that our limitation to the mental and physical nature was an error of the darkness, then we are liberated from the law of the lower existence, the law of the mind and body, then we attain to the supreme nature of the spirit. That splendid and lofty change is the last, the divine and infinite becoming, the putting off of mortal nature, the putting on of the immortal existence.

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LVII

THE LIBERATION OF THE NATURE

The two sides of our being, conscious experiencing soul and executive Nature continuously and variously offering to the soul her experiences, determine in their meeting all the affections of our inner status and its responses. Nature contributes the character of the happenings and the forms of the instruments of experience, the soul meets it by an assent to the natural determinations of the response to these happenings or by a will to other determination which it imposes upon the nature. The acceptance of the instrumental ego consciousness and the will to desire are the initial consent of the self to the lapse into the lower ranges of experience in which it forgets its divine nature of being; the rejection of these things, the return to free self and the will of the divine delight in being is the liberation of the spirit. But on the other side stand the contributions of Nature herself to the mixed tangle, which she imposes on the soul's experience of her doings and makings when once that first initial consent has been given and made the law of the whole outward transaction. Nature's essential contributions are two, the gunas and

the dualities. This interior action of Nature in which we live has certain essential qualitative modes which constitute the whole basis of its interiority. The constant effect of these modes on the soul in its natural powers of mind, life and body is a discordant and divided experience, a strife of opposites, *dwandwa*, a motion in all its experience and an oscillation between or a mixture of constant pairs of contraries, of combining positives and negatives, dualities. A complete liberation from the ego and the will of desire must bring with it a superiority to the qualitative modes of the inferior Nature, *traiguṇyâtîtya*, a release from this mixed and discordant experience, a cessation or solution of the dual action of Nature. But on this side too there are two kinds of freedom. A liberation from Nature in a quiescent bliss of the spirit is the first form of release. A farther liberation of the Nature into a divine quality and spiritual power of world-experience fills the supreme calm with the supreme kinetic bliss of knowledge, power, joy and mastery. A divine unity of supreme spirit and its supreme nature is the integral liberation.

Nature, because she is a power of spirit, is essentially qualitative in her action. One may almost say that Nature is only the power in being and the development in action of the infinite qualities of the spirit, *anantaguṇa*. All else belongs to her outward and more mechanical aspects; but this play of quality is the essential thing, of which the rest is the result and mechanical combination. Once we have set right the working of the essential power and quality, all the rest becomes subject to the control of the experiencing Purusha. But in the inferior nature of things the play of infinite quality is subject to a limited measure, a divided and conflicting working, a system of opposites and discords between which some practical mobile system of concords has to be found and to be kept in action; this play of concorded discords, conflicting qualities, disparate powers and ways of experience compelled to some

just manageable, partial, mostly precarious agreement, an unstable mutable equilibrium, is managed by a fundamental working in three qualitative modes which conflict and combine together in all her creations. These three modes have been given in the Sankhya system, which is generally adopted for this purpose by all the schools of philosophic thought and of Yoga in India, the three names, *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*.* Tamas is the principle and power of inertia; rajas is the principle of kinesis, passion, endeavour, struggle, initiation *(ârambha)*; sattwa the principle of assimilation, equilibrium and harmony. The metaphysical bearing of this classification does not concern us; but in its psychological and spiritual bearing it is of immense practical importance, because these three principles enter into all things, combine to give them their turn of active nature, result, effectuation, and their unequal working in the soul-experience is the constituent force of our active personality, our temperament, type of nature and cast of psychological response to experience. All character of action and experience in us is determined by the predominance and by the proportional interaction of these three qualities or modes of Nature. The soul in its personality is obliged, as it were, to run into their moulds; mostly, too, it is controlled by them rather than has any free control of them. The soul can only be free by rising above and rejecting the tormented strife of their unequal action and their insufficient concords and combinations and precarious harmonies, whether in the sense of a complete quiescence from the half-regulated chaos of their action or in the sense of a superiority to this lower turn of nature and a higher control or transformation of their working. There must be either an emptiness of the gunas or a superiority to the gunas.

* This subject has been treated in the Yoga of Works. It is restated here from the point of view of the general type of nature and the complete liberation of the being.

The gunas affect every part of our natural being. They have indeed their strongest relative hold in the three different members of it, mind, life and body. Tamas, the principle of inertia, is strongest in material nature and in our physical being. The action of this principle is of two kinds, inertia of force and inertia of knowledge. Whatever is predominantly governed by Tamas, tends in its force to a sluggish inaction and immobility or else to a mechanical action which it does not possess, but is possessed by obscure forces which drive it in a mechanical round of energy ; equally in its consciousness it turns to an inconscience or enveloped subconscience or to a reluctant, sluggish or in some way mechanical conscious action which does not possess the idea of its own energy, but is guided by an idea which seems external to it or at least concealed from its active awareness. Thus the principle of our body is in its nature inert, subconscient, incapable of anything but a mechanical and habitual self-guidance and action: though it has like everything else a principle of kineses and a principle of equilibrium of its state and action, an inherent principle of response and a secret consciousness, the greatest portion of its rajasic motions are contributed by the life-power and all the overt consciousness by the mental being. The principle of rajas has its strongest hold on the vital nature. It is the Life within us that is the strongest kinetic motor power, but the life-power in earthly beings is possessed by the force of desire, therefore rajas turns always to action and desire ; desire is the strongest human and animal initiator of most kinesis and action, predominant to such an extent that many consider it the father of all action and even the originator of our being. Moreover, rajas finding itself in a world of matter which starts from the principle of inconscience and a mechanical driven inertia, has to work against an immense contrary force; therefore its whole action takes on the nature of an effort, a struggle, a besieged and an imped-

ed conflict for possession which is distressed in its every step by a limiting incapacity, disappointment and suffering: even its gains are precarious and limited and marred by the reaction of the effort and an aftertaste of insufficiency and transience. The principle of sattwa has its strongest hold in the mind; not so much in the lower parts of the mind which are dominated by the rajasic life-power, but mostly in the intelligence and the will of the reason. Intelligence, reason, rational will are moved by the nature of their predominant principle towards a constant effort of assimilation, assimilation by knowledge, assimilation by a power of understanding will, a constant effort towards equilibrium, some stability, rule, harmony of the conflicting elements of natural happening and experience. This satisfaction it gets in various ways and in various degrees of acquisition. The attainment of assimilation, equilibrium and harmony brings with it always a relative but more or less intense and satisfying sense of ease, happiness, mastery, security, which is other than the troubled and vehement pleasures insecurely bestowed by the satisfaction of rajasic desire and passion. Light and happiness are the characteristics of the sattwic guna. The whole nature of the embodied living mental being is determined by these three gunas.

But these are only predominant powers in each part of our complex system. The three qualities mingle, combine and strive in every fibre and in every member of our intricate psychology. The mental character is made by them, the character of our reason, the character of our will, the character of our moral, aesthetic, emotional, dynamic, sensational being. Tamas brings in all the ignorance, inertia, weakness, incapacity which afflicts our nature, a clouded reason, nescience, unintelligence, a clinging to habitual notions and mechanical ideas, the refusal to think and know, the small mind, the closed avenues, the trotting round of mental habit, the dark and

the twilit places. Tamas brings in the impotent will, want of faith and self-confidence and initiative, the disinclination to act, the shrinking from endeavour and aspiration, the poor and little spirit, and in our moral and dynamic being the inertia, the cowardice, baseness, sloth, lax subjection to small and ignoble motives, the weak yielding to our lower nature. Tamas brings into our emotional nature insensibility, indifference, want of sympathy and openness, the shut soul, the callous heart, the soon spent affection and languor of the feelings, into our aesthetic and sensational nature the dull aesthesis, the limited range of response, the insensibility to beauty, all that makes in man the coarse, heavy and vulgar spirit. Rajas contributes our normal active nature with all its good and evil; when unchastened by a sufficient element of sattwa, it turns to egoism, self-will and violence, the perverse, obstinate or exaggerating action of the reason, prejudice, attachment to opinion, clinging to error, the subservience of the intelligence to our desires and preferences and not to the truth, the fanatic or the sectarian mind, self-will, pride, arrogance, selfishness, ambition, lust, greed, cruelty, hatred, jealousy, the egoisms of love, all the vices and passions, the exaggerations of the aesthesis, the morbidities and perversions of the sensational and vital being. Tamas in its own right produces the coarse, dull and ignorant type of human nature, rajas the vivid, restless, kinetic man, driven by the breath of action, passion and desire. Sattwa produces a higher type. The gifts of sattwa are the mind of reason and balance, clarity of the disinterested truth-seeking open intelligence, a will subordinated to the reason or guided by the ethical spirit, self-control, equality, calm, love, sympathy, refinement, measure, fineness of the aesthetic and emotional mind, in the sensational being delicacy, just acceptivity, moderation and poise, a vitality subdued and governed by the mastering intelligence. The accomplished types of the

sattwic man are the philosopher, saint and sage, of the rajasic man the statesman, warrior, forceful man of action. But in all men there is in greater or less proportions a mingling of the gunas, a multiple personality and in most a good deal of shifting and alternation from the predominance of one to the prevalence of another guna; even in the governing form of their nature most human beings are of a mixed type. All the colour and variety of life is made of the intricate pattern of the weaving of the gunas.

But richness of life, even a sattwic harmony of mind and nature does not constitute spiritual perfection. There is a relative possible perfection, but it is a perfection of incompleteness, some partial height, force, beauty, some measure of nobility and greatness, some imposed and precariously sustained balance. There is a relative mastery, but it is a mastery of the body by life or of the life by mind, not a free possession of the instruments by the liberated and self-possessing spirit. The gunas have to be transcended if we would arrive at spiritual perfection. Tamas evidently has to be overcome, inertia and ignorance and incapacity cannot be elements of a true perfection; but it can only be overcome in Nature by the force of rajas aided by an increasing force of sattwa. Rajas has to be overcome, egoism, personal desire and self-seeking passion are not elements of the true perfection; but it can only be overcome by force of sattwa enlightening the being and force of tamas limiting the action. Sattwa itself does not give the highest or the integral perfection; sattwa is always a quality of the limited nature; sattwic knowledge is the light of a limited mentality; sattwic will is the government of a limited intelligent force. Moreover, sattwa cannot act by itself in Nature, but has to rely for all action on the aid of rajas, so that even sattwic action is always liable to the imperfections of rajas; egoism, perplexity, inconsistency,

a one-sided turn, a limited and exaggerated will, exaggerating itself in the intensity of its limitations, pursue the mind and action even of the saint, philosopher and sage. There is a sattwic as well as a rajasic or tamasic egoism, at the highest an egoism of knowledge or virtue; but the mind's egoism of whatever type is incompatible with liberation. All the three gunas have to be transcended. Sattwa may bring us near to the Light, but its limited clarity falls away from us when we enter into the luminous body of the divine Nature.

This transcendence is usually sought by a withdrawal from the action of the lower nature. That withdrawal brings with it a stressing of the tendency to inaction. Sattwa when it wishes to intensify itself, seeks to get rid of rajas and calls in the aid of the tamasic principle of inaction; that is the reason why a certain type of highly sattwic men live intensely in the inward being, but hardly at all in the outward life of action, or else are there incompetent and ineffective. The seeker of liberation goes farther in this direction, strives by imposing an enlightened tamas on his natural being, a tamas which by this saving enlightenment is more of a quiescence than an incapacity, to give the sattwic guna freedom to lose itself in the light of the spirit. A quietude and stillness is imposed on the body, on the active life-soul of desire and ego, on the external mind, while the sattwic nature by stress of meditation, by an exclusive concentration of adoration, by a will turned inward to the Supreme, strives to merge itself in the spirit. But if this is sufficient for a quietistic release, it is not sufficient for the freedom of an integral perfection. This liberation depends upon inaction and is not entirely self-existent and absolute; the moment the soul turns to action, it finds that the activity of the nature is still the old imperfect motion. There is a liberation of the soul from the nature which is gained by inaction, but not a liberation of the soul in nature perfect and self-

existent whether in action or in inaction. The question then arises whether such a liberation and perfection are possible and what may be the condition of this perfect freedom.

The ordinary idea is that it is not possible because all action is of the lower gunas, necessarily defective, *sadosham*, caused by the motion, inequality, want of balance, unstable strife of the gunas; but when these unequal gunas fall into perfect equilibrium, all action of Nature ceases and the soul rests in its quietude. The divine Being, we may say, may either exist in his silence or act in Nature through her instrumentation, but in that case must put on the appearance of her strife and imperfection. That may be true of the ordinary deputed action of the Divine in the human spirit with its present relations of soul to nature in an embodied imperfect mental being, but it is not true of the divine nature of perfection. The strife of the gunas is only a representation in the imperfection of the lower nature; what the three gunas stand for are three essential powers of the Divine which are not merely existent in a perfect equilibrium of quietude, but unified in a perfect consensus of divine action. Tamas in the spiritual being becomes a divine calm, which is not an inertia and incapacity of action, but a perfect power, *shakti*, holding in itself all its capacity and capable of controlling and subjecting to the law of calm even the most stupendous and enormous activity: rajas becomes a self-effecting initiating sheer Will of the spirit, which is not desire, endeavour, striving passion, but the same perfect power of being, *shakti*, capable of an infinite, imperturbable and blissful action. Sattwa becomes not the modified mental light, *prakâça*, but the self-existent light of the divine being, *jyoti*, which is the soul of the perfect power of being and illumines in their unity the divine quietude and the divine will of action. The ordinary liberation gets the still divine light in the divine

quietude, but the integral perfection will aim at this greater triune unity.

When this liberation of the nature comes, there is a liberation also of all the spiritual sense of the dualities of Nature. In the lower nature the dualities are the inevitable effect of the play of the gunas on the soul affected by the formations of the sattwic, rajasic and tamasic ego. The knot of this duality is an ignorance which is unable to seize on the spiritual truth of things and concentrates on the imperfect appearances, but meets them not with a mastery of their inner truth, but with a strife and a shifting balance of attraction and repulsion, capacity and incapacity, liking and disliking, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, acceptance and repugnance; all life is represented to us as a tangle of these things, of the pleasant and the unpleasant, the beautiful and the unbeautiful, truth and falsehood, fortune and misfortune, success and failure, good and evil, the inextricable double web of Nature. Attachment to its likings and repugnances keeps the soul bound in this web of good and evil, joys and sorrows. The seeker of liberation gets rid of attachment, throws away from his soul the dualities, but as the dualities appear to be the whole act, stuff and frame of life, this release would seem to be most easily compassed by a withdrawal from life, whether a physical withdrawal, so far as that is possible while in the body, or an inner retirement, a refusal of sanction, a liberating distaste, *vairâgya*, for the whole action of Nature. There is a separation of the soul from Nature. Then the soul watches seated above and unmoved, *udâsîna*, the strife of the gunas in the natural being and regards as an impassive witness the pleasure and pain of the mind and body. Or it is able to impose its indifference even on the outer mind and watches with the impartial calm or the impartial joy of the detached spectator the universal action in which it has no longer an active inner participation. The end of

this movement is the rejection of birth and a departure into the silent self, *moksha*.

But this rejection is not the last possible word of liberation. The integral liberation comes when this passion for release, *mumukshutwa*, founded on distaste or *vairâgya*, is itself transcended ; the soul is then liberated both from attachment to the lower action of nature and from all repugnance to the cosmic action of the Divine. This liberation gets its completeness when the spiritual gnosis can act with a supramental knowledge and reception of the action of Nature and a supramental luminous will in initiation. The gnosis discovers the spiritual sense in Nature, God in things, the soul of good in all things that have the contrary appearance ; that soul is delivered in them and out of them, the perversions of the imperfect or contrary forms fall away or are transformed into their higher divine truth,—even as the gunas go back to their divine principles,—and the spirit lives in a universal, infinite and absolute Truth, Good, Beauty, Bliss which is the supramental or ideal divine Nature. The liberation of the Nature becomes one with the liberation of the spirit, and there is founded in the integral freedom the integral perfection.

A Defence of Indian Culture

(A RATIONALISTIC CRITIC ON INDIAN CULTURE *)

(7)

The whole root of difference between Indian and European culture springs from the spiritual aim of Indian civilisation and the turn which this aim gives to all the rich and luxuriant variety of its forms and rhythms, since even what it has in common with other cultures gets from that turn a unique character, a stamp of striking originality. I have given throughout this account of the framework of the Indian idea from the outlook of an intellectual critism, because that is the standpoint of the critics who affect to disparage its value, and it was as well to show that Indian culture must be adjudged even from this alien outlook to have been the creation of a wide and noble communal spirit, inspired in the heart of its being by a lofty principle, illumined with a striking and uplifting idea of individual manhood and its powers and possible perfection, alligned to a spacious plan of social architecture, enriched by a great and vivifying life-power as well as by strong intellectual and artistic creation; but this does not give an adequate account of its spirit or its greatness. One

* As these articles have extended beyond their original intention, a more suitable title is substituted for the original heading.

might describe Greek or Roman civilisation from this outlook and miss little that was of importance; but Indian civilisation was not only a great cultural system, it was an immense religious effort of the human spirit. The spiritual aspiration was its governing idea, core of thought, ruling passion; not only did it make spirituality the highest aim of life, but tried, as far as that could be done in the past conditions of the human race—a complete success in this effort can only come in the future,—to turn the whole of life towards spirituality. But since the native form of the spiritual impulse is religion, the predominance of the spiritual idea and its endeavour to take hold of life necessitated the filling of every circumstance of life with the religious sense, the casting of thought and action into the religious mould, a religio-philosophic culture. The highest spirituality moves high above that lower stage of seeking to which religious form and dogma belong, does not easily bear or at any rate it transcends their limitations, lives in an experience which to the formal religious mind is unintelligible; but man cannot arrive immediately at that inner elevation. He needs some support, some scaffolding of dogma, worship, image, sign, form, symbol, mixed half-natural motive to build up in him the temple of the spirit. Only when that is done can the support be removed, the scaffolding disappear. The religious culture which now goes by the name of Hinduism,—though it gave itself no name, set to itself no sectarian limits, but was only a continuously enlarging tradition of the Godward endeavour of the human spirit, the eternal religion, *sanâtana dharma*,—was an immense provision for such a self-building. To understand the sense and spirit of Indian culture we must have a just and right appreciation of the sense and spirit of Indian religion.

The European critics of Indian religion have often expressed an inability to make out what this religion is, what is its soul and what is the form of its body. Total

misunderstandings have been advanced such as the idea that there is no Hindu religion, but only a Hindu social system with a bundle of the most disparate religious beliefs and institutions, or the precious dictum that Hinduism is a mass of folk-lore with an ineffective coat of metaphysical daubing. These misunderstandings spring always from the total difference of outlook on religion between the Indian and the normal western mind, a difference so great that it can only be bridged by a wide spiritual culture and a philosophical training for which the forms of religion in the West make no provision. To the Indian mind dogma is the least important part of religion, the religious spirit matters, not the dogma: but to the western mind a fixed intellectual belief is the most important part of a cult, its core of meaning, the thing that distinguishes it and makes it either a false or a true religion. That notion is a consequence of the western idea that intellectual truth is the highest verity. The Indian religious thinker believes on the contrary that all the highest eternal verities are truths of the spirit, intellectual truth only one of the doors to it, and since intellectual truth turned towards the Infinite must be not one but many-sided, the most varying intellectual beliefs may be equally true because they mirror different facets, form, however separated by intellectual distance, so many side-entrances which admit us into the precincts of the eternal Verity. All religions are true in their own way and degree, they are some of the thousand paths to the one Brahman: to use the language of the Gita, in whatever way men approach God, in that way he receives their seeking. What Indian religion consists in is, first, this belief in the one highest and universal Spiritual Being and the effort to grow consciously into the truth of a divine existence and, secondly, a traditional, many-branching and always enlarging way of knowledge and of spiritual or religious discipline. The first element is the most essential and tends at a certain

pitch to overbear all differences, but the second though of a secondary, is still of a great importance. But the Indian religious tradition is not merely the form of a religio-social system; however greatly that may count at the moment of a social departure, however stubbornly the conservative religious mind may oppose all social change, still the core of the matter is a point of spiritual, not of social discipline. Actually we find religions like Sikhism which broke down the social tradition, counted in the Vedic family, while the Jains who observe the custom and intermarry with Hindus, were traditionally considered to be outside the fold because their religious system seemed in its origin a denial of and a departure from the spiritual continuity. This subject of Indian religion is too vast and complex for adequate treatment in brief limits. I will confine myself here to the point at issue, the central ideas of the religion and their actual bearing on the life and cultural aims of the individual and the society. It is the spiritualising and vitalising power of the religion that is denied: that power must be our main subject of appreciation.

The first idea of all Indian religion is one common to the highest human thinking that the supreme truth of all existence is a Being or an existence beyond mental and physical appearances, a Spirit, a Self, an Infinite, an Eternal, a one transcendent, universal, original and sempiternal Divinity and that soul, nature and life are only a manifestation or phenomenon of this self-aware Eternity. But this truth of being was not perceived by the Indian mind as a philosophical speculation, an idea to be played with by the thinker in his study, but otherwise void of practical bearing on life or a mystic sublimation which could be ignored in the dealings of man with life and Nature; it is a thing to be sought by all according to their degree of capacity, to be lived, to be made the governing idea of thought and life and action. It is for the Indian mind a religious truth and not simply a philoso-

phical generalisation, it is even the one universal credo of Indian religion. The Infinite alone justifies the existence of the finite, the finite by itself has no entirely separate value or independent existence, but serves only as a manifestation of the glory of the Infinite and as a means by which the soul in Nature can approach, touch, feel and unite itself by love, knowledge, faith, adoration, a God-ward will in works with the infinite Existence. The Self, the self-existent being is the one supreme reality, self-realisation is the great business of the living and thinking human being and all life and thought are a means of the progress towards self-realisation. Whether we consider the real self of man to be indivisibly one with the Supreme or universal self or different from him in Nature and an eternal soul of the divine Nature, or hold God, Nature and the individual soul in man to be three different eternal powers of being, the truth of Self holds with equal force, since even to the Indian dualist God is the supreme self and reality in whom and by whom Nature and man live, move and have their being and, if you eliminate God from his view of things, Nature and man would lose for him all their meaning. The Spirit, universal Nature (whether called Maya, Prakriti or Shakti) and the soul in living beings, Jiva, are the three truths which are universally admitted by all the many religious sects and conflicting religious philosophies; universal also is the admission that the discovery of the inner spiritual self in man, the divine soul in him, and some kind of unity with God or supreme Self or eternal Brahman is the condition of spiritual perfection. According to our experience, we may variously regard God as an impersonal Divinity or a transcendent sempiternal and universal Person, but in either case it is admitted that he is in the heart and centre of all existence and all existence is in him and to find him is the great self-finding. The differences of credal belief are to the Indian mind only various ways of seeing the

one self and Divinity. Self-realisation, to open to the inner Spirit, to live in the Infinite, to seek after and discover the Eternal, to be in union with God is the common religious idea, it is the sense given to spiritual salvation. That recognition of the highest spiritual truth and the highest spiritual aim is the first unity of Indian religion.

The spiritual genius of the Indian people, the claim of Indian civilisation to be in the front rank as a spiritual culture, a supreme expression of the spiritual mind of humanity, would be sufficiently substantiated, if there were nothing else in its favour, by the single fact that it has made the greatest and widest spiritual truth seen with the boldest largeness and an unique intensity the grand uplifting idea of life, the core of all its thinking, the foundation of all its religion, the sense and aim of the whole being of humanity. The truth itself is not peculiar to Indian thinking; but elsewhere it has been in its whole largeness and living sincerity the property only of a few thinkers, mystics or exceptionally gifted spiritual natures, while the mass of men have had no perception of it, but lived only in the lower sectarian side of religion, inferior ideas of the Deity or in the outward aspects of life; but Indian culture did succeed by the strenuousness of its vision, the universality of its approach, the intensity of its seeking in stamping religion with the essential ideal of a real spirituality and bringing some living reflection of it into every part of the religious field. Nothing can be more untrue than to say that the general religious mind of India has not at all grasped the higher spiritual or metaphysical truths of the Indian religion and has lived always in the externals only of rite and creed and shibboleth. The main metaphysical truths in their broad aspects have been stamped on the general mind of the people and are as familiar to the man in the street and the worshipper in the temple as to the philosopher in his seclusion, the monk in his monastery and the saint in

his hermitage, while the spiritual reality to which they lead has permeated the religion, the literature, the art, even the popular songs of the nation.

No doubt, these things are realised by the mass of men more readily through the fervour of devotion than by a strenuous effort of thinking. No doubt, too, the tendency to put too much stress on externals has always been there and worked to overcloud the deeper spiritual tendency,—that is a common failing of human nature,—and it has needed a constant stream of saints and religious thinkers and the teaching of illuminated Sannyasins to keep the reality vivid and resist the deadening weight of form and ceremony. But the fact remains that these messengers of the spirit have not been wanting, nor has there been wanting the readiness of the common mind to listen to the message. The ordinary materialised souls, the external minds who are in India as everywhere the majority,—how easy it is for the superior European critic to forget this common fact of our humanity and treat it as a peculiar sin of the Indian mentality! —have at least this distinction that they are by centuries of training nearer to the inner realities, divided from them by a less thick veil of the universal ignorance and more easily led back to a vital glimpse of God and Spirit, self and eternity. Where else could the lofty, austere and difficult teaching of a Buddha have seized so rapidly on the popular mind or the songs of a Tukaram, a Kabir, the Sikh gurus, the chants of the Tamil saints with their fervid devotion but also their profound philosophy found so speedy an echo and formed a popular religious literature? This strong permeation and readiness of the mind of a whole nation to turn to the highest realities is the sign and fruit of an age-long, a real and a still living supremely spiritual culture.

The variety of Indian philosophy and religion, interminable and bewildering to the European mind, which

seems often unable to see the forest because of the richness and luxuriance of its vegetation and misses the common spiritual life in the multitude of its forms, is itself, as Vivekananda pertinently pointed out, a sign of a superior religious culture. The Indian mind has always realised that the Supreme is the Infinite and perceived that to the soul in Nature the Infinite must always present itself in an infinite variety of aspects. The aggressive and quite illogical idea of a single religion for all mankind, a religion universal by the very force of its narrowness, one set of dogmas, one cult, one system of ceremonies, one ecclesiastical ordinance, one array of prohibitions and injunctions, which all minds must accept on peril of persecution by men and spiritual rejection or eternal punishment by God, that grotesque creation of human unreason which has been the parent of so much intolerance, cruelty and obscurantism and aggressive fanaticism, has never been able to take firm hold of the Indian mentality. Men everywhere have common human failings; intolerance and narrowness especially in the matter of observances there has been and is in India, violence of theological disputation, querulous bickerings of sects and their pretensions of spiritual superiority, sometimes, at one time especially in southern India in a period of acute religious differences, even local outbreaks of active mutual tyranny and cruelty. But these things have never taken the proportions which they assumed in Europe; they have been confined for the most part to the minor forms of polemical attack, intolerance and social obstruction or ostracism and have transgressed very little across the line to the major forms of persecution. Behind these weaknesses of human egoism there has stood always in India the saving perception of the higher spiritual mind, which has had its effect on the mass mentality, the living perception that since the minds, the temperaments, the intellectual affinities of men are unlimited in their variety, a perfect

liberty of thought and of worship must be allowed to the individual in his approach to the Infinite.

Authority of spiritual experience and knowledge was recognised, but also development by varying spiritual experience and knowledge. Even in the days of decline when the claim of authority became excessive, there was still left the saving perception that there could not be one but must be many authorities and a certain readiness to acknowledge new light capable of enlarging the old tradition. Indian civilisation did not develop its earlier political and social liberties,—that greatness of freedom belongs to the West,—but freedom of thought and spiritual liberty have always been among its constant traditions. The atheist and the agnostic were free from persecution ; Buddhism and Jainism might be declared unorthodox religions, but they lived freely side by side with the traditional creeds and philosophies and as much of their truths as was assimilable was taken into the stock of the common and enlarging spiritual continuity. This continuity was carefully conserved, but at the same time admitted light from all quarters. In latter times the saints who reached some fusion of the Hindu and the Islamic spiritual teaching, were recognised as teachers of the Hindu religion. The Yogin who developed a new path of Yoga, the religious teacher who founded a new order, the thinker who built up a novel statement of the truths of spiritual being, found no serious obstacle to their practice or propaganda. At most they had to meet the instinctive opposition of the priest and pundit to any change of the tradition, and this had only to be lived down for the new element to be received into the free and pliant body of the national religion.

At the same time the necessity of a spiritual order as well as a spiritual freedom was perceived, and this was provided for in various ways ; first, by the recognition of an enlarging number of authorised scriptures, some of a common authority, others peculiar to sects or schools,

some of an absolute, others of a relative binding force, but all open to a large freedom of interpretation; secondly, by the power of family and communal tradition, *kuladharma*, persistent but not entirely immutable; thirdly, by the religious authority of the Brahmins, who as priests were the custodians of observance and as scholars, a more respected role than the officiating priesthood, the exponents of religious tradition; finally, and very characteristically, by the succession, *parampará*, of Gurus or spiritual teachers who preserved the continuity of a spiritual system handed down from generation to generation but could enrich and develop its significance and practice. The evolution of the Vaishnava religion, its succession of saints and teachers, the developments given to it by Ramanuja, Madhwa, Chaitanya, Vallabhacharya and its recent stirrings of survival after a period of languor and of some fossilisation, present one notable instance of this living continuity. A more striking example was the founding of the Sikh religion, its long line of Gurus, the last development given to it by Guru Govinda Singh in the democratic institution of the Khalsa. The creation of a sort of divided pontifical authority by Shankaracharya, transmitted from generation to generation, the Buddhist Sangha and its councils, the Sikh Khalsa, the adoption of the congregational form called Samaj by the modern reforming sects are instances of an attempt at a more compact and stringent order. But it is noteworthy that the freedom and innate directness of the Indian religious mentality have prevented it from initiating anything like the overblown ecclesiastical orders and hierarchies which in the West have imposed the tyranny of their yoke on spiritual liberty.

This instinct at once for order and freedom in any field of human activity is a sign in that field of a high natural capacity, and a people which could devise such a union of religious liberty and orderly religious evolution,

must be credited with a high capacity for religion, even as they cannot be denied the inevitable fruit of it, a great, ancient and still living spiritual culture. The freedom of religious thought and experience, the provision of a flexible framework and means of a stable and powerful evolution have given to Indian civilisation its marvellous wealth of many-sided philosophies, great scriptures and profound religious works, religions which approach God from every side of his infinite being, Yogas, systems of psycho-spiritual discipline and self-finding, suggestive forms, symbols, ceremonies which train the mind at all stages of development to turn Godwards, a firm structure capable of bearing a large tolerance and assimilative spirit, a vivacity, intensity, multitudinousness of experience, a freedom from the unnatural European divorce between knowledge and religion, the claims of the intellect and the claims of the spirit, a long endurance and infinite capacity of revival which make it stand out today as the most remarkable and living of all religious systems. The nineteenth century has thrown on Indian religion its tremendous shock of negation and scepticism without being able to destroy its roots of assured spiritual knowledge. Disturbed for a while because found by this attack in a moment of depression, India has revived and responded by a fresh outburst of spiritual activity and is preparing for a great new life and transformation and a farther evolution in the inexhaustible infinities of spiritual experience.

The fundamental idea of Indian religion, the recognition of a one and infinite Godhead who can be approached and worshipped through any of his infinite aspects, a supreme and supracosmic Existence which manifests itself in the cosmos and enters into multitudinous relations with the souls in the universe who are one with or part of its own being, gives a many-sided appearance to Indian cult and spiritual experience which is a constant stumbling block to understanding by European minds accus-

tomed to the rigid impoverishing definitions and strict exclusions of the narrower religious thinking of Europe. The European critic is struck by what seems to him the immense mass and intricacy of a polytheistic cult crowned at its summit by a belief in the One which he cannot distinguish from pantheism. He applies with an obstinate prejudgment the ideas and definitions of his own thinking and by this illegitimate importation fixes false values on Indian spiritual conceptions. The Indian mind on the contrary is averse to intolerant exclusions. A great force of intuition and inner experience has given it from the beginning what the mind of the West is only now arriving at with great difficulty, the cosmic consciousness, the cosmic vision. When it sees the One without a second, it still admits his duality of Spirit and Nature, his many trinities, his million aspects. When it concentrates on a single limiting aspect of the Divinity and seems to see nothing beyond it, it has still at the back of its consciousness the sense of the All, the idea of the One. When it distributes its worship among many objects, it looks beyond the multitude of godheads to their unity. This synthetic turn is not peculiar to the mystics or the literate or the thinkers nourished on the high sublimities of the Veda and Vedanta, but permeates even the popular mind which is filled with the thoughts, the images, the traditions, the cultural symbols of the Purana and Tantra; for the Puranic and Tantric ideas, names, forms and symbols are only concrete representations of the combined monism, unitarianism, universalism and synthetism of the Vedic scriptures.

Indian religion founds itself on the conception of the timeless Supreme who is beyond name or form, but it does not deny or abolish all intermediary forms, names, powers, personality of this Divinity. Accordingly, it does not begin and end with a colourless monism or a transcendental Theism. The Godhead is worshipped as the All, the universal being; but Indian religion is not therefore

pantheism, since beyond the universality it recognises the supracosmic eternity of the Divine Being. Indian polytheism is not polytheism; for the worshipper of many gods knows that all gods are forms, names, personalities, powers of the one Being and all goddesses are powers of the one divine Energy. Those ways of Indian cult which most resemble a popular form of Theism, are still something more, because they do not exclude, but admit the many aspects of God and rest on and go upward to the philosophic truth of the one Deity. The later religious forms which most felt the impress of the Islamic idea or of western religious formulas, Nanak's worship of the timeless One, Akala, or the reforming creeds of today draw away from the anthropomorphic limitations of western monotheism: irresistibly they turn towards the truth of Vedanta. The personality of God and his human relations with man are strongly stressed by Vaishnavism and Shaivism, but they are not the whole of these religions. Indian religion cannot be described by any of these western definitions. In its totality it became a synthesis of all spiritual worship and experience, observed the one Truth from all its many sides, gave itself no specific name or limiting distinction, but only designations for its constituting cults and divisions. In its essential character, though strikingly distinguished from other creeds by its traditional scriptures, cults and symbols, it is not a credal religion but a vast, universal, many-sided and unifying system of spiritual culture.

To understand the effect of Indian spiritual culture on the life of the individual and the community, we must recognise this synthetical character and embracing unity. The One Existence to whom sages gives different names of the Veda, the One without a second of the Upanishads, is the fundamental seeing of Indian spirituality. All comes from, exists in, returns and amounts to that One. To discover, closely approach, enter into whatever unity

with this Infinite, this Eternal, is the height of spiritual experience. That is the first idea of the religious mind of India. The second idea is the manifold way of man's approach to the Eternal and Infinite. This Infinite is full of many infinities and each of these infinite aspects is the Eternal in his glory. In the limitations of the cosmos God manifests himself to man and fulfils himself in the world in many ways, but each is the way of the Eternal; in each finite we can discover and through all things approach the Infinite. All cosmic powers and manifestations are of the One and behind the workings of Nature are to be seen and adored powers, names, personalities which are the godheads of the one Godhead. The divine Will and Energy are behind all happenings, whether to us fortunate or adverse, and over each way of the universal dealings stands a form of the presiding Deity. He creates and is Brahma, preserves and is Vishnu, destroys or takes to himself and is Rudra or Shiva. His supreme Energy is beneficent in upholding and protection and is the Mother of the worlds, Luxmi or Durga, or beneficent even in the mask of destruction and is Chundi or Kali, the dark Mother. He manifests himself in form of his qualities; the God of divine love of the Vaishnava, the God of divine power of the Shakta appear as two different godheads, but are the one Deity. These things we try to explain now as symbols, which is by the way of an intellectual compromise with modern rationalism; but the Indian religious mentality saw them not only as symbols but as realities, because between the highest spiritual being and material being it is aware of other psychological planes of consciousness and experience and these things are truths of these planes no less real than the outward truths of the material universe. Man approaches God at first according to his psychological nature, experience, capacity for this deeper experience, *swabhâva*, *adhikâra*, whence comes the variety of religious cult,

belief and way of divine union. But also there is a third idea of strongest consequence, that not only through aspects of the universal spirit and all inner and outer Nature can the Divine be approached, but each individual object and being is in its spiritual being intimately one with the one divine Existence. In each individual man is the divinity, Narayana; all corporate or collective being is a form of the divine Narayana. God is in ourselves and in ourselves we have to find him. The supreme truth of all divisions is a secret unity. These three ideas govern the Indian religious mind and the seeing of them is its whole seeing. Indian spiritual culture opens up a hundred ways to arrive at the truth of our religious being, but its consummation is to see God in man and man in God, God in Nature and Nature in God, God in all things and all things in God, and to go beyond them to their origin in the supracosmic Absolute, Eternal and Infinite. To see the Supreme altogether and in all ways and grow to be at one with him, that is the eternal religion, *esha dharmah sanâtanah.*

The Future Poetry

RECENT ENGLISH POETRY

(2)

The effective stream of poetry in the English tongue has followed no such strong distinctive turn as would be able to sweep the effort of rhythmic expression along with it in one mastering direction. The poets of this age pursue much more even than their predecessors the bent of their personality, not guided by any uniting thought or standard of form, and have no other connecting link than the subtle similarities which the spirit of the age always gives to its work of creation. But the present age is so loose, fluid and many-motived that this subtler community is not easily tangible and works out in much less of an open family resemblance than in the Victorian poets or their predecessors. Only in the Celtic revival in Ireland have there been a number of considerable writers united by a common artistic motive and ideal, and it may be for that reason that a certain persistent thing which is striving to be and to get expression in the poetry of the time finds itself in a first illumination, emerges as a conscious power and seeks for its adequate form and rhythm. But we find it elsewhere too in obscurer forms; on this element we may pause to lay stress while we leave aside

as of less importance the crowding variety of other temperamental and personal emphasis which hides it from view or chokes up its channels of emergence. This subtler element, although far from being yet victorious over the tradition of the past or the more clamorous powers of the present, is the most original, the most unworked and fruitful in promise for the future and represents the highest possibility of a greater coming poetry. A distinct spiritual turn, the straining towards a deeper, more potent, supra-intellectual and supravital vision of things is its innermost secret of creative power. Now increasingly the highest turn of the human mind indicates a large opening of its vision to the self as well as the person of man and the spirit of Nature, to supernature, to the cosmic, the universal and the eternal, but without any loosing of the hold on life and earth, which is likely to survive and govern thought and creation and the forms of our living when the present multitude of standpoints, all the conflict and chaos of a manifold seeking and new formation, have resolved themselves into the harmony of a centralising and embracing outlook. That infinite self-discovery would be the logical outcome of the movement of the past and the present century and the widest possibility and best chance open to the human spirit : taking up the thought of the ages into a mightier arc of interpretation and realisation, it would be the crowning of one and the opening of a new and greater cycle.

The poets of yesterday and today, Whitman, Carpenter, the Irish poets, Tagore, but also others in their degree are forerunners of this new spirit and way of seeing, prophets sometimes, but at others only illumined by occasional hints or by side rays of a light which has not flooded all their vision. I may take for my purpose four of them whose names stand behind or are still with us and their station already among those whose work endures, Meredith and Phillips among recent English poets, A. E

and Yeats of the Irish singers.* There is a very great difference of the degree and power with which the spirit has opened to them its secret and a great difference too in the turn which they give to its promptings. The two English poets have it at moments in a high clarity, but at others it is only a suggestion behind which gives a penetrating, original and profound tone to their work. This is their native secret when they go deepest into themselves, a thing they get sometimes into clear speech perhaps by right of their Celtic inheritance; but they work in the English tradition, follow other attractions, bear the burden of a tendency of aesthetic feeling, form and treatment which lead away from the pursuit of the direct seeking and the perfect manner. The consistent note we get more constantly in the Irish poets who, freer in mind from this past tradition, though something of it must cling perhaps to all who write in the English tongue, unless they start with the superb revolutionary defiance of Whitman,—are able to strike out with a less encumbered gait into new paths of thought and movement. They have too an original well of inspiration in the Celtic spirit, temperament and tradition from which they draw a magical and delicate draught of other air naturally stimulative of a subtler and more spiritual vision: they escape and that is another supreme advantage, from the overstress of the intellectual and vital notes which in their English kindred and compeers take from the direct purity of utterance of their spirit. None of them has indeed the large and puissant voice of Whitman or his dominant force of poetic personality, though they have what he has not or did not care to evolve, the artistic faculty and

* I take most of my citations from Mr. Cousins' book, the only source I have at present before me; but though few, they are made from the same standpoint and selected with singular felicity and serve fully my purpose.

genius, but each has a high peculiar power in his own way of light, is at his best, and the best is not infrequent even in the least of them, a poet of the first rank. The greatness of scope and unified plenitude of power is absent which would have been needed to make any one of them a grand representative voice of the time. But they lead and prepare, they strike great new notes, open or at least give hints of great new ways for a future poetry.

One thing that comes home to us when we take a comparative view of this poetry, when we look at the inmost strands of the expression at which it arrives in these four poets, all of them among its boldest and most original and therefore most revealing representatives, is a certain common element behind their differences, a novel use of rhythmic movement, a sudden new moving force, turn, stamp and fashion in the minting of the gold and silver of their language and as the secret of this departure a quite other innate or conscious aim, not always manifest in the visible form of the substance, though that too is there in plenty, but in the way of seeing the object on which the inner eye is turned, whether it be idea, thing or person, significant emotion or glint of soul-power in man or revealing object or suggestive hint in Nature. This aim we may perhaps best express if we take up and modify a phrase of Meredith's when he speaks of the hampered human voice that could never say

"Our inmost in the sweetest way"--

hampered by the austerity of its wisdom or the excess of its sense and passion. But if it is rarely that this sweetest way is found—yet do we not get near to it sometimes in Yeats and Tagore?,—at least this new turn of the poetic voice is characteristically an endeavour to see and to say our inmost in the inmost way.

The natural turn of poetry, that which gives to it its soul of superiority to other ways of human utterance, is the endeavour of the interpretative cast of its mind always

to look beyond the object, even to get behind it and evoke from a something that was waiting for us within its own inevitable speech and rhythm. That inwardness is the triumph of great poetical speech, whether the poet has his eye like Homer on physical object and power of action and the externalised thought and emotion which they throw up into the surface roll of life, or else like Shakespeare on the surge of the life-spirit and its forms of character and passion and its waves of self-interpreting thought and reflection, or on the play of the detached or half-detached seeing intellect or the inspired reason, or on the strainings of the desire-soul of man striving to find the delight of things in the thousand-coloured threads of the double web of our existence. The manner and yield of poetry vary according to the depth we penetrate into that inner something which is hidden by layer upon layer of many an intervening medium, offers and gives itself wonderfully in all of them, yet seems to retreat always and invites to a profounder pursuit and discovery; it varies according to the insistence of the eye on the object or its liberation into the greater significance of which the object is only the seizable symbol, or according as we are stopped by the medium or break through it to some truth of the one thing in all which throws out in these various sheaths such different richnesses of form, colour and suggestion of idea and sound, but is yet one in all things to the soul that can discover its eternal unity.

But this new way of seeing is a first effort to get through the object and the medium and employ them only as suggestive instruments, to break beyond the life-force and the emotion, the imagination and the idea, not to be stopped by these things, though using the inmost life-stress, the inmost releasing force of the emotion, the inmost plunge of the imagination or its most searching power of form, colour and symbol, the inmost penetrating subtlety of the idea and to arrive at what we may call the

soul-sense, the soul-sound and as far as may be the soul-word interpetrative of some yet deeper revealing truth in all their objects. There is in most recent poetry that counts, though less here, more there, some element of this kind of straining, force, pressure on sound and word and vision, and though it often turns into strange obscure and devious paths, obstructed by the insistence of the superficial desire-soul or weighted by the intellect,—the two powers in us which modern humanity has developed into an exaggerated predominance,—still it reaches out towards this effort to see our inmost in the inmost way, and when it gets free, delivers voices of a supreme power, vision and purity. And what it must lead to in the end if it gets to its end, does not stop short or turn aside after some other lure, must be some direct seeing by the soul of the soul or self everywhere in its own delivered force of vision,—the direct vision of Indian aspiration, *atmani âtmânam âtmanâ*,—not the sensuous or the imaginative or the intellectual or the vital insistence, but a greater Potency using and surmounting them, the Soul's own delivered self-vision in all things and delight of its own greatness and light and beauty. That is the turn of mind which is now making itself heard in effort, though not in full mastery, stammered here, there sung with a slight, delicate and subtle sweetness or with an initial load of rare or crowding suggestion, but waiting still the splendour of the master song that shall rise into the light of the spirit,—

> So pure that it salutes the suns,
> The voice of one for millions,
> In whom the millions rejoice
> For giving their one spirit voice.

The inmost seeing must bring out of itself to be poetically effective the inmost word and sound, must find out a luminous purity of its steps or a profound depth of its movement, must be said in the inmost way. Rhythm

is the most potent, founding element of poetic expression, and though most modern poets depend or at least lean more heavily on force of thought and substance than on the greater musical suggestions of rhythm,—Shelley, Swinburne, Yeats are exceptions,—there must always be a change in this basis of the poet's art when there is a substantial change of the constituting spirit and motive. Especially when there is this more subtle spiritual aim, the rhythmical movement becomes of a new importance. Whether as an aid to help out by the subtle meaning of the cadence the total spiritual suggestion of the speech or, more supremely, to bring in out of the depths, as great music does, some surge or outwelling of the infinite movement and cry of the spirit and bear like a jewel of light on its breast the outbreak of the inevitable revealing word, it must be persuaded to find some new unity of measure and speech, the thought echoing with the very native sound of its Idea. We find accordingly the beginning, sometimes something more, of another spirit in the movement of this poetry. These poets use for the most part old established metrical forms or variations of them; when there are departures, they do not go very far from the familiar base : but in their way of using them we are as far as possible in its intrinsic principle from the method of the older poets. The change may be described as a more complete subordination of the metrical insistence to the inner suggestion of the movement. The old poets depended greatly on the metrical fall, made much of the external mould and its possible devices and filled it with the tones of life or thought or the excitement of the thing that possessed them and moved them to speech. Shakespeare's lines,

> Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
> Seal up the shipboy's eyes and rock his brains
> In cradle of the rude imperious surge,

are a supreme instance of the manner, or Milton's

> Those thoughts that wander through eternity,

or any of his stately rolling lines or periods of organ music will do for a great illustration. Pope and Dryden simply overdid the reliance on measure and chained themselves up in a monotony of pointed metrical effect. The succeeding poets got back to the greater freedoms of tone and used them in a new way, but the principle remains the same,—as in Shelley's

> Rarely, rarely comest thou,
> Spirit of Delight,

or Wordsworth's

> For old unhappy far-off things
> And battles long ago,—

both of them examples of the ordinary base used with a deep simplicity of single tone and a melodious instance; or otherwise, where the tone on the contrary makes the most of the mould,

> And wild-roses and ivy serpentine,

or,

> Breaking the silence of the seas
> Among the farthest Hebrides.

The base of the old poetry is a march, a walk or a lilt, a measured flow, roll or surge,—or it is with less competent metrists a tripping trot, dance or gallop: but even in the freest movements there is a prevailing metrical insistence. In the new movement the old base is there, but whatever show it may make, its real importance tends to drop into a very second place. Insistence of tone has taken full possession of or even conquered the insistence of the fall. A spiritual intonation, not content to fill and at its strongest overflow the metrical mould, but insistent to take it into itself and carrying it rather than carried in it, is the secret of its melody or its harmony. There is here the sound of the coming in, perhaps only the first suggestion of a new music.

The main reliance on the metrical stress can leave room in powerful hands for very great rhythms, but it

has its limitations, from which different poets try to get release by different devices. Milton sought it in variations of pause and the engulfing swell of periods of large and resonant harmony, Swinburne by the cymbal clang of his alliterations and a rush and surge of assonant lyrical sound, Browning by a calculated roughness. Shakespeare himself under a great stress of crowding life and thought suggestions simply broke the back and joints of his instrument and tortured it into shapes from which he got out masterfully irregular harmonies sometimes of a great power, a process of which we may perhaps see in Whitmanesque free verse the far-off logical consequence. These more recent poets, whatever metrical devices they may use, depend upon something else, on a method which at its clearest becomes a principle of pure sound intonation.

Phillips' blank verse which is of a very original mould, is built on this principle. The poet first gets as his basis the most simple, direct and easy form possible of the metre, which he can loosen as much as possible, suppress or shift or add as many stresses as he chooses, or on the contrary weigh extraordinarily upon his stresses so as to give an impression of long space or burdened lingering or some echo of infinite duration; but in either case the object is to get free room for the play of tone. Four lines come together,

> The history of a flower in the air
> Liable but to breezes and to time,
> As rich and purposeless as is the rose.
> Thy simple doom is to be beautiful,

in which they are only three stresses, in the last one might almost say two and a half, a small number of quantitatively long syllables are the physical support of the verse,—as if quantity were trying to come back to first importance in a language of stresses,—and the rest is made up of varying minor tones. Or the long drawn out syllables are brought in in great abundance, in a variety of combina-

tions, closely packed and largely spaced, as in

> The fiery funeral of foliage old.

or,

> With slow sweet surgery restore the brain.

or again,

> The vault closed back, woe upon woe, the wheel
> Revolved, the stone rebounded, for that time
> Hades her interrupted life resumed.

These and others are the means used, but at their back is the principle of a free intonation. It is the tone that builds the verse, gives it its real form and the metrical mould, forced to become and to do whatever the tone chooses, whatever is needed for the intonation of the inmost thought, is a flexible convenience and a needed restraint, —for if loosened or freely spaced, it is not broken,—but no longer a chain and hardly felt even as a limitation. The significance is that the poet has a rhythm of thought and spirit already sounding somewhere within him and in bringing it out he imposes it consciously on his outer instrument with an imperious sovereignty and does not get to it, like the older masters, as the result of a faithful observance of the metrical harmony.

The other poets use a different, less open and forceful outer method, but the same principle emerges in greater or less degree as if by some spiritual necessity. Meredith's poetry belongs to an earlier technique, observes faithfully the metrical law, but the subtler thing is already coming: some curious turn is given to the beat which persistently compels it to serve some dominant soul-tone of the thought and seeing and to dance attendance on that, as in the four lines already quoted from "The Lark Ascending," or else there is the turn towards long spaces and lingering tones where the metrical sound floats and seems always on the point of drowning in some deep sea of inner intonation,—

> Through widening chambers of surprise to where
> Throbs rapture near an end that aye recedes,
> Because his touch is infinite and lends
> A yonder to all ends,—

a description which might well be applied to the whole drift and cause of this spiritual principle of rhythm. A. E. is not a great rhythmist, he is too preoccupied with his vision, more of a truth-seer than a truth-hearer of the Spirit, but when the hearing comes, the *çruti*, somehow or other without any expenditure of device the full spiritual intonation rises up and takes possession of the music, —to give one instance only,

> Like winds and waters were her ways :
> They heed not immemorial cries ;
> They move to their high destinies
> Beyond the little voice that prays.

And in Yeats, a supreme artist in rhythm, this spiritual intonation is the very secret of all his subtlest melodies and harmonies and reveals itself whether in the use of old and common metres which cease to be either old or common in his hands or in delicate new turns of verse. We get it in his blank verse, taken at random,—

> A sweet miraculous terrifying sound,—

or in the mounting flight of that couplet on the flaming multitude

> That rise, wing upon wing, flame above flame
> And like a storm cry the ineffable name,

or heard through the slowly errant footfalls of that other,

> In all poor foolish things that live a day
> Eternal Beauty wandering on her way,—

but most of all in the lyrical movements,—

> With all the earth and the sky and the water remade, like a casket of gold
> For my dream of your image that blossoms, a rose in the deeps of my heart.

There we have, very near to the ear of the sense, that inaudible music floating the vocal music, the song unheard, or heard only behind and in the inner silence, to

catch some echo of which is the privilege of music but also the highest intention of poetical rhythm.

Beyond all analysis or set provision of means that is the constant attempt to which poetry must move, if this new realm is to open to its footsteps, not to suit the metre to the intellectual or even the emotional sense or to cast it in the moulds of life, but to seize some sound, some intonation of the voice of the soul, the lyric or the epic *chhandas* or the large or simple measures of its meditation and creation, which, as the old Vedic theory would say, initiate, roll out and support all the steps of the universe. This intoned music in which the outer form becomes an external subtle means and suggestion, but the building power is other and brings in a spiritual accompaniment which is the real thing we have to listen to, opens at least one line on which we can arrive at that greater hearing whose wave can bring with it the inspiring word of a higher vision. For the musical tone of the older poetry is the simply sensuous, the emotional, the thought or the life tone with the spiritual cadence as the result of some strong intensity of these things, but here is some beginning of a direct spiritual intonation.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK II

IV

THE VICTORY OF THE DIVINE

LIFE OR DEATH

1 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.

2 Life is like a moth which in summer at nightfall turns about a lamp; there it finds at first a fugitive joy, but afterwards death.

3 When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin;
4 and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.—
5 For the wages of sin is death.—Sin is nothing other than man's act of turning his face away from God and himself towards death.

6 The wicked have called unto them death by their works and their words; they have taken death for their friend and have been consumed, they have made

1) Deuteronomy XIII. 15.— 2) Zeisho Aishako.— 3) James I. 14, 15.— 4) Romans VI. 23.— 5) Angelus Silesius.— 6) Wisdom I. 16.

alliance with him, because of such companionship they were worthy.

* * *

7 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but
8 the end thereof are the ways of death.—In the way of righteousness is life: and in the pathway thereof
9 there is no death.—As righteousness tendeth to life, so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death.
10-11 Heedlessness is the road of death.—To be heedful of one's soul is the way to immortality, but heedlessness is the highway of death. They who persevere and are heedful shall not perish, but the careless are even now as if souls that are dead.
12 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of the
13 dead.—That man whose mind attaches itself only to sensible objects, death carries away like a torrent dragging with it a sleeping village.
14 Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh, shall reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit
15 reap life everlasting.—For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. To be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace.
16 Whosoever has come to know himself, has come to the perfect good; but he who by an error of love has set his love on the body, remains lost in dark-

7) Proverbs XIV. 12.—8) id. XII. 28.—9) id. XI. 19.—10) Buddhist Texts.—11) Dhammapada.—12) Proverbs XXI. 16.—13) Dhammapada.—14) Galatians VI. 7, 8.—15) Romans VIII 5.—16) Hermes.

ness and subjected by his senses to the conditions of death.

17 The foolish follow after the desires that are outward and they fall into the snare of death that is wide open for them, but the wise man sets his mind on the immortal and the certain and longs not here below for uncertain and transient things.

18 When all the desires that trouble the heart have fallen silent, then this mortal puts on immortality.

*
* *

19 By the understanding of the impermanence, of subjection to grief and of the unreality of substance of all formations arises the light of the true wisdom and without it there can be no veritable illumination. The gate of the Way is found in this understanding. Whoever strives not to come to it, is torn into pieces by death.

20 Who goeth into the next world undelivered from death, even as here death respecteth nothing, so in that world too shall he be its perpetual prey.

21 The way of life is above to the wise that he may
22 depart from hell which is beneath.—When the wicked turneth away from his wickedness and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

23 The pure shall not die, but he who leads not the spiritual life dies without ceasing. The wise man knows

17) Katha Upanishad.— 18) id.—19) Fo-shu-hing-tsan-king.— 20) Çatapatha Brahmana.—21) Proverbs XV. 24.—22) Ezekiel XVIII 27. 28.—23) Udanavarga

this difference and takes pleasure in purity and spiri-
24 tuality; it is his joy to live like the saints.—When one
follows the Way, there is no death upon the earth.
25 —Death is swallowed up in victory.
26 When this corruptible shall have put on incorrup-
tion and this mortal shall have put on immortality,
then shall be brought to pass the saying that is writ-
ten, "Death is swallowed up in victory."
27 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

*
* *

28 Why, O men born from the earth, do you yield
yourselves to death, when it is permitted to you to
obtain immortality? Return to yourselves, O you
who walk in error and languish in ignorance, with-
draw from the light that is darkness, renounce cor-
29 ruption, take part in immortality.—Cease to search
out death with such ardour in the strayings of your
life, use not the work of your hands to win that
30 which shall destroy you.—Forsake your ignorance
and live.
31 If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye
through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body,
32 ye shall live.—For this corruptible must put on in-
corruption and this mortal must put on immortality.

*
* *

33 Take me from non-being to being, take me from
death to immortality. The non-being, it is death;
but the being is the immortal. From death take me
to that which dies not, let me be that which is im-
mortal.

---

24) Lao-Tse.—25) I Corinthians XV. 54.—26) id.— 27) id. XV. 26.— 28) Hermes.— 29) Wisdom I. 12.—30) Proverbs IX. 6.—31) Romans VIII. 13.— 32) I Corinthians XV. 53.— 33) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

34 O mortal, the enchantress sensuality is dragging thee like an untameable horse to the bottom of the tomb. Death will suddenly give the rein to thy courser and thou shalt not avail to hold her back from
35 the fatal descent.—Be not taken in the snares of the Prince of death, let him not cast thee to the ground because thou hast been heedless.

36-37 Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead. Depart from evil and do good and dwell for evermore.

38 Above all thou must tear this robe that thou wearest, this garment of ignorance which is the principle of wickedness, this dark covering, this living death, this tomb which thou carriest about with thee.

39 When thy soils shall have vanished and thou art free of defect, thou shalt no more be subject to decay and death.

40 When thou art purified of thy omissions and thy pollutions, thou shalt come by that which is beyond age and death.

41-42 Strive forcefully, cross the current.—Cross force-
43 fully the torrent flood of the world.—To it with good heart, O pilgrim, on to that other shore!

44 Few among men come to that other shore of deliverance; the common run of mortals only wander parallel to its bank. But those who are consecrated to Truth and live according to its Law and strive for one only end, they shall come by that other shore and they shall swim across death's impetuous torrent.

45 Those who are consecrated to Truth shall surely gain the other shore and they shall cross the torrent waves of death.

---

34) Sadi.— 35) Buddhist Texts.— 36) Revelations III. 1.— 37) Psalms XXXVII. 27.—38) Hermes.—39) Dhammapada.— 40) Buddhist Texts. 41) Dhammapada.—42) id.—43) Book of Golden Precepts. 44) Dhammapada.— 45) Buddhist Texts.

Karma

One finds an unanswerable truth in the theory of Karma,—not necessarily in the form the ancients gave to it, but in the idea at its centre,—which at once strikes the mind and commands the assent of the understanding. Nor does the austerer reason, distrustful of first impressions and critical of plausible solutions, find after the severest scrutiny that the more superficial understanding, the porter at the gateways of our mentality, has been deceived into admitting a tinsel guest, a false claimant into our mansion of knowledge. There is a solidity at once of philosophic and of practical truth supporting the idea, a bedrock of the deepest universal undeniable verities against which the human mind must always come up in its fathomings of the fathomless; in this way indeed does the world deal with us, there is a law here which does so make itself felt and against which all our egoistic ignorance and self-will and violence dashes up in the end, as the old Greek poet said of the haughty insolence and prosperous pride of man, against the very foundation of the throne of Zeus, the marble feet of Themis, the adamantine bust of Ananke. There is the secret of an eternal factor, the base of the unchanging action of the just and truthful gods, *devânâm dhruvâni vratâni*, in the self-sufficient and impartial law of Karma.

This truth of Karma has been alwaysrecognised in

the East in one form or else in another; but to the Buddhists belongs the credit of having given to it the clearest and fullest universal enunciation and the most insistent importance. In the West too the idea has constantly recurred, but in external, in fragmentary glimpses, as the recognition of a pragmatic truth of experience, and mostly as an ordered ethical law or fatality set over against the self-will and strength of man: but it was clouded over by other ideas inconsistent with any reign of law, vague ideas of some superior caprice or of some divine jealousy,—that was a notion of the Greeks,—a blind Fate or inscrutable Necessity, Ananke, or, later, the mysterious ways of an arbitrary, though no doubt an all-wise Providence. And all this meant that there was some broken half-glimpse of the working of a force, but the law of its working and the nature of the thing itself escaped the perception,—as indeed it could hardly fail to do, since the mental eye of the West, absorbed by the passion of life, tried to read the workings of the universe in the light of the single mind and life of man; but those workings are much too vast, ancient, unbrokenly continuous in Time and all-pervading in Space,—not in material infinity alone, but in the eternal time and eternal space of the soul's infinity,—to be read by so fragmentary a glimmer. Since the eastern idea and name of the law of Karma was made familiar to the modern mentality, one side of it has received an increasing recognition, perhaps because latterly that mentality had been prepared by the great discoveries and generalisations of Science for a fuller vision of cosmic existence and a more ordered and majestic idea of cosmic Law. It may be as well then to start from the physical base in approaching this question of Karma, though we may find at last that it is from the other end of being, from its spiritual summit rather than its material support that we must look in order to catch its whole significance—and to fix also the limits of its significance.

Fundamentally, the meaning of Karma is that all existence is the working of a universal Energy, a process and an action and a building of things by that action,—an unbuilding too, but as a step to farther building,—that all is a continuous chain in which every one link is bound indissolubly to the past infinity of numberless links, and the whole governed by fixed relations, by a fixed association of cause and effect, present action the result of past action as future action will be the result of present action, all cause a working of energy and all effect too a working of energy. The moral significance is that all our existence is a putting out of an energy which is in us and by which we are made and as is the nature of the energy which is put forth as cause, so shall be that of the energy which returns as effect, that this is the universal law and nothing in the world can, being of and in our world, escape from its governing incidence. That is the philosophical reality of the theory of Karma, and that too is the way of seeing which has been developed by physical Science. But its seeing has been handicapped in the progress to the full largeness of its own truth by two persistent errors, first, the strenuous paradoxical attempt—inevitable and useful no doubt as one experiment of the human reason which had to have its opportunity, but foredoomed to failure—to explain supraphysical things by a physical formula, and a darkening second error of setting behind the universal rule of law and as its cause and efficient the quite opposite idea of the cosmic reign of Chance. The old notion of an unintelligible supreme caprice,—unintelligible it must naturally be since it is the working of an unintelligent Force,—thus prolonged its reign and got admission side by side with the scientific vision of the fixities and chained successions of the universe.

Being is no doubt one, and Law too may be one; but it is perilous to fix from the beginning on one type of phenomena with a predetermined will to deduce from that

all other phenomenon however different in its significance and nature. In that way we are bound to distort truth into the mould of our own prepossession. Intermediately at least we have rather to recognise the old harmonious truth of Veda—which also came by this way in its end, its Vedanta, to the conception of the unity of Being,—that there are different planes of cosmic existence and therefore too of our own existence and in each of them the same powers, energies or laws must act in a different type and in another sense and light of their effectuality. First, then, we see that if Karma be a universal truth or the universal truth of being, it must be equally true of the inly-born mental and moral worlds of our action as in our outward relations with the physical universe. It is the mental energy that we put forth which determines the mental effect,—but subject to all the impact of past, present and future surrounding circumstance, because we are not isolated powers in the world, but rather our energy a subordinate strain and thread of the universal energy. The moral energy of our action determines similarly the nature and effect of the moral consequence, but subject too—though to this element the rigid moralist does not give sufficient consideration,—to the same incidence of past, present and future surrounding circumstance. That this is true of the output of physical energy, needs no saying nor any demonstration. We must recognise these different types and variously formulated motions of the one universal Force, and it will no do to say from the beginning that the measure and quality of my inner being is some result of the output of a physical energy translated into mental and moral energies,—for instance, that my doing a good or a bad action or yielding to good or to bad affections and motives is at the mercy of my liver, or contained in the physical germ of my birth, or is the effect of my chemical elements or determined essentially and ultimately by the disposition of the constituent electrons of my brain and nervous sys-

tem. Whatever drafts my mental and moral being may make on the corporeal for its supporting physical energy and however it may be affected by its borrowings, yet it is very evident that it uses them for other and larger purposes, has a supraphysical method, evolves much greater motives and significances. The moral energy is in itself a distinct power, has its own plane of karma, moves me even, and that characteristically, to override my vital and physical nature. Forms of one universal Force at bottom —or at top—these may be, but in practice they are different energies and have to be so dealt with—until we can find what that universal Force may be in its highest purest texture and initial power and whether that discovery can give us in the perplexities of our nature a unifying direction.

Chance, that vague shadow of an infinite possibility, must be banished from the dictionary of our perceptions; for of chance we can make nothing, because it is nothing. Chance does not at all exist; it is only a word by which we cover and excuse our own ignorance. Science excludes it from the actual process of physical law; everything there is determined by fixed cause and relation. But when it comes to ask why these relations exist and not others, why a particular cause is allied to a particular effect, it finds that it knows nothing whatever about the matter; every actualised possibility supposes a number of other possibilities that have not actualised but conceivably might have, and it is convenient then to say that Chance or at most a dominant probability determines all actual happening, the chance of evolution, the stumblings of a groping inconscient energy which somehow finds out some good enough way and fixes itself into a repetition of the process. If Inconscience can do the works of intelligence, it may not be impossible that chaotic Chance should create a universe of law! But this is only a reading of our own ignorance into the workings of the

universe,—just as prescientific man read into the workings of physical law the caprices of the gods or any other name for a sportive Chance whether undivine or dressed in divine glories, whether credited with a pliant flexibility to the prayers and bribes of man or presented with an immutable Sphinx face of stone,—but names only in fact for his own ignorance.

And especially when we come to the pressing needs of our moral and spiritual being, no theory of chance or probability will serve at all. Here Science, physical in her basis, does not help except to point out to a certain degree the effects of my physicality on my moral being or of my moral action on my physicality: for anything else of just illumination or useful purpose, she stumbles and splashes about in the quagmire of her own nescience. Earthquake and eclipse she can interpret and predict, but not my moral and spiritual becoming, but only attempt to explain its phenomena when they have happened by imposing polysyllables and fearful and wonderful laws of pathology, morbid heredity, eugenics and what not of loose fumbling, which touch only the draggled skirts of the lowest psycho-physical being. But here I need guidance more than anywhere else and must have the recognition of a law, the high line of a guiding order. To know the law of my moral and spiritual being is at first and last more imperative for me than to learn the ways of steam and electricity, for without these outward advantages I can grow in my inner manhood, but not without some notion of moral and spiritual law. Action is demanded of me and I need a rule for my action : something I am urged inwardly to become which I am not yet, and I would know what is the way and law, what the central power or many conflicting powers and what the height and possible range and perfection of my becoming. That surely much more than the rule of electrons or the possibilities of a more omnipotent physical machinery and more powerful

explosives is the real human question.

The Buddhists' mental and moral law of Karma comes in at this difficult point with a clue and an opening. As Science fills our mind with the idea of a universal government of Law in the physical and outward world and in our relations with Nature, though she leaves behind it all a great unanswered query, an agnosticism, a blank of some other ungrasped Infinite,—here covered by the concept of Chance,—the Buddhist conception too fills the spaces of our mental and moral being with the same sense of a government of mental and moral Law: but this too erects behind that Law a great unanswered query, an agnosticism, the blank of an ungrasped Infinite. But here the covering word is more grandly intangible; it is the mystery of Nirvana. This Infinite is figured in both cases by the more insistent and positive type of mind as an Inconscience,—but material in the one, in the other a spiritual infinite zero,—but by the more prudent or flexible thinkers simply as an unknowable. The difference is that the unknown of Science is something mechanical to which mechanically we return by physical dissolution or *laya*, but the unknown of Buddhism is a Permanent beyond the Law to which we return spiritually by an effort of self-suppression, of self-renunciation and, at the latest end, of self-extinction, by a mental dissolution of the Idea which maintains the law of relations and a moral dissolution of the world-desire which keeps up the stream of successions of the universal action. This is a rare and an austere metaphysics; but to its discouraging grandeur we are by no means compelled to give assent, for it is neither self-evident nor inevitable. It is by no means so certain that a high spiritual negation of what I am is my only possible road to perfection; a high spiritual affirmation and absolute of what I am may be also a feasible way and gate. This nobly glacial or blissfully void idea of a Nirvana, because it is so overwhelmingly a negation, cannot finally satisfy the human spirit, which

is drawn persistently to some highest positive and affirmation of itself and only uses negations by the way the better to rid itself of what comes in as an obstacle to its self-finding. To the everlasting No the living being may resign itself by an effort, a sorrowful or a superb turning upon itself and existence, but the everlasting Yes is its native attraction : our spiritual orientation, the magnetism that draws the soul, is to eternal Being and not to eternal Non-Being.

Nevertheless certain essential and needed clues are there in the theory of Karma. And first, there is this assurance, this firm ground on which I can base a sure tread, that in the mental and moral world as in the physical universe there is no chaos, fortuitous rule of chance or mere probability, but an ordered Energy at work which assures its will by law and fixed relation and steady succession and the links of ascertainable cause and effectuality. To be assured that there is an all-pervading mental law and an all-pervading moral law, is a great gain, a supporting foundation. That in the mental and moral as in the physical world what I sow in the proper soil, I shall assuredly reap, is a guarantee of divine government, of equilibrium, of cosmos ; it not only grounds life upon an adamant underbase of law, but by removing anarchy opens the way to a greater liberty. But there is the possibility that if this Energy is all, I may only be a creation of an imperative Force and all my acts and becomings a chain of determination over which I can have no real control or chance of mastery. That view would resolve everything into predestination of Karma, and the result might satisfy my intellect but would be disastrous to the greatness of my spirit. I should be a slave and puppet of Karma and could never dream of being a sovereign of myself and my existence. But here there comes in the second step of the theory of Karma, that it is the Idea which creates all relations. All is the expression and ex-

pansion of the Idea, *sarvâni vijnâna-vijrimbhitâni*. Then I can by the will, the energy of the Idea in me develop the form of what I am and arrive at the harmony of some greater idea than is expressed in my present mould and balance. I can aspire to a nobler expansion. Still, if the Idea is a thing in itself, without any base but its own spontaneous power, none originating it, no knower, no Purusha and Lord, I may be only a form of the universal Idea and myself, my soul may have no independent existence or initiation. But there is too this third step that I am a soul developing and persisting in the paths of the universal Energy and that in myself is the seed of all my creation. What I have become, I have made myself by the soul's past idea and action, its inner and outer karma; what I will to be, I can make myself by present and future idea and action. And finally, there is this last supreme liberating step that both the Idea and its Karma may have their origin in the free spirit and by arriving at myself by experience and self-finding I can exalt my state beyond all bondage of Karma to spiritual freedom. These are the four pillars of the complete theory of Karma. They are also the four truths of the dealings of Self with Nature.

आर्य

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

16th September 1919

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA..... Aurobindo Ghose
Above the Gunas

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G.
Ch. LVIII. The Elements of Perfection

THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... ..... Paul Richard
The Second Birth

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE (8)

THE FUTURE POETRY
Recent English Poetry (3)

KARMA AND FREEDOM

Essays on the Gita

ABOVE THE GUNAS

The distinctions between the Soul and Nature rapidly drawn in the verses of the twelfth chapter by a few decisive epithets and brief packed characterisations of their separate power and functioning, the distinction especially between the embodied soul subjected to the action of Nature by its enjoyment of her gunas, qualities or modes and the Supreme Soul, who dwells enjoying the gunas, but not subject because it is itself beyond them, is the basis on which the Gita founds its whole idea of the liberated being made one in the conscious law of its existence with the Divine. That liberation, that oneness, that putting on of the divine nature, *sâdharmya*, it declares to be the very essence of spiritual freedom and the whole significance of immortality. To be immortal was never held by the ancient spiritual teaching to consist merely in a personal survival of the death of the body, for all beings are immortal in that sense and it is only the forms that perish ; even those who do not arrive at liberation, live through the cycles, exist still involved in the Brahman during their dissolution and are born again in the appearance of a new cycle. Pralaya, the end of a cycle of aeons, is the temporary disintegration of a universal form of existence and of all the individual

forms which move in its rounds, but that is only a momentary pause, an interval followed by a new creation in which they reappear. The death of the body is also a pralaya,—the Gita will presently use the word in the sense of this death, *pralayam yâti dehabhrit*, "the soul bearing the body comes to a pralaya," a disintegration of that body with which its ignorance identified its being and which now dissolves into the natural elements; but the soul itself persists and after an interval resumes in a new body formed from those elements its round of births in the cycle, just as after the interval of pause and cessation the universal Being resumes his endless round of the cyclic aeons. To be immortal is something different from this survival of death and constant recurrence; it is to reach that supreme status of being in which the Spirit knows itself to be superior to death and birth, not conditioned by the nature of its manifestation, infinite, imperishable, immutably eternal, immortal because never being born it never dies. The divine Purushottama, who is the supreme Lord and supreme Brahman, possesses for ever this immortal eternity and is not affected by his taking up a body or by his continuous assumption of universal being because he exists always in this self-knowledge; his very nature is to be conscious of his own eternity. He is here the Inhabitant of all bodies, but as the unborn in every body, not limited in his consciousness by that manifestation, not identified with the physical nature which he assumes; for that is only a minor circumstance of his universal activised play of existence. Liberation, immortality is to live in this conscious eternal being of the Purushottama.

But to arrive at this greater spiritual immortality the embodied being must cease to live according to the law of the lower nature and must put on the law of the Divine's supreme way of existence which is in fact the real law of its own eternal being; in the spiritual evolu-

tion of its becoming it must grow into the likeness of the Divine. And this great thing, to rise from the human into the divine nature, we can only do by an effort of God-ward knowledge, will and adoration. For the soul put forth by the Divine as his portion or representative in the workings of universal Nature is obliged by the character of those workings, *avaçam prakriter vaçât*, to identify itself with her limiting conditions, to identify itself with life, mind and body to the oblivion of its inner spiritual reality. To get back to self-knowledge and to the knowledge of the real as distinct from the apparent relations of the soul with Nature, to know God and ourselves and the world with a spiritual and no longer with a physical or externalised knowledge, through the deepest truth of the inner soul-consciousness and not through the misleading phenomenal knowledge of the sense-mind and the outward understanding, is an indispensable means of this perfection. Perfection cannot come without self-knowledge and God-knowledge and a spiritual attitude towards our natural existence, and that is why the ancient wisdom laid so much stress on salvation by knowledge,—which is not an intellectual cognizance of things, but a growing of the mental being into a greater spiritual consciousness. The soul's salvation cannot come without the soul's perfection, without its growing into the divine nature ; the impartial Divine will not effect it for us by an arbitrary act of caprice or a special *sanad* of his favour. Divine works are effective for salvation because they lead us towards this perfection and to a knowledge of self and nature and God by a growing unity with the inner Master of our being, divine love because by it we grow into the likeness of the sole and supreme object of our love and call down the answering love of the Divine to flood us with the light of his knowledge and the uplifting power and purity of his eternal being. Therefore, says the Gita, this is the supreme knowledge and the highest of all knowings because

it leads to the highest pertection and spiritual status, *parâm siddhim*, and brings the soul to likeness with the Divine, *sâdharmya*. It is the eternal wisdom, the great spiritual experience by which all the sages attained to that highest perfection, grew into one law of being with the Divine and live for ever in his eternity, not born in the creation, not troubled by the anguish of the universal dissolution. In other words, this perfection, this *sâdharmya*, is the way of immortality.

The soul of man could not grow into the likeness of the Divine, if it were not in its secret being one in essence with the Divine and part and parcel of his divinity; it could not be or become immortal if it were merely a creature of mental, vital and physical Nature. But all existence is a manifestation of the divine Spirit, and that which is within us is too spirit of the eternal Spirit. We have come indeed into the lower material nature and are under its influence, but we have come there from the supreme spiritual nature: this inferior imperfect status is only our apparent, but not our real being. The Eternal puts all this movement forth as his self-creation; he is the Father and Mother of the universe. The substance of the infinite Idea, the Mahad Brahman, is the womb into which he casts the seed of his self-conception; as the Over-Soul he casts it, as the Mother, the Nature-Soul the Energy filled with his conscious power he receives it into this infinite substance of being as Idea, into this Vast of self-conception and develops there the divine embryo into mental and physical form of existence born from the original act of conceptive creation. All that is is born from that act of creation; but that which is born is only finite idea and form of being. For the Spirit is eternal and superior to all its manifestation; Nature is eternal without beginning in the spirit and proceeds for ever with the rhythm of the cycles by act of creation and act of cessation; the Soul too which takes on this

or that form in Nature, is no less eternal than she, *anâdî ubhâv api* : but in Nature it follows the round of the cycles, while in the Eternal from which it proceeds into them, it is raised above the terms of birth and death. What makes the difference, then, what gets the soul into the appearance of birth and death and bondage,—for it is only an appearance,—is a self-oblivious identification with the modes of Nature in the limited action of this lower motivity, with this self-wrapped ego-bounded knot of action of the mind, life and body. To rise above the modes of Nature is indispensable, if we are to get back in our conscious being from the obsessing power of the lower action and put on the free nature of the spirit in its eternal immortality. That condition of the *sâdharmya* is what the Gita next proceeds to develop ; it has already alluded to it and laid down the condition, *traigunyâtîta*, with a brief emphasis in a previous chapter, but it has now to indicate more precisely what are these modes, how they bind the soul and keep it back from spiritual freedom and what is meant by rising above the modes of Nature.

The modes of Nature are all qualitative in their essence and are called for that reason its gunas or qualities. In any spiritual conception of the universe this must be so, because the connecting medium between spirit and matter must be psyche or soul power and the primary action psychological and qualitative, not physical and quantitative ; for quality is the immaterial, the more spiritual element in all the action of the universal Energy. The predominance of physical Science has accustomed us to a different view of Nature, because there the first thing that strikes us is the importance of the quantitative aspect of her workings and her dependence for the creation of forms on quantitative combinations and dispositions,—although now the discovery that matter is rather substance or act of energy than energy a motive power

of or acting on self-existent material substance has led to some revival of an older reading of universal Nature. The analysis of the ancient Indian thinkers allowed for the quantitative action of Nature, *mâtrâ*, but that it regarded as proper to its more objective formally executive working, while the ideatively executive power which disposes things according to the quality of their being and energy, *guna*, *swabhâva*, is the primary determinant and underlies all the outer qualitative dispositions. In the basis of the physical world this is only not apparent because there the underlying ideative spirit, the Mahad Brahman, is overlaid and hidden up by the movement of matter and material energy; but even there the miraculous results of the combinations of the quantities of elements admits of no explanation if there is not a variative quality, or let us say at once, a secret ideative capacity of the energy,—even if we suppose the energy and its idea, *buddhi*, to be itself mechanical in its nature,—which fixes the mathematic of its outer dispositions, while in the vital and mental existence quality openly appears as the primary power and amount of energy is only a secondary factor. But in fact the mental, the vital, the physical existence are all subject to the limitations of quality and governed by its determinations. Only the Spirit, which by the power of its idea-being and its idea-force, called *mahat* or *vijnâna*, fixes these conditions, is not so determined, not subject to any limitations of quality because its immeasurable and indeterminable infinity is superior to the modes which it develops and uses for its creation.

But, again, the whole qualititative action of Nature, so infinitely intricate in its detail and variety, is figured as cast into the mould of three general modes of quality everywhere present, intertwined, almost inextricable, *sattwa*, *rajas*, *tamas*. These modes are described in the Gita only by their psychological action in man, or incidentally in things such as food according as they produce a psy-

chological effect on human beings. If we look for a more general definition, we shall perhaps catch a glimpse of it in the symbolic idea of Indian religion which attributes each of these qualities respectively to one member of the cosmic Trinity, sattwa to the preserver Vishnu, rajas to the creator Brahma, tamas to the destroyer Rudra. Looking behind this idea for the rationale of this ascription, we might define the three modes or qualities in terms of the motion of the universal Energy as Nature's three concomitant and inseparable powers of equilibrium, kinesis and inertia. But that is only their appearance in terms of the external action of Force, and if we regard consciousness and force as twin terms of the one Existence, always coexistent in the reality of being, however in the primal outward phenomenon of material Nature light of consciousness may seem to disappear in a vast action of nescient unillumined energy, while at an opposite pole of spiritual quiescence action of force may seem to disappear in the stillness of the observing or witness consciousness, —these are the two extremes of an apparently separated Purusha and Prakriti, though each really only conceals its eternal mate in the depths of its own characteristic way of being,—then we must find a corresponding psychological power of these three modes which informs their more outward executive action. On their psychological side the three qualities may be defined, tamas as Nature's power of nescience, rajas as her power of active seeking ignorance enlightened by desire and impulsion, sattwa as her power of possessing and self-possessing knowledge.

The three qualitative modes of Nature are inextricably intertwined in all cosmic existence. Tamas, the principle of inertia, is a passive and inert nescience which suffers all shocks and contacts without any effort of mastering response and by itself would lead to a disintegration of the whole action of the energy, but it is driven by the kinetic power of rajas and even in the nescience of Matter

is met and embraced by an innate though unpossessed principle of knowledge. Material energy appears to be tamasic in its basic action, *jada*, nescient, mechanic, disintegrative, but it is dominated by a huge force and impulsion of rajasic kinesis which drives it, even in and even by its dispersion and disintegration, to build and create and by a sattwic ideative element in its force which is always imposing a harmony and preservative order on its two opposite tendencies. Rajas, the principle of creative endeavour and impulsion in Prakriti, kinesis, *pravritti*, appears more evidently as a passion of seeking and desire and action in the dominant character of life,—for that is the nature of all vital existence,—and would lead by itself to a persistent but always mutable and unstable life and activity and creation without any settled result; but met on one side by the disintegrating power of tamas with death and decay and inertia, its ignorant action is on the other side of its functioning settled and harmonised and sustained by the power of sattwa, subconscient in the lower forms of life, conscient in the emergence of mentality. Sattwa, the principle of understanding knowledge and of according assimilation, measure and equilibrium, which by itself would lead only to some lasting concord of fixed and luminous harmonies, is in the motions of this world impelled to follow the mutable strife and action of the eternal kinesis and constantly overpowered or hedged in by the forces of inertia and nescience. This is the appearance of a world governed by the interlocked and mutually limited play of the three qualitative modes of Nature.

The Gita applies this generalised analysis of the universal Energy to the psychological nature of man in its relation to his bondage to Nature and the realisation of spiritual freedom. Sattwa, it tells us, is by the purity of its quality a cause of light and illumination and by virtue of that purity it produces no disease or morbidity or suf-

fering in the nature. Whenever into all the doors in the body there comes a flooding of light,—as when the doors and windows of a house are opened to sunshine—a light of understanding, perception and knowledge, and the intelligence is alert and illumined, the senses quickened, the whole mentality satisfied and full of brightness and the nervous being calmed and filled with an illumined ease and clarity, *prasâda*, one should understand that there has been a great increase and uprising of the sattwic guna in the nature. For knowledge and ease and pleasure and happiness are the results of sattwa. This pleasure is not only the satisfaction which an inner clarity of satisfied perception brings with it, but all delight and content produced by a possession, an accord or an adequate adjustment of the soul in itself or as between the soul and the surrounding nature or the objects of its perception.

Rajas, again, the Gita tells us, has for its essence attraction of liking and longing; it is a child of the attachment of the soul to the desire of objects, born from the nature's thirst for an unpossessed satisfaction; it is therefore full of unrest and fever and lust and greed and excitement, a thing of seeking impulsions, and all these things mount in us when this guna increases; it is the force of desire which motives all ordinary personal initiative of action and the movement of stir and seeking and propulsion in our Nature which is the impetus towards action and works, *pravritti*. Rajas, then, is evidently the kinetic force in the modes of Nature. Its fruit is the lust of action, but also grief, pain, all kinds of suffering, because it has no right possession of its object,—desire in fact implies non-possession,—and even its pleasure of acquired possession is troubled and unstable because it has not clear knowledge and does not know how to possess nor can find the secret of accord and right enjoyment. All the ignorant and passionate seeking of life belongs to the rajasic mode of Nature. Tamas, finally, is born of

ignorance and its fruit too is ignorance. It is the darkness of tamas which obscures knowledge and causes all confusion and delusion; therefore it is the opposite of sattwa, for the essence of sattwa is enlightenment, *prakâça*, and the essence of tamas is absence of light, nescience, *aprakâça*. But tamas brings too negligence of action as well as the negligence of error, inattention and misunderstanding or nonunderstanding; indolence, languor and sleep belong to this guna: therefore it is the opposite of rajas, for the essence of rajas is movement and impulsion and kinesis, *pravritti*, but the essence of tamas is inertia, *apravritti*. Tamas is inertia of nescience and inertia of inaction, a double negative.

These three qualities of Nature are evidently present and active in all human beings and none can be said to be devoid of or free from any one of them; for all men have in them in whatever degree the rajasic impulse of desire and activity and the sattwic boon of light and happiness, some balance, some adjustment of mind to itself and its surroundings and objects, and all have their share of tamasic incapacity and ignorance or nescience. But these qualities are not constant in any man in the quantitative action of their force or in the combination of their elements; they are variable and in a continual state of mutual impact, displacement and interaction; now one leads, now another increases and predominates, and each subjects us to its characteristic action and consequences. Only by a general and ordinary predominance of one or other of the qualities can a man be said to be either sattwic or rajasic or tamasic in his nature; but this can only be a general and not an exclusive or absolute description. The three qualities are a triple power which by their interaction determine the character and disposition and through that and its various motions the actions of the natural man. But this triple power is a triple cord of bondage. "The three gunas born of Prak-

riti" says the Gita "bind in the body the imperishable dweller in the body". In a certain sense we can see at once that there must be this bondage in following the action of the gunas, for they are all limited by their finite of quality and operation and cause limitation. Tamas is on both its sides an incapacity and therefore very obviously binds to limitation: rajasic desire as an initiator of action is a more positive power, but still we can see well enough that desire with its limiting and engrossing hold on man must always be a bondage. But how does sattwa, the power of knowledge and happiness, become a bondage? It so becomes because it is a principle of mental nature, a principle of limited and limiting knowledge and of a happiness which depends upon right following or attainment of this or that object or else on particular states of the mentality. Other is the infinite spiritual knowledge and the free self-existent delight of spiritual being.

But then there is the question, how does the infinite and imperishable spirit come thus to confine itself to this lower action of Prakriti and undergo this bondage and how is it not, like the supreme spirit of which it is a portion, free in its infinity even while enjoying the self-limitations of its active nature? The reason, says the Gita, is attachment to the gunas and the result of their workings. Sattwa, it says, attaches to happiness, rajas attaches to action, tamas covering up the knowledge attaches to negligence of error and inaction. Or again, "sattwa binds by attachment to knowledge and attachment to happiness, rajas binds the embodied spirit by attachment to works, tamas binds by negligence and indolence and sleep." In other words, the soul by attachment to the enjoyment of the gunas and their results concentrates its consciousness in the lower and outward action of life, mind and body in Nature and becomes oblivious of its own greater consciousness behind in the spirit which is the free consciousness of the liberating Purusha. Evidently, we have in

order to be liberated and perfect to get back from the gunas; and above them to that free spiritual consciousness. But this would seem to imply a cessation of all action, since all natural action is done by the gunas, by Nature through her modes of being; the soul cannot act by itself, it can only act through Nature, and yet the Gita insists upon the necessity of action. Here comes in the importance of its insistence on the abandonment of the fruits, for it is the desire of the fruits which is the most potent cause of the soul's bondage and by abandoning it the soul can be free in action. Ignorance is the result of tamasic action, pain of rajasic action, pain of reaction, disappointment, dissatisfaction or transience, and therefore in attachment to the fruits of this kind of action attended with these undesirable things there is no profit. But of action rightly done the fruit is pure and sattwic, the inner result is knowledge and happiness; yet attachment to these things too must be abandoned, first, because in the mind they are limited and limiting things and, secondly, because, since sattwa is constantly entangled with and besieged by rajas and tamas which may at any moment overcome it, there is a perpetual insecurity in their tenure. But, even if one is free from attachment to the fruit, there may be an attachment to the action itself, either for its own sake, the essential rajasic bond, or owing to a lax subjection to the drive of Nature, the tamasic, or for the sake of the attracting rightness of the action, which is the sattwic attaching cause powerful over the virtuous man or the man of knowledge. And here evidently the resource is in that other injunction of the Gita, to give up the action itself to the Lord of works and be only a desireless and equal-minded instrument of his will. To see that the modes of Nature are the whole agency and cause of action and to know and turn to that which is supreme above the gunas, is the way to rise above the lower nature and attain to the nature and status of the Divine, *mad-bhâva*, by which

free from subjection to birth and death and their concomitants, decay, old age and suffering, the liberated soul shall enjoy in the end the eternal immortality.

But what, asks Arjuna, are the signs of such a man, what his action and how is he said even in action to be above the three gunas? The sign, says Krishna, is that equality of which I have so constantly spoken; the sign is that inwardly he regards happiness and suffering alike, gold and mud and stone as of equal value and that to him the pleasant and the unpleasant, praise and blame, honour and insult, the faction of his friends and the faction of his enemies are equal things. He is standfast in a wise imperturbable and immutable inner calm and quietude. He initiates no action, but leaves all action to be done by the gunas of Nature. Sattwa, rajas or tamas may rise or cease in his outer mentality and physical being with their results of enlightenment, impulsion to works or inaction and the clouding over of the mental and nervous being, but he does not rejoice when this acts or that ceases or on the other hand abhor and shrink from the action or the cessation. He has seated himself in the conscious light of another principle than the nature of the gunas and that greater consciousness remains steadfast in him, above these things and unshaken by their action like the sun above clouds to one who has risen into a higher atmosphere. He from that height sees that it is the gunas that are in action, that their storm and calm are only a movement of Prakriti; he himself is immovable above and his spirit does not participate in that shifting mutability. This is the impersonality of the Brahmic status; for that higher principle, that greater wide high-seated consciousness, *kûtastha*, is the immutable Brahman.

But still there is evidently here a double status and a scission of the being between two opposites, a liberated status in the immutable Self or Brahman watching the

action of an unliberated mutable Nature, Akshara and Kshara. Is there no greater status, no principle of more absolute perfection, or is this division the highest consciousness possible in the body, and is the end of Yoga to drop the mutable nature and the gunas born of the body by dropping this embodiment and disappear into the impersonality of the Brahman? Is that *laya* or dissolution of the individual Purusha the greatest liberation? There is, it would seem, something else; for the Gita says at the close, always returning to this one final note, "He also who loves and strives after Me with an undeviating love and adoration, passes beyond the three gunas and he too is prepared for becoming the Brahman." This "I" is the Purushottama who is the foundation of Brahman and of immortality and imperishable spiritual being and of the eternal dharma and an utter bliss of happiness. There is a status then which is greater than the peace of the Brahman watching unmoved the strife of the gunas; there is a highest spiritual experience and foundation above the immutability of the Brahman in which there is an eternal dharma greater than the rajasic impulsion to works, *pravritti*, an absolute delight of being which is untouched by rajasic suffering and beyond the sattwic happiness, and it is found and possessed by dwelling in the being of the Purushottama. But since it is acquired by bhakti, its status must be that divine delight, Ananda, in which is experienced the union of utter love* which is the crown of bhakti, and to rise into that Ananda and unity must be the completion of spiritual perfection and the fulfilment of the eternal immortalising dharma.

Niratishayapremâspadatwam ânandatattwam.

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LVIII

THE ELEMENTS OF PERFECTION

When the self is purified of the wrong and confused action of the instrumental Nature and liberated into its self-existent being, consciousness, power and bliss and the Nature itself liberated from the tangle of this lower action of the struggling gunas and the dualities into the high truth of the divine calm and the divine action, then spiritual perfection becomes possible. Purification and freedom are the indispensable antecedents of perfection. A spiritual self-perfection can only mean a growing into oneness with the nature of divine being, and therefore according to our conception of divine being will be the aim, effort and method of our seeking after this perfection. To the Mayavadin the highest or rather the only real truth of being is the impassive, impersonal, self-aware Absolute and therefore to grow into an impassive calm, impersonality and pure self-awareness of spirit is his idea of perfection and a rejection of cosmic and individual being and a settling into silent self-knowledge is his way. To the Buddhist for whom the highest truth is a negation of being, a recognition of the impermanence and sorrow of being

and the disastrous nullity of desire and a dissolution of egoism, of the upholding associations of the Idea and the successions of Karma are the perfect way. Other ideas of the Highest are less negative; each according to its own idea leads towards some likeness to the Divine, *sâdriçya*, and each finds its own way, such as the love and worship of the Bhakta and the growing into the likeness of the Divine by love. But for the integral Yoga perfection will mean a divine spirit and a divine nature which will admit of a divine relation and action in the world; it will mean also in its entirety a divinising of the whole nature, a rejection of all its wrong knots of being and action, but no rejection of any part of our being or of any field of our action. The approach to perfection must be therefore a large and complex movement and its results and workings will have an infinite and varied scope. We must fix in order to find a clue and method on certain essential and fundamental elements and requisites of perfection, *siddhi*; for if these are secured, all the rest will be found to be only their natural development or particular working. We may cast these elements into six divisions, interdependent on each other to a great extent but still in a certain way naturally successive in their order of attainment. The movement will start from a basic equality of the soul and mount to an ideal action of the Divine through our perfected being in the largeness of the Brahmic unity.

The first necessity is some fundamental poise of the soul both in its essential and its natural being regarding and meeting the things, impacts and workings of Nature. This poise we shall arrive at by growing into a perfect equality, *samatâ*. The self, spirit or Brahman is one in all and therefore one to all; it is, as is said in the Gita which has developed fully this idea of equality and indicated its experience on at least one side of equality, the equal Brahman, *samam Brahma*; the Gita even goes so far in one passage as to identify equality and yoga, *samatwam yoga*

uchyate. That is to say, equality is the sign of unity with the Brahman, of becoming Brahman, of growing into an undisturbed spiritual poise of being in the Infinite. Its importance can hardly be exaggerated; for it is the sign of our having passed beyond the egoistic determinations of our nature, of our having conquered our enslaved response to the dualities, of our having transcended the shifting turmoil of the gunas, of our having entered into the calm and peace of liberation. Equality is a term of consciousness which brings into the whole of our being and nature the eternal tranquillity of the Infinite. Moreover, it is the condition of a securely and perfectly divine action; the security and largeness of the cosmic action of the Infinite is based upon and never breaks down or forfeits its eternal tranquillity. That too must be the character of the perfect spiritual action; to be equal and one to all things in spirit, understanding, mind, heart and natural consciousness,—even in the most physical consciousness,—and to make all their workings, whatever their outward adaptation to the thing to be done, always and imminuably full of the divine equality and calm must be its inmost principle. That may be said to be the passive or basic, the fundamental and receptive side of equality, but there is also an active and possessive side, an equal bliss which can only come when the peace of equality is founded and which is the beatific flower of its fullness.

The next necessity of perfection is to raise all the active parts of the human nature to that highest condition and working pitch of their power and capacity, *shakti*, at which they become capable of being divinised into true instruments of the free, perfect, spiritual and divine action. For practical purposes we may take the understanding, the heart, the prana and the body as the four members of our nature which have thus to be prepared, and we have to find the constituent terms of their perfection. Also there is the dynamical force in us *(vîrya)* of the temperament, character and soul nature, *swabhâva,* which makes

the power of our members effective in action and gives them their type and direction ; this has to be freed from its limitations, enlarged, rounded so that the whole manhood in us may become the basis of a divine manhood, when the Purusha, the real Man in us, the divine Soul, shall act fully in this human instrument and shine fully through this human vessel. To divinise the perfected nature we have to call in the divine Power or Shakti to replace our limited human energy so that this may be shaped into the image of and filled with the force of a greater infinite energy, *daivî prakriti, bhâgawatî shakti.* This perfection will grow in the measure in which we can surrender ourselves, first, to the guidance and then to the direct action of that Power and of the Master of our being and our works to whom it belongs, and for this purpose faith is the essential, faith is the great motor-power of our being in our aspirations to perfection,—here, a faith in God and the Shakti which shall begin in the heart and understanding, but shall take possession of all our nature, all its consciousness, all its dynamic motive-force. These four things are the essentials of this second element of perfection, the full powers of the members of the instrumental nature, the perfected dynamis of the soul nature, the assumption of them into the action of the divine Power, and a perfect faith in all our members to call and support that assumption, *shakti, vîrya, daivî prakriti, çraddhâ.*

But so long as this development takes place only on the highest level of our normal nature, we may have a reflected and limited image of perfection translated into the lower terms of the soul in mind, life and body, but not the possession of the divine perfection in the highest terms possible to us of the divine Idea and its Power. That is to be found beyond these lower principles in the supramental gnosis ; therefore the next step of perfection will be the evolution of the mental into the gnostic being. This evolution is effected by a breaking beyond the men-

tal limitation, a stride upward into the next higher plane or region of our being hidden from us at present by the shining lid of the mental reflections and a conversion of all that we are into the terms of this greater consciousness. In the gnosis itself, *vijnâna*, there are several gradations which open at their highest into the full and infinite Ananda. The gnosis once effectively called into action will progressively take up all the terms of intelligence, will, sense-mind, heart, the vital and sensational being and translate them by a luminous and harmonising conversion into a unity of the truth, power and delight of a divine existence. It will lift into that light and force and convert into their own highest sense our whole intellectual, volitional, dynamic, ethical, aesthetic, sensational, vital and physical being. It has the power also of overcoming physical limitations and developing a more perfect and divinely instrumental body. Its light opens up the fields of the superconscient and darts its rays and pours its luminous flood into the subconscient and enlightens its obscure hints and withheld secrets. It admits us to a greater light of the Infinite than is reflected in the paler luminosity even of the highest mentality. While it perfects the individual soul and nature in the sense of a diviner existence and makes a full harmony of the diversities of our being, it founds all its action upon the Unity from which it proceeds and takes up everything into that Unity. Personality and impersonality, the two eternal aspects of existence, are made one by its action in the spiritual being and Nature body of the Purushottama.

The gnostic perfection, spiritual in its nature, is to be accomplished here in the body and takes life in the physical world as one of its fields, even though the gnosis opens to us possession of planes and worlds beyond the material universe. The physical body is therefore a basis of action, *pratisthâ*, which cannot be despised, neglected or excluded from the spiritual evolution : a perfection of the body as the outer instrument of a complete divine

living on earth will be necessarily a part of the gnostic conversion. The change will be effected by bringing in the law of the gnostic Purusha, *vijnânamaya purusha*, and of that into which it opens, the Anandamaya, into the physical consciousness and its members. Pushed to its highest conclusion this movement brings in a spiritualising and illumination of the whole physical consciousness and a divinising of the law of the body. For behind the gross physical sheath of this materially visible and sensible frame there is subliminally supporting it and discoverable by a finer subtle consciousness a subtle body of the mental being and a spiritual or causal body of the gnostic and bliss soul in which all the perfection of a spiritual embodiment is to be found, a yet unmanifested divine law of the body. Most of the physical siddhis acquired by certain Yogins are brought about by some opening up of the law of the subtle or a calling down of something of the law of the spiritual body. The ordinary method is the opening up of the *chakras* by the physical processes of Hathayoga (of which something is also included in the Rajayoga) or by the methods of the Tantric discipline. But while these may be optionally used at certain stages by the integral Yoga, they are not indispensable; for here the reliance is on the power of the higher being to change the lower existence, a working is chosen mainly from above downward and not the opposite way, and therefore the development of the superior power of the gnosis will be awaited as the instrumentative change in this part of the Yoga.

There will remain, because it will then only be entirely possible, the perfect action and enjoyment of being on the gnostic basis. The Purusha enters into cosmic manifestation for the variations of his infinite existence, for knowledge, action and enjoyment; the gnosis brings the fullness of spiritual knowledge and it will found on that the divine action and cast the enjoyment of world and being into the law of the truth, the freedom and the perfection

of the spirit. But neither action nor enjoyment will be the lower action of the gunas and consequent egoistic enjoyment mostly of the satisfaction of rajasic desire which is our present way of living. Whatever desire will remain, if that name be given, will be the divine desire, the will to delight of the Purusha enjoying in his freedom and perfection the action of the perfected Prakriti and all her members. The Prakriti will take up the whole nature into the law of her higher divine truth and act in that law offering up the universal enjoyment of her action and being to the Anandamaya Ishwara, the Lord of existence and works and Spirit of bliss, who presides over and governs her workings. The individual soul will be the channel of this action and offering, and it will enjoy at once its oneness with the Ishwara and its oneness with the Prakriti and will enjoy all relations with Infinite and finite, with God and the universe and beings in the universe in the highest terms of the union of the universal Purusha and Prakriti.

All the gnostic evolution opens up into the divine principle of Ananda, which is the foundation of the fullness of spiritual being, conciousness and bliss of Sachchidananda or eternal Brahman. Possessed at first by reflection in the mental experience, it will be possessed afterwards with a greater fullness and directness in the massed and luminous consciousness, *chidghana*, which comes by the gnosis. The Siddha or perfected soul will live in union with the Purushottama in this Brahmic consciousness, he will be conscious in the Brahman that is the All, *sarvam brahma*, in the Brahman infinite in being and infinite in quality, *anantam brahma*, in Brahman as self-existent consciousness and universal knowledge, *jnânam brahma*, in Brahman as the self-existent bliss and its universal delight of being, *anandam brahma*. He will experience all the universe as the manifestation of the One, all quality and action as the play of his universal and infinite energy, all knowledge and conscious experience as the outflowing

of that consciousness, and all in the terms of that one Ananda. His physical being will be one with all material Nature, his vital being with the life of the universe, his mind with the cosmic mind, his spiritual knowledge and will with the divine knowledge and will both in itself and as it pours itself through these channels, his spirit with the one spirit in all beings. All the variety of cosmic existence will be changed to him in that unity and revealed in the secret of its spiritual significance. For in this spiritual bliss and being he will be one with That which is the origin and continent and inhabitant and spirit and constituting power of all existence. This will be the highest reach of self-perfection.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK II

IV

THE VICTORY OF THE DIVINE

THE SECOND BIRTH

1 To transform death and make of it a means of victory and triumph.

2 What use to cut the branches if one leaves the
3 roots? —Death is the only remedy against death.
4 —There is one only way of salvation, to renounce the life which perishes and to live the life in which
5 there is no death.—To know how to die in one age
6 gives us life in all the others.—To surmount this thirst of existence, to reject it, to be liberated from it, to give it no farther harbourage.

7 He that loveth his life, shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.

8 The sage does not die any more, for he is already dead, dead to all vanity, dead to all that is not God.

---

1) Nietzsche.—2) Apollonius of Tyana.—3) Farid-ud-din-attar. —4) Tolstoi.—5) Giordano Bruno.—6) Mahavagga.—7) John XII. 25.— 8) Angelus Silesius.

9 —He is in truth the man of piety who is dead even in his lifetime, that is to say, whose passions and desires have been destroyed and are like a body that is dead.

10 Those I love who know how to live only to disappear, for they pass beyond.

*
* *

11 None can be saved without being reborn.

12-13 He who conceives the Truth, is born anew.—The splendour which inundates all his thought and all his soul, snatches him from the ties of the body and transforms his whole being into the very essence of God.

14 Whosoever comes to birth in God, is delivered from the physical sensations, recognises the different elements which compose it and enjoys a perfect hap-

15 piness.—That is the supreme felicity of those who have won their victory, it is the perfect and immutable peace, the defeat of Impermanence, a pure and luminous condition, the victory over death.

*
* *

16 So long as we do not die to ourselves and are not indifferent to creatures, the soul will not be free.

17 How shall we conquer the old man in us? When the flower becomes a fruit, the petals fall of themselves; so when the divinity increases in us, all the weaknesses of human nature vanish of their own

18 accord.—The ideal birth is perfected, the twelfth executioner is driven forth and we are born to con-

19 templation.—Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.

---

9) Ramakrishna.—10) Nietzsche.— 11) Hermes— 12) Vemana. —13) Hermès.— 14) id.— 15) Canon in Pali.— 16) Farid-ud-dîn-attar.—17) Ramakrishna.— 18) Hermes.— 19) II Corinthians V. 17.

20 I have issued out of myself, I have put on an immortal body, I am no longer the same, I am born into wisdom.

21 Now this is the counsel which I give to kings and Churches and to all that has grown weak by age and virtue,—"Allow yourselves to be overthrown that you may recover life and the virtue return to you."

22 Before the creator can be born, there must be many pangs and transformations. Yes, your life must pass through many bitter deaths, O creators.

23 Ye must be born again.

24 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.

25 And be not conformed to this world, but be ye
26 transformed by the renewing of your mind.—Ye have been taught that ye put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, that ye put on the new man.

27-28 Repent and be converted.—Return and turn back from all your transgressions that your iniquity be not your ruin. Cast from you all the transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new mind.

29 For you were sometimes darkness, but now are light; walk as children of light.

30 You shall no more carry in yourselves the root of evil; disease and infirmity no more shall make war against you and corruption shall flee from you for ever into oblivion.

* *

31 That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Marvel not that

20) Hermes.—21) Nietzsche.—22) id.—23) John III. 7.—24) I Corinthians V. 7.—25) Romans XII. 2.—26) Ephesians IV. 21-24. —29) Ephesians V. 8.—30) Esdras IV. 8. 33.—31) John III. 6, 7.

I said unto thee, "Ye must be born again."

32 Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead.

33 —Renew thyself utterly day by day; make thyself new and again new and ever again new.

34 Despair not, my son, thy desire shall be fulfilled, thy will shall have fruit; put to sleep the sensations of the body and thou shalt be born in God.

35 It is then alone that thou canst become one who walks in heaven, one of those who walk on the winds and above the waves and their feet shall not touch the waters.

36 So long as thou art not dead to all things, one by one, thou canst not set thy feet in this portico. —

37 Thou must pass over thyself to mount beyond, ever higher till the stars themselves are below thee.

38 O sage, very high raise thyself, even to the most

39 high dwelling of Truth. — Since the world passes, thyself pass beyond it

---

32) Ephesians V. 14.—33) Tsang-tso.—34) Hermes.—35) Book of Golden Precepts.—36) Farid-ud-din-attar.—37) Nietzsche.—38) Mahavagga.—39) Farid-ud-din-attar.

A Defence of Indian Culture

(8)

The difficulty of religion and spirituality is to bring home the greatness and uplifting power of the spiritual truth to the natural man whose mind and senses are turned outward towards the external calls of life and its objects and never inwards to the Truth which lies behind them. It is this external vision and attraction which is the essence of what is designated in Indian philosophy the Ignorance. Ancient Indian spirituality recognised that man lives in the Ignorance and has to be led not merely away from it, but through its imperfect indications to the highest knowledge. We live between two worlds, the outward and the inward being, and the majority of men put the whole emphasis of life on the outward, live very strongly in that and very little in the inward existence, while even the choice spirits raised from the grossness of the vital and physical being by the stress of thought and culture do not usually get farther than a strong dwelling on the things of the mind and either a preference for living in them more than in the outward life or an attempt to subject life to the law of intellectual truth, ethical reason and will and aesthetic beauty. But to spiritual knowledge there is a greater thing than the mind and our inmost and real being is not the intellect and the aesthetic, ethical or

other mentality, which is only the inner instrument, but the divinity who uses these and the physical instruments, the Spirit. A purely intellectual, ethical and aesthetic culture which does not go back to the inmost truth of the spirit, is still an Ignorance, a relative and superficial knowledge. To make the discovery of our deepest being and the living of the inmost life the aim of existence is therefore the first necessity and sign of a spiritual culture.

This endeavour takes in certain religions the form of a spiritual exclusiveness, as in the Christian discipline whose tendency was to discourage not only the physical and vital way of life, but the intellectual and the aesthetic being and to emphasise as against them a spiritual intuition and experience with a development of the ethical man as its one mental pre-necessity and preparation. But a spiritual culture so limited,—Indian spirituality in its latest phase tended also to a similar force but by no means an identical nature of exclusiveness,—to whatever heights it may rise, however it may help to purify life or lead to a certain kind of individual salvation, cannot be a complete thing; its exclusiveness imposes on it a certain impotence to deal effectively with all the problems of human existence and lead it to its integral perfection. A wider spiritual culture which recognises, like the antique Indian kind in its purity and fullness, that the Spirit is not only the highest and inmost thing, but all is manifestation and creation of the Spirit, must have a wider outlook and a more embracing range of applicability. Its aim must be to raise not only the few elect, but all men and all life and the whole human being, to spiritualise life, to divinise the entire existence of man, not only in his individual but in his communal being; it must turn all the members of his ignorance into members of the knowledge by a spiritual change, transmute all the instruments of his human into instruments of his divine living. We see that from the beginning the total movement of Indian

spirituality is towards this aim, in spite of all the difficulties, imperfections and fluctuations of its evolution, and it is only by an intelligence of this total drift, which sometimes emerges into something like a conscious synthetic clarity, sometimes is dispersed in a multitude of subordinate and special stand-points, that its manifold sides and variations of effort and teaching and discipline receive their full reconciling unity.

The spirit of Indian religion and spiritual culture has been the same throughout the long time of its vigour, but its form has undergone remarkable changes, which when we look rightly into them appear as the results of a logical and inevitable evolution. In its earliest form, that of the Vedic system, it took its outward foundation,—the means by which it sought to mediate between the spirit and the normal human mentality,—on the mind of the physical man whose natural faith is in things physical, the material objects, presences, representations, the external pursuits and aims of life, and whose idea of the Divine can only come through his vision of external Nature and the sense of a superior Power or Powers in its phenomena, in the heaven and earth, father and mother of our being, the sun and moon and stars, its lights and regulators, in dawn and day and night and rain and wind and storm, the oceans and rivers and the forests, all the circumstances and forces of its scene of action, all that vast and mysterious surrounding life of which we are a part and in which the natural heart and mind of the human being feel instinctively through whatever bright or dark or confused figures that there is here some mighty Infinite, one, manifold and mysterious, which takes these forms and manifests itself in these motions. The Vedic religion took this natural sense and feeling of the physical man and the conceptions to which they gave birth, and it sought to lead him through them to the psychical and spiritual truths of his own being and the being of the cosmos. It recognised

that he was right in seeing behind the manifestations of Nature powers and godheads, even though he knew not the inner truth of them, and in offering to them worship and propitiation; for that is the initial way in which his active physical, vital and mental nature approaches the Godhead, as something greater than his own natural self which guides, sustains and directs his life and for help and support in the desires, difficulties, distresses, struggles of his human existence.* It accepted also the form in which early man everywhere expressed his sense of the relation between himself and the godheads of Nature,—the act and ritual of a physical sacrifice. However crude the notions attached to it, this idea of the necessity of sacrifice did express obscurely a first law of being, the interchange between the individual being and the universal powers of the cosmos which supports all the process of life and action of Nature.

But the external or exoteric side of the Vedic religion did not limit itself to this acceptance and regulation of the first religious notions of the natural physical mind. The Vedic Rishis gave a psychical function also to the godheads worshipped by the people ; they spoke to them of a higher Truth, Right, Law of which the gods were the guardians, of the necessity of a knowledge and a living according to this Truth and Right and of a home of Immortality to which the soul of man could ascend by the power of Truth and right doing. The people no doubt took these ideas in their most external sense, but they were trained by them to develop their ethical nature, to turn towards some initial development of their psychical

* The Gita recognises four kinds of worshippers and God-seekers, the *arthârthî* and *ârta*, those who seek him for the fulfilment of desire and for divine help in the sorrow and suffering of existence, the *jijnâsu*, who is moved to seek the Divine in his truth and in that to meet him, and the *jnânî* who has already the truth and endeavours to live in unity with the Spirit

being, to conceive the idea of a knowledge and truth other than that of the physical life and to receive a first conception of some greater spiritual reality which was the highest reach of human aspiration. The deeper truth of these things was reserved for the initiates, for those who were ready to understand and practice the inner sense, the esoteric meaning hidden in the Vedic scripture,—for the Veda is full of words which, as the Rishis themselves express it, are secret words that give their inner meaning only to the seer, *kavaye nivachanâni ninyâni vachâmsi.* This is a feature of the ancient sacred hymns which grew obscure to later ages, became a dead tradition and has been entirely ignored by modern scholarship in its laborious attempt to read the hieroglyph of the Vedic symbols. Yet its recognition is essential to a right understanding of almost all the ancient religions; in all or most there was a religion for the common physical man who was held yet unfit for the psychical and spiritual life and a secret of the Mysteries disguised by symbols which was open only to the initiates. This was the origin of the later distinction between the Shudra, the undeveloped physical-minded man and the twice-born, those who were capable of entering into the second birth by initiation and to whom alone the Vedic education was given, and of the prohibition of any reading or teaching of the Veda by the Shudra. But it was the inner meaning, the higher psychical and spiritual truths they contained, which gave to these hymns the name by which they are known, the Veda, the Book of Knowledge. Only by penetrating into the esoteric sense of this worship can we understand the full flowering of the Vedic religion in the Upanishads and the later evolution of Indian spirituality. It is all there in the seed, preshadowed or even prefigured in the verses of the early seers, and the persistent notion which through every change ascribed the foundation of all our culture to the Rishis, whatever its fabulous forms and

mythical ascriptions, reflects the fact of a true initiation and unbroken continuity; it contains a real truth and veils a sound historic tradition.

This inner Vedic religion started by an extension of the psychical conception of the godheads of the Cosmos. Its primary notion was that there are different worlds or planes of being in the universe, a mounting scale of the physical, psychical and spiritual, corresponding to a similar mounting scale of planes or degrees or levels of conscious being in the nature of man. There is a Truth, Right and Law which sustains and governs all these levels of being, but it takes in them different but cognate forms,—as for instance the outer physical light, a higher and inner light which is the vehicle of the mental and psychical consciousness and the highest inmost light of spiritual illumination, so that Surya, the Sun-God, is at once the lord of the physical Sun, the giver of the rays of knowledge which illumine the mind, and the soul and power and body of the spiritual illumination, a luminous form of the one and infinite Godhead. All the Vedic godheads, in their external character powers of physical Nature, have in their inner meaning a psychical function and psychological ascriptions and they are all various powers of some one highest Reality, one infinite Existence, *ekam Sat*, called often in the Veda "That Truth" or "That One," *tat satyam, tad ekam*. This truth of the Vedic godheads assumes forms which have been wholly misunderstood by those who ascribe to them only their outward physical significance. These gods, who are complete cosmic personalities of the one Existence, form in their combination of powers a universal power of godhead, *vaiswadevyam*, and each apart from his special function is one with the others and holds in himself the universal divinity; each god is all the other gods,—an aspect of the Vedic teaching and worship to which a European scholar has given the sounding misnomer, henotheism,—while beyond in the

triple Infinite they put on their highest nature and are names of the one nameless Being.

But the power of the Vedic teaching lay in its application to the inner life of man. Man lives in the physical cosmos subject to death and the "much falsehood" of the mortal existence; in order to rise beyond death he has to turn from the falsehood to the Truth, to battle with and to conquer the powers of the Darkness, and this he does by communion with the divine Powers and their aid,—the symbols of the outer sacrifice are for this purpose given in the way of the Mysteries all over the world an inner meaning and represent an inner calling of the gods into the human being, a sacrifice, an intimate interchange, a mutual aid, a communion,—and by a building of the godheads within him, a formation of the universality of the divine nature; for the gods are the guardians and increasers of the Truth, the powers of the Immortal, the sons of the infinite Mother, and the way to immortality is the way of the Truth, a journey, an ascent by which there is a growth into the law of the Truth, *ritasya panthâ*. Man arrives at immortality by breaking beyond the limitations not only of the physical, but of the mental and psychical being into the highest native plane of the Truth which is the foundation of immortality and infinity. On these ideas the Vedic sages built up a psychological and psychic discipline which led beyond itself to the highest spirituality and which contains the whole seed of later Indian Yoga. And they open into and already contain the most characteristic ideas of Indian spirituality, the one Existence who manifests the individual and the universal from his supracosmic being,—so that all these are in their essence of being one and the individual can attain to universality and to a transcendental state,—the one God who presents to us his many forms, names, powers, personalities of Godhead, the distinction between the Knowledge and the Ignorance,* the greater truth of immortal, the

comparative falsehood or mixed truth and falsehood of mortal existence, the inward growth of man from the physical through the psychical to the spiritual existence, the conquest of death, the realisable divinity of man, the secret of immortality. This, in an age which we are accustomed to look back to as the childhood of humanity and a period of vigorous barbarism, was the profound psychical and spiritual teaching by which the ancient fathers, *pûrve pitarah*, founded Indian civilisation.

This great beginning was secured in its results by a greater efflorescence. The Upanishads have always been recognised in India as the crown and end of Veda,—Vedanta, and in fact they are so; they are the large crowning outcome of the Vedic discipline and experience. The time in which these Vedantic truths were seen and the Upanishads took shape, was, as we can see from such records as the Chhandogya and Brihadaranyaka, an epoch of immense and strenuous spiritual seeking in which the truths held by the initiates but kept back from ordinary men broke their barriers, swept through all the higher mind of the nation and fertilised the soil of Indian culture for a general growth of spirituality. It was not as yet entirely universal; for it was chiefly men of the higher classes, mainly Kshatriyas and Brahmins trained in the Vedic system of education, who, no longer content with an external truth and the works of the outer sacrifice, began everywhere to seek for the highest word of revealing experience from the sages who possessed the knowledge of the One; but also we find among those who attained to it and became great teachers men of inferior or doubtful birth like Satyakama Jabali, son of a servant-girl who knew not who was his father. The work that was done in this period became the bedrock of Indian spirituality in later ages and from it gush still the life-giving waters of a perennial inspiration.

[*] The distinction is already made expressly in the Veda, *Ichitti achitti.*

It created the whole difference between the evolution of Indian and of other civilisations. For a time had come when the original Vedic symbols were to lose their significance and pass into obscurity, as did the inner teaching of the Mysteries in other countries. The old poise of culture between the crude or half-trained naturalness of the outer physical man and an inner and secret psychical and spiritual teaching for the initiates could no longer suffice as a basis of spiritual progress: the race in its cycle of civilisation needed a large, a more and more generalised intellectual, ethical and aesthetic evolution to help it to grow into the light, and this was a turn that had to come in India as in other lands. But the danger was that the greater spiritual truth might be lost in the reign and domination of the self-supported intellect and reason. That was what actually happened in the West, Greece leading the way, although the old knowledge was prolonged in a more intellectual form by the Pythagoreans, by Plato and the Neo-Platonists; but still in spite of them and in spite of the spiritual wave which swept over Europe from Asia in an ill-understood Christianity, the whole real trend of Western civilisation has been intellectual, rational, secular and even materialistic, its general aim a culture of the vital and physical man by the power of an intellectualised ethics, aesthesis and reason. The spiritual truth and the spiritual tendency were saved in India from this collapse by the immense effort of the age of the Upanishads, which took up the Vedic truth into its highest and most simple expression of intuition and experience, but yet in a form which could lend itself to intellectual and philosophic statement and appreciation. The result was a great upbuilding of an intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and social culture guided, uplifted and more and more penetrated and suffused by the saving power of spirituality.

The second or post-Vedic age of Indian civilisation, distinguished by the rise of the great philosophies, a vast

epic literature, a vigorous and complex society, the beginnings of art and science, the formation of large kingdoms and empires and manifold formative activities of all kinds, great systems of living and thinking, was as elsewhere a high outburst of the intelligence working upon life and the things of the mind to discover their reason and their right way and bring out a broad and noble fullness of human existence. But this effort in India never lost sight of the spiritual motive or the touch of the religious sense. In philosophy the intelligence attempted to analyse by the reason and logical faculty what had formerly been approached through intuition and spiritual experience, but it started from the data these had discovered and went back always in one form or another to the profound truths of the Upanishads which kept their place as the highest authority in these matters,—and this amounted practically to a constant admission by the Indian mind that spiritual experience is a greater thing and a deeper cause of light than the intellectual reason. The epical literature is full of a strong and free intellectual and ethical thinking, a criticism of life by the intelligence and the ethical reason, but the background is a constant religious sense and assent to the spiritual truths which remained the basis of the culture and suffused with their higher light secular thought and action. Art dwells much upon life, but its highest achievement is always in the field of the interpretation of the religio-philosophical mind of India and its whole tone is coloured by a suggestion of the spiritual and the infinite. Society develops its communal coordination of the mundane life of interest and desire, *kâma*, *artha*, but governs always its action by a reference at every point to the dharma, which takes the form of a complex practical amplification of the Vedic idea of truth and right action and living, and it never loses sight of spiritual liberation as the highest point and the ultimate aim of the effort of Life. In later times there

is a still stronger secular tendency of intellectual culture, science, mundane political and social development, a stressing of an artistic, sensuous, hedonistic experience, but this too always strives to keep itself within the frame and not to lose the special stamp of the Indian cultural idea and is compensated by a deepening of the intensities of psycho-religious experience, while every excess of emphasis on the splendour and richness, the powers and pleasures of life has its recoil and is balanced by a corresponding potent stress on spiritual asceticism as the higher way. The two trends, the extreme of the richness of life experience and the extreme of a pure intensity of the spiritual life, accompany each other, interact and preserve with whatever loss of the earlier harmony and synthesis the balance of Indian culture.

Indian religion following this line of evolution, kept its inner continuity with its Vedic and Vedantic origins, while it changed entirely its mental contents and colour and its outward basis. This it did not by any religious revolt or revolution, not with any idea of iconoclastic reformation, but by a development of its organic life which resulted in a natural transformation. At one time indeed it seemed as if a discontinuity and sharp new beginning were necessary and would take place; for Buddhism seemed to reject any spiritual continuity with the Vedic religion. But this was after all more in appearance than in reality. The ideal of Nirvana was only a negative and exclusive statement of the highest Vedantic spiritual experience, its ethical system, the eightfold path as the way to release, an austere sublimation of the Vedic notion of the Truth, Right and Law as the way to immortality, its strongest note, universal compassion and fellow-feeling, an ethical application of the spiritual unity which is the essential idea of Vedanta, its characteristic tenets such as Nirvana and Karma could have been justified, if it had chosen, from the utterances of the Brahmanas and Upanishads, and

it might have claimed for itself a Vedic origin quite as well as the Sankhya philosophy and discipline with which it had some points of intimate alliance. But what most hurt Buddhism and determined its rejection, was not so much its denial of a Vedic origin or authority, but the exclusive trenchancy of its intellectual, ethical and spiritual positions,—a result of the high stress of the logical and rational mind in which it was born as a separate religion,—which could not in the end be made sufficiently compatible with the flexibility, many-sided susceptibility and synthetical turn of the Indian religious consciousness. Eventually, Indian religion while absorbing all that it could of Buddhism, rejected its exclusive positions and preserved the full line of its own Vedic continuity.

This evolution moved by a gradual fading out of the prominent Vedic forms, a transformation of symbol and ritual and ceremony, an emergence of things that are only hints in the original system, a development of new idea-forms from the seed of the original thinking, a farther widening and fathoming of psychic and spiritual experience. The Vedic gods, though losing their real significance, at first keep their hold, but are overshadowed by the great Trinity, Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva, afterwards they fade altogether and remain only as a dead tradition; a new pantheon appears which in its outward symbolic aspects expresses a deeper truth and range of religious experience. The Vedic sacrifice persists only in broken and lessening fragments; the house of Fire is replaced by the temple, the karmic ritual of sacrifice transformed into the devotional temple ritual, the mental images of the Vedic gods figured in the mantras by mental forms of the two great deities, Vishnu and Shiva, and their Shaktis and by corresponding physical images which are made the basis both for external worship and for the mantras of inward adoration and meditation, while the psychic and spiritual experience which the inner sense of the Vedic hymns ex-

pressed finally disappeared into the psycho-spiritual experience of Puranic and Tantric religion and Yoga. The Purano-Tantric stage of the religion has been decried by European critics and Indian reformers as a degradation of the earlier and purer religion ; but this is not so in essential reality, but rather it was an effort successful in a great measure to raise the general mind of the people to a higher and deeper range of spiritual experience. Much of the adverse criticism proceeds upon a total ignoring of the real sense of this worship ; much of it is concentrated on accretions and aberrations which could hardly be avoided in an immense widening of the basis of the culture and catholic attempt to draw towards the spiritual truth minds of all classes and qualities. Much indeed was lost of the profound psychic knowledge of the Vedic seers, but much also of new knowledge was developed. And on the whole what we have to see is the essential sense and aim of the development and the intrinsic value of its forms and means and symbols.

When we look at it from this standpoint, we shall see that this evolution followed upon the early Vedic form very much for the same reason as Catholic Christianity replaced the mysteries and sacrifices of the early Pagan religions. The outward basis of the early religion appealed to the physical outward mind and took that as its starting-point ; the new evolution appealed to a more inner psychic mind and made it its aim to lead that towards the higher spiritual truth. It provided indeed for the outward physical sense and aesthetic turn by its system of temple worship and numerous ceremonies and physical images, but it gave them also a psychical sense and direction which was open to the ordinary man and not reserved for the elect, the initiates ; the initiation now became instead a condition for the introduction from the psycho-religious to the deepest spiritual truth and experience. The Vedic godheads were to the mass of their worship-

pers divine powers presiding over the workings of the outward life of the physical cosmos; but the Puranic Trinity had an entirely psycho-religious and spiritual significance and its more external significance, such as the function of cosmic creation, preservation and destruction, was merely a dependent fringe of these profundities. The spiritual truth remained the same, the truth of the One in many aspects,—the Trinity is a triple form of the one supreme Godhead and Brahman, the Shaktis are energies of the one Energy of the highest divine Being,—but this was now brought more powerfully, widely and intensely home to the general mind of the people. Even the so-called henotheism of the Vedic idea was prolonged and heightened in the worship of Vishnu or Shiva as the one Deity, the universal and highest Godhead of whom all others are the forms and powers. The idea of the Divinity in man was popularised, especially the manifestation of the Divine in humanity which was the basis of the worship of the Avataras. The systems of Yoga developed themselves on the same basis and led through psycho-physical and psycho-spiritual methods to a union with the Supreme, One and Divine which is in various forms the aim of all Indian spirituality. The whole of this Purano-Tantric system, if looked at in its totality and real significance and with an intelligent understanding of its forms, is an endeavour to raise man from a basis of generalised psycho-religious experience through knowledge, works and love to a supreme spiritual experience and spiritual status.

This stage is not the highest reach of spiritual or religious evolution. As the Vedic training of the physically-minded man made possible this development, this raising of the basis of religion to the inner psychical mind, so that again by its training of the psychically-minded man ought to make possible a still higher development and a raising of the basis of religion to the spiritual mind itself

as the leading power of life. The first stage makes possible the preparation of the natural external man for spirituality; the second takes up his outward life into a deeper mental and psychical living and brings him more directly into contact with the spirit and divinity within him; the third should render him capable of taking up his whole mental, psychical, physical living into a first beginning at least of a generalised spiritual life. This endeavour has manifested itself in the evolution of Indian spirituality and is the significance of the latest philosophies, the great spiritual movements of the saints and bhaktas and an increasing resort to the various paths of Yoga. But unhappily it synchronised with a decline of Indian culture and an increasing collapse of its general power and knowledge, and in these surroundings it could not bear its natural fruit; but at the same time it has done much to prepare such a possibility in the future. If Indian culture is to survive and keep its spiritual basis and innate character, it is in this direction, and not in a mere revival or prolongation of the Puranic system, that its evolution must turn, rising so towards the fulfilment of that which the Vedic seers saw as the aim of man and his life thousands of years ago and the Vedantic sages cast into the clear and immortal forms of their luminous revelation.

The Future Poetry

RECENT ENGLISH POETRY

(3)

The rhythmic change which distinguishes the new poetry, may not be easy to seize at the first hearing, for it is a subtle thing in its spirit more than in its body, commencing only and obscured by the outward adherence to the apparent turn-out and method of older forms; but there is a change too, more readily tangible, in the language of this poetry, in that fusion of a concentrated substance of the idea and a transmuting essence of the speech which we mean by poetic style. But here too, if we would understand in its issues the evolution of poetic speech in a language, it is on the subtler things of the spirit, the significant inner changes that we must keep our eye; for it is these that determine the rest and are the heart of the matter. We take little account of the psychology of poetic genius and are content with saying that the word of the poet is the speech of the imagination or that he works by an inspiration. But this is an insufficient account; for imagination is of many different kinds and inspiration touches the mind at different levels and breaks out through different media before it issues through the gates of the creative imagination. What we mean by inspiration is that the impetus to poetic creation and utterance comes to us

from a superconscient source above the ordinary mentality, so that what is written seems not to be the fabrication of the brain-mind, but something more sovereign breathed or poured in from above. That is the possession by the divine *enthousiasmos* of which Plato has spoken. But it is seldom that the whole word leaps direct from that source, that cavern of natal light ready-shaped and with the pure stamp of its divine origin,—ordinarily it goes through some secondary process in the brain-mind itself, gets its impulse and unformed substance perhaps from above, but subjects it to an intellectual or other earthly change; there is in that change always indeed some superior power born of the excitement of the higher possession, but also some alloy too of our mortality. And the character, value and force of the word of the poet vary according to the action of those parts of our mentality which dominate in the change,—the vital mind, the emotional temperament, the imaginative or reflective intellect or the higher intuitive intelligence. The Tantric theory of Speech, the inspired seeing and creative goddess enthroned in our various soul-centres in her several forms and with her higher and higher stations, becomes here an actual and luminously perceptible truth of our being. But also there is in us a direct medium between that divine and this human mentality, an intuitive soul-mind supporting the rest, which has its share both in the transmission and the formal creation, and it is where this gets out into overt working, discloses its shaping touch or makes heard its transmitting voice that we get the really immortal tones of speech and heights of creation. And it is the epochs when there is in the mind of a race some enthusiastic outburst or some calm august action of this intuitive power, intermediary of the inspirations of the spirit or its revelations, that make the great ages of poetry.

In English literature this period was the Elizabethan. Then the speech of poetry got into it a ring and turn of

direct intuitive power, a spontaneous fullness of vision and divine fashion in its utterance which it had not at all before and has hardly had afterwards. Even the lesser poets of the time are touched by it, but in Shakespeare it runs in a stream and condenses to a richly-loaded and crowding mass of the work and word of the intuition almost unexampled in any poetry. The difference can be measured by taking the work of Chaucer or of subsequent poets almost at their best and of Shakespeare at a quite ordinary level and feeling the effect on the poetic listener in our own intuitive being. We take Chaucer with his easy adequate limpidity,—

> He was a very parfit gentle knight.

and then pass on to Shakespeare's rapid seizing of the intuitive inevitable word and the disclosing turn of phrase which admits us at once to a direct vision of the thing he shows us,—

> Of moving accidents by flood and field,
> Of hair-breadth scapes in the imminent deadly breach,

where with quite as simple a thing to say and a perfect force of directness in saying it, it is yet a vastly different kind of directness. The one speaks from the poetic intellect and satisfies by a just and pleasing expression, in the other the words get, one might say, into the entrails of vision and do not stop short at the clear measure of the thing seen, but evoke their very quality and give us immediately the inmost vital fibre and thrill of the life they describe and interpret. It is not merely a difference of the measure of the genius, but of its source. This language of Shakespeare's is a unique and wonderful thing; it has everywhere the royalty of the sovereign intuitive mind looking into and not merely at life and in this most myriad-minded of poets it takes like life itself many tones, but that intuitive readiness to get through, seize the lurking word and bring it out from the heart of the thing itself is almost always its secret. From that, he might have said,

could he have given a better account of his own working, and not by any mere mirroring of things in Nature,

> It was my hint to speak, such was the process.

We are most readily struck in Shakespeare by the lines and passages in which the word thus seized and brought out is followed swiftly on the heels by another and another of its kind, many crowding together or even fused and run into each other in a single phrase of many suggestions,—for this manner is peculiarly his own and others can only occasionally come near to it. Such passages recur to the mind as those in the soliloquy on sleep or the well-known lines in Macbeth,

> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart.

His is often a highly imaged style, but Shakespeare's images are not, as with so many poets, decorative or brought in to enforce and visualise the intellectual sense, they are more immediately revelatory, intimate to the thing he speaks and rather the proper stuff of the fact itself than images. But he has too a clearer, less crowded, still swifter fashion of speech in which they are absent; for an example,

> She should have died hereafter;
> There would have been a time for such a word,—

which has yet the same deep and penetrating intuitive spirit in its utterance. Or the two manners meet together and lean on each other,—

> I have lived long enough; my way of life
> Is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf,

or become one, as in the last speeches of Antony,—

> I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
> I here importune death awhile, until
> Of many thousand kisses the poor last
> I lay upon thy lips.

But all have the same characteristic stamp of the intuitive mind rapidly and powerfully at work; but always too,—and this is the important distinction,—that mediator between the secret spirit and our ordinary surface mentality works in him through and behind the life vision to give the vital impression, the vital psychology, the life-burden of the thought, the emotion, the act or the thing seen in Nature.

The movement that immediately followed, abandoned this power which Shakespeare and the Elizabethans had brought into English poetry; it sought after a language cut into the precision or full with the suggestions of the poetical intellect, and it gained something by its sacrifice; it purified the language, got rid of Elizabethan conceit and extravagance, laid a clearer basis of thought, went back to ordinary speech and raised it into a fit instrument of the poetical imagination. But it lost this Shakespearian directness of intutive vision and spontaneous power of utterance. Gray in a notable passage observes and laments the loss, without penetrating into its cause and nature, and he tried sometimes in his own way, within the cadre of an intellectualised language, to recover something of the power. The later poets get a compensation in other directions by a heightening of the clarified thought and imagination, but the basic substance of the speech seems to have irrecoverably changed and its more tenuous spirit and make impose on the searching audacities of the intuition the curbing restraints and limits of the imaginative intelligence. Shelley's

> Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought,

Keats'

> A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,

or his

> To that large utterance of the early Gods,

or Wordsworth's

> the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world,

give the force and pitch and measure of this often clear, strong, large and luminous, but less intensely surprising and uplifting manner. English poetry has got away from the Elizabethan outbreak nearer to a kinship with the mind and manner of the Greek and Latin poets and their intellectual descendants, though still, it is to be noted, keeping something, a subtle and intimate turn, a power of fire and ether which has become native to it, a legacy from the Shakespearian speech which was not there in its beginnings. This imaginatively intellectual basis of speech remains constant down to the end of the Victorian era.

But at the same time there emerges, at times, a certain effort to recapture the Shakespearian potency and intensity accompanied by a new and higher element in the workings of the poetic inspiration. When we try to put a name on it,—a thing which the poet himself seldom does successfully, for the creative instinct does not usually care to burden itself with a too intellectual self-conciousness,—we can see that this is an attempt to return to the fullness and the awakening turn of the direct intuitive expression on a subtler and more ethereal level. The clarified intellect observing life from above is in itself a higher thing than the vital and emotional mind which responds more immediately and powerfully to life, but is caught in its bonds; and if the direct intuitive power can be got to work on the level just above the ordinary thinking mind where that mind opens through the full intuitive intelligence to a greater supra-intellectual mass and subtlety of light, it will bring in the revelation and inspiration of mightier and profounder things than when it works from behind the mind—even the vividly thinking mind of life and its vital sight and feeling. For here, on the lower level, we get at most, as in Shakespeare, at the spirit in life with all its power of vital thought and its potency of passion and emotion; but there we shall get the greater spirit which embraces life, but shows us too all

that is behind it, all that it dimly means and strives in embarrassed act and thought to bring into expression. Of this effort and this new thing we get magical first indications in the pre-Victorian poets, as in Wordsworth's

> And beauty born of murmuring sound
> Shall pass into her face.

or see the first motion towards it, the first seeking for a suitable style, as in Keats'

> Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
> Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
> Far from the fiery noon and eve's one star,

but also though less often, a sudden leaping out of the thing itself,—

> Solitary thinkings such as dodge
> Conception to the very bourne of heaven,

or

> The journey homeward to habitual self.

These lines of Keats are Shakespearian in their quality, they have recovered the direct revealing word and intimate image of the full intuitive manner, but they enter into a world of thought and inner truth other than Shakespeare's; by the passage through the detaching intellect and beyond it they have got to the borders of the realm of another and greater self than the life-self, though there we include and takes up life into the deeper self-vision. In the Victorian poets we get occasionally the same tendency in a stronger but less happy force; for it is weighted down by an increased intellectuality, in Browning by the robust strenuousness of the analytic intelligence, in Tennyson by the tendency to mere trimming of expression or glitter and wealth of artistic colour; but we have its voice sometimes, as in this line of the *Lotus-Eaters*,—

> Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.

But it has not yet arrived, it is still seeking for itself, beating fitfully at the gates of the greater intuitive vision and expression.

But in more recent work it is precisely the recovery of this supreme power of speech on that loftier and subtler level which to one who comes freshly to this poetry breaks out with a sense of satisfying surprise and discovery. It is not complete; it is not everywhere; it is only just rising from the acquired basis of the previous heights of expression to its own realm; but it is there in a comparative abundance and it is the highest strain of its intensities. We find it in Meredith; when he writes of "Colour, the soul's bridegroom," he has got the intimate revealing image of this fuller and higher intuitive manner, or in his lark's

> silver chain of sound
> Of many links without a break:

when he writes, again,

> Nor know they joy of sight
> Who deem the wave of rapt desire must be
> Its wrecking and last issue of delight,

he has got the perfected turn of the direct intuitive word of thought in its more crowded manner of suggestion,—the kinship in the last line to the Shakespearian manner is close,—as too its more clear and limpid speech in other turns,

> The song seraphically free
> From taint of personality;

and in the lines,

> Dead seasons quicken in one petal spot
> Of colour unforgot,

he has it ready for an intuitive and vivid spiritual interpretation of Nature. We find it in Phillips'

> Dreadful suspended business and vast life
> Pausing.

or in his trees

> Motionless in an ecstasy of rain.

In the Irish poets it comes with less of the Shakespearian kinship, though Yeats has often enough a different but corresponding manner, but most characteristically in a delicate and fine beauty of the word of vision and of an

intuitive entrance into the mystery of things, as in lines like A. E's

> Is thrilled by fires of hidden day
> And haunted by all mystery,

or passages already quoted from Yeats, or, to give one other instance, his

> When God goes by with white footfall.

This is a style and substance which recovers something that had been lost and yet is new and pregnant of new things in English literature.

It is sufficient at present to indicate this new power of language. But we must see whence it arises and to what possibility it points in the widening of the realms of poetic interpretation. It points to a greater thing than has yet been achieved and it is itself a higher achievement,—apart from all question of the force and genius of individual poets. Shakespeare is still—though need he be always ?—immeasurably the largest name in English poetry ; but still, however preeminent his genius, there remain greater things to be seen by the poet than Shakespeare saw and greater things to be said in poetry than Shakespeare said,—and here we have an indication of the way on which they lie and of the gates which open to their hiding-place and own home of light and self-revelation.

Karma and Freedom

The universe in which we live presents itself to our mentality as a web of opposites and contraries, not to say contradictions, and yet it is a question whether there can be in the universe any such thing as an entire opposite or a real contradiction. Good and evil seem to be as opposite powers as well can be and we are apt by the nature of our ethical mind to see the world, at any rate in its moral aspect, as a struggle and tug of war between these eternal opposites, God and devil, Deva and Asura, Ahuramazda, Angrya Mainyu. We hope always that on some as yet hardly conceivable day the one will perish and the other triumph and be convinced of eternity ; but actually they are so intertangled that some believe they are here always together like light and shadow and, if at all, then only somewhere beyond this world of action, in some restful and silent eternity is there a release from the anguish of the knot of their intertwining, their bitter constant embrace and struggle. Good comes out of evil and again good itself seems often to turn to evil ; the bodies of the wrestling combatants get so mixed and confounded together that to distinguish them the minds of the sages even are perplexed and bewildered. And it would seem sometimes as if this distinction hardly existed except for man and the spirits who urge him, perhaps since he eat of that tree of dual knowledge in the garden ; for matter knows it not and life below man troubles itself

but little, if at all, with moral differences. And it is said too that on the other side of human being and beyond its struggles is a serenity of the high and universal spirit where the soul transcends sin, but transcends also virtue, and neither sorrows nor repents nor asks "Why have I not done the good and wherefore have I done this which is evil?" *because in it all things are perfect and to it all things are pure. The sages make too an opposition of the Knowledge and the Ignorance,—*vidyâ avidyâ, chitti achitti,*—on which this question of good and evil seems very intimately to hang; for evil runs behind an ignorant urge of the soul in nature, is itself an ignorant perversion of its will, and the partiality of good is equally an affliction of the Ignorance. But when we look closely into the essence of these two things, we find that on one side ignorance seems to be nothing else than an involved or a partial knowledge; it is knowledge wrapped up in an inconscient action or it is knowledge feeling out for itself with the tentacles of mind; and again on the other side knowledge itself appears to be at best a partial knowing and always to have something beyond of which it is ignorant, even its highest and widest splendour a golden outbreak of solar effulgence against the mass of blue-black light of infinity through which we look beyond it to the Ineffable.

Our mind is compelled to think always by oppositions, from the practical validity of which we cannot escape, but which yet seem always in some sort questionable. We get a perception of a law of Karma, the constant unavoidable successions of the acts of energy and its insistent stream of consequences and reactions, the chain of causality, the great mass of past causes behind us from which all future consequence ought infallibly to unroll itself, and by this we try to explain the universe;

*Taittiriya Upanishad

but then immediately there arises the opposite idea and the challenging problem of liberty. Whence comes this notion of liberty, this divine or this Titanic thirst in man for freedom, born perhaps of something in him by which, however finite be his mind and life and body, he participates in the nature of infinity? For when we look round on the world as it is, everything seems to be by necessity and to move under a leaden constraint and compulsion. This is the aspect of the unthinking world of Force and Matter in which we live; and even in ourselves, in man the thinker, how little is free from some kind of present constraint and of compelling previous necessity! So much of what we are and do, is determined by our environment, so much has been shaped by our education and upbringing,—we are made by life and by the hands of others, are clay for many potters, and, as for what is left, was it not determined, even that which is most ourselves, by our individual, our racial, our human heredity or in the last resort by universal Nature who has shaped man and each man to what he is for her blind or her conscient uses? But we insist and say that we have a will which is aware of a however heavily burdened freedom and can shape to its own purpose and change by its effort environment and upbringing and the formations of heredity and even our apparently immutable common nature. But this will and its effort, is it not itself an instrument, even a mechanical engine of Nature, the active universal energy, and is not its freedom an arbitrary illusion of our mentality which lives in each moment of the present and separates it by ignorance, by an abstraction of the mind from its determining past, so that I seem at every critical moment to exercise a free and virgin choice, while all the time my choice is dominated by its own previous formation and by all that obscure past which I ignore? Granted that Nature works through our will and can create and change, can, that is to say, produce a new formation out of the

stuff she has provided for her workings, is it not by a past impulsion and a continuous energy from it that the thing is done? That is the first idea of Karma. Certainly, our present will must come in as one though not by any means the sole element of the act and formation, but in this view it is not a free ever-new will, but constantly an instrument shaped and used by something greater than ourselves. Only if there is a soul or self which is not a creation, but a master of Nature, not a formation of the stream of universal energy, but itself the former and creator of its own Karma, are we justified in our claim of an actual freedom or at least in our aspiration to a real liberty. There is the whole heart of the debate, the nodus and escape of this perplexed issue.

But here the critical negative analytic thinker, ancient nihilistic Buddhist or modern materialist, comes in to take away the basis of any actual freedom in our earthly or in any possible heavenly existence. The Buddhist denied the existence of a Self free and infinite; that, he thought, was only a sublimation of the idea of ego, an imposition, *adhyâropa*, or gigantic magnified shadow thrown by the falsehood of our personality on eternal Non-Existence. But as for the soul, there is no soul, but only a stream of forms, ideas and sensations, and as the idea of a chariot is only a name for the combination of planks and pole and wheels and axles, so is the idea of individual soul or ego only a name for the combination or continuity of these things, nor is the universe itself anything other than such a combination, *sanghâta*, formed and maintained in its continuity by the successions of Karma, by the action of Energy. In this mechanical existence there can be no freedom from Karma, no possible liberty; but there is yet a possible liberation, because that which exists by combination and bondage to its combinations can be liberated from itself by dissolution. The motive power which keeps Karma in motion is desi-

re and attachment to its works, and by the conviction of impermanence and the cessation of desire there can come about an extinction of the continuity of the idea in the successions of Time. This may be called a liberation, but it is not a status of freedom ; for that can only repose upon on affirmation, a permanence, not upon a negative and extinction of all affirmations, and needs too, one would imagine, a someone or something that is free. The Buddha himself, it may be remarked, seems to have conceived of Nirvana as a status of absolute bliss of freedom, a negation of Karmic existence in some incognisable Absolute which he refused steadfastly to describe or define by any positive or any negative,—as indeed definition by any exclusive positive or widest sum of positives or any negative or complete sum of negatives would seem by the very fact of its bringing in a definition and thereby a limitation to be inapplicable to the Absolute. The Illusionist's Maya is a more mystic thing and more obscure to the intelligence ; but we have at least here a Self, a positive Infinite which is capable therefore of an eternal freedom, but only by inaction, by cessation from Karma; for the self as the individual, the soul in action in Karma is bound always by ignorance, and only by rejection of individuality and of the cosmic illusion can we return to the liberty of the Absolute. What we see in both these systems is that spiritual freedom and the cosmic compulsion are equally admitted, but in a total separation and an exclusion from each other's own proper field,—still as absolute opposites and contraries. Compulsion of ignorance or Karma is absolute in the world of birth ; freedom of the spirit is absolute in a withdrawal from birth and cosmos and Karma.

But these trenchant systems, however satisfactory to the logical reason, are suspect to a synthetic intelligence ; and at any rate, as we find that knowledge and ignorance are not in their essence absolute contraries but ignorance

and inconscience itself the veil of a secret knowledge, so it may be at least possible that liberty and the compulsion of Karma are not such unbridgeable opposites, but that behind and even in Karma itself there is all the time a secret liberty of the indwelling Spirit. Buddhism and Illusionism too demand of man a choice between the right and the wrong way, between the will to an impermanent existence and the will to Nirvana, between a will to cosmic existence and the will to an absolute spiritual being; and they demand this choice not of the Absolute or of the universal Being or Power who indeed cares nothing for their demand and goes on very tranquilly and securely with his mighty eternal action, but they ask it of the individual, of the soul of man halting perplexed between the oppositions of his mentality. It would seem then that there is something in our individual being which has some real freedom of will, some power of choice of a great consequence and magnitude, and what is it then that thus chooses, and what are the limits, where the beginning or the end of its actual or its possible liberty? Difficult also is it to understand how unsubstantial Impermanence can have such a giant hold or present this power of eternal continuity in Time,—there must surely, one thinks, be a Permanent which expresses itself in this continuity, *dhruvam adhruveshu*; or how an Illusion,—for what is illusion but an inconsequent dream or unsubstantial hallucination?—can build up this mighty world of just sequence and firm law and linked Necessity; some secret self-knowledge and wisdom there must be which guides the Energy of Karma in its idea and has appointed for her the paths she must hew in Time. It is because of their persistence of principle in all the transiences of particular form that things have such a hold on our mind and will. It is because the world is so real that we feel so potently its grasp on us and our spirits turn on it with this grip of the wrestler. It is often in-

deed too fiercely real for us and we seek for liberty in the realm of dream or planes of the ideal and, not finding it sufficiently there, because we have not the freedom nor can develop the mastery to impose our ideal on this active reality, we seek it beyond in the remote and infinite greatness of the Absolute. We shall do better then to fix on that other more generally admissible distinction, namely, of the world of Karma as a practical or relative reality and the being of the Spirit constant behind it or brooding above it as a greater supreme reality. And then we have to find whether in the latter alone is any taste of freedom or whether, as must surely be if it is the Spirit that presides over the Energy at work and over its action, there is here too some element or some beginning at least of liberty, and whether, even if it be small and quite relative, we cannot in these steps of Time, in these relations of Karma make this freedom great and real by dwelling consciously in the greatness of the Spirit. May not that be the sovereignty we shall find here when we rise to the top of the soul's evolution?

One thing we will note that this urge towards control and this impression of freedom are an orientation and an atmosphere which cling about the action of mind and grow in Nature as she rises towards mentality. The world of Matter seems to know nothing about freedom; everything there appears as if written in sybillic laws upon tablets of stone, laws which have a process, but no initial reason, serve a harmony of purposes or at least produce a cosmos of fixed results, but do not appear to be shaped with an eye to them by any discoverable Intelligence. We can think of no presence of soul in natural things, because we can see in them no conscious action of mind and a conscious active mental intelligence is to our notions the very basis and standing-ground, if not the whole stuff of soul-existence. If Matter is all, then we may very easily conclude that all is a Karma of material energy which is

governed by some inherent incomprehensible mechanically legislating Necessity. But then we see that Life seems to be made of a different stuff; here various possibility develops, here creation becomes eager, pressing, flexible, protean; here we are conscious of a searching and a selection, many potentialities and a choice of actualities, of a subconscient idea which is feeling around for its vital self-expression and guiding an instinctive action,—often, though in certain limits, with an unerring intuitive guidance of life to its immediate objective or to some yet distant purpose,—of a subconscient will too in the fibre of all this vast seeking and mutable impulsion. This too indeed works within limits, under fetters, in a given range of processes. But when we get to mind, Nature becomes there much more widely conscious of possibility and of choice; mind is aware of potentialities and of determinations in idea which are other than those of the immediate actuality or of the fixedly necessary consequence of the sum of past and present actualities; it is aware of numberless "may-be"s and "might-have-beens," and these last are not entirely dead rejected things, but can return through the power of the Idea and effect future determinations and can fulfil themselves at last in the inner reality of their idea though, it may well be, in other forms and circumstances. Moreover, mind can and does go still further and it can conceive of infinite possibility behind the self-limitations of actual existence and from this seeing there arises the idea of a free and infinite Will, a Will of illimitable potentiality which determines all these innumerable marvels of its own universal becoming or creation in Space and Time. That means the absolute freedom of a Spirit and Power which is not determined by Karma, but determines Karma. Apparent Necessity is the child of the spirit's free self-determination. What affects us as Necessity, is a Will which works in sequence and not a blind Force driven by its own mechanism.

There are in the end three main conceptions which we can form of existence. First, there is the idea of a blind mechanical Necessity of some kind,—and against or beyond that nothing or some absolute non-existence,—a processus bound to certain initial and general determinations of which all the rest is the consequence. But that is only the first appearance of universal things, a stamp of phenomenal impression which we get from the aspect of the material universe. Then, there is the idea of a free infinite Being, God or Absolute, who somehow or other creates out of something or out of nothing, in reality or only in conception, or brings out of himself into manifestation a world of the necessity of his will or of Karma in which all things and all creatures are bound as the victims of that necessity, whether by force of Ignorance or by force of Karma or by some kind of arbitrary predestination. And, finally, there is the idea of an absolute free Existence which supports, develops and informs a universe of relations, of that Power as the universal Spirit of our existence, of the world as the evolution of these relations, of beings in the universe as souls who work them out with some freedom of the spirit as its basis,—for that they inwardly are,—but with an observation of the law of the relations as their natural condition. That law would be in phenomenon to a superficial view of its workings an apparent chain of necessity, but in fact it would be a free self-determination of the Spirit in existence. The free self and spirit would be there informing all the action of material energy, secretly conscient in its inconscience; his would be the movement of life and its inner spirit of guidance; but in mind would be something of the first open light of his presence. The soul evolving in Nature, *prakritir jîvabhûtâ*, would be an immortal clouded Power of him growing into the light of the spirit and therefore towards the consciousness and reality of freedom. It would be bound at first in Nature and obey

helplessly in all its action the urge of Karma, because on the surface the action of energy would be whole truth of its kinetic being; the rest, the freedom, the origination is there, but concealed below, subliminal and therefore not at all manifest in the action. Even in mentality the action of Karma would be the main fact, everything would be determined by the nature of force of our active being working upon and responding to the influences of the environment and by the nature of quality of our active being which would colour and shape the character of these outputtings and responses. But that force is the force, that quality the quality of the soul; and as the soul grew aware of itself, the consciousness of Freedom would emerge, assert itself, insist, strive to grow into a firmly felt and possessed reality. Free in the spirit within, conditioned and determined in Nature, striving in his soul to bring out the spiritual freedom to work upon the natural conditions and determinations, this would be the nature of man the mental being.

On this basis it becomes possible to come at some clear and not wholly antinomous relation between man's necessity and man's freedom, between his earthly human nature at whirl in the machinery of mind, life and body and the master Soul, the Godhead, the real Man behind whose consent supports or whose bidding governs its motions. The soul of man is a power of the self-existence which manifests the universe and not the creature and slave of a mechanical Nature; and it is only the natural instruments of his being, it is mind, life and body and their functions and members which are helpless apparatus and gear of the machinery. These things are subject to the action of Karma, but man in himself, the real man within is not its subject, *na karma lipyate nare*; rather is Karma his instrument and its developments the material he uses, and he is using it always from life to life for the shaping of a limited and individual, which may be one day a divine

and cosmic personality. For the eternal spirit enjoys an absolute freedom, and this freedom appears to us no doubt in a certain status, origin or background of all being as an unconditioned infinite of existence, but also it is in relation to the universe the freedom of an existence which displays an infinite of possibilities and has a power of shaping at will out of its own potentiality the harmonies of the cosmos. Man, too may well be capable of a release, *moksha*, into the unconditioned Infinite by cessation of all action and mind and personality ; but that is not the whole of the spirit's absolute freedom ; it is rather a dependent liberty, since it endures only by this cessation. But the freedom of the Spirit is not so dependent ; that remains unimpaired in all this action of Karma and is not diminished or abrogated by the pouring of its energies into the whirl of the universe. Now you may say that man cannot enjoy the double freedom because as man he is an individual being and therefore a thing of Nature and entirely subject to Karma ; to be free he must get away from individuality and nature and Karma, and then man no longer exists, there is only the unconditioned Infinite. But this is to assume that there is no power of spiritual individuality, but only a power of individuation in Nature, only the formation of a nodus of mental, vital and physical Karma with which the one self for a long time mistakenly identifies its being by the delusion of ego. But if on the other hand there is any such thing as an individual power of spirit, it must in whatever degree share in the force and freedom of the self-existent Divinity ; for it is being of his being.

Freedom somewhere there is in our being and action, and we have only to see how and why it is limited in our outward nature, why here I am at all under any dominion of Karma. I appear to be bound by the law of an outward and imposed energy only because there is separation etween my outward nature and my inmost spiritual self

and I do not live in that outwardness with my whole being, but with a shape, turn and mental formation of myself which I call my ego or my personality. The cosmic spirit in matter seems itself to be so bound, for the same reason, because it has started an outward action, a law and disposition of material energy which must be allowed to unroll its consequences; itself holds back behind and conceals its shaping touch, but still its supporting assent and impulse are there and these come out more into the open as Nature rises in the scales of life and mind. Nevertheless, I have to note that even in mind and even in its phenomenon of a conscious will Karma is the first law and there cannot be for me there a complete freedom; there is no such thing as a mental will which is absolutely free. And this is because mind is part of the action of the outward Ignorance, an action which seeks for knowledge but does not possess its full light and power, which can conceive of self and spirit and infinity and reflect them, but not altogether live in them, which can quiver with infinite possibility, but can only deal in a limited half-effective fashion with limited possibilities. An Ignorance cannot be permitted to have, even if in its nature it could have, free mastery. It would never do for an ignorant mind and will to be given a wide and real freedom; for it would upset the right order of the energy which the Spirit has set at work and produce a most unholy confusion. It must be forced to obey or, if it resists, to bear the reaction of the Law; its partial freedom of a clouded and stumbling knowledge must be constantly overruled both in action and result by the law of universal Nature and the will of the seeing universal Spirit who governs the dispositions and consequences of Karma. And that is in patent fact the character of our mental being and action.

But still there is here something which we may call a relative freedom. It does not really belong to our outward mind and will or that shadow of myself which I

have put forth in my mental ego; for these things are instruments and work in the roads of the successions of Karma. But they still feel a power constantly coming forth and either assenting to or intervening in the action of the nature, and that power they attribute to themselves; they are aware of a relative freedom in their disposition of action and of at least a potential absolute freedom behind it, and mixing these two things confusedly together mind, will and ego cry out in unison "I am free." But this freedom and power are influences of the soul; to use a familiar metaphysical language, they type the assent and will of the Purusha without which the Prakriti cannot move on her way. But the first and greater part of this soul-influence is in the form of an assent to Nature, an acquiescence; and for good reason. For I start with the action of the universal Energy which the Spirit has set in motion and as I rise from the ignorance towards knowledge, the first thing demanded from me is to gather experience of its law and of my relations to the law and at first therefore to acquiesce, to allow myself to be moved, to see and to come to know the nature of the motions, to suffer and obey the law, to understand and know Karma. This obedience is absolute and forcibly imposed on the lower ignorant creation. But in man who experiences increasingly from generation to generation and from life to life the nature of things and develops reflective knowledge and the sense of his soul in Nature, a power of initiating will also develops; he is not bound to her set actualities; he can refuse assent, and the thing in Nature to which it is refused goes on indeed for a time and produces its results by impetus of Karma, but as it runs, it loses power and falls into impotence and desuetude. He can do more, he can command a new action and orientation of his nature,—the assent was a manifestation of the power of the soul as giver of the sanction, *anumantâ*, but this is a power of the soul as active lord of the nature, *ishwara*. Then Nature still insists more or less on her old

habitual way by reason of her past impetus or the right of previous sanctions and may even, in proportion as she is unaccustomed to control, resist and call in hostile powers, our own creations, the children of our past willings; then is there a battle in the house of our being between the lord and his spouse or between old and new nature and a defeat of the soul or its victory. But all this is only a relative freedom, and even the greatest mental self-mastery is a relative and precarious thing at the best, which when we look down from a higher station is not well distinguishable from a lightened bondage.

The mental being in us can be a learner in the school of freedom, not a perfect adept; that can only come by getting away from the mind into the life of the spirit, from personality to the Person, from Nature to the lord of Nature. There first he enjoys an observing and essential liberty in which the active part of his being is an instrument of the supreme Spirit and its universal action; but his assent is now to the will of the Spirit and not to the mechanical force of Nature; he has the freedom of light and purity and right knowledge of relations and a clear detached assent to the divine workings. But if he would have too a freedom of power, of participation, of companionship as the son of God in a greater divine control, he must then not only get back from, but must stand, in his thought and will even, above the levels of mentality and find there the station of leverage, a spiritual *pou sto*, * whence he can sovereignly move the world of his being. Such a station of consciousness there is in our supramental ranges where the soul is one with the Supreme and with the universal not only in essence of consciousness and spiritual truth of being, but in expressive act too of consciousness and being, an initiating and relating truth of spiritual will and knowledge and the soul's overflowing delight in God and existence. There Karma itself becomes a rhythm of freedom and birth a strain of immortality.

* A "where to stand," the station of leverage from which Archimedes, could he only have found it, undertook to move the world.
† *Sambhutyá amritam aśnute.* "by birth he enjoys immortality."

अ र्

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th October 1919

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA..... Aurobindo Ghose
The Three Purushas

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G.
Ch. LIX. The Perfection of Equality

THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... ..... Paul Richard
The Perfect Union

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE (9)

THE FUTURE POETRY
Recent English Poetry (4)

KARMA WILL AND CONSEQUENCE

Essays on the Gita

THE THREE PURUSHAS

The doctrine of the Gita from the beginning to the end converges on all its lines and through all the flexibility of its turns towards one central thought, and to that it is arriving in all its balancing and reconciliation of the disagreements of various philosophic systems and its bringing together of the truths of spiritual experience, lights often conflicting or at least divergent when taken separately and exclusively pursued along their outer arc and curve, into one focus of grouping vision. This central thought is the idea of a triple consciousness, three and yet one, present in the whole scale of existence. There is a spirit here at work in the world ; it is the developer of birth and action, the moving power of life, the inhabiting and associating consciousness in the myriad mutabilities of Nature ; it is the constituting reality of all this stir in Time and Space ; it is itself Time and Space and Circumstance; it is this multitude of souls in the worlds, it is the gods and men and creatures and things and forces and qualities and quantities and powers and presences ; it is Nature, which is power of the Spirit, and objects, which are its phenomena of name and idea and form, and existences, who are portions, births and becomings of the one self-existent spiritual entity. But what we see at work, is a

Nature which in the blind stress of her operations is ignorant of the spirit within her action ; her work too is a confused, ignorant and limiting play of certain fundamental modes, qualities, principles of force in operation and their consequences ; and whatever soul comes to the surface in the action, is itself ignorant, suffering, bound to the incomplete and unsatisfying play of this inferior Nature. This power which is hidden in its truth, manifest in its appearances, is the Kshara, the spirit in the mutability of cosmic phenomenon and becoming. We have to know its truth and discover the Spirit behind these veils, to see all as the one, *vâsudeva iti sarvam*. But this is a thing impossible to achieve with any completeness of inner reality, so long as we live concentrated in the inferior Nature, because that is an ignorance, a Maya, which hides the Divine within its folds. The Godhead is hidden there by the Maya of his own all-creating Yoga, the Eternal is figured in transience, Being is absorbed and covered up by its own manifesting phenomena. In the Kshara taken alone as a thing in itself there is no completeness of knowledge, no completeness therefore of our being and therefore no liberation.

But then there is another spirit of whom we become aware and who is none of these things, but self and self only. This is eternal, always the same, never changed or affected by manifestation, the one, the stable, a self-existence undivided and not even seemingly divided by the division of things and powers in Nature, inactive in her action, immobile in her motion. It is the Self of all and yet unmoved, indifferent, intangible, as if all these things which depend upon it, were not-self, not its own results and powers and consequences, but a drama of action developed before the eye of an unmoved unparticipating spectator ; for the mind that stages the drama is other than the Self which indifferently contains the action. This spirit is timeless, though we see it in Time, unextended

in space, though we see it as if pervading space. We become aware of it in proportion as we draw back from out inward, or look behind the action and motion for something that is eternal and stable, or get away from time and its creation to the uncreated, away from phenomenon to being, from the personal to impersonality, from becoming to unalterable self-existence. This is the Akshara, the immutable in the mutable, the immobile in the mobile, the imperishable in things perishable, or rather, since that is only an appearance of pervasion, the immutable, immobile and imperishable in which proceeds all the mobility of mutable and perishable things. The Kshara spirit moves and acts all-pervadingly as all natural existence and all existences in the immobile and eternal Akshara; this mobile Power of Self acts in that fundamental stability of Self, as the second principle of material Nature, Vayu, with its contactual force of aggregation and separation, attraction and repulsion, supporting the formative force of the fiery (electric) and other elemental movements, ranges pervadingly in the stability of ether. This Akshara is the self higher than the buddhi—that highest subjective principle of Nature in our being, by which man going beyond his restless mobile mental to his calm, eternal, spiritual self is at last free from the persistence of birth and the long chain of action, of Karma. This in its highest status, *paraṁ dhâma*, is an unmanifest beyond the unmanifest principle of the original cosmic Prakriti, Avyakta, and, if the soul turns to it, the hold of cosmos and Nature falls away and it passes beyond birth to eternity. These two then are the two spirits we see in the world, one emerging in front in its action, but the other steadfast in that eternal silence behind from which the action comes and in which it ceases in a timeless existence. *Dwâv imau purushau loke ksharaç châkshara eva cha.*

The difficulty which baffles our intelligence is that these two seem to be irreconcilable opposites with no

real nexus between them or any transition from the one to the other except by a movement of separation. The Kshara acts, or at least motives action, separately in the Akshara; the Akshara stands apart, self-centred, separate in its inactivity from the Kshara. At first sight it would almost seem better, more logical, more easy of comprehension, if we admitted with the Sankhyas an original and eternal duality of Purusha and Prakriti, if not even an eternal plurality of souls,—and then our experience of the Akshara would be simply the withdrawal of each Purusha into himself, his turning away from Nature and therefore from all contact with other souls in the relations of existence; for each is self-sufficient and infinite and complete in his own being. But after all the final experience is that of a unity of all beings which is not merely the community of experience in Nature, but a unity of the spirit, of the conscious being beyond all the variety of determination and the separativism of relative existence. The Gita takes its stand in this highest spiritual, experience. It appears to admit the eternal plurality of souls subject to and sustained by their unity, for cosmos is eternal and manifestation goes on in unending cycles, nor does it affirm anywhere or use any expression that would indicate an absolute disappearance, *laya*, of the soul of man in the Infinite. But at the same time it affirms with a strong insistence that the Akshara is the one self of all these many souls, and it is therefore evident that these two spirits are a dual status of one eternal and universal existence. That is a very ancient doctrine; it is the whole basis of the thought of the Upanishads,—as when the Isha tells us that Brahman is both the mobile and the immobile, is the Self and all existences, *Atman, sarvabhûtâni*, is the Knowledge and the Ignorance, is the eternal unborn status and also the birth of existences, and that to dwell only on one of these things to the exclusion of its eternal counterpart is a darkness of exclusive

knowledge or a darkness of ignorance. It too insists like the Gita that man must know and must embrace both and learn of the Supreme in his entirety,—*samagram mâm*, as the Gita says,—in order to arrive at and enjoy immortality. The teaching of the Gita and this side of the teaching of the Upanishads are so far at one ; they look at and admit both sides of the reality and still arrive at identity as the conclusion and the highest truth of existence.

But this greater knowledge and experience, however true and however powerful in its appeal to our highest seeing, has still to get rid of a very real and pressing difficulty. The Eternal is other than this mobile subjective and objective experience, there is a greater consciousness, *no idam yad upâsate*,* but at the same time all this is the Eternal, all this is the perennial self-seeing of the Self, *sarvam khalu idam brahma, ayam âtmâ brahma*, † the Eternal has become all existences, *âtmâ abhût sarvabhûtâni*††, or, as the Mundaka puts it, Thou art this boy and yonder girl and that old man walking supported on his staff, even as in the Gita the Divine says that he is Krishna and Arjuna and Vyasa and Ushanas, and the lion and the aswattha-tree, and consciousness and intelligence and all qualities and the self of all beings. But how are these two the same, when they seem not only so opposite in nature, but so difficult to unify in experience ? For when we live in the mobility of the becoming, we may be aware of, but hardly live in the immortality of timeless self-existence, and when we fix ourselves in timeless being, Time and Space and circumstance fall away from us and begin to appear as a troubled dream in the Infinite. The most persuasive conclusion would be, at first sight, that the mobility of the spirit in Nature is an illusion, a thing real only when we live in it, but not real in essence, and that is why, when we go back into self, it falls away

* Kena Upanishad. † Mandukya Upanishad, Verily all this that is is the Brahman, and the Self is the Brahman. †† Isha Upanishad.

from our being. But the Gita does not take refuge in this explanation which has enormous difficulties of its own, besides its failure to account for the illusion,—for it only says that it is all a mysterious and incomprehensible Maya, and then we might just as well say that it is all a mysterious and incomprehensible double reality. The Gita speaks of Maya, but only as a bewildering partial consciousness which loses hold of the complete reality, lives in the phenomenon of mobile Nature and has no sight of the Spirit of which she is the active Power, *me prakritih*. When we transcend this Maya, the world does not disappear, it only changes its whole heart of meaning; in the spiritual vision we find not that all this does not really exist, but rather that all is; all is self and soul and nature of the Godhead, all is Vasudeva. The world for the Gita is real, a creation of the Lord, a power of the Eternal, a manifestation from the Parabrahman, and even this lower nature of the triple Maya is a derivation from the supreme divine Nature. Nor can we take refuge altogether in this distinction that there is a double, an inferior active and temporal and a superior still and eternal reality beyond action and that our liberation is to pass from this partiality to that greatness, from the action to the silence. For the Gita insists that we can and should, while we live, be conscious in the self and yet act with power in the world of Nature. And it gives the example of the Divine himself who is not bound by necessity of birth, but free, superior to the cosmos, and yet abides eternally in action, *varta eva cha karmani*. Therefore it is by putting on a likeness of the divine nature in its completeness that the unity of this double experience becomes entirely possible. But what is the principle of that unity?

The Gita finds it in its vision of the Purushottama, which is the type, according to its doctrine, of the complete and the highest experience, that of the whole-know-

ers, *kritsnavidah*. The Akshara is *para*, supreme in relation to the elements and action of cosmic Nature. It is the immutable Self of all, and the immutable Self of all is the Purushottama; it is he in that freedom of self-existence which is not affected by the action of his own power in Nature and the urge of his becoming and the play of the qualities. But the Purushottama is at the same time greater than the Akshara, because he is more than this immutability and not limited even by the highest eternal status of his being; still, it is through whatever is immutable and eternal in our being, that we arrive at the highest status from which there is no returning to birth, and that was the liberation which was sought by the wise of old, the ancient sages. But when pursued through the Akshara alone, it becomes the seeking of the Indefinable, a thing hard for the nature of embodied being. This Indefinable, to which the Akshara, the pure intangible self here in us rises in its separative urge, is some supreme Unmanifest, *paro avyakta*, and this highest unmanifest Akshara is the Purushottama. But yet he is other than the Akshara, because he is to be known also as the supreme Purusha who extends this whole universe in his being. He is the Lord here in the Kshara, in the heart of every being, Ishwara, and there too in his highest eternal status he is the supreme Lord, Parameshwara, origin and father and mother and first foundation and eternal abode of the cosmic being and the Master of all existences and enjoyer of askesis and sacrifice. It is by knowing him at once in the Akshara and the Kshara, the Unborn who partially manifests himself in all birth and even himself descends as the constant Avatar, by knowing him in his entirety, *samagram mâm*, that the soul is easily released from the appearances of the lower Nature and grows into its divine being. For the truth of the Kshara too is a truth of the Purushottama. It is the Purushottama who is in the heart of every creature and is manifested in his countless Vibhutis; it is

the Purushottama who is the cosmic spirit in Time and who gives the command to the divine action of the liberated human being. He is both Akshara and Kshara, and yet he is other than either of these opposites. *Uttamah purushas tvanyah paramâtmetyudâhritah, yo lokatrayam âvishya vibhartyavyaya îsvarah*, "But other than these two is that highest spirit called the supreme self, which enters the three worlds and upbears them, the imperishable Lord." This verse is the keyword of the Gita's reconciliation of these two apparently opposite aspects of our existence.

The idea of the Purushottama has been prepared, alluded to, adumbrated, assumed even from the beginning, but it is only now in the fifteenth chapter that it is expressly stated and the distinction given a name. And it is instructive to see how it is now immediately approached and developed. To rise into the divine nature, we have been told, one must first fix oneself in a perfect spiritual equality and so rise above the lower nature of the three gunas; by that we fix ourselves in the impersonality, the imperturbable superiority to all action, the purity from all definition and limitation by quality which is the nature of the Purushottama manifested as the eternity and unity of the self in the Akshara. But there is also an eternal multiplicity of the Purushottama in soul manifestation. The Infinite has an eternal power and unending action of his divine Nature, and personality too finds in the Infinite its higher spiritual meaning: but it is then no longer the egoistic, separative, oblivious personality of the lower Prakriti, it is something exalted, immortal and divine. That mystery is the secret of love and devotion; it is the eternal soul offering itself to the eternal Divine of whom it is a portion, *ansha*; and therefore the completeness of knowledge finds itself in this love and adoration and the sacrifice of works receives by it its consummation and perfect sanction. It is then through these things that the soul of man fulfils it-

self in this other secret of the divine nature and possesses by that fulfilment the foundation of immortality, the eternal Dharma and the supreme felicity. And having so stated this double requisite, equality in the one self, adoration of the one Lord, at first as if they were two separate ways of arriving at the Brahmic status, *brahmabhûyâya*,—quietistic *sannyasa* and the way of divine love and divine action, for they can be so treated,—the Gita proceeds now to unite the personal and the impersonal in the Purushottama and to define their relations. For the object of the Gita is to get rid of exclusions and separative exaggerations and fuse these two sides of knowledge and spiritual experience into a perfect unity.

And first it begins by describing cosmic existence in the Vedantic image of the aswattha tree. This tree of cosmic existence has no beginning and no end, *nânto na châdih*, in space or in time ; for it is eternal and imperishable, *avyaya*. The form of it cannot be perceived by us here in the material world of man's embodiment, nor has it any apparent lasting foundation here; for it is an infinite movement and its foundation is above in the supreme of the Infinite; it is the ancient sempiternal urge to action, *pravritti*, which for ever proceeds without beginning or end from the original Soul of all existence, *âdyam purusham yatah pravrittih prasritâ purânî*. Therefore its original root is above; but its branches stretch down below and it extends and plunges down its roots, well-fixed and clinging roots of attachment and desire with their consequences of continual developing action, here into the world of men. The hymns of the Veda are compared to its leaves and the man who knows this tree of the cosmos is the Veda-knower. And here we see the sense of that rather disparaging view of the Veda or at least of the Vedavada, which we had to notice at the beginning; for what the Veda gives is a knowledge of the gods, of the principles and powers of the cosmos, and the fruits of the

sacrifice which is offered with desire, fruits of enjoyment and lordship in the nature of the three worlds, in earth and heaven and the world between earth and heaven. These branches of which the Vedic rhythms, *chhandâusi*, are the leaves, extend both below and above, below in the material, above in the supraphysical planes; they grow by the gunas of Nature,—the triple guna is the subject of the Vedas, *traiguṇya-vishayâ vedâh*,—and the sensible objects of desire supremely gained by a right doing of the sacrifice with desire are their foliage. Man, therefore, so long as he enjoys the play of the gunas and is attached to desire, is held in the Pravritti, in the movement of birth and action, turns about constantly between the earth and the middle planes and the heavens and is unable to get back to his supreme spiritual existence. This was perceived by the sages. To achieve liberation they followed the path of Nivritti or cessation from the original urge to action, and the consummation of this way is a cessation of birth itself and a transcendent status in the highest supracosmic reach of existence. But for this purpose it is necessary to cut these long-fixed roots of desire by the strong sword of detachment and then to seek for that highest goal whence, once having reached it, there is no return. To be free from the bewilderment of this lower Maya, without egoism, the great fault of attachment conquered, all desires stilled, the duality of joy and grief cast away, a wide equality, always to be firm in a pure spiritual consciousness, these are the steps of the way to that supreme existence. There is the timeless being which is not illumined by sun or moon or fire, but is itself the light of the presence of the eternal Purusha. I turn away, says the Vedantic verse, to seek that original Soul of existence alone and reach him in the great passage. That is the highest status of the Purushottama, his supracosmic existence.

But it would seem that this can be attained very well, best even, preeminently, directly, by the quiescence

of Sannyasa, the way of the Akshara, the complete renunciation of works and life, an ascetic seclusion, an ascetic inaction. Where is the room here, or at least where is the call, the necessity, for the command to action, and what has all this to do with the maintenance of the cosmic existence, *lokasangraha*, the slaughter of Kurukshetra, the ways of the Spirit in Time, the vision of the million-bodied Lord and his high-voiced bidding, "Arise, slay the foe, enjoy a wealthy kingdom"? And what then is this soul in Nature? This spirit, this Kshara, this enjoyer of our mutable existence, too, is the Purushottama, but in his eternal multiplicity. "It is an eternal portion of me which becomes the Jiva in the world of Jivas." This is an epithet, a statement of immense bearing and consequence. For it means that each soul, each being in its spiritual reality is the Divine himself, however partial the actual manifestation of him in Nature. And it means too, if words have any sense, that each manifesting spirit, each of the many, is an eternal individual, an eternal power of being of the one Existence. We call this manifesting spirit the Jiva, because it appears here as a living being in a world of living beings, and we speak of the spirit in man as the human soul and think of it in the terms of humanity. But in truth it is something greater than its present appearance and not bound to its humanity. When this soul rises above limitation, it puts on its divine nature of which its humanity is only a temporary veil, a thing of partial and incomplete significance. The individual spirit exists beyond in the Eternal, for it is itself everlasting, *sanâtana*, and it is evidently this idea of the eternal individual which leads the Gita to avoid any expression at all suggestive of a complete dissolution, *laya*, and to speak rather of the highest state of the soul as a dwelling in the Purushottama, *nivasishyasi ntayyeva*. If when speaking of the one Self of all, it seems to use the language of Advaita, this idea of the eternal individual, *mamânshah sa-*

nâtanah, adds something which brings in a qualification and seems to accept the seeing of the Visishtadwaita, —though we must not therefore leap at once to the conclusion that that alone is the Gita's philosophy or that its doctrine is identical with the later doctrine of Ramanuja. Still this much is clear that there is an eternal, a real and not illusive principle of multiplicity in the spiritual being of the one divine Existence.

This eternal individual is not other than or in any way really separate from the Divine. It is the Lord himself, the Ishwara who by virtue of the eternal multiplicity of his oneness—is not all existence a rendering of that truth of the Infinite ?—takes up the body and goes forth from this frame when it is cast away to disappear into the elements of Nature. He brings in with him and cultivates for the enjoyment of the objects of mind and sense the subjective powers of Prakriti, mind and the five senses, and in his going forth he goes taking them as the wind takes the perfumes from a vase. But the identity of the Lord and the soul in mutable Nature is hidden from us by the outward appearance, the crowding mobile deceptions of that Nature. And those who allow themselves to be governed by the figures of Nature, the figure of humanity or any other form, will never see it, but will ignore and despise the Divine lodged in the human body. Their ignorance cannot see him in his coming in and his going forth or in his staying and enjoying and assumption of quality, but sees only what is there visible to the mind and senses, not the greater truth which can only be glimpsed by the eye of knowledge. Never can they see him, even if they strive to do so, until they learn to put away the limitations of the outward consciousness and form themselves in the spiritual being. Man, to know himself, must be *kritâtmâ*, formed in the spiritual mould, enlightened in the spiritual vision. But the Yogins who have this eye of knowledge, see the divine being we are

in their own eternal spiritual reality ; illumined, they see the Lord in themselves and are delivered from the crude material limitation and the form of mental personality. But they see him too not only in themselves, but in all the cosmos. In the light of the sun that illumines all this world, they witness the light of the Godhead which is in us ; the light in the moon and in fire is the light of the Divine. It is the Divine who has entered into his form of earth and is the spirit of its material force and sustains by his might these beings. The Divine is the godhead of Soma who by the *rasa*, the sap in her, nourishes the plants and trees which clothe her surface. The Divine and no other is the flame of life which sustains the physical body of living beings and turns its food into sustenance of their vital force. He is lodged in the heart of every being ; from him are memory and knowledge and the debates of the reason ; he is that which is known by all the Vedas and by all forms of knowing, he is the knower of Veda and the maker of Vedanta. In other words, the Divine is at once the Soul of matter and the Soul of life and the Soul of mind and the Soul of the supramental light of being.

Thus the Divine is manifest in the double soul of existence, *dwâv imau purushau*, the spirit of mutable things who is all these existences, *ksharah sarvâni bhutâni*, and the immutable spirit standing above them in his imperturbable immobility of eternal silence and calm, and it is by the force of the Divine in them that the knowledge and being of man are so powerfully drawn as if by opposing and incompatible attractions. But the Divine in himself is neither wholly the Kshara, nor wholly the Akshara ; greater is he than the immutable Self and much greater than the Soul of mutable things, and because he is other than them, *anyah*, he is capable of being both at once, the Purushottama extended in the world and extended in the Veda, in self-knowledge and in cosmic experience. And whoever thus knows and sees him as the Purushottama, is no longer bewildered whether by the world-ap-

pearance or by the separate attraction of these two apparent contraries which confront each other as a positive of the cosmic action and its negative in the self who has no part in an action that belongs entirely to the ignorance of Nature or a positive of pure, indeterminable, stable, eternal self-existence and its negative of a world of determinations and relations, idea and form, perpetual unstable becoming and the creating and uncreating tangle of action and evolution. He becomes all-knowing, *sarvavid*, a whole-knower, sees the entire sense of the self and things, the integral reality of the Divine, *samagram mâm*. He unites the Kshara and the Akshara in the Purushottama. He loves, worships, cleaves to and adores this supreme Self of his and all existence, this Lord of his and all being, this supreme Eternal in and beyond the world, and he does it too with no single side or portion of himself, but in all the ways of his being and becoming. Divine in the equality of his imperturbable self-existence, one in it with all existences, he brings that equality, that oneness into his mind and heart and life and body and founds on it the integrality of divine love, divine works, divine knowledge. This is the Gita's way of salvation.

And is that not too after all the real Adwaita which makes no scission in the being of the one eternal Existence, but sees the one as the one even in the multiplicities of Nature, in all aspects, in the reality of cosmos and in that greatest reality of the supracosmic which is the source of cosmos and not bound either by the affirmation of universal becoming or by any universal negation? That at least is the Adwaita of the Gita. This is the most secret Shastra, says the Teacher to Arjuna, the supreme teaching and science which leads us into the heart of the highest mystery of existence, and to know it, to seize it in knowledge and experience, is to be perfected in understanding and successful in the supreme sense and objective of all action. It is the way to be immortal, to rise towards the highest divine nature and to assume the eternal Dharma,

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LIX

THE PERFECTION OF EQUALITY

The very first necessity for spiritual perfection is a perfect equality. Perfection in the sense in which we use it in Yoga, means a growth out of a lower undivine into a higher divine nature. In terms of knowledge it is a putting on the being of the higher self and a casting away of the darker broken lower self or a transforming of our imperfect state into the rounded luminous fullness of our real and spiritual personality. In terms of devotion and adoration it is a growing into a likeness of the nature or the law of the being of the Divine, to be united with whom we aspire,—for if there is not this likeness, this oneness of the law of the being, unity between that transcending and universal and this individual spirit is not possible. The supreme divine nature is founded on equality. This affirmation is true of it whether we look on the Supreme Being as a pure silent Self and Spirit or as the divine Master of cosmic existence. The pure Self is equal, unmoved, the witness in an impartial peace of all the happenings and relations of cosmic existence. While it is not averse to them,—aversion is not equality, nor, if that were the attitude of the Self to cosmic existence, could the uni-

verse come at all into being or proceed upon its cycles,—a detachment, the calm of an equal regard, a superiority to the reactions which trouble and are the disabling weakness of the soul involved in outward nature, are the very substance of the silent Infinite's purity and the condition of its impartial assent and support to the many-sided movement of the universe. But in that power too of the Supreme which governs and develops these motions, the same equality is a basic condition.

The Master of things cannot be affected or troubled by the reactions of things; if he were, he would be subject to them, not master, not free to develop them according to his sovereign will and wisdom and according to the inner truth and necessity of what is behind their relations, but obliged rather to act according to the claim of temporary accident and phenomenon. The truth of all things is in the calm of their depths, not in the shifting inconstant wave form on the surface. The supreme conscious Being in his divine knowledge and will and love governs their evolution—to our ignorance so often a cruel confusion and distraction—from these depths and is not troubled by the clamour of the surface. The divine nature does not share in our gropings and our passions; when we speak of the divine wrath or favour or of God suffering in man, we are using a human language which mistranslates the inner significance of the movement we characterise. We see something of the real truth of them when we rise out of the phenomenal mind into the heights of the spiritual being. For then we perceive that whether in the silence of self or in its action in the cosmos, the Divine is always Sachchidananda, an infinite existence, an infinite consciousness and self-founded power of conscious being, an infinite bliss in all his existence. We ourselves begin to dwell in an equal light, strength, joy—the psychological rendering of the divine knowledge, will and delight in self and things which are the active universal

outpourings from those infinite sources. In the strength of that light, power and joy a secret self and spirit within us accepts and transforms always into food of its perfect experience the dual letters of the mind's transcript of life, and if there were not the hidden greater existence even now within us, we could not bear the pressure of the universal force or subsist in this great and dangerous world. A perfect equality of our spirit and nature is a means by which we can move back from the troubled and ignorant outer consciousness into this inner kingdom of heaven and possess the spirit's eternal kingdoms, *râjyam samriddham*, of greatness, joy and peace. That self-elevation to the divine nature is the complete fruit and the whole occasion of the discipline of equality demanded from us by the self-perfecting aim in Yoga.

A perfect equality and peace of the soul is indispensable to change the whole substance of our being into substance of the self out of its present stuff of troubled mentality. It is equally indispensable if we aspire to replace our present confused and ignorant action by the self-possessed and luminous works of a free spirit governing its nature and in tune with universal being. A divine action or even a perfect human action is impossible if we have not equality of spirit and an equality in the motive-forces of our nature. The Divine is equal to all, an impartial sustainer of his universe, who views all with equal eyes, assents to the law of developing being which he has brought out of the depths of his existence, tolerates what has to be tolerated, depresses what has to be depressed, raises what has to be raised, creates, sustains and destroys with a perfect and equal understanding of all causes and results and working out of the spiritual and pragmatic meaning of all phenomena. God does not create in obedience to any troubled passion of desire or maintain and preserve through an attachment of partial preference or destroy in a fury of wrath, disgust or aversion. The Divine deals with great

and small, just and unjust, ignorant and wise as the Self of all who, deeply intimate and one with the being, leads all according to their nature and need with a perfect understanding, power and justness of proportion. But through it all he moves things according to his large aim in the cycles and draws the upward soul in the evolution through its apparent progress and retrogression towards the higher and ever higher development which is the sense of the cosmic urge. The self-perfecting individual who seeks to be one in will with the Divine and make his nature an instrument of the divine purpose, must enlarge himself out of the egoistic and partial views and motives of the human ignorance and mould himself into an image of this supreme equality.

This equal poise in action is especially necessary for the *sadhaka* of the integral Yoga. First, he must acquire that equal assent and understanding which will respond to the law of the divine action without trying to impose on it a partial will and the violent claim of a personal aspiration. A wise impersonality, a quiescent equality, a universality which sees all things as the manifestations of the Divine, the one Existence, is not angry, troubled, impatient with the way of things or on the other hand excited, over-eager and precipitate, but sees that the law must be obeyed and the pace of time respected, observes and understands with sympathy the actuality of things and beings, but looks also behind the present appearance to their inner significances and forward to the unrolling of their divine possibilities, is the first thing demanded of those who would do works as the perfect instruments of the Divine. But this impersonal acquiescence is only the basis. Man is the instrument of an evolution which wears at first the mask of a struggle, but grows more and more into its truer and deeper sense of a constant wise adjustment and must take on in a rising scale the deepest truth and significance—now only underlying the adjustment and

struggle—of a universal harmony. The perfected human soul must always be an instrument for the hastening of the ways of this evolution. For that a divine power acting with the royalty of the divine will in it must be in whatever degree present in the nature. But to be accomplished and permanent, steadfast in action, truly divine, it has to proceed on the basis of a spiritual equality, a calm, impersonal and equal self-identification with all beings, an understanding of all energies. The Divine acts with a mighty power in the myriad workings of the universe, but with the supporting light and force of an imperturbable oneness, freedom and peace. That must be the type of the perfected soul's divine works. And equality is the condition of the being which makes possible this changed spirit in the action.

But even a human perfection cannot dispense with equality as one of its chief elements and even its essential atmosphere. The aim of a human perfection must include, if it is to deserve the name, two things, self-mastery and a mastery of the surroundings; it must seek for them in the greatest degree of these powers which is at all attainable by our human nature. Man's urge of self-perfection is to be, in the ancient language, *swarât* and *samrât*, self-ruler and king. But to be self-ruler is not possible for him if he is subject to the attack of the lower nature, to the turbulence of grief and joy, to the violent touches of pleasure and pain, to the tumult of his emotions and passions, to the bondage of his personal likings and dislikings, to the strong chains of desire and attachment, to the narrowness of a personal and emotionally preferential judgment and opinion, to all the hundred touches of his egoism and its pursuing stamp on his thought, feeling and action. All these things are the slavery to the lower self which the greater "I" in man must put under his feet if he is to be king of his own nature. To surmount them is the condition of self-rule; but of that surmounting again

equality is the condition and the essence of the movement. To be quite free from all these things,—if possible, or at least to be master of and superior to them,—is equality. Farther, one who is not self-ruler, cannot be master of his surroundings. The knowledge, the will, the harmony which is necessary for this outward mastery, can come only as a crown of the inward conquest. It belongs to the self-possessing soul and mind which follows with a disinterested equality the Truth, the Right, the universal Largeness to which alone this mastery is possible,—following always the great ideal they present to our imperfection while it understands and makes a full allowance too for all that seems to conflict with them and stand in the way of their manifestation. This rule is true even on the levels of our actual human mentality, where we can only get a limited perfection. But the ideal of Yoga takes up this aim of Swarajya and Samrajya and puts it on the larger spiritual basis. There it gets its full power, opens to the diviner degrees of the spirit; for it is by oneness with the Infinite, by a spiritual power acting upon finite things, that some highest integral perfection of our being and nature finds its own native foundation.

A perfect equality not only of the self, but in the nature is a condition of the Yoga of self-perfection. The first obvious step to it will be the conquest of our emotional and vital being, for here are the sources of greatest trouble, the most rampant forces of inequality and subjection, the most insistent claim of our imperfection. The equality of these parts of our nature comes by purification and freedom. We might say that equality is the very sign of liberation. To be free from the domination of the urge of vital desire and the stormy mastery of the soul by the passions is to have a calm and equal heart and a life-principle governed by the large and even view of a universal spirit. Desire is the impurity of the Prana, the life-principle, and its chain of bondage. A free Prana means a con-

tent and satisfied life-soul which fronts the contact of outward things without desire and receives them with an equal response; delivered, uplifted above the servile duality of liking and disliking, indifferent to the urgings of pleasure and pain, not excited by the pleasant, not troubled and overpowered by the unpleasant, not clinging with attachment to the touches it prefers or violently repelling those for which it has an aversion, it will be opened to a greater system of values of experience. All that comes to it from the world with menace or with sollicitation, it will refer to the higher principles, to a reason and heart in touch with or changed by the light and calm joy of the spirit. Thus quieted, mastered by the spirit and no longer trying to impose its own mastery on the deeper and finer soul in us, this life-soul will be itself spiritualised and work as a clear and noble instrument of the diviner dealings of the spirit with things. There is no question here of an ascetic killing of the life-impulse and its native utilities and functions; not its killing is demanded, but its transformation. The function of the Prana is enjoyment, but the real enjoyment of existence is an inward spiritual Ananda, not partial and troubled like that of our vital, emotional or mental pleasure, degraded as they are now by the predominance of the physical mind, but universal, profound, a massed concentration of spiritual bliss possessed in a calm ecstasy of self and all existence. Possession is its function, by possession comes the soul's enjoyment of things, but this is the real possession, a thing large and inward, not dependent on the outward seizing which makes us subject to what we seize. All outward possession and enjoyment will be only an occasion of a satisfied and equal play of the spiritual Ananda with the forms and phenomena of its own world-being. The egoistic possession, the making things our own in the sense of the ego's claim on God and beings and the world, *parigraha*, must be renounced in order that this greater thing, this large,

universal and perfect life, may come. *Tyaktena bhuñjîthâh*, by renouncing the egoistic sense of desire and possession, the soul enjoys divinely its self and the universe.

A free heart is similarly a heart delivered from the gusts and storms of the affections and the passions; the assailing touch of grief, wrath, hatred, fear, inequality of love, trouble of joy, pain of sorrow fall away from the equal heart, and leave it a thing large, calm, equal, luminous, divine. These things are not incumbent on the essential nature of our being, but the creations of the present make of our outward active mental and vital nature and its transactions with its surroundings. The ego-sense which induces us to act as separate beings who make their isolated claim and experience the test of the values of the universe, is responsible for these aberrations. When we live in unity with the Divine in ourselves and the spirit of the universe, these imperfections fall away from us and disappear in the calm and equal strength and delight of the inner spiritual existence. Always that is within us and transforms the outward touches before they reach it by a passage through a subliminal psychic soul in us which is the hidden instrument of its delight of being. By equality of the heart we get away from the troubled desire-soul on the surface, open the gates of this profounder being, bring out its responses and impose their true divine values on all that sollicits our emotional being. A free, happy, equal and all-embracing heart of spiritual feeling is the outcome of this perfection.

In this perfection too there is no question of a severe ascetic insensibility, an aloof spiritual indifference or a strained rugged austerity of self-suppression. This is not a killing of the emotional nature but a transformation. All that presents itself here in our outward nature in perverse or imperfect forms has a significance and utility which come out when we get back to the greater truth of divine being. Love will be not destroyed, but perfected, enlarg-

ed to its widest capacity, deepened to its spiritual rapture, the love of God, the love of man, the love of all things as ourselves and as beings and powers of the Divine; a large, universal love, not at all incapable of various relation, will replace the clamant, egoistic, self-regarding love of little joys and griefs and insistent demands afflicted with all the chequered pattern of angers and jealousies and satisfactions, rushings to unity and movements of fatigue, divorce and separation on which we now place so high a value. Grief will cease to exist, but a universal, an equal love and sympathy will take its place, not a suffering sympathy, but a power which, itself delivered, is strong to sustain, to help, to liberate. To the free spirit wrath and hatred are impossible, but not the strong Rudra energy of the Divine which can battle without hatred and destroy without wrath because all the time aware of the things it destroys as parts of itself, its own manifestations and unaltered therefore in its sympathy and understanding of those in whom are embodied these manifestations. All our emotional nature will undergo this high liberating transformation; but in order that it may do so, a perfect equality is the effective condition.

The same equality must be brought into the rest of our being. Our whole dynamic being is acting under the influence of unequal impulses, the manifestations of the lower ignorant nature. These urgings we obey or partially control or place on them the changing and modifying influence of our reason, our refining aesthetic sense and mind and regulating ethical notions. A tangled strain of right and wrong, of useful and harmful, harmonious or disordered activity is the mixed result of our endeavour, a shifting standard of human reason and unreason, virtue and vice, honour and dishonour, the noble and the ignoble, things approved and things disapproved of men, much trouble of self-approbation and disapprobation or of self-righteousness and disgust, remorse, shame and moral

depression. These things are no doubt very necessary at present for our spiritual evolution. But the seeker of a greater perfection will draw back from all these dualities, regard them with an equal eye and arrive through equality at an impartial and universal action of the dynamic Tapas, spiritual force, in which his own force and will are turned into pure and just instruments of a greater calm secret of divine working. The ordinary mental standards will be exceeded on the basis of this dynamic equality. The eye of his will must look beyond to a purity of divine being, a motive of divine will-power guided by divine knowledge of which his perfected nature will be the engine, *yantra*. That must remain impossible in entirety as long as the dynamic ego with its subservience to the emotional and vital impulses and the preferences of the personal judgment interferes in his action. A perfect equality of the will is the power which dissolves these knots of the lower impulsion to works. This equality will not respond to the lower impulses, but watch for a greater seeing impulsion from the Light above the mind, and will not judge and govern with the intellectual judgment, but wait for enlightenment and direction from a superior plane of vision. As it mounts upward to the supramental being and widens inward to the spiritual largeness, the dynamic nature will be transformed, spiritualised like the emotional and pranic, and grow into a power of the divine nature. There will be plenty of stumblings and errors and imperfections of adjustment of the instruments to their new working, but the increasingly equal soul will not be troubled overmuch or grieve at these things, since, delivered to the guidance of the Light and Power within self and above mind, it will proceed on its way with a firm assurance and await with growing calm the vicissitudes and completion of the process of transformation. The promise of the Divine Being in the Gita will be the anchor of its resolution, "Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in Me alone; I

will deliver thee from all sin and evil; do not grieve."

The equality of the thinking mind will be a part and a very important part of the perfection of the instruments in the nature. Our present attractive self-justifying attachment to our intellectual preferences, our judgments, opinions, imaginations, limiting associations of the memory which makes the basis of our mentality, to the current repetitions of our habitual mind, to the insistences of our pragmatic mind, to the limitations even of our intellectual truth-mind, must go the way of other attachments and yield to the impartiality of an equal vision. The equal thought-mind will look on knowledge and ignorance and on truth and error, those dualities created by our limited nature of consciousness and the partiality of our intellect and its little stock of reasonings and intuitions, accept them both without being bound to either twine of the skein and await a luminous transcendence. In ignorance it will see a knowledge which is imprisoned and seeks or waits for delivery, in error a truth at work which has lost itself or got thrown by the groping mind into misleading forms. On the other side it will not hold itself bound and limited by its knowledge or forbidden by it to proceed to fresh illumination, nor lay too fierce a grasp on truth, even when using it to the full, or tyrannously chain it to its present formulations. This perfect equality of the thinking mind is indispensable because the objective of this progress is the greater light which belongs to a higher plane of spiritual cognizance. This equality is the most delicate and difficult of all, the least practised by the human mind; its perfection is impossible so long as the supramental light does not fall fully on the upward looking mentality. But an increasing will to equality in the intelligence is needed, before that light can work freely upon the mental substance. This too is not an abnegation of the seekings and cosmic purposes of the intelligence, not an indifference or impartial scepticism, nor

yet a stilling of all thought in the silence of the Ineffable. A stilling of the mental thought may be part of the discipline, when the object is to free the mind from its own partial workings, in order that it may become an equal channel of a higher light and knowledge; but there must also be a transformation of the mental substance; otherwise the higher light cannot assume full possession and a compelling shape for the ordered works of the divine consciousness in the human being. The silence of the Ineffable is a truth of divine being, but the Word which proceeds from that silence is also a truth, and it is this Word which has to be given a body in the conscious form of the nature.

But, finally, all this equalisation of the nature is a preparation for the highest spiritual equality to take possession of the whole being and make a pervading atmosphere in which the light, power and joy of the Divine can manifest itself in man amid an increasing fullness. That equality is the eternal equality of Sachchidananda. It is an equality of the infinite being which is self-existent, an equality of the eternal spirit, but it will mould into its own mould the mind heart, will, life, physical being. It is an equality of the infinite spiritual consciousness which will contain and base the blissful flowing and satisfied waves of a divine knowledge. It is an equality of the divine Tapas which will initiate a luminous action of the divine will in all the nature. It is an equality of the divine Ananda which will found the play of a divine universal delight, universal love and an illimitable aesthesis of universal beauty. The ideal equal peace and calm of the Infinite will be the wide ether of our perfected being, but the ideal, equal and perfect action of the Infinite through the nature working on the relations of the universe will be the untroubled outpouring of its power in our being. This is the meaning of equality in the terms of the integral Yoga.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK II

IV

THE VICTORY OF THE DIVINE

THE PERFECT UNION

1 Then are the veils torn which distinguish from each other these manifestations and he will soar up from the world of the passions to the heaven of the One.

2 There are no partitions between ourselves and the Infinite.

3 Men who are sovereignly perfect resemble the earth by the greatness and depth of their wisdom, the heavens by its height and splendour, Space and illimitable Time by its extent and duration.

4 As for those who have risen more high, they make no distinction between cause and effect, and those who, higher still in the eternal cities, dwell in the flowering gardens, know not cause nor effect, both are to them absolutely foreign, for, rapid as the lightning, they have passed the kingdom of Names and qualities and they dwell with the divine Essence.

---

1) Baha-ullah.— 2) Emerson.— 3) Tsu-tse.— 4) Baha-ullah

5 The One is attained when man arrives at ripeness in one of these three states of his spirit, "All is myself," "All is thou," "Thou art the Master, I the ser-
6 vant."—To Him when the sages come, they are satisfied in knowledge, desire passes away from them, they have perfected the self, they enter in on every side into the All who pervades all things and they are united with him for ever.

7 This evolution lasts until we reach the absolute purity of the Being. Then we arrive at divinity. We form a vast oneness. We enjoy an entirety of divine power; we are united in a single love; we are God.

* * *

8 The soul which has reached this state, loses itself and is submerged in the deep sea of Divinity, so that it can say, "God is within me, God is outside me, God is everywhere around me, he replaces all things for me and I know Him only and nothing else."

9 The saint who has arrived at a perfect contemplation, sees the All as one only spirit and his soul loses itself in this spirit, as water is dissolved in water, as fire is united to fire, as air is made one with
10 air.—He sees the one Spirit in all beings and he sees
11 all beings in the one Spirit.—Thus seeing the supreme Spirit equally in all beings and all beings in the supreme Spirit, he, offering his soul in sacrifice, identifies himself with the Being who shines in his own splendour.

12 Knowing the elements, knowing the worlds, knowing all the regions and the spaces, adoring the first-born Word, understanding heaven, earth and air to be only He, knowing that the worlds, discovering that Space and the solar orb are He alone, he sees

5) Ramakrishna.—6) Mundaka Upanishad.— 7) Antoine the Healer.— 8) J. Tauler.—9) Shankaracharya.— 10) Bhagavad Gita. — 11) Manu.— 12) The Upanishad of the Universal Sacrifice.

this supreme Being, he becomes that Being, he is identified in union with Him and completes this vast and fertile web of solemn sacrifice.

* * *

13 Then, accomplished in knowledge, he shakes from him good and evil, and, stainless, reaches that supreme Equality.

14 As the rivers flow into the ocean and lose their name and form, the sage losing name and form disappears into the supreme Spirit and himself becomes
15 that Spirit.—As the floods when they have thrown themselves into the ocean, lose their name and their form and one cannot say of them, "Behold, they are here, they are there," though still they are, so one cannot say of the Perfect when he has entered into the supreme Nirvana, "He is here, he is there," though he is still in existence.

16 The traveller in this valley may seem to be seated in the dust, but in truth he sits upon spiritual heights receiving the eternal favours, drinking the exquisite
17 wine of the spirit. He feels himself to be master of the universe, his "I" floats in power above this gulf and will range across eternity above these infinite vicissitudes. His spirit endeavours to announce and spread harmony. And through endless ages his union with Self and his creation which surrounds him will increase in perfection.

* * *

18 Such is the last good of those who possess knowledge : to become God.

19 The soul bound is man ; free, it is God.

20 Dost thou not know that thou hast become God and art the son of the One?

13) Mundaka Upanishad.— 14) id.— 15) Buddhist Meditations. — 16) Baha-ullah: The Seven Valleys.— 17) Novalis.— 18) Hermes. — 19) Ramakrishna.— 20) Hermes.

A Defence of Indian Culture

(9)

The considerations which have been advanced in the last two chapters, however bare and summary the ground they give, may help by that very simplicity to keep our minds clear as to the central meaning of Indian religion and culture and the significance of its historic evolution. It will be as well to follow at first the same method of abstracting the essence when we proceed to observe the effect of the Indian spiritual ideal on life. To keep ourselves to the central, living, governing things, not to be led away by the confusion of accidents and details, a care the critics of our culture steadily refuse to take, is indispensable for a right view of Indian civilisation. It must be looked at from its heart of abiding principle. Otherwise we shall be likely to find ourselves, like these critics, in a maze without a clue stumbling about among false and partial conclusions. And, first, let me sum up briefly what I have already said as to the governing idea and aim of Indian religion and spirituality and the evolution of the total many-sided form of its religious approach to the spirit.

Indian culture recognises the spirit as the truth of our being and our life as a growth and evolution of the spirit in man. It sees God as the supreme and as the

All and it sees man as a soul and power of the being of God in Nature. The progressive growth of man into self, into God, into spiritual existence by the development of our natural into our divine being is for Indian thinking the significance of life and the aim of human existence. That deeper and more spiritual idea of Nature and of existence is, I may add, though stated in however new and modern a language, the thing towards which a great deal of what is strongest and most potential of fruitful development in recent European thinking already turns with a growing impetus. Whether this turn is a relapse to "barbarism" or the high natural outcome of her own increasing and ripened culture is for Europe to decide ; but always to India that idea of Self, God, Spirit and the moulding of man into that have been the fundamental power of her philosophy, religion, civilisation. The formal turn and the rhythmic lines of effort of this culture have grown through two complete external stages. The first was the early Vedic in which religion took its formal stand on the natural approach of the physical mind of man to the Godhead in the universe, but the initiates guarded the sacrificial fire of a greater spiritual truth behind the form of outward religious worship and conception. The second was the Purano-Tantric in which religion took its outward stand on the deeper approach of man's psycho-physical mind to the Divine in the universe, but a greater initiation opened the way to the most intimate truth and living of the spiritual life in all its profundity and infinite possibility of uttermost sublime experience. A third stage has been long in preparation, its idea often cast out in limited or large, quiet or striking spiritual movements and potent new disciplines and religions, but not successful yet, because the circumstances were adverse and the hour not come, which will call the community of men to live in the greatest light of all and to found their whole life on some fully revealed power and grand uplifting truth of the Spirit. Not until that third en-

larging movement has come into its own,—a thing not so easy as the religious reformer, the purist of the reason or the purist of the spirit constantly imagines and by that too hasty imagination falls short in his endeavour, can Indian civilisation be said to have discharged its mission, to have spoken its last word and be fully *functus officio*, crowned and complete in its office of mediation between the life of man and the spirit.

The past dealings of Indian religion with life must be more particularly judged according to the stages of its progress and in each age of its movement on its own basis. But throughout it has consistently held to two perceptions of great wisdom. First, it saw that the approach to the spirit cannot be sudden, simple and immediate for all individuals or for the community of men, but must come ordinarily or at least at first through a progressive training, an enlarging of the natural life accompanied by an uplifting of all its motives, a growing hold upon it of the higher rational, psychical and ethical leading up to the highest spiritual law. But it saw too at the same time that in order that its greater aim might be fruitful and the character of its culture imperative, there must throughout and at every moment be some kind of insistence on the spiritual motive, which for the mass of men means some kind of religious influence. That was necessary in order that from the beginning some power of the universal inner truth, the real truth of our existence might cast its light or at least its sensible if subtle influence on the natural life of man and lead it to flower naturally, but at the same time with a wise nurturing and cultivation into its own profounder spiritual significance. Therefore Indian culture has worked always by two coordinated, mutually stimulating and always interblended operations. First, it has laboured to lead upward the enlarging life of the individual and the community through the natural to the spiritual existence, and, secondly, it has striven to keep that highest aim be-

fore the mind and throw its influence on each circumstance and action of the human being. The plan of the first aim, in which it comes nearer to the highest ancient culture of mankind in other regions, though in a type and with a motive all its own, has been already described and appreciated; its frame was the synthesis and gradation of the fourfold object of life,—desire and enjoyment, interest, right and law, spiritual liberation,—the fourfold order of society with its economical functions and cultural, ethical and spiritual significances, and the fourfold scale and succession of the stages of life, student, householder, forest recluse and free supersocial man. This frame, these lines of a noble training subsisted in their purity, their fine effectiveness, their grand natural balance of austerity and accommodation, only during the later Vedic and heroic age of the civilisation. But the tradition, the idea, some large effect of the power and some figure of its lines endured throughout the whole period of cultural vigour, however deflected they might have been, however mutilated and complicated for the worse; only in the decline do we get the slow collapse, the degraded and confused mass of conventions which still labours to call itself, but in spite of relics of glamour and beauty, survivals of spiritual suggestion, a residue of the old high training, is far from being the ancient and noble Aryan system. But the turn of the other more direct spiritual operation is of a still greater importance, because it is that which, always surviving, has coloured permanently the Indian mind and life and remained the same, behind whatever change of forms, throughout all the ages of the civilisation.

This second side of the cultural effort, its direct spiritual operation, took the form of an endeavour to cast the whole of life into a religious mould and to multiply means and devices which would help by their insistent suggestion and opportunity and their mass of effect to stamp a Godward tendency on the entire existence. In-

dian culture founded itself on a constant religious conception of life which the individual and the community drank in at every moment by the training and turn of the education, by the atmosphere and social surroundings and by the whole original form and hieratic character of the culture. They felt the near idea of the spiritual existence as the highest ideal, bore always the pressure of the notion of the universe as a manifestation of divine Powers and a movement full of the presence of the Divine, of man himself as a soul in constant relation with God and these divine cosmic Powers, the continued existence of the soul as a pilgrimage and evolution from birth to birth, the human life as a summit of the evolution, every stage of that life as a step in the pilgrimage and every single action as having its importance of fruit whether in future lives or in the worlds beyond the material existence. But Indian religion was not content with the general pressure of these conceptions, with a training, with an atmosphere, with a stamp on the culture. Its persistent effort was to impress the mind at every moment and in each particularity with the religious influence. To do this the more effectively and by a living and practical adaptation, it took its idea of the varying natural capacity of man, *adhikára*, and provided in its system means by which each man high and low, wise and ignorant, exceptional and average might feel in the way suitable to his nature and stage of development this pressure and influence and be allured and helped to grow in his religious and spiritual being. Besides, each part of the human nature and its characteristic turn of action was given a place in the system, surrounded with the spiritual idea and religious influence and provided with steps by which it might rise towards its own spiritual possibility and meaning. And, finally, the highest spiritual significance of life was not only set on the summits of each evolving power of the human nature, but put everywhere indicatively or in symbols behind the whole

system so that its impression might fall in whatever degree on the life and, as far as possible, increase in pervasion and take up the entire culture of the being. This was the aim and to a great extent, considering always the imperfections of our nature and the difficulty of the endeavour, it achieved an unusual measure of success. It has been said that for the Indian the whole of life is a religion. That was true of the ideal and to a certain degree and in a certain sense in the fact and practice; for no step could he take in his inner or outer life without being reminded of a spiritual existence, of something beyond his natural life, beyond the moment in time, beyond his individual ego, exceeding the needs and interests of his vital and physical being. That gave its tone and turn to his thought and action and produced the subtler sensitiveness to the spiritual appeal and the greater readiness to turn to the spiritual effort which are even now distinguishing marks of the Indian temperament. That readiness is in fact what we mean by the spirituality of the Indian people.

The idea of the *adhikara* has to be taken into careful account if we would understand the peculiar character of Indian religion. In most other religious systems we get a high-pitched spiritual call and a difficult ethical standard which is made imperative on all, but to which very evidently only the very few are able to give an adequate response. There are presented to our view for all our picture of life the extremes of the saint and the worldling, the religious and irreligious, good and bad, souls accepted and souls rejected, the sheep and the goats, the saved and the damned: all between is a confusion, a tug of war or an uncertain balance. This too crude and summary classification is the foundation of the Christian system of an eternal heaven and hell,—though the Catholic religion more humanely interposes a precarious chance of purgatory between that happy and this dread alternative. But Indian religion did not go about its work in that summary

fashion. Rather all human beings are portions of the Divine, evolving souls, and sure of an eventual salvation by knowledge, love or works, and all must feel, as the good in them grows, the ultimate touch and call of their highest self, spirit, Divinity. But actually in life there can be drawn a general distinction, not to be ignored, between three principal types which vary in their openness to the religious or spiritual appeal, influence or impulse. And practically this distinction may be said to come to a gradation of three stages of the growing human consciousness—one crude, ill-formed, still outward, still vitally and physically minded; another which is more developed and capable of a stronger and deeper psycho-spiritual experience, a riper make of manhood gifted with a more conscious rational, aesthetic and ethical power of the nature; a third, the most developed of all, is ready for full spirituality, fit to receive the pure highest truth of God and of man's being and to tread the summits of divine experience* To meet the need of the first type or level was provided all that suggestive mass of ceremony, ritual, strict outward rule and injunction, all that pageant of attracting and compelling symbol with which Indian religion is so richly and profusely equipped, forming and indicative things which work upon the mind consciently and subconsciently and prepare it for an entry into the significance of the greater things that lie behind them. And for him too, for the vitally minded being, is all in the religion that calls on man to turn to a divine Power or powers for the satisfaction of his desires and his interests, but subject to the right and the law, the Dharma. For him in the Vedic times the outward ritual sacrifice and at a later period all the religious forms and notions that clustered visibly around the rites and imagery

* The Tantric distinction is the animal man the hero man, the divine man, *pashu*, *vira*, *deva*. It may also be graded according to the three gunas, the tamasic or rajaso-tamasic, the rajasic or sattwo-rajasic, and the sattwic man ready to complete and transcend the scale.

of temple worship, festival and ceremony. These things seem to the developed mind to belong to an ignorant or a half awakened, half ignorant religionism, but they have their truth, their psychic value and are indispensable to this stage of the development of the human being.

The second stage or type starts from these things, but gets behind them and is capable of understanding more clearly and consciently the psychical truths, conceptions of the intelligence, the aesthetic indications, the ethical values and directions which Indian religion took care to place behind its symbols and vivify with them the outward forms of its system. This nobler type can go inward to a more deeply psycho-religious experience, grapple with the difficulties of the relations between the spirit and life, satisfy the rational, aesthetic and ethical nature, lead them upward towards their own highest heights and train the soul and the mind for the full spiritual existence. This ascending type of humanity claims all that large and opulent middle region of philosophic, psycho-spiritual, ethical, aesthetic and emotional religious seeking which is the larger, more significant portion of the wealth of Indian culture. At this stage intervene the philosophical systems, the subtle illumining debates and inquiries of the thinkers, the nobler reaches of devotion, the higher, ampler, austerer ideals of the Dharma, the psychical suggestions and urgings in the religion which draw men by their appeal and promise towards the practice of Yoga. But all these things opened and climbed to the luminous grandeurs of spiritual truth and its practice was kept ready and its means of attainment provided for the third and greatest type of human being, the third loftiest stage of the spiritual evolution. The complete light of spiritual knowledge when it emerges from veil and compromise and goes beyond all symbols and middle significances, the absolute and universal divine love, the beauty of the All-beautiful, the noblest dharma of unity with all beings, universal compassion and benevo-

lence calm and sweet in the perfect purity of the spirit, the upsurge of the psychical being into the spiritual unity or the spiritual ecstasy, these divinest things were the heritage of the human being ready for divinity and their way and call were the supreme significances of Indian religion and Yoga. He reached by them the fruits of his perfect spiritual evolution, an identity with the Self and Spirit, a dwelling in or with God, the divine law of his being, a spiritual universality, communion, transcendence.

But distinctions are lines that can always be overpassed in the infinite complexity of man's nature and there was no sharp and unbridgeable division, only a gradation, since the actuality or potentiality of the three powers coexist in all men. Both the middle and the highest significances were near and present and pervaded the whole system, and the approaches to the highest status were not absolutely denied to any man, in spite of certain prohibitions: but these prohibitions broke down in practice or left a way of escape to the man who felt the call; the call itself was a sign of election. He had only to find the way and the guide. But even in the direct approach the principle of *adhikâra*, differing capacity and varying nature, *swabhâva*, was recognised in subtle ways, which it would be beyond my present purpose to enumerate. One may note as an example the significant Indian idea of the *ishta-devatâ*, the special name, form, idea of the Divinity which each man may choose for worship and communion and follow after according to the attraction in his nature and his capacity of spiritual intelligence. And each of the forms has its outer initial associations and suggestions for the worshipper, its appeal to the intelligence, psychical, aesthetic, emotional power in the nature and its highest spiritual significance which leads through some one truth of the Godhead into the essence of spirituality. One may note too that in the practice of Yoga the disciple has to be led through his nature and according to his

capacity and the spiritual teacher and guide is expected to perceive and take account of the necessary gradations and the individual need and power in his giving of help and guidance. Many things may be objected to in the actual working of this large and flexible system and I shall take some note of them when I have to deal with the weak points or the pejorative side of the culture against which the hostile critic directs with a misleading exaggeration his missiles. But the principle of it and the main lines of the application embody a remarkable wisdom, knowledge and careful observation of human nature and an assured insight into the things of the spirit which none can question who has considered deeply and flexibly these difficult matters or had any close experience of the obstacles and potentialities of our nature in its approach to the concealed spiritual reality.

This carefully graded and complex system of religious development and spiritual evolution was linked on by a process of pervading intimate connection to that general culture of the life of the human being and his powers which must be the first care of every civilisation worth the name. The most delicate and difficult part of this task of human development is concerned with the thinking being of man, his mind of reason and knowledge. No ancient culture of which we have knowledge, not even the Greek, attached more importance to it or spent more effort on its cultivation. The business of the ancient Rishi was not only to know God, but to know the world and life and to reduce it by knowledge to a thing well understood and mastered with which the reason and will of man could deal on assured lines and on a safe basis of wise method and order. The ripe result of this effort was the Shastra. When we speak of the Shastra nowadays, we mean too often only the religio-social system of injunctions of the middle age made sacrosanct by their mythical attribution to Manu, Parasara and other Vedic sages. But in older India Shas-

tra meant any systematised teaching and science; each department of life, each line of activity, each subject of knowledge had its science or Shastra. The attempt was to reduce each to a theoretical and practical order founded on detailed observation, just generalisation, full experience, intuitive, logical and experimental analysis and synthesis, in order to enable man to know always with a just fruitfulness for life and to act with the security of right knowledge. The smallest and the greatest things were examined with equal care and attention and each provided with its art and science. The name was given even to the highest spiritual knowledge whenever it was stated not in a mass of intuitive experience and revelatory knowledge as in the Upanishads, but for intellectual comprehension in system and order,—and in that sense the Gita is able to call its profound spiritual teaching the most secret science, *guhyatamam çâstram*. This high scientific and philosophical spirit was carried by the ancient Indian culture into all its activities. No Indian religion is complete without its outward form of preparatory practice, its supporting philosophy and its Yoga or system of inward practice or art of spiritual living: most even of what seems irrational in it to a first glance, has its philosophical turn and significance. It is this complete understanding and philosophical character which has given religion in India its durable security and immense vitality and enabled it to resist the acid dissolvent power of modern sceptical inquiry; whatever is ill-founded in experience and reason, that power can dissolve, but not the heart and mind of these great teachings. But what we have more especially to observe is that while Indian culture made a distinction between the lower and the higher learning, the knowledge of things and the knowledge of self, it did not put a gulf between them like some religions, but considered the knowledge of the world and things as a preparatory and a leading up to the knowledge of Self and God. All Shas-

tra was put under the sanction of the names of the Rishis, who were in the beginning the teachers not only of spiritual truth and philosophy,—and we may note that all Indian philosophy, even the logic of Nyaya and the atomic theory of the Vaisheshikas, has for its highest crowning note and eventual object spiritual knowledge and liberation,—but of the arts, the social, political and military, the physical and psychic sciences, and every instructor was in his degree respected as a *guru* or *âcharya*, a guide or preceptor of the human spirit. All knowledge was woven into one and led up by degrees to the one highest knowledge.

The whole right practice of life founded on this knowledge was in the view of Indian culture a Dharma, a living according to a just, understanding and right view of self-culture, of the knowledge of things and life and of action in that knowledge. Thus each man and class and kind and species and each activity of soul, mind, life, body has its dharma. But the largest or at least most vitally important part of the Dharma was held to be the culture and ordering of the ethical nature of man. The ethical aspect of life, contrary to the amazingly ignorant observation of a certain type of critics, attracted a quite enormous amount of attention, occupied the greater part of Indian thought and writing not devoted to the things of pure knowledge and of the spirit and was so far pushed that there is no ethical formation or ideal which does not reach in it its highest conception and a certain divine absolutism of ideal practice. Indian thought took for granted,—though there are some remarkable speculations to the contrary,—the ethical nature of man and the ethical law of the world. It considered that man was justified in satisfying his desires, since that is necessary for the satisfaction and expansion of life, but not in obeying the dictates of desire as the law of his being; for in all things there is a greater law, each has not only its side of inte-

rest and desire, but its dharma or rule of right practice, satisfaction, expansion, regulation. The Dharma, then, fixed by the wise in the Shastra is the right thing to observe, the true rule of action. First in the web of Dharma comes the social law; for man's life is only initially for his vital, personal, individual self, but much more imperatively for the community, though most imperatively of all for the greatest Self one in himself and in all beings, for God, for the Spirit. Therefore first the individual must subordinate himself to the communal self, though by no means bound altogether to efface himself in it as the extremists of the communal idea imagine. He must live according to the law of his nature harmonised with the law of his social type and class, for the nation and in a higher reach of his being—this was greatly stressed by the Buddhists—for humanity. Thus living and acting he could learn to transcend the social scale of the Dharma, practise without injuring the basis of life the ideal scale and finally grow into the liberty of the spirit, when rule and duty were not binding because he would then move and act in a highest free and immortal dharma of the divine nature. All these aspects of the Dharma were closely linked up together in a progressive unity. Thus, for an example, each of the four orders had its own social function and ethics, but also an ideal rule for the growth of the pure ethical being, and every man by observing his dharma and turning his action Godwards could grow out of it into the spiritual freedom. But behind all dharma and ethics was put, not only as a safeguard but as a light, a religious sanction, a reminder of the continuity of life and of man's long pilgrimage through many births, a reminder of the Gods and planes beyond and of the Divine, and above it all the vision of a last stage of perfect comprehension and unity and of divine transcendence.

The system of Indian ethics liberalised by the catholicity of the ancient mind did not ban or violently dis-

courage the aesthetic or even the hedonistic being of man in spite of a growing ascetic tendency and a certain high austerity of the summits. The aesthetic satisfactions of all kinds and all grades were an important part of the culture. Poetry, the drama, song, dance, music, the greater and lesser arts were placed under the sanction of the Rishis and were made instruments of the spirit's culture. A just theory held them to be initially the means of a pure aesthetic satisfaction and each was founded on its own basic rule and law, but on that basis and with a perfect fidelity to it still raised up to minister to the intellectual, ethical and religious development of the being. It is notable that the two vast Indian epics have been considered as much as Dharma-shastras as great historico-mythic epic narratives, *itihâsas*. They are, that is to say, noble, vivid and puissant pictures of life, but they utter and breathe throughout their course the law and ideal of a great and high ethical and religious spirit in life and aim in their highest intention at the idea of the Divine and the way of the mounting soul in the action of the world. Indian painting, sculpture and architecture did not refuse service to the aesthetic satisfaction and interpretation of the social, civic and individual life of the human being; these things, as all evidences show, played a great part in their motives of creation, but still their highest work was reserved for the greatest spiritual side of the culture, and throughout we see them seized and suffused with the brooding stress of the Indian mind on the soul, the Godhead, the spiritual, the Infinite. And we have to note too that the aesthetic and hedonistic being was made not only an aid to religion and spirituality and liberally used for that purpose, but even one of the main gates of man's approach to the Spirit. The Vaishnava religion especially is a religion of love and beauty and of the satisfaction of the whole delight-soul of man in God and even the desires and images of the sensuous life were

turned by its vision into figures of a divine soul-experience. Few religions have gone so far as this immense catholicity or carried the whole nature so high in its large puissant and many-sided approach to the spiritual and the infinite.

Finally, there is the most outwardly vital life of man, his ordinary dynamic, political, economical and social being. This too Indian culture took strenuously in hand and subjected its whole body to the pressure of its own ideals and conceptions. Its method was to build up great shastras of social living, duty and enjoyment, military and political rule and conduct and economical well-being. These were directed on one side to success, expansion, opulence and the right art and relation of these activities, but on those motives, demanded by the very nature of the vital man and his action, was imposed the law of the Dharma, a stringent social and ethical ideal and rule—thus the whole life of the king as the head of power and responsibility was regulated by it in its every hour and function,—and the constant reminder of religious duty. In latter times a Machiavellian principle of statecraft, that which has been always and is still pursued by governments and diplomats, encroached on this nobler system, but in the best age of Indian thought this depravation was condemned as a temporarily effective, but lesser, ignoble and inferior way of policy. The great rule of the culture was that the higher a man's position and power, the larger the scope of his function and influence of his acts and example, the greater should be the call on him of the Dharma. The whole law and custom of society was placed under the sanction of the Rishis and the gods, protected from the violence of the great and powerful, given a socio-religious character and the king himself charged to live and rule as the guardian and servant of the Dharma with only an executive power over the community which was valid so long as he observed with fidelity the Law. And as this

vital aspect of life is the one which most easily draws us outward and away from the inner self and the diviner aim of living, it was the most strenuously linked up at every point with the religious idea in the way the vital man can best understand, in the Vedic times by the constant reminder of the sacrifice behind every social and civic act, at a later period by religious rites, ceremonies, worship, the calling in of the gods, the insistence on the subsequent results of a supraterrestrial aim of works. So great was this preoccupation, that while in the spiritual and intellectual and other spheres a considerable or a complete liberty was allowed to speculation, action, creation, here the tendency was to impose a rigorous law and authority, a tendency which in the end became greatly exaggerated and prevented the expansion of the society into new forms more suitable for the need of the spirit of the age, the Yugadharma. A door of liberty was opened to the community by the provision of an automatic permission to changed custom and to the individual in the adoption of the religious life with its own higher discipline or freedom outside the ordinary social weft of binding rule and injunction. A rigid observation and discipline of the social law, a larger nobler discipline and freer self-culture of the ideal side of the Dharma, a wide freedom of the religious and spiritual life became the three powers of the system. The steps of the expanding human spirit mounted through these powers to its perfection.

Thus the whole general character of the application of Indian ideals to life became throughout of this one texture, the constant, subtly graded, subtly harmonised preparation of the soul of man for its spiritual being. First, the regulated satisfaction of the primary natural being of man subjected to the law of the Dharma and the ethical idea and besieged at every moment by the suggestions of religion, a religion at first appealing to his more outward undeveloped mind, but in each of its outward symbols

and circumstances opening to a profounder significance, armed with the indication of a profoundest spiritual and ideal meaning as its justification. Then, the higher steps of the developed reason and psychical, ethical and aesthetic powers closely interwoven and raised by a similar opening beyond themselves to their own heights of spiritual direction and potentiality. Finally, each of these growing powers in man was made on its own line of approach a gateway into his divine and spiritual being. Thus we may observe that there was created a Yoga of knowledge for the self-exceeding of the thinking intellectual man, a Yoga of works for the self-exceeding of the active, dynamic and ethical man, a Yoga of love and bhakti for the self-exceeding of the emotional, aesthetic, hedonistic man, by which each arrived to perfection through a self-ward, spiritual, God-ward direction of his own special power, as too a Yoga of self-exceeding through the power of the psychical being and even through the power of the life in the body,—Yogas which could be practised in separation or with some kind of synthesis. But all these ways of self-exceeding led to a highest self-becoming. To become one with universal being and all existences, one with the self and spirit, united with God completed the human evolution, built the final step of man's self-culture.

The Future Poetry

RECENT ENGLISH POETRY

(4)

The inspiring spirit and shaping substance of this new poetry, that which gives it its peculiar turn, raises the power of its style to the intuitive closeness or directness and presses on it to bring in another law of its movement, has been indicated to some extent in the core of its meaning, but it is necessary to dwell on it more perusingly, that we may get a closer glimpse of the things towards which we are moving. The change that is coming or at least striving to come, might be described on the surface as a great and subtle deepening and enlarging of the thought-mind in the race and a new profounder, closer, more intimate way of seeing, feeling, appreciating, interpreting life and Nature and existence. The thought of the middle and even the later nineteenth century was wide in its way, especially in its range and breadth of surface or in comparison with the narrower thought of the preceding ages, but it was acute rather than profound, superficial even in its attempt at penetration. It sought for its food over a great country, but it did not wing high in the breadth of the altitudes or plunge down into the largeness of the depths. Perhaps the distinction is best marked by that significant movement of philosophic thou-

ght which now repelled by these limitations rejects the supremacy of the intellect and seeks for the secret of things in the intuition, in the inmost suggestions of life, in the innate will and principle of action and points more or less obscurely through these things to a spirit or self or nameless somewhat superconscient to or at least greater than our intellectual mind and reason. The nineteenth century was intellectual, not intuitive, critical rather than creative, or creative mostly by the constructive force of the critical mind,—critically constructive, we may then say, rather than creative by any direct insight and interpretation,—curiously observative of the phenomenon of life and Nature, concerned with many interests, patient, accurate and analytic in its method of scrutiny, occupied by a stress of many problems, moved by strong human and democratic sympathies, attracted by intellectual ideals, but mechanical and outward in stress and rather curious and inventive than deep or fine in its aesthetic feeling. It has looked much at the body and life and active idea, but little at the deeper soul and spirit of things. Poetry has been affected by the turn of the human mind in this age; it has been brilliant, curious, careful, inventive, interested and interesting, moving over a great range of subjects, closely observative and even sometimes analytical, or elaborately aesthetic, or expressive of some intellectual idealism, but without much height of wing or force from the depths or strong or fine spiritual suggestion. Or there has been only some occasional suggestion or isolated foretaste of these things. There has been much stress of thought, but not much deeply moved or spontaneous greatness of creation.

The mind and soul of the race is now moving forward on the basis of what it has gained by a century of intellectual stir and activity, towards a profounder mood and a more internal force of thought and life. The intellectual way of looking at things is being gradually trans-

cended or is raising itself to a power beyond itself; it is moving through the observing mind and reflective reason towards an intimate self-experience, from thought to vision, from intellectual experiment to intuitive experience, from life and Nature as observed by the eye of the intellect in their appearance to life and Nature as seen and felt by the soul in their spirit and reality. Mankind is still engaged in thinking and searching with an immense stress of mental power, but it is now once more in search of its soul and of the spirit and deeper truth of things, although in a way very different from that of its past cultural ages and on the whole with a greater power and subtlety of the mind, though not as yet, but that too seems predestined to come, with a greater power of the spirit. It is, to return to a phrase already used, in search of our immost and attempting already to find, though it has not yet altogether found, our inmost way of its sense, vision, idea, expression. This change, reflected in the poetry of the time is not an abrupt turn or a casting away of the immediate past from which it was born, but a rapid development of new view-points, a shedding of restrictions and limitations and husks and externalities, a transformation by the entrance of a new force of the soul into possession of the gains of the intellectual age and a swift completion and filling of them out in a new flood of light and an at once nearer and more extended sense of their meaning. The whole view and sense of existence has deepened into a greater subjectivity. For the subjectivity of the nineteenth century was a matter of the temperament, an activity of the strongly marked psychological individuality turned upon things held under the lens as an object of the intelligence; but now there are coming a universal subjectivity of the whole spirit, an attempt towards closeness and identity, a greater community of the individual with the universal soul and mind. The wider interest in Man has not lessened in breadth, but it is changing its character.

More strenuous than before, it is less concentrated on his outer life and creation, and even where it deals with them, it opens more understandingly to his future and to his inner possibilities, to the psychological and the spiritual sense of his past, to the deeper significance of his present, to his self-creation. The profounder ranges of his being are now sounded and there is an initial feeling and even some actual seeing of the greater individual and the communal or universal self of our kind. Nature is seen more in her hidden suggestions and soul meanings and in the finer impressions by which we enter into them and establish with her a spiritual relation or identity. The things that lie behind the material world are almost for the first time being touched and seen with a close and revealing intimacy. The communion of the human soul with the Divine is becoming once more a subject of thought and utterance, not now limited to the old religious and personal form, but enlightened by a sense of the Infinite and Eternal which has arisen from and vivified the larger cosmic sense for which the thinking and discovery of the last century was a training. This change amounts to a revolution of the whole attitude of man towards existence, but it is commencing by an extension of the intellectual stress and a consequent breaking down of its bounds. A self-exceeding of the intellect and a growth of man into some first freedom and power of an intuitive mentality supported by the liberated intelligence is in its initial travail of new birth. These things have not all arrived, but they are on the way and the first waves of the surge have already broken over the dry beaches of the age of reason.

This considerable change was intellectually anticipated and to some extent prepared in the last century itself by a strain, a little thin in body, but high and continuous, of strenuous intellectuality which strove to rise beyond the level of the ordinary thought of the time to

the full height and power of what the intellect of the race could then think out or create in the light of the inheritance of our ages. A small number of writers—in the English language Emerson, Carlyle, Ruskin are the best known among these names,—build for us a bridge of transition from the intellectual transcendentalism of the earlier nineteenth century across a subsequent low-lying scientific, utilitarian, externalised intellectualism, as if from bank to bank across morass or flood, over to the age now beginning to come in towards us. But in the region of poetic thought and creation Whitman was the one prophetic mind which consciously and largely foresaw and prepared the paths and had some sense of that to which they are leading. He belongs to the largest mind of the nineteenth century by the stress and energy of his intellectual seeking, by his emphasis on man and life and Nature, by his idea of the cosmic and universal, his broad spaces and surfaces, by his democratic enthusiasm, by his eye fixed on the future, by his intellectual reconciling vision at once of the greatness of the individual and the community of mankind, by his nationalism and internationalism, by his gospel of comradeship and fraternity in our common average manhood, by almost all in fact of the immense mass of ideas which form the connecting tissue of his work. But he brings into them an element which gives them another potency and meaning and restores something which in most of the literature of the time tended to be overcast and sicklied over by an excessive intellectual tendency more leaned to observe life than strong and swift to live it and which in the practicality of the time was caught up from its healthful soul of nature and converted into a huge grinding mechanism. He has the intimate pulse and power of life vibrating in all he utters, an almost primitive force of vitality, delivered from the enormous mechanical beat of the time by a robust closeness to the very spirit of life,—that closeness he has more

than any other poet since Shakespeare,—and ennobled by a lifting up of its earthly vigour into a broad and full intellectual freedom. Thought leads and all is made subject and object and substance of a free and a powerful thinking, but this insistence of thought is made one with the pulse of life and the grave reflective pallor and want of blood of an overburdened intellectualism is healed by that vigorous union. Whitman writes with a conscious sense of his high function as a poet, a clear self-conception and consistent idea of what he has to cast into speech,—

> One's-self I sing a simple separate person
> Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En Masse...
> Of Life immense in passion, pulse and power,
> Cheerful, for freest action formed under the laws divine,
> The Modern Man I sing.

No other writer of the time has had this large and definite consciousness of the work of a modern poet as a representative voice of his age, this inspiring vital sentiment of the nation conceived as a myriad-souled pioneer of human progress, of mankind, of universal Nature, of the vast web of a universal thought and action. His creation, triumphing over all defect and shortcoming, draws from it a unique broadness of view, vitality of force and sky-wide atmosphere of greatness.

But beyond this representation of the largest thought and life and broadest turn to the future possible to his age, there is something else which arises from it all and carries us forward towards what is now opening to man around or above, towards a vision of new reaches and a profounder interpretation of existence. Whitman by the intensity of his intellectual and vital dwelling on the things he saw and expressed, arrives at some first profound sense of the greater self of the individual, of the greater self in the community of the race and in all its immense past action opening down through the broadening eager present to an

immenser future, of the greater self of Nature and of the eternal, the divine Self and Spirit of existence who broods over these things, who awaits them and in whom they come to the sense of their oneness. That which the old Indian seers called the *mahân âtmâ*, the Great Self, the Great Spirit, which is seen through the vast strain of the cosmic thought and the cosmic life,—the French poets, influenced in their form and substance by Whitman have seized on this element with the clear discernment and intellectual precision and lucidity of the Latin mind and given it the name of unanimism,—is the subject of some of his highest strains. He gets to it repeatedly through his vision of the past opening to the ideal future, the organic universal movement of bygone nations and ages and the labour and creation of the present and some nobler coming turn to a freedom of unified completion,—

> The journey done, the journeyman come home.
> And man and art with Nature fused again...
> The Almighty leader now for once has signalled with his wand.

And some part of his work, as in the *Passage to India*, opens out even into a fuller and profounder sense of its meaning. He sees it here as a new voyage of the human spirit,—"O farther sail!

> Sail forth, steer for the deep waters only...
> For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go,
> And we will risk the ship ourselves and all...
> O daring joy, but safe! are they not all the seas of God?

And with a singularly clear first seeing of the ideal goal and the ideal way of the conversion of the intellectual and vital into the spiritual self, he calls the spirit of man to the adventure.

> The circumnavigation of the world begin,
> Of man, the voyage of his mind's return,
> To reason's early paradise,
> Back, back to wisdom's birth, to innocent intuitions,
> Again with fair creation,—

He casts forward too the ideal heart of this wider movement of man into the sense of the divine unity which is its completion, brings out the divinity of the soul in man and its kinship to the divinity of the Eternal,—

O Thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them,
Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving,...
How should I think, how breathe a single breath, how speak, if out of myself
I could not launch to those superior universes?
Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee, O soul, O actual Me,
And, lo, thou gently masterest the orbs.
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of space,—

and he foresees the coming of that kindship of God and man to conscious fruition in oneness,

Greater than stars or suns,
Bounding, O soul, thou journeyest forth:
What love than thine and ours could wider amplify?
What aspirations, wishes outvie thine and ours, O soul?
What dreams of the ideal? what plans of purity, perfection, strength?
What cheerful willingness for others' sake to give up all?
For others' sake to suffer all?
Reckoning ahead, O soul, when thou, the time achieved,..
Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest, the aim attained,
As filled with friendship, love complete, the Elder Brother found,
The Younger melts in fondness in his arms,

These passages—one of the seers of old time reborn in ours might so have expressed himself in a modern and intellectualised language,—send forward an arclight of prophetic expression on what is at the very heart of the new movement of humanity. It is in some degree an indication of that which the twentieth century is slowly turning

to lay hold of, to develop and to make its own in a closer actuality of insight and experience.

The idea in these and cognate passages anticipates the new age, but the language and method are still that of the poetic intellect straining to some fullest power of its intelligence and speech-force, and the thought and writing of those who follow Whitman, like the French "unanimist" poets, bear the same character. At the centre of English poetry, in England itself, we have found another turn of intuitive speech which is more native to that closer actuality of experience for which we seek, a turn and power brought about perhaps by the greater fire of poetic genius and imagination, the special gift of the Anglo-Celtic mind, which leaps at once to the forceful, native, instinctive energy of poetic expression of the thing it has to say. The full idea of that thing, the large and clearly conceived substance of thought and vision which should fill this mould of intuitive utterance, we do not get in any considerable degree or range,—again perhaps because of the inferior turn for large and straight thinking on the great scale, a full-orbed thinking with a sustained and total conception, which is the defect of the English mind, —but we have constant partial intuitions in detail and a treatment of life and thought and nature which presses towards the greater coming significance. That is as yet only one strain of recent poetry, but it is the most powerful and original and turns sometimes almost with a full face towards the future. These are strong touches only, but they give already some impression and mould of the thing that has to be, the ultimate creation. A new intuitive interpretation of the soul and mind of man, of the soul and mind in Nature, a thought which casts its fathom beyond the passion of life and the clarity of the intelligence and starts sounding a suggestion of the hidden and the infinite in all it touches is the shaping power and the mode of this utterance.

The citations I have already given to illustrate the new rhythm and language indicate also this power and thought-turn in the substance. A few more citations from the same poets may help to bring it out with more precision. The early and greater poetry of Phillips has much of this stamp,—afterwards he unhappily turned to a more outward dramatic motive which was not the true and original bent of his genius, but even there his best is that which prolongs the high beauty of his first inspiration. He has no great conscious range of poetical thinking, but all the more remarkable is the power with which this new influence comes out in what he can give us. We note a new treatment of life and human emotion. The love of Idas for Marpessa is not satisfied with the old forms of passion and feeling and imaginative idealism, there are here other notes which carry the individual emotion out of itself and strive to cast it into unity with the life of Nature and the whole past life and love of humanity and the eternal continuity of passion and seeking and all the suggestion of the Infinite. The very passion for physical beauty takes on this almost mystic character; it is the passion for a body

> packed with sweet
> Of all this world, that cup of brimming June.
> That jar of violet wine set in the air,
> That palest rose sweet in the night of life.

But, says Idas,

> Not for this only do I love thee, but
> Because Infinity upon thee broods,
> And thou art full of whispers and of shadows.
> Thou meanest what the sea has striven to say
> So long, and yearned up to the cliffs to tell:
> Thou art what all the winds have uttered not,
> What the still night suggesteth to the heart.
> Thy voice is like to music heard ere birth,
> Some spirit lute touched on a spirit sea;
> Thy face remembered is from other worlds.
> It has been died for though I know not where,
> It has been sung of though I know not when.
> I am aware of other times and lands,
> Of births far back, of lives in many stars.

Here we have the reconciliation, already suggested by Whitman, of the full power and meaning of the individual with the full power and meaning of the universal, eternal and infinite, but it is concentrated and brought to bear on a single feeling for its enlargement with a great power of intuitive and revealing suggestion. This enlarging of the particular to meet and become one with the universal and infinite—Tennyson's knowing of what God and man is from a deep and intimate perception of all that is meant by Nature in a single little flower in the crannies—is a very characteristic and indicative feature of this new poetry.

The same turn emerges in a more indirect and subtle, but not less significant way of treatment even in lines which apparently seek only to concentrate for the thought the essence of a common human idea and emotion. When the poet speaks of

> Beautiful friendship tried by sun and wind,
> Durable from the daily dust of life,

or of Marpessa's maternal human longing,

> And he shall give me passionate children, not
> Some radiant god that will despise me quite,
> But clambering limbs and little hearts that err,

the thought in itself is not uncommon, but what makes it uncommon is the turn of the utterance which by an intuitive pressure towards some deeper significance of the personal thought and emotion carries it beyond the personality of the idea and feeling into a suggestion of profound universality, a rhythm and light of some entire vibration from the depths of life caught up and held by a human self-knowledge. The same force of suggestion emerges in the treatment of Nature, whether it takes the form of an intensity of sensation,

> the moment deep
> When we are conscious of the secret dawn
> Amidst the darkness that we feel is green,

or passes through that intensity to the sense of the very soul and emotion of what seems to us in less seeing moods an inconscient and inanimate Nature, as in the

> trees
> Motionless in an ecstasy of rain.

Meredith with his greater force of thinking gives us the clear significance of what is here only a powerful indication, a seeing identity of the soul of man with the hidden

soul in earth-nature.

I neighbour the invisible
So close that my consent
Is only asked for spirits masked
To leap from trees and flowers.
And this because with them I dwell
In thought, while calmly bent
To read the lines dear earth designs
Shall speak her life on ours.

And the same turn emerges too in direct thought on the large aspects of life, as in such a phrase as

Lonely antagonist of destiny.

or that which describes,

The listless ripple of oblivion,

lines which give us by some deep suggestion to the spiritual sight a whole abiding soul aspect of man and the universe in a single revealing expression. The effort of poetry of this kind of inspiration may be defined by adapting another expression of Meredith's,

To spell the letters of the sky and read
A reflex upon earth else meaningless.

And the fullness of that which it points to beyond itself, is a movement to unite the life of the earth, not lessened, not denied, not cast away, but accepted, with its own hidden spiritual reality, the one crucial movement necessary for man before he can reach that perfection which the race shall have on its heights, when

The vile plucked out of them, the unlovely slain,
Not forfeiting the beast with which they are crossed,
To stature of the Gods they shall attain.
They shall uplift their earth to meet her Lord.
Themselves the attuning chord.

This is in substance the same strain that arises finally from the more puissant voice of Whitman, but it has if a less forceful, a profounder touch,—a more delicate, intimate and spiritual closeness of seeing, experience and utterance is its charm and distinction.

The indications that we get in these and other English poets opens to a clearer totality in the two great Irish voices. They have, helped by the strand of a spiritual lucidity of thought in the finer Celtic mind, a sustained and conscious idea of the thing that is most inwardly stirring them to utterance. That shapes into a singular light, delicacy and beauty the whole of Yeats' poetry. Here I must be content to note three of its more distinc-

tive features, the remarkable interweaving into one, whether against a background of Irish tradition and legend or by a directer thought, of the earthly life of man with the unseen psychical life which, if we could only see it, as we can when we go back from the frontage of things into the inner soul-spaces, presses upon the earth-life and supports it, so that at times our world seems only its detached projection; the reading through the signs of life of the brighter letters of an ideal and eternal Beauty; the insistence, even when touching exclusively our external life, on the suggestion of finer soul-values which exceed its material meanings. The poetry of A. E. is still more remarkable. What the others suggest or give us in more or less luminous glimpses, he casts into concentrated expression from a nearer spiritual knowledge,—as when he strikes out in a brief verse the living spiritual perception of the universal and infinite source of love,—

> We bade adieu to love the old,
> We heard another lover then,
> Whose forms are myriad and untold,
> Sigh to us from the hearts of men.

He lives on the spiritual plane to which so much of this poetry is an indistinct or a less distinct aspiration, and his whole self-expression is bathed, perhaps rendered sometimes a little remote and unseizable by its immergence in an unusual light, the light of the spirit breaking through the veils of the intelligence in which it has to find its means of speech. This is not the frank marriage and close unity of the earth and heavens of which Whitman and Meredith speak, but a rare, high and exclusive pinnacle of the soul's greater sight. The rest of this side of recent poetry is a climbing or pointing up from the earth-levels to the heights of Truth; but from one region of those loftiest elevations this sight looks down and opens its eye of light on the life of man and the cycles of the universe.

Karma, Will and Consequence

Will, Karma and consequence are the three steps of the Energy which moves the universe. But Karma and consequence are only the outcome of will or even its forms; will gives them their value and without it they would be nothing, nothing at least to man the thinking and growing soul and nothing, it may be hazarded, to the Spirit of which he is a flame and power as well as a creature. The thing we first see or imagine we see, when we look at the outward mechanism of the universe, is energy and its works, action and consequence. But by itself and without the light of an inhabiting will this working is only a huge soulless mechanism, a loud rattling of crank and pulley, a monstrous pounding of spring and piston. It is the presence of the spirit and its will that gives a meaning to the action and it is the value of the result to the soul that gives its profound importance to all great or little consequence. It would not matter to any one or anything, not even to the cosmos itself, though this universal stir came to an end tomorrow or had never been created, if these suns and systems were not the field of a consciousness which there rolls out its powers, evolves its works, enjoys its creations, plans and exults in its immense aims and sequences. Spirit and consciousness and power of the spirit and Ananda are the meaning of existence. Take away this spiritual significance and this world of energy becomes a mechanical fortuity or a blind and rigid Maya.

The life of man is a portion of this vast significance, and since it is in him that on this material plane it comes out in its full capacity of meaning, a very important and central portion. The Will in the universe works up to him

in the creative steps of its energy and makes of his nature a chariot of the gods on which it stands within the action, looks out on its works from the very front and no longer only from behind or above Nature's doings and moves on to the ultimate consequences and the complete evolution of its purpose. The will of man is the agent of the Eternal for the unveiling of his secret meaning in the material creation. Man's mind takes up all the knots of the problem and works them out by the power of the spirit within him and brings them nearer to the full force and degree of their individual and cosmic solutions. This is his dignity and his greatness and he needs no other to justify and give a perfect value to his birth and his acts and his passing and his return to birth, a return which must be—and what is there in it to grieve at or shun?—until the work of the Eternal in him is perfected or the cycles rest from the glory of their labour.

This view of the world is the standpoint from which we must regard the question of man's conscious will and its dealings with life, because then all things fall into their natural place and we escape from exaggerated and depreciated estimates. Man is a conscious soul of the Eternal, one with the Infinite in his inmost being, and the spirit within him is master of his acts and his fate. For fate is *fatum*, the form of act and creation declared beforehand by a Will within him and the universe as the thing to be done, to be achieved, to be worked out and made the self-expression of his spiritual being. Fate is *adrishta*, the unseen thing which the Spirit holds hidden in the plan of its vision, the consequence concealed from the travailing mind absorbed in the work of the moment by the curtained nearnesses or the far invisible reaches of Time. Fate is *niyati*, the thing willed and executed by Nature, who is power of the Spirit, according to a fixed law of its self-governed workings. But since this Eternal and Infinite, our greater Self, is also the universal being, man in the universe is inseparably one with all the rest of existence, not a soul working out its isolated spiritual destiny and nature while all other beings are nothing but his environment and means or obstacles,—that they are indeed, but they are much more to him,—which is the impression cast on the mind by the thought

or the religions that emphasise too much his centre of individuality or his aim of personal salvation. He is not indeed solely a portion of the universe. He is an eternal soul which, though limited for certain temporal purposes in its outward consciousness, has to learn to enlarge itself out of those limits, to find and make effective its unity with the eternal Spirit who informs and transcends the universe. That spiritual necessity is the truth behind the religious dogma.

But also he is one in God and one in Nature with all beings in the cosmos, touches and includes all other souls, is linked to all powers of the Being that are manifest in this cosmic working. His soul, thought, will, action are intimate with the universal soul, thought, will and action. All acts on and through him and mixes with him and he acts too on all and his thought and will and life mix in and become a power of the one common life. His mind is a form and action of the universal mind. His call is not to be busy and concerned only with his own growth and perfection and natural destiny or spiritual freedom. A larger action too claims him. He is a worker in a universal work; the life of others is his life; world-consequence and the world-evolution are also his business. For he is one self with the selves of all other beings.

The dealings of our will with Karma and consequence have to be envisaged in the light of this double truth of man's individuality and man's universality. And seen in this light the question of the freedom of our individual will takes on another appearance. It becomes clear enough that our ego, our outward personality can be only a minor, a temporal, an instrumental form of our being. The will of the ego, the outward, the mentally personal will which acts in the movement cannot be free in any complete or separate sense of freedom. It cannot so be free because it is bound by its partial and limited nature and it is shaped by the mechanism of its ignorance, and again because it is an individualised form and working of the universal energy and at every moment impinged upon and modified and largely shaped by environing wills and powers and forces. But also it cannot so be free because of the greater Soul in us behind the mind which deter-

mines works and consequence according to the will in its being and the nature, its power of being, not in the moment but in the long continuities of Time, not solely by the immediate adaptation to the environment, but by its own previous intention which has shaped the environment and already predetermined in great part the present act and consequence. The inward will in the being which is in intimacy with that Power is the real will and this outward thing only an instrumentation for a working out from moment to moment, a spring of the karmic mechanism. That inward will we find when we get back to it, to be a free will, not armoured in a separate liberty, but free in harmony with the freedom of the Spirit guiding and compelling Nature in all souls and in all happenings. This thing our outward mind cannot see easily because the practical truth which it feels is the energy of Nature at once working on us from without and forming too our action from within and reacting upon herself by the mental will, her instrument, to continue her self-shaping for farther Karma and farther consequence. Yet are we aware of a self and the presence of this self imposes on our minds the idea of some one who wills, someone who shapes even the nature and is responsible for consequence.

To understand one must cease to dwell exclusively on the act and will of the moment and its immediate consequences. Our present will and personality are bound by many things, by our physical and vital heredity, by a past creation of our mental nature, by environmental forces, by limitation, by ignorance. But our soul behind is greater and older than our present personality. The soul is not the result of our heredity, but has prepared by its own action and affinities this heredity. It has drawn around it these environmental forces by past karma and consequence. It has created in other lives the mental nature of which now it makes use. That ancient soul of long standing, sempiternal in being, *purushah purânah sanâtanah*, has accepted the outward limitation, the outward ignorance as a means of figuring out in a restriction of action from moment to moment the significance of its infinity and the sequence of its works of power. To live in this knowledge is not to take away the value and potency of the moment's will and act, but to give it an immensely

increased meaning and importance. Then each moment becomes full of things infinite and can be seen taking up the work of a past eternity and shaping the work of a future eternity. Our every thought, will, action carries with it its power of future self-determination and is too a help or a hindrance for the spiritual evolution of those around us and a force in the universal working. For the soul in us takes in the influences it receives from others for its own self-determination and gives out influences which the soul in them uses for their growth and experience. Our individual life becomes an immensely greater thing in itself and is convinced too of an abiding unity with the march of the universe.

And karma and consequence also get a wider meaning. At present we fix too much on the particular will and act of the moment and a particular consequence in a given time. But the particular only receives its value by all of which it is a part, all from which it comes, all to which it moves. We fix too much also on the externalities of karma and consequence, this good or that bad action and result of action. But the real consequence which the soul is after is a growth in the manifestation of its being, an enlarging of its range and action of power, its comprehension of delight of being, its delight of creation and self-creation, and not only its own but the same things in others with which its greater becoming and joy are one. Karma and consequence draw their meaning from their value to the soul; they are steps by which it moves towards the perfection of its manifested nature. And even when this object is won, our action need not cease, for it will keep its value and be a greater force of help for all these others with whom in self we are one. Nor can it be said that it will have no self-value to the soul grown aware of freedom and infinity; for who shall persuade me that my infinity can only be an eternal full stop, an endless repose, an infinite cessation? Much rather should infinity be eternally capable of an infinite self-expression.

अर्

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th November 1919

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA..... Aurobindo Ghose
The Fullness of Spiritual Action

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... ..... A. G.
Ch. LX. The Way of Equality

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE (10)

THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... ..... Paul Richard
The Perfect Peace

THE FUTURE POETRY
New Birth or Decadence

REBIRTH AND KARMA

Essays on the Gita

THE FULLNESS OF SPIRITUAL ACTION

We have now come to a point at which one question alone remains for solution. This is the question of the nature itself and how it is to effect its evolution from the lower to the higher being. The difficulty is one which is implied in certain of the positions laid down in the Gita, but we have to bring it out into greater prominence than it gets there and to give it a clearer shape and body. The Gita proceeded on a psychological knowledge which was familiar to the mind of the time, and in the steps of its thought it was well able to abridge its transitions, to take much for granted and to leave many things unexpressed which we need to be put strongly into light and made precise to us. The teaching sets out at the beginning to propose a new source and level for our action in the world; for the object was not to propose a way of liberation, *moksha*, but to show the compatibility both of the effort towards liberation and of spiritual freedom itself when once attained with action. Incidentally, a synthetic Yoga or psychological method of arriving at spiritual liberation and perfection has been developed and certain metaphysical affirmations put forward, certain truths of our being and nature, on which this Yoga relies for its validity. But the original preoccupation remains throughout, the original difficulty and problem, how Arjuna, dislodged by a strong revulsion

of thought and feeling from the established natural and rational foundations and standards of action, is to find a new and satisfying spiritual standard of works, or how he is to live in the truth of the Spirit, since he can no longer act according to the partial truths of the customary reason and nature of man, and yet to do his appointed work on the battle-field of Kurukshetra. To live inwardly in the impersonal and universal Self and yet do the works of Nature, and, more largely, to be one with God within and to do the will of God expressed through a certain height of the personal nature in the world, is the Gita's solution.

Let us see what this comes to in the most plain and positive terms and from the standpoint of the problem proposed by Arjuna's difficulty. His duty as a human being and a social being is the discharge of his function as a Kshatriya without which the order of society cannot be maintained, the ideals of the race vindicated and the order of justice upheld against the violence of injustice: but the appeal to duty by itself can no longer satisfy the protagonist of the struggle because in the terrible actuality it presents itself in harsh, perplexed and ambiguous terms. The discharge of his social duty has suddenly come to him to mean sin and sorrow and suffering, the customary means of maintaining social order and justice is found itself to lead to a great disorder and chaos. The rule of just claim and interest, that which we call rights, will not serve here; because the kingdom he will win for himself, his brothers and his side in the war, though rightly theirs and though its assertion is an overthrowing of Asuric tyranny and a vindication of justice, will come by bloodshed and be possessed in sorrow and with the stain of sin and a great harm done to society. Nor will the rule of Dharma, of ethical right, serve any better, because there is here a conflict of dharmas. A new and greater rule is needed to solve the problem. To withdraw from the action, to take

refuge in a saintly inaction and leave the imperfect world with its unsatisfying methods and motives to take care of itself is one solution ; but that is precisely what the Teacher wishes to forbid. Action is demanded of man by the Master of the world who is the master of all his works and whose world proceeds by action, whether done by the ego and in the ignorance or partial light of his reason or initiated from a higher and more largely seeing principle. To abandon this particular action as evil is another solution. But to this solution too the Teacher refuses his sanction ; for in fact Arjuna's abstention would work a much greater evil, it would mean, if it had any effect at all, the triumph of wrong and injustice and the rejection of his own mission as an instrument of the divine workings. A violent crisis in the destinies of the race has been brought about not by any blind working of forces or solely by the confused clash of human ideas, interests, desires, egoisms, but by a Will which is behind these outward appearances. This truth Arjuna must be brought to see and to learn to act impersonally as the instrument not of his personal desires and shrinkings, but of a greater divine and universal Will. He must act impersonally and universally in a union of his soul with the Divine, *yukta*, in Yoga with his own supreme Self and the informing Self of the universe.

But this truth cannot be rightly seen, nor this action rightly undertaken, so long as man is governed by the ego, even by the half-enlightened unillumined sattwic ego of the reason. For this is a truth of the spirit and an action from a spiritual basis. A spiritual knowledge is the first indispensable requisite for this way of works. First, therefore, the Teacher points out that all these ideas and feelings which trouble, perplex and baffle Arjuna, joy and sorrow, desire and sin, the governing of action by the outward results of action, the shrinking from what seems terrible and formidable in the dealings of the universal

spirit with the world, are things born of the subjection of the soul to a natural ignorance, they are the way of working of a lower nature in which the soul is involved and in which it sees itself as a separate ego returning to the action of things upon it these dual reactions, pain and pleasure, virtue and sin, right and wrong, good and evil fortune and happening. These reactions create a tangled web of perplexity in which the soul is lost and bewildered by its own ignorance and has to guide itself by partial and imperfect solutions which serve ordinarily with a stumbling sufficiency in the normal life, but fail when brought to the test of a wider seeing of things. To understand the real sense of existence and action one must get behind all these things into the self and arrive at self-knowledge as the basis of a right world-knowledge. The first requisite is to get rid of desire and passion and troubling emotion and arrive at a dispassionate and impersonal calm and equality; for only in that clear and lucid atmosphere free from all storm and cloud can self-knowledge come and the law of the world and the truth of Nature be seen steadily, comprehensively, with an undisturbed and all-embracing vision. For behind this little personal self which allows itself to be a plaything of Nature and sees itself as a thing figured in her creations, there is an impersonal self one in all which sees and knows all, is an equal, impartial, universal presence and support of things and allows Nature to work out the becoming of things in their own type, *swabhâva*, but does not involve and lose itself in the action. To draw back from the ego and the troubled personality into this calm, equal, eternal, universal, impersonal Self is the first step towards the action in Yoga, a seeing action in union with the divine Being and Will which manifests itself in the universe.

When we live calmly poised in this self, then, because that is vast, calm, quiescent, impersonal, our little self, our ego of action disappears into its largeness; we

then see that it is Nature which acts and not we; for all action is the action of Nature and it can be nothing else. And this thing we call Nature is a universal executive Power of being in motion which takes different shapes and forms in this or that class of beings and in each individual of the species, according to its type of being and the resultant law of its action. According to its nature each being must act and it cannot act by anything else; ego and personal will and desire are only forms of the natural workings; reason and intelligence and mind and sense and life and body are Nature's instruments and creations. But the impersonal Self does not act, it only observes the action from behind and above and remains a free and impassive knower and witness. The soul that lives in this impersonality is not affected by the actions of which our nature is an instrument, it does not reply to them or their effects by grief and joy, desire and shrinking, attraction and repulsion; it regards all men, all things and happenings with equal eyes, watches the modes or qualities of Nature acting on the modes or qualities, sees the whole secret of the mechanism; it is itself beyond these modes and qualities, a pure absolute essential being, impassive, free, at peace. Nature works out her action, the soul impersonal and universal supports her, but is not attached, entangled, affected or involved. Works continue so long as Nature's impulsion prolongs itself in the instruments, but there is a spiritual quiescence and freedom.

This duality of Self and Nature, quiescent Purusha, active Prakriti, is not, however, the whole of being. If it were so, either all action would be quite indifferent to the soul and this or that action or refraining from action would take place by some ungoverned turn of the varying action of the gunas,—Arjuna would be moved to battle by rajasic impulse in the instruments or withheld from it by tamasic inertia or sattwic indifference,—or else, if it so is that he must act and act only in this way, it would be by

some mechanical determinism of Nature. Moreover, since the soul would come to live in the impersonal quiescent Self and cease to live in active Nature, the final result would be quiescence, inaction, cessation. And, finally, this duality gives no real explanation why the soul is at all called to involve itself in Nature and action; for it cannot be that the one uninvolved self-conscient spirit gets itself involved and loses its self-knowledge and has to return to self-knowledge, since this pure Self, this Atman is always there, always the same, always the one self-conscient impersonal and impartial supporter of the action. We have to suppose two Purushas or two poses of the Purusha, one secret in the Self, observing from its self-existence, one lending itself to the action of Nature and identifying itself with her creations. But the dualism of Self and Prakriti or Maya or the dualism of the two Purushas is not the whole philosophic creed of the Gita. It affirms that there is a supreme Being, Purushottama, a supreme Self, Lord and Brahman, who is both the impersonal and the personal, but other and greater than either of them and than both of them. He is Purusha, Self and soul of being, and he is also Prakriti, for Prakriti is the power of the All-Soul, the power of his being self-moved to action and creation. As the supreme and universal Existence, he becomes by his Prakriti all these beings; as the supreme Self and Brahman, he manifests by his Maya of self-knowledge and his Maya of ignorance the double truth of the cosmic existence; as the supreme Lord he creates, impels and governs all this Nature and all the being and works of these existences. Each soul is a partial being of this self-existent Being, an eternal soul of this All-Soul, a partial manifestation of this universal Nature. All here is this Divine, this Godhead, Vasudeva; for by Nature and the soul in Nature he becomes all that is and everything proceeds from him and lives in or by him, though he himself is greater than any manifestation. This is the complete truth

of existence and of the universal action that we have seen disengaging itself from the later chapters of the Gita.

But how does this greater truth modify or how affect the principle of spiritual action? It modifies it to begin with in this fundamental thing that the whole meaning of the relation of Self and soul and Nature gets changed and opens out to new vision, fills in the blanks that were left, acquires a greater amplitude, a true and real significance. The world is no longer a purely mechanical qualitative action and determination of Nature set over against the quiescence of an impersonal self-existence which has no quality or power of self-determination; the chasm left by this unsatisfactory dualism is bridged and a unity created between knowledge and works, the soul and Nature. The quiescent impersonal Self is a truth, but it is the truth of the Godhead, the Eternal, the Lord of all becoming and action and creation in his calm infinite freedom of self-existence not bound, troubled or affected by his creation, by the action and reaction of Nature. Nature itself is now a movement of becoming of the Eternal, all her stir and activity and multiplicity founded on and supported by his detached and observing tranquillity of immutable self and spirit. The Lord of Nature remains that immutable self even while he becomes in a partial manifestation, as the one and multiple soul of the universe, all these beings, forces, powers, consciousnesses, gods, animals, things, men. The Nature of the gunas is a lower self-limited action of his power, a nature of partial manifestation and therefore of a certain ignorance with the truth of the self and the truth of the Divine held back from her force absorbed in its action until the soul in her turns to find out this hidden thing, gets inside itself and discovers the real verities of its being. That is why it has to draw back from the personal egoistic to the impersonal, immutable and universal Self in order to become capable of self-knowledge. But the Lord is there, not only in that self, but in Nature. He is in the

heart of every being and guides by his presence the turnings of this great natural mechanism. He is present in all, all lives in him, all is himself because all is a becoming of his being. But all proceeds here in a lower partial working out of a secret, higher, greater completer nature of Divinity, out of the eternal infinite nature or absolute power of being of the Godhead. The perfect conscious being of the soul in man, which is an eternal portion or spiritual being of the eternal Divine Being, comes by his living in this truth ; he has to get back to the truth of the immutable eternal impersonal self and at the same he has to see everywhere the Divine from whom he proceeds, to see him as all, to see him in the whole of this mutable Nature and in every part and result of her, in all her workings, and there too to make himself one with God, to live in him, to enter into the divine oneness. He unites then a divine calm and freedom of his essential being with a divine power of instrumental action.

But how is this done? First by a right spirit in his will of works. He has to regard all his action as a sacrifice to the Lord of works, to the eternal and universal Being, to his own highest Self who is also the Self of all other beings and the supreme all-inhabiting, all-containing, all-governing Godhead in the universe. The whole action of Nature is such a sacrifice, offered at first to the divine Powers that move her, but these powers are only limited forms and names of the one illimitable Godhead. Man ordinarily offers his sacrifice either to his own ego, which is the false action of his self-will and ignorance, or he offers his knowledge, action, aspiration, works of energy and effort to the gods for partial, temporal, personal aims ; but the man of knowledge, the liberated soul is, we have seen, he who offers all his activities to the one eternal Godhead without any seeking for personal fruit or satisfaction of personal desire. He works for God, not for himself, for the universal welfare of beings in the world,

not for any particular object which is of his own personal creation, as a divine agent not as a principal and separate profiteer in the world-commerce—and that, it must be noted, is a thing which cannot be really done except in proportion as he arrives at equality, universality, impersonality ; for without them the claim to be thus acting is a pretension or an illusion. The whole action of the world is the business of the Lord of the universe, of the self-existent Spirit of whom it is the creation, becoming, manifestation ; the fruits are his, the results are those determined by him and our personal action is only a minor contribution ruled or overruled, so far as its motive is an egoistic claim, by this Self and Spirit in us who is the Self and Spirit in all and governs things for the universal end and good and not for the sake of our ego. To work impersonally, desirelessly, without attachment to the fruits of our work, for the sake of God and the world, for the greater Self and the fulfilment of the universal will, is the first step towards liberation.

But beyond this step there lies that other of giving up all our actions to the Divinity within us. For it is the divine Will that impels our works and the turn our ego gives to it is a deformation of the lower nature, a contribution of our tamasic, rajasic, sattwic quality, and this deformation comes by the ego thinking of itself as the doer. The character of the act takes the form of the limited personal nature, the soul is bound up with that, does not allow the act freely and purely to proceed from the infinite power within it, and the ego must suffer the personal consequence and reaction even as it claims the responsible origination and personal will of the doing. But the free and perfect working comes by referring the action and origination to the divine Master of our being who takes it up by drawing the soul into intimacy and unity with himself and originates the work directly from the greater Self, from its eternal, infinite, universal power of

being and not from the ignorance of the little personal ego. The action is shaped according to the nature, but entirely by the divine Will in the nature, and it is free, perfect within, whatever its outward appearance, it comes stamped with the inward spiritual seal of the Infinite as the thing to be done in the ways of the divine Master of action, *kartavyam karma*. The soul of the liberated man is free in impersonality, even while contributing to the action as the means and occasion his instrumental being, the will and power in his nature,—because that will and power is now not separately, egoistically his own, but the force of the suprapersonal Divine who acts in this becoming of self by means of the form of the natural being, the swabhava. This is the highest secret and mystery, *uttamam rahasyam*, of the action of the liberated man. It is the result of a growing of the human soul into divine being and of the union of its nature with universal nature.

This change cannot come about except by knowledge. There is necessary a right knowledge of self and God and world and a living and growing into the greater consciousness of our being to which the knowledge admits us. We know now what the knowledge is; it is sufficient to remember that it is a knowledge by which one is first of all liberated from the limitations of the ego sense and so sees the one self in all, all in God, all beings as Vasudeva, as vessels of the Godhead and one's self too as a being and soul-power of that one Godhead, treats in a spiritual uniting consciousness all the happenings of the lives of others as if they were happenings of one's own life, allows no wall of separation, lives in a universal sympathy with all existences, while amidst the world-movement he still does the work that has be done for the good of all beings, *sarvabhûta-hite*, according to the way appointed by the Divine in Time, by the command of the Spirit who is Master of Time. Thus living and acting in this knowledge the soul of man becomes united with the Eternal in perso-

nality and in impersonality; he lives in the Eternal though acting in Time, even as does the Eternal himself, and is free, perfect and blissful whatever may be the form and determination of his work. The liberated man has the complete and total knowledge, *kritsnavid*, and does all works, *kritsnakrit*, according to the freedom and infinite power of the divine will within him. And since he is united with the Eternal, he has the pure spiritual joy of his eternal being. He turns with adoration to the Self of whom he is a portion, to the Master of his works, to the divine Lover of his being. He is not an impassive calm spectator only, lifts not only his knowledge and will to the Eternal, but his heart also of love and adoration; for without that his whole being is not fulfilled and united with God. Beyond the personal and the impersonal is the supracosmic Being who is immutable in impersonality and fulfils himself in personality; to that he rises personally by the soul's love and joy in God, the adoration of the will in him for the Master of its works, the peace and delight of an impersonal knowledge perfected in the self-existent reality of the supreme and universal Spirit. This glorifies his knowledge and unites it with the eternal delight of the Spirit in its self and its manifestation, this perfects too his personality in the superperson of the divine Purusha and makes to him his natural being and action one with eternal beauty, eternal love and delight, eternal harmony.

But all this change means a passing from the lower to the higher divine nature. It is a lifting of the whole being or at least of the whole mental being that wills, knows, feels into some highest spiritual consciousness, fullest power of existence, widest delight of the spirit. And this may well be possible by a transcendence of our present natural being, it may well be possible in some state beyond the earthly existence or still beyond in a supracosmic, an absolute and infinite power of being of the Spirit. But while we are here in the body, here in life, here in action, what

in this change becomes of the lower nature? For all action is determined in its shape by the nature, and this Nature is the nature of the three gunas, and in all natural being and in all action there is the triple guna, tamas with its ignorance and inertia, rajas with its kinesis and action and passion and grief and perversion, sattwa with its light and happiness, and the bondage of these things. And granted that the soul becomes superior in the self to the three gunas, how does it escape in its instrumental nature from their action and result and bondage? For even the man of knowledge, says the Gita, must act according to his nature. To feel and bear the reactions of the gunas in the outer nature, but to be free from them and superior in the observing conscious self behind is not enough, leaves still a dualism of freedom and subjection. Where is the release here, the full raising of the being to the higher spiritual nature, to the immortal Dharma, to the law of the infinite power of the divine being? If it cannot be done while in the body, then so it must be said, that the whole nature cannot be transformed and there must remain an unreconciled duality until the mortal type of being drops off like a discarded shell from the spirit. But in that case the gospel of action cannot well be the right or at least cannot be the ultimate gospel: a perfect quiescence or at least as perfect a quiescence as possible, a progressive Sannyasa and renunciation of works would seem still to be the true counsel of perfection,—as the Mayavadin contends, who says that the Gita's way is no doubt the right way so long as we remain in action, but still all action is an illusion and quiescence the highest path. To act in this spirit is well, but only as a transition to a renunciation of all works, to cessation, to absolute quiescence.

This is the difficulty which the Gita has still to meet in order to justify works to the seeker after the spirit. Otherwise it must say to Arjuna, "Act temporarily in this

fashion, but afterwards seek the higher way of renunciation of works." But on the contrary it has said that not the cessation of works, but renunciation of desire is the better way; it has spoken of the action of the liberated man, *muktasya karma*; it has insisted on doing all actions, *sarvâni karmâni, kritsnakrit*; it has said that in whatever way the perfected Yogin lives and acts, he lives and acts in God. This can only be, if the nature in its action also becomes divine and untroubled by the reactions of the lower nature. How and by what steps is this most difficult transformation to be effected, and what is this last secret of the soul's perfection?

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LX

THE WAY OF EQUALITY

It will appear from the description of the complete and perfect equality that this equality has two sides. It must therefore be arrived at by two successive movements. One will liberate us from the action of the lower nature and admit us to the calm peace of the divine being; the other will liberate us into the full being and power of the higher nature and admit us to the equal poise and universality of a divine and infinite knowledge, will of action, Ananda. The first may be described as a passive or negative equality, an equality of reception which fronts impassively the impacts and phenomena of existence and negates the dualities of the appearances and reactions which they impose on us. The second is an active, a positive equality which accepts the phenomena of existence, but only as the manifestation of the one divine being and with an equal response to them which comes from the divine nature in us and transforms them into its hidden values. The first lives in the peace of the one Brahman and puts away from it the nature of the active Ignorance. The second lives in that peace, but also in the Ananda of the Divine and imposes on the life of the soul in nature

the signs of the divine knowledge, power and bliss of being. It is this double orientation united by the common principle which will determine the movement of equality in the integral Yoga.

The effort towards a passive or purely receptive equality may start from three different principles or attitudes which all lead to the same result and ultimate consequence,—endurance, indifference and submission. The principle of endurance relies on the strength of the spirit within us to bear all the contacts, impacts, suggestions of this phenomenal Nature that besieges us on every side without being overborne by them and compelled to bear their emotional, sensational, dynamic, intellectual reactions. The outer mind in the lower nature has not this strength. Its strength is that of a limited force of consciousness which has to do the best it can with all that comes in upon it or besieges it from the greater whirl of consciousness and energy which environs it on this plane of existence. That it can maintain itself at all and affirm its individual being in the universe, is due indeed to the strength of the spirit within it, but it cannot bring forward the whole of that strength or the infinity of that force to meet the attacks of life; if it could, it would be at once the equal and master of its world. In fact, it has to manage as it can. It meets certain impacts and is able to assimilate, equate or master them partially or completely, for a time or wholly, and then it has in that degree the emotional and sensational reactions of joy, pleasure, satisfaction liking, love, etc, or the intellectual and mental reactions of acceptance, approval, understanding, knowledge, preference, and on these its will seizes with attraction, desire, the attempt to prolong, to repeat, to create, to possess, to make them the pleasurable habit of its life. Other impacts it meets, but finds them too strong for it or too dissimilar and discordant or too weak to give it satisfaction; these are things which it cannot bear or cannot equate with it-

self or cannot assimilate, and it is obliged to give to them reactions of grief, pain, discomfort, dissatisfaction, disliking, disapproval, rejection, inability to understand or know, refusal of admission. Against them it seeks to protect itself, to escape from them, to avoid or minimise their recurrence; it has with regard to them movements of fear, anger, shrinking, horror, aversion, disgust, shame, would gladly be delivered from them, but it cannot get away from them, for it is bound to and even invites their causes and therefore the results; for these impacts are part of life, tangled up with the things we desire, and the inability to deal with them is part of the imperfection of our nature. Other impacts again the normal mind succeeds in holding at bay or neutralising and to these it has a natural reaction of indifference, insensibility or tolerance which is neither positive acceptance and enjoyment nor rejection or suffering. To things, persons, happenings, ideas, workings, whatever presents itself to the mind, there are always these three kinds of reaction. At the same time, in spite of their generality, there is nothing absolute about them; they form a scheme for a habitual scale which is not precisely the same for all or even for the same mind at different times or in different conditions. The same impact may arouse in it at one time and another the pleasurable or positive, the adverse or negative or the indifferent or neutral reactions.

The soul which seeks mastery may begin by turning upon these reactions the encountering and opposing force of a strong and equal endurance. Instead of seeking to protect itself from or to shun and escape the unpleasant impacts it may confront them and teach itself to suffer and to bear them with perseverance, with fortitude, an increasing equanimity or an austere or calm acceptance. This attitude, this discipline brings out three results, three powers of the soul in relation to things. First, it is found that what was before unbearable, becomes easy to endure; the

scale of the power that meets the impact rises in degree; it needs a greater and greater force of it or of its protracted incidence to cause trouble, pain, grief, aversion or any other of the notes in the gamut of the unpleasant reactions. Secondly, it is found that the conscious nature divides itself into two parts, one of the normal mental and emotional nature in which the customary reactions continue to take place, another of the higher will and reason which observes and is not troubled or affected by the passion of this lower nature, does not accept it as its own, does not approve, sanction or participate. Then the lower nature begins to lose the force and power of its reactions, to submit to the suggestions of calm and strength from the higher reason and will, and gradually that calm and strength take possession of the mental and emotional, even of the sensational, vital and physical being. This brings the third power and result, the power by this endurance and mastery, this separation and rejection of the lower nature, to get rid of the normal reactions and even, if we will, to remould all our modes of experience by the strength of the spirit. This method is applied not only to the unpleasant, but also to the pleasant reactions; the soul refuses to give itself up to or be carried away by them; it endures with calm the impacts which bring joy and pleasure; refuses to be excited by them and replaces the joy and eager seeking of the mind after pleasant things by the calm of the spirit. It can be applied too to the thought-mind in a calm reception of knowledge and of limitation of knowledge which refuses to be carried away by the fascination of this attractive or repelled by dislike for that unaccustomed or unpalatable thought-suggestion and waits on the Truth with a detached observation which allows it to grow on the strong, disinterested, mastering will and reason. Thus the soul becomes gradually equal to all things, master of itself, adequate to meet the world with a strong front in the mind and an undisturbed serenity of the spirit.

The second way is an attitude of impartial indifference. Its method is to reject at once the attraction or the repulsion of things, to cultivate for them a luminous impassivity, an inhibiting rejection, a habit of dissociation and desuetude. This attitude reposes less on the will, though will is always necessary, than on the knowledge. It is an attitude which regards these passions of the mind as things born of the illusion of the outward mentality or inferior movements unworthy of the calm truth of the single and equal spirit or a vital and emotional disturbance to be rejected by the tranquil observing will and dispassionate intelligence of the sage. It puts away desire from the mind, discards the ego which attributes these dual values to things, and replaces desire by an impartial and indifferent peace and ego by the pure self which is not troubled, excited or unhinged by the impacts of the world. And not only is the emotional mind quieted, but the intellectual being also rejects the thoughts of the ignorance and rises beyond the interests of an inferior knowledge to the one truth that is eternal and without change. This way too develops three results or powers by which it ascends to peace.

First, it is found that the mind is voluntarily bound by the petty joys and troubles of life and that in reality these can have no inner hold on it, if the soul simply chooses to cast off its habit of helpless determination by external and transient things. Secondly, it is found that here too a division can be made, a psychological partition between the lower or outward mind still subservient to the old habitual touches and the higher reason and will which stand back to live in the indifferent calm of the spirit. There grows on us, in other words, an inner separate calm which watches the commotion of the lower members without taking part in it or giving it any sanction. At first the higher reason and will may be often clouded, invaded, the mind carried away by the incitation of the

lower members, but eventually this calm becomes inexpugnable, permanent, not to be shaken by the most violent touches, *na duhkena gurunâpi vichâlyate*. This inner soul of calm regards the trouble of the outer mind with a detached superiority or a passing uninvolved indulgence such as might be given to the trivial joys and griefs of a child, it does not regard them as its own or as reposing on any permanent reality. And, finally, the outer mind too accepts by degrees this calm and indifferent serenity; it ceases to be attracted by the things that attracted it or troubled by the griefs and pains to which it had the habit of attaching an unreal importance. Thus the third power comes, an all-pervading power of wide tranquillity and peace, a bliss of release from the siege of our imposed fantastic self-torturing nature, the deep undisturbed exceeding happiness of the touch of the eternal and infinite replacing by its permanence the strife and turmoil of impermanent things, *brahmasparsham atyantam sukham açnute*. The soul is fixed in the delight of the self, *âtmaratih*, in the single and infinite Ananda of the spirit and hunts no more after outward touches and their griefs and pleasures. It observes the world only as the spectator of a play or action in which it is no longer compelled to participate.

The third way is that of submission, which may be the Christian resignation founded on submission to the will of God, or an unegoistic acceptance of things and happenings as a manifestation of the universal Will in time, or a complete surrender of the person to the Divine, to the supreme Purusha. As the first was a way of the will and the second a way of knowledge, of the understanding reason, so this is a way of the temperament and heart and very intimately connected with the principle of Bhakti. If it is pushed to the end, it arrives at the same result of a perfect equality. For the knot of the ego is loosened and the personal claim begins to disappear, we

find that we are no longer bound to joy in things pleasant or sorrow over the unpleasant; we bear them without either eager acceptance or troubled rejection, refer them to the Master of our being, concern ourselves less and less with their personal result to us and hold only one thing of importance, to approach God, or to be in touch and tune with the universal and infinite Existence, or to be united with the Divine, his channel, instrument, servant, lover, rejoicing in him and in our relation with him and having no other object or cause of joy or sorrow. Here too there may be for some time a division between the lower mind of habitual emotions and the higher psychical mind of love and self-giving, but eventually the former yields, changes, transforms itself, is swallowed up in the love, joy, delight of the Divine and has no other interests or attractions. Then all within is the equal peace and bliss of that union, the one silent bliss that passes understanding, the peace that abides untouched by the solicitation of lower things in the depths of our spiritual existence.

These three way coincide in spite of their separate starting-points, first, by their inhibition of the normal reactions of the mind to the touches of outward things, *bâhya-sparshân*, secondly, by their separation of the self or spirit from the outward action of Nature. But it is evident that our perfection will be greater and more embracingly complete, if we can have a more active equality which will enable us not only to draw back from or confront the world in a detached and separated calm, but to return upon it and possess it in the power of the calm and equal Spirit. This is possible because the world, Nature, action are not in fact a quite separate thing, but a manifestation of the Self, the All-Soul, the Divine. The reactions of the normal mind are a degradation of the divine values which would but for this degradation make this truth evident to us,—a falsification, an ignorance which alters their workings, an ignorance which starts from the

involution of the Self in a blind material nescience. Once we return to the full consciousness of Self, of God, we can then put a true divine value on things and receive and act on them with the calm, joy, knowledge, seeing will of the Spirit. When we begin to do that, then the soul begins to have an equal joy in the universe, an equal will dealing with all energies, an equal knowledge which takes possession of the spiritual truth behind all the phenomena of this divine manifestation. It possesses the world as the Divine possesses it, in a fullness of the infinite light, power and Ananda.

All this existence can therefore be approached by a Yoga of positive and active in place of the negative and passive equality. This requires, first, a new knowledge which is the knowledge of unity,—to see all things as oneself and to see all things in God and God in all things. There is then a will of equal acceptance of all phenomena, all events, all happenings, all persons and forces as masks of the Self, movements of the one energy, results of the one power in action, ruled by the one divine wisdom; and on the foundation of this will of greater knowledge there grows a strength to meet everything with an untroubled soul and mind. There must be an identification of myself with the self of the universe, a vision and a feeling of oneness with all creatures, a perception of all forces and energies and results as the movement of this energy of my self and therefore intimately my own; not, obviously, of my ego-self which must be silenced, eliminated, cast away, —otherwise this perfection cannot come,—but of a greater impersonal or universal self with which I am now one. For my personality is now only one centre of action of that universal self, but a centre intimately in relation and unison with all other personalities and also with all those other things which are to us only impersonal objects and forces: but in fact they also are powers of the one impersonal Person (Purusha), God, Self and Spirit. My indivi-

duality is his and is no longer a thing incompatible with or separated from universal being; it is itself universalised, a knower of the universal Ananda and one with and a lover of all that it knows, acts on and enjoys. For to the equal knowledge of the universe and equal will of acceptance of the universe will be added an equal delight in all the cosmic manifestation of the Divine.

Here too we may describe three results or powers of the method. First, we develop this power of equal acceptance in the spirit and in the higher reason and will which respond to the spiritual knowledge. But also we find that though the nature can be induced to take this general attitude, there is yet a struggle between that higher reason and will and the lower mental being which clings to the old egoistic way of seeing the world and reacting to its impacts. Then we find that these two, though at first confused, mingled together, alternating, acting on each other, striving for possession, can be divided, the higher spiritual disengaged from the lower mental nature. But in this stage, while the mind is still subject to reactions of grief, trouble, an inferior joy and pleasure, there is an increased difficulty which does not act to the same extent in a more sharply individualised Yoga. For not only does the mind feel its own troubles and difficulties, but it shares in the joys and griefs of others, vibrates to them in a poignant sympathy, feels their impacts with a subtle sensitiveness, makes them its own; not only so, but the difficulties of others are added to our own and the forces which oppose the perfection act with a greater persistence, because they feel this movement to be an attack upon and an attempt to conquer their universal kingdom and not merely the escape of an isolated soul from their empire. But finally, we find too that there comes a power to surmount these difficulties; the higher reason and will impose themselves on the lower mind, which sensibly changes into the vast types of the spiritual nature; it takes even a delight in

feeling, meeting and surmounting all troubles, obstacles and difficulties until they are eliminated by its own transformation. Then the whole being lives in a final power, the universal calm and joy, the seeing delight and will of the Spirit in itself and its manifestation.

To see how this positive method works, we may note very briefly its principle in the three great powers of knowledge, will and feeling. All emotion, feeling, sensation is a way of the soul meeting and putting effective values on the manifestations of the Self in nature. But what the self feels is a universal delight, Ananda. The soul in the lower mind on the contrary gives it, as we have seen, three varying values of pain, pleasure and neutral indifference, which tone by gradations of less and more into each other, and this gradation depends on the power of the individualised consciousness to meet, sense, assimilate, equate, master all that comes in on it from all of the greater self which it has by separative individualisation put outside of it and made as if not-self to its experience. But all the time, because of the greater Self within us, there is a secret soul which takes delight in all these things and draws strength from and grows by all that touches it, profits as much by adverse as by favourable experience. This can make itself felt by the outer desire soul, and that in fact is why we have a delight in existing and can even take a certain kind of pleasure in struggle, suffering and the harsher colours of existence. But to get the universal Ananda all our instruments must learn to take not any partial or perverse, but the essential joy of all things. In all things there is a principle of Ananda, which the understanding can seize on and the aesthesis feel as the taste of delight in them, their *rasa*; but ordinarily they put upon them instead arbitrary, unequal and contrary values: they have to be led to perceive things in the light of the spirit and to transform these provisional values into the real, the equal and essential, the spiritual rasa. The life-principle is there

to give this seizing of the principle of delight, *rasa-grahana*, the form of a strong possessing enjoyment, *bhoga*, which makes the whole life-being vibrate with it and accept and rejoice in it; but ordinarily it is not, owing to desire, equal to its task, but turns it into the three lower forms,—pain and pleasure, *sukha-bhoga duhkha-bhoga*, and that rejection of both which we call insensibility or indifference. The prana or vital being has to be liberated from desire and its inequalities and to accept and turn into pure enjoyment the *rasa* which the understanding and aesthesis perceive. Then there is no farther obstacle in the instruments to the third step by which all is changed into the full and pure ecstasy of the spiritual Ananda.

In the matter of knowledge, there are again three reactions of the mind to things, ignorance, error and true knowledge. The positive equality will accept all three of them to start with as movements of a self-manifestation which evolves out of ignorance through the partial or distorted knowledge which is the cause of error to true knowledge. It will deal with the ignorance of the mind, as what it is psychologically, a clouded, veiled or wrapped up state of the substance of consciousness in which the knowledge of the all-knowing Self is hidden as if in a dark sheath; it will dwell on it by the mind and by the aid of related truths already known, by the intelligence or by an intuitive concentration deliver the knowledge out of the veil of the ignorance. It will not attach itself only to the known or try to force all into its little frame, but will dwell on the known and the unknown with an equal mind open to all possibility. So too it will deal with error; it will accept the tangled skein of truth and error, but attach itself to no opinion, rather seeking for the element of truth behind all opinions, the knowledge concealed within the error,—for all error is a disfiguration of some misunderstood fragments of truth and draws its vitality from that and not from its misapprehension; it will accept, but not limit it-

self even by ascertained truths, but will always be ready for new knowledge and seek for a more and more integral, a more and more extended, reconciling, unifying wisdom. This can only come in its fullness by rising to the ideal supermind, and therefore the equal seeker of truth will not be attached to the intellect and its workings or think that all ends there, but be prepared to rise beyond, accepting each stage of ascent and the contributions of each power of his being, but only to lift them into a higher truth. He must accept everything, but cling to nothing, be repelled by nothing however imperfect or however subversive of fixed notions, but also allow nothing to lay hold on him to the detriment of the free working of the Truth-Spirit. This equality of the intelligence is an essential condition for rising to the higher supramental and spiritual knowledge.

The will in us, because it is the most generally forceful power of our being,—there is a will of knowledge, a will of life, a will of emotion, a will acting in every part of our nature,—takes many forms and returns various reactions to things, such as incapacity, limitation of power, mastery, or right will, wrong or perverted will, neutral volition,—in the ethical mind virtue, sin and non-ethical volition,—and others of the kind. These too the positive equality accepts as a tangle of provisional values from which it must start, but which it must transform into universal mastery, into the will of the Truth and universal Right, into the freedom of the divine Will in action. The equal will need not feel remorse, sorrow or discouragement over its stumblings; if these reactions occur in the habitual mentality, it will only see how far they indicate an imperfection and the thing to be corrected,—for they are not always just indicators,—and so get beyond them to a calm and equal guidance. It will see that these stumblings themselves are necessary to experience and in the end steps towards the goal. Behind and within all that

occurs in ourselves and in the world, it will look for the divine meaning and the divine guidance; it will look beyond imposed limitations to the voluntary self-limitation of the universal Power by which it regulates its steps and gradations,—imposed on our ignorance, self-imposed in the divine knowledge,—and go beyond to unity with the illimitable power of the Divine. All energies and actions it will see as forces proceeding from the one Existence and their perversions as imperfections, inevitable in the developing movement, of powers that were needed for that movement; it will therefore have charity for all imperfections, even while pressing steadily towards a universal perfection. This equality will open the nature to the guidance of the divine and universal Will and make it ready for that supramental action in which the power of the soul in us is luminously full of and one with the power of the supreme Spirit.

The integral Yoga will make use of both the passive and the active methods according to the need of the nature and the guidance of the inner spirit, the Antaryamin. It will not limit itself by the passive way, for that would lead only to some individual quietistic salvation or negation of an active and universal spiritual being which would be inconsistent with the totality of its aim. It will use the method of endurance, but not stop short with a detached strength and serenity, but move rather to a positive strength and mastery, in which endurance will no longer be needed, since the self will then be in a calm and powerful spontaneous possession of the universal energy and capable of determining easily and happily all its reactions in the oneness and the Ananda. It will use the method of impartial indifference, but not end in an aloof indifference to all things, but rather move towards a high-seated impartial acceptance of life strong to transform all experience into the greater values of the equal spirit. It will use too temporarily resignation and submission, but

by the full surrender of its personal being to the Divine it will attain to the all-possessing Ananda in which there is no need of resignation, to the perfect harmony with the universal which is not merely an acquiescence, but an embracing oneness, to the perfect instrumentality and subjection of the natural self to the Divine by which the Divine also is possessed by the individual spirit. It will use fully the positive method, but will go beyond any individual acceptance of things which would have the effect of turning existence into a field only of the perfected individual knowledge, power and Ananda. That it will have, but also it will have the oneness by which it can live in the existence of others for their sake and not only for its own and for their assistance and as one of their means, an associated and helping force in the movement towards the same perfection. It will live for the Divine, not shunning world-existence, not attached to the earth or the heavens, not attached either to a supracosmic liberation, but equally one with the Divine in all his planes and able to live in him equally in the Self and in the manifestation.

A Defence of Indian Culture

10

I have dwelt at some length, though still very inadequately, on the principles of Indian religion, the sense of its evolution and the intention of its system, because these things are being constantly ignored and battle delivered by its defenders and assailants on details, particular consequences and side issues. Those too have their importance because they are part of the practical execution, the working out of the culture in life; but they cannot be rightly valued unless we seize hold of the intention which was behind the execution. And the first thing we see is that the principle, the essential intention of Indian culture was extraordinarily high, ambitious and noble, the highest indeed which the human spirit can conceive. For what can be a greater idea of life than that which makes it a development of the spirit in man to its most vast secret and high possibilities, conceives it as a movement of the Eternal in time, of the universal in the individual, of the infinite in the finite, of the Divine in man, or holds that man can become not only conscious of the eternal and the infinite, but live in its power and universalise, spiritualise, divinise himself by self-knowledge? What can be greater aims for the life of man than to grow by an inner and outer experience till he can live in God, realise his spirit, become divine in knowledge, in will and in the joy of being? And that is the whole sense of the striving of Indian culture.

It is easy to say that these ideas are fantastic, chimerical and impracticable, that there is no spirit and no eternal

and nothing divine, and man would do much better not to dabble in religion and philosophy, but rather make the best he can of the ephemeral littleness of his life and body. That is a negation natural enough to the vital and physical mind, but it rests on the assumption that man can only be what he is at the moment, and there is nothing greater in him which it is his business to evolve; such a negation has no enduring value. The whole aim of a great culture is to lift man up to something which at first he is not, to lead him to knowledge though he starts from an unfathomable ignorance, to teach him to live by his reason, though actually he lives much more by his unreason, by the law of good and unity, though he is now full of evil and discord, by a law of beauty and harmony though his actual life is a repulsive muddle of ugliness and jarring barbarisms, by some high law of his spirit, though at present he is egoistic, material, unspiritual, engrossed by the needs and desires of his physical being. If a civilisation has not any of these aims, it can hardly at all be said to have a culture and certainly in no sense a great and noble culture. But the last of these aims, as conceived by ancient India, is the highest of all because it includes and surpasses all the others. To have made this attempt is to have ennobled the life of the race; to have failed in it is better then if it had never at all been attempted; to have achieved even a partial success is a great contribution to the future possibilities of the human being.

The system of Indian culture is another thing. A system is in its very nature at once an effectuation and a limitation of the spirit; and yet we must have a science and art of life, a system of living. All that is needed is that the lines laid down should be large and noble, capable of evolution so that the spirit may more and more express itself in life, flexible even in its firmness so that it may absorb and harmonise new material and enlarge its variety and richness without losing its unity. The system of In-

dian culture was all these things in its principle and up to a certain point and a certain period in its practice. That a decline came upon it in the end and a kind of arrest of growth, not absolute, but still very serious and dangerous to its life and future, is perfectly true, and we shall have to ask whether that was due to the inherent character of the culture, to a deformation or to a temporary exhaustion of the force of living, and, if the last, how that exhaustion came. At present, I will only note in passing one point which has its importance. Our critic is never tired of harping on India's misfortunes and he attributes them all to the incurable badness of our civilisation, the total absence of a true and sound culture. Now misfortune is not a proof of absence of culture, nor good fortune the sign of salvation. Greece was unfortunate; she was as much torn by internal dissensions and civil wars as India, she was finally unable to arrive at unity or preserve independence; yet Europe owes half its civilisation to those squabbling inconsequent petty peoples of Greece. Italy was unfortunate enough in all conscience, yet few nations have contributed more to European culture than incompetent and unfortunate Italy. The misfortunes of India have been considerably exaggerated, at least in their incidence, but take them at their worst, admit that no nation has suffered more. If all that is due to the badness of our civilisation, to what is due then the remarkable fact of the obstinate survival of India, her culture and her civilisation under this load of misfortunes, or the power which enables her still to assert herself and her spirit at this moment, to the great wrath of her critics, against the tremendous shock of the flood from Europe which has almost submerged other peoples? If her misfortunes are due to her cultural deficiencies, must not by a parity of reasoning this extraordinary vitality be due to some great force in her, some enduring virtue of truth in her spirit? A mere lie and insanity cannot live; its persistence is a

disease which must before long lead to death ; it cannot be the source of an unslayable life. There must be some heart of soundness, some saving truth which has kept this people alive and still enables it to raise its head and affirm its will to be and its faith in its mission.

But, finally, we have to see not only the spirit and principle of the culture, not only the ideal idea and scope of intention in its system, but its actual working and effect in the values of life. Here we must admit great limitations, great imperfections. There is no culture, no civilisation ancient or modern which in its system has been entirely satisfactory to the need of perfection in man ; there is none in which the working has not been marred by considerable limitations and imperfections. And the greater the aim of the culture, the larger the body of the civilisation, the more are these flaws likely to overbear the eye. In the first place every culture suffers by the limitations or defects of its qualities and, an almost infallible consequence, by the exaggerations too of its qualities. It tends to concentrate on certain leading ideas and to lose sight of others or unduly depress them ; this want of balance gives rise to one-sided tendencies which are not properly checked, not kept in their due place, and bring about unhealthy exaggerations. But so long as the vigour of the civilisation lasts, life accommodates itself, makes the most of compensating forces and in spite of all stumblings, evils, disasters some great thing is done; but in a time of decline the defect or the excess of particular quality gets the upper hand, becomes a disease, makes a general ravage and, if not arrested, may lead to decay and death. Again, the ideal may be great, may have even, as Indian culture had in its best times, a certain kind of provisional completeness, a first attempt at comprehensive harmony, but there is always a great gulf between the ideal and the actual practice of life. To bridge that gulf or at least to make it as narrow as possible is the most difficult part of

human endeavour. Finally, the evolution of our race, surprising enough if we look across the ages, is still, when all is said, a slow and embarrassed progress. Each age, each civilisation carries the heavy burden of our deficiencies, each succeeding age throws off something of the load, but loses some virtue of the past, creates other gaps and embarrasses itself with new aberrations. We have to strike a balance, to see things in the whole, to observe whither we are tending and use a large secular vision; otherwise it would be difficult to keep an unfailing faith in the destinies of the race. For, after all, what we have accomplished so far in the main at the best of times is to bring in a modicum of reason and culture and spirituality to leaven a great mass of barbarism. Mankind is still no more than semi-civilised and it was never anything else in the recorded history of its present cycle.

And therefore every civilisation presents a mixed and anomalous appearance and can be turned by a hostile or unsympathetic observation which notes and exaggerates its defects, ignores its true spirit and its qualities, masses the shades, leaves out the lights, into a mass of barbarism, a picture of almost unrelieved gloom and failure, to the legitimate surprise and indignation of those to whom its motives appear to have a great and just value. For each has achieved something of special value for humanity in the midst of its general work of culture, brought out in a high degree some potentiality of our nature and given a first large standing-ground for its future perfection. Greece developed to a high degree the intellectual reason and the sense of form and harmonious beauty, Rome founded firmly strength and power and patriotism and law and order, modern Europe has raised to enormous proportions practical reason, science and efficiency and economic capacity, India developed the spiritual mind working on the other powers of man and exceeding them, the intuitive reason, the philosophical harmony of the Dharma informed by

the religious spirit, the sense of the eternal and the infinite. The future has to go on to a greater and more perfect comprehensive development of these things and to evolve fresh powers, but we shall not do this rightly by damning the past or damning other cultures than our own in a spirit of arrogant intolerance. We need not only a spirit of calm criticism, but an eye of sympathetic intuition to extract the good from the past and present effort of humanity and make the most of it for our future progress.

This being so, if our critic insists that the past culture of India was of the nature of a semi-barbarism, I shall not object, so long as I have the liberty of passing the same criticism, equally valid or invalid, on the type of European culture which he wishes to foist on us in its place. Mr. Archer feels the openings which European civilisation gives to this kind of retort and he pleads plaintively that it ought not to be made; he takes refuge in the old tag that a *tu quoque* is no argument. Certainly the retort would be irrelevant if this were only a question of the dispassionate criticism of Indian culture without arrogant comparisons and offensive pretensions. But it becomes a perfectly valid and effective argument when the critic turns into a partisan and tries to trample underfoot all the claims of the Indian spirit and its civilisation in the name of the superiority of Europe. When he insists on our renouncing our own natural being and culture in order to follow and imitate the West as docile pupils on the ground of India's failure to achieve cultural perfection or the ideal of a sound civilisation, we have a right to point out that Europe has to its credit at least as ugly a failure, and for the same fundamental reasons. We have a right to ask whether science, practical reason and efficiency and an unbridled economic production which makes man a slave of his life and body, a wheel, spring or clog in a huge mechanism or a cell of an economic organism and

translates into human terms the ideal of the ant-hill and the bee-hive, is really the whole truth of our being and a sound or complete ideal of civilisation. The ideal of this culture, though it has its obstacles and difficulties, is at any rate not an unduly exalted aim and ought to be more easy of accomplishment than the arduous spiritual ideal of ancient India. But how much of the European mind and life is really governed by reason and what does this practical reason and efficiency come to in the end? To what perfection has it brought the human mind and soul and life? The aggressive ugliness of modern European life, its paucity of philosophic reason and aesthetic beauty and religious aspiration, its constant unrest, its harsh and oppressive mechanical burden, its lack of inner freedom, its recent huge catastrophe, the fierce struggle of classes are things of which we have a right to take note. To harp in the style of the Archerian lyre on these aspects alone and to ignore the brighter side of modern ideals would certainly be an injustice. There was a time indeed many years ago, when, while admiring the past cultural achievement of Europe, the present industrial form of it seemed to me an intellectualised Titanic barbarism with Germany as its too admired type and successful protagonist. A wider view of the ways of the Spirit in the world corrects the onesidedness of this notion, but still it contains a truth which Europe recognised in the hour of her agony, though now she seems to be forgetting too easily her momentary illumination. Mr. Archer argues that at least the West is trying to struggle out of its barbarism while India has been content to stagnate in her deficiencies. That may be a truth of the immediate past; but what then? The question still remains whether Europe is taking the only, the complete or the best way open to human endeavour and whether it is not the right thing for India, not to imitate Europe, though she well may learn from western experience, but to get out of her stagnation by developing what is best and

most essential in her own spirit and culture.

The right, the natural path for India lies so obviously in this direction that in order to destroy it Mr. Archer in his chosen role as devil's advocate has to juggle with the truth at every step and labour hard and vainly to reestablish the spell of hypnotic suggestion, now broken for good, which led most of us for a long space to condemn wholesale ourselves and our past and imagine that the Indian's whole duty in life was to turn an imitative ape in leading-strings and dance to the mechanic barrel-organ tunes of the British civiliser. The claim of Indian culture to survival can be met first and most radically by challenging the value of its fundamental ideas and the high things which are most native to its ideal, its temperament, its way of looking at the world. To deny the truth or the value of spirituality, of the sense of the eternal and infinite, the inner spiritual experience, the philosophic mind and spirit, the religious aim and feeling, the intuitive reason, the idea of universality and spiritual unity is one resource, and this is the real attitude of our critic which emerges constantly in his vehement philippic. But he cannot carry it through consistently, because it brings him into conflict with ideas and perceptions which are ineradicable in the human mind and which even in Europe are now after a temporary obscuration beginning to come back into favour. Therefore he hedges and tries rather to prove that we find in India, even in her magnificent past, even at her best, no spirituality, no real philosophy, no true or high religious feeling, no light of intuitive reason, nothing at all of the great things to which she has directed her most strenuous aspiration. This assertion is sufficiently absurd, self-contradictory and opposed to the express testimony of those who are eminently fitted and entitled to express an authoritative opinion on these matters. He therefore establishes a third line of attack combined of two inconsistent and opposite assertions, first, that the higher Hin-

duism which is made up of these greater things has had no effect on India and, secondly, that it has had on the contrary a most all-pervading, a most disastrous and paralysing, a soul-killing, life-killing effect. He attempts to make his indictment effective by massing together all these inconsistent lines of attack and leading them all to the one conclusion, that the culture of India is both in theory and practice wrong, worthless, deleterious to the true aim of human living.

The last position taken is the only one which we need now consider, since the value of the essential ideas of Indian culture cannot be destroyed and to deny them is futile. The things they stand for are there, in whatever form, vaguely or distinctly seeking for themselves in the highest and deepest movements of human being and its nature. The peculiarity of Indian culture lies only in this distinction that what is vague or confused or imperfectly brought out in most other cultures, it has laboured rather to make distinct, to sound all its possibilities, to fix its aspects and lines and hold it up as a true, precise, large and practicable ideal for the race. The formulation may not be entirely complete; it may have to be still more enlarged, bettered, put otherwise, things missed brought out, the lines and forms modified, errors of stress and direction corrected; but a firm, a large foundation has been laid down not only in theory, but in solid practice. If there has been an actual complete failure in life—and that is the one point left,—it must be due to one of two causes; either there has been some essential bungling in the application of the ideal to the facts of life as it is, or else there has been a refusal to recognise the facts of life at all. Perhaps, then, there has been, to put it otherwise, an insistence on what we may be at some hardly attainable height of our being without having first made the most of what we are. The infinite can only be reached after we have grown in the finite, the eternal grasped only by man

growing in time, the spiritual perfected only by man accomplished first in body, life and mind. If that necessity has been ignored, then one may fairly contend that there has been a gross, impracticable and inexcusable error in the governing idea of Indian culture. But as a matter of fact there has been no such error. We have seen what were the aim and idea and method of Indian culture and it will be perfectly clear that the value of life and its training were amply recognised in its system and given their proper place. Even the most extreme philosophies and religions, Buddhism and Illusionism, which held life to be an impermanence or ignorance that must be transcended and cast away, yet did not lose sight of the truth that man must develop himself under the conditions of this present ignorance or impermanence before he can attain to knowledge and to that Permanent which is the denial of temporal being. Buddhism was not solely a cloudy sublimation of Nirvana, nothingness, extinction and the tyrannous futility of Karma ; it gave us a great and powerful discipline for the life of man on earth. The enormous positive effects it had on society and ethics and the creative impulse it imparted to art and thought and in a less degree to literature, are a sufficient proof of the strong vitality of its method. If this positive turn was present in the most extreme philosophy of denial, it was still more largely present in the totality of Indian culture.

There has been indeed from early times in the Indian mind a certain strain, a tendency towards a lofty and austere exaggeration in the direction taken by Buddhism and Mayavada. This excess was inevitable, the human mind being what it is ; it had even its necessity and value. Our mind does not arrive at the totality of truth easily and by one embracing effort ; an arduous search is the condition of its finding. The mind opposes different sides of the truth to each other, follows each to its extreme possibility, treats it even for a time as the sole truth, makes

imperfect compromises, arrives by various adjustments and gropings nearer to the true relations. The Indian mind followed this method; it covered, as far as it could, the whole field, tried every position, looked at the truth from every angle, attempted many extremes and many syntheses. But the European critic very ordinarily labours under the idea that this exaggeration in the direction of negating life was actually the whole of Indian thought and sentiment or the one undisputed governing idea of the culture. Nothing could be more false and inaccurate. The early Vedic religion did not deny, but laid a full emphasis on life. The Upanishads did not deny life, but held that the world is a manifestation of the Eternal, of Brahman, all here is Brahman, all is in the Spirit and the Spirit is in all, the self-existent Spirit has become all these things and creatures; life too is Brahman, the life-force is the very basis of our existence, the life-spirit Vayu is the manifest and evident Eternal, *pratyaksham brahma*. But it affirmed that the present way of existence of man is not the highest or the whole; his outward mind and life are not all his being; to be fulfilled and perfect he has to grow out of his physical and mental ignorance into spiritual self-knowledge.

Buddhism arrived at a later stage and seized on one side of these ancient teachings to make a sharp spiritual and intellectual opposition between the impermanence of life and the permanence of the Eternal which brought to a head and made a gospel of the ascetic exaggeration. But the synthetic Hindu mind struggled against this negation and finally threw out Buddhism, though not without contracting an increased bias in this direction. That bias came to its height in the philosophy of Shankara, his theory of Maya, which put its powerful imprint on the Indian mind and, coinciding with a progressive decline in the full vitality of the race, did tend for a time to fix a pessimistic and negative view of terrestrial life and distort the larger In-

dian ideal. But his theory is not at all a necessary deduction from the great Vedantic authorities, the Upanishads, Brahmasutras and Gita, and was always combated by other Vedantic philosophies and religions which drew from them and from spiritual experience very different conclusions. At the present time, in spite of a temporary exaltation of Shankara's philosophy, the most vital movements of Indian thought and religion are moving again towards the synthesis of spirituality and life which was an essential part of the ancient Indian ideal. Therefore Mr. Archer's contention that whatever India has achieved in life and creation and action has been done in spite of the governing ideas of her culture, since logically she ought to have abandoned life and creation and action, is as unsound as it is unnatural and grotesque. To develop to the full the intellectual, the dynamic and volitional, the ethical, the aesthetic, the social and economic being of man was an important element of Indian civilisation,—if for nothing else, at least as an indispensable preliminary to spiritual perfection and freedom. India's best achievements in thought, art, literature, society were the logical outcome of her religio-philosophical culture.

But still it may be argued that whatever may have been the theory, the exaggeration was there and in practice it discouraged life and action. That, when its other falsities have been eliminated, is what Mr. Archer's criticism comes to in the end; the emphasis on the Self, the eternal, the universal, the impersonal, the infinite discouraged, he thinks, life, will, personality, human action and led to a false and life-killing asceticism. India achieved nothing of importance, produced no great personalities, was impotent in will and endeavour, her literature and art are a barbaric and monstrous nullity not equal even to the third-rate work of Europe, her life story a long and dismal record of incompetence and failure. An inconsistency more or less is nothing to this critic and in the same

breath he affirms that this very India, described by him elsewhere as always effete, sterile or a mother of monstrous abortions, is one of the most interesting countries in the world, that her art casts a potent and attractive spell and has numberless beauties, that her very barbarisms are magnificent and that, most wonderful of all, in presence of some of her personalities in the abodes of her ancient fine-spun aristocratic culture a European is apt to feel like a semi-barbarian intruder! But let us leave aside these signs of grace which are only an occasional glimmering of light across the darkness and gloom of Mr. Archer's mood. We must see how far there is any foundation for the substance of this criticism. What was the real value of Indian life, will, personality, achievement, creation, those things that she regards as her glories, but her critic tells her she should shudder at as her disgrace? That is the one remaining vital question.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK III

IV

THE VICTORY OF THE DIVINE

THE PERFECT PEACE

1 If a man possesses the true light, darkness cannot lodge in his soul. Who can describe the peace of that luminous country where the true light shines out for ever in its limpid purity?

2 The happiness of each thing resides in its own proper perfection, and this perfection is nothing else for each individual than union with his own Cause.

3 The man in whose vision all things are becomings of the Self and who sees in all things oneness, whence
4 shall he have grief or delusion?—The sage having perceived God by the spiritual union casts from him grief and joy.

5 Who in the world of plurality sees the One Existence and in the world of shadows seizes this Reality, to him belongs the eternal peace, to none else, to none else.

---

1) Imitation of Christ.— 2) Sallust.— 3) Isha Upanishad — 4) Katha Upanishad.—5) Vivekananda.

6 The one controlling inner Self of all existences who makes his one form into many kinds of form, him the sages see in themselves; theirs is the eternal peace
7 and it is not for others.—The sages who see the eternal in things transient, for them is the peace eternal.

*
* *

8 In mosque and church and synagogue one has the terror of hell and the seeking for Paradise, but the seed of that disquiet has never sprouted in the heart which has entered into the secrets of the Almighty.
9 When man has seen that he is one with the infinite being of the universe, all separation is at an end, all men, women, angels, gods, animals, plants, the whole world lost in this oneness, then all fear disappears.—
10 When one perceives clearly this Self as God and as the Lord of all that is and will be, he knows no longer any fear.
11 When one knows God without beginning and end in the midst of the complex mass of things, the creator of all who takes many forms, the One who envelops the universe, he is delivered from all bondage.
12 Good and evil cannot bind him who has realised the oneness of nature and self with the Eternal.—
13 When he knows that he is That, the Eternal, he is delivered from all limitations.
14 The traveller in the valley of knowledge who sees the end of each thing, knows how to find peace amid contest and reconciliation amidst disunion.
15 —To him justice and injustice are equal, knowledge and ignorance have the same value, for he has broken the cage of personality and desire and he has flown on the wings of immortality towards the eternal heavens.

---

6) Katha Upanishad.—7) id.—8) Omar Khayyam.—9) Vivekananda.—10) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.— 11) Swetaçwatara Upanishad.—12) Ramakrishna.—13) Upanishad.—14) Baha-ullah.—15) id.—

16 In this state he will submit to destiny, making no more of disorder than of order. Death gives him a comprehension of immortality; he sees with the spiritual eye the mystery of resurrection in men and things and his heart makes him feel the divine wisdom in these infinite manifestations.

17 He whose whole play of life is with the Self and in the Self has his joy and so does actions, is the
18 best of the knowers of the Eternal.—Void of wishes, controlled in mind and spirit, abandoning all desire of external possession, satisfied with what comes to him, free from liking and disliking and from all jealousy and envy, equal in success and failure, he acts and is not bound by his actions.

19 As a bird of the waters, such as the pelican, can dive into the waves and his plumage is not wetted, the liberated soul lives in the world, but is not affec-
20 ted by the world.—When the soul attains to its divine estate, it can live in constant contact with innumerable unregenerated souls without being affected by the contact.

21 The present world and the next are but a drop of
22 water whose existence is of no account.—If we drink of this cup, we shall forget the whole world.

23 The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. Therefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in security.

---

16) id.—17) Mundaka Upanishad.—18) Bhagavad Gita.—19) Ramakrishna.— 20) id.—21) Farid-ud-din attar.— 22) Baha-ullah.— 23) Psalms XVI, 6. 9.

The Future Poetry

NEW BIRTH OR DECADENCE?

At this point we stand in the evolution of English poetry. Its course, we can see, is only one line of a common evolution, and I have singled it out to follow because, for two reasons, it seems to me the most complete and suggestive. It follows most faithfully the natural ascending curve of the human spirit in this kind of rhythmic imaginative self-expression and, again, because of all the modern European languages it has the largest freest poetic energy and natural power, it responds on the whole most directly of all of them—in spite of certain serious limitations of the English mind—to the fountain motives, the essential impetus of the soul of poetry in its ascent and shows them, if not always in their greatest or most perfect, yet almost always in their most characteristic and revealing form. Poetry like everything else in man evolves. Its fundamental nature, function and law are no doubt always the same, because each thing and each activity too in our being must be faithful to the divine idea in it, to its dharma, and can try to depart from it only on peril, whatever momentarily it may seem to gain, of eventual inferiority and futility, or even of disintegration and death. But still there is an evolution within this law of its being. And evolution means a bringing out of new powers which lay concealed in the seed or the first form; the simple deve-

lops to the more complex,—more complex even in some apparent simplicity,—the superficial gives place to the more and more profound, the lesser gives place to the greater nature of the common manifestation. But poetry is a psychological phenomenon, the poetic impulse a highly charged force of expression of the mind and soul of man, and therefore in trying to follow out its line of evolution it is the development of the psychological motive and power, it is the kind of feeling, vision, mentality which is seeking in it for its word and idea and form of beauty and it is the power of the soul though which it finds expression or the level of mind from which it speaks which we must distinguish to get a right idea of the progress of poetry. All else is subsidiary, variations of rhythm, language, structure; they are the form, the vehicle; they derive subtly and get their character and meaning from the psychological power and the fundamental motive.

If poetry is a highly-charged power of aesthetic expression of the soul of man, it must follow in its course of evolution the development of that soul. I put it that from this point of view the soul of man like the soul of Nature can be regarded as an unfolding of the spirit in the material world. Our unfolding has its roots in the soil of the physical life; its growth shoots up and out in many directions in the stalk and branches of the vital being; it puts forth the opulence of the buds of mind and there, nestling in the luxuriant leaves of mind and above it, out from the spirit which was concealed in the whole process must blossom the free and infinite soul of man, the hundred-petalled rose of God. Man indeed, unlike other forms of being in terrestrial Nature, though rooted in body, proceeds by the mind and all that is characteristic of him belongs to the wonderful play of mind taking up physicality and life and developing and enriching its gains till it can exceed itself and become a spiritual mind, the divine Mind in man. He turns first his view on the outward phy-

sical world and on his own life of outward action and concentrates on that or throws into its mould his life-suggestions, his thought, his religious idea, and, if he arrives at some vision of an inner spiritual truth, he puts even that into forms and figures of the physical life and physical Nature.* Poetry at a certain stage or of a certain kind expresses this turn of the human mentality in word and in form of beauty. It can reach great heights in this kind of mental mould, can see the physical forms of the gods, lift to a certain greatness by its vision and disclose a divine quality in even the most obvious, material and outward being and action of man; and in this type we have Homer. Arrived to a greater depth of living, seeing from a vivid half outward half inward turn of mind his thought and action and self and world and Nature, man begins to feel more sensitively the passion and power of life, its joy and pain, its wonder and terror and beauty and romance, to turn everything into moved thought and sentiment and sensation of the life-soul, the desire soul in him which first forces itself on his introspection when he begins to go inward. Poetry too takes this turn, rises and deepens to a new kind of greatness; and at the summit in this kind we have Shakespeare.

This way of seeing and creating, in which thought is involved in life and the view is that of the life-spirit feeling, thinking, imagining, carried forward in its own surge of self, cannot permanently hold the greater activities of the mental being. He ceases to identify himself entirely with the passion, the emotion, the thought-suggestions of life; for he needs to know from a freer height what it is and what he is, to get a clear detached idea of its workings, to dominate his emotions and vital intuitions and see with the calm eye of his reason, to probe, analyse, get

* As in the hymns of the Vedic Rishis.

at the law and cause and general and particular rule of himself and Nature. He does this at first on large and comparatively bare lines dwelling only on the salient details for a first strong and provisionally adequate view. Poetry following this movement takes on the lucid, restrained, intellectual and ideal classic form, in which high or strong ideas govern and develop the presentation of life and thought in an atmosphere of clear beauty and the vision of the satisfied intelligence; that is the greatness of the Greek and Latin poets. But afterwards the intelligence sets more comprehensively to work, opens itself to all manner of the possibilities of truth and to a crowding stream and mass of interests, a never satisfied minuteness of detail, an endless succession of pregnant generalisations. This is the type of modern intellectualism.

The poetry which arises from this mentality is full of a teeming many-sided poetic ideation which takes up the external and life motives not for their own sake, but to make them food for the poetic intelligence, blends the classical and romantic motives, adds to them the realistic, aesthetic, impressionist, idealistic ways of seeing and thinking, makes many experiments and combinations, passes through many phases. The true classic form is then no longer possible; if it is tried, it is not quite genuine, for what informs it is no longer the classic spirit; it is too crowded with subtle thought-matter, too brooding, sensitive, responsive to many things; no new Parthenon can be built whether in the white marble subdued to the hand or in the pure and lucid spacings of the idea and the word: the mind of man has become too full, complex, pregnant with subtle and not easily expressible things to be capable of that earlier type of perfection. The romantic strain is a part of this wider intelligence, but the pure and genuine romanticism of the life-spirit which cares nothing for thought except as it enriches its own being, is also no longer possible. If it tries to get back to that, it

falls into an affectation, an intellectual pose and, whatever genius may be expended upon it, this kind cannot remain long alive. That is the secret of the failure of modern romanticism in Germany and France. In Germany, Goethe and Heine alone got away from this falsity and were able to use this strain in its proper way as one enriching chord serving the complex harmonic purpose of the intelligence; the rest of German literary creation of the time is interesting and suggestive in its way, but very little of it is intimately alive and true, and afterwards Germany failed to keep up a sustained poetic impulse; she turned aside to music on the one side and on the other to philosophy and science for her field. The French mind got away very soon from romanticism and, though greatly enriched by its outbreak into that phase, went on to a more genuine intellectual and intellectually aesthetic form of creation In England with the greater spontaneity of its poetic spirit the mistake never went so far. The poetry of the time of Wordsworth and Shelley is sometimes called romantic poetry, but it was not so in its essence, but only in certain of its moods and motives. It lives really by its greater and more characteristic element, by its half spiritual turn, by Wordsworth's force of ethical thought and communion with Nature, by Shelley's imaginative transcendentalism, Keats' worship of Beauty, Byron's Titanism and force of personality, Coleridge's supernaturalism or, as it should more properly be called, his eye for other nature, Blake's command of the inner psychic realms. Only in drama was there, owing to the prestige of Shakespeare, an attempt at pure romanticism, and therefore in this domain nothing great and living could be done, but only a record of failures. Realism is a more native turn of this kind of intellegence, and it invades poetry too to a certain extent, but if it dominates, then poetry must decline and cease. The poetry of an age of many-sided intellectualism can live only by its many-sidedness and by making everything as

it comes a new material for the aesthetic creations of the observing, thinking, constructing intelligence.

But then comes the now vital question in this cultural evolution,—in what is this intellectualism to culminate. For if it leads to nothing beyond itself, it must end, however brilliant its work, in a poetic decadence, and that must come nearer, the more intellect dominates the other powers of our being. The intellect moves naturally between two limits, the abstractions or solving analyses of the reason and the domain of positive and practical reality; its great achievements are in these two fields or in a mediation between them, and it can do most and go farthest, can achieve its most native and characteristic and therefore its greatest and completest work either in philosophy or in Science. The age of developed intellectualism in Greece killed poetry; it ended in the comedy of Menander, the intellectual artificialities of Alexandrianism, the last flush of beauty in the aesthetic pseudo-naturalism of the Sicilian pastoral poetry; philosophy occupied the field. In the more rich and complex modern mind this result could not so easily come and has not yet come. At the same time the really great, perfect and securely characteristic work of the age has not been in the field of art and poetry, but in critical thought and science. Criticism and science, by a triumphant force of abstraction and analysis turned on the world of positive fact, have in this period been able to become enormously effective for life. They have been able to reign sovereignly, not so much by their contributions to pure knowledge, but by their practical, revolutionary and constructive force. If modern thought with its immense scientific achievement has not enriched life at its base or given it a higher and purer action,—it has only created a yet unrealised possibility in that direction by its idealistic side,—it has wonderfully equipped it with powerful machinery and an imposing paraphernalia and wrought conspicuous and unprecedented changes in

its superstructure. But poetry in this atmosphere has kept itself alive not by any native and spontaneous power born of agreement between its own essential spirit and the spirit of the age, but by a great effort of the imagination and aesthetic intelligence labouring for the most part to make the best of what material it could get in the shape of new thought and new view-points for the poetic criticism or the thoughtful presentation of life. It has been an aesthetic byplay rather than a leading or sometimes even premier force in the cultural life of the race such as it was in the ancient ages and even, with a certain limited action, in more recent times.

That a certain decline, not of the activity of the poetic mind, but of its natural vigour, importance and effective power has been felt, if not quite clearly appreciated in its causes, we can see from various significant indications. Throughout the later nineteenth century one observes a constant apprehension of approaching aesthetic decadence, a tendency to be on the look-out for it and to find the signs of it in innovations and new turns in art and poetry. The attempt to break the whole mould of poetry and make a new thing of it so that it may be easier to handle and may shape itself to all the turns, the high and low, noble and common, fair or unseemly movements of the modern mind and its varied interest in life, is itself due to a sense of some difficulty, limitation and unease, some want of equation between the fine but severely self-limiting character of this kind of creative power and the spirit of the age. At one time indeed it was hardily predicted that since the modern mind is increasingly scientific and less and less poetically and aesthetically imaginative, poetry must necessarily decline and give place to science,—for much the same reason, in fact, for which philosophy replaced poetry in Greece. On the opposite side it was sometimes suggested that the poetic mind might become more positive and make use of the mate-

rials of science or might undertake a more intellectual though always poetic criticism of life and might fill the place of philosophy and religion which were supposed for a time to be dead or dying powers in human nature; but this came to the same thing, for it meant a deviation from the true law of aesthetic creation and only a more protracted decadence.

And behind these uneasy suggestions lay the one fact that for causes already indicated an age of reason dominated by the critical, scientific or philosophic intelligence is ordinarily unfavourable and, even when it is most catholic and ample, cannot be quite favourable to great poetic creation. The pure intellect cannot create poetry. The inspired or the imaginative reason does indeed play an important, sometimes a leading part, but even that can only be a support or an influence; the thinking mind may help to give a final shape, a great and large form, *sammahema manîshayâ*, as the Vedic poets said of the mantra, but the word must start first from a more intimate sense in the heart of the inner being, *hridâ tashtam*; it is the spirit within and not the mind without that is the fount of poetry. Poetry too is an interpreter of truth, but in the forms of an innate beauty, and not so much of intellectual truth, the truths offered by the critical mind, as of the intimate truth of being. It deals not so much with things thought as with things seen, not with the authenticities of the analytic mind, but with the authenticities of the synthetic vision and the seeing spirit. The abstractions, generalisations, minute precisions of our ordinary intellectual cerebration are no part of its essence or texture; but it has others, more luminous, more subtle, those which come to us after passing through the medium and getting drenched in the light of the intuitive and revealing mind. And therefore when the general activity of thought runs predominantly into the former kind, the works of the latter are apt to proceed under rather anaemic conditions, they

are affected by the pervading atmosphere; poetry either ceases or falls into a minor strain or takes refuge in virtuosities of its outer instruments and aids or, if it still does any considerable work, lacks the supreme spontaneity, the natural perfection, the sense of abundant ease or else of sovereign mastery which the touch of the spirit manifests even amidst the fullest or austerest labour of its creation.

But this incompatibility is not the last word of the matter. The truth which poetry expresses takes two forms, the truth of life and the truth of that which works in life, the truth of the inner spirit. It may take its stand on the outer life and work in an intimate identity, relation or close dwelling upon it, and then what it does is to bring some light of intuitive things, some power of revelation of the beauty that is truth and the truth that is beauty into the outer things of life, even into those that are most common, obvious, of daily occurrence. But also it may get back into the truth of the inner spirit and work in an intimate identity, relation or close dwelling upon it, and then what it will do is to give a new revelation of our being and life and thought and Nature and the material and the psychical and spiritual worlds. That is the effort to which it seems to be turning now in its most characteristic, effective and beautiful manifestations. But it cannot fully develop in this sense unless the general mind of the age takes that turn. There are signs that this will indeed be the outcome of the new direction taken by the modern mind, not an intellectual petrifaction or a long spinning in the grooves of a critical intellectualism, but a higher and more authentic thinking and living. The human intelligence seems on the verge of an attempt to rise through the intellectual into an intuitive mentality; it is no longer content to regard the intellect and the world of positive fact as all or the intellectual reason as a sufficient mediator between life and the spirit, but is beginning to perceive that there is a spiritual mind which can admit

us to a greater and more comprehensive vision. This does not mean any sacrifice of the gains of the past, but a raising and extending of them not only by a seeking of the inner as well as the outer truth of things, but also of all that binds them together and a bringing of them into true relation and oneness. A first opening out to this new way of seeing is the sense of the work of Whitman and Carpenter and some of the recent French poets, of Tagore and Yeats and A.E, of Meredith and some others of the English poets. There are critics who regard this tendency as only another sign of decadence; they see in it a morbid brilliance, a phosphorescence of decay or the phosphorescence which we observe on the sea when the sun has gone done and night occupies the waters. But this is to suppose that poetry can only repeat what it has done in the past and can accomplish no new and great thing and that a clear, strong or brilliant dealing with the outer mind and world is its last word and the one condition of its healthy creativeness. There is much that is morbid, perverse or unsound in some recent poetry; but this comes from an artificial prolongation of the past or a temporary mixed straining, it does not belong to that element in the new poetry which escapes from it and turns firmly to the things of the future. Decadence arrives when in the decline of a culture there is nothing more to be lived or seen or said, or when the poetic mind settles irretrievably into a clumsy and artificial repetition of past forms and conventions or can only escape from them into scholastic or aesthetic prettinesses or extravagance. But an age which brings in large and new vital and spiritual truths, truths of our being, truths of the self of man and the inner self of Nature and opens vast untrod ranges to sight and imagination, is not likely to be an age of decadence, and a poetry which voices these things,—unless its creative power has been fatally atrophied by long conventionalism, and that is not at present our case,—is not like-

ly to be a poetry of decadence.

The more perfectly intuitive poetry of the future, supposing it to emerge successfully from its present incubation, find itself and develop all its possibilities, will not be a mystic poetry recondite in expression or quite remote from the earthly life of man. Some element of the kind may be there; for always when we open into these fields, mysteries more than the Orphic or the Eleusinian revive and some of them are beyond our means of expression; but mysticism in its unfavourable or lesser sense comes when either we glimpse but do not intimately realise the now secret things of the spirit or, realising, yet cannot find their direct language, their intrinsic way of utterance, and have to use obscurely luminous hints or a thick drapery of symbol, when we have the revelation, but not the inspiration, the sight but not the word. And remoteness comes when we cannot relate the spirit with life or bring the power of the spirit to transmute the other members of our being. But the new age is one which is climbing from a full intellectuality towards some possibility of an equal fullness of the intuitive mind, and the full intuitive mind, not that of glimpses, but of a luminous totality, opens to the mind of revelation and inspiration. The aesthetic mind, whether it take form in the word of the poet or in the word of the illumined thinker, the prophet or the seer, can be one of the main gateways. And what the age will aim at is neither materialism nor an intuitive vitalism nor a remote detached spirituality, but a harmonious and luminous totality of man's being. Therefore to this poetry the whole field of existence will be open for its subject, God and Nature and man and all the worlds, the field of the finite and the infinite. It is not a close, even a high close and ending in this or any field that the future offers to us, but a new and higher evolution, a second and greater birth of all man's powers and his being and action and creation.

Rebirth and Karma

The ancient idea of Karma was inseparably connected with a belief in the soul's continual rebirth in new bodies. And this close association was not a mere accident, but a perfectly intelligible and indeed inevitable union of two related truths which are needed for each other's completeness and can with difficulty exist in separation. These two things are the soul side and the nature side of one and the same cosmic sequence. Rebirth is meaningless without karma, and karma has no fount of inevitable origin and no rational and no moral justification if it is not an instrumentality for the sequences of the soul's continuous experience. If we believe that the soul is repeatedly reborn in the body, we must believe also that there is some link between the lives that preceded and the lives that follow and that the past of the soul has an effect on its future; and that is the spiritual essence of the law of Karma. To deny it would be to establish a reign of the most chaotic incoherence, such as we find only in the leaps and turns of the mind in dream or in the thoughts of madness, and hardly even there. And if this existence were, as the cosmic pessimist imagines, a dream or an illusion or, worse, as Schopenhauer would have it, a delirium and insanity of the soul, we might accept some such law of inconsequent consequence. But, taken even at its worst

this world of life differs from dream, illusion and madness by its plan of fine, complex and subtle sequences, the hanging together and utility even of its discords, the general and particular harmony of its relations, which, if they are not the harmony we would have, not our longed-for ideal harmony, has still at every point the stamp of a Wisdom and an Idea at work; it is not the act of a Mind in tatters or a machine in dislocation. The continuous existence of the soul in rebirth must signify an evolution if not of the self, for that is said to be immutable, yet of its more outward active soul or self of experience. This evolution is not possible if there is not a connected sequence from life to life, a result of action and experience, an evolutionary consequence to the soul, a law of Karma.

And on the side of Karma, if we give to that its integral and not a truncated meaning, we must admit rebirth for the sufficient field of its action. For Karma is not quite the same thing as a material or substantial law of cause and effect, the antecedent and its mechanical consequence. That would perfectly admit of a Karma which could be carried on in time and the results come with certainty in their proper place, their just degree by a working out of the balance of forces, but need not in any way touch the human originator who might have passed away from the scene by the time the result of his acts got into manifestation. A mechanical Nature could well visit the sins of the fathers not on them, but on their fourth or their four-hundredth generation, as indeed this physical Nature does, and no objection of injustice or any other mental or moral objection could rise, for the only justice or reason of a mechanism is that it shall work according to the law of its structure and the fixed eventuality of its force in action. We cannot demand from it a mind or a moral equity or any kind of supraphysical responsibility. The universal energy grinds out inconsciently its effects and individuals are only fortuitous or subordinate means of its workings;

the soul itself, if there is a soul, makes only a part of the mechanism of Nature, exists not for itself, but as an utility for her business. But Karma is more than a mechanical law of antecedent and consequence. Karma is action, there is a thing done and a doer and an active consequence; these three are the three joints, the three locks, the three *sandhis* of the connexus of Karma. And it is a complex mental, moral and physical working; for the law of it is not less true of the mental and moral than of the physical consequence of the act to the doer. The will and the idea are the driving force of the action, and the momentum does not come from some commotion in my chemical atoms or some working of ion and electron or some weird biological effervescence. Therefore the act and consequence must have some relation to the will and the idea and there must be a mental and moral consequence to the soul which has the will and idea. That, if we admit the individual as a real being, signifies a continuity of act and consequence to him and therefore rebirth for a field of this working. It is evident that in one life we do not and cannot labour out and exhaust all the values and powers of that life, but only carry on a past thread, weave out something in the present, prepare infinitely more for the future.

This consequence of rebirth would not follow from the very nature of Karma if there were only an All-Soul of the universe. For then it would be that which is carrying on in myriads of forms its past, working out some present result, spinning yarn of karma for a future weft of consequence. It is the All-Soul which would be the originator, would upbear the force of the act, would receive and exhaust or again take up for farther uses the returning force of the consequence. Nothing essential would depend on its doing all these things through the same individual mask of its being. For the individual would only be a prolonged moment of the All-Soul, and what it originated in this moment of its being which I call my-

self, might very well produce its result on some other moment of the same being which from the point of view of my ego would be somebody quite different from and unconnected with myself. There would be no injustice, no unreason in such an apparently vicarious reaping of the fruit or suffering of the consequence; for what has a mask, though it be a living and suffering mask, to do with these things? And, in fact, in the nature of life in the material universe a working out of the result of the action of one in the lives of many others, an effect of the individual's action on the group or the whole is everywhere the law. What I sow in this hour, is reaped by my posterity for several generations and we can then call it the karma of the family. What the men of today as community or people resolve upon and execute, comes back with a blessing or a sword upon the future of their race when they themselves have passed away and are no longer there to rejoice or to suffer; and that we can speak of as the karma of the nation. Mankind as a whole too has a karma; what it wrought in its past, will shape its future destiny; individuals seem only to be temporary units of human thought, will, nature who act according to the compulsion of the soul in humanity and disappear; but the karma of the race which they have helped to form continues through the centuries, the millenniums, the cycles.

But we can see, when we look into ourselves, that this relation of the individual to the whole has a different significance; it does not mean that I have no existence except as a more or less protracted moment in the cosmic becoming of the All-Soul: that too is only a superficial appearance and much subtler and greater is the truth of my being. For the original and eternal Reality, the Alpha and Omega, the Godhead is neither separate in the individual nor is he only and solely a Pantheos, a cosmic spirit. He is at once the eternal individual and the eternal All-Soul of this and many universes, and at the same time he

is much more than these things. This universe might end, but he would still be; and I too, though the universe might end, could still exist in him; and all these eternal souls would still exist in him. But as his being is for ever, so the succession of his creations too is for ever; if one creation were to come to an end, it would be only that another might begin and the new would carry on with a fresh commencement and initiation the possibility that had not been worked out in the old, for there can be no end to the self-manifestation of the Infinite. *Nasti anto vistarya me.* The universe finds itself in me, even as I find myself in the universe, because we are this face and that face of the one eternal Reality, and individual being is as much needed as universal being to work out this manifestation. The individual vision of things is as true as the universal vision, both are ways of the self-seeing of the Eternal. I may now see myself as a creature contained in the universe; but when I come to self-knowledge, I see too the universe to be a thing contained in myself, subtly by implication in my individuality, amply in the great universalised self I then become. These are data of an ancient experience, things known and voiced of old, though they may seem shadowy and transcendental to the positive modern mind which has long pored so minutely on outward things that it has become dazed and blind to any greater light and is only slowly recovering the power to see through its folds; but they are for all that always valid and can be experienced today by any one of us who chooses to turn to the deepest way of the inner experience. Modern thought and science, if we look at the new knowledge given us in its whole, do not contradict them, but only trace for us the outward effect and workings of these realities; for always we find in the end that truth of self is not contradicted, but reproduced and made effectual here by law of Energy and law of Matter.

The necessity of rebirth, if we look at it from the

outward side, from the side of energy and process, stands upon a persistent and insistent fact which supervenes always upon the generality of common law and kind and constitutes the most intimate secret of the wonder of existence, the uniqueness of the individual. And this uniqueness is everywhere, but appears as a subordinate factor only in the lower ranges of existence. It becomes more and more important and pronounced as we rise in the scale, enlarges in mind, gets to enormous proportions when we come to the things of the spirit. That would seem to indicate that the cause of this significent uniqueness is something bound up with the very nature of spirit; it is something it held in itself and is bringing out more and more as it emerges out of material Nature into self-conscience. The laws of being are at bottom one for all of us, because all existence is one existence; one spirit, one self, one mind, one life, one energy of process is at work; one will and wisdom has planned or has evolved from itself the whole business of creation. And yet in this oneness there is a persistent variety, which we see first in the form of a communal variation. There is everywhere a group energy, group life, group mind, and if soul is, then we have reason to believe that however elusive it may be to our seizing, there is a group-soul which is the support and foundation—some would call it the result—of this communal variety. That gives us a ground for a group karma. For the group or collective soul renews and prolongs itself and in man at least develops its nature and experience from generation to generation. And who knows whether, when one form of it is disintegrated, community or nation, it may not wait for and assume other forms in which its will of being, its type of nature and mentality, its attempt of experience is carried forward, migrates, one might almost say, into new-born collective bodies, in other ages or cycles? Mankind itself has this separate collective soul and collective existence. And on that community the community

of karma is founded; the action and development of the whole produces consequence of karma and experience for the individual and the totality even as the action and development of the individual produces consequences and experience for others, for the group, for the whole. And the individual is there; you cannot reduce him to a nullity or an illusion; he is real, alive, unique. The communal soul-variation mounts up from the rest, exceeds, brings in or brings out something more, something new, adds novel powers in the evolution. The individual mounts and exceeds in the same way from the community. It is in him, on his highest heights that we get the flame-crest of self-manifestation by which the One finds himself in Nature.

And the question is how does that come about at all? I enter into birth, not in a separate being, but in the life of the whole, and therefore I inherit the life of the whole. I am born physically by a generation which is a carrying on of its unbroken history; the body, life, physical mentality of all past being prolongs itself in me and I must therefore undergo the law of heredity; the parent, says the Upanishad, recreates himself by the energy in his seed and is reborn in the child. But as soon as I begin to develop, a new, an independent and overbearing factor comes in, which is not my parents nor my ancestry, nor past mankind, but I, my own self. And this is the really important, crowning, central factor. What matters most in my life, is not my heredity; that only gives me my opportunity or my obstacle, my good or my bad material, and it has not by any means been shown that I draw all from that source. What matters supremely is what I make of my heredity and not what my heredity makes of me. The past of the world, bygone humanity, my ancestors are there in me; but still I myself am the artist of my self, my life, my actions. And there is the present of the world, of humanity, there are my contemporaries as well as my ancestors; the life of my environment too enters into me,

offers me a new material, shapes me by its influence, lays its direct its or indirect touch on my being. I am invaded, changed, partly recreated by the environing being and action in which I am and act. But here again the individual comes in subtly and centrally as the decisive power. What is supremely important is what I make of all this surrounding and invading present and not what it makes of me. And in the interaction of individual and general Karma in which others are causes and produce an effect in my existence and I am a cause and produce an effect on them, I live for others, whether I would have it so or no, and others live for me and for all. Still the central power of my psychology takes its colour from this seeing that I live for my self, and for others or for the world only as an extension of my self, as a thing with which I am bound up in some kind of oneness. I seem to be a soul, self or spirit who constantly with the assistance of all create out of my past and present my future being and myself too help in the surrounding creative evolution.

What then is this all-important and independent power in me and what is the beginning and the end of its self-creation? Has it, even though it is something independent of the physical and vital present and past which gives to it so much of its material, itself no past and no future? Is it something which suddenly emerges from the All-Soul at my birth and ceases at my death? Is its insistence on self-creation, on making something of itself for itself, for its own future and not only for its fleeting present and the future of the race, a vain preoccupation, a gross parasitical error? That would contradict all that we see of the law of the world-being; it would not reduce our life to a greater consistency with the frame of things, but would bring in a freak element and an inconsistency with the pervading principle. It is reasonable to suppose that this powerful independent element which supervenes and works upon the physical and vital evolu-

tion, was in the past and will be in the future. It is reasonable also to suppose that it did not come in suddenly from some unconnected existence and does not pass out after one brief intervention; its close connection with the life of the world is rather a continuation of a long past connection. And this brings in at once the whole necessity of past birth and karma. I am a persistent being who pursue my evolution within the persistent being of the world. I have evolved my human birth and I help constantly in the human evolution. I have created by my past karma my own conditions and my relations with the life of others and the general karma. That shapes my heredity, my environment, my affinities, my connections, my material, my opportunities and obstacles, a part of my predestined powers and results, not arbitrarily predestined but predetermined by my own stage of nature and past action, and on this groundwork I build new karma and farther strengthen or subtilise my power of natural being, enlarge experience, go on with my soul evolution. This process is woven in with the universal evolution and all its lines are included in the web of being, but it is not merely a jutting point or moment of it or a brief tag shot into the tissue. That is what rebirth means in the history of my manifested self and of universal being.

The old idea of rebirth errs on the contrary by an excessive individualism. Too self-concentrated, it treated one's rebirth and karma as too much one's own single affair, a sharply separate movement in the whole, leaned too much on one's own concern with one's self and, even while it admitted universal relations and a unity with the whole, yet taught the human being to see in life principally a condition and means of his own spiritual benefit and separate salvation. That came from the view of the universe as a movement which proceeds out of something beyond, something from which each being enters into life and returns out of it to its source, and the absorbing idea of that return as the one thing that at all matters. Our being in

the world, so treated, came in the end to be regarded as an episode and in sum and essence an unhappy and discreditable episode in the changeless eternity of the Spirit. But this was too summary a view of the will and the ways of the Spirit in existence. Certain it is that while we are here our rebirth or karma even while it runs on its own lines, is intimately one with the same lines in the universal existence. But my self-knowledge and self-finding too do not abolish my oneness with other life and other beings. An intimate universality is part of the glory of spiritual perfection. This idea of universality, of oneness not only with God or the eternal Self in me, but with all humanity and other beings, is growing to be the most prominent strain in our minds and it has to be taken more largely into account in any future idea or computation of the significance of rebirth and karma. It was admitted in old times; the Buddhist law of compassion was a recognition of its importance; but it has to be given a still more pervading power in the general significance.

The self-effectuation of the Spirit in the world is the truth on which we take our foundation, a great, a long self-weaving in time. Rebirth is the continuity of that self-effectuation in the individual, the persistence, of the thread; Karma is the process, a force, a work of energy and consequence in the material world, an inner and an outer will, action and mental, moral, dynamic consequence in the soul evolution of which the material world is a constant scene. That is the conception; the rest is a question of the general and particular laws, the way in which karma works out and helps the purpose of the spirit in birth and life. And whatever those laws and ways may be, they must be subservient to this spiritual self-effectuation and take from it all their meaning and value. The law is a means, a line of working for the spirit, and does not exist for its own sake or for the service of any abstract idea. Idea and law of working are only direction and road for the soul's progress in the steps of its existence.

आर्य

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th December 1919

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA..... Aurobindo Ghose
Deva and Asura

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G.
Ch. LXI. The Action of Equality

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE (11)

THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... Paul Richard
The Perfect Knowledge

THE FUTURE POETRY.....
The Ideal Spirit of Poetry

KARMA AND JUSTICE.....

Essays on the Gita

DEVA AND ASURA

The practical difficulty of the change from the normal nature of man to the active freedom of his divine and spiritual being will appear if we ask ourselves, more narrowly, how the transition can be effected from the fettered embarrassed functioning of the three qualities to the infinite action of the liberated man who is no longer subject to the gunas. The transition is indispensable; for it is clearly laid down that he must be above or without the three gunas, *triguṇâtîta nistraiguṇya*. On the other hand it is no less clearly, no less emphatically laid down that in every natural being here on earth the three gunas are there in their inextricable working and it is even said that all action of man or creature or force is their action upon each other in which one predominates, the others modify, *guṇa guṇeshu vartante*. How then can there be another active nature or any other kind of works? To act is to be subject to the three qualities of Nature; to be beyond these modes of her working is to be silent in the Self. The Ishwara, the Supreme who is master of action and guides and determines it by his divine will, is indeed above this mechanism of quality, but still it would seem that he acts always through them, shapes by the power of

the swabhava, through the psychological machinery of the gunas. They are the properties of Prakriti, the executive Nature force which takes shape here in our being, and the Jiva is the partial being of the Divine in this Prakriti. If then he still does works, still moves in the kinetic movement, it must be so that he moves and acts, in Nature and by the limitation of her qualities, subject to their reactions, not, so far as that part of his being persists, in the freedom of the Divine. But the Gita has said exactly the opposite, that the liberated Yogin, whatever he does, however he lives, moves and acts in God, delivered from the guna reactions, in the freedom and the immortality, in the law of his supreme eternal being, *sarvathâ vartamâno'pi sa yogî mayi vartate.* There seems here to be a contradiction, an impasse.

But this is only when we knot ourselves up in the logical oppositions of the analytic mind, not when we look freely and subtly at the nature of spirit and being. What moves the world is not really the modes of Prakriti,—they are only the lower aspect, the mechanism of our normal nature; the real motive power is a divine spiritual Will which uses at present, but is not itself limited, dominated, mechanised, as is the human will, by the gunas. No doubt, since these modes are so universal in their action, they must proceed from something inherent in the power of the Spirit, there must be powers in the divine Will-force from which these aspects of our nature have their origin. For everything in the lower normal nature is derived from the higher spiritual power of being of the Purushottama, *matlah pravartate*; it does not come into being *de novo* and without a spiritual cause; something in the essential power of the spirit there must be from which the sattwic light and satisfaction, the rajasic kinesis, the tamasic inertia are derivations and of which they are the imperfect or degraded forms. But once we get back to these things in their purity above the imperfection

and degradation, we shall find that they wear a quite different aspect when we live in the spirit. Being and action become altogether different things.

For what is behind this troubled kinesis of the cosmos with all its clash and struggle which, when it touches the mind, when it puts on mental values, creates the reactions of desire, striving, straining, error of will, sorrow, sin, pain? It is a will of the spirit in movement, it is a large divine will in action which is not touched by these things, a power* of the free and infinite conscious being which has no desire, but rather a spontaneous and universal possession, no striving and straining but a free mastery of its means and its objects, no error of will, but a knowledge of self and things which is the source of the mastery, no sorrow, sin or pain, but the joy and purity of its being and the joy and purity of its power. The soul that lives in God, acts by this spiritual will and not by the normal will of the unliberated mind: its kinesis takes place by this spiritual force and not by the rajasic mode of Nature, precisely because it no longer lives in the lower being to which that deformation belongs, but has got back in the divine nature to the pure and perfect sense of the kinesis.

And again what is behind the inertia of Nature, this Tamas which, when complete, makes her action like the blind driving of a machine, a mechanical impetus unobservant of anything except the groove in which it is set to spin and not conscious even of the law of that motion, resolves cessation of the accustomed action into disintegration, and in the mind becomes a power for inaction and ignorance? This tamas is an impulse which mistranslates, we may say, into inaction of power and inaction of knowledge the eternal principle of calm and repose in the

* *Tapas, chit-shakti.*

Spirit, which it never loses even while it acts, and which retains the integral knowledge and power of its creative will even in the apparent limitation of its action and knowledge and would still retain it ready and conscious even if it ceased for a time actively to know and create. The Eternal does not need to sleep or rest; he does not get tired and flag and stop to refresh and recreate his exhausted energies; for his energy is inexhaustibly the same and infinite. He is calm and at rest in the midst of his action; his very cessation of action would contain in it the full power of his kinesis. And the liberated soul enters into this calm, participates in this eternal repose of the spirit. This is known to every one who has had any taste of the joy of liberation, that it contains an eternal power of calm. And this remains in the very heart of action; there may be a flood of thought, action, will, movement, an overflowing of love or the emotion of the self-existent spiritual ecstasy extending itself to the spiritual enjoyment of things and beings in the world and in the ways of Nature, and yet this calm and repose would be behind it, always the same. The calm of the liberated man is not an indolence, incapacity, insensibility; it is full of immortal power, capable of all action, capable of all delight and all love.

And so too behind the inferior light and happiness of the sattwic quality of Nature,—that power of assimilation, equivalence, right knowledge and dealing, harmony, balance, right law of action, right possession, which brings so full a satisfaction to the mind, this highest thing in the normal nature, admirable in itself so far as it goes and while it can be maintained, but precarious, secured by limitation, dependent on rule and condition,—there is a greater light and bliss, its free source in the free spirit. That is not limited nor dependent on limitation or rule or condition, but self-existent, unalterable, not the result of this or that harmony amid the discords of our nature, but the fount of harmony and able to create whatever harmony it will. That is

a luminous spiritual and in its native action a direct supramental light of knowledge, *jyotih*, not the modified and derivative mental light, *prakâça*. That is the light and bliss of self-existence, self-knowledge and universal identity, not of acquisition, assimilation, adjustment, equivalence. That light is full of the luminous spiritual will and there is no guilt or disparateness between its knowledge and its action. That delight is not the mental happiness, *sukham*, but a self-existent bliss extended to all things it does, envisages, creates, a divine bliss, Ananda. The liberated soul participates in this light and bliss, grows the more perfectly into it, the more integrally it unites itself with the Divine. And while among the gunas of Nature there is a disequilibrium, inconstancy of measures and struggle for domination, the greater light, bliss, calm, will of kinesis do not exclude each other, are not at war, are not even merely in equilibrium, but are each an aspect of the other and in their fullness inseparable, one. Our mind may, when it approaches the Divine, seem to enter into one to the exclusion of another, as for instance calm to the exclusion of kinesis of action, but that is because we approach him first through the spirit in the mind; afterwards we can see that each contains all the rest and we can then get rid of this mental limitation.

We see then that action is possible without the subjection of the soul to the normal degraded functioning of the modes of Nature. That functioning depends on the mental limitation; it is a deformation, an incapacity, a wrong or depressed value given by the mind and life in matter. When we grow into the spirit, this dharma or inferior law of Nature is replaced by the immortal dharma of the spirit, a free immortal action, divine knowledge, power, repose. But still there remains the question of the transition; for there must be a transition, a proceeding by steps, since nothing in God's workings in this world is done by an abrupt action without procedure or basis. We

have the thing we seek in us, but we have in practice to evolve it out of the inferior forms of our nature. Then in the action of the modes itself there must be some means, some leverage, some *point d'appui*, by which we can effect this transformation. The Gita finds it in the full development of the sattwic guna till it reaches a point at which it can go beyond itself and disappear into its source. The reason is evident, because sattwa is a power of light and happiness, a force that makes for calm and knowledge, and at its highest point it can arrive at a certain reflection, almost a mental identity with the spiritual light and bliss from which it derives; but the other two gunas cannot arrive at the divine kinetic will or the divine repose and calm without the intervention of the sattwic quality. The principle of inertia will remain an inert inaction of power and inaction of knowledge until its ignorance disappears in illumination and its incapacity in the light of the divine will of repose. Then only can we have the supreme calm. Therefore tamas must be dominated by sattwa. The principle of rajas for the same reason must remain a restless, troubled, feverish or unhappy working because it has not right knowledge; it is a wrong and perverse action. Our will must purify itself by knowledge, get more and more to a right action before it can be converted into the divine kinetic will. That again means the necessity of the intervention of sattwa. The sattwic quality is a first mediator between the higher and lower nature. It must indeed at a certain point transform or escape from itself, break up and dissolve into its source, its conditioned derivative light and action change into the free direct action and light of the spirit. But meanwhile it delivers us from the tamasic and the rajasic disqualification; and its own disqualification, once we are not pulled downward by rajas and tamas, can be surmounted with a certain ease. To develop sattwa till it becomes full of spiritual light and calm, is then the first condition of this discipline.

That, we shall find, is the whole intention of the remaining chapters of the Gita. But first it prefaces the consideration of this movement by a distinction between two kinds of human being, the Deva and the Asura, of whom the Deva is capable of this high self-transforming sattwic action, the Asura incapable. We must see what is the precise object and bearing of this preface and this distinction. The nature of all human beings is a mixture of the three gunas; it would seem then that in all there must be the capacity to develop and strengthen the sattwic element and turn it upward towards the heights of the divine transformation. That our ordinary turn is actually towards making our reason and will the servants of our rajasic or tamasic egoism, the ministers of our restless and ill-balanced kinetic desire or our self-indulgent indolence and static inertia, can only be a characteristic of our undeveloped spiritual being, a rawness of its imperfect evolution. But at the same time we actually see that men above a certain level fall very largely into two classes, those who have a great force of sattwic nature turned towards knowledge, self-control, beneficence, perfection and those who have a great force of rajasic nature turned towards egoistic greatness, satisfaction of desire, the indulgence of their own strong will and personality which they seek to impose on the world not for the service of man or God, but for their own pride, glory and pleasure. These are the Devas and Danavas or Asuras, the Gods and the Titans. This distinction is a very ancient one in Indian religious symbolism. The fundamental idea of the Rig Veda is a struggle between the Gods and their dark opponents, the Masters of Light, sons of Infinity, and the children of Division and Night, in which man takes part and which is reflected in all his inner life and action,—as it was also the idea of the religion of Zoroaster. The same idea is prominent in later literature. The Ramayana is in its ethical idea a struggle between the Deva in human form and the Rakshasa, the huge unbrid-

led force and gigantic civilisation of the exaggerated Ego. The Mahabharata, of which the Gita is a section, is a struggle between human Deva and Asura, the men of power, sons of the Gods, who are governed by the light of a high ethical Dharma, and the incarnate Titans, the men of power who are out for the service of their intellectual, vital and physical ego. The ancient mind saw behind the life of man great cosmic Powers or beings representing certain turns or grades of the universal Shakti, divine, titanic, gigantic, demoniac, and men who strongly represented in themselves these types of nature were said to be themselves Devas, Asuras, Rakshasas, Pisachas. The Gita for its own purposes takes up this distinction and develops the difference between these two kinds of beings, *dwau bhûtasargau*. It has spoken previously of the nature which is Asuric and Rakshasic and prevents God-knowledge, salvation and perfection; it now contrasts it with the Daivic nature which is turned to these things.

Arjuna, says the Teacher, is of the Deva nature; he need not grieve or think that in his action he is yielding to the impulses of the Asura. The action on which all turns, the battle which Arjuna has to fight with the incarnate Godhead as his charioteer at the bidding of the Master of the world in the form of the Time-Spirit, is a battle to establish the kingdom of the Dharma, the empire of Truth, Right and Justice. He himself is born in the Deva kind; he has developed in himself the sattwic being, until he has now come to a point at which he is capable of the transformation and liberation from the *traiguṇya* nature. The distinction between the Deva and the Asura is not comprehensive of all humanity, neither is it sharp and definite in all stages of its moral or spiritual history. The tamasic man who makes so large a part of the race, falls in neither category as it is here described, though he has both elements in him and for the most part serves tepidly the lower qualities; the normal man is ordinarily a mix-

ture, though one or the other tendency is more pronounced and he may be said to be preparing for either culmination. For it is here a question of a certain culmination of the qualitative nature, as will be evident from the descriptions given, on one side a sublimation of the rajasic quality, on the other a sublimation of the sattwic quality of the soul in nature. The one leads towards that movement of liberation on which the Gita is going to lay stress, the carrying of the sattwa quality beyond itself into a likeness of the divine being, *vimokshâya*, the other leads away from it to an exaggeration of the bondage to the ego. This is the point of the distinction.

The Deva nature is distinguished by an acme of the sattwic habits and qualities; self-control, sacrifice, the religous habit, cleanness and purity, candour and straightforwardness, truth, calm, self-denial, compassion to all beings, modesty, gentleness, forgivingness, patience, steadfastness, a freedom from all restlessness, levity and inconstancy are its native attributes; the Asuric qualities, wrath, greed, cunning, treachery, the doing of injury to others, pride and arrogance and excessive self-esteem have no place in its composition. But its gentleness and self-denial and self-control are free too from all weakness; it has energy and soul force, resolution, the fearlessness of the soul that lives in the right and according to the truth as well as its harmlessness, *tejah, abhayam, dhritih, ahinsâ, satyam*. The whole being, the whole temperament is integrally pure; there is a seeking for knowledge and the calm and fixed abiding in knowledge. This is the wealth, the plenitude of the man born into the Deva nature. The Asuric nature has too its wealth, its plenitude of force, but it is of a very different, an evil though powerful kind.

Asuric men have no true knowledge of the way of action or the way of abstention, the fulfilling or the holding in of the nature. Truth is not in them, nor clean doing, nor faithful observance. They see naturally in the world a huge

play of the satisfaction of self, a world with Desire for its cause and seed and governing force and law, a world of Chance, devoid of just relation and linked Karma, a world without God, a world not true, not founded in Truth. Whatever intellectual or religious creed they may possess, this is the creed of their mind and will in action, a cult of Desire and Ego. On that way of seeing life they lean in reality and by its falsehood they ruin their souls and their reason. They become men of a fierce, Titanic, violent action, a fount of injury and evil, a power of destruction in the world. Arrogant, full of self-esteem and the drunkenness of their pride, they delude themselves, persist in false and obstinate aims, pursue the fixed impure resolution of their desires. They think that desire and enjoyment are the whole aim of life and in the result, in their pursuit of it, they are the prey of a measureless unceasing thought and anxiety till their death. For they are bound by a hundred bonds of desire, devoured with wrath and lusts, unweariedly occupied in amassing unjust gains which may serve their enjoyment and the satisfaction of desire; always they are thinking, "Today I have gained this object of desire, tomorrow I shall have that other, today I have so much wealth, more I will get tomorrow, I have killed this my enemy, the rest too I will kill. I am a lord and king of men, I am perfect, accomplished, strong, happy and fortunate, a privileged enjoyer of the world; I am wealthy, I am of high birth; who is there like unto me? I will sacrifice, I will give, I will enjoy." Thus occupied by many egoistic ideas, deluded, doing works, but doing them wrongly, acting mightily, but for themselves, for desire, for enjoyment, not for God in themselves and God in man, they fall into the unclean hell of their own evil. They sacrifice and give, but from an egoistic ostentation, from self-esteem, with a stiff and foolish pride. In the egoism of their strength and pride and wrath and arrogance they hate, despise and belittle the God in themsel-

ves and the God in man. And because they have this proud hatred and contempt of good and of God, because they are cruel and evil, the Divine casts them down continually into more and more Asuric births; they find him not, but losing the way sink down into the lowest status of soul-nature, *adhamâm gatim*.

This graphic description and the bearing of the distinction it implies, must not be pressed to carry more in it than it means. When it is said that there are two creations of beings in this material world, Deva and Asura, it is not meant that souls are so created by God from the beginning each with its own inevitable career in Nature, nor is it meant that there is a rigid spiritual predestination and those rejected by the Divine are blinded by him so that they may be thrust down to eternal perdition and the impurity of Hell. All souls are eternal portions of the Divine, the Asura as well as the Deva, all come to salvation; even the greatest sinner can turn to the Divine. But the evolution of the soul in Nature is an adventure of which swabhava and the Karma governed by the swabhava are ever the chief powers; and if the swabhava, the self-becoming of the soul, turns the law of being to the perverse side, if the rajasic qualities are given the upper hand, cultured to the diminution of sattwa, then it necessarily culminates not in the sattwic height which is capable of the movement of liberation, but in the highest exaggeration of the perversities of the lower nature. The man, if he does not stop short and turn in his way of error, is eventually born as an Asura, and once he has taken that enormous turn away from the Light and Truth, he cannot turn again because of the very immensity of the misused divine power in him until he has plumbed the depths to which it falls, found bottom and seen where the way has led him, the power exhausted and misspent, himself down in the lowest state of the soul nature, which is Hell. Only when he understands and turns to the Truth, does that other truth of the Gita come in, that

even the greatest sinner, the most impure and violent evil-doer is saved the moment he turns to adore and follow after God within. Then by that turn he gets at once into the sattwic way which leads to perfection and freedom.

The Asuric nature is the rajasic nature at its height; it leads to the slavery of the soul to desire, wrath and greed, the three powers of the rajasic ego, and these are the three-fold doors of Hell, the Hell into which the soul falls when it indulges the impurity and evil and ignorance of its lower or perverted instincts. They are the doors of darkness, tamas, Ignorance, and the unbridled power of the rajasic nature, when exhausted, falls back into the weakness, collapse, darkness, incapacity of the worst tamasic soul-status. To escape from it one must get rid of these three things and turn to the light of the sattwic quality, live by the right, in the true relations, according to the Truth and the Law; then one follows one's own higher good and arrives at the highest soul-status. To follow the law of desire is not the true rule of our nature; there is a higher and truer law of our being. But where is it embodied or how is it to be found? In the first place, the human race has always been seeking for this Law and it is embodied in its Shastra, its rule of science and knowledge, rule of ethics, rule of religion, rule of social living, rule of one's right relations with man and God. Shastra does not mean a mass of customs, some good, some bad, unintelligently followed by the customary routine mind of the tamasic man. Shastra is the law laid down by intuition, experience and wisdom, the science and art and ethic of life, the best law available to the race. The man who leaves the observance of its rule to follow the guidance of his instincts and desires, can get pleasure but not happiness, for the inner happiness can only come by right living. He cannot move to perfection, cannot acquire the highest spiritual status. The law of instinct and desire seems to come first in the animal world, but the manhood of man grows by the pursuit of truth

and religion and knowledge and a right life. The Shastra, the recognised Law that he has set up to govern his lower members by his reason and intelligent will, must therefore first be observed and made the authority for conduct and works and for what should or should not be done, till the instinctive desire nature is schooled and abated and put down by the habit of self-control and man is ready for the still higher supreme law of the spiritual nature.

For the Shastra in its ordinary aspect is not that spiritual law, though at its highest point, when it becomes a science and art of spiritual living, Adhyatma-shastra,—the Gita itself describes its own teaching as the highest and most secret Shastra,—it becomes the rule of the self-transcendence of the sattwic nature and develops the discipline which leads to spiritual transmutation. Yet the Shastra is built on a number of preparatory conditions, dharmas; it is a means, not an end; the end is the freedom of the spirit when abandoning all dharmas the soul turns to God for its sole law of action, acts straight from the divine will and lives in the freedom of the divine nature, not in the Law, but in the Spirit. This is the development of the teaching which is prepared by the next question of Arjuna.

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LXI

THE ACTION OF EQUALITY

The distinctions that have already been made, will have shown in sufficiency what is meant by the status of equality. It is not mere quiescence and indifference, not a withdrawal from experience, but a superiority to the present reactions of the mind and life. It is the spiritual way of replying to life or rather of embracing it and compelling it to become a perfect form of action of the self and spirit. It is the first secret of the soul's mastery of existence. When we have it in perfection, we are admitted to the very ground of the divine spiritual nature. The mental being in the body tries to compel and conquer life, but is at every turn compelled by it, because it submits to the desire reactions of the vital self. To be equal, not to be overborne by any stress of desire, is the first condition of real mastery, self-empire is its basis. But a mere mental equality, however great it may be, is hampered by the tendency of quiescence. It has to preserve itself from desire by self-limitation in the will and action. It is only the spirit which is capable of sublime undisturbed rapidities of will as well as an illimitable patience, equally just in a slow and deliberate or a swift and violent, equally

secure in a safely lined and limited or a vast and enormous action. It can accept the smallest work in the narrowest circle of cosmos, but it can work too upon the whirl of chaos with an understanding and creative force; and these things it can do because by its detached and yet intimate acceptance it carries into both an infinite calm, knowledge, will and power. It has that detachment because it is above all the happenings, forms, ideas and movements it embraces in its scope; and it has that intimate acceptance because it is yet one with all things. If we have not this free unity, *ekatwam anupaçyatah*, we have not the full equality of the spirit.

The first business of the sadhaka is to see whether he has the perfect equality, how far he has gone in this direction or else where is the flaw, and to exercise steadily his will on his nature or invite the will of the Purusha to get rid of the defect and its causes. There are four things that he must have; first, equality in the most concrete practical sense of the word, *samatâ*, freedom from mental, vital, physical preferences, an even acceptance of all God's workings within and around him; secondly, a firm peace and absence of all disturbance and trouble, *çânti*; thirdly, a positive inner spiritual happiness and spiritual ease of the natural being which nothing can lessen, *sukham*; fourthly, a clear joy and laughter of the soul embracing life and existence. To be equal is to be infinite and universal, not to limit oneself, not to bind oneself down to this or that form of the mind and life and its partial preferences and desires. But since man in his present normal nature lives by his mental and vital formations, not in the freedom of his spirit, attachment to them and the desires and preferences they involve is also his normal condition. To accept them is at first inevitable, to get beyond them exceedingly difficult and not, perhaps, altogether possible so long as we are compelled to use the mind as the chief instrument of our action. The first necessity therefore is to take at least

the sting out of them, to deprive them, even when they persist, of their greater insistence, their present egoism, their more violent claim on our nature.

The test that we have done this is the presence of an undisturbed calm in the mind and spirit. The sadhaka must be on the watch as the witnessing and willing Purusha behind or, better, as soon as he can manage it, above the mind, and repel even the least indices or incidence of trouble, anxiety, grief, revolt, disturbance in his mind. If these things come, he must at once detect their source, the defect which they indicate, the fault of egoistic claim, vital desire, emotion or idea from which they start and this he must discourage by his will, his spiritualised intelligence, his soul unity with the Master of his being. On no account must he admit any excuse for them, however natural, righteous in seeming or plausible, or any inner or outer justification. If it is the prana which is troubled and clamorous, he must separate himself from the troubled Prana, keep seated his higher nature in the buddhi and by the buddhi school and reject the claim of the desire soul in him; and so too if it is the heart of emotion that makes the clamour and the disturbance. If on the other hand it is the will and intelligence itself that is at fault, then the trouble is more difficult to command, because then his chief aid and instrument becomes an accomplice of the revolt against the divine Will and the old sins of the lower members take advantage of this sanction to raise their diminished heads. Therefore there must be a constant insistence on one main idea, the self-surrender to the Master of our being, God within us and in the world, the supreme Self, the universal Spirit. The buddhi dwelling always in this master idea must discourage all its own lesser insistences and preferences and teach the whole being that the ego whether it puts forth its claim through the reason, the personal will, the heart or the desire-soul in the prana, has no just claim of any kind and all grief,

revolt, impatience, trouble is a violence against the Master of the being.

This complete self-surrender must be the chief mainstay of the sadhaka because it is the only way, apart from complete quiescence and indifference to all action,—and that has to be avoided,—by which the absolute calm and peace can come. The persistence of trouble, *açânti*, the length of time taken for this purification and perfection, itself must not be allowed to become a reason for discouragement and impatience. It comes because there is still something in the nature which responds to it, and the recurrence of trouble serves to bring out the presence of the defect, put the sadhaka upon his guard and bring about a more enlightened and consistent action of the will to get rid of it. When the trouble is too strong to be kept out, it must be allowed to pass and its return discouraged by a greater vigilance and insistence of the spiritualised buddhi. Thus persisting, it will be found that these things lose their force more and more, become more and more external and brief in their recurrence, until finally calm becomes the law of the being. This rule persists so long as the mental buddhi is the chief instrument; but when the supramental light takes possession of mind and heart, then there can be no trouble, grief or disturbance; for that brings with it a spiritual nature of illumined strength in which these things can have no place. There the only vibrations and emotions are those which belong to the *ânandamaya* nature of divine unity.

The calm established in the whole being must remain the same whatever happens, in health and disease, in pleasure and in pain, even in the strongest physical pain, in good fortune and misfortune, our own or that of those we love, in success and failure, honour and insult, praise and blame, justice done to us or injustice, everything that ordinarily affects the mind. If we see unity everywhere, if we recognise that all comes by the divine will, see God in all,

in our enemies or rather our opponents in the game of life as well as our friends, in the powers that oppose and resist us as well as the powers that favour and assist, in all energies and forces and happenings, and if besides we can feel that all is undivided from our self, all the world one with us within our universal being, then this attitude becomes much easier to the heart and mind. But even before we can attain or are firmly seated in that universal vision, we have by all the means in our power to insist on this receptive and active equality and calm. Even something of it, *alpam api asya dharmasya*, is a great step towards perfection; a first firmness in it is the beginning of liberated perfection; its completeness is the perfect assurance of a rapid progress in all the other members of perfection. For without it we can have no solid basis; and by the pronounced lack of it we shall be constantly falling back to the lower status of desire, ego, duality, ignorance.

This calm once attained, vital and mental preference has lost its disturbing force; it only remains as a formal habit of the mind. Vital acceptance or rejection, the greater readiness to welcome this rather than that happening, the mental acceptance or rejection, the preference of this more congenial to that other less congenial idea or truth, the dwelling upon the will to this rather than to that other result, become a formal mechanism still necessary as an index of the direction in which the Shakti is meant to turn or for the present is made to incline by the Master of our being. But it loses its disturbing aspect of strong egoistic will, intolerant desire, obstinate liking. These appearances may remain for a while in a diminished form, but as the calm of equality increases, deepens, becomes more essential and compact, *ghana*, they disappear, cease to colour the mental and vital substance or occur only as touches on the most external physical mind, are unable to penetrate within, and at last even that recurrence, that appearance at the outer gates of mind ceases. Then there

can come the living reality of the perception that all in us is done and directed by the Master of our being, *yathâ prayukto'smi, tathâ karomi*, which was before only a strong idea and faith with occasional and derivative glimpses of the divine action behind the becomings of our personal nature. Now every movement is seen to be the form given by the Shakti, the divine power in us, to the indications of the Purusha, still no doubt personalised, still belittled in the inferior mental form, but not primarily egoistic, an imperfect form, not a positive deformation. We have then to get beyond this stage even. For the perfect action and experience is not to be determined by any kind of mental or vital preference, but by the revealing and inspiring spiritual will which is the Shakti in her direct and real initiation. When I say that as I am appointed, I work, I still bring in a limiting personal element and mental reaction. But it is the Master who will do his own work through myself as his instrument, and there must be no mental or other preference in me to limit, to interfere, to be a source of imperfect working. The mind must become a silent luminous channel for the revelations of the supramental Truth and of the Will involved in its seeing. Then shall the action be the action of that highest Being and Truth and not a qualified translation or mistranslation in the mind. Whatever limitation, selection, relation is imposed, will be self-imposed by the Divine on himself in the individual at the moment for his own purpose, not binding, not final, not an ignorant determination of the mind. The thought and will become then an action from a luminous Infinite, a formulation not excluding other formulations, but rather putting them into their just place in relation to itself, englobing or transforming them even and proceeding to larger formations of the divine knowledge and action.

The first calm that comes is of the nature of peace, the absence of all unquiet, grief and disturbance. As the

equality becomes more intense, it takes on a fuller substance of positive happiness and spiritual ease. This is the joy of the spirit in itself, dependent on nothing external for its absolute existence, *nirâśraya*, as the Gita describes it, *antah-sukho antarârâmah*, an exceeding inner happiness, *brahmasparśam atyantam sukham aśnute*. Nothing can disturb it, and it extends itself to the soul's view of outward things, imposes on them too the law of this quiet spiritual joy. For the base of it is still calm, it is an even and tranquil neutral joy, *ahailuka*. And as the supramental light grows, a greater Ananda comes, the base of the abundant ecstasy of the spirit in all it is, becomes, sees, experiences and of the laughter of the Shakti doing luminously the work of the Divine and taking his Ananda in all the worlds.

The perfected action of equality transforms all the values of things on the basis of the divine *ânandamaya* power. The outward action may remain what it was or may change, that must be as the Spirit directs and according to the need of the work to be done for the world,—but the whole inner action is of another kind. The Shakti in its different powers of knowledge, action, enjoyment, creation, formulation, will direct itself to the different aims of existence, but in another spirit; they will be the aims, the fruits, the lines of working laid down by the Divine from his light above, not anything claimed by the ego for its own separate sake. The mind, the heart, the vital being, the body itself will be satisfied with whatever comes to them from the dispensation of the Master of the being and in that find a subtlest and yet fullest spiritualised satisfaction and delight; but the divine knowledge and will above will work forward towards its farther ends. Here both success and failure lose their present meanings. There can be no failure; for whatever happens is the intention of the Master of the worlds, not final, but a step on his way, and if it appears as an opposition, a defeat, a

denial, even for the moment a total denial of the aim set before the instrumental being, it is so only in appearance and afterwards it will appear in its right place in the economy of his action,—a fuller supramental vision may even see at once or beforehand its necessity and its true relation to the eventual result to which it seems so contrary and even perhaps its definite prohibition. Or, if—while the light is deficient,—there has been a misinterpretation whether with regard to the aim or the course of the action and the steps of the result, the failure comes as a rectification and is calmly accepted without bringing discouragement or a fluctuation of the will. In the end it is found that there is no such thing as failure and the soul takes an equal passive or active delight in all happenings as the steps and formulations of the divine Will. The same evolution takes place with regard to good fortune and ill fortune, the pleasant and the unpleasant in every form, *mangala amangala*, *priya apriya*.

And as with happenings, so with persons, equality brings an entire change of the view and the attitude. The first result of the equal mind and spirit is to bring about an increasing charity and inner toleration of all persons, ideas, views, actions, because it is seen that God is in all beings and each acts according to his nature, his *swabhâva*, and its present formulations. When there is the positive equal Ananda, this deepens to a sympathetic understanding and in the end an equal universal love. None of these things need prevent various relations or different formulations of the inner attitude according to the need of life as determined by the spiritual will, or firm furtherings of this idea, view, action against that other for the same need and purpose by the same determination, or a strong outward or inward resistance, opposition and action against the forces that are impelled to stand in the way of the decreed movement. And there may be even the rush of the Rudra energy forcefully working upon or shattering the

human or other obstacle, because that is necessary both for him and for the world purpose. But the essence of the equal inmost attitude is not altered or diminished by these more superficial formulations. The spirit, the fundamental soul remain the same, even while the Shakti of knowledge, will, action, love does its work and assumes the various forms needed for its work. And in the end all becomes a form of a luminous spiritual unity with all persons, energies, things in the being of God and in the luminous, spiritual, one and universal force, in which one's own action becomes an inseparable part of the action of all, is not divided from it, but feels perfectly every relation as a relation with God in all in the complex terms of his universal oneness. That is a plenitude which can hardly be described in the language of the dividing mental reason for it uses all its oppositions, yet escapes from them, nor can it be put in the terms of our limited mental psychology. It belongs to another domain of consciousness, another plane of our being.

A Defence of Indian Culture

(11)

The most general charge against Indian culture in its practical effects can be dismissed without any serious difficulty. The critic with whom I have to deal has, in fact, spoiled his case by the spirit of frantic exaggeration in which he writes. To say that there has been no great or vivid activity of life in India, that she has had no great personalities with the mythical exception of Buddha and the other pale exception of Asoka, that she has never shown any will-power and never done any great thing, is so contrary to all the facts of history that only a devil's advocate in search of a case could advance it at all or put it with that crude vehemence. India has lived and lived greatly, whatever judgment one may pass on her ideas and institutions. What is meant after all by life and when is it that we most fully and greatly live? Life is surely nothing but the creation and active self-expression of man's spirit, powers, capacities, his will to be and think and create and love and do and achieve. When that is wanting or, since it cannot be absolutely wanting, depressed, held under, discouraged or inert, whether by internal or external causes, then we may say that there is a lack of life. Life in its largest sense is the great web of our internal and external

action, the play of Shakti, the play of Karma; it is religion and philosophy and thought and science and poetry and art, drama and song and dance and play, politics and society, industry, commerce and trade, adventure and travel, war and peace, conflict and unity, victory and defeat and aspirations and vicissitudes, the thoughts, emotions, words, deeds, joy and sorrows which make up the existence of man. In a narrower sense life is sometimes spoken of as the more obvious and external vital action, a thing which can be depressed by a topheavy intellectuality or ascetic spirituality, sicklied over with the pale cast of thought or the paler cast of world-weariness or made flat, stale and uninteresting by a formalised, conventional or too strait-laced system of society. Again, life may be very active and full of colour for a small and privileged part of the community, but the life of the mass dull, void and miserable. Or, finally, there may be all the ordinary materials and circumstances of mere living, but if life is not uplifted by great hopes, aspirations and ideals, then we may well say that the community does not really live; it is defective in the characteristic greatness of the human spirit.

The ancient and mediaeval life of India was not wanting in any of the things that make up the vivid interestin activity of human existence. On the contrary, it was extraordinarily full of colour and interest. Mr. Archer's criticism on this point, a criticism packed full of ignorance and built up by a purely fictitious construction of what things logically ought to have been on the theory of a dominating asceticism and belief in the illusionary character of the world, is not and cannot be borne out by anyone who has come close to the facts. It is true that while many European writers who have studied the history of the land and the people, have expressed strongly their appreciation of the vividness and interesting fullness, colour and beauty of life in India before the present period, —that unhappily exists no longer except in the pages of his-

tory and literature and the broken or crumbling fragments of the past,—those who see only from a distance or fix their eyes only on one aspect, speak of it often as a land of metaphysics, philosophies, dreams and brooding imaginations, and certain artists and writers are apt to write in a strain as if it were a country of the Arabian Nights, a mere glitter of strange hues and fancies and marvels. But on the contrary India has been as much a home of serious and solid realities, of a firm grappling with the problems of thought and life, of measured and wise organisation and great action as any other considerable centre of civilisation. The widely different view these perceptions express simply show the many-sided brilliance and fullness of her life. The colour and magnificence have been its aesthetic side; she has had great dreams and high and splendid imaginations, for that too is wanted for the completeness of our living; but also deep philosophical and religious thinking, a wide and searching criticism of life, a great political and social order, a strong ethical tone and a persistent vigour of individual and communal living. That is a combination which means life in all its fullness, though deficient, it may be, except in extraordinary cases, in the more violent egoistic perversities and exaggerations which some minds seem to take for a proof of the highest vigour of existence.

In what field indeed has not India attempted, achieved, created, and in all on a large scale and yet with much attention to completeness of detail? Of her spiritual and philosophic achievement there can be no real question. They stand there as the Himalayas stand upon the earth in the phrase of Kalidasa, *prithivyâ iva mânadandah*, "as if earth's measuring rod," mediating still beneath earth and heaven, measuring the finite, casting their plummet far into the infinite, plunging their extremities into the upper and lower seas of the superconscient and the subliminal, the spiritual and the natural being. But if her

philosophies, her religious disciplines, her long list of great spiritual personalities, thinkers, founders, saints are her greatest glory, as was natural to her temperament and governing idea, they are by no means her sole glories, nor are the others dwarfed by their eminence. It is now proved that in science she went farther than any country before the modern era, and even Europe owes the beginning of her physical science to India as much as to Greece, although not directly but through the medium of the Arabs. And, even if she had only gone as far, that would have been sufficient proof of a strong intellectual life in an ancient culture. Especially in mathematics, astronomy and chemistry, the chief elements of ancient science, she discovered and formulated much and well and anticipated by force of reasoning or experiment some of the scientific ideas and discoveries which Europe first arrived at much later, but was able to base more firmly by her new and completer method. She was well-equipped in surgery and her system of medicine survives to this day and has still its value, though it declined intermediately in knowledge and is only now recovering its vitality.

In literature, in the life of the mind, she lived and built greatly. Not only has she the Vedas, Upanishads and Gita, not to speak of less supreme but still powerful or beautiful work in that field, unequalled monuments of religious and philosophic poetry, a kind in which Europe has never been able to do anything much of any great value, but that vast national structure, the Mahabharata, gathering into its cycle the poetic literature and expressing so completely the life of a long formative age, that it is said of it in a popular saying which has the justice if also the exaggeration of a too apt epigram, "What is not in this Bharata, is not in Bharatavarsha (India)," and the Ramayana, the greatest and most remarkable poem of its kind, that most sublime and beautiful epic of ethical idealism and a heroic semi-divine human life, and the marvellous

richness, fullness and colour of the poetry and romance of highly cultured thought, sensuous enjoyment, imagination, action and adventure which makes up the romantic literature of her classical epoch. Nor did this long continuous vigour of creation cease with the loss of vitality by the Sanskrit tongue, but was parallelled and carried on in a mass of great or of beautiful work in her other languages, in Pali first and Prakrit, much unfortunately lost*, and Tamil, afterwards in Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and other tongues. The long tradition of her architecture, sculpture and painting speaks for itself, even in what survives after all the ruin of stormy centuries: whatever judgment may be formed of it by the narrower school of Western aesthetics,—and at least its fineness of execution and workmanship cannot be denied, nor the power with which it renders the Indian mind,—it testifies at least to a continuous creative activity. And creation is proof of life and great creation of greatness of life.

But these things are, it may be said, the things of the mind, and the intellect, imagination and aesthetic mind of India may have been creatively active, but yet her outward life depressed, dull, poor, gloomy with the hues of asceticism, void of will-power and personality, ineffective, null. That would be a hard proposition to swallow; for literature, art and science do not flourish in a void of life. But here too what are the facts? India has not only had the long roll of her great saints, sages, thinkers, religious founders, poets, creators, scientists, scholars, legists; she has had her great rulers, administrators, soldiers, conquerors, heroes, men with the strong active will, the mind that plans and the seeing force that builds. She has warred and ruled, traded and colonised and spread her civilisation, built polities and organised communities and societies,

* Eg. the once famous work in Paisachi of which the *Kathâsaritsâgara* is an inferior version.

done all that makes the outward activity of great peoples. A nation tends to throw out its most vivid types in that line of action which is most congenial to its temperament and expressive of its leading idea, and it is the great saints and religious personalities that stand at the head in India and present the most striking and continuous roll-call of greatness, just as Rome lived most in her warriors and statesmen and rulers. The Rishi in ancient India was the outstanding figure with the hero just behind, while in later times the most striking feature is the long uninterrupted chain from Buddha and Mahavira to Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Nanak, Ramdas and Tukaram and beyond them to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and Dayananda. But there have been also the remarkable achievements of statesmen and rulers, from the first dawn of ascertainable history which comes in with the striking figures of Chandragupta, Chanakya, Asoka, the Gupta emperors and goes down through the multitude of famous Hindu and Mahomedan figures of the middle age to quite modern times. In ancient India there was the life of republics, oligarchies, democracies, small kingdoms of which no detail of history now survives, afterwards the long effort at empire-building, the colonisation of Ceylon and the Archipelago, the vivid struggles that attended the rise and decline of the Pathan and Mogul dynasties, the Hindu struggle for survival in the south, the wonderful record of Rajput heroism and the great upheaval of national life in Maharashtra penetrating to the lowest strata of society, the remarkable episode of the Sikh Khalsa. An adequate picture of that outward life still remains to be given; once given it would be the end of many fictions. All this mass of action was not accomplished by men without mind and will and vital force, by pale shadows of humanity in whom the vigorous manhood had been crushed out under the burden of a gloomy and all-effacing asceticism, nor does it look like the sign of a metaphysically minded people of dreamers averse to life

and action. It was not men of straw or lifeless and willess dummies or thin-blooded dreamers who thus acted, planned, conquered, built great systems of administration, founded kingdoms and empires, figured as great patrons of poetry and art and architecture or, later, resisted heroically imperial power and fought for the freedom of clan or people. Nor was it a nation devoid of life which maintained its existence and culture and still lived on and broke out constantly into new revivals under the ever increasing stress of continuously adverse circumstances. The modern Indian revival, religious, cultural, political, called now sometimes a renaissance, which so troubles and grieves the minds of her critics, is only a repetition under altered circumstances, in an adapted form, in a greater though as yet less vivid mass of movement, of a phenomenon which has constantly repeated itself throughout a millennium of Indian history.

And it must be remembered that by virtue of its culture and its system the whole nation shared in the common life. In all countries in the past the mass has indeed lived with a less active and vivid force than the few,—sometimes with the mere elements of life, not with even any beginning of finished richness,—nor has modern civilisation yet got rid of this disparity, though it has opened the advantages or at least the initial opportunities of a first-hand life and thought and knowledge to a greater number. But in ancient India, though the higher classes led and had the lion's share of the force and wealth of life, the people too lived and until much later times intensely though on a lesser scale and with a more diffused and less concentrated force. Their religious life was more intense than that of any other country; they drank in with remarkable facility the thoughts of the philosophers and the influence of the saints; they heard and followed Buddha and the many who came after him; they were taught by the Sannyasins and sang the songs of the Bhaktas and Bauls and thus possessed

some of the most delicate and beautiful poetical literature ever produced; they contributed many of the greatest names in our religion, and from the outcastes themselves came saints revered by the whole community. In ancient Hindu times they had their share of political life and power; they were the people, the *viçah* of the Veda, of whom the kings were the leaders and from them as well as from the sacred or princely families were born the Rishis; they held their villages as little self-administered republics; in the time of the great kingdoms and empires they sat in the municipalities and urban councils and the bulk of the typical royal Council described in the books of political science was composed of commoners, Vaishyas, and not of Brahman Pundits and Kshatriya nobles; for a long time they could impose their will on their kings, without the need of a long struggle, by a single demonstration of their displeasure. So long as Hindu kingdoms existed, something of all this survived, and even the entrance into India of central Asian forms of absolutist despotism, never an indigenous Indian growth, left some remnant of the old edifice still in being. The people had their share too in art and poetry, their means by which the essence of Indian culture was disseminated through the mass, a system of elementary education in addition to the great universities of ancient times, a type of popular dramatic representation which was in some parts of the country alive even yesterday; they gave India her artists and architects and many of the famous poets in the popular tongues; they preserved by the force of their long past culture an innate aesthetic sense and faculty of which the work of Indian craftsmen remained a constant and striking evidence until it was destroyed or degraded by the vulgarisation and loss of aesthetic sense and beauty which has been one of the results of modern civilisation. Nor was the life of India ascetic, gloomy or sad, as the too logical mind of the critic would have it be. The outward form is more quiet

than in other countries, there is a certain gravity and reserve before strangers which deceives the foreign observer, and in recent times asceticism and poverty and an increase of puritanic tendency had their effect, but the life portrayed in the literature of the country is glad and vivid, and even now despite certain varieties of temperament and many forces making for depression laughter, humour, an unobtrusive elasticity and equanimity in the vicissitudes of life are very marked features of the Indian character.

The whole theory of a want of life and will and activity in the Indian people as a result of their culture is then a myth. The circumstances which have given some colour to it in later times will be noted in their proper place; but they are a feature of the decline and even then must be taken with considerable qualification, and the much longer history of its past greatness tells quite another story. That history has not been recorded in the European fashion; for the art of history and biography, though not entirely neglected, was never brought to perfection in India, never sufficiently practised, nor does any sustained record of the doings of kings and great men and peoples before the Musulman dynasties survive except in the one solitary instance of Cashmere. This is certainly a defect and leaves a very serious gap. India has lived much, but has not sat down to record the history of her life. Her soul and mind have left their great monuments, but so much as we know—and after all it is not little—of the rest, the more outward things, remains or has emerged recently in spite of her neglect; such exact records as she had, she has allowed to rust forgotten or disappear. Perhaps what Mr. Archer really means when he tells us that we have had no personalities in our history, is that they do not come home to his mind because their doings and sayings are not minutely recorded in the Western manner; their personality, will-power and creative force emerge only in their work or in indicative tradition and anecdote

or in incomplete records. And very curiously, very fancifully this defect has been set down to an ascetic want of interest in life; it is supposed that India was so much absorbed in the eternal that she deliberately despised and neglected time, so profoundly concentrated on the pursuit of ascetic brooding and quietistic peace that she looked down on and took no interest in the memory of action. That is another myth. The same phenomenon of a lack of sustained and deliberate record appears in other ancient cultures, but nobody suggests that Egypt, Assyria or Persia have to be reconstructed for us by the archaeologists for an analogous reason. The genius of Greece developed the art of history, though only in the later period of her activity, and Europe has cherished and preserved the art; India and other ancient civilisations did not arrive at it or neglected its full development. It is a defect, but there is no reason why we should go out of our way in this one case to attribute it to a deliberate motive or to any lack of interest in life. And in spite of the defect the greatness and activity of the past life of India reveals itself and comes out in bolder relief the more the inquiry into her past unearths the vast amount of material still available.

But our critic will still have it that India lived as it were in spite of herself and that in all this teeming action there is ample evidence of the dwarfing of individual will and the absence of any great individual personality. He arrives at that result by methods which savour of the skill of the journalist or pamphleteer rather than the disinterested mind of the critic. He tells us for instance that India has contributed only one or at most two great names to the world's Pantheon. By that, of course, he means Europe's Pantheon, or the world's Pantheon as constructed by the mind of Europe, crammed with the figures of Western history and achievement which are near and familiar to it and admitting only a very few of the more

gigantic names from the distant east, those which it finds it most difficult to ignore. One remembers the list made by a great French poet in the field of literature in which a sounding string of French names equals or outnumbers the whole contribution of the rest of Europe! If an Indian were to set about the same task in the same spirit, he would no doubt similarly pour out an interminable list of Indian names with some great men of Europe and America, Arabia, Persia, China, Japan forming a brief tail to this large peninsular body. These exercises of the partial mentality have no value. And it is difficult to find out what measure of values Mr. Archer is using when he relegates other great Indian names, allowing for three or four only, to the second plan and even there belittles them in comparison with corresponding European immortals. In what is Shivaji with his vivid and interesting life and character, who not only founded a kingdom but organised a nation, inferior to Cromwell, or Shankara whose great spirit in the few years of its mortal life swept triumphant through India and reconstituted the whole religious life of her peoples, inferior as a personality to Luther? Why are Chanakya and Chandragupta who laid down the form of empire-building in India and whose great administrative system survived with changes often for the worse down to modern times, lesser men than the rulers and statesmen of European history? India may not present any recorded moment of her life so crowded as the few years of Athens to which Mr. Archer makes appeal; she may have no parallel to the swarm of interesting but often disturbing, questionable or even dark and revolting figures which illuminate and stain the story of the Italian cities during the Renaissance, although she has had too her crowded moments thronged by figures of a different kind. But she has had many rulers, statesmen and encouragers of art as great in their own way as Pericles or Lorenzo di Medici; the personalities of her famed poets emerge more

dimly through the mist of time, but with indications which point to a lofty spirit or a humanity as great as that of Aeschylus or Euripides or a life-story as human and interesting as that of the famous Italian poets. And if, comparing this one country with all Europe as Mr. Archer insists,—mainly on the ground that Indians themselves make the comparison when they speak of the size of the country, its many races and the difficulty so long experienced in organising Indian unity,—it may be that in the field of political and military action Europe has a long lead, but what of the unparallelled profusion of great spiritual personalities in which India is preeminent? Again Mr Archer speaks with arrogant depreciation of the significant figures born of the creative Indian mind which people its literature and its drama. Here too it is difficult to follow him or to accept his measure of values. To an oriental mind at least Rama and Ravana are as vivid and great and real characters as the personalities of Homer and Shakespeare, Sita and Draupadi certainly not less living than Helen or Cleopatra, Damayanti and Shakuntala and other feminine types not les sweet, gracious and alive than Alcestis or Desdemona. I am not here affirming any superiority, but the bottomless inequality and inferiority which this critic affirms exists, not in truth, but only in his imagination or his way of seeing.

That perhaps is the one thing of significance, the one thing which is really worth noting, the difference of mentality which is at the bottom of these comparisons. There is not any inferiority of life or force or active and reactive will but, as far as the sameness of human nature allows, a difference of type, character, personality, let us say, an emphasis in different and almost opposite directions. Willpower and personality have not been wanting in India, but the direction preferably given to them and the type most admired are of a different kind. The average European mind is prone to value or at least to be more interested

in the egoistic or self-asserting will which insists upon itself with a strong or a bold, an aggressive, sometimes a fierce insistence; the Indian mind not only prizes more from the ethical standpoint,—that is found everywhere,—but is more vividly interested in the calm, self-controlling or even the self-effacing personality; for the effacement of egoism seems to it to be not an effacement, but an enhancement of value and power of the true person and its greatness. Mr. Archer finds Asoca pale and featureless; to an Indian mind he is supremely vivid and attractive. Why is Asoca to be called pale in comparison with Charlemagne or, let us say, with Constantine? Is it because he only mentions his sanguinary conquest of Kalinga in order to speak of his remorse and the turning of his spirit, a sentiment which Charlemagne massacring the Saxons in order to make good Christians of them could not in the least have understood, nor any more perhaps the Pope who anointed him? Constantine gave the victory to the Christian religion, but there is nothing Christian in his personality; Asoca not only enthroned Buddhism, but strove though not with a perfect success to follow the path laid down by Buddha. And the Indian mind would account him not only a nobler will, but a greater and more attracting personality than Constantine or Charlemagne. It is interested in Chanakya, but much more interested in Chaitanya.

And in literature also just as in actual life it has the same turn. This European mind finds Rama and Sita uninteresting and unreal, because they are too virtuous, too ideal, too white in colour; but to the Indian mind even apart from all religious sentiment they are figures of an absorbing reality which appeal to the inmost fibres of our being. A European scholar criticising the Mahabharata finds the strong and violent Bhima the only real character in that great poem; the Indian mind on the contrary finds greater character and a more moving interest in the

calm and collected heroism of Arjuna, in the fine ethical temperament of Yudhisthira, in the divine charioteer of Kurukshetra who works not for his own hand but for the founding of the kingdom of right and justice. Those vehement or self-asserting characters or those driven by the storm of their passions which make the chief interest of European epic and drama, would either be relegated by it to the second plan or else, if set in large proportions, so brought in in order to bring into relief the greatness of the higher type of personality, as Ravana contrasts with and sets off Rama. The admiration of the one kind of mentality in the aesthetics of life goes to the coloured, that of the other to the luminous personality. Or, to put it in the form of the distinction made by the Indian mind itself, the interest of the one centres more in the rajasic, that of the other in the sattwic will and character.

Whether this difference imposes an inferiority on the aesthetics of Indian life and creation, each must judge for himself, but surely the Indian is the more evolved and spiritual conception. The Indian mind believes that the will and personality are not diminished but heightened by moving from the rajasic or more coloured egoistic to the sattwic and more luminous level of our being. Are not after all calm, self-mastery, a high balance signs of a greater and more real force of character than mere self-assertion of strength of will or the furious driving of the passions? Their possession does not mean that one must act with an inferior or less puissant, but only with a more right, collected and balanced will. And it is a mistake to think that asceticism itself rightly understood and practised implies an effacement of will; it brings much rather its greater concentration. That is the Indian view and experience and the meaning of the old legends in the epics —to which Mr. Archer, misunderstanding the idea behind them, violently objects,—attributing so enormous a force, even when it was misused, to the power gained by ascetic

self-mastery, Tapasya. The Indian mind believed and still believes that soul power is a greater thing, works from a mightier centre of will and has greater results than a more outwardly and materially active will-force. But it will be said that India has valued most the impersonal and that must obviously discourage personality. But this too,—except for the negative ideal of losing oneself in the trance or the silence of the Eternal, which is not the true essence of the matter,—involves a misconception. However paradoxical it may sound, one finds actually that the acceptance of the eternal and impersonal behind one's being and action and the attempt at unity with it is precisely the thing that carries the person to his largest greatness and power. For this impersonality is not a nullity, but an oceanic totality of the being. The perfect man, the Siddha or the Buddha, becomes universal, embraces all being in sympathy and oneness, finds himself in others as in himself and by so doing draws into himself at the same time something of the infinite power of a universal energy. That is the positive ideal of Indian culture. And when this hostile critic finds himself forced to do homage to the superiority of certain personalities who have sprung from this "fine-spun aristocratic" culture, he is really paying a tribute to some results of this preference of the sattwic to the rajasic, the universal to the limited and egoistic man. Not to be as the common man, that is to say, as the crude natural or half-baked human being, was indeed the sense of this ancient endeavour and in that sense it may be called an aristocratic culture. But it was not a vulgar outward but a spiritual nobility which was the aim of its self-discipline. Indian life, personality, art, literature must be judged in this light and appreciated or depreciated after being seen in the real sense and with the right understanding of Indian culture.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK II

IV

THE VICTORY OF THE DIVINE

THE PERFECT KNOWLEDGE

1 The veils that hide the light shall be rent asund-
2 er.—The soul when it has arrived at unity, acquires a supernatural knowledge.
3 All Nature will be transfigured to them and the book of knowledge lie open. They will not need to have recourse to books in order to know ; their own thought will have become their book and will contain
4 an infinite knowledge.—When the spark of truth is discovered in the spirit, all is taught to it that it needs.
5 —The virtue of a man who has attained to the height of perfection, extends even to a foreknowledge of the future.
6 When the mind is one with the deeper spirit and wholly in touch with knowledge, its universality embraces all things.
7 When the mind is one with the deeper spirit, there results the absolute knowledge of the self.
8 That man who is without darkness, exempt from

---

1) Baha-ullah.— 2) Lao-T'se.— 3) Vivekananda.— 4) Ruysbroeck.—5) Confucius.—6) Patanjali.—7) id.—8) Sutra in 40 articles.

evil, absolutely pure, although of all things which are in the world of the ten regions since unbeginning time till today, he knows none, has seen none, has heard of none, has not in a word any knowledge of them however small, yet has he the high knowledge of omniscience. It is in speaking of him that one can use the word enlightenment.

9 The man who has plunged deep into a pure knowledge of the profound secrets of the spirit, is neither a terrestrial nor a celestial being. He is the most high spirit robed in the perishable body, the sublime and
10 very Divinity.—His faculties are so ample, so vast, so profound that it is as if an immense source from which everything issues in its time. They are as vast and extended as the heavens; the hidden source from
11 which they issue is deep as the abyss.—And then lost in the Eternal, he is luminous, he is without body and matter, he is pure, he is delivered from all suffering and stain, he knows, he foresees, he masters everything, and beings appear to him what they were from eternity, constantly like unto themselves.

* *
*

12 The seeker will discover himself with new eyes, a new understanding, a new heart and a new soul, and with them he shall see the evident signs of the world and the obscure secrets of the soul, and he will understand that in the least object there is found a door by which one enters into the domain of self-evidence, certitude and conviction.

13 Each moment, each hour will bring him the vision of a new mystery, because his heart is detached from this as from the other world; an invisible aid guides
14 all his steps and fires his ardour.—In each thing

9) Pico de la Mirandola.— 10) Tsu-tse.— 11) Upanishad.— 12) Baha-ullah.—13) id.—14) id.

he will see the mystery of the transfiguration and
15 the divine apparition.—At each instant he sees a wonderful world and a new creation.

16 When his mind shall be enfranchised from human things, then shall he enter into the city of marvellous wisdom which ever renews itself and grows in beauty
17 from age to age.—He shall contemplate under the
18 veil millions of secrets as radiant as the sun.—He will see with the divine eyes the mysteries of the eternal art.

19 Some men only have the happiness to raise themselves to that perception of the Divine which exists only in God and in the human mind.

20 Thou who by the force of thy heroism hast reached the unlimited exercise of a divine intelligence, thou hast wisdom for the force of thy means and gentle-
21 ness for the force of thy pure action.—Reflect attentively with all thy knowledge on the divine manifestation in all things of a glorious unity; purify thy understanding from the sentences of men that thou mayst hear the sacred and divine harmonies which come from all directions; sanctify thy heart from all the superstitions of the past that thou mayst understand the simple, direct and marvellous Revelation.

22 And before thee she shall open wide the portals of her secret chambers and under thy eyes she shall lay bare the treasures hidden in the deeps of her bosom. But she shows not her treasures save to the eye of the spirit, the eye which is never closed, the eye which is met by no veil in any of the kingdoms of her empire.

15) id.—16) id.—17) Upanishad.—18) Baha-ullah.—19) Hermes.—20) Lalita-Vistara —21) Baha-ullah —22) Book of Golden Precepts.

23 It is then that she shall show to thee the means and the way, the first and the second and the third even to the seventh door. Last the end, beyond which are extended and bathed in light of the spiritual sun glories inexpressible and invisible to all save only to the soul's eye.

24 Thou shalt hear what no ear has heard, thou shalt see what no eye has seen.

25 And at last thou shalt come into that place where thou shalt find only one sole being in place of the
26 world and its mortal creatures.—That man, O beloved, who knows this imperishable Spirit, in which the Self is gathered with all its powers, lives and creatures, penetrates into all things and becomes omniscient.

27 Equal in heart, equal in thought thou hast won for
28 thyself omniscience.—Pass; thou hast the key, thou canst be at ease.

29 Peace to him who has finished this supreme journey under the guidance of the Truth and the Light!

30 We have known thee, O most great Light who art perceived only by the intelligence! We have known thee, O Plenitude matrix of all Nature! We have known thee, O eternal Permanence!

---

23) id.—24) Ahmad Halif.—25) id.—26) Prasna Upanishad.—27) Lalita Vistara.—28) Book of Golden Precepts.—29) Baha-ullah.—30) Hermes.

The Future Poetry

THE IDEAL SPIRIT OF POETRY

To attempt to presage the future turn or development of mind or life in any of its fields is always a hazardous occupation. Life and mind are not like physical Nature which runs in precise mechanical grooves; these are more mobile and freer powers. The gods of life and still more the gods of mind are so incalculably self-creative that even when we can distinguish the main lines on which the working runs or has so far run, we are still unable to foresee with any certainty what turn they will yet take or of what new thing they are in labour. It is therefore impossible to predict what the poetry of the future will actually be like. We can see where we stand today, but we cannot tell where we shall stand a quarter of a century hence. All that one can do is to distinguish for oneself some possibilities that lie before the poetic mind of the race and to figure what it can achieve if it chooses to follow out certain great openings which the genius of recent and contemporary poets has made free to us, but what path it will actually choose to tread or what new heights attempt, waits still for its own yet undecided decision.

What would be the ideal spirit of poetry in an age of the increasingly intuitive mind? For the possibility of such an age is that on which we have been dwelling. I

have spoken in the beginning of the mantra as the highest intensest revealing form of poetic thought and expression. What the Vedic poets meant by the mantra was an inspired and revealed seeing and visioned thinking, attended by a realisation, to use the ponderous but necessary modern word, of some inmost truth of God and self and man and Nature and cosmos and life and thing and thought and experience and deed. It was a thinking that came on the wings of a great soul rhythm, *chhandas*. For the seeing could not be separated from the hearing; it was one act. Nor could the living of the truth in oneself which we mean by realisation, be separated from either, for the presence of it in the soul and its possession of the mind must precede or accompany in the creator or human channel that expression of the inner sight and hearing which takes the shape of the luminous word. The mantra is born through the heart and shaped or massed by the thinking mind into a chariot of that godhead of the Eternal of whom the truth seen is a face or a form. And in the mind too of the fit outward hearer who listens to the word of the poet seer, these three must come together, if our word is a real mantra; the sight of the inmost truth must accompany the hearing, the possession of the inmost spirit of it by the mind and its coming home to the soul must accompany or follow immediately upon the rhythmic message of the Word and the mind's sight of the Truth. That may sound a rather mystic account of the matter, but substantially there could hardly be a more complete description of the birth and effect of the inspired and revealing word, and it might be applied, though usually on a more lowered scale than was intended by the Vedic Rishis, to all the highest outbursts of a really great poetry. But poetry is the mantra only when it is the voice of the inmost truth and is couched in the highest power of the very rhythm and speech of that truth. And the ancient poets of the Veda and Upanishads claimed to

be uttering the mantra because always it was this inmost and almost occult truth of things which they strove to see and hear and speak and because they believed themselves to be using or finding its innate soul rhythms and the sacrificial speech of it cast up by the divine Agni, the sacred Fire in the heart of man. The mantra in other words is a direct and most heightened, an intensest and most divinely burdened rhythmic word which embodies an intuitive and revelatory inspiration and ensouls the mind with the sight and the presence of the very self, the inmost reality of things and with its truth and with the divine soul-forms of it, the Godheads which are born from the living Truth. Or, let us say, it is a supreme rhythmic language which seizes hold upon all that is finite and brings into each the light and voice of its own infinite.

This is a theory of poetry, a view of the rhythmic and creative self-expression to which we give that name, which is very different from any that we now hold, a sacred or hieratic *ars poetica* only possible in days when man believed himself to be near to the gods and felt their presence in his bosom and could think he heard some accents of their divine and eternal wisdom take form on the heights of his mind. And perhaps no thinking age has been so far removed from any such view of our life as the one through which we have recently passed and even now are not well out of its shadow, the age of materialism, the age of positive outward matter of fact and of scientific and utilitarian reason. And yet curiously enough—or naturally, since in the economy of Nature opposite creates itself out of opposite and not only like from like,—it is to some far-off light at least of the view of ourselves at our greatest of which such ideas were a concretised expression that we seem to be returning. For we can mark that although in very different circumstances, in broader forms, with a more complex mind and an enormously enlarged basis of

culture and civilisation, the gain and inheritance of many intermediate ages, it is still to something very like the effort which was the soul of the Vedic or at least the Vedantic mind that we almost appear to be on the point of turning back in the circle of our course. Now that we have seen minutely what is the material reality of the world in which we live and have some knowledge of the vital reality of the Force from which we spring, we are at last beginning to seek again for the spiritual reality of that which we and all things are. Our minds are once more trying to envisage the self, the spirit of Man and the spirit of the universe, intellectually, no doubt, at first, but from that to the old effort at sight, at realisation within ourselves and in all is not a very far step. And with this effort there must rise too on the human mind the conception of the godheads in whom this Spirit, this marvellous Self and Reality which broods over the world, takes shape in the liberated soul and life of the human being, his godheads of Truth and Freedom and Unity, his godheads of a greater more highly visioned Will and Power, his godheads of Love and universal Delight, his godheads of universal and eternal Beauty, his godheads of a supreme Light and Harmony and Good. The new ideals of the race seem already to be affected by some first bright shadow of these things, and even though it be only a tinge, a flush colouring the duller atmosphere of our recent mentality, there is every sign that this tinge will deepen and grow, in the heavens to which we look up if not at once in the earth of our actual life.

But this new vision will not be as in the old times something hieratically remote, mystic, inward, shielded from the profane, but rather a sight which will endeavour to draw these godheads again to close and familiar intimacy with our earth and embody them not only in the heart of religion and philosophy, nor only in the higher flights of thought and art, but also, as far as may be, in the common life and action of man. For in the old days

these things were Mysteries, which men left to the few, to the initiates and by so leaving them lost sight of them in the end, but the endeavour of this new mind is to reveal, to divulge and to bring near to our comprehension all mysteries,—at present indeed making them too common and outward in the process and depriving them of much of their beauty and inner light and depth, but that defect will pass,—and this turn towards an open realisation may well lead to an age in which man as a race will try to live in a greater Truth than has as yet governed our kind. For all that we know, we now tend to make some attempt to form clearly and live. His creation too will then be moved by another spirit and cast on other lines.

And if this takes place or even if there is some strong mental movement towards it, poetry may recover something of an old sacred prestige. There will no doubt still be plenty of poetical writing which will follow the old lines and minister to the old commoner aesthetic motives, and it is as well that it should be so, for the business of poetry is to express the soul of man to himself and to embody in the word whatever power of beauty he sees; but also there may now emerge too and take the first place souls no longer niggardly of the highest flame, the poet-seer and seer-creator, the poet who is also a Rishi, master singers of Truth, hierophants and magicians of a diviner and more universal beauty. There has no doubt always been something of that in the greatest masters of poetry in the great ages, but to fulfil such a role has not often been the one fountain idea of their function; the mind of the age has made other demands on them, needed at that time, and the highest things in this direction have been rare self-exceedings and still coloured by and toned to the half light in which they sang. But if an age comes which is in common possession of a deeper and greater and more inspiring Truth, then its masters of the rhythmic word will at least sing on a higher common

level and may rise more often into a fuller intenser light and capture more constantly the greater tones of which this harp of God, to use the Upanishad's description of man's created being, is secretly capable.

A greater era of man's living seems to be in promise, whatever nearer and earthier powers may be striving to lead him on a side path away to a less exalted ideal, and with that advent there must come a new great age of his creation different from the past epochs which he counts as his glories and superior to them in its vision and motive. But first there must intervene a poetry which will lead him towards it from the present faint beginnings. It will be aided by new views in philosophy, a changed and extended spirit in science and new revelations in the other arts, in music, painting, architecture, sculpture, as well as high new ideals in life and new powers of a reviving but no longer limited or obscurantist religious mind. A glint of this change is already visible. And in poetry there is already the commencement of such a greater leading; the conscious effort of Whitman, the tone of Carpenter, the significance of the poetry of A. E, the rapid immediate fame of Tagore are its first signs. The idea of the poet who is also the Rishi has made again its appearance. Only a wider spreading of the thought and mentality in which that idea can live and the growth of an accomplished art of poetry in which it can take body, are still needed to give the force of permanence to what is now only an incipient and just emerging power. Mankind satiated with the levels is turning its face one more towards the heights, and the poetic voices that will lead us thither with song will be among the high seer voices. For the great poet interprets to man his present or reinterprets for him his past, but can also point him to his future and in all three reveal to him the face of the Eternal.

An intuitive revealing poetry of the kind which we have in view would voice a supreme harmony of five

eternal powers, Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and the Spirit. These are indeed the five greater ideal lamps or rather the five suns of poetry. And towards three of them the higher mind of the race is in many directions turning its thought and desire with a new kind and force of insistence. The intellectual side of our recent progress has in fact been for a long time a constant arduous pursuit of Truth in certain of its fields; but now the limited truth of yesterday can no longer satisfy or bind us. Much has been known and discovered of a kind which had not been found or had only been glimpsed before, but the utmost of that much appears now very little compared with the infinitely more which was left aside and ignored and which now invites our search. The description which the old Vedic poet once gave of the seeking of divine Truth, applies vividly to the mind of our age, "As it climbs from height to height, there becomes clear to its view all the much that is yet to be done." But also it is beginning to be seen that only in some great awakening of the self and spiritual being of man is that yet unlived truth to be found and that infinite much to be achieved. It is only then that the fullness of a greater knowledge for man living on earth can unfold itself and get rid of its coverings and again on his deeper mind and soul, in the words of another Vedic poet-seer, "New states come into birth, covering upon covering awaken to knowledge, till in the lap of the Mother one wholly sees". This new-old light is now returning upon our minds. Men no longer so completely believe that the world is a machine and they only so much transient thinking matter, a view of existence in the midst of which however helpful it might be to a victorious concentration on physical science and social economy and material well-being, neither religion nor philosophic wisdom could renew their power in the fountains of the spirit nor art and poetry, which are also things of the soul like religion and wisdom, refresh themselves from their

native sources of strength. Now we are moving back from the physical obsession to the consciousness that there is a soul and greater self within us and the universe which finds expression here in the life and the body.

But the mind of today insists too and rightly insists on life, on humanity, on the dignity of our labour and action. We have no longer any ascetic quarrel with our mother earth, but rather would drink full of her bosom of beauty and power and raise her life to a more perfect greatness. Thought now dwells much on the idea of a vast creative will of life and action as the secret of existence. That way of seeing, though it may give room for a greater power of art and poetry and philosophy and religion, for it brings in real soul-values, has by its limitation its own dangers. A spirit which is all life because it is greater than life, is rather the truth in which we shall most powerfully live. Aditi, the infinite Mother, cries in the ancient Vedic hymn to Indra the divine Power now about to be born in her womb, "This is the path of old discovered again by which all the gods rose up into birth, even by that upward way shouldst thou be born in thy increase; but go not forth by this other to turn thy mother to her fall," but if, refusing the upward way, the new spirit in process of birth replies like the god, "By that way I will not go forth, for it is hard to tread, let me come out straight on the level from thy side; I have many things to do which have not yet been done; with one I must fight and with another I must question after the Truth," then the new age may do great things, as the last also did great things, but it will miss the highest way and end like it in a catastrophe. There is no reason why we should so limit our new birth in time; for the spirit and life are not incompatible, but rather a greater power of the spirit brings a greater power of life. Poetry and art most of all our powers can help to bring this truth home to the mind of man with an illumining and catholic force, for

while philosophy may lose itself in abstractions and religion turn to an intolerant otherworldliness and ascetism, poetry and art are born mediators between the immaterial and the concrete, the spirit and life. This mediation between the truth of the spirit and the truth of life will be one of the chief functions of the poetry of the future.

The two other sister lamps of God, colour suns of the Ideal, which our age has most dimmed and of whose reviving light it is most sadly in need, but still too strenuously outward and utilitarian to feel sufficiently their absence, Beauty and Delight, are also things spiritual and they bring out the very heart of sweetness and colour and flame of the other three. Truth and Life have not their perfection until they are suffused and filled with the completing power of delight and the fine power of beauty and become one at their heights with this perfecting hue and this secret essence of themselves; the spirit has no full revelation without these two satisfying presences. For the ancient Indian idea is absolutely true that delight, Ananda, is the inmost expressive and creative nature of the free self because it is the very essence of the original being of the Spirit. But beauty and delight are also the very soul and origin of art and poetry. It is the significance and spiritual function of art and poetry to liberate man into pure delight and to bring beauty into his life. Only there are grades and heights here as in everything else and the highest kinds of delight and beauty are those which are one with the highest Truth, the perfection of life and the purest and fullest joy of the self-revealing Spirit. Therefore will poetry most find itself and enter most completely into its heritage when it arrives at the richest harmony of these five things in their most splendid and ample sweetness and light and power; but that can only wholly be when it sings from the highest skies of vision and ranges through the widest widths of our being.

These powers can indeed be possessed in every scale,

because on whatever grade of our ascent we stand, the Spirit, the divine Self of man is always there, can break out into a strong flame of manifestation carrying in it all its godheads in whatever form, and poetry and art are among the means by which it thus delivers itself into expression. Therefore the essence of poetry is eternally the same and its essential power and the magnitude of the genius expended may be the same whatever the frame of the sight, whether it be Homer chanting of the heroes in god-moved battle before Troy and of Odysseus wandering among the wonders of remote and magic isles with his heart always turned to his lost and far-off human hearth, Shakespeare riding in his surge of the manifold colour and music and passion of life, or Dante errant mid his terrible or beatific visions of Hell and Purgatory and Paradise, or Valmiki singing of the ideal man embodying God and egoistic giant Rakshasa embodying only fierce self-will approaching each other from their different centres of life and in their different law of being for the struggle desired by the gods, or some mystic Vamadeva or Viswamitra voicing in strange vivid now forgotten symbols the action of the gods and the glories of the Truth, the battle and the journey to the Light, the double riches and the sacrificial climbing of the soul to Immortality. For whether it be the inspired imagination fixed on earth or the soul of life or the inspired reason or the high intuitive spiritual vision which gives the form, the genius of the great poet will seize on some truth of being, some breath of life, some power of the spirit and bring it out with a certain supreme force for his and our delight and joy in its beauty. But nevertheless the poetry which can keep the amplitude of its breadth and nearness of its touch and yet see all things from a higher height will, the rest being equal, give more and will more fully satisfy the whole of what we are and therefore the whole of what we demand from this most complete of all the arts and most subtle of all our means

of aesthetic self-expression.

The poetry of the future, if it fulfils in amplitude the promise now only there in rich hint, will kindle these five lamps of our being, but raise them up more on high and light with them a broader country, many countries indeed now hidden from our view, will make them not any longer lamps in some limited temple of beauty, but suns in the heavens of our highest mind and illuminative of our widest as well as our inmost life. It will be a poetry of a new largest vision of himself and Nature and God and all things which is offering itself to man and of its possible realisation in a nobler and more divine manhood; and it will not sing of them only with the power of the imaginative intelligence, the exalted and ecstatic sense or the moved joy and passion of life, but will rise to look at them from an intenser light and embody them in a more revealing force of the word. It will be first and most a poetry of the intuitive reason, the intuitive senses, the intuitive delight-soul in us, getting from this enhanced source of inspiration a more sovereign poetic enthusiasm and ecstasy, and then, it may even be, rise towards a still greater power of revelation nearer to the direct vision and word of the Overmind from which all creative inspiration comes.

A poetry of this kind need not be at all something high and remote or beautifully and delicately intangible, or not that alone, but will make too the highest things near, close and visible, will sing greatly and beautifully of all that has been sung, all that we are from outward body to very God and Self, of the finite and the infinite, the transient and the Eternal, but with a new reconciling and fusing vision that will make them other to us than they have been even when yet the same. If it wings to the heights, it will not leave earth unseen below it, but also will not confine itself to earth, but find too other realities and their powers on man and take all the planes of exis-

tence for its empire. It will take up and transform the secrets of the older poets and find new undiscovered secrets, transfigure the old rhythms by the insistence of the voice of its deeper subtler spirit and create new characteristic harmonies, reveal other greater powers and spirits of language, proceeding from the past and present yet will not be limited by them or their rule and forms and canon, but compass its own altered perfected art of poetry. This at least is its possible ideal endeavour, and then the attempt itself would be a rejuvenating elixir and put the poetic spirit once more in the shining front of the powers and guides of the ever-progressing soul of humanity. There it will lead in the journey like the Vedic Agni, the fiery giver of the word, *yuvâ kavih, priyo atithir amartyo mandrajihvo, ritachid ritâvâ*, the Youth, the Seer, the beloved and immortal Guest with his honeyed tongue of ecstasy, the Truth-conscious, the Truth-finder, born as a flame from earth and yet the heavenly messenger of the Immortals.

Karma and Justice

What are the lines of Karma? What is the intrinsic character and active law of this energy of the soul and its will and development of consequence? To ask that question is to ask what is the form taken here by the dynamic meaning of our existence and what the curves of guidance of its evolving self-creation and action. And such a question ought not to be answered in a narrow spirit or under the obsession of some single idea which does not take into account the manysidedness and rich complexity of this subtle world of Nature. The law of Karma can be no rigid and mechanical canon or rough practical rule of thumb, but rather its guiding principle should be as supple a harmonist as the Spirit itself whose will of self-knowledge it embodies and should adapt itself to the need of self-development of the variable individual souls who are feeling their way along its lines towards the right balance, synthesis, harmonics of their action. The karmic idea cannot be—for spirit and not mind is its cause—a cosmic reflection of our limited average human intelligence, but rather the law of a greater spiritual wisdom, a means which behind all its dumb occult appearances embodies an understanding lead and a subtle management towards our total perfection.

The ordinary current conception of law of Karma is dominantly ethical, but ethical in no very exalted kind. Its idea of karma is a mechanical and materialistic ethics, a crudely exact legal judgment and administration of reward and punishment, an external sanction to virtue and prohibition of sin, a code, a balance. The idea is that there must be a justice governing the award of happiness and misery on the earth, a humanly intelligible equity and that the law of Karma represents it and gives us its formula. I have done so much good, *punya*. It is my capital, my accumulation and balance. I must have it paid it out to me in so much coin of prosperity, the legal currency of this sovereign and divine Themis, or why on earth should I at all do good? I have done so much evil. That too must come back to me in so much exact and accurate punishment and misfortune. There must be so much outward suffering or an inward suffering caused by outward event and pressure; for if there were not this physically sensible, visible, inevitable result, where would be any avenging justice and where could we find any deterrent sanction in Nature against evil? And this award is that of an exact judge, a precise administrator, a scrupulous merchant of good for good and evil for evil who has learned nothing and will never learn anything of the Christian or Buddhistic ideal rule, has no bowels of mercy or compassion, no forgiveness for sin, but holds austerely to an eternal Mosaic law, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, a full, slow or swift, but always calm and precisely merciless *lex talionis*.

This commercial and mathematical accountant is sometimes supposed to act with a startling precision. A curious story was published the other day, figuring as a fact of contemporary occurrence, of a rich man who had violently deprived another of his substance. The victim is born as the son of the oppressor and in the delirium of a fatal illness reveals that he has obliged his old tyrant and

present father to spend on him and so lose the monetary equivalent of the property robbed minus a certain sum, but that sum must be paid now, otherwise—The debt is absolved and as the last pice is expended, the reborn soul departs, for its sole object in taking birth is satisfied, accounts squared and the spirit of Karma content. That is the mechanical idea of Karma at its acme of satisfied precision. At the same time the popular mind in its attempt to combine the idea of a life beyond with the notion of rebirth, supposes a double prize for virtue and a double penalty for transgression. I am rewarded for my good deeds in heaven after death until the dynamic value of my virtue is exhausted and I am then reborn and rewarded again materially on earth. I am punished in hell to the equivalence of my sins and again punished for them in another life in the body. This looks a little superfluous and a rather redundant justice, and, even, the precise accountant becomes very like an unconscionable hundred per cent usurer. Perhaps it may be said that beyond earth it is the soul that suffers—for purification, and here the physical being—as a concession to the forces of life and the symmetry of things : but still it is the soul that thus pays double in its subtle experience and in its physical incarnation.

The strands of our nature which mix in this natural but hardly philosophic conception, have to be disentangled before we can disengage the right value of these ideas. Their first motive seems to be ethical, for justice is an ethical notion ; but true ethics is dharma, the right fulfilment and working of the higher nature, and right action should have right motive, should be its own justification and not go limping on the crutches of greed and fear. Right done for its own sake is truly ethical and ennobles the growing spirit ; right done in the lust for a material reward or from fear of the avenging stripes of the executioner or sentence of the judge, may be eminently practi-

tical and useful for the moment, but it is not in the least degree ethical, but is rather a lowering of the soul of man; or at least the principle is a concession to his baser animal and unspiritual nature. But in natural man, born before the higher dharma and more potent and normal as a motive to action, come two other very insistent things, *kâma*, *artha*, desire and pleasure of enjoyment with its corresponding fear of suffering, and interest of possession, acquisition, success with its complementary pain of lacking and frustration, and this is what governs most prominently the normal barbaric or still half barbaric natural man. He needs to some not small extent if he is to conform his close pursuit of desire and interest to the ethical standard, a strict association or identity of result of virtue with some getting of his interest and pleasure and result of sin with some loss of materially or vitally desirable things and the infliction of mental, vital or physical pain. Human law proceeds on this principle by meeting the grosser more obvious offences with punishment and avenging pain or loss and on the other hand assuring the individual in some degree of the secure having of his legitimate pleasure and interest if he observes the legal rule. The cosmic law is expected by the popular theory of Karma to deal with man on his own principle and do this very thing with a much sterner and more unescapable firmness of application and automatic necessity of consequence.

The cosmic Being must be then, if this view is to hold, a sort of enlarged divine Human or, we might say, a superior anthropoid Divine, or else the cosmic Law a perfection and magnitude of human methods and standards, which deals with man as he is accustomed to deal with his neighbour,—only not with a rough partial human efficacy, but either a sure omniscience or an unfailing automatism. Whatever truth there may be behind that notion, this is not likely to be an adequate account of the

matter. In actual life, if we put aside the rebirth theory, there are traces of this method, but it does not work out with any observable consistency,—not even if we accept an unsatisfactory and hardly just vicarious punishment as part of the scheme. What surety have we, then, of its better or its faultless working out in rebirth except for some similar partial signs and indications and, to fill in the blanks, our general sense of the fitness of things? And again where does the true nature of ethics come in in this scheme? That more elevated action, it would almost seem, is an ideal movement of less use for the practical governance of life than as one part of a preparation for a fourth and last need of man, his need of spiritual salvation, and salvation winds up finally our karma and casts away the economy along with the very thought and will of life. Desire is the law of life and action and therefore of Karma. To do things above the material level for their own sake and their pure right or pure delight is to head straight towards the distances of heaven or the silence of the Ineffable. But this is a view of the meaning of existence against which it is time for the higher seeing mind and being of man to protest and to ask whether the ways of the Spirit in the world may not be capable of a greater, nobler and wiser significance.

But still, since the mind of man is part of the universal mind and reflects something of it in a however broken or as yet imperfect and crookedly seeing fashion, there may well be something of a real truth behind this view, though it is not likely to be the whole or the well understood truth. There are some certain or probable laws of the universal working which are relevant to it and must enter into the account. First, it is sure that Nature has laws of which the observance leads to or helps well-being and of which the violation imposes suffering; but all of them cannot be given a moral significance. Then there is the certainty that there must be a moral law of cause and conse-

quence in the total web of her weaving and this we would perhaps currently put into the formula that good produces good and evil evil, which is a proposition of undoubted truth, though also we see in this complicated world that evil comes out of what we hold to be good, and again out of evil disengages itself something that yet turns to good. Perhaps our system of values is too rigidly precise or too narrowly relative; there are subtle things in the totality, minglings, interrelations, cross-currents, suppressed or hidden significances which we do not take into account. The formula is true, but is not the whole truth, at least as now understood in its first superficial significance.

And at any rate in the ordinary notion of Karma we are combining two different notions of good. I can well understand that moral good does or ought to produce and increase moral good and moral evil to farther and to create moral evil. It does so in myself. The habit of love confirms and enhances my power of love; it purifies my being and opens it to the universal good. The habit of hatred on the contrary corrupts my being, fills it with poison, with bad and morbid toxic matter, and opens it to the general power of evil. My love ought also by a prolongation or a return to produce love in others and my hatred to give rise to hatred; that happens to a certain, a great extent, but it need not be and is not an invariable or rigorous consequence; still we may well see and believe that love does throw out widening ripples and helps to elevate the world while hatred has the opposite consequence. But what is the necessary connection between this good and evil on the one hand and on the other pleasure and pain? Must the ethical power always turn perfectly into some term of kindred hedonistic result? Not entirely; for love is a joy in itself, but also love suffers; hatred is a troubled and self-afflicting thing, but has too its own perverse delight of itself and its gratifications; but in the end we may say that love, because it is born of the

universal Delight, triumphs in its own nature and hatred because it is its denial or perversion, leads to a greater sum of misery to myself as to others. And of all true moral good and real evil this may be said that the one tends towards some supreme Right, the *ritam* of the Vedic Rishis, the highest law of a highest Truth of our being and that Truth is the door of the spirit's Ananda, its beatific nature, the other is a missing or perversion of the Right and the Truth and exposes us to its opposite, to false delight or suffering. And even in the perplexed steps of life some reflection of this identity must emerge.

This correspondence is, still, more essentially true in the inner field, in the spiritual, mental and emotional result and reaction of the good or the evil or of the effects of its outgoing action. But where is the firm link of correspondence between the ethical and the more vital and physical hedonistic powers of life ? How does my ethical good turn into smiling fortune, crowned prosperity, sleek material good and happiness to myself and my ethical evil into frowning misfortune, rugged adversity, sordid material ill and suffering,—for that is what the desire soul of man and the intelligence governed by it seem to demand,—and how is the account squared or the transmutation made between these two very different energies of the affirmation and denial of good ? We can see this much that the good or the evil in me translates itself into a good or an evil action which among other things brings about much mental and material happiness and suffering to others, and to this outgoing power and effect there ought to be an equal reaction of incoming power and effect, though it does not seem to work itself out immediately or with any discoverable exactness of correspondence. There does still appear to be a principle of rebound in Nature ; our action has in some degree the motion of recoil of the boomerang and cycles back towards the will that has cast it on the world. The stone we hurl rashly against the

universal Life is cast back at us and may crush, maim or injure our own mental and physical being. But this mechanical rebound is not the whole principle of Karma. Nor is Karma wholly a mixed ethical-hedonistic order in its total significance, for there are involved other powers of our consciousness and being. Nor is it again a pure mechanism which we set going by our will and have then helplessly to accept the result; for the will which produced the effect, can also intervene to modify it. And above all the initiating and receiving consciousness can change the values and utilities of the reactions and make another thing of life than this automatic mechanism of fateful return or retribution to the half-blind embodied actor in a mute necessity of rigorous law of Nature.

The relation of our consciousness and will to Karma is the thing upon which all the subtler lines of action and consequence must depend; that connexus must be the hinge of the whole significance. The dependence of the pursuit of ethical values on a sanction by the inferior hedonistic values, material, vital and lower mental pleasure, pain and suffering, appeals strongly to our normal consciousness and will; but it ceases to have more than a subordinate force and finally loses all force as we grow towards greater heights of our being. That dependence cannot then be the whole or the final power or guiding norm of Karma. The relation of will to action and consequence must be cast on more subtle and liberal lines. The universal Spirit in the law of Karma must deal with man in the lower scale of values only as a part of the transaction and as a concession to man's own present motives. Man himself puts these values, makes that demand for pleasure and prosperity and dreads their opposites, desires heaven more than he loves virtue, fears hell more than he abhors sin, and while he does so, the world-dispensation wears to him that meaning and colour. But the spirit of existence is not merely a legislator and judge concerned to maintain

a standard of legal justice, to dole out deterrents and sanctions, rewards and penalties, ferocious pains of hell, indulgent joys of paradise. He is the Divine in the world, the Master of a spiritual evolution and the growing godhead in humanity. That godhead grows however slowly beyond the dependence on the sanctions of pleasure and pain. Pain and pleasure govern our primary being and in that primary scale pain is Nature's advertisement of things we should avoid, pleasure her lure to things she would tempt us to pursue. These devices are first empirical tests for limited objects; but as I grow, I pass beyond their narrower uses. I have continually to disregard Nature's original warnings and lures in order to get to a higher nature. I have to develop a nobler spiritual law of Karma.

This will be evident if we consider our own greater motives of action. The pursuit of Truth may entail on me penalties and sufferings; the service of my country or the world may demand from me loss of my outward happiness and good fortune or the destruction of my body; the increase of my strength of will and greatness of spirit may be only possible by the ardours of suffering and the firm renunciation of joys and pleasures. I must still follow after Truth, I must do the service to my race my soul demands from me; I must increase my strength and inner greatness and must not ask for a quite irrelevant reward, shun penalty or make a bargain for the exact fruits of my labour. And that which is true of my action in the present life, must be equally true of my connected action and self-development through many births. Happiness and sorrow, good fortune and ill-fortune are not my main concern whether in this birth or in future lives, but my perfection and the higher good of mankind purchased by whatever suffering and tribulation. Spinoza's dictum that joy is a passage to a greater perfection and sorrow a passage to a lesser perfection is a much too summary epigram. Delight will be indeed the atmosphere of perfection and attends

too even the anguish of our labour towards it, but first a higher delight which has often much trouble for its price, and afterwards a highest spiritual Ananda which has no dependence on outward circumstances, but rather is powerful to new-shape their meanings and transform their reactions. These things may be above the first formulation of the world energy here, may be influences from superior planes of the universal existence, but they are still a part of the economy of Karma here, a process of the spiritual evolution in the body. And they bring in a higher soul nature and will and action and consequence, a higher rule of Karma.

The law of Karma is therefore not simply an extension of the human idea of practical justice into future births and a rectification there of the apparent injustice of life. A justice or rather a justness there must be in all the workings of the world-energy; Nature certainly seems to be scrupulous in her measures. But in the life of man there are many factors to be taken into the reckoning; there are too stages, grades, degrees. And on a higher step of our being things do not look the same nor are quite the same as on a lower grade. And even in the first normal scale there are many factors and not only the ethical –hedonistic standard. If it is just that the virtuous man should be rewarded with success and happiness and the wicked man punished with downfall and pain at some time, in some life, on earth or in heaven or in hell, it is also just that the strong man should have the reward of his cultivated strength, the intellectual man the prize of his cultivated skill, the will that labours in whatever field the fruit of its effort and its works. But it does not work rightly, you say, not morally, not according to the ethical law? But what is right working in this connection of will and action and consequence? I may be religious and honest, but if I am dull, weak and incompetent? And I may be selfish and impious, but if I have the swift flame

of intellect, the understanding brain, the skill to adapt means to ends, the firm courageous will fixed on its end? I have then an imperfection which must impose its consequences, but also I have powers which must make their way. The truth is that there are several orders of energy and their separate characteristic working must be seen, before their relations can be rightly discovered in the harmonics of Nature. A complex web is what we have to unravel. When we have seen the parts in the whole, the elements and their affinities in the mass, then only can we know the lines of Karma.

उषा

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

16th January 1920

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA.....Aurobindo Ghose
The Gunas, Faith and Action

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G.
Ch. EXII. The Power of the Instruments

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE (12)

THE FUTURE POETRY..... A. G.
The Sun of Poetic Truth

A VEDIC HYMN TO THE FIRE

Essays on the Gita

THE GUNAS, FAITH AND ACTION

The Gita has made a distinction between action according to the license of personal desire and action done according to the Shastra or recognised science and art of life which is the outcome of the collective living, culture, search for the best rule of life of humanity as it works in the ignorance and proceeds towards knowledge. The first belongs to its primitive unregenerated state and is dictated by its tamasic ignorance and unregulated kinetic or rajasic egoism; the second is an outcome of intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, social and religious culture, embodies an attempt at a certain right living, harmony, order and is evidently an effort, more or less advanced according to circumstances, of the sattwic element in man to overtop, regulate and control or guide, where it must be admitted, his rajasic and tamasic egoism. It is the means of a step in advance, and therefore mankind must first proceed through it and make this Shastra his law of action rather than the impulsion of his personal desires. This is a general rule which humanity has always recognised wherever it has arrived at any kind of established and developed society; it has an idea of an order, a law, a rule of its perfection, something other than the guidance of its desires or crude direction of its raw impulses. This the

individual finds usually outside himself in some more or less fixed outcome of the experience and wisdom of the race, which he accepts, to which his mind and the leading parts of his being give their assent or sanction and which he tries to make his own by living it in his mind, will and action. And this assent of the being, its conscious acceptance and will to believe and realise, may be called by the name which the Gita gives to it, his faith, *çraddhâ*. The religion, the philosophy, the ethical law, the social idea, the cultural idea in which I put my faith, gives me a law for my being, an idea of relative right or an idea of relative or absolute perfection and in proportion as I have a sincerity and completeness of faith in it and an intensity of will to live according to that faith, I become what it proposes to me, shape myself into an image of that right or an exemplar of that perfection.

But we see also that there is a freer tendency in man other than the leading of his desires and other than his will to accept the Law, the fixed idea and safe governing rule of the Shastra. The individual frequently enough, the community at any moment of its life is seen to turn away from the Shastra, becomes impatient of it, loses that form of its will and faith and goes in search of another law which it is now more disposed to accept as the right rule of living and as a more vital or higher truth of existence. This may happen when the established Shastra ceases to be a living thing and becomes a mass of customs and conventions. Or it may come because it is found that the Shastra is imperfect or no longer useful for the progress demanded; a new truth and law of living then become imperative. If that does not exist, it has to be discovered by the effort of the race or by some great and illumined individual mind who embodies the desire and seeking of the race. The Vedic law becomes a convention and a Buddha appears with his new rule of the eightfold path and the goal of Nirvana; and it may be remarked that he

propounds it not as a personal invention, but as the true rule of Aryan living constantly rediscovered by the Buddha, the enlightened mind. But this practically means that there is an ideal, an eternal Dharma which religion, philosophy, ethics and all other powers in man that strive after truth and perfection are constantly endeavouring to embody in new statements of the science and art of the inner and outer life, a new Shastra. The Mosaic law of religious, ethical and social righteousness is convicted of narrowness and imperfection and is now besides a convention ; the law of Christ comes to replace it and claims at once to abrogate it and to fulfil, to abrogate the imperfect form and fulfil in a deeper and broader light and power the spirit of the thing which it aimed at, the divine rule of living. And the human search does not stop there, but leaves these formulations too, goes back to some past truth it had rejected or breaks forward to some new truth, but is always in search of the same thing, the law of its perfection, its right living, its complete, highest and essential self and nature.

This movement begins with the individual, who is no longer satisfied with the law because he finds that it no longer corresponds to his idea and largest or intensest experience of himself and view of existence and therefore he can no longer bring to it the will to believe and practise. It does not correspond to his inner existence, it is not to him *sat*, the thing that truly is, the right, the highest or best or real good, the truth and law of being. The Shastra is something impersonal to the individual, and that gives it its authority over the narrow personal law of his members ; but at the same time it is personal to the collectivity and is the outcome of its experience, its culture or its nature. It is not in all its form and spirit the ideal rule of fulfilment of the Self or the eternal law of the Master of our being, although it may contain in itself in small or large measure indications, preparations, illumina-

tions of that ideal rule or eternal law. And the individual may have gone beyond the collectivity and be ready for a greater truth and rule of living. The leading in him which departs from the Shastra may not be always a higher movement; it may take the form of a revolt of the egoistic or rajasic nature seeking freedom from the yoke of something which it feels to be cramping to its self-fulfilment and liberty; but even then it is often justified by some narrowness or imperfection of the Shastra or by its having become a merely restricting or lifeless convention. And so far it is justified, even though it misses the right path, since the free action of the rajasic ego, because it has more in it of liberty and life, is better than the dead and hidebound tamasic following of a convention; for the rajasic is always greater and has more possibilities in it than the tamasic nature. But also this leading may be a turn to a larger and greater ideal which will carry us nearer to a completer truth of our self and universal existence and nearer therefore to that highest law of our being which is one with the divine liberty. And in effect this movement is usually an attempt to lay hold on some forgotten truth or to move on to a yet undiscovered or unlived truth of our being. It is not a mere licentious movement of the unregulated nature; it has its spiritual justification; it is a necessity of our spiritual progress. And even if the Shastra is still a living thing and the best rule for the ordinary man, the exceptional spiritually developed man, as Indian thought has always recognised, is called upon to go beyond its rule. For this is a rule for the guidance, control and relative perfection of the normal imperfect man and he has to go on to a more absolute perfection; this is a system of fixed dharmas and he has to learn to live in the liberty of the Spirit.

But what then shall the base of an action which departs both from the guidance of desire and from the normal law? For the rule of desire has an authority of its

own, no longer safe or satisfactory to us as it is to the animal or might have been to the primitive man, but still, so far as it goes, founded on a very living part of our nature and fortified by its strong indications; and the law, the Shastra has behind it all the authority of long established rule, old successful sanctions and the past experience of man. But this new movement is of the nature of an adventure into the unknown or partly known, a development and new conquest, and what then is the clue to be followed, the guiding light on which it can depend or its strong basis in our being? The answer is that it is man's *çraddhâ*, his faith, his will to believe, to live what he sees or thinks to be the truth of himself and of existence. In other words this movement is man's appeal to himself or to something potent and compelling in himself or in universal existence for the discovery of his truth, his law of living, his way to fullness and perfection. And everything depends on the nature of his faith, the thing in himself or in universal being—of which he is a portion or manifestation—to which he directs it and how near he gets to his real self and the Self or true being of the universe. If he is tamasic, ignorant, clouded and has an ignorant faith, he will fall away to his lower being; if he is led by false rajasic lights, he will be carried away by his self-will into bypaths, and in either case his only chance of salvation lies in a return of sattwa upon him to impose a new enlightened order and rule upon his members which will liberate him from his error of self-will or his error of clouded ignorance. If on the other hand he has the sattwic nature and a sattwic faith and direction, he will arrive at a higher ideal rule which may, though it does not follow always that it will, lead him beyond the sattwic light to the highest divine light and a divine being and living. But if the sattwic light is so strong in him as to bring him to its own culminating point, then he will be able from that point to make his

gate of entrance into something at least of that which is divine, transcendent and absolute. In all effort at self-finding these possibilities are there; they are the conditions of this spiritual adventure.

Now we have to see how the Gita deals with this question on its own line of spiritual teaching and self-discipline. For Arjuna puts immediately a suggestive query from which it or one aspect of it arises. When men, he says, sacrifice to God or the gods with faith, *çraddhâ*, but abandoning the rule of the Shastra, what is that concentrated will of devotion in them, *nishthâ*, which gives them this faith and moves them to this kind of action? Is it sattwa, rajas or tamas? to which strand of our nature does it belong? The answer given is first that the faith in our being is of a triple kind and varies according to the dominating quality of our nature. The faith of each man takes the shape, hue, quality given to it by his being, his temperament, his power of existence, *sattwânurûpâ sarvasya çraddhâ*. And then there comes a remarkable line in which the Gita tells us that this Purusha, this soul in man, is made of *çraddhâ*, a faith, a will of being, a belief in itself and existence, and whatever is that will, faith or constituting belief in him, he is that and that is he. *Çraddhâmayo 'yam purusha yo yach-chraddhah sa eva sah*. If we look into this pregnant saying a little closely, we shall find that this single line contains implied in its few forceful words almost the whole theory of the modern gospel of pragmatism. For if a man or the soul in a man consists of the faith which is in him, taken in this deeper sense, then it follows that the truth which he sees and wills to live, is for him the truth of his being, the truth of himself that he has created or is creating and there can be for him no other real truth. This truth is a thing of his inner and outer action, a thing of his becoming, he is what he is today by a past will of being and by a present will to know and believe in his intelligence and

vital mind, and whatever new turn this will and faith of his being takes, that he will tend to become in the future. We create our own truth of existence in an action of mind and life, which is another way of saying that we create our own selves.

But very obviously this is only one aspect of the truth. Truth is not merely whatever our own personality creates; that is only the truth of our becoming. Beyond our personality there is, first, universal being as well as universal becoming and beyond that too the eternal Being out of which all becoming derives. We may say indeed that all becoming is only an act of universal consciousness, is Maya, a creation of the will to become, and the only other reality, if there is any, is pure eternal being beyond consciousness, featureless, unexpressed and inexpressible. That is practically the standpoint taken by the Mayavadin's Adwaita and the sense of its distinction between pragmatic truth which to it is illusory—while modern pragmatism takes it to be real or at least the only recognisable reality because the only reality that we can act and know,—and the supreme truth of featureless inexpressible being. But for the Gita the supreme Brahman is also supreme Purusha, and Purusha is always conscious Being, though its highest consciousness—as, one may add, its lower which we call the Inconscient,—is something different from our mentality to which alone we are accustomed to give the name. There is in that super-conscience a highest truth and dharma of immortality, the divine way of being, the way of the eternal and infinite existence, to which we are to arrive. That exists already in the being of the Purushottama, and we are now attempting to create it in our becoming, to become the Divine, to be as He, *madbhâva*. That also depends on *çraddhâ*, it is by an act of our conscious being and a belief in its truth, a will to live it or be it that we come by it; but this does not mean that it does not already exist. Though it may not exist for

our outward mind until we see and create ourselves anew into it, it is still there in the Eternal and we may say that it exists already too in our greater secret being, for there also the Purushottama always is, and our growing into it, our creation of it is its manifestation. All creation indeed since it proceeds from the being of the Eternal, is a manifestation,

We are concerned at present, however, not with the metaphysical issue, but with the relation of this will or faith in our being to our growth into the perfection of the divine nature. This power, this *çraddhâ* is in any case our basis. When we live, are and act according to our desires, that is an act of *çraddhâ* belonging mostly to our vital, tamasic and rajasic nature; when we try to be, live and act according to the Shastra, we proceed by an act of *çraddhâ* which belongs, supposing it to be not a routine faith, to a sattwic tendency labouring to impose itself on our rajasic and tamasic nature. When we leave both these things and try to be, live and act according to some ideal or conception of truth of our own seeing, that too is an act of *çraddhâ* which may be dominated by any one of the three qualities of our nature; and when we try to be, live and act according to the divine nature, then too we must proceed by an act of *çraddhâ*, which will be according to the Gita the faith of the sattwic nature culminating and exceeding its own limitation. But all and any of these things implies some kinesis or displacement of nature, an inner or outer or ordinarily both an inner and outer action. And what then will be the character of this action? The Gita states three main elements of the action we have to do, *kartavyam karma*, sacrifice, askesis, and giving. For when questioned by Arjuna on the difference between the outer and inner renunciation, *sannyâsa* and *tyâga*, Krishna insists that these three things ought not to be renounced but ought to be done, they are the work before us, *kartavyam karma*, and they purify the wise. In other words these acts

constitute the means of our perfection. But at the same time they may be done too unwisely or less wisely by the unwise, and indeed all our action may be reduced in its essential parts to these three elements. For all action involves a voluntary or an involuntary tapasya or askesis, an energism and concentration of our forces or capacities or of some capacity which helps us to acquire or to become something, *tapas*. All action involves an expenditure or giving which is the price of that acquisition or becoming, *dâna*. All action involves too a sacrifice to elemental or to universal powers or to the supreme Master of our being. The question is whether we do these things inconsciently, ignorantly, passively or with an unintelligent ignorant half-conscient will in it or with an unwisely or perversely conscient energism or with a wisely conscient will, in other words, whether our sacrifice, askesis or giving is tamasic, rajasic or sattwic in its nature.

For everything here, including physical things, partakes of this triple character. Our food, for example, the Gita tells us, is either sattwic, rajasic or tamasic according to its character and effect on the body. The sattwic temperament in the mental and physical body turns naturally to the food that increases the life, increases the inner and outer strength, nourishes, that is, at once the mental, vital and physical force and increases the pleasure and satisfaction and happy condition of mind and life and body, the food that is succulent and soft and firm and satisfying; the rajasic temperament likes that which is violently sour, pungent, hot, acrid, rough and strong and burning and which increases ill-health and the distempers of the mind and body; the tamasic temperament has a pleasure in cold, impure, stale, rotten or tasteless food or even, like the animals, in the remnants half-eaten by others. All-pervading is the principle of the three gunas. The gunas will therefore apply also to sacrifice, askesis and giving, and the Gita distinguishes under each head between the three

kinds in the customary terms of these things as they were formulated by the symbolism of the old Indian culture. But remembering the very wide sense which the Gita itself gives to the idea of sacrifice, we may for our purpose enlarge these hints to a freer meaning. And it will be convenient to take them in a reverse order, from tamas to sattwa, since we are considering how we go upward out of our lower nature through a certain sattwic culmination to a divine nature and action beyond the three gunas.

The tamasic sacrifice is work which is done without faith, without, that is to say, the full conscious idea and belief and will to the thing Nature yet compels us to do, mechanically, because the act of living demands it, because it comes in our way, because others do it, to avoid some other greater difficulty which may arise from not doing it, or from any other tamasic motive, and it is apt to be done, if we have in the full this kind of nature, carelessly, perfunctorily, in the wrong way. It will not be performed by the *vidhi* or right rule of the Shastra, according to the method laid down by the art and science of life and the right science of the thing to be done. It will be done without the giving of food in the sacrifice,—and that act in the Indian ritual is symbolic of the element of helpful giving that is inherent in every action that is sacrifice, the giving to others, the help to others, to the world, without which our action becomes a wholly self-regarding thing and a violation of the true universal law,—and without the dakshina, the giving or self-giving to the leaders of the sacrificial action, whether to the outward guide and helper of our work or to the godhead within, and without the mantra, the dedicating thought which is that of the will and knowledge directed to the godheads we serve by our sacrifice. The tamasic man does not offer his sacrifice to the gods, but to inferior elemental powers or to grosser spirits behind the veil who feed upon his works. The rajasic man on the other hand offers his sa-

crifice to lower godheads or perverse powers, the Yakshas, the keepers of wealth, or to the Asuric forces. His sacrifice may be performed outwardly according to the Shastra, but its motive is ostentation, pride or a lust after the fruit and rewards of his works. All work therefore that proceeds from violent or egoistic personal desire or from an arrogant will trying to impose itself on the world for personal objects is of the rajasic nature, even if it be done outwardly as a sacrifice. And therefore even if it is ostensibly given to God or to the gods, it remains essentially an Asuric action. It is the inner state, motive and direction which give value to our works, and not merely the apparent outer direction, the divine names we may call to sanction them or even the sincere intellectual belief which seems to justify us in the performance. Wherever there is a dominating egoism in our acts, there our work becomes a rajasic sacrifice. The sattwic sacrifice is distinguished by three signs. First, it is dictated by and done according to the *vidhi*, the right principle, method, rule, law of our works, and that means that the reason and enlightened will are the guides. Secondly, it is done with a mind concentrated and fixed on the idea of the thing to be done as a true sacrifice imposed on us by the divine law that governs our life, and therefore it is performed as a duty, without desire for the personal fruit,—the more impersonal the motive of the action, the more sattwic its nature. And finally it is offered to the gods, the divine powers by which the Master of existence governs the universe.

This sattwic sacrifice comes then very near to and leads towards the kind of action demanded by the Gita, but it is not the last and highest thing; it is not yet the action of the perfected man who lives in the divine nature. For it is done as a fixed dharma, and it is offered to the gods, to some power or aspect of the Divine manifested in ourselves or in the universe. Work done with a dis-

interested religious faith or done selflessly for humanity or done impersonally from devotion to the Right or the Truth is of this nature, and action of that kind is necessary for our perfection ; for it purifies our thought and will and being. But the culmination of the sattwic action at which we have to arrive is the sacrifice offered to the supreme Divine in his totality, with the seeking for or the vision of the Purushottama, of Vasudeva in all beings, impersonally, universally, for the good of the world and the fulfilment of the divine will in the universe. That culmination leads to its own transcending. For then comes a freedom in which there is no personal action at all, no sattwic rule of dharma, no limitation of Shastra, the inferior reason and will are themselves overpassed and it is not they but a higher wisdom which dictates and guides the work. There is no question of personal fruit, for the will that works is not our own but a supreme Will of which the soul is the instrument ; no self-regarding or selflessness, for the Jiva, the portion of the Divine, is united with the highest Self of his existence, and he and all are one in that Self and Spirit ; no personal action, for all actions are given up to the Master of works and it is he that does the action through the divinised Prakriti ; no sacrifice, unless we can say that the Master of sacrifice is offering the works of his energy in the Jiva to himself in his universal being. This is the supreme state arrived at by the action that is sacrifice, and this is the perfection of the soul that has come to its full consciousness in the divine nature.

Tamasic tapasya is that which is done with a clouded and deluded idea in it obstinate in its delusion, with an ignorant faith in some falsehood or with a suffering imposed on oneself in pursuit of some narrow and vulgar egoistic object which has no relation to any true or great aim, or else a concentration of the energy with a will to do hurt to others. That which makes this kind of energism

tamasic is not any principle of inertia, for that is foreign to tapasya, but a darkness in the mind and nature, a vulgar narrowness and ugliness in the doing, a brutish instinct or desire in the aim. Rajasic energisms of askesis are those which are undertaken to get honour from men, in order to be worshipped by them, for personal distinction and outward glory and greatness, or from some other motive of pride and egoistic will. This kind of askesis devoted to fleeting particular objects which add nothing to the heavenward growth and perfection of the soul, is a thing without fixed and helpful principle, bound up with changeful and passing occasion and itself of that nature. Or even if there is ostensibly a more inward and nobler object and the faith and will are of a higher kind, yet if any kind of arrogance or pride or any great strength of violent self-will or desire enters into the askesis or if it drives some violent, lawless or terrible action contrary to the Shastra, to the right science of life and works, afflicting to self and others, or of the nature of self-torture hurting and violating the mental, vital and physical elements and the God within us who is seated in the inner subtle body, then it is an unwise, an Asuric, a rajasic or rajaso-tamasic tapasya.

The sattwic tapasya is that which is done with a highest enlightened faith, as duty, for some ethical or spiritual or other higher reason and with no desire for any external or personal fruit in the action. It is of the character of self-discipline, self-control and a harmonising of one's nature. The Gita describes three kinds of sattwic askesis; first, what it calls the physical, that is to say the askesis of outward action, and it mentions especially worship and reverence of those deserving reverence, cleanness of person and act and life, candid dealing, sexual purity, avoidance of killing and injury to others; next, askesis of speech, which consists of the study of Scripture and kind and true and beneficent speech and avoidance of words which cause fear, sorrow or trouble to other men; finally, the askesis

of mental and moral perfection, the purifying of the whole temperament and gentleness and a clear and calm gladness of mind and silence and self-control, all in fact that quiets the rajasic egoistic nature and replaces it by the happy and tranquil principle of good. This is the askesis of the sattwic dharma so highly prized in the system of the ancient Indian culture. Its culmination will be a high purity of the reason and will, an equal soul, a deep peace and calm, a wide sympathy and a preparation of oneness, a reflection of the divine delight in the mental, vital and physical being. And this culmination too can be made to transcend itself and pass into the settled divine energy of the supreme nature. What will remain then will be the divine Tapas, a highest will in all the members acting in a supreme calm and the supreme spiritual delight, Ananda. There will then be no farther need of askesis, no tapasya, because all is that Tapas, no labour of the lower energism, because the energy of Prakriti will have found its source and base in the Purushottama and the acts of that energy will proceed naturally, spontaneously from that innate perfect will and by that inherent perfect guidance. There will be no limitation by any of the present dharmas, for there will be a free action far above the rajasic and tamasic nature, but beyond too the limits of the sattwic rule of action.

The tamasic giving is that which is offered ignorantly with no consideration of the right condition of time or place or object, a foolish, inconsiderate and really self-regarding giving, the gift offered without sympathy or true liberality, without regard for the feelings of the recipient and despised by him even in the acceptance. The rajasic giving is that which is done with a personal and egoistic object or in the hope of a return or corresponding or greater benefit to oneself. The sattwic giving is that done with right reason and good will and sympathy in the right conditions of time and place to the right

recipient who is worthy or whom the gift can really help, for the sake of the giving and beneficence, without any view to benefit already done or to be done to oneself by the receiver, without any personal object in the action. The culmination of the sattwic *dâna* will be the wider self-giving in all one's action to others and to the world and to God, *âtma-samarpana*, which is the consecration of the sacrifice of works enjoined by the Gita. And the transcendence in the divine nature will be founded on the greater meaning of existence. All this manifold universe comes into birth and is constantly maintained by a giving by God of himself and the outflowing of his self and spirit into all these existences; for universal being, says the Veda, is the sacrifice of the Purusha. The action of the perfected soul will be even such a divine giving of itself, of the knowledge, light, strength, love, joy, helpful shakti which it possesses in the Divine to all around it and to this world of beings. That will be the result of the completed self-giving of the soul to the Master of our existence.

The Gita closes this chapter with what seems at first sight a recondite utterance. OM, Tat, Sat, are, it says, the triple definition of the Brahman, by whom the Brahmanas, the Vedas and sacrifices were created of old. Tat, That, indicates the Absolute, Sat indicates the supreme and universal existence in its principle, OM is the symbol of the triple outward-looking, inward or subtle and superconscient causal being, each letter A, U, M indicating one of them, while the whole syllable brings in the fourth state, Turiya, which rises to the Absolute. OM is the syllable which is pronounced at the beginning or as a prelude and sanction to all action of sacrifice, giving and askesis; that is to say, it is a reminder that the work should be made an expression of the triple Divine in our being and turned towards him in the idea and motive. The seekers of liberation do these actions without desire

of fruit and only with the idea of the absolute Divine behind their being which they seeek by this purity and impersonality in all their works. Sat means good and it means existence. Both must be behind that triple kind of action ; good works are Sat, for they prepare the soul for the higher truth of our existence ; firm abiding in sacrifice, giving and askesis and works done with that view, as sacrifice, giving and askesis, are Sat, for they build the basis for the highest truth of our spirit. And because *çraddhâ* is the central principle of our existence, any of these things done without *çraddhâ* is a falsity and has no true meaning or true being on earth or beyond, in life here or after mortal life. The soul's faith, not a mere intellectual belief, but the concordant will to know, see, believe, do and be, gives the measure of our possibilities of becoming, and it is this faith and will turned towards the highest and divine in all our inner and outer self and action which will enable us to reach the supreme perfection.

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LXII

THE POWER OF THE INSTRUMENTS

The second member of the Yoga of self-perfection is the heightened, enlarged and rectified power of the instruments of our normal Nature. The cultivation of this second perfection need not wait for the security of the equal mind and spirit, but it is only in that security that it can become complete and act in the safety of the divine leading. The object of this cultivation is to make the nature a fit instrument for divine works,. All work is done by power, by Shakti, and since the integral Yoga does not contemplate abandonment of works, but rather a doing of all works from the divine consciousness and with the supreme guidance, the characteristic powers of the instruments, mind, life and body, must not only be purified of defects, but raised to a capacity for this greater action. In the end they must undergo a spiritual and supramental transfiguration.

There are four members of this second part of the sadhana or discipline of self-perfection and the first of them is right shakti, the right condition of the powers of the intelligence, heart, vital mind and body. It will only be possible at present to suggest a preliminary perfection of

the last of these four, for the full siddhi will have to be dealt with after I have spoken of the supermind and its influence on the rest of the being. The body is not only the necessary outer instrument of the physical part of action, but for the purposes of this life a base or pedestal also for all inner action. All working of mind or spirit has its vibration in the physical consciousness, records itself there in a kind of subordinate corporeal notation and communicates itself to the material world partly at least through the physical machine. But the body of man has natural limitations in this capacity which it imposes on the play of the higher parts of his being. And, secondly, it has a subconscient consciousness of its own in which it keeps with an obstinate fidelity the past habits and past nature of the mental and vital being and which automatically opposes and obstructs any very great upward change or at least prevents it from becoming a radical transformation of the whole nature. It is evident that if we are to have a free divine or spiritual and supramental action conducted by the force and fulfilling the character of a diviner energy, some fairly complete transformation must be effected in this outward character of the bodily nature. The physical being of man has always been felt by the seekers of perfection to be a great impediment and it has been the habit to turn from it with contempt, denial or aversion and a desire to suppress altogether or as far as may be the body and the physical life. But this cannot be the right method for the integral Yoga. The body is given us as one instrument necessary to the totality of our works and it is to be used, not neglected, hurt, suppressed or abolished. If it is imperfect, recalcitrant, obstinate, so are also the other members, the vital being, heart and mind and reason. It has like them to be changed and perfected and to undergo a transformation. As we must get ourselves a new life, new heart, new mind, so we have in a certain sense to build for ourselves a new body.

The first thing the will has to do with the body is to impose on it progressively a new habit of all its being, consciousness, force and outward and inward acion. It must be taught an entire passivity in the hands first of the higher instruments, but eventually in the hands of the spirit and its controlling and informing Shakti. It must be accustomed not to impose its own limits on the nobler members, but to shape its action and its response to their demands, to develop, one might say, a higher notation, a higher scale of responses. At present the notation of the body and the physical consciousness has a very large determining power on the music made by this human harp of God; the notes we get from the spirit, from the psychic soul, from the greater life behind our physical life cannot come in freely, cannot develop their high powerful and proper strain. This condition must be reversed; the body and the physical consciousness must develop the habit of admitting and shaping themselves to these higher strains and not they, but the nobler parts of the nature must determine the music of our life and being.

The control of the body and life by the mind and its thought and will is the first step towards this change. All yoga implies the carrying of that control to a very high pitch. But afterwards the mind must itself give place to the spirit, to the spiritual force, the supermind and the supramental force. And finally the body must develop a perfect power to hold whatever force is brought into it by the spirit and to contain its action without spilling and wasting it or itself getting cracked. It must be capable of being filled and powerfully used by whatever intensity of spiritual or higher mind or life force without any part of the mechanical instrument being agitated, upset, broken or damaged by the inrush or pressure,—as the brain, vital health or moral nature are often injured in those who unwisely attempt Yogic practice without preparation or by undue means or rashly invite a power they are intellectually, vital-

ly, morally unfit to bear,—and, thus filled, it must have the capacity to work normally, automatically, rightly according to the will of that spiritual or other now unusual agent without distorting, diminishing or mistranslating its intention and stress. This faculty of holding, *dhârana-shakti*, in the physical consciousness, energy and machinery is the most important siddhi or perfection of the body.

The result of these changes will be to make the body a perfect instrument of the spirit. The spiritual force will be able to do what it wills and as it wills in and through the body. It will be able to conduct an unlimited action of the mind or at a higher stage of the supermind without the body betraying the action by fatigue, incapacity, inaptitude or falsification, It will be able too to pour a full tide of the life-force into the body and conduct a large action and joy of the perfected vital being without that quarrel and disparity which is the relation of the normal life-instincts and life-impulses to the insufficient physical instrument they are obliged to use. And it will also be able to conduct a full action of the spiritualised psychic being not falsified, degraded or in any way marred by the lower instincts of the body and to use physical action and expression as a free notation of the higher psychical life. And in the body itself there will be a presence of a greatness of sustaining force, an abounding strength, energy and puissance of outgoing and managing force, a lightness, swiftness and adaptability of the nervous and physical being, a holding and responsive power in the whole physical machine and its driving springs * of which it is now even at its strongest and best incapable.

This energy will not be in its essence an outward, physical or muscular strength, but will be of the nature, first, of an unbounded life-power or pranic force, secondly, sustaining and using this pranic energy, a superior or su-

* *Mahattwa, bala, laghutâ, dhârana-sâmarthya*

preme will-power acting in the body. The play of the pranic shakti in the body or form is the condition of all action, even of the most apparently inanimate physical action. It is the universal Prana, as the ancients knew, which in various forms sustains or drives material energy in all physical things from the electron and atom and gas up through the metal, plant, animal, physical man. To get this pranic shakti to act more freely and forcibly in the body is knowingly or unknowingly the attempt of all who strive for a greater perfection of or in the body. The ordinary man tries to command it mechanically by physical exercises and other corporeal means, the Hathayogin more greatly and flexibly, but still mechanically by Asana and Pranayama ; but for our purpose it can be commanded by more subtle essential and pliable means ; first, by a will in the mind widely opening itself to and potently calling in the universal pranic shakti on which we draw and fixing its stronger presence and more powerful working in the body ; secondly, by the will in the mind opening itself rather to the spirit and its power and calling in a higher pranic energy from above, a supramental pranic force ; thirdly, the last step, by the highest supramental will of the spirit entering and taking up directly the task of the perfection of the body. In fact, it is always really a will within which drives and makes effective the pranic instrument even when it uses what seem to be purely physical means ; but at first it is dependent on the inferior action. When we go higher, the relation is gradually reversed ; it is then able to act in its own power or handle the rest only as a subordinate instrumentation.

Most men are not conscious of this pranic force in the body or cannot disfinguish it from the more physical form of energy which it informs and uses for its vehicle. But as the consciousness becomes more subtle by practice of Yoga, we can come to be aware of the sea of pranic shakti around us, feel it with the mental consci-

ousness, concretely with a mental sense, see its courses and movements, and direct and act upon it immediately by the will. But until we thus become aware of it, we have to possess a working or at least an experimental faith in its presence and in the power of the will to develop a greater command and use of this prana force. There is necessary a faith, *çraddhâ*, in the power of the mind to lay its will on the state and action of the body, such as those have who heal disease by faith, will or mental action; but we must seek this control not only for this or any other limited use, but generally as a legitimate power of the inner and greater over the outer and lesser instrument. This faith is combated by our past habits of mind, by our actual normal experience of its comparative helplessness in our present imperfect system and by an opposing belief in the body and physical consciousness. For they too have a limiting *çraddhâ* of their own which opposes the idea in the mind when it seeks to impose on the system the law of a higher yet unattained perfection. But as we persist and find this power giving evidence of itself to our experience, the faith in the mind will be able to found itself more firmly and grow in vigour and the opposing faith in the body will change, admit what it first denied and not only accept in its habits the new yoke but itself call for this higher action. Finally we shall realise the truth that this being we are is or can become whatever it has the faith and will to be,—for faith is only a will aiming at greater truth,—and cease to set limits to our possibility or deny the potential omnipotence of the Self in us, the divine Power working through the human instrument. That however, at least as a practical force, comes in at a later stage of high perfection.

The Prana is not only a force for the action of physical and vital energy, but supports also the mental and spiritual action. Therefore the full and free working of the pranic shakti is required not only for the lower but

still necessary use, but also for the free and full operation of mind and supermind and spirit in the the instrumentality of our complex human nature. That is the main sense of the use of exercises of Pranayama for control of the vital force and its motions which is so important and indispensable a part of certain systems of Yoga. The same mastery must be got by the seeker of the integral Yoga ; but he may arrive at it by other means and in any case he must not be dependent on any physical or breathing exercise for its possession and maintenance, for that will at once bring in a limitation and subjection to Prakriti. Her instrumentation has to be used flexibly by the Purusha, but not to be a fixed control on the Purusha. The necessity of the Pranic force, however, remains and will be evident to our self-study and experience. It is in the Vedic image the steed and conveyance of the embodied mind and will, *vâhana*. If it is full of strength and swiftness and a plenitude of all its powers, then the mind can go on the courses of its action with a plenary and unhampered movement. But if it is lame or soon tired or sluggish or weak, then an incapacity is laid on the effectuation of the will and activity of the mind. The same rule holds good of the supermind when it first comes into action. There are indeed states and activities in which the mind takes up the pranic shakti into itself and this dependence is not felt at all ; but even then the force is there, though involved in the pure mental energy. The supermind, when it gets into full strength, can do pretty well what it likes with the pranic shakti, and we find that in the end this life power is transformed into the type of a supramentalised prana which is simply one motor power of that greater consciousness. But this belongs to a later stage of the siddhi of the Yoga.

Then again there is the psychic prana, pranic mind or desire soul ; this too calls for its own perfection. Here too the first necessity is a fullness of the vital capacity in

the mind, its power to do its full work, to take possession of all the impulsions and energies given to our inner psychic life for fulfilment in this existence, to hold them and to be a means for carrying them out with strength, freedom, perfection. Many of the things we need for our perfection, courage, will-power effective in life, all the elements of what we now call force of character and force of personality, depend very largely for their completest strength and spring of energetic action on the fullness of the psychic prana. But along with this fullness there must be an established gladness, clearness and purity in the psychic life-being. This dynamis must not be a troubled, perfervid, stormy, fitfully or crudely passionate strength; energy there must be, rapture of its action it must have, but a clear and glad and pure energy, a seated and firmly supported pure rapture. And as a third condition of its perfection it must be poised in a complete equality. The desire-soul must get rid of the clamour, insistence or uneqality of its desires in order that its desires may be satisfied with justice and balance and in the right way and eventually must rid them of the character of desire altogether and change them into impulsions of the divine Ananda. To that end it must make no demands nor seek to impose itself on heart, mind or spirit, but accept with a strong passive and active equality whatever impulsion and command come into it from the spirit through the channel of a still mind and a pure heart. And it must accept too whatever result of the impulse, whatever enjoyment more or less, full or nil, is given to it by the Master of our being. At the same time, possession and enjoyment are its law, function, use, swadharma. It is not intended to be a slain or mortified thing, dull in its receptive power dreary, suppressed, maimed, inert or null. It must have a full power of possession, a glad power of enjoyment, an exultant power of pure and divine passion and rapture. The enjoyment it will have will be in the essence a spiri-

tual bliss, but one which takes up into itself and transforms the mental, emotional, dynamic, vital and physical joy; it must have therefore an integral capacity for these things and must not by incapacity or fatigue or inability to bear great intensities fail the spirit, mind, heart, will and body. Fullness, clear purity and gladness, equality, capacity for possession and enjoyment are the fourfold perfection of the psychic prana.*

The next instrument which needs perfection is the *chitta*, and within the complete meaning of this expression we may include the emotional and the pure psychical being. This heart and psychic being of man shot through with the threads of the life instincts is a thing of mixed inconstant colours of emotion and soul vibrations, bad and good, happy and unhappy, satisfied and unsatisfied, troubled and calm, intense and dull. Thus agitated and invaded it is unacquainted with any real peace, incapable of a steady perfection of all its powers. By purification, by equality, by the light of knowledge, by a harmonising of the will it can be brought to a tranquil intensity and perfection. The first two elements of this perfection are on one side a high and large sweetness, openness, gentleness, calm, clarity, on the other side a strong and ardent force and intensity. In the divine no less than in ordinary human character and action there are always two strands, sweetness and strength, mildness and force, *saumya* and *raudra*, the force that bears and harmonises, the force that imposes itself and compels, Vishnu and Ishâna, Shiva and Rudra. The two are equally necessary to a perfect world-action. The perversions of the Rudra power in the heart are stormy passion, wrath and fierceness and harshness, hardness, brutality, cruelty, egoistic ambition and love of violence and domination. These and other human perversions have to be got rid of by the flowering of a calm, clear and sweet psychical being.

* *Purnatâ, prasannatâ, samatâ. bhoga-sâmarthya.*

But on the other hand incapacity of force is also an imperfection. Laxity and weakness, self-indulgence, a certain flabbiness and limpness or inert passivity of the psychical being are the last result of an emotional and psychic life in which energy and power of assertion have been quelled, discouraged or killed. Nor is it a total perfection to have only the strength that endures or to cultivate only a heart of love, charity, tolerance, mildness, meekness and forbearance. The other side of perfection is a self-contained and calm and unegoistic Rudra-power armed with psychic force, the energy of the strong heart which is capable of supporting without shrinking an insistent, an outwardly austere or even, where need is, a violent action. An unlimited light of energy, force, puissance harmonised with sweetness of heart and clarity, capable of being one with it in action, the lightning of Indra starting from the orb of the nectarous moon-rays of Soma is the double perfection. And these two things *saumyatwa*, *tejas*, must base their presence and action on a firm equality of the temperament and of the psychical soul delivered from all crudity and all excess or defect of the heart's light or the heart's power.

Another necessary element is a faith in the heart, a belief in and will to the universal good, an openness to the universal Ananda. The pure psychic being is of the essence of Ananda, it comes from the delight-soul in the universe; but the superficial heart of emotion is overborne by the conflicting appearances of the world and suffers many reactions of grief, fear, depression, passion, short-lived and partial joy. An equal heart is needed for perfection, but not only a passive equality; there must be the sense of a divine power making for good behind all experiences, a faith and will which can turn the poisons of the world to nectar, see the happier spiritual intention behind adversity, the mystery of love behind suffering, the flower of divine strength and joy in the seed of pain.

This faith, *kalyâna-çraddhâ*, is needed in order that the heart and the whole overt psychic being may respond to the secret divine Ananda and change itself into this true original essence. This faith and will must be accompanied by and open into an illimitable widest and intensest capacity for love. For the main business of the heart, its true function is love. It is our destined instrument of complete union and oneness; for to see oneness in the world by the understanding is not enough unless we also feel it with the heart and in the psychic being, and this means a delight in the One and in all existences in the world in him, a love of God and all beings. The heart's faith and will in good are founded on a perception of the one Divine immanent in all things and leading the world. The universal love has to be founded on the heart's sight and psychical and emotional sense of the one Divine, the one Self in all existence. All four elements will then form a unity and even the Rudra power to do battle for the right and the good proceed on the basis of a power of universal love. This is the highest and the most characteristic perfection of the heart, *prema-sâmarthya*.

The last perfection is that of the intelligence and thinking mind, *buddhi*. The first need is the clarity and the purity of the intelligence. It must be freed from the claims of the vital being which seeks to impose the desire of the mind in place of the truth, from the claims of the troubled emotional being which strives to colour, distort, limit and falsify the truth with the hue and shape of the emotions. It must be free too from its own defect, inertia of the thought-power, obstructive narrowness and unwillingness to open to knowledge, intellectual unscrupulousness in thinking, prepossession and preference, self-will in the reason and false determination of the will to knowledge. Its sole will must be to make itself an unsullied mirror of the truth, its essence and its forms and measures and relations, a clear mirror, a just measure, a fine

and subtle instrument of harmony, an integral intelligence. This clear and pure intelligence can then become a serene thing of light, a pure and strong radiance emanating from the sun of Truth. But, again, it must become not merely a thing of concentrated dry or white light, but capable of all variety of understanding, supple, rich, flexible, brilliant with all the flame and various with all the colours of the manifestation of the Truth, open to all its forms. And so equipped it will get rid of limitations, not be shut up in this or that faculty or form or working of knowledge, but an instrument ready and capable for whatever work is demanded from it by the Purusha. Purity, clear radiance, rich and flexible variety, integral capacity are the fourfold perfection of the thinking intelligence, *viçuddhi*, *prakâça*, *vichitra-bodha*, *sarva-jnâna-sâmarthya*.

The normal instruments thus perfected will act each in its own kind without undue interference from each other and serve the unobstructed will of the Purusha in a harmonised totality of our natural being. This perfection must rise constantly in its capacity for action, the energy and force of its working and a certain greatness of the scope of the total nature. They will then be ready for the transformation into their own supramental action in which they will find a more absolute, unified and luminous spiritual truth of the whole perfected nature. The means of this perfection of the instruments we shall have to consider later on; but at present it will be enough to say that the principal conditions are will, self-watching and self-knowledge and a constant practice, *abhyâsa*, of self-modification and transformation. The Purusha has that capacity; for the spirit within can always change and perfect the working of its nature. But the mental being must open the way by a clear and a watchful introspection, an opening of itself to a searching and subtle self-knowledge which will give it the understanding and to an increasing extent the mastery of its natural instruments, a vigilant and insistent

will of self-modification and self-transformation—for to that will the Prakriti must with whatever difficulty and whatever initial or prolonged resistance eventually respond,—and an unfailing practice which will constantly reject all defect and perversion and replace it by right state and a right and enhanced working. Askesis, tapasya, patience and faithfulness and rectitude of knowledge and will are the things required until a greater Power than our mental selves directly intervenes to effect a more easy and rapid transformation.

A Defence of Indian Culture

(12)

A good deal of hostile or unsympathetic Western criticism of Indian civilisation has been directed against its aesthetic side and taken the form of a disdainful or violent depreciation of its fine arts, architecture, sculpture and painting. Mr. Archer would not find much support in his wholesale and undiscriminating depreciation of a great literature, but here too there has been, if not positive attack, much failure of understanding. This aesthetic side of a people's culture is of the highest importance and demands almost as much scrutiny and carefulness of appreciation as the philosophy, religion and central formative ideas which have been the foundation of Indian life and of which much of the art and literature is a conscious expression in significant aesthetic forms. Fortunately, a considerable amount of work has been already done in the clearing away of misconceptions about Indian sculpture and painting and, if that were all, I might be content to refer to the works of Mr. Havell and Dr. Coomarswamy or to the sufficiently understanding though less deeply informed and penetrating criticisms of others who cannot be charged with a prepossession in favour of oriental work. But a more general and searching consideration of first principles is called for in any complete view of the

essential motives of Indian culture. I am appealing mainly to that new mind of India which long misled by an alien education, view and influence is returning to a sound and true idea of its past and future ; but in this field the return is far from being as pervading, complete or luminous as it should be. I shall confine myself therefore first to a consideration of the sources of misunderstanding and pass from that to the true cultural significance of Indian aesthetic creation.

Mr. Archer pursuing his policy of Thorough devotes a whole chapter to the subject. This chapter is one long torrent of sweeping denunciation. But it would be a waste of time to take his attack as serious criticism and answer all in detail. His reply to defenders and eulogists is amazing in its shallowness and triviality, made up mostly of small, feeble and sometimes irrelevant points, big glaring epithets and forcibly senseless phrases, based for the rest on a misunderstanding or a sheer inability to conceive the meaning of spiritual experiences and metaphysical ideas which betrays an entire absence of the religious sense and the philosophic mind. Mr. Archer is of course a rationalist and contemner of philosophy and entitled to his deficiencies ; but why then try to judge things into the sense of which one is unable to enter and exhibit the spectacle of a blind man discoursing on colours? I will cite one or two instances which will show the quality of his criticism and amply justify a refusal to attach any positive value to the actual points he labours to make, except for the light they throw on the psychology of the objectors.

I will give first an instance amazing in its ineptitude. The Indian ideal figure of the masculine body insists on two features among many, a characteristic width at the shoulders and slenderness in the middle. Well, an objection to broadness of girth and largeness of belly—allowed only where they are appropriate as in sculptures of Ganesha or the Yakshas—is not peculiar to the Indian aesthe-

tic sense; an emphasis, even a pronounced emphasis on their opposites is surely intelligible enough as an aesthetic tradition, however some may prefer a more realistic and prosperous presentation of the human figure. But Indian poets and authorities on art have given in this connection the simile of the lion, and lo and behold Mr. Archer solemnly discoursing on this image as a plain proof that the Indian people were only just out of the semi-savage state! It is only too clear that they drew their ideal of heroic manhood from their native jungle, from theriolatry, that is to say, from a worship of wild beasts! I presume on the same principle and with the same stupefying ingenuity he would find in Kamban's image of the sea for the colour and depth of Sita's eyes clear evidence of a still more primitive savagery and barbaric worship of inanimate nature, or in Valmiki's description of his heroine's "eyes like wine," *madirekshanâ*, evidence of a chronic inebriety and the semi-drunken inspiration of the Indian poetic mind. This is one example of Mr. Archer's most telling points. It is by no means an isolated though it is an extreme specimen, and the absurdity of that particular argument only brings out the triviality of this manner of criticism. It is on a par with the common objection to the slim hands and feet loved of the Bengal painters which one hears sometimes advanced as a solid condemnation of their work. And that can be pardoned in the average man who under the high dispensation of modern culture is not expected to have any intelligent conception about art,—the instinctive appreciation has been already safely killed and buried. But what are we to say of a professed critic who ignores the deeper motives and fastens on details in order to give them this kind of significance?

But there are more grave and important objections in this criticism; for Mr. Archer turns also to deal with philosophy in art. The whole basis of Indian artistic crea-

tion, perfectly conscious and recognised in the canons, is directly spiritual and intuitive. Mr. Havell rightly lays stress on this essential distinction and speaks in passing of the secret of the infinite superiority of the method of direct perception over intellect, an assertion naturally offensive to the rationalistic mind, though it is now increasingly affirmed by leading western thinkers. Mr. Archer at once starts out to hack at it with a very blunt tomahawk. How does he deal with this crucial matter? In a way which misses the whole real point and has nothing whatever to do with the philosophy of art. He fastens on Mr. Havell's coupling of the master intuition of Buddha with the great intuition of Newton and objects to the parallel because the two discoveries deal with two different orders of knowledge, one scientific and physical, the other mental or psychic, spiritual or philosophic in nature. He trots out from its stable the old objection that Newton's intuition was only the last step in a long intellectual process, while according to this positive psychologist and philosophic critic the intuitions of Buddha and other Indian sages had no basis in any intellectual process of any kind or any verifiable experience. It is on the contrary the simple fact, well-known to all who know anything of the subject, that the conclusions of Buddha and other Indian philosophers (I am not now speaking of the inspired thought of the Upanishads which was pure spiritual experience enlightened by intuition and gnosis,) were preceded by a very acute scrutiny of relevant psychological phenomena and a process of reasoning which, though certainly not rationalistic, was as rational as any other method of thinking. He clinches his refutation by the sage remark that these intuitions which he chooses to call fantasies contradict one another and therefore, it seems, have no sort of value except their vain metaphysical subtlety. Are we to conclude that the patient study of phenomena, the scrupulous and rigidly verifiable intellec-

tual reasonings and conclusions of western scientists have led to no conflicting or contradictory results ? One could never imagine at this rate that the science of heredity is torn by conflicting "fantasies" or that Newton's "fantasies" about space and gravitational effect on space are at this day in danger of being upset by Eynstein's "fantasies" in the same field. It is a minor matter that Mr. Archer happens to be wrong in his idea of Buddha's intuition when he says that he would have rejected a certain Vedantic intuition, since Buddha neither accepted nor rejected, but simply refused at all to speculate on the supreme Cause. His intuition was confined to the cause of sorrow and the impermanence of things and the release by extinction of ego, desire and Sanskara, and so far as he chose to go, his intuition of this extinction, Nirvana, and the Vedantic intuition of the supreme unity were the seeing of one truth of spiritual experience, seen no doubt from different angles of vision and couched in different intellectual forms, but with a common intuitive substance. The rest was foreign to Buddha's rigidly practical purpose. All this leads us far afield from our subject, but our critic has a remarkably confused mind and to follow him is to be condemned to divagate.

Thus far Mr. Archer on intuition. This is the character of his excursions on first principles in art. Is it really necessary to point out that a power of mind or spirit may be the same and yet act differently in different fields? or that a certain kind of intuition may be prepared by a long intellectual training, but that does not make it a last step in an intellectual process, any more than the precedence of sense activity makes intellectual reasoning a last step of sense-perception ? The reason overtops sense and admits us to other and subtler ranges of truth ; the intuition similarly overtops reason and admits us to a more direct and luminous power of truth. But very obviously in the use of the intuition the poet and artist cannot proceed

precisely in the same way as the scientist or philosopher. Leonardo da Vinci's remarkable intuitions in science and his creative intuitions in art started from the same power, but the surrounding or subordinate mental operations were of a different character and colour. And in art itself there are different kinds of intuition. Shakespeare's seeing of life differs in its character and aids from Balzac's or Ibsen's, but the essential part of the process, that which makes it intuitive, is the same. The Buddhistic, the Vedantic seeing of things may be equally powerful starting-points for artistic creation, may lead one to the calm of a Buddha or the other to the rapture dance or majestic stillness of Shiva, and it is quite indifferent to the purposes of art to which of them the metaphysician may be inclined to give a logical preference. These are elementary notions and it is not surprising that one who ignores them should misunderstand the strong and subtle artistic creations of India.

The weakness of Mr. Archer's attack, its empty noise and violence and exiguity of substance must not blind us to the very real importance of the mental outlook from which his dislike of Indian art proceeds. For the outlook and the dislike it generates are rooted in something deeper than themselves, a whole cultural training, natural or acquired temperament and fundamental attitude towards existence, and it measures, if the immeasurable can be measured, the width of the gulf which till recently separated the oriental and the western mind and most of all the European and the Indian way of seeing things. An inability to understand the motives and methods of Indian art and a contempt of or repulsion from it was almost universal till yesterday in the mind of Europe. There was little difference in this regard between the average man bound by his customary first notions and the competent critic trained to appreciate different forms of culture. The gulf was too wide for any bridge of culture then built to span. To

the European mind Indian art was a thing barbarous, immature, monstrous, an arrested growth from humanity's primitive savagery and incompetent childhood. If there has been now some change, it is due to the remarkably sudden widening of the horizon and view of European culture, a partial shifting even of the standpoint from which it was accustomed to see and judge all that it saw. In matters of art the western mind was long bound up as in a prison in the Greek and Renascence tradition modified by a later mentality with only two side rooms of escape, the romantic and the realistic motives, but these were only wings of the same building; for the base was the same and a common essential canon united their variations. The conventional superstition of the imitation of Nature as the first law or the limiting rule of art governed even the freest work and gave its tone to the artistic and critical intelligence. The canons of western artistic creation were held to be the sole valid criteria and everything else was regarded as primitive and half-developed or else strange and fantastic and interesting only by its curiosity. But a remarkable change has begun to set in, even though the old ideas still largely rule. The prison, if not broken, has at least had a wide breach made in it; a more flexible vision and a more profound imagination have begun to superimpose themselves on the old ingrained attitude. As a result and a contributing influence oriental or at any rate Chinese and Japanese art has begun to command something like adequate recognition.

But the change has not yet gone far enough for a thorough appreciation of the deepest and most characteristic spirit and inspiration of Indian work. An eye or an effort like Mr. Havell's is still rare. For the most part even the most sympathetic criticism stops short at a technical appreciation and imaginative sympathy which tries to understand from outside and penetrates into so much only of the artistic suggestion as can be at once seized by

the new wider view of a more accomplished and flexible critical mentality. But there is little sign of the understanding of the very well-spring and spiritual fountain of Indian artistic creation. There is therefore still an utility in fathoming the depths and causes of the divergence. That is especially necessary for the Indian mind itself, for by the appreciation excited by an opposing view it will be better able to understand itself and especially to seize what is essential in Indian art and must be clung to in the future and what is an incident or a phase of growth and can be shed in the advance to a new creation. This is properly a task for those who have themselves at once the creative insight, the technical competence and the seeing critical eye. But everyone who has at all the Indian spirit and feeling, can at least give some account of the main, the central things which constitute for him the appeal of Indian painting, sculpture and architecture. This is all that I shall attempt, for it will be in itself the best defence and justification of Indian culture on its side of aesthetic significance.

The criticism of art is a vain and dead thing when it ignores the spirit, aim, essential motive from which a type of artistic creation starts and judges by the external details only in the light of a quite different spirit, aim and motive. Once we understand the essential things, enter into the characteristic way and spirit, are able to interpret the form and execution from that inner centre, we can then see how it looks in the light of other standpoints, in the light of the comparative mind. A comparative criticism has its use, but the essential understanding must precede it if it is to have any real value. But while this is comparatively easy in the wider and more flexible turn of literature, it is, I think, more difficult in the other arts, when the difference of spirit is deep, because there the absence of the mediating word, the necessity of proceeding direct from spirit to line and form brings about a

special intensity and exclusive concentration of aim and stress of execution. The intensity of the thing that moves the work is brought out with a more distinct power, but by its very stress and directness allows of few accommodations and combined variations of appeal. The thing meant and the thing done strike deep home into the soul or the imaginative mind, but touches it over a smaller surface and with a lesser multitude of points of contact. But whatever the reason, it is less easy for a different kind of mind to appreciate.

The Indian mind in its natural poise finds it almost or quite as difficult really, that is to say, spiritually to understand the arts of Europe, as the ordinary European mind to enter into the spirit of Indian painting and sculpture. I have seen a comparison made between a feminine Indian figure and a Greek Aphrodite which illustrates the difficulty in an extreme form. The critic tells me that the Indian figure is full of a strong spiritual sense,—here of the very breath and being of devotion, an ineffable devotion, and that is true, it is a suggestion or even a revelation which breaks through or overflows the form rather than depends on the external work,—but the Greek creation can only awaken a sublimated carnal or sensuous delight. Now having entered somewhat into the heart of meaning of Greek sculpture, I can see that this is a wrong account of the matter. The critic has got into the real spirit of the Indian, but not into the real spirit of the Greek work; his criticism from that moment, as a comparative appreciation, loses all value. The Greek figure stresses no doubt the body, but appeals through it to an imaginative seeing inspiration which aims at expressing a certain divine power of beauty and gives us therefore something which is much more than a merely sensuous aesthetic pleasure. If the artist has done this with perfection, the work has accomplished its aim and ranks as a masterpiece. The Indian sculptor stresses something be-

hind, something more remote to the surface imagination, but nearer to the soul, and subordinates to it the physical form. If he has only partially succeeded or done it with power but with something faulty in the execution, his work is less great, even though it may have a greater spirit in the intention : but when he wholly succeeds, then his work too is a masterpiece, and we may prefer it with a good conscience, if the spiritual, the higher intuitive vision is what we most demand from art. This however need not interfere with an appreciation of both kinds in their own order.

But in viewing much of other European work of the very greatest repute, I am myself aware of a failure of spiritual sympathy. I look for instance on some of the most famed pieces of Tintoretto,—not the portraits, for those give the soul, if only the active or character soul in the man, but say, the Adam and Eve, the St. George slaying the dragon, the Christ appearing to Venetian Senators, and I am aware of standing baffled and stopped by an irresponsive blankness somewhere in my being. I can see the magnificence and power of colouring and design, I can see the force of externalised imagination or the spirited dramatic rendering of action, but I strive in vain to get out any significance below the surface or equivalent to the greatness of the form, except perhaps an incidental minor suggestion here and there and that is not sufficient for me. When I try to analyse my failure, I find at first certain conceptions which conflict with my expectation or my own way of seeing. This muscular Adam, the sensuous beauty of this Eve do not bring home to me the mother or the father of the race, this dragon seems to me only a surly portentous beast in great danger of being killed, not a creative embodiment of monstrous evil, this Christ with his massive body and benevolent philosophic visage almost offends me, is not at any rate the Christ whom I know. But these are after all incidental things ; what is

really the matter is that I come to this art with a previous demand for a kind of vision, imagination, emotion, significance which it cannot give me. And not being so self-confident as to think that what commands the admiration of the greatest critics and artists is not admirable, I can see this and pause on the verge of applying Mr. Archer's criticism of certain Indian work and saying that the mere execution is beautiful or marvellous but there is no imagination, nothing beyond what is on the surface. I can understand that what is wanting is really the kind of imagination I personally demand; but though my acquired cultured mind explains this to me and may intellectually catch at the something more, my natural being will not be satisfied, I am oppressed, not uplifted by this triumph of life and the flesh and of the power and stir of life,—not that I object to these things in themselves or to the greatest emphasis on the sensuous or even the sensual, elements not at all absent from Indian creation, if I can get something at least of the deeper thing I want behind it,—and I find myself turning away from the work of one of the greatest Italian masters to satisfy myself with some "barbaric" Indian painting or statue, some calm unfathomable Buddha, bronze Shiva or eighteen-armed Durga slaying the Asuras. But the cause of my failure is there, that I am seeking for something which was not meant in the spirit of this art and which I ought not to expect from its characteristic creations. And if I had steeped myself in this Renascence mind as in the original Hellenic spirit, I could have added something to my inner experience and acquired a more catholic and universal aesthesis.

I lay stress on this psychological misunderstanding or want of understanding, because it explains the attitude of the natural European mind to the great works of Indian art and puts on it its right value. This mind catches only what is kin to European effort and regards that too

as inferior, naturally and quite rightly since the same thing is more sincerely and perfectly done from a more native fountain of power in Western work. That explains the amazing preference of better informed critics than Mr. Archer for the bastard Gandharan sculpture to great and sincere work original and true in its unity,—Gandharan sculpture which is an unsatisfying, almost an impotent junction of two incompatible motives, incompatible at least if one is not fused into the other as here certainly it is not fused,—or its praise otherwise incomprehensible of certain second-rate or third-rate creations and its turning away from others noble and profound but strange to its conceptions. Or else it seizes with appreciation—but is it really a total and a deeply understanding appreciation?—on work like the Indo-Saracenic which though in no way akin to western types has yet the power at certain points to get within the outskirts of its circle of aesthetic conceptions. It is even so much struck by the Taj as to try to believe that it is the work of an Italian sculptor, some astonishing genius, no doubt, who indianised himself miraculously in this one hour of solitary achievement, for India is a land of miracles,—and probably died of the effort, for he has left us no other work to admire. Again it admires, at least in Mr. Archer, Javanese work because of its humanity and even concludes from that that it is not Indian. Its essential unity with Indian work behind the variation of manner is invisible to it, because the spirit and inner meaning of Indian work is a blank to its vision and it sees only a form, a notation of the meaning, which, therefore, it does not understand and dislikes. One might just as well say that the Gita written in the Devanagari is a barbaric, monstrous or meaningless thing, but put into some cursive character at once becomes not Indian, because human and intelligible!

But, ordinarily, place this mind before anything ancient, Hindu, Buddhistic or Vedantic in art and it looks at

it with a blank or an angry incomprehension. It looks for the sense and does not find it, because either it has not in itself the experience and finds it difficult to have the imagination, much more the realisation of what it does really mean and express, or because it insists on looking for what it is accustomed to see at home and, not finding that, is convinced that there is nothing to see or nothing of any value. Or else if there is something which it could have understood, it does not understand because it is expressed in the Indian form andthe Indian way. It looks at the method and form and finds it unfamiliar, contrary to its own canons, is revolted, contemptuous, repelled, speaks of the thing as monstrous, barbarous, ugly or null, passes on in a high dislike or disdain. Or if it is overborne by some sense of unanalysable beauty or greatness or power, it still speaks of a splendid barbarism. Do you want an illuminating instance of this blankness of comprehension? Mr. Archer sees the Dhyani Buddha with its supreme, its unfathomable, its infinite spiritual calm which every cultured oriental mind can at once feel and respond to in the depths of its being, and he denies that there is anything,—only drooped eyelids, an immobile pose and an insipid, by which I suppose he means a calm passionless face.* He turns for comfort to the Hellenic nobility of expression of the Gandharan Buddha, or to the living Robindranath Tagore more spiritual than any Buddha from Peshawar to Kamakura, an inept misuse of comparison against which I imagine the great poet himself would be the first to protest. There we have the total incomprehension, the blind window, the blocked door in the mind, and there too the cause, that the natural western

* In a note Mr. Archer mentions and very rightly discounts an absurd apology for these Buddhas, viz, that the greatness and spirituality are not at all in the work, but in the devotion of the artist! If the artist cannot put into his work what was in him—and here it is not devotion that is expressed,—his work is a futile abortion. But it or the capacity to feel it must also be there in the mind that looks at his work.

mentality comes to Indian art with a demand for something other than its characteristic spirit and motive intend to give, and, demanding that, is not prepared to enter into another kind of spiritual experience and another range of creative sight, imaginative power and mode of self-expression.

This once understood, we can turn to the difference in the spirit and method of artistic creation which has given rise to the mutual incomprehension; for that will bring us to the positive side of the matter. All great artistic work proceeds from an act of intuition, not really an intellectual idea or a splendid imagination,—these are only mental translations,—but a direct intuition of some truth of life or being, some significant form of that truth, some development of it in the mind of man. And so far there is no difference between great European and great Indian work. Where then begins the immense divergence? It is there in everything else, in the object and field of the intuitive vision, in the method of working out the sight or suggestion, in the part taken in the rendering by the external form and technique, in the whole way of the rendering to the human mind, even in the centre of our being to which the work appeals. The European artist gets his intuition by a suggestion from an appearance in life and nature or, if it starts from something in his own soul, relates it at once to an external support. He brings down that intuition into his normal mind and sets the intellectual idea and the imagination in the intelligence to clothe it with a mental stuff which will render its form to the moved reason, emotion, aesthesis. Then he missions his eye and hand to execute it in terms which start from a colourable "imitation" of life and Nature—and in ordinary hands too often end there—to get at an interpretation that really changes it into the image of something not outward in our own being or in universal being which was the real thing seen. And to that in looking at the

work we have to get back through colour and line and disposition or whatever else may be part of the external means, to their mental suggestions and through them to the soul of the whole matter. The appeal is not direct to the eye of the deepest self and spirit within, but to the outward soul by a strong awakening of the sensuous, the vital, the emotional, the intellectual and imaginative being, and of the spiritual we get as much or as little as can suit itself to and express itself through the outward man. Life, action, passion, emotion, idea, Nature seen for their own sake and for an aesthetic delight in them, these are the object and field of this creative intuition. The something more which the Indian mind knows to be behind these things looks out, if at all, from behind many veils. The direct and unveiled presence of the Infinite and its godheads is not evoked or thought necessary to the greater greatness and the highest perfection.

The theory of ancient Indian art at its greatest—and the greatest gives its character to the rest and throws on it something of its stamp and influence—is of another kind. Its highest business is to disclose something of the Self, the Infinite, the Divine to the regard of the soul, the Self through its expressions, the Infinite through its living finite symbols, the Divine through his powers. Or the Godheads are to be revealed, luminously interpreted or in some way suggested to the soul's understanding or to its devotion or at the very least to a spiritually or religiously aesthetic emotion. When this hieratic art comes down from these altitudes to the intermediate worlds behind ours, to the lesser godheads or genii, it still carries into them some power or some hint from above. And when it comes quite down to the material world and the life of man and the things of external Nature, it does not altogether get rid of the greater vision, the hieratic stamp, the spiritual seeing, and in most good work—except in moments of relaxation and a humorous or vivid play with

the obvious—there is always something more in which the seeing presentation of life floats as in an immaterial atmosphere. Life is seen in the self or in some suggestion of the infinite or of something beyond or there is at least a touch and influence of these which helps to shape the presentation. It is not that all Indian work realises this ideal; there is plenty no doubt that falls short, is lowered, ineffective or even debased, but it is the best and the most characteristic influence and execution which gives its tone to an art and by which we must judge. Indian art in fact is identical in its spiritual aim and principle with the rest of Indian culture.

A seeing in the self accordingly becomes the characteristic method of the Indian artist and it is directly enjoined on him by the canon. He has to see first in his spiritual being the truth of the thing he must express and to create its form in his intuitive mind; he is not bound to look out first on outward life and Nature for his model, his authority, his rule, his teacher or his fountain of suggestions. Why should he when it is something quite inward he has to bring out into expression? It is not an idea in the intellect, a mental imagination, an outward emotion on which he has to depend for his stimulants, but an idea, image, emotion of the spirit, and the mental equivalents are subordinate things for help in the transmission and give only a part of the colouring and the shape. A material form, colour, line and design are his physical means of the expression, but in using them he is not bound to an imitation of Nature, but has to make the form and all else significant of his vision, and if that can only be done or can best be done by some modification, some pose, some touch or symbolic variation which is not found in physical Nature, he is at perfect liberty to use it, since truth to his vision, the unity of the thing he is seeing and expressing is his only business. The line, colour and the rest are not his first, but his last preoccu-

pation, because they have to carry on them a world of things which have already taken spiritual form in his mind. He has not for instance to recreate for us the human face and body of the Buddha or some one passion or incident of his life, but to reveal the calm of Nirvana through a figure of the Buddha, and every detail and accessory must be turned into a means or an aid of his purpose. And even when it is some human passion or incident he has to portray, it is not usually that alone, but also or more something else in the soul to which it points or from which it starts or some power behind the action that has to enter into the spirit of his design and is often really the main thing. And through the eye that looks on his work he has to appeal not merely to an excitement of the outward soul, but to the inner self, *antarâtman*. One may well say that beyond the ordinary cultivation of the aesthetic instinct necessary to all artistic appreciation there is a spiritual insight or culture needed if we are to enter into the whole meaning of Indian artistic creation, otherwise we get only at the surface external things or at the most at things only just below the surface. It is an intuitive and spiritual art and must be seen with the intuitive and spiritual eye.

This is the distinctive character of Indian art and to ignore it is to fall into total incomprehension or into much misunderstanding. Indian architecture, painting, sculpture are not only intimately one in inspiration with the central things in Indian philosophy, religion, Yoga, culture, but a specially intense expression of their significance. There is much in the literature which can be well enough appreciated without any very deep entry into these things, but it is comparatively a very small part of what is left of the other arts, Hindu or Buddhistic, of which this can be said. They have been very largely a hieratic aesthetic script of India's spiritual, contemplative and religious experience.

The Future Poetry

THE SUN OF POETIC TRUTH

What is the kind of Truth which we can demand from the spirit of poetry, from the lips of the inspired singer, or what do we mean when we speak of Truth as one of the high powers and godheads of his work and of its light as a diviner sunlight in which he must see and shape from its burning rays within and around him the flame-stuff of his creation? We have all our own notions of the Truth and that gives an ambiguous character to the word and brings in often a narrow and limited sense of it into our idea of poetry. But first there is the primary objection, plausible enough if we look only at the glowing robe and not at the soul of creative expression, that the poet has nothing at all to do with any other kind of truth or with Truth at all for her own sake, but is a lover only of Beauty, she his only worshipped goddess, and not truth but imagination her winged servant and the radiant messenger of the Muse. If it cannot absolutely be said that most poetry is most feigning and the whole art amounts to a power of beautiful fiction, yet it is apparent that the poet most succeeds when he takes outward or actual truth only as a first hint and steeps most subtly whatever crude matter it gives to his mind in the delightful hues of imagination and transmutes it into the unfettered beauty of her shapes. That might seem at first sight to mean or so might be interpreted that truth and

art are two unconnected or little connected things, and if truth is to be made at all the subject-matter of art, it yet does not become art unless it has come out transfigured and, it may be, unrecognisable in the imagination's characteristic process. But in fact it does not mean that, but only that art is not an imitation or reproduction of outward Nature, but rather missioned to give by the aid of a transmuting faculty something more inwardly true than the external life and appearance.

And next, there is the quite opposite idea, which one finds sometimes rampant and self-confident in an age of realism and the cult of vital power, that the truth which is the material of poetry and has to be set out and rhythmed in her process, is the reality of life in its most strenuous vital sense, the reality of what we see and hear and touch and vitally feel and energetically think with the most positive impact of the mind, the raw rough concrete and dynamic fact of experience to be transferred without any real change to rhythmic form, relieved with image and dressed in its just idea and word. And we are even told that poetry to be faithful to life must manage not only her seeing and expression, but her rhythmic movement so as to create some subjective correspondence with life, creep and trip and walk and run and bound along with it, reproduce every bang and stumble and shuffle and thump of the vital steps, and then we shall get a quite new large and vigorous music and in comparison with its sincere and direct power the old melodies will fade into false and flimsy sweetnesses of insipid artifice. Here what is demanded is not beauty but power or rather force. If beauty can get in, if she can dress herself in these new and strong colours, we shall gratefully accept her, provided she is not too beautiful to be true and does not bring in again with her the unreal, the romantic or remotely ideal or some novel kind of perverse* imagination. But if ugly,

* In the sense in which a critic of some note, I am told, applies

brutal and sordid things are shown powerfully in their full ugliness, brutality and sordidness without any work of transmutation, so much the better since truth of life, force of vital reality of whatever kind set and made vivid in a strong outlining illumination is what we shall henceforth demand of the artist in verse. And it cannot be denied that the crudity of actual life so treated and heightened in art—for art cannot merely reproduce, it cannot help heightening—gives us a new sensation, becomes a crude and heady wine setting up an agreeable disturbance in the midriff and bowels and a violent satisfaction in the brain and can be given by a powerful writer a wide appeal demanding no effort of taste or understanding from the average man who makes the multitude. A robust muscular and masculine poetry suitable to the Anglo-Saxon genius can no doubt be the result of this kind of aesthesis.

Then again there is the old academic conception, truth of the cultivated intelligence, truth of reason, philosophic and scientific truth, or, more pertinent to the matter, truth of a certain selective imagination and taste consonant with reason and strong to give a tempered beauty to just presentation and idea, the classical or in its more formal shape the pseudo-classical aesthetic rule. And in this connection we have many familiar notions chasing each other across the field, such as on one side the compatibility or incompatibility of philosophy and poetry or on the other the definition of poetry as substantially a criticism of life though set in an artistic form and a high and serious tone. And associated with this view also we find very commonly a dislike of free imagination and rich colour and the audacities of the fancy

the epithet to Yeats' poetry. I have not read the criticism, but the expression itself is a sufficient condemnation not of the poet, but of the mind—and of its poetic theory—which can use such a word in such a connection.

and the far-off and shrouded voices and things visionary, subtle and remote. The aesthetic mind varies, follows its own bent, fashions its idea of poetic truth according to its own standard of satisfaction and sets up as a canon and law its own manner of response; there is a multitude of counsels, and each has this common characteristic that it overstresses one side of the norm of poetic creation. For the spirit of poetry is many-sided and flexible in its processes, but firm and invariable in the central law of its nature.

The poetic Truth of which I am speaking has nothing to do with any of these limitations. Truth, as she is seen by us in the end, is an infinite goddess, the very front and face of Infinity and Aditi herself the illimitable mother of all the gods. This infinite eternal and eternally creative Truth is no enemy of imagination or even of free fancy, for they too are godheads and can wear one of her faces or one of her expressive masks, while imagination is perhaps the very colour of her creative process, her births and movements are innumerable, her walk supple and many-pathed, and through all divine powers and universal means she can find her way to her own riches, and even error is her illegitimate child and serves, though wantonly, rebelliously and through many a giddy turn, her mother's many-formed self-adaptive world-wide aim. Now it is something of this infinite Truth which poetry succeeds in giving us with a high power, in its own way of beauty, by its own opulent appointed means. The channel is different from those of her other activities because the power is of another kind. Infinite Truth has her many distinct ways of expressing and finding herself and each way must be kept distinct and the law of one must not be applied to the law of another form of her self-expression; and yet that does not mean that the material of one cannot be used as the material of another, though it must be cast by a different power into a different mould, or that all do not

meet on their tops. Truth of poetry is not truth of philosophy or truth of science or truth of religion only because it is another way of self-expression of infinite Truth so distinct that it appears to give quite another face of things and reveal quite another side of experience. A poet may have a religious creed or subscribe to a system of philosophy or take rank himself like Lucretius or certain Indian poets as a considerable philosophical thinker or succeed like Goethe as a scientist as well as a poetic creator, but the moment he begins to argue out his system intellectually in verse or puts up a dressed-up science straight into metre or else inflicts like Wordsworth or Dryden rhymed sermons or theological disputations on us, he is breaking the law. And even if he does not move so far astray, yet the farther he goes in that direction even within the bounds of his art, he is, though it has often been done with a tolerable, sometimes a considerable or total success, treading on unfirm or at any rate on lower ground. It is difficult for him there to maintain the authentic poetic spirit and pure inspiration.

For this is another cult and worship and the moment he stands before the altar of the Muse, he has to change his robes of mind and serve the rites of a different consecration. He has to bring out into the front that other personality in him who looks with a more richly irised seeing eye and speaks with a more rapturous voice. The others have not normally the same joy of the word because they do not go to its fountainhead, even though each has its own intense delight, as philosophy has its joy of deep and comprehensive understanding and religion its hardly expressible rapture. Still it remains true that the poet may express precisely the same thing in essence as the philosopher or the man of religion or the man of science, may even give us truth of philosophy, truth of religion, truth of science, provided he transmutes it, abstracts from it something on which the others insist in

their own special form and gives us the something more which poetic sight and expression bring. He has to convert it into truth of poetry, and it will be still better for his art if he saw it originally with the poetic insight, the creative, intuitive, directly perceiving and interpreting eye; for then his utterance of truth is likely to be more poetic, authentic, inspired and compelling. This distinction between poetic and other truth, well enough felt but not always well observed, and their fusion and meetingplace are worth dwelling upon; for if poetry is to do all it can for us in the new age, it will include increasingly in its scope much that will be common to it with philosophy, religion and even in a broader sense with science, and yet it will at the same time develop more intensely the special beauty and peculiar power of its own insight and its own manner. The poetry of Tagore is already a new striking instance of what differently seen and followed out might have been a specifically philosophic and religious truth, but here turned into beauty and given a new significance by the transforming power of poetic vision.

The difference which separates these great things of the mind is a difference of the principal, the indispensable instrument we must use and of the appeal to the mind and the whole manner. There is a whole gulf of difference. The philosopher sees in the dry light of the reason, proceeds dispassionately by a severe analysis and abstraction of the intellectual content of the truth, a logical slow close stepping from idea to pure idea, a method difficult and nebulous to the ordinary, hard, arid, impossible to the poetic mind. For the poetic mind sees at once in a flood of coloured light, in a moved experience, in an ecstasy of the coming of the word, in splendours of form, in a spontaneous leaping out of inspired idea upon idea, sparks of the hoof-beats of the white flame horse Dadhikravan galloping up the mountain of the gods or breath and hue of wing striking into wing of the irised broods of Thou-

ght flying over earth or up towards heaven. The scientist proceeds also by the intellectual reason but with a microscopic scrutiny which brings it to bear on an analysis of sensible fact and process and on the correct measure and relation of force and energy as it is seen working on the phenomenal stuff of existence, and joins continually link of fact with fact and coil of process with process till he has under his hand at least in skeleton and tissue the whole connected chain of apparent things. But to the poetic mind this is a dead mechanical thing; for the eye of the poet loves to look on breathing acting life in its perfected synthesis and rhythm, not on the constituent measures, still less on the dissected parts, and his look seizes the soul of wonder of things, not the mechanical miracle. The method of these other powers moves by the rigorously based and patiently self-assured steps of the systematising intelligence and the aspect of Truth which they uncover is a norm measured and cut out from the world of ideas and the world of sense by the eye of the intellectual reason. The brooding philosopher or the discovering scientist cannot indeed do without the aid of a greater power, intuition, but ordinarily he has to bring what that nearer more swiftly luminous faculty gives him into a more deliberate air under the critical light of the intelligence and establish it in the dialectical or analytical way of philosophy and science before the intellect as judge. The mind of the poet sees by intuition and direct perception and brings out what they give him by a formative stress on the total image, and the aspect to which he thrills is the living truth of the form, of the life that inspires it, of the creative thought behind and the supporting movement of the soul and a rhythmic harmony of these things revealed to his delight in their beauty. These fields and paths lie very wide apart, and if any voices from the others reach and claim the ear of the poetic creator, they must change greatly in their form and suit themselves to the warmth and colour

of his atmosphere before they can find right of entry into his kingdom.

The meeting is not here at the base, but on the tops. The philosopher's reasoning intelligence discovers only a system of thought symbols and the reality they figure cannot be seized by the intelligence, but needs direct intuition, a living contact, a close experience by identity in our self of knowledge. That is work not for a dialectical, but a bright revelatory thinking, a luminous body of intuitive thought and spiritual experience which carries us straight into sight, into vision of knowledge. The first effort of philosophy is to know for the sake of pure understanding, but her greater height is to take Truth alive in the spirit and clasp and grow one with her and be consciously within ourselves all the reality we have learned to know. But that is precisely what the poet strives to do in his own way by intuition and imagination, when he labours to bring himself close to and be one by delight with the thing of beauty which awakes his joy. He does not always seize the very self of the thing, but to do so lies within his power. The language of intuitive thinking moves always therefore to an affinity with poetic speech and in the ancient Upanishads it used that commonly as its natural vehicle. "The Spirit went abroad, a thing pure, bright, unwounded by sin, without body or sinew or scar; the Seer, the Thinker, the Self-born who breaks into being all around us, decreed of old all things in their nature from long eternal years." "There sun shines not nor moon nor star nor these lightnings blaze nor this fire; all this world is luminous only with his light." Are we listening, one might ask, to the voice of poetry or philosophy or religion? It is all three voices cast in one, indistinguishable in the eternal choir. And there is too and similarly a pure intuitive science which comes into the field when we enter the ranges of the psychical and spiritual being and can from there work for the discovery of greater secrets of the

physical or at least of the psycho-physical world. Indian Yoga founds itself on that greater pocess, and there, though as in all true science the object is an assured method of personal discovery or living repetition and possession of past discovery and a working out of all the thing found, there is too a high final intention to hold the truth, the light found in our inner power of being and turn it to a power of our psychical self, our spirit, our self of knowledge, and will, our self of love and joy, our self of life and action. This too, though not the same thing in form, is akin to the higher work of poetry when it acts, as the ancients would have had it consciously act, as a purifier and builder of the soul.

The initial function of religion again is to make clear the approaches of the soul to the Highest, to God. And it does that at first by laying on the mind a scheme of religious knowledge or guiding creed and dogma, a taming yoke of moral instruction or purifying law of religious conduct and an awakening call of religious emotion, worship, cult, and so far it is a thing apart in its own field, but in its truly revealing side of intuitive being and experience we find that the essence of religion is an aspiration and adoration of the soul towards the Divine, the Self, the Supreme, the Eternal, the Infinite, and an effort to get close to and live with or in that or to enjoy in love and be like or one with that which we adore. But poetry also on its heights turns to the same things in ourselves and the world, not indeed with religious adoration, but by a regarding closeness and moved oneness in beauty and delight. The characteristic method and first field of all these things is indeed wide apart, but at their end when they come into their deepest spirit, they begin to approach each other and touch; and because of this greater affinity philosophy, psychic and spiritual science and religion are found in the ancient Indian culture woven into one unity, and when they turn to the expression of their

most intimate experience, it is always the poetic word which they use.

The steps of Poetry rise to these heights on her own side of the mountain of the gods. Poetry comes into being at the direct call of three powers, inspiration, beauty and delight, and brings them to us and us to them by the magic charm of the inspired rhythmic word. If it can do that at all perfectly, its essential work has been done. It is in its beginning concerned with close and simple natural things and, when it grows more subtle, still it has only to create a power of beauty, move the soul with aesthetic delight and make it feel and see, and its function seems at an end. The kind does not seem to matter, and it has nothing to do primarily or directly, nor at any time in a set formal will taking that as its function and aim, with the presentation of intellectual concepts to the reason or with truth of science or with moral betterment or the working out of religious aspiration, not often even with so near a thing to it as religious emotion and love. But yet because of that greater affinity we see it actually doing what is an equivalent to these things by its own power, in a strange and beautiful mould, with an indirect and yet subtly direct touch. The poet too brings out sometimes as if by accident, sometimes with a conscious intention the same essential truths as the philosopher or the man of religion. An instance or two will be sufficient to show the approximation and the difference. Religion brings us a command to love our neighbour as ourselves and even our enemies, a thing impossible to our normal nature, a law honoured with the consent of the lips and universally ignored in the observance. A few only seeking perfection in spiritual experience discover in it the natural rule of our real and our highest being, quite possible if we can only get some abiding realisation of that secret oneness which is the foundation of the law of universal love. Then, not seeking this at all but only poetic delight or, if

you are so inclined, the criticism of life, we listen to Creon's fierce reproach to Antigone that in her refusal to hate the national enemy she stands unnaturally apart from the mind and heart of all her people and hear suddenly start out the high and proud reply of one lonely and doomed but inflexibly true to her nature, her soul's will under the shadow of a cruel death, "Not to join in hate, but to join in love was I born!" The Athenian poet intended no moral instruction, calls up no religious emotion into his line, is concerned only with a crucial situation in life, the revolt of natural affection against the rigid claim of the law, nation, State. It is a simple cry of the voice of nature and life, yet there breathes behind it a greater thought which is not so far from the truth underlying religious teaching and spiritual experience. The poet, his eyes fixed on life, shows us as if by accident the seed in our normal nature which can grow into the prodigious spiritual truth of universal love. He has to do it in his own way in the mould of poetic beauty and delight, and if we judge by such instances, we shall say that so only he has to do it, to cast as if casually the seed of the beauty and delight of some high mood of life and nature into the mind and pass on leaving it to its work on the soul's reflecting emotional experience, perhaps hardly himself knowing what he has done since he is absorbed in sight and satisfied with the joy of beautiful creation.

And yet actually we find that we cannot quite set these limits or they are not regarded by poets of a high order. The poet of the Gita has the conscious intention of laying the form of unity on the soul of the hearer and moving him to seek the full experience. "He is the greatest Yogin who, come happiness by that or come grief, sees wherever he turns his eyes all equally in the image of his self." That is something high, grave, couched in the language of the inspired reason, uplifted in the original by a sweet and noble diction and rhythm, religious and phi-

losophical in its strain and yet poetical, because it adds to the fundamental idea the visualising and bringing home of the spiritual experience, the sustaining emotion of the thing felt and a touch of its life. And in the much older Yajur Veda we find breaking out with a different, a more moved and less reflective voice the same truth of experience, the same touch on the soul, "Where I am wounded, make me firm and whole. May all creatures gaze on me with the eye of the Friend, may I gaze on all creatures, may we all gaze on all with the eye of the Friend." There poetry and religious emotion become powerfully fused and one in the aspiration to the heart's perfection and the loving unity of all life. The same uniting alchemy and fusion can take place between truth of philosophy and poetic truth and it is continually found in Indian literature. And so too all the old Rig Veda, all the Vaishnava poetry of North and South had behind it an elaborate Yoga or practised psychical and spiritual science, without which it could not have come into birth in that form. Today much of the poetry of Tagore is the sign of such a Sadhana, a long inheritance of assured spiritual discovery and experience. But what is given whether directly or in symbol or in poetic image is not the formal steps of the Sadhana, but the strongly felt movement and the living outcome, the vision and life and inner experience the spirit and power and body of sweetness and beauty and delight. The tracing of close and too meticulous bounds round the steps of poetic truth or turning of its wide continental spheres into some limiting magic circle seems therefore to have no real foundation. One may almost though not quite say that there is nothing in infinite Truth that the poet cannot make his material, even if it seems to belong to other provinces of the mind, because all forms of human experience approach each other on their sides of intuition and inner life and vision and all meet in the spirit. The condition, the limitation is only

in the way and manner,—but that means enormously much,—the necessity of the purely poetic way of seeing and the subjection of the thing seen to the law of poetic harmony and moved delight and beauty.

The real distinction therefore is in the primary or essential aim of poetry and in the imperative condition which that aim lays upon the art. Its function is not to teach truth of any particular kind, nor indeed to teach at all, nor to pursue knowledge nor to serve any religious or ethical aim, but to embody beauty in the word and give delight. But at the same time it is at any rate part of its highest function to serve the spirit and to illumine and lead through beauty and build by a high informing and revealing delight the soul of man. And its field is all soul experience, its appeal is to the aesthetic response of the soul to all that touches it in self or world; it is one of the high and beautiful powers of our inner and may be a power of our inmost life. All of the infinite Truth of being that can be made part of that life, all that can be made true and beautiful and living to that experience, is poetic truth and a fit subject matter of poetry. But there are always three things which we find present in the utterance and which may be taken as the tests of its measure of power. First there is a force of inspired seeing which gives us the appeal of some reality of self or mind or world, whether in this material field or the other planes of universal existence or of our own being to which imagination is one of the gates, a seeing which brings to us the power of its truth and the beauty of its image and gives it body in the mind by the word. Then there must be the touch, presence, breath of the very life, not the outward only, but the inward life, not an imitation by force of speech or the holding up of a mirror to some external movement or form of Nature, but a creative interpretation which brings home to us as much as may be of what she is or things or we are. And again that must carry in it

and arouse in us an emotion of its touch on the soul, not the raw emotion of the vital parts,—though that comes in in certain kinds of poetry,—but a spiritual essence of feeling to which our inner strands can vibrate. The intellectual, vital, sensible truth are subordinate things; the breath of poetry should give us along with them, or it may even be apart from them, some more essential truth of the being of things, their very power which springs in the last resort from something eternal in their heart and secrecy, *hridaye guhâyâm*, expressive even in the moments and transiences of life. The soul of the poet, and the soul too of the hearer by a response to his word, enters into some direct contact through vision and straight touch and emotion, possesses and feels at its strongest by a union in our own stuff of being, a moved identity. A direct spiritual perception and vision called by us intuition, however helped or prepared by other powers, can alone avail to give us these things. Imagination is only the poet's most powerful aid for this discovery and interpretative creation, fancy a brilliant opener of hidden or out-of-the-way doors. The finding of a new image is itself a joy to the poet and the hearer because it reveals some new significant correspondence or sheds a stronger disclosing light on the thing seen and makes it stand out and live more opulently, luminously, with a greater delight of itself in the mind. The poet having to bring home something, even in things common, which is not obvious to surface experience, avails himself of image, symbol, whatever is just, beautiful, meaningful, suggestive. His fictions are not charming airy nothings, but as with every true artist significant figures and creations which serve to bring very real realities close to the spirit, and their immortality is the immortality of truth.

It is in this sense that we can speak of the sun of poetic truth in whose universal light the poet creates. But all depends on how he sees or uses the light. He can

catch this or that sight in an isolated ray, or sometimes lights with it his own personality and kindles a lamp in the house of his own being, or looks through its radiance over the material earth and the forms and first movements of her children or searches with the lustre the surge of the life-soul and its passion and power or discovers the lesser or the greater secrets of the mind and heart of man, or looks upwards through a loftier flood of beams and sees the mid-worlds and heavens and the actions of the gods and the scenes and moments of an immortal life. And sometimes the dark sun of the Vedic image lodging in the blind cave gives him a negative light; a darkness visible revealing darkness immeasurable shows him the gloomy secrets of some city of dreadful Night, shadow of Hades or lowest Tartarean clot of Hell. The sun of Truth may be still for him below the verge with its light already on the tops and flushing the chill of the snows, ride regal in heaven or gravely sunken or splendid in some setting light. He may stand on the earth or wander winged like the symbolic birds of the Veda still in the terrestrial atmosphere or rise into worlds beyond nearer to the sun and see in a changed light all that is below. And one or two may perhaps be strong to look with unblinded eyes into the source of all light, see that splendour which is its happiest form of all, to which approaching or entering one can say "He am I", discover the identity of his spirit with all things and find in that oneness the word of light which can most powerfully illumine our human utterance.

And where then is the highest range of sight into which the mind of the poet can rise and according to the power of his genius find a deeper and deeper and larger and larger truth of already spoken things and of new things to be spoken and as yet unattempted in prose or rhyme? If some kind of intuitive seeing is at the back of his imaginative vision and the real power that calls down

the inspired word, it will be when he can rise to its source and live in the fullness of a highest intuitive mind which is greater than the awakened sense, intuitive life-vision or inspired reason, though it will see all that they can see, that he will get his fullest power, deepest sight, broadest scope. To throw light on the self of things in some power and beauty of it is after all the native aim of poetry, and that can be done entirely by this greatest intuitive mind, for it can bring near or going beyond itself actually reach the vision of identity, that seeing of our whole self and the self of the world which is the last object and the highest spirit of all our mental powers and seekings. The poetry which will accomplish that will be able to see, though in another way than that of philosophy and religion, the self of the Eternal, to know God and his godheads, to know the freedom and immortality which is our divinest aim, to see in the delight of a union in beauty the self of the Infinite, the self of Nature and the whole self of man. But so to see the self is to meet the spirit in every-thing and the spirit reveals to us the inner and the inmost truth of all that comes from it, life and thought and form and every image and every power. Much has been done by the art of rhythmic self-expression; much remains to be done. To express these greatest things and to gather up all that man has come and is yet coming to see and know and feel in a new and greater light and give to him the universal spirit and power of beauty and delight behind all this existence is a work that will open to poetry a larger territory and the perfect greatness of its function. A beginning of such an endeavour we have seen to be the noblest strain in recent work; the possibility of a refreshed and long continued vitality and a hardly exhaustible fount of inspiration lies in that direction. The Veda speaks in one of its symbolic hints of the fountain of eternal Truth round which stand the illumined powers of thought and life. There under the eyes of

delight and the face of imperishable beauty of the Mother of creation and bride of the eternal Spirit they lead their immortal dance. The poet visits that marvellous source in his superconscient mind and brings to us some strain or some vision of her face and works. To find the way into that circle with the waking self is to be the seer-poet and discover the highest power of the inspired word, the mantra.

A VEDIC HYMN TO THE FIRE

A HYMN OF THE UNIVERSAL DIVINE FORCE AND WILL

Other flames are only branches of thy stock, O Fire. All the immortals take in thee their rapturous joy. O universal Godhead, thou art the navel-knot of the earths and their inhabitants; all men born thou controllest and supportest like a pillar.

The Flame is the head of heaven and the navel of the earth and he is the power that moves at work in the two worlds. O Vaiswanara, the gods brought thee to birth a god to be a light to Aryan man.

As the firm rays sit steadfast in the Sun, all treasures have been placed in the universal godhead and flame. King art thou of all the riches that are in the growths of the earth and the hills and the waters and all the riches that are in men.

Heaven and Earth grow as if vaster worlds to the Son. He is the priest of our sacrifice and sings our words even as might a man of discerning skill. To Vaisvanara, for this most strong god who brings with him the light of the sun-world, its many mighty waters because his strength is of the truth.

O universal godhead, O knower of all things born, thy excess of greatness overflows even the Great Heaven. Thou art the king of the toiling human peoples and by battle madest the supreme good for the gods.

This is the universal godhead who by his greatness labours in all the peoples, the lustrous master of sacrifice, the Flame with his hundred treasures. This is he who has the word of the Truth.

* A hymn of Nodhâ Gautama to Agni Vaiswânara in the Rig Veda.

अर्

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th February 1920

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA.....Aurobindo Ghose
The Gunas, the Mind and Action

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G.
Ch. LXIII. Soul-Force and the Fourfold Personality

THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... Paul Richard
Death

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE
XIII

THE FUTURE POETRY.
The Breath of Greater Life

PARASARA'S HYMNS TO THE LORD OF FLAME (1)

Essays on the Gita

THE GUNAS, THE MIND AND ACTION

The Gita has not yet completed its analysis of action in the light of its idea of the three gunas and the transcendence of them by a self-exceeding culmination of the highest sattwic discipline. Faith, *çraddhâ*, the will to believe and to be, know, live and do what we see as the Truth is the principal thing, the indispensable condition of a self-developing action and the growth of the soul by works. But there are also the mental powers, instruments, conditions which go to constitute the momentum, direction and character of the activity and are therefore of importance for a full understanding of this psychological discipline. The Gita enters into a summary psychological analysis of these things before it proceeds to the finale, the culmination, the highest secret which is that of the exceeding of all dharmas, the transcendence. And we have to follow it in its brief descriptions, summarily, expanding just enough to seize fully the main idea, for these are secondary things, but yet each of great consequence in its own place. It is their action cast in the type of the gunas that we have to understand, and the nature of the culmination of any or each of them beyond the gunas will follow from the nature of the general transcendence.

This part of the subject is introduced by a last question of Arjuna regarding the principle of Sannyasa and

the principle of Tyaga and the difference. The frequent harping, the reiterated emphasis of the Gita on this point, this crucial distinction, has been amply justified by the subsequent history of the later Indian mind, its constant confusion of these two very different things and its strong bent towards belittling any activity of the kind taught by the Gita as only a preliminary of the supreme inaction of Sannyasa. As a matter of fact, when people talk of Tyaga, of renunciation, it is always the physical renunciation of the world which they understand by the word or at least on which they lay emphasis, while the Gita takes absolutely the opposite view that the real Tyaga has action and living in the world as its basis and not a flight to the monastery or the cave; the real Tyaga is action with a renunciation of desire and that too is the real Sannyasa. The liberating activity of the sattwic self-discipline must be pervaded by a spirit of renunciation, but what renunciation? Not the renunciation of work in the world, not any outward asceticism or ostentation of the giving up of enjoyment, but a renunciation, a leaving, *tyaga*, of vital desire, of ego, a total laying aside or giving up, *sannyâsa*, of the separate personal life of the desire soul and ego-governed mind; that is the condition of entering into the heights of Yoga whether by Brahman oneness and impersonal self or into universal Vasudeva or into the supreme Purushottama. More conventionally taken, Sannyasa in the standing terminology of the sages means the physical depositing or laying aside of desirable actions: Tyaga—this is the Gita's distinction—is the name given by the wise to a mental and spiritual renunciation of the fruit of all our works. In that sense Tyaga, not Sannyasa is the better way. It is not the desirable actions that must be laid aside, but the desire which gives them that character has to be put away. The fruit of the action may come in the dispensation of the Master of works, but there is to be no egoistic demand for that as a reward

and condition of doing works ; or the fruit may not come and still the work has to be performed as the thing to be done, the thing which the Master within demands of us. The success or the failure are in his hands and he will regulate them according to his will and his divine purpose. Action, all action has indeed to be given up in the end, not physically by abstention, by immobility, by inertia, but spiritually to the Master of our being by whose power alone can any action be done. There has to be a renunciation of the false idea of ourselves as the doer of the works, when really it is the universal Shakti that works through our ego. That spiritual transference of the works to the Master and his Shakti is the real Sannyasa in the teaching of the Gita.

Then a question may arise, what works are to be done? Those even who stand for a final physical renunciation, differ in this matter. Some would have it that all works must be excised from our life, as if that were possible. But it is not possible so long as we are in the body and alive, and salvation does not consist in reducing our active selves by trance to the lifeless immobility of the clod and the stone ; as soon as the breath comes again in the body, we are in action again and have toppled down from the heights of this salvation by spiritual sleep. But the salvation by the inner renunciation of the ego and union with the Purushottama remains steady in whatever state, in this world or out of it or in whatever world or out of all world ; it is self-existent and does not depend upon inaction or action. What then are the actions to be done ? The thoroughgoing ascetic answer, not noted by the Gita,—it was perhaps not current at the time,—might be, solely begging, eating and meditation and otherwise only the necessary actions of the body. But the more liberal and comprehensive solution was to do only sacrifice, giving and askesis. And these certainly are to be done, says the Gita, for they purify the wise. But more generally, and

understanding these three things in their widest sense, it is the righty regulated action, *niyatam karma*, that has to be done, the actions regulated by the Shastra, the science and art of right knowledge, act and life, or by the essential nature, *swabhâva-niyatam karma*, or, finally, regulated by the will of the Divine,—and the last is the action of the liberated man, *muktasya karma*. To renounce these works is not right,—the Gita lays that down plainly and trenchantly in the end, *niyatasya tu sannyâsah karmano nopapadyate*. To renounce them in an ignorant delusion as to the sufficiency of that withdrawal for the true liberation, is a tamasic renunciation,—for the gunas follow us into the renunciation of works as well as into works. To give them up because they bring sorrow or are a trouble to the flesh and a weariness to the mind, in the feeling that it is all vanity and vexation of spirit, is a rajasic renunciation and does not bring the high spiritual fruit. That is a result of vital weariness or intellectual pessimism, it has its roots in ego, and no freedom can come from a renunciation governed by this self-regarding principle.

The sattwic renunciation is to do works, not dictated by desire, but by the law of right living or by the essential nature, its knowledge, its ideal, its faith in itself and the Truth it sees, its *çraddhâ*, or by the will of the Master with the mind in Yoga, and to do them without any personal attachment to the fruit or the action, that is to say, without desire and without egoistic choice and finally without the subtler egoism of the will which either says, "The work is mine, I am the doer", or even "The work is God's, but I am the doer." There must be no attachment to pleasant, desirable, lucrative or successful work, but it has to be done, totally, selflessly, with the assent of the spirit, when it is the work that should be done. There must be no aversion to unpleasant, undesirable or ungratifying action or work that brings suffering, danger or other inauspicious fruit; for that too has to be done, to-

tally, selflessly, with understanding of its meaning and need, when it is the work that should be done. The wise man puts away the shrinkings and hesitations of his desire-soul and the doubts of the ordinary human intelligence, that measurer by little personal, conventional or otherwise limited standards, and follows in the light of the full sattwic mind and with the power of an inner renunciation lifting the soul to impersonality, towards the universal Spirit, towards God the highest ideal law of his nature or the will of the inner Master of works. He will not work for the sake of personal result and reward in this life or with an attachment to success; neither will he do works for the sake of a fruit, result or reward after this life, in new births or in worlds beyond as does the half-baked religious mind. The three kinds of result, pleasant, unpleasant and mixed, in this or other worlds, in this or another life are for the slaves of desire and ego; they do not cling to the free spirit. The liberated worker who has given up his works by the inner sannyasa to a greater Power, is free from Karma. Action he will do, for some kind of action, less or more, small or great, is inevitable, natural, right for the embodied soul,—action is the divine law of life. The essence of renunciation, the true Tyaga, the true Sannyasa is a disinterested soul, a selfless mind, the transition from ego to the free impersonal and spiritual nature. The spirit of this inner renunciation is the first mental condition of the highest culminating sattwic discipline.

The Gita then speaks of the five causes or necessities required for the accomplishment of works as laid down by the Sankhya. These five are the frame of body, life and mind which are the basis or standing-ground of the soul in Nature, *adhisthâna*, the doer, *kartâ*, the various instrumentation of Nature, *karana*, the many kinds of effort which make up the force of action, *chesthâh*, and Fate, *daivam*, that is to say, the influence of the Power

or powers other than human or the cosmic Law which stand behind and modify the work and dispose its fruits in the steps of act and consequence. These five things are the causes of the shaping and outcome of whatever work man undertakes with body, mind and speech. The doer is ordinarily supposed to be my personal self, but that is the idea of those whose understanding has not arrived at knowledge. The ostensible doer is indeed the ego, but the ego and its will are creations and instruments of Nature with which the understanding identifies my self. Liberated from ego the real self behind, impersonal and universal, sees in its self-vision of unity with the universal Spirit universal Nature as the doer of the work and the Divine Will behind as the master of universal Nature. And so long as we have not this knowledge, we are bound by the character of the ego and its will as the doer and we do good and evil and have the satisfaction of our tamasic, rajasic or sattwic nature. But once we live in this greater knowledge, the character and consequences of the work make no difference to the freedom of the spirit. The work may be outwardly a terrible action like this great battle and slaughter of Kurukshetra ; but though the liberated man takes his part in the struggle and though he slay all these peoples, he slays none and is not bound by his work, because the work is that of the Master of the Worlds and it is he who has already slain in his will all these armies. This work of destruction was needed that humanity might move forward to another creation and a new purpose, might get rid as in a fire of its past karma of unrighteousness and oppression and injustice and move towards a kingdom of the Dharma. The liberated man does his appointed work as the living instrument one in spirit with the universal Spirit. And knowing that this must be and looking beyond the outward appearance he acts not for self but for God and man, not in fact himself acting, but conscious of the presence and power of the divi-

one Force in his deeds. He knows that the supreme Shakti is doing in his mental, vital and physical body, *adhisthâna*, as the sole doer the thing appointed by a Fate which is in truth not Fate, but the wise and all-seeing Will that is at work in human Karma. This "terrible work" on which the whole teaching of the Gita turns, is an extreme example of action inauspicious in appearance, *akushalam*, though a great good, *kushala*, lies beyond the appearance. Impersonally has it to be done by the divinely appointed man for the holding together of the world purpose, *lokasangrahârtham*, without personal aim or desire, because it is the appointed service.

It is clear that the work is not the sole thing that matters, but rather the knowledge in which we do works makes an immense spiritual difference. There are three things, says the Gita, which go to constitute the mental impulsion to works, and they are the knowledge in our will, the object of knowledge, the knower, and into the knowledge there comes the working of the three gunas and that makes all the difference to the view of the thing known and to the spirit in which the knower does his work. The tamasic ignorant knowledge is a small narrow knowing of things which does not look at all at the real nature of the world or the thing done or its field or the act or its conditions. The tamasic mind does not look at real cause and effect, but absorbs itself in one action with an obstinate attachment to it, can see nothing but the little section of personal activity before its eyes and does not know in fact what it is doing but blindly lets natural impulsion work out through its deed results of which it has no conception, foresight or comprehending intelligence. The rajasic knowledge is that which sees the multiplicity of things only in their separateness and variety of operation in all these existences and is unable to discover a principle of unity and coordinate its will and action, but follows the bent of ego and desire, the activity

of its many-branching egoistic will and various and mixed motive in response to the sollicitation of internal and environing impulsions and forces. This knowing is a jumble of sections of knowledge put forcefully together to make some kind of pathway through the confusion of our half-knowledge and half-ignorance, or else it is a restless kinetic multiple action with no firm governing higher ideal and self-possessed law of its light and power. The sattwic knowledge is that which sees existence as one indivisible whole in all these divisions, one imperishable being in becoming and masters the principle of its action and the relation of the particular action to the total purpose of existence and puts in the right place each step in the total process. At the highest top of knowledge this seeing becomes the knowledge of the one spirit in the world, one in all these many existences, the one Master of all works, and of the work itself as the operation of his supreme will and wisdom in man and his life, and its conscious will lives and works in this One and grows into a perfect instrument of his light and power in man. The liberated action comes by that culmination of the sattwic knowledge.

And there are again three things which make up the holding together of the work; these three are the doer, the instrument and the work done. And here again the difference of the gunas determines the character of each of these things. The sattwic mind is the governing instrument of the sattwic man and guides all the rest of the machine; the egoistic will of desire supported by the desire-soul is the dominant instrument of the rajasic man; an ignorant instinct or impulsion is the chief instrumental force of the tamasic man; but the instrument of the liberated man is a higher spiritual light and power which works in him and uses as a clear channel of its force the purified mind, body and life. The tamasic action is that which a man undertakes with a confused, deluded and

and ignorant mind, in mechanical obedience to his instincts, impulsions and unseeing ideas and without regarding his strength or capacity or the waste and loss of blind misapplied effort or the antecedent and consequence and right conditions of his impulse, effort or labour. The rajasic action is that which a man undertakes under the dominion of desire, with his eyes fixed on the work and its hoped-for fruit and nothing else, or with an egoistic sense of his own personality in the work, and it is done with inordinate effort, with a passionate labour, with a great heaving and straining of the personal will to get at the object of its desire. The sattwic action is that which a man does calmly and with reason and knowledge and the impersonal sense of duty and right, of a thing that ought to be done whatever may be the result to himself in the world, done without attachment, without liking or disliking for spur or drag, but with the sole satisfaction of reason and right and clear intelligence and will and the pure disinterested mind. At the culmination of sattwa this will become the impersonal action dictated by the spirit within and fulfilling the highest law of the nature, free from the lower ego and its light or heavy baggage of opinion, desire and personal will; there will be none of these impedimenta, but only a clear self-knowledge and knowledge of the power that acts and the work to be done for the world.

The tamasic doer is one who does not put himself really to the work, but does it with his mechanical mind, or with a common and vulgar routine mind or with an obstinate stubbornness and foolish pride in his ignorant doing, a narrow and evasive cunning replacing true intelligence, a stupid and insolent contempt for those with whom he has to deal or a laziness, slowness, procrastination, want of vigour and sincerity in his work. The tamasic man is ordinarily slow to act, dilatory in his steps, easily depressed, ready soon to give up his task. The raja-

sic doer is one eagerly attached to the work, passionately desirous of its fruit, greedy of heart, impure of mind, often violent and cruel and brutal in the means, not caring whom he injures or how much he injures others so long as he gets what he wants, satisfies his passions and will, vindicates his ego and its claims. He is full of joy in success, bitterly grieved and stricken by failure. The sattwic doer is free from all this attachment, this egoism, a mind and will unelated by success, undepressed by failure, full of a fixed impersonal resolution, a calm rectitude of zeal or a high and pure and selfless enthusiasm in the work that has to be done. At the culmination of sattwa this resolution, zeal, enthusiasm become the spontaneous working of the spiritual Tapas, highest soul-force, God-Power, the steadfast movement of a divine energy in man in its self-assured steps, the delight of the free spirit in the works of the liberated nature.

The reason and intelligent will work in man in whatever measure he may possess these human gifts, right or perverted, clouded or luminous, narrow and small or large and wide; the buddhi is the power of his nature that chooses the work or at least approves and sets its sanction on one or other among the many suggestions of his complex instincts, impulsions, ideas, desires. It is that which determines for him what is right or wrong, Dharma or not Dharma, to be done or not to be done. And the persistence of the will * is that continuous force of mental Nature which sustains the work. And here again there is the incidence of the gunas. The tamasic reason is a false, ignorant and darkened instrument which chains us to see all things in a wrong light, in a cloud of misconceptions, a stupid ignoring of the values of things. This reason calls light darkness and darkness light, takes what is not the true

* *Dhriti*

law and calls that the law, persists in the thing which ought not to be done and holds it up to us as the thing to be done. Its ignorance is invincible and its persistence of will is a persistence in the satisfaction and pride of its ignorance. That is on its side of blind action, but it is pursued also by a heavy stress of inertia, a persistence in dullness and sleep, a dwelling on the fears and pains and depressions of mind which deter us in our path or keep us to base and weak and cowardly ways. Timidity, shirking, evasion, indolence, the justification by the mind of its fears and false doubts and cautions and refusals of duty and lapses and turning from the call of our higher nature and a safe following of the line of least resistance so that there may be the least trouble and effort and peril in the winning of the fruit of toil—rather no fruit or poor result, it says, than great, perilous or exacting toil,—are characteristics of the tamasic will and intelligence.

The rajasic understanding can distinguish in a way between right and wrong, what should or should not be done, not rightly, but with a pulling awry of their measures, a distortion of values, because its reason and will are a reason of the ego and a will of desire, and these powers constantly misrepresent and distort the truth and the right to serve their own egoistic purpose. It is only when we are free from ego and desire and see steadily with a calm, pure, disinterested mind concerned only with the truth that we can hope to see things rightly and in their just values. But the rajasic will fixes its persistent attention on the satisfaction of its own attached clingings and desires in its pursuit of interest and pleasure and of what it thinks or chooses to think right and justice, Dharma. Always it is apt to put on these things the construction which will most flatter and justify its desires and uphold as right or legitimate the means which will best help it to get the fruits of its work. That is the cause of three fourths of the falsehood and misconduct of the human

reason and will. The sattwic understanding sees in its right place, form and measure the movement of the world, the law of action and the law of abstention from action, the thing that is to be done and the thing that is not to be done, what is dangerous to the soul and really to be feared and shunned and what is the really safe, just and right thing to be embraced by the will, what binds the spirit of man and what sets it free. These things are what it follow or avoids by the persistence of its will according to the degree of its light and the stage of evolution it has reached in its upward ascent to the highest self and Spirit. The culmination of this sattwic intelligence is in a high persistence of the buddhi settled on what is beyond the reason and mental will, the steady control of the senses and the life and a union by Yoga with man's highest self, with the universal Divine, with the transcendent Spirit. It is there that arriving through the sattwic guna one can pass beyond the gunas, beyond the limitations of the mind and its will and intelligence to that which is above the gunas, beyond this instrumental nature and seated in firm union with the Self, the Spirit, the Godhead. Arrived to that summit we can leave the Highest to guide Nature in our members in the spontaneity of free and divine works. Then all these lower conditions, laws, dharmas cease to have any hold; the Infinite acts in the liberated man and there is no law but the immortal truth and right of the free spirit, no Karma, no kind of bondage.

The characteristic quality of the sattwic temperament and mind is happiness, a clear and calm content, ease and peace. Happiness is indeed the one thing which is the common pursuit of the human mind, happiness or its suggestion or some counterfeit of it, pleasure, enjoyment, satisfaction of the mind, the passions, the body, the will. Pain is a thing we accept when we must as a necessity or a means to what we seek, but not a thing

desired for its own sake. Or it is at most sought in perversity or an ardour of enthusiasm in suffering for some touch of fierce pleasure it brings. But there are too various kinds of happiness or pleasure according to the guna which dominates in our nature. The tamasic mind can have a pleasure in its indolence and inertia, its blindness and error, its stupor and sleep. Nature gives it the privilege of a satisfaction in its stupidity and ignorance, its dim lights of the cave, its petty and base and vulgar and inert joys. Delusion is the beginning of this satisfaction and delusion is its consequence; but still there is given a dull, a by no means admirable, but a sufficient pleasure in his delusions to the dweller in the cave.

The mind of the rajasic man drinks of a more fiery and intoxicating cup; the keen, mobile, active pleasure of the senses and the body and the sense-entangled will and intelligence give a fervour and joy to his life. This joy is nectar to the lips at the first touch, but there is a constant poison in the bottom of the cup, the poison of disappointment, satiety, fatigue, revolt, disgust, sin, suffering, loss, transience. And it must be so because these are not the things which the spirit in us truly demands, but something behind which is lasting, satisfying, self-sufficient, beyond the transience of the form. What it seeks is the satisfaction of the higher mind and the spirit and when it once gets this one object of its quest, there comes in a clear, pure happiness of the soul, a state of fullness, ease and peace. This happiness does not depend on outward things, but on oneself alone. But it is not at first our normal possession, but has to be got by self-discipline, a labour of the soul, a high and arduous endeavour. At first this means much loss of habitual pleasure, much suffering and struggle, a poison born of the churning of our nature and its revolt and opposition to the change, but in the end the nectar of immortality rises in its place and climbing to the higher spiritual nature we come to the end of sorrow,

the death of grief and pain. That is the surpassing happiness which is the result of the culmination of the sattwic discipline.

The self-exceeding of the sattwic nature comes when we get beyond the great but still lesser sattwic pleasure, the pleasures of mental knowledge and virtue and peace to the eternal calm of the self and the spiritual ecstasy of the divine oneness. That spiritual joy is no longer the sattwic happiness, *sukham*, but the absolute Ananda. The Ananda is the secret delight from which all things are born, by which all is sustained in existence, and to which all can rise in the spiritual culmination. Only then can it be possessed when the liberated man free from ego and its desires lives at last one in his self, one with all beings one with God in an absolute bliss of the spirit.

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LXIII

SOUL-FORCE AND THE FOURFOLD PERSONALITY

The perfecting of the normal mind, heart, prana and body gives us only the perfection of the psycho-physical machine we have to use and creates certain right instrumental conditions for a divine life and works lived and done with a purer, greater, clearer power and knowledge. The next question is that of the Force which is poured into the instruments, *karana*, and the One who works it for his universal ends. The force at work in us must be the manifest divine Shakti, the supreme or the universal Force unveiled in the liberated individual being, *parâ prakritir jîvabhûtâ*, who will be the doer of all the action and the power of this divine life, *kartâ*. The One behind this force will be the Ishwara, the Master of all being, with whom all our existence will be in our perfection a Yoga at once of oneness in being and of union in various relations of the soul and its nature with the Godhead who is seated within us and in whom too we live, move and have our being. It is this Shakti with the Ishwara in her or behind her whose divine presence and way we have to call into all our being and life. For without this divine presence and this greater working there can be no siddhi of the power of the nature.

All the action of man in life is a nexus of the presence of the soul and the workings of Nature, Purusha and Prakriti. The presence and influence of the Purusha represents itself in nature as a certain power of our being which we may call for our immediate purpose soul-force; and it is always this soul-force which supports all the workings of the powers of the reason, the mind, life and body and determines the cast of our conscious being and the type of our nature. The normal ordinarily developed man possesses it in a subdued, a modified, a mechanised, submerged form as temperament and character; but that is only its most outward mould in which Purusha, the conscious soul or being, seems to be limited, conditioned and given some shape by the mechanical Prakriti. The soul flows into whatever moulds of intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, dynamic, vital and physical mind and type the developing nature takes and can act only in the way this formed Prakriti lays on it and move in its narrow groove or relatively wider circle. The man is then sattwic, rajasic or tamasic or a mixture of these qualities and his temperament is only a sort of subtler soul-colour which has been given to the major prominent operation of these fixed modes of his nature. Men of a stronger force get more of the soul-power to the surface and develop what we call a strong or great personality, they have in them something of the Vibhuti as described by the Gita, *vibhûtimat sattwam çrîmad urjitam eva vâ*, a higher power of being often touched with or sometimes full of some divine afflatus or more than ordinary manifestation of the Godhead which is indeed present in all, even in the weakest or most clouded living being, but here some special force of it begins to come out from behind the veil of the average humanity, and there is something beautiful, attractive, splendid or powerful in these exceptional persons which shines out in their personality, character, life and work. These men too work in the type of their nature-force ac-

cording to its gunas, but there is something evident in them and yet not easily analysable which is in reality a direct power of the Self and spirit using to strong purpose the mould and direction of the nature. The nature itself thereby rises to or towards a higher grade of its being. Much in the working of the Force may seem egoistic or even perverse, but it is still the touch of the Godhead behind, whatever Daivic, Asuric or even Rakshasic form it may take, which drives the Prakriti and uses it for its own greater purpose. A still more developed power of the being will bring out the real character of this spiritual presence and it will then be seen as something impersonal and self-existent and self-empowered, a sheer soul-force which is other than the mind-force, life-force, force of intelligence, but drives them and, even while following to a certain extent their mould of working, guna, type of nature, yet puts its stamp of an initial transcendence, impersonality, pure fire of spirit, a something beyond the gunas of our normal nature. When the spirit in us is free, then what was behind this soul-force comes out in all its light, beauty and greatness, the Spirit, the Godhead who makes the nature and soul of man his foundation and living representative in cosmic being and mind, action and life.

The Godhead, the spirit manifested in Nature appears in a sea of infinite quality, Ananta-guna. But the executive or mechanical Prakriti is of the threefold guna, sattwa, rajas, tamas, and the Ananta-guna, the spiritual play of infinite quality, modifies itself in this mechanical nature into the type of these three gunas. And in the soul-force in man this Godhead in Nature represents itself as a fourfold effective Power, *chatur-vyûha*, a Power for knowledge, a Power for strength, a Power for mutuality and active and productive relation and interchange, a Power for works and labour and service, and its presence casts all human life into a nexus and inner and outer operation of these

four things. The ancient thought of India conscious of this fourfold type of active human personality and nature built out of it the four types of the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra, each with its spiritual turn, ethical ideal, suitable upbringing, fixed function in society and place in the evolutionary scale of the spirit. As always tends to be the case when we too much externalise and mechanise the more subtle truths of our nature, this became a hard and fast system inconsistent with the freedom and variability and complexity of the finer developing spirit in man. Nevertheless the truth behind it exists and is one of some considerable importance in the perfection of our power of nature; but we have to take it in its inner aspects, first, personality, character, temperament, soul-type, then the soul-force which lies behind them and wears these forms, and lastly the play of the free spiritual Shakti in which they find their culmination and unity beyond all modes. For the crude external idea that a man is born as a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Sudra and that alone, is not a psychological truth of our being. The psychological fact is that there are these four active powers and tendencies of the Spirit and its executive Shakti within us and the predominance of one or the other in the more well-formed part of our personality gives us our main tendencies, dominant qualities and capacities, effective turn in action and life. But they are more or less present in all men, here manifest, there latent, here developed, there subdued and depressed or subordinate, and in the perfect man will be raised up to a fullness and harmony which in the spiritual freedom will burst out into the free play of the infinite quality of the spirit in the inner and outer life and in the self-enjoying creative play of the Purusha with his and the world's Nature-Power.

The most outward psychological form of these things is the mould or trend of the nature towards certain dominant tendencies, capacities, characteristics, form of active

power, quality of the mind and inner life, cultural personality or type. The turn is often towards the predominance of the intellectual element and the capacities which make for the seeking and finding of knowledge and an intellectual creation or formativeness and a preoccupation with ideas and the study of ideas or of life and the information and development of the reflective intelligence. According to the grade of the development there is produced successively the make and character of the man of active, open, inquiring intelligence, then the intellectual and, last, the thinker, sage, great mind of knowledge. The soul-powers which make their appearance by a considerable development of this temperament, personality, soul-type, are a mind of light more and more open to all ideas and knowledge and incomings of Truth; a hunger and passion for knowledge, for its growth in ourselves, for its communication to others, for its reign in the world, the reign of reason and right and truth and justice and, on a higher level of the harmony of our greater being, the reign of the spirit and its universal unity and light and love; a power of this light in the mind and will which makes all the life subject to reason and its right and truth or to the spirit and spiritual right and truth and subdues the lower members to their greater law; a poise in the temperament turned from the first to patience, steady musing and calm, to reflection, to meditation, which dominates and quiets the turmoil of the will and passions and makes for high thinking and pure living, founds the self-governed sattwic mind, grows into a more and more mild, lofty, impersonalised and universalised personality. This is the ideal character and soul-power of the Brahmana, the priest of knowledge. If it is not there in all its sides, we have the imperfections or perversions of the type, a mere intellectuality or curiosity for ideas without ethical or other elevation, a narrow concentration on some kind of intellectual activity without the greater needed openness of mind,

soul and spirit, or the arrogance and exclusiveness of the intellectual shut up in his intellectuality, or an ineffective idealism without any hold on life, or any other of the characteristic incompletenesses and limitations of the intellectual, religious, scientific or philosophic mind. These are stoppings short on the way or temporary exclusive concentrations, but a fullness of the divine soul and power of truth and knowledge in man is the perfection of this Dharma or Swabhava, the accomplished Brahminhood of the complete Brahmana.

On the other hand the turn of the nature may be to the predominance of the will-force and the capacities which make for strength, energy, courage, leadership, protection, rule, victory in every kind of battle, a creative and formative action, the will-power which lays its hold on the material of life and on the wills of other men and compels the environment into the shapes which the Shakti within us seeks to impose on life or acts powerfully according to the work to be done to maintain what is in being or to destroy it and make clear the paths of the world or to bring out into definite shape what is to be. This may be there in lesser or greater power or form and according to its grade and force we have successively the mere fighter or man of action, the man of self-imposing active will and personality and the ruler, conqueror, leader of a cause, creator, founder in whatever field of the active formation of life. The various imperfections of the soul and mind produce many imperfections and perversities of this type,—the man of mere brute force of will, the worshipper of power without any other ideal or higher purpose, the selfish, dominant personality, the aggressive violent rajasic man, the grandiose egoist, the Titan, Asura, Rakshasa. But the soul-powers to which this type of nature opens on its higher grades are as necessary as those of the Brahmana to the perfection of our human nature. The high fearlessness which no danger or diffi-

culty can daunt and which feels its power equal to meet and face and bear whatever assault of man or fortune or adverse gods, the dynamic audacity and daring which shrinks from no adventure or enterprise as beyond the powers of a human soul free from disabling weakness and fear, the love of honour which would scale the heights of the highest nobility of man and stoop to nothing little, base, vulgar or weak, but maintains untainted the ideal of high courage, chivalry, truth, straightforwardness, sacrifice of the lower to the higher self, helpfulness to men, unflinching resistance to injustice and oppression, self-control and mastery, noble leading, warriorhood and captainship of the journey and the battle, the high self-confidence of power, capacity, character and courage indispensable to the man of action,—these are the things that build the make of the Kshatriya. To carry these things to their highest degree and give them a certain divine fullness, purity and grandeur is the perfection of those who have this Swabhava and follow this Dharma.

A third turn is one that brings out into relief the practical arranging intelligence and the instinct of life to produce, exchange, possess, enjoy, contrive, put things in order and balance, spend itself and get and give and take, work out to the best advantage the active relations of existence. In its outward action it is this power that appears as the skilful devising intelligence, the legal, professional, commercial, industrial, economical, practical and scientific, mechanical, technical and utilitarian mind. This nature is accompanied at the normal level of its fullness by a general temperament which is at once grasping and generous, prone to amass and treasure, to enjoy, show and use, bent upon efficient exploitation of the world or its surroundings, but well capable too of practical philanthropy, humanity, ordered benevolence, orderly and ethical by rule but without any high distinction of the finer ethical spirit, a mind of the middle levels, not strai-

ning towards the heights, not great to break and create noble moulds of life, but marked by capacity, adaptation and measure. The powers, limitations and perversions of this type are familiar to us on a large scale, because this is the very spirit which has made our modern commercial and industrial civilisation. But if we look at the greater inner capacities and soul-values, we shall find that here also there are things that enter into the completeness of human perfection. The Power that thus outwardly expresses itself on our present lower levels is one that can throw itself out in the great utilities of life and at its freest and widest makes, not for oneness and identity which is the highest reach of knowledge or the mastery and spiritual kingship which is the highest reach of strength, but still for something which is also essential to the wholeness of existence, equal mutuality and the exchange of soul with soul and life with life. Its powers are, first, a skill, *kaushala*, which fashions and obeys law, recognises the uses and limits of relations, adapts itself to settled and developing movements, produces and perfects the outer technique of creation and action and life, assures possession and proceeds from possession to growth, is watchful over order and careful in progress and makes the most of the material of existence and its means and ends; then a power of self-spending skilful in lavishness and skilful in economy, which recognises the great law of interchange and amasses in order to throw out in a large return, increasing the currents of interchange and the fruitfulness of existence; a power of giving and ample creative liberality, mutual helpfulness and utility to others which becomes the source in an open soul of just beneficence, humanitarianism, altruism of a practical kind; finally, a power of enjoyment, a productive, possessive, active opulence luxurious of the prolific Ananda of existence. A largeness of mutuality, a generous fullness of the relations of life, a lavish self-spending and return and ample inter-

change between existence and existence, a full enjoyment and use of the rhythm and balance of fruitful and productive life are the perfection of those who have this Swabhava and follow this Dharma.

The other turn is towards work and service. This was in the old order the dharma or soul-type of the Sudra and the Sudra in that order was considered as not one of the twice-born, but an inferior type. A more recent consideration of the values of existence lays stress on the dignity of labour and sees in its toil the bed-rock of the relations between man and man. There is a truth in both attitudes. For this force in the material world is at once in its necessity the foundation of material existence or rather that on which it moves, the feet of the creator Brahma in the old parable, and in its primal state not uplifted by knowledge, mutuality or strength a thing which reposes on instinct, desire and inertia. The well-developed Sudra soul-type has the instinct of toil and the capacity of labour and service; but toil as opposed to easy or natural action is a thing imposed on the natural man which he bears because without it he cannot assure his existence or get his desires and he has to force himself or be forced by others or circumstances to spend himself in work. The natural Sudra works not from a sense of the dignity of labour or from the enthusiasm of service,—though that comes by the cultivation of his dharma,—not as the man of knowledge for the joy or gain of knowledge, not from a sense of honour, nor as the born craftsman or artist for love of his work or ardour for the beauty of its technique, nor from an ordered sense of mutuality or large utility, but for the maintenance of his existence and gratification of his primal wants, and when these are satisfied, he indulges, if left to himself, his natural indolence, the indolence which is normal to the tamasic quality in all of us, but comes out most clearly in the uncompelled primitive man, the savage. The unregenerated Sudra is born

therefore for service rather than for free labour and his temperament is prone to an inert ignorance, a gross unthinking self-indulgence of the instincts, a servility, an unreflective obedience and mechanical discharge of duty varied by indolence, evasion, spasmodic revolt, an instinctive and uninformed life. The ancients held that all men are born in their lower nature as Sudras and only regenerated by ethical and spiritual culture, but in their highest inner self are Brahmanas capable of the full spirit and godhead, a theory which is not far perhaps from the psychological truth of our nature.

And yet when the soul develops, it is in this Swabhava and Dharma of work and service that there are found some of the most necessary and beautiful elements of our greatest perfection and the key to much of the secret of the highest spiritual evolution. For the soul powers that belong to the full development of this force in us are of the greatest importance,—the power of service to others, the will to make our life a thing of work and use to God and man, to obey and follow and accept whatever great influence and needful discipline, the love which consecrates service, a love which asks for no return, but spends itself for the satisfaction of that which we love, the power to bring down this love and service into the physical field and the desire to give our body and life as well as our soul and mind and will and capacity to God and man, and, as a result, the power of complete self-surrender, *âtma-samarpana*, which transferred to the spiritual life becomes one of the greatest most revealing keys to freedom and perfection. In these things lies the perfection of this Dharma and the nobility of this Swabhava. Man could not be perfect and complete if he had not this element of nature in him to raise to its divine power.

None of these four types of personality can be complete even in its own field if it does not bring into it something of the other qualities. The man of knowledge

cannot serve Truth with freedom and perfection, if he has not intellectual and moral courage, will, audacity, the strength to open and conquer new kingdoms, otherwise he becomes a slave of the limited intellect or a servant or at most a ritual priest of only an established knowledge,* —cannot use his knowledge to the best advantage unless he has the adaptive skill to work out its truths for the practice of life, otherwise he lives only in the idea,—cannot make the entire consecration of his knowledge unless he has the spirit of service to humanity, to the Godhead in man and the Master of his being. The man of power must illumine and uplift and govern his force and strength by knowledge, light of reason or religion or the spirit, otherwise he becomes the mere forceful Asura,—must have the skill which will help him best to use and administer and regulate his strength and make it creative and fruitful and adapted to his relations with others, otherwise it becomes a mere drive of force across the field of life, a storm that passes and devastates more than it constructs,—must be capable too of obedience and make the use of his strength a service to God and the world, otherwise he becomes a selfish dominator, tyrant, brutal compeller of men's souls and bodies. The man of productive mind and work must have an open inquiring mind and ideas and knowledge, otherwise he moves in the routine of his functions without expansive growth, must have courage and enterprise, must bring a spirit of service into his getting and production, in order that he may not only get but give, not only amass and enjoy his own life, but consciously help the fruitfulness and fullness of the surrounding life by which he profits. The man of labour and service becomes a

* That perhaps is why it was the Kshatriya bringing his courage, audacity, spirit of conquest into the fields of intuitive knowledge and spiritual experience who first discovered the great truths of Vedanta.

helpless drudge and slave of society if he does not bring knowledge and honour and aspiration and skill into his work, since only so can he rise by an opening mind and will and understanding u-efulness to the higher dharmas. But the greater perfection of man comes when he enlarges himself to include all these powers, even though one of them may lead the others, and opens his nature more and more into the rounded fullness and universal capacity of the fourfold spirit. Man is not cut out into an exclusive type of one of these dharmas, but all these powers are in him at work at first in an ill-formed confusion, but he gives shape to one or another in birth after birth, progresses from one to the other even in the same life and goes on towards the total development of his inner existence. Our life itself is at once an inquiry after truth and knowledge, a struggle and battle of our will with ourselves and surrounding forces, a constant production, adaptation, application of skill to the material of life and a sacrifice and service.

These things are the ordinary aspects of the soul while it is working out its force in nature, but when we get nearer to our inner selves, then we get too a glimpse and experience of something which was involved in these forms and can disengage itself and stand behind and drive them, as if a general Presence or Power brought to bear on the particular working of this living and thinking machine. This is the force of the soul itself presiding over and filling the powers of its nature. The difference is that the first way is personal in its stamp, limited and determined in its action and mould, dependent on the instrumentation, but here there emerges something impersonal in the personal form, independent and self-sufficient even in the use of the instrumentation, indeterminable though determining both itself and things, something which acts with a much greater power upon the world and uses particular power only as one means of communica-

tion and impact on man and circumstance. The Yoga of self-perfection brings out this soul-force and gives it its largest scope, takes up all the fourfold powers and throws them into the free circle of an integral and harmonious spiritual dynamis. The godhead, the soul-power of knowledge rises to the highest degree of which the individual nature can be the supporting basis. A free mind of light develops which is open to every kind of revelation, inspiration, intuition, idea, discrimination, thinking synthesis; an enlightened life of the mind grasps at all knowledge with a delight of finding and reception and holding, a spiritual enthusiasm, passion, or ecstasy; a power of light full of spiritual force, illumination and purity of working manifests its empire, *brahma-tejas*, *brahma-varchas*; a bottomless steadiness and illimitable calm upholds all the illumination, movement, action as on some rock of ages, equal, unperturbed, unmoved, *achyuta*.

The godhead, the soul-power of will and strength rises to a like largeness and altitude. An absolute calm fearlessness of the free spirit, an infinite dynamic courage which no peril, limitation or possibility, wall of opposing force can deter from pursuing the work or aspiration imposed by the spirit, a high nobility of soul and will untouched by any littleness or baseness and moving with a certain greatness of step to spiritual victory or the success of the God-given work through whatever temporary defeat or obstacle, a spirit never depressed or cast down from faith and confidence in the power that works in the being, are the signs of this perfection. There comes too to fulfilment a large godhead, a soul-power of mutuality, a free self-spending and spending of gift and possession in the work to be done, lavished for the production, the creation, the achievement, the possession, gain, utilisable return, a skill that observes the law and adapts the relation and keeps the measure, a great taking into oneself from all beings

and a free giving out of oneself to all, a divine commerce, a large enjoyment of the mutual delight of life. And finally there comes to perfection the godhead, the soul-power of service, the universal love that lavishes itself without demand of return, the embrace that takes to itself the body of God in man and works for help and service, the abnegation that is ready to bear the yoke of the Master and make the life a free servitude to Him and under his direction to the claim and need of his creatures, the self-surrender of the whole being to the Master of our being and his work in the world. These things unite, assist and enter into each other, become one. The full consummation comes in the greatest souls most capable of perfection, but some large manifestation of this fourfold soul-power must be sought and can be attained by all who practise the integral Yoga.

These are the signs, but behind is the soul which thus expresses itself in a consummation of nature. And this soul is an outcoming of the free self of the liberated man. That self is of no character, being infinite, but bears and upholds the play of all character, supports a kind of infinite, one, yet multiple personality, *nirguno guni*, is in its manifestation capable of infinite quality, *anantaguna*. The force that it uses is the supreme and universal, the divine and infinite Shakti pouring herself into the individual being and freely determining action for the divine purpose.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK III

THE UNION OF ALL IN THE ONE IN ALL

I

DEATH

1 Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.

2 The days of our years are three score years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow.

3 Young and old and those who are growing to age, shall all die one after the other like fruits that fall.

4 —Man falls not suddenly into death, but moves to meet him step by step. We are dying each day; each

5 day robs us of a part of our existence.—For what is our life! It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.

6 Regard behind thee the abyss of duration and in front that other infinity of the ages to come. What difference is there is in this immensity between one who has lived three days and one who has lived three human ages?

1) Genesis III.19.—2) Psalms XC. 10.—3) Buddhist Texts.—4) Seneca.— 5) James IV. 14.— 6) Marcus Aurelius.

7 As a ripe fruit is at every moment in peril of detaching itself from the branch, so every creature born lives under a perpetual menace of death.

8 The lives of mortal men are like vases of many colours made by the potter's hands; they are broken into a thousand pieces; there is one end for all.

9 As the herdsman urges with his staff his cattle to the stall, so age and death drive before them the
10 lives of men.—Like the waves of a river that flow slowly on and return never back, the days of human
11 life pass and come not back again.—Like the waves of a rivulet, day and night are flowing the hours of
12 life and coming nearer and nearer to their end.—Time is a flood, an impetuous torrent which drags with it all that is born. A thing has scarcely appeared when it is carried away; another has already passed; and this other will soon fall into the gulf.

*
* *

13 Nature wills that each thing after its fulfilment shall disappear; it is for this that everything ages and
14 dies.—Nothing is fixed, nothing stable, nothing immobile in nature, nor in heaven, nor on the earth.

15-16 Nothing is wholly dead nor wholly alive.—It is at all times a sensible consolation to be able to say, "Death is as natural as life."

17 Death and decrepitude are inherent in the world. The sage who knows the nature of things, does not grieve.

18 Each thing in the world shoots out, flowers and returns to its root. This return is in conformity with

7) Buddhist Texts.— 8) id.— 9) Udanavarga.— 10) Buddhist Texts.— 11) id.—12) Marcus Aurelius.—13) Apollonius of Tyana.— 14) Hermes.—15) Victor Hugo.—16) Schopenhauer.—17) Metta Sutta.—18) Lao-Tse.

nature ; therefore the destruction of the body is no
19 danger to the being.—Man when he dies, knows that nothing peculiar will happen to him, only what has already happened to millions of beings, and all he does is to change his mode of journeying, but it is impossible for him not to feel an emotion when he comes to the place where he must undergo the change.

20 The dying man understands with difficulty what lives, not because his mental faculties are dulled, but because he understands something the living do not and cannot understand, and in this he is entirely absorbed.

21 Death will work in me this transformation, that I shall pass into another being otherwise separated from the world. And then the whole world, while yet the same for those who live in it, will become other for me.

22 When the present dream of our life is finished, a new dream will succeed it and there our life and death will not be known.

23 For things and their revolutions are like the images of a dream...So long as the dream lasts, all this world appears real to us ; the world exists no longer when the dream is finished.

24 All the earth is no more than a great tomb and there is nothing on its surface which is not hidden in the tomb, under earth...All are hastening to bury themselves in the depths of the ocean of infinity. But be of good courage...The sun is cradled in darkness and the need of the night is to reveal the splendour of the stars.

19) Tolstoi.— 20) id.— 21) Tolstoi.— 12) Schopenhauer.— 23) Shankaracharya.—24) Totaku-ko-Nozagual (Lopok. Mexico.)

A Defence of Indian Culture

XIII

Architecture, sculpture and painting, because they are the three great arts which appeal to the spirit through the eye, are those too in which the sensible and the invisible meet with the strongest emphasis on themselves and yet the greatest necessity of each other. The form with its insistent masses, proportions, lines, colours, can here only justify them by their service for the something intangible it has to express; the spirit needs all the possible help of the material body to interpret itself to itself through the eye, yet asks of it that it shall be as transparent a veil as possible of its own greater significance. The art of the East and the art of the West—each in its characteristic or mean, for there are always exceptions,—deal with the problem of these two interlocking powers in a quite different way. The western mind is arrested and attracted by the form, lingers on it and cannot get away from its charm, loves it for its own beauty, rests on the emotional, intellectual, aesthetic suggestions that arise directly from its most visible language, confines the soul in the body ; it might almost be said that for this mind form creates the spirit, the spirit depends for its existence and for everything it has to say on the form. The Indian attitude to the matter is at the opposite pole to this view. For the Indian mind form does not exist accept as a creation

of the spirit and draws all its meaning and value from the spirit. Every line, arrangement of mass, colour, shape, posture, every physical suggestion, however many, crowded, opulent they may be, is first and last a suggestion, a hint, very often a symbol which is in its main function a support for a spiritual emotion, idea, image that again goes beyond itself to the less definable, but more powerfully sensible reality of the spirit which has excited these movements in the aesthetic mind and passed through them into significant shapes.

This characteristic attitude of the Indian reflective and creative mind necessitates in our view of its creations an effort to get beyond at once to the inner spirit of the reality it expresses and see from it and not from outside. And in fact to start from the physical details and their synthesis appears to me quite the wrong way to look at an Indian work of art. The orthodox style of western criticism seems to be to dwell scrutinisingly on the technique, on form, on the obvious story of the form, and then pass to some appreciation of beautiful or impressive emotion and idea. It is only in some deeper and more sensitive minds that we get beyond that depth into profounder things. A criticism of that kind applied to Indian art leaves it barren or poor of significance. Here the only right way is to get at once through a total intuitive or revelatory impression or by some meditative dwelling on the whole, *dhyâna* in the technical Indian term, to the spiritual meaning and atmosphere, make ourselves one with that as completely as possible, and then only the helpful meaning and value of all the rest comes out with a complete and revealing force. For here it is the spirit that carries the form, while in most western art it is the form that carries whatever there may be of spirit. The striking phrase of Epictetus recurs to the mind in which he describes man as a little soul carrying a corpse, *psucharion ei bastazon nekron*. The more ordinary western

outlook is upon animate matter carrying in its life a modicum of soul. But the seeing of the Indian mind and of Indian art is that of a great, a limitless self and spirit, *mahân âtmâ*, which carries to us in the sea of its presence a living shape of itself, small in comparison to its own infinity, but yet sufficient by the power that informs this symbol to support some aspect of that infinite's self-expression. It is therefore essential that we should look here not solely with the physical eye informed by the reason and the aesthetic imagination, but make the physical seeing a passage to the opening of the inner spiritual eye and a moved communion in the soul. A great oriental work of art does not easily reveal its secret to one who comes to it solely in a mood of aesthetic curiosity or with a considering critical objective mind, still less as the cultivated and interested tourist passing among strange and foreign things; but it has to be seen in loneliness, in the solitude of one's self, in moments when one is capable of long and deep meditation and as little weighted as possible with the conventions of material life. That is why the Japanese with their fine sense in these things,—a sense which modern Europe with her assault of crowded art galleries and over-pictured walls seems to have quite lost, though perhaps I am wrong, and those are the right conditions for the display of European art,—have put their temples and their Buddhas as often as possible away on mountains and in distant or secluded scenes of Nature and avoid living with great paintings in the crude hours of daily life, but keep them by preference in such a way that their undisputed suggestion can sink into the mind in its finer moments or apart where they can go and look at them in a treasured secrecy when the soul is at leisure from life. That is an indication of the utmost value pointing to the nature of the appeal made by eastern art and the right way and mood for looking at its creations.

Indian architecture especially demands this kind of

inner study and this spiritual self-identification with its deepest meaning and will not otherwise reveal itself to us. The secular buildings of ancient India, her palaces and places of assembly and civic edifices have not outlived the ravage of time; what remains to us is mostly something of the great mountain and cave temples, something too of the temples of her ancient cities of the plains, and for the rest we have the fanes and shrines of her later times, whether situated in temple cities and places of pilgrimage like Srirangam and Rameshwaram or in her great once regal towns like Madura, when the temple was the centre of life. It is then the most hieratic side of a hieratic art that remains to us. These sacred buildings are the signs, the architectural self-expression of an ancient spiritual and religious culture. Ignore the spiritual suggestion, the religious significance, the meaning of the symbols and indications, look only with the rational and secular aesthetic mind, and it is vain to expect that we shall get to any true and discerning appreciation of this art. And it has to be remembered too that the religious spirit here is something quite different from the sense of European religions; and even mediaeval Christianity, especially as now looked at by the modern European mind which has gone through the two great crises of the Renascence and recent secularism, will not in spite of its oriental origin and affinities be of much real help. To bring in into the artistic look on an Indian temple occidental memories or a comparison with Greek Parthenon or Italian church or Duomo or Campanile or even the great Gothic cathedrals of mediaeval France, though these have in them something much nearer to the Indian mentality, is to intrude a fatally foreign and disturbing element or standard in the mind. But this consciously or else subconsciously is what almost every European mind does to a greater or less degree,—and it is here a pernicious immixture, for it subjects the work of a vision that saw the immeasurable to the tests

of an eye that dwells only on measure.

Indian sacred architecture of whatever date, style or dedication goes back to something timelessly ancient and now outside India almost wholly lost, something which belongs to the past, and yet it goes forward too, though this the rationalistic mind will not easily admit, to something which will return upon us and is already beginning to return, something which belongs to the future. An Indian temple, to whatever godhead it may be built, is in its inmost reality an altar raised to the divine Self, a house of the Cosmic Spirit, an appeal and aspiration to the Infinite. As that and in the light of that seeing and conception it must in the first place be understood, and everything else must be seen in that setting and that light, and then only can there be any real understanding. No artistic eye however alert and sensible and no aesthetic mind however full and sensitive can arrive at that understanding, if it is attached to a Hellenised conception of rational beauty or shuts itself up in a materialised or intellectual interpretation and fails to open itself to the great things here meant by a kindred close response to some touch of the cosmic consciousness, some revelation of the greater spiritual self, some suggestion of the Infinite. These things, the spiritual self, the cosmic spirit, the Infinite, are not rational, but suprarational, eternal presences, but to the intellect only words, and visible, sensible, near only to an intuition and revelation in our inmost selves. An art which starts from them as a first conception can only give us what it has to give, their touch, their nearness, their self-disclosure, through some responding intuition and revelation in us, in our own soul, our own self. It is this which one must come to it to find and not demand from it the satisfaction of some quite other seeking or some very different turn of imagination and more limited superficial significance.

This is the first truth of Indian architecture and its

significance which demands emphasis and it leads at once to the answer to certain very common misapprehensions and objections. All art reposes on some unity and all its details, whether few and sparing or lavish and crowded and full, must go back to that unity and help its significance ; otherwise it is not art. Now we find our western critic telling us with an assurance which would be stupefying if one did not see how naturally it arose, that in Indian architecture there is no unity, which is as much as to say that there is here no great art at all, but only a skill in the execution of crowded and unrelated details. We are told even by otherwise sympathetic judges that there is an overloading of ornament and detail which, however beautiful or splendid in itself, stands in the way of unity, an attempt to load every rift with ore, an absence of calm, no unfilled spaces, no relief to the eye. Mr. Archer as usual carries up the adverse criticism to its extreme clamorous top notes ; his heavily shotted phrases are all a continuous insistence on this one theme. The great temples of the South of India are, he allows, marvels of massive construction. He seems by the way to have a rooted objection to massiveness in architecture or great massed effects in sculpture, regardless of their appropriateness or need, although he admits them in literature, Still this much there is and with it a sort of titanic impressiveness, but of unity, clarity, nobility there is no trace. This observation seems to my judgment sufficiently contradictory, since I do no understand how there can be a marvel of construction, whether light or massive, without any unity, —but here is not even, it seems, a trace of it—or a mighty impressiveness without any greatness or nobility whatever, even allowing this to be a Titanic and not an Olympian nobleness. He tells us that everything is ponderous, everything here overwrought and the most prominent features swarming, writhing with contorted semi-human figures are as senseless as anything in architecture. How, one might

ask, does he know that they are senseless, when he practically admits that he has made no attempt to find what is their sense, but has simply assumed from the self-satisfied sufficiency of his own admitted ignorance and failure to understand that there cannot be any meaning. And the whole thing he characterises as a monstrosity built by Rakshasas, ogres, demons, a gigantesque barbarism. The northern buildings find a little less disfavour in his eyes, but the difference in the end is small or none. There is the same ponderousness, absence of lightness and grace, an even greater profusion of incised ornament; these too are barbaric creations. Alone the Mahomedan architecture, called Indo-Saracenic, is exempted from this otherwise universal condemnation.

It is a little surprising after all, however natural the first blindness here, that even assailants of this extreme kind, since they must certainly know that there can be no art, no effective construction without unity, should not have paused even once to ask themselves whether after all there must not be here some principle of oneness which they had missed because they came with alien conceptions and looked at things from the wrong end, and before pronouncing this magisterial judgment should not have had patience to wait in a more detached and receptive way upon the thing under their eye and seen whether then some secret of unity did not emerge. But it is the more sympathetic and less violent critic who deserves a direct answer. Now it may readily be admitted that the failure to see at once the unity of this architecture is perfectly natural to a European eye, because unity in the sense demanded by the western conception, the Greek unity gained by much suppression and a sparing use of detail and circumstance or even the Gothic unity got by casting everything into the mould of a single spiritual aspiration, is not there. And the greater unity that really is there can never be arrived at at all, if the eye begins and ends by

dwelling on form and detail and ornament, because it will then be obsessed by these things and find it difficult to go beyond to the unity which all this in its totality serves not so much to express in itself, but to fill it with that which comes out of it and relieve its oneness by multitude. An origina loneness, not a combined or synthetic or an effected unity, is that from which this art begins and to which its work when finished returns or rather lives in it as in its self and atmosphere. Indian sacred architecture constantly represents the greatest oneness of the self, the cosmic, the infinite in the immensity of its world design, the multitude of its features of self-expression, *lakshana*, (yet the oneness is greater than and independent of their totality and in itself indefinable,) and all its starting-point of unity in conception, its mass of design and immensity of material, its crowding abundance of significant ornament and detail and its return towards oneness are only intelligible as necessary circumstances of this poem, this epic or this lyric—for there are smaller structures which are such lyrics—of the Infinite. The western mentality, except in those who are coming or returning, since Europe had once something of this cult in her own way, to this vision, may find it difficult to appreciate the truth and meaning of such an art, which tries to figure existence as a whole and not in its pieces; but I would invite those Indian minds who are troubled by these criticisms or partly or temporarily overpowered by the western way of seeing things, to look at our architecture in the light of this conception and see whether all but minor objections do not vanish as soon as the real meaning makes itself felt and gives body to the first indefinable impression and emotion which we experience before the greater constructions of the Indian builders.

To appreciate this spiritual-aesthetic truth of Indian architecture, it will be best to look first at some work where there is not the complication of surroundings now

often out of harmony with the building, outside even those temple towns which still retain their dependence on the sacred motive, and rather in some place where there is room for a free background of Nature. I have before me two prints which can well serve the purpose, a temple at Kalahasti, a temple at Sinhachalam, two buildings entirely different in treatment and yet one in the ground and the universal motive. The straight way here is not to detach the temple from its surroundings, but to see it in unity with the sky and lowlying landscape or with the sky and hills around and feel the thing common to both, the construction and its environment, the reality in Nature, the reality expressed in the work of art. The oneness to which this Nature aspires in her inconscient self-creation and in which she lives, the oneness to which the soul of man uplifts itself in his conscious spiritual upbuilding, his labour of aspiration here expressed in stone, and in which so upbuilt he and his work live, are the same and the soul-motive is one. Thus seen this work of man seems to be something which has started out and detached itself against the power of the natural world, something of the one common aspiration in both to the same infinite spirit of itself,—the inconscient uplook and against it the strong single relief of the self-conscient effort and success of finding. One of these buildings climbs up bold, massive in projection, uppiled in the greatness of a forceful but sure ascent, preserving its range and line to the last, the other soars from the strength of its base, in the grace and emotion of a curving mass to a rounded summit and crowning symbol. There is in both a constant subtle yet pronounced lessening from the base towards the top, but at each stage a repetition of the same form, the same multiplicity of insistence, the same crowded fullness and indented relief, but one maintains its multiple endeavour and indication to the last, the other ends in a single sign. To find the significance we have first to feel the oneness of the infinity in

which this nature and this art live, then see this thronged expression as the sign of the infinite multiplicity which fills this oneness, see in the regular lessening ascent of the edifice the subtler and subtler return from the base on earth to the original unity and seize on the symbolic indication of its close at the top. Not absence of unity, but a tremendous unity is revealed. Reinterpret intimately what this representation means in the terms of our own spiritual self-existence and cosmic being, and we have what these great builders saw in themselves and reared in stone. All objections, once we have got at this identity in spiritual experience, fall away and show themselves to be what they really are, the utterance and cavil of an impotent misunderstanding, an insufficient apprehension or a complete failure to see. To appreciate the detail of Indian architecture is easy when the whole is thus seen and known; otherwise, it is impossible.

This method of interpretation applies, however different the construction and the nature of the rendering, to all Dravidian architecture, not only to the mighty temples of far-spread fame, but to unknown roadside shrines in small towns, which are only a slighter execution of the same theme, a satisfied suggestion here, but the greater buildings a grandiose fulfilled aspiration. The architectural language of the north is of a different kind, there is another basic style; but here too the same spiritual, meditative, intuitive method has to be used and we get at the same result, an aesthetic interpretation or suggestion of the one spiritual experience, one in all its complexity and diversity, which founds the unity of the infinite variations of Indian spirituality and religious feeling and the realised union of the human self with the Divine. This is the unity too of all the creations of this hieratic art. The different styles and motives arrive at or express that unity in different ways. The objection that an excess of thronging detail and ornament hides, impairs or breaks up the

unity, is advanced only because the eye has made the mistake of dwelling on the detail first, without relation to this original spiritual oneness, which has first to be fixed in an intimate spiritual seeing and union and then all else seen in that vision and experience. When we look on the multiplicity of the world, it is only a crowded plurality that we can find and to arrive at unity we have to reduce, to suppress what we have seen or sparingly select a few indications or to be satisfied with the unity of this or that separate idea, experience or imagination: but when we have realised the self, the infinite unity and look back on the multiplicity of the world, then we find that oneness able to bear all the infinity of variation and circumstance we can crowd into it and its unity remains unabridged by even the most endless self-multiplication of its informing creations. We find the same thing in looking at this architecture. The wealth of ornament, detail, circumstance in Indian temples represents the infinite variety and repetition of the worlds,—not our world only, but all the planes,—suggests the infinite multiplicity in the infinite oneness. It is a matter of our own experience and fullness of vision how much we leave out or bring in, whether we express so much or so little or attempt as in the Dravidian style to give the impression of a teeming inexhaustible plenitude. The largeness of this unity is base and continent enough for any superstructure or content of multitude.

To condemn this abundance as barbarous is to apply a foreign standard. Where after all are we bound to draw the line? To the pure classical taste Shakespeare's art once appeared great but barbarous for a similar reason,—one remembers the Gallic description of him as a drunken barbarian of genius,—his artistic unity non-existent or spoilt by crowding tropical vegetation of incident and character, his teeming imaginations violent, exaggerated, sometimes bizarre, monstrous, without symmetry,

proportion and all the other lucid unities, lightnesses, graces loved by the classic mind. That mind might say of his work in language like Mr. Archer's that here there is indeed a Titanic genius, a mass of power, but of unity, clarity, classic nobility no trace, but rather an entire absence of lucid grace and lightness and restraint, a profusion of wild ornament and an imaginative riot without law or measure, strained figures, distorted positions and gestures, no dignity, no fine, just, rationally natural and beautiful classic movement and pose. But even the strictest Latin mind has now got over its objections to the "splendid barbarism" of Shakespeare and can understand that here is a fuller, less sparing and exiguous vision of life, a greater intuitive unity than the formal unities of the classic aesthesis. But the Indian vision of the world and existence was vaster and fuller than Shakespeare's, because it embraced not merely life, but all being, not merely humanity, but all the worlds and all Nature and cosmos. The European mind not having arrived except in individuals at any close, direct, insistent realisation of the unity of the infinite self or the cosmic consciousness peopled with its infinite multiplicity, is not driven to express these things, cannot understand or put up with them when they are expressed in this oriental art speech and style and object to it as the Latin mind once objected to Shakespeare. Perhaps the day is not distant when it will see and understand and perhaps even itself try to express the same things in another language.

The objection that the crowding detail allows no calm, gives no relief or space to the eye, falls under the same heading, springs from the same root, is urged from a different-experience and has no validity for the Indian experience. For this unity on which all is upborne, carries in itself the infinite space and calm of the spiritual realisation, and there is no need for other unfilled spaces or tracts of calm of a lesser more superficial kind. The eye is

here only a way of access to the soul, it is to that that there is the appeal, and if the soul living in this realisation or dwelling under the influence of this aesthetic impression needs any relief, it is not from the incidence of life and form, but from the immense incidence of that vastness of infinity and tranquil silence, and that can only be given by its opposite, by an abundance of form and detail and life. As for the objection in regard to Dravidian architecture to its massiveness and its Titanic construction, the precise spiritual effect intended could not be given otherwise; for the infinite, the cosmic seen as a whole in its vast manifestation is Titanic, is mighty in material and power. It is other and quite different things also, but none of these are absent from Indian construction. The great temples of the north have often in spite of Mr. Archer's dictum, a singular grace in their power, a luminous lightness relieving their mass and strength, a rich delicacy of beauty in their ornate fullness. It is not indeed the Greek lightness, clarity or naked nobleness, nor is it exclusive, but comes in in a fine blending of opposites which is in the very spirit of the Indian religious, philosophical and aesthetic mind. Nor are these things absent from many Dravidian buildings, though in certain styles they are boldly sacrificed or only put into minor incidents,—one instance of the kind Mr. Archer rejoices in as an oasis in the desert of this to him unintelligible mass of might and greatness,—but in either case suppressed so that the fullness of solemn and grandiose effect may have a complete, an undiminished expression.

I need not deal with adverse strictures of a more insignificant kind,—such as the dislike of the Indian form of the arch and dome, because they are not the radiating arch and dome of other styles. That is only an intolerant refusal to admit the beauty of unaccustomed forms. It is legitimate to prefer one's own things, those to which our mind and nature have been trained, but to condemn

other art and effort because it also prefers its own way of arriving at beauty, greatness, self-expression, is a narrowness which with the growth of a more catholic culture ought to disappear. But there is one comment on Dravidian temple architecture which is worth noting because it is made by others than Mr. Archer and his kind. Even a sympathetic mind like Professor Geddes is impressed by some sense of a monstrous effect of terror and gloom in these mighty buildings. Such expressions are astonishing to an Indian mind because terror and gloom are conspicuously absent from the feelings aroused in it by its religion, art or literature. In the religion they are rarely awakened and only in order to be immediately healed and, even when they come, are always sustained by the sense of a supporting and helping présence, an eternal greatness and calm or love or Delight behind ; the very goddess of destruction is at the same time the compassionate and loving Mother ; the austere Maheswara, Rudra, is also Shiva, the auspicious, *âçutosha*, the refuge of men. The Indian thinking and religious mind looks with calm, without shrinking or repulsion, with an understanding born of its agelong effort at identity and oneness, at all that meets it in the stupendous spectacle of the cosmos. And even its asceticism, its turning from the world, which begins not in terror and gloom, but in a sense of vanity and fatigue, or of something higher, truer, happier than life, soon passes beyond any element of pessimistic sadness into the rapture of the eternal peace and bliss. Indian secular poetry and drama is throughout rich, vital and joyous and there is more tragedy, terror, sorrow and gloom packed into any few pages of European work than we can find in the whole mass of Indian literature. It does not seem to me that Indian art is at all different in this respect from the religion and literature. The western mind is here thrusting in its own habitual reactions upon things in the indigenous conception in which they have no pro-

per place. Mark the curious misreading of the dance of Shiva as a dance of Death or Destruction, whereas, as anybody ought to be able to see who looks upon the Nataraja, it expresses on the contrary the rapture of the cosmic dance with the profundities behind of the unmoved eternal and infinite bliss. So too the figure of Kali which is so terrible to European eyes is, as we know, the Mother of the universe accepting this fierce aspect of destruction in order to slay the Asuras, the powers of evil in man and the world. There are other strands in this feeling in the western mind which seem to spring from a dislike of anything uplifted far beyond the human measure and others again in which we see a subtle survival of the Greek limitation, the fear, gloom and aversion with which the sunny terrestrial Hellenic mind commonly met the idea of the beyond, the limitless, the unknown; but that reaction has no place in Indian mentality. And as for the strangeness or formidable aspect of certain unhuman figures or the conception of demons or Rakshasas, it must be remembered that the Indian aesthetic mind deals not only with the earth but with psychic planes in which these things exist and ranges freely among them without being over-powered because it carries everywhere the stamp of a large confidence in the strength and the omnipresence of the Self or the Divine.

I have dwelt on Hindu and especially on Dravidian architecture because the latter is the most fiercely attacked as the most uncompromisingly foreign to European taste. But a word too may be said about Indo-Moslem architecture. I am not concerned to defend any claim for the purely indigenous origin of its features. It seems to me that here the Indian mind has taken in much from the Arab and Persian imagination and in certain mosques and tombs I seem to find an impress of the robust and bold Afghan and Moghul temperament; but it remains clear enough that it is still on the whole a typically Indian

creation with the peculiar Indian gift. The richness of decorative skill and imagination has been turned to the uses of another style, but it is the same skill which we find in the northern Hindu temples, and in the ground we see, however toned down, something sometimes of the old epic mass and power, but more often that lyric grace which we see developing before the Mahomedan advent in the indigenous sculpture,—as in the schools of the North-East and of Java,—and sometimes a blending of the two motives. The modification, the toning down sets the average European mind at ease and secures its suffrage. But what is it that it so much admires? Mr. Archer tells us at first that it is its rational beauty, refinement and grace, normal, fair, refreshing after the monstrous riot of Hindu Yogic hallucination and nightmare. That description which might have been written of Greek art, seems to me grotesquely inapplicable. Immediately afterwards he harps on quite another and an incompatible phrase, and calls it a faery-land of exquisite architecture. A rational faery-land is a wonder which may perhaps be hereafter discovered by some strange intertwining of the nineteenth and twentieth century minds, but I do not think it has yet existed on earth or in the heavens. Not rational but magical beauty satisfying and enchanting to some deeper quite suprarational aesthetic soul in us is the inexpressible charm of these creations. But still where does the magic touch our critic? He tells us in a rapt journalistic style. It is the exquisite marble traceries, the beautiful domes and minarets, the stately halls of sepulture, the marvellous loggias and arcades, the magnificent plinths and platforms, the majestic gateways, *et cetera*. And is this then all? Only the charm of an outward material luxury and magnificence? Yes; Mr. Archer again tells us that we must be content here with a visual sensuous beauty without any moral suggestion. And that helps him to bring in the sentence of destructive condemnation without which he

could not feel happy in dealing with Indian things: this Moslem architecture suggests not only unbridled luxury, but effeminacy and decadence! But in that case, whatever its beauty, it belongs entirely to a secondary plane of artistic creation and cannot rank with the great spiritual aspirations in stone of the Hindu builders.

I do not demand "moral suggestions" from architecture, but is it true that there is nothing but a sensuous outward grace and beauty and luxury in these Indo-Moslem buildings? It is not at all true of the characteristic greater work. The Taj is not merely a sensuous reminiscence of an imperial amour or a faery enchantment hewn from the moon's lucent quarries, but the eternal dream of a love that survives death. The great mosques embody often a religious aspiration lifted to a noble austerity which supports and is not lessened by the subordinated ornament and grace. The tombs reach beyond death to the beauty and joy of Paradise. The buildings of Fatehpur-Sikri are not monuments of an effeminate luxurious decadence,—an absurd description for the mind of the time of Akbar,—but give form to a nobility, power and beauty which lay hold upon but do not wallow on the earth. There is not here indeed the vast spiritual content of the earlier Indian mind, but it is still an Indian mind which in these delicate creations absorbs the West Asian influence, and lays stress on the sensuous as before in the poetry of Kalidasa, but uplifts it to a certain immaterial charm, rises often from the earth without quite leaving it into the magical beauty of the middle world and in the religious mood touches with a devout hand the skirts of the Divine. The all-pervading spiritual obsession is not there, but other elements of life not ignored by Indian culture and gaining on it since the classical times are here brought out under a new influence and are still penetrated with some radiant glow of a superior lustre.

The Future Poetry

THE BREATH OF GREATER LIFE

The turn of poetry in the age which we have now left behind, was, as was inevitable in a reign of dominant intellectuality, a preoccupation with reflective thought and therefore with truth, but it was not at its core and in its essence a poetic thought and truth and its expression, however artistically dressed with image and turn or enforced by strong or dexterous phrase, however frequently searching, apt or picturesque, had not often, except in one or two exceptional voices, the most moving and intimate tones of poetry. The poets of the middle nineteenth century in England and America philosophised, moralised or criticised life in energetic and telling or beautiful and attractive or competent and cultured verse; but they did not represent life with success or interpret it with high poetic power or inspired insight and were not stirred and uplifted by any deeply great vision of truth. The reasoning and observing intellect is a most necessary and serviceable instrument, but an excess of reason and intellectuality does not create an atmosphere favourable to moved vision and the uplifting breath of life, and for all its great stir of progress and discovery that age, the carnival of industry and science, gives us who are in search of more living, inner and potent things the impression of a brazen

flavour, a heavy air, an inhibition of the greater creative movements, a level spirit of utility and prose. The few poets who strained towards a nearer hold upon life, had to struggle against this atmosphere which weighed upon their mind and clogged their breath. Whitman, striving by stress of thought towards a greater truth of the soul and life, found refuge in a revolutionary breaking out into new anarchic forms, a vindication of freedom of movement which unfortunately at its ordinary levels brings us nearer to the earth and not higher up towards a more illumined air; Swinburne, excited by the lyric fire within him, had too often to lash himself into a strained violence of passion in order to make a way through the clogging thickness for its rush of sound; Meredith's strains, hyming life in a word burdened and packed with thought, are strong and intimate, but difficult and few. And therefore in this epoch of a bursting into new fields and seeking for new finer and bolder impulses of creation, one of the most insistent demands and needs of the human mind, not only in poetry, but in thought itself and in spirit, has been to lessen the tyranny of the reasoning and critical intellect, to return to the power and sincerity of life and come by a greater deepness of the intuition of its soul of meaning. That is the most striking turn of all recent writing of any importance.

This turn is in itself perfectly sound and its direction is to a certain extent on the right line, even if it does not yet altogether see its own end. But the firm grasp on a greater life has not quite come and there are many mistaken directions of this urge. The enlightening power of the poet's creation is vision of truth, its moving power is a passion of beauty and delight, but its sustaining power and that which makes it great and vital is the breath of life. A poetry which is all thought and no life or a thought which does not constantly keep in touch with and refresh itself from the fountains of life, even if it is something

more than a strong, elegant or cultured philosophising or moralising in skilled verse, even if it has vision and intellectual beauty, suffers always by lack of fire and body, wants perfection of grasp and does not take full hold on the inner being to seize and uplift as well as sweeten and illumine, as poetry should do and all great poetic writing does. The function of the poet even when he is most absorbed in thinking, is still to bring out not merely the truth and interest, but the beauty and power of the thought, its life and emotion, and not only to do that, not only to make the thought a beautiful and living thing, but to make it one thing with life. But words are ambiguous things and we must see what is the full extent of our meaning when we say, as we may say, that the poet's first concern and his concern always is with living beauty and reality, with life.

As we can say that the truth with which poetry is touched, is an infinite truth, all the truth that lives in the eternal and universal and fills, informs, vivifies, holds and shapes the spirit and form of creation, so we may say too that the life something of which the poet has to reembody in the beauty of the word is all life, the infinite life of the spirit thrown out in its many creations. The poet's business most really, most intimately is not with the outward physical life as it is or the life of the passions and emotions only for its own sake or even with some ideal life imaged by the mind or some combining and new shaping of these things into a form of beauty, but with the life of the soul and with these other things only as its expressive forms. Poetry is the rhythmic voice of life, but it is one of the inner and not one of the surface voices. And the more of this inner truth of his function the poet brings out in his work, the greater is his creation, while it does not seem to matter essentially or not at the first whether his method is professedly subjective or objective, his ostensible power that of a more outward or a more inward spirit or whether

it is the individual or the group soul or the soul of Nature or mankind or the eternal and universal spirit in them whose beauty and living reality find expression in his word. This universal truth of poetry is apt to be a little hidden from us by the form and stress of preoccupation with this or that medium of outward soul-expression in the poet's work. Mankind in its development seems to begin with the most outward things and go always more and more inward in order that the race may mount to greater heights of the spirit's life. An early poetry therefore is much occupied with a simple, natural, straightforward, external presentation of life. A primitive epic bard like Homer thinks only by the way and seems to be carried constantly forward in the stream of his strenuous action and to cast out as he goes only so much of surface thought and character and feeling as obviously emerges in a strong and single and natural speech and action. And yet it is the adventures and trials and strength and courage of the soul of man in Odysseus which makes the greatness of the Odyssey and not merely the vivid incident and picturesque surrounding circumstance, and it is the clash of great and strong spirits with the gods leaning down to participate in their struggle which makes the greatness of the Iliad and not merely the action and stir of battle. The outward form of Shakespeare's work is a surge of emotion and passion and thought and act and event arising out of character at ferment in the yeast of feeling and passion, but it is its living interpretation of the truth and powers of the life-soul of man that are the core of greatness of his work and the rest without it would be a vain brute turmoil. The absence or defect of this greater element makes indeed the immense inferiority of the rest of Elizabethan dramatic work. And whatever the outward character or form of the poetry, the same law holds that poetry is a self-expressive power of the spirit and where the soul of things is most revealed in its very

life by the rhythmic word, there is the fullest achievement of the poet's function.

And so long as the poet's medium is the outward life of things or the surface inward life of the passions and emotions, he is moving in a strong and fresh natural element and in an undivided wholeness of the inner and outer man, and his work, given the native power in him, has all the vitality of a thing fully felt and lived. But when intellectual thought has begun its reign in the mind of a more cultured race, the poet's difficulty also begins and increases as that reign becomes more sovereign and imperative. For intellectual thought makes a sort of scission in our being and on one side of the line is the vital urge carrying on life and on the other side the deliberate detached reason trying to observe it, take an intelligent view and extract from it all its thought values. The poet, as a child of the age and one of its voices, is moved to follow this turn. He too observes life, extracts the thought values of his theme, criticises while attempting to create, or even lingers to analyse his living subject, as Browning is constantly doing with the thinking and feeling mind of his characters. But this can only be done without detriment to the vital power of the poetic spirit and the all-seizing effect of its word, when there is a balance maintained between thought and life, the life passing into self-observing thought and the thought returning on the life to shape it in its own vital image. It has been remarked that the just balance betwen thought and the living word was found by the Greeks and not again. That is perhaps an excessive affirmation, but certainly a just balance between observing thought and life is the distinctive effort of classical poetry and that endeavour gave it its stamp whether in Athens or Rome or in much of the epic or classical literature of ancient India. But this balance is easily lost, a difficult thing, and, once it has gone, thought begins to overweight life which loses its power and elan

and joy, its vigorous natural body and its sincere and satisfied passion and force. We get more of studies of life than of creation, thought about the meaning of character and emotion and event and elaborate description rather than the living presence of these things. Passion, direct feeling, ardent emotion, sincerity of sensuous joy are chilled by the observing eye of the reason and give place to a play of sentiment,—sentiment which is an indulgence of the intelligent observing mind in the aesthesis, the *rasa* of feeling, passion, emotion, sense thinning them away into a subtle, at the end almost unreal fineness. There is then an attempt to get back to the natural fullness of the vital and physical life, but the endeavour fails in sincerity and success because it is impossible; the mind of man having got so far cannot return upon its course, undo what it has made of itself and recover the glad childhood of its early vigorous nature. There is instead of the simplicity of spontaneous life a search after things striking, exaggerated, abnormal, violent, new, in the end a morbid fastening on perversities, on all that is ugly, glaring and coarse on the plea of their greater reality, on exaggerations of vital instinct and sensation, on physical wrynesses and crudities and things unhealthily strange. The thought-mind, losing the natural full-blooded power of the vital being, pores on these things, stimulates the failing blood with them and gives itself an illusion of some forceful sensation of living. This is not the real issue, but the way to exhaustion and decadence.

The demand for life, for action, the tendency to a pragmatic and vitalistic view of things, a certain strenuous and even strident note has been loud enough in recent years. Life, action, vital power are great indispensable things, but to get back to them by thinking less is a way not open to us in this age of time, even if it were a desirable remedy for our disease of over-intellectuality and a mechanised existence. In fact we do not think less than

the men of the past generation but much more insistently, with a more packed and teeming thought, with a more eager more absorbed hunting of the mind along all the royal high-roads and alluring byways of life. And it could not be otherwise. The very school of poetry which insists on actual life as the subject matter of the poet carries into it with or without conscious intention the straining of the thought mind after something quite other than the obvious sense of the things it tries to force into relief, some significance deeper than what either the observing reason or the normal life-sense gives to our first or our second view of existence. The way out lies not in cessation of thinking and the turn to a strenuous description of life, nor even in a more vitally forceful thinking, but in another kind of thought mind. The filled activity of the thinking mind is as much part of life as that of the body and vital and emotional being, and its growth and predominance are a necessary stage of human progress and man's self-evolution. To go back from it is impossible or, if possible, would be undesirable, a lapse and not a betterment of our spirit. But the full thought-life does not come by the activity of the intellectual reason and its predominance. That is only a step by which we get above the first immersion in the activity and excitement and vigour of the life and the body and give ourselves a first freedom to turn to a greater and higher reach of the fullness of existence. And that higher reach we gain when we get above the limited crude physical mind, above the vital power and its forceful thought and self-vision, above the intellect and its pondering and measuring reason, and tread the illumined realm of an intuitive and spiritual thinking, an intuitive feeling, sense and vision. This is not that vital intuition which is sometimes confused with a much broader, loftier, vaster and more seeing power, but the high original power itself, a supra-intellectual and spiritual intuition. The all-informing spirit, when found in

all its fullness, heals the scission between thought and life, the need of a just balance between them disappears, instead there begins a new and luminous and joyful fusion and oneness. The spirit gives us not only a greater light of truth and vision, but the breath of a greater living; for the spirit is not only the self of our consciousness and knowledge, but the great self of life. To find our self and the self of things is not to go through a rarefied ether of thought into Nirvana, but to discover the whole greatest integral power of our complete existence.

This need is the sufficient reason for attaching the greatest importance to those poets in whom there is the double seeking of this twofold power, the truth and reality of the eternal self and spirit in man and things and the insistence on life. All the most significant and vital work in recent poetry has borne this stamp; the rest is of the hour, but this is of the future. It is the highest note of Whitman, widening, as in one who seeks and sees much but has not fully found, a great pioneer poetry, an opening of a new view rather than a living in its accomplished fullness; it is constantly repeated from the earth side in Meredith, comes down from the spiritual side in all A. E's work, moves between earth and the life of the worlds behind in Yeats' subtle rhythmic voices of vision and beauty, echoes with a large fullness in Carpenter. The poetry of Tagore owes its sudden and universal success to this advantage that he gives us more of this discovery and fusion for which the mind of our age is in quest than any other creative writer of the time. His work is a constant music of the overpassing of the borders, a chant-filled realm in which the subtle sounds and lights of the truth of the spirit give new meanings to the finer subtleties of life. The objection has been made that this poetry is too subtle and remote and goes away from the broad, near, present and vital actualities of existence. Yeats is considered by some a poet of Celtic romance and nothing more, Tagore

accused in his own country of an unsubstantial poetic philosophising, a lack of actuality, reality of touch and force of vital insistence. But this is to mistake the work of this poetry and to mistake too in a great measure the sense of life as it must reveal itself to the greatening mind of humanity now that is growing in world-knowledge and towards self-knowledge. These poets have not indeed done all that has to be done or given the complete poetic synthesis and fusion. Their work has been to create a new and deeper manner of seeing life, to build bridges of visioned light and rhythm between the infinite and eternal and the mind and soul and life of man. The future poetry has not to stay in their achievement, but to step from these first fields into new and yet greater ranges, to fathom all the depths yet unplumbed, to complete what has been left half done or not yet done, to bring all it can of the power of man's greater self and the universal spirit into the broadest all of life. That cannot and will not be achieved in its fullness all at once, but to make a foundation of this new infinite range of poetic vision and creation is work enough to give greatness to a whole age.

The demand for activity and realism or for a direct, exact and forceful presentation of life in poetry proceeds upon a false sense of what poetry gives or can give us. All the highest activities of the mind of man deal with things other than the crude actuality or the direct appearance or the first rough appeal of existence. A critical or a scientific thought may attempt to give an account of the actuality as it really is, though even to do that they have to go far behind its frontage and make a mental reconstruction and surprising change in its appearance. But the creative powers cannot stop there, but have to make new things for us as well as to make existing things new to the mind and eye. It is no real portion of the function of art to cut out palpitating pieces from life and present them raw and smoking or well-cooked for the aesthetic diges-

tion. For in the first place all art has to give us beauty and the crude actuality of life is not often beautiful, and in the second place poetry has to give us a deeper reality of things and the outsides and surface faces of life are only a part of its reality and do not take us either very deep or very far. Moreover, the poet's greatest work is to open to us new realms of vision, new realms of being, our own and the world's, and he does this even when he is dealing with actual things. Homer with all his epic vigour of outward presentation does not show us the heroes and deeds before Troy in their actuality as they really were to the normal vision of men, but much rather as they were or might have been to the vision of the gods. Shakespeare's greatness lies not in his reproduction of actual human events or men as they appear to us buttoned and cloaked in life,—others of his time could have done that as well, if with less radiant force of genius, yet with more of the realistic crude colour or humdrum drab of daily truth,—but in his bringing out in his characters and themes of things essential, intimate, eternal, universal in man and Nature and Fate on which the outward features are borne as fringe and robe and which belong to all times, but are least obvious to the moment's experience : when we do see them, life presents to us another face and becomes something deeper than its actual present mask. That is why the poet oftenest instinctively prefers to go away from the obsession of a petty actuality, from the realism of the prose of life to his inner creative self or an imaginative background of the past or the lucent air of myth or dream or on into a greater outlook on the future. Poetry may indeed deal with the present living scene, at some peril, or even with the social or other questions and problems of the day,—a task which is now often laid on the creative mind, as if that were its proper work ; but it does that successfully only when it makes as little as possible of what belongs to the moment and time and the surface

and brings out their roots of universal or eternal interest or their suggestion of great and deep things. What the poet borrows from the moment, is the most perishable part of his work and lives at all only by being subordinated and put into intimate relation with less transient realities. And this is so because it is the eternal increasing soul of man and the intimate self of things and their more abiding and significant forms which are the real object of his vision.

The poetry of the future can least afford to chain itself to the outward actualities which we too often mistake for the whole of life, because it will be the voice of a human mind which is pressing more and more towards the very self of the self of things, the very spirit of which the soul of man is a living power and to a vision of unity and totality which is bound to take note of all that lies behind our apparent material life. What man sees and experiences of God and himself and his race and Nature and the spiritual, mental, psychic and material worlds in which he moves, his backlook upon the past, his sweep of vision over the present, his eye of aspiration and prophecy cast towards the future, his passion of self-finding and self-exceeding, his reach beyond the three times to the eternal and immutable, this is his real life. Poetry in the past wrote much of the godheads and powers behind existence, but in the mask of legends and myths, sometimes of God, but not often with a living experience, oftener in the set forms taught by religions and churches and without true beauty and knowledge. But now the mind of man is opening more largely to the deepest truth of the Divine, the Self, the Spirit, the eternal Presence not separate and distant, but near us, around us and in us, the Spirit in the world, the greater Self in man and his kind, the Spirit in all that is and lives, the Godhead, the Existence, the Power, the Beauty, the eternal Delight that broods over all, supports all and manifests itself in every turn of creation. A

poetry which lives in this vision must give us quite a new presentation and interpretation of life; for of itself and at the first touch this seeing reconstructs and reimages the world for us and gives us a greater sense and a vaster, subtler and profounder form of our existence. The real faces of the gods are growing more apparent to the eye of the mind, though not yet again intimate with our life, and the forms of legend and symbol and myth must open to other and deeper meanings, as already they have begun to do, and come in changed and vital again into poetry to interpret the realities behind the veil. Nature wears already to our eye a greater and more transparent robe of her divine and her animal and her terrestrial and cosmic life and a deeper poetry of Nature than has yet been written is one of the certain potentialities of the future. The material realm too cannot for very much longer be our sole or separate world of experience, for the partitions which divide it from psychic and other kingdoms behind it are wearing thin and voices and presences are beginning to break through and reveal their impact on our world. This too must widen our conception of life and make a new world and atmosphere for poetry which may justify as perhaps never before the poet's refusal to regard as unreal what to the normal mind was only romance, illusion or dream. A larger field of being made more real to man's experience will be the realm of the future poetry.

These things are often given an appearance of remoteness, of withdrawal from the actuality of life, because to discover them the mind had at first to draw away from the insistent outward preoccupation and live as if in a separate world. The seeker of the Self and Spirit, the God-lover, tended to become the cloistered monk, the ascetic, the mystic, the eremite and to set the spiritual apart from and against the material life. The lover of Nature went away from the noise of man and daily things to commune with her largeness and peace. The gods were found more in the lights of solitude than in the thoughts and actions

of men. The seer of other worlds lived surrounded by the voices and faces of supernature. And this was a legitimate seclusion, for these are provinces and realms and presences and one has often to wander apart in them or live secluded with them to know their nearest intimacies. The spirit is real in itself even apart from the world, the gods have their own home beyond our sky and air, Nature her own self-absorbed life and supernature its brilliant curtains and its dim mysterious fences. None of these things are unreal, and if the supernatural as handled by older poets seemed often mere legend, fancy and romance, it was because it was seen from a distance by the imagination, not lived in by the soul and in its spirit, as is done by the true seer and poet of this supernature or other-nature. And all these things, because they have their own reality, have their life and a poetry which makes them its subject can be as vital, as powerful, as true as the song which makes beautiful the physical life and normal passions and emotions of men and the objects of our bodily sense-experience.

But still all life is one and a new human mind moves towards the realisation of its totality and oneness. The poetry which voices the oneness and totality of our being and Nature and the worlds and God, will not make the actuality of our earthly life less but more real and rich and full and wide and living to men. To know other countries is not to belittle but enlarge our own country and help it to a greater power of its own being, and to know the other countries of the soul is to widen our bounds and make more opulent and beautiful the earth on which we live. To bring the gods into our life is to raise it to its own diviner powers. To live in close and abiding intimacy with Nature and the spirit in her is to free our daily living from its prison of narrow preoccupation with the immediate moment and act and to give the moment the inspiration of all Time and the background of eternity and the daily act the foundation of an eternal peace and the large momentum of the universal Power, To bring God into

life, the sense of the self in us into all our personality and becoming, the powers and vistas of the Infinite into our mental and material existence, the oneness of the self in all into our experience and feelings and relations of heart and mind with all that is around us is to help to divinise our actual being and life, to force down its fences of division and blindness and unveil the human godhead that individual man and his race can become if they will and lead us to our most vital perfection. This is what a future poetry may do for us in the way and measure in which poetry can do these things, by vision, by the power of the word, by the attraction of the beauty and delight of what it shows us. What philosophy or other mental brooding makes precise or full to our thought, poetry can by its creative power, imaging force and appeal to the emotions make living to the soul and heart. This poetry will present to us indeed in forms of power and beauty all the actual life of man, his wonderful and fruitful past, his living and striving present, his yet more living aspiration and hope of the future, but will present it more seemingly as the life of the vast self and spirit within the race and the veiled divinity in the individual, as an act of the power and delight of universal being, in the greatness of an eternal manifestation, in the presence and intimacy of Nature, in harmony with the beauty and wonder of the realms that stretch out beyond earth and its life, in the march to godhead and the significances of immortality, in the ever clearer letters and symbols of the self-revealing mystery and not only in its first crude and incomplete actualities; these actualities will themselves be treated with a firmer and finer vision, find their own greater meaning and become to our sight thread of the fine tissue and web of the cosmic work of the Spirit. This poetry will be the voice and rhythmic utterance of our greater, our total, our infinite existence, and will give us the strong and infinite sense, the spiritual and vital joy, the exalting power of a greater breath of life.

PARASARA'S HYMNS TO THE LORD OF FLAME

1

He hides himself like a thief with the Cow of vision in the secret cavern of being taking to himself and bearing thither our adoration. The thinkers nurse a common joy in him in their hearts and follow in his way by her footprints. All the Masters of sacrifice come to thee, O Flame, in thé secrecy.

The Gods follow after him the ways and works of the Truth. He shall stand encompassing the earth like heaven. The Waters increase by their toil growing in his bulk the Flame because he was born perfect in their womb in the house of Truth.

He is like delightful increase and like the wide earth our dwelling-place. He is enjoyable like a hill and bliss-giving like fast-running water. He is like a horse in the battle-charge urged to the gallop and like a rushing river, and who then shall hedge in his course?

He is the close comrade of the Rivers as a brother of his sisters. He devours Earth's pleasant woods as a king devours his enemies. When driven by the breath of the wind he stands about in all the woodland, the Flame tears asunder the hairs of earth's body.

He breathes in the Waters like a seated swan. Awake in the dawn he has power by the will of his works to give knowledge to the peoples. He is like the god of the nectar-wine and born of Truth and a creator. He is like

the Cow with her child. He is all-pervading and his light is seen from a far distance.

2

He is the conqueror in the forests, he is the friend in mortals. He chooses for himself inspired knowledge as a king an unaging councillor. He is like a perfect good, he is like a happy will just in its thoughts. He has become to us the priest of our sacrifice and the carrier of our offerings.

He holds in his hands all mights: sitting in the secret cave of being he founds the gods in strength. And it is there that men who hold the thought in their minds, when they have given utterance to its sacred words carved into shape by the heart, discover the god.

He holds like one unborn the wide earth our dwelling-place and pillars heaven with the truth of the sacred words of his thinking. O Flame, thou art universal life; guard the pleasant footholds of the Cow of vision; watch over the herd of the rays in the secrecy of the secret cavern.

He who has known him in the secret cave, he who has come to the stream of the Truth, all who touch and penetrate into the things of the Truth, to such he speaks the word of his treasures.

This is the Flame who besieges us with his greatness in all the growths of the earth and who is all the children of the worlds and who is within in all the mothers. He is knowledge in the house of the Waters and he is universal life. The thinkers have measured and constructed him like a mansion.

ARYA

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th March 1920

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA.....Aurobindo Ghose
Swabhava and Swadharma

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G.
Chapter LXIV. The Divine Shakti

THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... Paul Richard
Immortality

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE XIV A. G.

THE FUTURE POETRY.
The Soul of Poetic Delight and Beauty

Essays on the Gita

SWABHAVA AND SWADHARMA

We have seen that a development of the soul out of the lower nature of the triple gunas into the supreme divine nature which is beyond the three gunas is the condition of spiritual perfection and freedom. But this can best be done by an anterior development of the predominance of the highest sattwic quality to a point at which sattwa also is overpassed, goes beyond its own limitation and breaks up into a supreme freedom, light, power of spiritual conscious being in which there is no determination by conflicting gunas. A highest sattwic faith or highest belief shaping what we are to some highest possible conception of ourselves passes then into a spiritual self-knowledge of our own real being; a loftiest ideality or standard of dharma, the right law of our being, passes into a free self-existent perfection in which all dependence on standards is transcended and the spontaneous law of the immortal self and spirit takes its place. The sattwic mind and will change into that spiritual knowledge and power of being in which the nature becomes the free self-expression of the spirit. The sattwic doer becomes the Jiva united with the Purushottama and no longer the personal doer, but a spiritual channel of the works of the transcendent and universal Spirit with the natural being as the instrument of a universal and impersonal action. The sattwic

action becomes the free activity of the perfected nature in which there is no longer any personal limitation, bondage to this or that quality or any but a supreme spiritual self-determination. That is the culmination of works uplifted to the Divine by God-seeking and spiritual knowledge.

But there is still an incidental question of great importance in the old Indian system of culture and, even apart from that antique view, of considerable general importance, on which we have had some passing pronouncements already by the Gita and which now falls into its proper place. All action on the normal level is determined by the gunas, and the action which is to be done, *kartavyam karma*, takes the triple form of giving, askesis and sacrifice; and any or all of these three may assume the character of any of the gunas and it is by the raising of them to the highest sattwic height that we have to proceed and go beyond to a largeness in which all action becomes a free self-giving, an energy of the divine Tapas, a perpetual sacrament of the spiritual existence. But this is a general law and all these considerations have been the enunciation of quite general principles and refer indiscriminately to all action and all beings; all can arrive by spiritual evolution at this discipline, this perfection, this highest spiritual state. But while the general rule of mind and action is the same for all men, we see too that there is a law of variation and each individual acts not only according to the common laws of the human spirit, mind, will, life, but according to his own nature and each fulfils different functions or follows a different bent according to the rule of his own circumstances, capacities, being. What place is to be assigned to this variation, this individual rule of nature in the spiritual discipline?

The Gita has laid some stress on this point and given it a great preliminary importance. At the start it has spoken of the nature, rule and function of the Kshatriya

as Arjuna's own law of action, *swadharma**; it has proceeded to lay it down very emphatically that one's own nature, rule, function should be observed and followed, —even if defective, it is better than the well-performed rule of another nature. Death in one's own law of nature is better for a man, to follow the law of another's nature is dangerous to his soul,† contradictory, as we may say, to the natural way of his evolution, a thing mechanically imposed and therefore imported, artificial and sterilising to the growth. What comes out of the being is the true and healthful thing, not what is laid on it from outside. This swadharma is of four general kinds formulated outwardly in the action of the four orders of men of the old Indian social culture, *châturvarnya*; that system corresponds, says the Gita, to a divine law, it "was created by me according to the divisions of the gunas and works." In other words, there are four distinct orders of the active nature, or four fundamental types of the soul in nature, *swabhâva*, and the work and proper function of each human being corresponds to his type of nature. This is now finally explained in preciser detail. The works of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, says the Gita, are divided according to the qualities (*gunas*) born of their own nature of being (Swabhava). Calm, self-control, askesis, purity, long-suffering, candour, knowledge, acceptance of spiritual truth are the work of the Brahmin, born of his swabhava. Heroism, high spirit, resolution, ability, not fleeing in the battle, giving, lordship (*îshwarabhâva*, the temperament of the ruler and leader) are the natural work of the Kshatriya. Agriculture, cattle-keeping, trade are the natural work of the Vaishya; work of the nature of service is the natural work of the Shu-

* II. 31. *swadharmam api châvekshya.*

† III. 35.

dra. A man, it goes on to say who devotes himself to his own natural work in life acquires spiritual perfection. But not by the mere act itself; there is a condition. He has to make it a worship of the Spirit of this creation, the Master of the universe from whom is all impulse to action. The work then, whatever it be, is consecrated by this turn, makes of the life a self-offering to the Divine and is converted into a means of spiritual perfection. A work not naturally one's own may be well performed, may look better from the outside, judged by an external and mechanical standard, may lead to more success in life, but it is still inferior as a means of subjective growth. One's own natural work is better, even if it looks from some other point of view defective. When one acts in agreement with the law of one's own nature, one does not incur sin or stain. All action in the three gunas is imperfect, subject to fault, defect or limitation; but that should not make us abandon our own proper action. Action should be rightly regulated action, *niyatam karma*, but it must be action intrinsically one's own, evolved from within, in harmony with the truth of one's being, regulated by the Swabhava, *swabhâva-niyatam karma.*

What precisely is the intention of the Gita? Let us take it first in its more outward meaning and consider the tinge given to the principle it enounces by the ideas of the race and the time. These verses and the earlier pronouncements of the Gita on the same subject have been seized upon in current controversies on the caste question and interpreted by some as a sanction of the present caste system, used by others as a denial of the hereditary basis of caste. In point of fact the verses in the Gita have no bearing on the existing caste system, because that is a very different thing from the ancient social ideal of *chaturvarna*, the four clear-cut orders of the Aryan community, and in no way corresponds with the description of the Gita. Agriculture, cattle-keeping and trade of every

kind are said to be the work of the Vaishya, but in the later system the majority of those concerned in trade and in cattle-keeping, artisans, small craftsmen and others are actually classed as Shudras,—where they are not put altogether outside the pale,—the merchant class is alone and that too not everywhere ranked as Vaishya, agriculture, government and service are the professions of all classes from the Brahmin down to the Shudra. And if the economical divisions of function have been confounded beyond any possibility of rectification, the law of the guna or quality is still less a part of the later system. There all is rigid custom, *âchâra*, with no reference to the need of the individual nature. If again we take the religious side of the contention advanced by the advocates of the caste system, we can certainly fasten no such absurd idea on the words of the Gita as that it is a law of a man's nature that he shall follow without regard to his personal bent and capacities the profession of his parents or his immediate or distant ancestors, the son of a milkman be a milkman, the son of a doctor a doctor, the descendants of shoemakers remain shoemakers to the end of measurable time, still less that by doing so, by this unintelligent and mechanical repetition of the law of another's nature without regard to his own individual call and qualities a man automatically farthers his own perfection and arrives at spiritual freedom. The Gita's words refer to the ancient system of *chaturvarna*, as it existed or was supposed to exist in its ideal purity,—there is some controversy whether it was ever anything more than an ideal or general norm more or less loosely followed in practice,—and it should be considered in that connection alone. Here too there is considerable difficulty as to the exact outward significance.

The ancient system of the four orders had a triple, a social and economical, a cultural and a spiritual appearance. On the economic side it recognised four functions

of the social man in the community, the religious and intellectual, the political, the economical and the servile functions, the works of spiritual ministration, letters, learning, knowledge, the works of rule, politics, administration, war, the works of production, wealth-making and exchange, the works of hired labour and service. The arrangement of the society was sought to be founded and stabilised on the partition of these four functions to four clearly marked classes. This system was not peculiar to India, but was with certain differences the dominating feature of a stage of social evolution in other ancient or mediaeval societies. The four functions are still inherent in the life of all normal communities, but the clear divisions no longer exist anywhere; the old system everywhere broke down and gave place to a more fluid order or, as in India, to a confused and complex social rigidity and economic immobility degenerating towards a chaos of castes. Along with this economical division there existed the association of a cultural idea which gave to each class its religious custom, its law of honour, ethical rule, suitable education and training, type of character, family ideal and discipline. The facts of life did not always correspond to the idea,—there is always a certain gulf found between idea and practice,—but there was a constant and strenuous endeavour to keep in being as much as possible of a real correspondence. The importance of this attempt and of the cultural ideal and atmosphere it created in the past training of the social man, can hardly be put too high; but at the present day it has little more than a historical, a past and evolutionary significance. Finally, wherever this system existed, it was given more or less a religious sanction, (more in the East, very little in Europe,) and in India a profounder spiritual use and significance. This spiritual significance is the real kernel of the teaching of the Gita.

The Gita found this system in existence and its ideal

in possession of the Indian mind and it recognised and accepted both the ideal and system and its religious sanction. "The fourfold order was created by me," says Krishna "according to the divisions of quality and active function." On the strength of this phrase it is not clear that the Gita regarded this as an eternal social order, for other authorities did not so regard it, but distinctly state that it did not exist in the beginning and will collapse in a later age; but we may understand that the fourfold function of social man was, to its conception, inherent in the social needs of the race, was therefore a dispensation of the Spirit that expresses itself in the human corporate and individual existence. The Gita's line in in fact an intellectual rendering of the well-known symbol in the Vedic Purusha-Sukta. But what then should be the natural basis and form of the practice of these functions? The practical basis in ancient times came to be the hereditary principle. A man's social function and position originally no doubt were determined in a freer, less closely ordered state by environment, occasion, birth and capacity, but his rank came practically with a more fixed stratification to be regulated by birth mainly or alone and in the later system of caste birth came to be the sole rule of status. The son of a Brahmin is always a Brahmin in status, though he may have nothing of the typical Brahmin qualities or character, no intellectual training or spiritual worth or knowledge, no connection whatever with the right function of his class. This was an inevitable evolution, because the external signs are the only ones which are easily and conveniently determinable and birth was the most handy and manageable in an increasingly mechanised and conventional social order. For a time the possible disparity between the hereditary fiction and the individual's real inborn character and capacity was made up or minimised by education and training, but eventually this effort ceased to be sustained and the hereditary con-

vention held absolute rule. The ancient lawgivers, while recognising the hereditary practice, insisted that quality, character, capacity was the right and real basis and that without it the social status was a falsehood and lost its true significance. The Gita as always founds itself on the inner significance. It speaks indeed in one verse of the work born with a man, *sahajam karma*, but this does not imply a hereditary basis; for by the Indian theory of rebirth, which the Gita recognises, a man's inborn nature and course of life are essentially determined by his own past lives, his self-development by past actions and mental and spiritual evolution and not by the purely material factor of his ancestry, parentage, physical birth, which can only be of subordinate moment, one effective sign perhaps, but not the dominant principle. The word *sahaja* means natural, inborn, innate, and its equivalent in all other passages is *swabhâvaja*. The work or function of a man is determined by his qualities, *karma* by *guna*; it is the work born of his Swabhava, *swabhâvajam karma*, and regulated by his Swabhava, *swabhâva-niyatam karma*. The emphasis on an inner quality and spirit which find expression in the work and action is the whole sense of the Gita's idea of Karma.

And from this emphasis on the inner truth and not on the outer form arises the spiritual significance and power which the Gita assigns to the following of the Swadharma. This is the really important bearing of the passage. Too much has been made of its connection with the outer social order, as if the object of the Gita were to support that for its own sake or to justify it by a religio-philosophical theory; but in fact it lays very little stress on the external rule and a very great stress on the internal law which the system was an attempt to put into regulated outward practice. And it is on the individual and spiritual value of this law and not on its communal and economical or other social and cultural importance

that the eye of the thought is fixed in this passage. The Gita accepted the Vedic theory of sacrifice, but gave it a profound turn, an inner, subjective and universal meaning, a spiritual sense and direction which altered all its values. Here too and in the same way it accepts the theory of the four orders of men, but gives it a profound turn, an inner, subjective and universal meaning, a spiritual sense and direction, and immediately it changes its values and becomes an enduring and living truth not bound up with the transience of a particular social form and order. What the Gita is concerned with is not the validity of the Aryan social order now abolished or in a state of deliquescence,—if that were all, its principle of the Swabhava and Swadharma would have no permanent truth or value,—but the relation of a man's outward life to his inward being, the evolution of his action from his soul and inner law of nature. And we see in fact that the Gita itself indicates very clearly its intention when it describes the work of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya not in terms of external function, not defined as learning, priest-work, letters or government, politics, war, but entirely in terms of internal character. The language reads a little curiously to our ear. Calm, self-control, askesis, purity, long-suffering, candour, knowledge, acceptance and practice of spiritual truth would not ordinarily be described as a man's function, work or life occupation; but this is precisely what the Gita means, that these things, their development, their expression in conduct, their power to cast into form the law of the sattwic nature are the real work of the Brahmin; learning, religious ministration and the other outer functions are only a suitable field, a favourable means of this inner development, its self-expression, its fixing into firmness of type. War, government, politics, leadership and rule are a similar field and means for the Kshatriya; but his real work is the development, the expression in conduct, the power to cast into form the law of the active battling

nature. The work of the Vaishya and Sudra is expressed in terms of external function, and for this opposite turn there is perhaps some reason, for the nature moved to production and wealth-getting or limited in the circle of labour and service, the mercantile and the servile mind, are usually turned outward, more occupied with external values of their work, and this temperament is not so favourable to a sattwic or spiritual action of nature. That too is the reason why a commercial and industrial age or a society preoccupied with the idea of work and labour creates around it an atmosphere more favourable to the material than the spiritual life, to vital efficiency than to the subtler perfection of the high-reaching mind and spirit. Nevertheless, this kind of nature too and its functions have their inner significance, their spiritual value, can be made a means and power for perfection. As has been said elsewhere, not alone the Brahmin with his ideal of spirituality, ethical purity and knowledge and the Kshatriya with his ideal of nobility, chivalry and high character, but the wealth-seeking Vaishya, toil-imprisoned Sudra, woman with her imprisoned, circumscribed and subject life, the very outcaste can by this road rise at once towards the highest inner greatness and spiritual freedom, towards perfection, towards fulfilment of the divine in the human being.

Three propositions suggest themselves at first view from what the Gita says in this passage. First, all action must be determined from within, each man has in him something his own, some characteristic principle, inborn power of his nature, and that is the power and creates the form of his soul and to express and perfect that by action, to make that effective in capacity and conduct and life is his work: that points him to the right way of his inner and outer living. Next, there are broadly four types of nature each with its characteristic type and function and ideal rule of work and character; the type gives the man

his proper field and circle of function. Finally, whatever work a man does, if done according to the law of his being, the truth of his nature, can be made by being turned Godwards an effective means of spiritual liberation and perfection. The first and last of these propositions are suggestions of an evident truth and justice. The ordinary way of man's individual and social living seems indeed to be a contradiction of these principles; for certainly we bear a terrible weight of external necessity, rule and law and our need for self-expression, for the development of our true being, our real soul, our inmost characteristic law of nature in life is at every turn interfered with, thwarted, forced from its course, given a very poor chance and scope by environmental influences. Life, State, society, family, all surrounding powers seem to be in a league to lay their yoke on our spirit, compel us into their moulds, impose their mechanical interest and rough, immediate convenience. We become parts of a machine, not free children of the spirit empowered to develop the highest characteristic perfection of our being and make it the means of service to the race; we are not what we make ourselves, but what we are made. Yet the more we advance in knowledge, the more the truth of the Gita's rule is bound to appear. The child's education ought to be an outbringing of all that is best, most powerful, most intimate and living in his nature, the mould into which the man's action ought to run is that of his innate quality and power,—he must acquire new things, but he will acquire them best, most vitally on the basis of his own developed nature,—the functions of a man ought to be determined by his natural turn, gift, capacities, and the individual developing freely in this manner will be a living soul and mind and have a much greater power for the service of the race. And we now see too more clearly that this rule is true not only of the individual but of the community and nation. The second proposition is more open to dis-

pute. It may be said that it is too simple and positive and, whatever its theory, the outward social application leads precisely to that tyranny of a mechanical rule which is the flat contradiction of the law of the Swadharma. But it has a profounder meaning which gives it a less disputable value. And even if we reject it, the third proposition will yet stand in its general significance. Whatever a man's work and function in life, he can, if it is determined from within or if he is allowed to make it a self-expression of his nature, turn it into a means of growth and greater inner perfection. And whatever it be, if he does it in the right spirit, enlightens it by the ideal mind, turns it to the uses of the Godhead within, of the Spirit manifested in the universe, of the Divine in humanity, he can make it a means too of spiritual perfection and freedom.

But the Gita's teaching here has a still profounder significance if we take it not as a detached quotation self-contained in meaning, as is too often done, but as we should, in connection with all that it has been saying throughout the work and especially in the last twelve chapters. The Gita's philosophy of life and works is that all proceeds from the Divine, from the transcendent and universal Spirit, all is a veiled manifestation of the Godhead, Vasudeva, *yato pravrittir bhûtânâm yena sarvam idam tatam*, and to unveil the Godhead within and in the world, to live in unity with universal being, to rise in consciousness, knowledge, will, love, spiritual delight to oneness with the supreme Divine, to live in the highest spiritual nature with the individual, perfected, natural being as the instrument of divine works is the perfection of which humanity is capable and the condition of immortality and freedom. But how is this possible when in fact we are enveloped in natural ignorance, the soul shut up in the form of its ego, overcome, beset, hammered and moulded by the environment, mastered by the mechanism

of Nature, cut off from our hold on the reality of our own secret spiritual being? The answer is that all this action of Nature, however now enveloped in a veiled and contrary working, still contains the principle of its own evolving freedom and perfection. A Godhead is seated in the heart of every man and is the Lord of this action of Nature. And though this Spirit of the universe, this One who is all, seems to be turning us on the wheel of Nature as if mounted on a machine by the force of Maya, shaping us in our ignorance as the potter shapes a pot, as the weaver a fabric, by some skilful mechanical principle, yet is this spirit our own greatest self and it is according to the real idea, the truth of ourselves, that which is growing in us and finding always new and more adequate forms in birth after birth, in our animal and human and divine life, that which we were, that which we are, that which we shall be, that our opened eyes see our being shaped by this spirit within us in its dealings with Nature. This machinery of ego, the three gunas, mind, body, life, emotion, desire, struggle, thought, aspiration, endeavour, this locked interaction of pain and pleasure, sin and virtue, striving, success and failure, soul and environment, myself and others, is only the outward imperfect form taken by a higher spiritual nature and being in me which pursues through its vicissitudes the progressive self-expression of the divine reality and greatness I am secretly in spirit and shall become in nature. This action contains in itself the principle of its own success, the principle of the Swabhava and Swadharma.

The Jiva is in self-expression a portion of the Purushottama. He represents in Nature the power of being of the supreme Spirit, brings out in individual being the powers of the universal spirit. This Jiva is spirit and not the natural ego and the spirit, not the form of ego, is our reality and soul principle. The true force of our existence is of the higher spiritual nature, and the mechanical Maya

of the three gunas is not the fundamental truth of that force; it is only its present executive energy, its apparatus of lower convenience, its scheme of outward exercise and practice. The spiritual nature which has become this multiple personality in the universe, *parâ prakritir jîva-bhûtâ*, is the basic stuff of our existence; all the rest is derivation and formation from this hidden highest activity and power of the spirit. And in Nature each being has a principle and will of its own becoming, a force of self-consciousness formulating an idea of the Divine in it, which guides its action, evolution, progressive self-finding, constant varying self-expression and growth to fullness. That is its Swabhava, its own real nature, its truth of being finding expression in various becoming in the world, and the law of action determined by its Swabhava is its right law of self-shaping, function, action, Swadharma. This principle obtains throughout Nature; there is everywhere the one Power at work, with one common universal nature, but in each grade, form, energy, genus, species, individual creature it follows out a major and minor idea and principle of variation founding its dharma, the law of its being in becoming, of its birth and persistence and change, self-preservation, self-increasing, stable and evolving self-expression, self-finding, relation with the rest of the expression of the Self in the universe. To follow the law of its being, Swadharma, to develop the idea in its being, Swabhava, is its safety, its right rule of procedure. That does not in the end chain down the soul to the present formulation, but rather by this very development, enriching itself with new experience assimilated to its law of being, it can break beyond present moulds and rise to a higher self-expression. To be unable to maintain the law and principle of its being, to fail to adapt itself to its environment in such a way as to adapt the environment to itself and make it useful to its own nature is to lose its self, its way of self, is per-

dition, *vinashti*, is falsehood, death, anguish of decay and dissolution and necessity of painful self-recovery often after eclipse and disappearance, is the circuit of the wrong road retarding the real progress. This law obtains in other forms in all Nature and underlies all that action of law of universality and law of variation revealed to us by science. The law obtains too in the life of the human being. Here it has an outward play and an inward spiritual truth and the outward play only gets to its full and real meaning when we have found the inward spiritual truth and enlightened all our action with the values of the spirit. This transformation we can only effect according as we progress in self-knowledge.

And first we have to see that the Swabhava means one thing in the highest spiritual nature and takes quite another form of meaning in the lower nature of the three gunas. There too it acts, but is not in full possession of itself, is seeking as it were for its own true law, goes through many lower forms, false forms, imperfections, perversions, self-losings, self-findings, seekings after norm and rule. It is a mixed weft of knowledge and ignorance, truth and falsehood, success and failure, right and wrong, finding and losing, sin and virtue. It is the Swabhava that is looking for self-expression and self-finding through all these things, *swabhâvas tu pravartate*, a truth which should teach us universal charity and equality of vision, since we are all subject to the same perplexity and struggle. The Purushottama is not limited by this ignorance, but guides the soul through their changes; the pure immutable self is not touched by these things, but supports by its eternity the mutable Nature in its vicissitudes; the real soul' too is greater than them, but accepts them in its outward evolution in Nature. And when we get at this real soul, at the changeless universal self sustaining us and at the Purushottama, the Lord within us who presides over and guides the whole action of Nature, we get

at the real spiritual meaning of the law of our life. We become aware of the Master of being expressing himself in his infinite quality, *anantaguna*, in all beings; we become aware in all being of a fourfold presence of the Divinity, a Soul of self-knowledge and world-knowledge, a Soul of strength and power finding and using its powers, a Soul of mutuality and creation and relation and interchange between creature and creature, a Soul of works that labours in the universe and serves all in each and turns the labour of each to the service of all others. We become aware too of the individual power of the Divine in us, using these powers, giving us our strain of self-expression, determining our divine work and office and raising us through it all to the universality of his being so that we can find by it our spiritual oneness with him and all that he is in the universe.

The external idea of the four orders of men in life is concerned only with the more outward working of this truth of the divine action, a side of its truth in the working of the three gunas. It is true that in this birth men fall very largely into one of four types, the man of knowledge, the man of power, the productive vital man, the man of rude labour and service. These are not fundamental divisions, but stages of self-development in our manhood. The human being starts with a sufficient load of ignorance and inertia; his first state is one of rude toil enforced on his animal indolence by the needs of the body, by impulsion of life, by necessity of Nature and beyond a certain point of need by some form of compulsion which society lays upon him, and those who are still governed by this tamas are the Sudras, the serfs of society who give it their toil and can contribute nothing or very little else in comparison with more developed men to its manifold play of life. By action man develops the rajasic guna in him and we get a second type of man who is driven by a constant instinct for useful creation, produc-

tion, having, acquisition, holding and enjoying, the middle economical and vital man, the Vaishya. At a higher elevation of the rajasic or kinetic quality of our one common nature we get the active man with a more dominant will, with bolder ambitions, with the instinct to act, battle, and enforce his will, and then to lead, command, rule, carry masses of men in his orbit, the Kshatriya. And where the sattwic mind predominates, we get the Brahmin, the man with a turn for knowledge, who brings thought, reflection, the seeking for truth and an intelligent or at the highest a spiritual rule into life and illumines by it his conception and mode of existence. There is something of all these four personalities developed or undeveloped, wide or narrow in its need in all men, but one or the other tends to predominate and seems to take up sometimes the whole space of action in the nature. And in any society we should have all four types; even, for an example, if we could create a purely productive and commercial society, there would still be the thinkers moved to find the law and truth and guiding rule of the whole matter, the captains and leaders of industry who would make all the productive activity an excuse for the satisfaction of their need of adventure and battle and leadership and dominance, the many typical purely productive and wealth-getting men, the average workers satisfied with a modicum of labour and the reward of their labour. But all these are quite outward things, and if that were all, this economy of human type would have no spiritual significance. Or it would mean at most, as has been sometimes held in India, that we have to go through these stages of development in our births, proceed through the tamasic, the rajaso-tamasic, the rajasic or rajaso-sattwic to the sattwic nature and ascend and fix ourselves in an inner Brahminhood, *brahmanya*, and then seek salvation from that basis. But in that case there would be no logical room for the Gita's assertion that even the Sudra or Chandala can by turning

his life Godwards climb straight to spiritual liberty and perfection.

The fundamental truth is not this outward thing, but a truth of our inner being in movement, the truth of the fourfold active power of the spiritual nature. Each Jiva possesses in his spiritual nature these four sides, is a soul of knowledge, a soul of strength and of power, a soul of mutuality and interchange, a soul of works and service, but one side or other predominates in the action and expressive spirit, in the dealings of the soul with its embodied nature, and there it leads and gives its stamp to the other powers and uses them for the principal strain of action, tendency, experience. The Swabhava then follows, not crudely and rigidly as put in the social demarcation, but subtly and flexibly the law of this strain, develops in developing it the other three powers,—so that the pursuit of the impulse of works and service too develops knowledge, power, closeness or balance of mutuality, skill and order of relation,—and moves through the enlargement of its own dominant principle of nature and enrichment by the other three towards a total perfection. This development undergoes the law of the three gunas. There is possible a tamasic and rajasic way of following even the dharma of the soul of knowledge, a brute tamasic and a high sattwic way of following the dharma of power, a forceful rajasic or a beautiful and noble sattwic way of following the dharma of works and service. To arrive at the sattwic way of the inner individual Swadharma and of whatever works it moves us to in the ways of life, is a preliminary condition of perfection. And it may be noted that the inner Swadharma is not bound to any outward social or other form ; the soul of works and service can make the life of the pursuit of knowledge, the life of struggle and power, the life of mutuality, production and interchange a means of satisfying its divine impulse to labour and to service. And in the end to arrive at the

divine form and spiritual power of this fourfold activity is the doorway to the highest perfection. This we can do wholly by turning the action of the Swadharma into a worship of the inner Godhead, the universal Spirit, the transcendent Purushottama and, eventually, by giving up the whole action into his hands, *mayi sannyasya karmâni*. Then as we get beyond the limitation of the three gunas, so also do we get beyond the limitation of all distinctive dharmas, *sarvadharmân parityajya*. The Spirit takes up the individual into the universal Swabhava, perfects the fourfold soul of nature in us and does its self-determined works according to the divine will and the accomplished power of the godhead in the creature.

The Gita's injunction is to worship the Divine by our own work, *swakarmanâ* the work determined by our own law of being and nature. For from the Divine all movement of creation and impulse to action comes and by him all this universe is extended and for the holding together of the worlds he presides over and shapes through the Swabhava all action. To worship him with our inner and outer activities, to make our whole active life a sacrifice of works to him is to prepare ourselves to become one with him in all our will and being and nature. Our works must be according to the truth of our nature, not an accomodation with outward and artificial standards, but a living and sincere expression of the soul in nature. The living inmost truth of the soul in nature will help us to arrive at the immortal truth of the same soul in the now superconscious supreme nature. There in oneness with God and our true self and all beings we can live and be a means of divine action in the freedom of the immorta Dharma.

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LXIV

THE DIVINE SHAKTI

The relation between the Purusha and Prakriti which emerges as one advances in the Yoga of self-perfection is the next thing that we have to understand carefully in this part of the Yoga. In the spiritual truth of our being the power which we call Nature is the power of being, consciousness and will and therefore the power of self-expression and self-creation of the self, soul or Purusha. But to our ordinary mind in the ignorance and to its experience of things the force of Prakriti has a different appearance. When we look at it in its universal action outside ourselves, we see it first as a mechanical energy in the cosmos which acts upon matter or in its own created forms of matter. In matter it evolves powers and processes of life and in living matter powers and processes of mind. Throughout its operations it acts by fixed laws and in each kind of created thing displays varying properties of energy and laws of process which give its character to the genus or species and again in the individual develops without infringing the law of the kind minor characteristics and variations of a considerable consequence. It is this mechanical appearance of Prakriti which has preoccupied the modern scientific mind and made for it its

whole view of Nature, and so much so that science still hopes and labours with a very small amount of success to explain all phenomena of life by laws of matter and all phenomena of mind by law of living matter. Here soul or spirit has no place and nature cannot be regarded as power of spirit. Since the whole of our existence is mechanical, physical and bounded by the biological phenomenon of a brief living consciousness and man is a creature and instrument of material energy, the spiritual self-evolution of Yoga can be only a delusion, hallucination, abnormal state of mind or self-hypnosis. In any case it cannot be what it represents itself to be, a discovery of the eternal truth of our being and a passing above the limited truth of the mental, vital and physical to the full truth of our spiritual nature.

But when we look, not at external mechanical Nature to the exclusion of our personality, but at the inner subjective experience of man the mental being, our nature takes to us a quite different appearance. We may believe intellectually in a purely mechanical view even of our subjective existence, but we cannot act upon it or make it quite real to our self-experience. For we are conscious of an I which does not seem identical with our nature, but capable of a standing back from it, of a detached observation and criticism and creative use of it, and of a will which we naturally think of as a free will; and even if this be a delusion, we are still obliged in practice to act as if we were responsible mental beings capable of a free choice of our actions, able to use or misuse and to turn to higher or lower ends our nature. And even we seem to be struggling both with our environmental and with our own present nature and striving to get mastery over a world which imposes itself on and masters us and at the same time to become something more than we now are. But the difficulty is that we are only in command, if at all, over a small part of ourselves, the rest is subcons-

cient or subliminal and beyond our control, our will acts only in a small selection of our activities; the most is a process of mechanism and habit and we must strive constantly with ourselves and surrounding circumstances to make the least advance or self-amelioration. There seems to be a dual being in us; Soul and Nature, Purusha and Prakriti, seem to be half in agreement, half at odds, Nature laying its mechanical control on the soul, the soul attempting to change and master nature. And the question is what is the fundamental character of this duality and what the issue.

The Sankhya explanation is that our present existence is governed by a dual principle. Prakriti is inert without the contact of Purusha, acts only by a junction with it and then too by the fixed mechanism of her instruments and qualities; Purusha, passive and free apart from Prakriti, becomes by contact with her and sanction to her works subject to this mechanism, lives in her limitation of ego-sense and must get free by withdrawing the sanction and returning to its own proper principle. Another explanation that tallies with a certain part of our experience is that there is a dual being in us, the animal and material, or more widely the lower nature-bound, and the soul or spiritual being entangled by mind in the material existence or in world-nature, and freedom comes by escape from the entanglement, the soul returning to its native planes or the self or spirit to its pure existence. The perfection of the soul then is to be found not at all in, but beyond Nature.

But in a higher than our present mental consciousness we find that this duality is only a phenomenal appearance. The highest and real truth of existence is the one Spirit, the supreme Soul, Purushottama, and it is the power of being of this Spirit which manifests itself in all that we experience as universe. This universal Nature is not a lifeless, inert or unconscious mechanism, but in-

formed in all its movements by the universal Spirit. The mechanism of its process is only an outward appearance and the reality is the Spirit creating or manifesting its own being by its own power of being in all that is in Nature. Soul and Nature in us too are only a dual appearance of the one existence. The universal energy acts in us, but the soul limits itself by the ego-sense, lives in a partial and separate experience of her workings, uses only a modicum and a fixed action of her energy for its self-expression. It seems rather to be mastered and used by this energy than to use it, because it identifies itself with the ego-sense which is part of the natural instrumentation and lives in the ego experience. The ego is in fact driven by the mechanism of Nature of which it is a part and the ego-will is not and cannot be a free will. To arrive at freedom, mastery and perfection we have to get back to the real self and soul within and arrive too thereby at our true relations with our own and with universal nature.

In our active being this translates itself into a replacement of our egoistic, our personal, our separatively individual will and energy by a universal and a divine will and energy which determines our action in harmony with the universal action and reveals itself as the direct will and the all-guiding power of the Purushottama. We replace the inferior action of the limited, ignorant and imperfect personal will and energy in us by the action of the divine Shakti. To open ourselves to the universal energy is always possible to us, because that is all around us and always flowing into us, it is that which supports and supplies all our inner and outer action and in fact we have no power of our own in any separately individual sense, but only a personal formulation of the one Shakti. And on the other hand this universal Shakti is within ourselves, concentrated in us, for the whole power of it is present in each individual as in the universe, and there are means and processes by which we can awaken its greater and

potentially infinite force and liberate it to its larger workings.

We can become aware of the existence and presence of the universal Shakti in the various forms of her power. At present we are conscious only of the power as formulated in our physical mind, nervous being and corporeal case sustaining our various activities. But if we can once get beyond this first formation by some liberation of the hidden, recondite, subliminal parts of our existence by Yoga, we become aware of a greater life force, a Pranic Shakti, which supports and fills the body and supplies all the physical and vital activities,—for the physical energy is only a modified form of this force,—and supplies and sustains too from below all our mental action. This force we feel in ourselves also, but we can feel it too around us and above, one with the same energy in us, and can draw it in and down to aggrandise our normal action or call upon and get it to pour into us. It is an illimitable ocean of Shakti and will pour as much of itself as we can hold into our being. This pranic force we can use for any of the activities of life, body or mind with a far greater and effective power than any that we command in our present operations, limited as they are by the physical formula. The use of this pranic power liberates us from that limitation to the extent of our ability to use it in place of the body-bound energy. It can be used so to direct the prana as to manage more powerfully or to rectify any bodily state or action, as to heal illness or to get rid of fatigue, and to liberate an enormous amount of mental exertion and play of will or knowledge. The exercises of Pranayama are the familiar mechanical means of freeing and getting control of the pranic energy. They heighten too and set free the psychic, mental and spiritual energies which ordinarily depend for their opportunity of action on the pranic force. But the same thing can be done by mental will and practice or by an increasing opening of

ourselves to a higher spiritual power of the Shakti. The pranic Shakti can be directed not only upon ourselves, but effectively towards others or on things or happenings for whatever purposes the will dictates. Its effectivity is immense, in itself illimitable, and limited only by defect of the power, purity and universality of the spiritual or other will which is brought to bear upon it; but still, however great and powerful, it is a lower formulation, a link between the mind and body, an instrumental force. There is a consciousness in it, a presence of the spirit, of which we are aware, but it is encased, involved in and preoccupied with the urge to action. It is not to this action of the Shakti that we can leave the whole burden of our activities; we have either to use its lendings by our own enlightened personal will or else call in a higher guidance; for of itself it will act with greater force, but still according to our imperfect nature and mainly by the drive and direction of the life-power in us and not according to the law of the highest spiritual existence.

The ordinary power by which we govern the pranic energy is that of the embodied mind. But when we get clear above the physical mind, we can get too above the pranic force to the consciousness of a pure mental energy which is a higher formulation of the Shakti. There we are aware of a universal mind consciousness closely associated with this energy in, around and above us,—above, that is to say, the level of our ordinary mind status,—giving all the substance and shaping all the forms of our will and knowledge and of the psychic element in our impulses and emotions. This mind force can be made to act upon the pranic energy and can impose upon it the influence, colour, shape, character, direction of our ideas, our knowledge, our more enlightened volition and thus more effectively bring our life and vital being into harmony with our higher powers of being, ideals and spiritual aspirations. In our ordinary state these two, the mental and the pranic

being and energies, are very much mixed up and run into each other, and we are not able clearly to distinguish them or get a full hold of the one on the other and so control effectively the lower by the higher and more understanding principle. But when we take our station above the physical mind, we are able then to separate clearly the two forms of energy, the two levels of our being, disentangle their action and act with a clearer and more potent self-knowledge and an enlightened and a purer will-power. Nevertheless the control is not complete, spontaneous, sovereign so long as we work with the mind as our chief guiding and controlling force. The mental energy we find to be itself derivative, a lower and limiting power of the conscious spirit which acts only by isolated and combined seeings, imperfect and incomplete half-lights which we take for full and adequate light, and with a disparity between the idea and knowledge and the effective will-power. And we are aware soon of a far higher power of the Spirit and its Shakti concealed or above, superconscient to mind or partially acting through the mind, of which all this is an inferior derivation.

The Purusha and Prakriti are on the mental level as in the rest of our being closely joined and much involved in each other and we are not able to distinguish clearly soul and nature. But in the purer substance of mind we can more easily discern the dual strain. The mental Purusha is naturally able in its own native principle of mind to detach itself, as we have seen, from the workings of its Prakriti and there is then a division of our being between a consciousness that observes and can reserve its will-power and an energy full of the substance of consciousness that takes the forms of knowledge, will and feeling. This detachment gives at its highest a certain freedom from the compulsion of the soul by its mental nature. For ordinarily we are driven and carried along in the stream of our own and the universal active energy partly floun-

dering in its waves, partly maintaining and seeming to guide or at least propel ourselves by a collected thought and an effort of the mental will muscle ; but now there is a part of ourselves, nearest to the pure essence of self, which is free from the stream, can quietly observe and to a certain extent decide its immediate movement and course and to a greater extent its ultimate direction. The Purusha can at last act upon the Prakriti from half apart, from behind or from above her as a presiding person or presence, *adhyaksha*, by the power of sanction and control inherent in the spirit.

What we shall do with this relative freedom depends on our aspiration, our idea of the relation we must have with our highest self, with God and Nature. It is possible for the Purusha to use it on the mental plane itself for a constant self-observation, self-development, self-modification, to sanction, reject, alter, bring out new formulations of the nature and establish a calm and disinterested action, a high and pure sattwic balance and rhythm of its energy, a personality perfected in the sattwic principle. This may amount only to a highly mentalised perfection of our present intelligence and the ethical and the psychic being or else, aware of the greater self in us, it may impersonalise, universalise, spiritualise its self-conscious existence and the action of its nature and arrive either at a large quietude or a large perfection of the spiritualised mental energy or its being. It is possible again for the Purusha to stand back entirely and by a refusal of sanction allow the whole normal action of the mind to exhaust itself, run down, spend its remaining impetus of habitual action and fall into silence. Or else this silence may be imposed on the mental energy by rejection of its action and a constant command to quietude. The soul may through the confirmation of this quietude and mental silence pass into some ineffable tranquillity of the spirit and vast cessation of the activities of Nature. But it is also possible to make this

silence of the mind and ability to suspend the habits of the lower nature a first step towards the discovery of a superior formulation, a higher grade of the status and energy of our being and pass by an ascent and transformation into the supramental power of the spirit. And this may even, though with more difficulty, be done without resorting to the complete state of quietude of the normal mind by a persistent and progressive transformation of all the mental into their greater corresponding supramental powers and activities. For everything in the mind derives from and is a limited, inferior, groping, partial or perverse translation into mentality of something in the supermind. But neither of these movements can be successfully executed by the sole individual unaided power of the mental Purusha in us, but needs the help, intervention and guidance of the divine Self, the Ishwara, the Purushottama. For the supermind is the divine mind and it is on the supramental plane that the individual arrives at his right, integral, luminous and perfect relation with the supreme and universal Purusha and the supreme and universal Para Prakriti.

As the mind progresses in purity, capacity of stillness or freedom from absorption in its own limited action, it becomes aware of and is able to reflect, bring into itself or enter into the conscious presence of the Self, the supreme and universal Spirit, and it becomes aware too of grades and powers of the spirit higher than its own highest ranges. It becomes aware of an infinite of the consciousness of being, an infinite ocean of all the power and energy of illimitable consciousness, an infinite ocean of Ananda, of the self-moved delight of existence. It may be aware of one or other only of these things, for the mind can separate and feel exclusively as distinct original principles what in a higher experience are inseparable powers of the One, or it may feel them in a trinity or fusion which reveals or arrives at their oneness. It may become aware

of it on the side of Purusha or on the side of Prakriti. On the side of Purusha it reveals itself as Self or Spirit, as Being or as the one sole existent Being, the divine Purushottama, and the individual Jiva soul can enter into entire oneness with it in its timeless self or in its universality, or enjoy nearness, immanence, difference without any gulf of separation and enjoy too inseparably and at one and the same time oneness of being and delight-giving difference of relation in active experiencing nature. On the side of Prakriti the power and Ananda of the Spirit come into the front to manifest this Infinite in the beings and personalities and ideas and forms and forces of the universe and there is then present to us the divine Mahashakti, original Power, supreme Nature, holding in herself infinite existence and creating the wonders of the cosmos. The mind grows conscious of this illimitable ocean of Shakti or else of her presence high above the mind and pouring something of herself into us to constitute all that we are and think and will and do and feel and experience, or it is conscious of her all around us and our personality a wave of the ocean of power of spirit, or of her presence in us and of her action there based on our present form of natural existence but originated from above and raising us towards the higher spiritual status. The mind too can rise towards and touch her infinity or merge itself in it in trance of samadhi or can lose itself in her universality, and then our individuality disappears, our centre of action is then no longer in us, but either outside our bodied selves or nowhere; our mental activities are then no longer our own, but come into this frame of mind, life and body from the universal, work themselves out and pass leaving no impression on us, and this frame of ourselves too is only an insignificant circumstance in her cosmic vastness. But the perfection sought in the integral Yoga is not only to be one with her in her highest spiritual power and one with her in her universal action, but to realise and possess the fullness of

this Shakti in our individual being and nature. For the supreme Spirit is one as Purusha or as Prakriti, conscious being or power of conscious being, and as the Jiva in essence of self and spirit is one with the supreme Purusha, so on the side of Nature, in power of self and spirit it is one with Shakti, *parâ prakritir jîvabhûtâ*. To realise this double oneness is the condition of the integral self-perfection. The Jiva is then the meeting-place of the play of oneness of the supreme Soul and Nature.

To reach this perfection we have to become aware of the divine Shakti, draw her to us and call her in to fill the whole system and take up the charge of all our activities. There will then be no separate personal will or individual energy trying to conduct our actions, no sense of a little personal self as the doer, nor will it be the lower energy of the three gunas, the mental, vital and physical nature. The divine Shakti will fill us and preside over and take up all our inner activities, our outer life, our Yoga. She will take up the mental energy, her own lower formation, and raise it to its highest and purest and fullest powers of intelligence and will and psychic action. She will change th mechanical energies of the mind, life and body which now govern us into delight-filled manifestations of her own living and conscious power and presence. She will manifest in us and relate to each other all the various spiritual experiences of which the mind is capable. And as the crown of this process she will bring down the supramental light into the mental levels, change the stuff of mind into the stuff of supermind, transform all the lower energies into energies of her supramental nature and raise us into our being of gnosis. The Shakti will reveal herself as the power of the Purushottama, and it is the Ishwara who will manifest himself in his force of supermind and spirit and be the master of our being, action, life and Yoga.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK III

I

IMMORTALITY

1 Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one
2 to come—Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.
3 That which we are is that, yes, it is that that we become, and if one knows it not, great is the perdition : it is they who who have discovered it that be-
4 come immortal.—They rest from their labours and
5 their works follow them.—The deeds a man has accomplished follow him in his journeying when he fares to another world.

* * *

6 The voice which tells us that we are immortal is the voice of God within us.
7 There are some who see by contemplation the self in themselves by the self, others by union through

1) Hebrews XIII. 14.—2) II Corinthians IV. 16.—3) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.—4) Revelations XIV. 13.—5) Mahabharata.—6) Pascal.—7) Bhagavad Gita.

the understanding, and others again know not, but hear of it from others and seek after it, and all these, even they who hear and seek after it, pass over beyond death.

8 Let him in whom there is understanding know
9 that he is immortal.—Those become immortal who know by the heart and the understanding Him who in the heart has his dwelling-place.

10 When man has known beyond this world the Being who is hidden according to the form in every creature, the Lord who contains in himself all things, then he becomes immortal.

11 He who sees all things in the self and the self in all things, has doubt no longer.

12 The sage having seen the Self in everything, when he leaves this world, becomes immortal.

13 That being known which is without sound, touch or form, inexhaustible, eternal, without beginning or end, greater than the great self, immutable, man es-
14 capes from the mouth of death.—He who thus knows, "I am the Eternal", the gods themselves cannot make him other, for he is their own self.

15 Therefore neither you, O judges, nor men in general ought to fear death : they have only to remember one thing, that for a just man there is no ill in life and no ill in death.

16 For the saint there is no death.

* * *

17 Here is a man to whom all others are not-self : at bottom his own personality alone is real to him, the

8) Hermes.—9) Çwetaswatara Upanishad.—10) id.—11) Isha Upanishad.—12) Kena Upanishad.—13) Katha Upanishad.—14) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.—15) Socrates.—16) Tolstoy.—17) Schopenhauer.

others in truth only phantasms: he recognises an existence in them, but it is relative, they can serve him as instruments of his designs or can come in his way and that is all: in short between his own personality and all of them there is a deep gulf, an immense distance. Look upon this man confronted by death: it seems to him as if with him all reality, the whole world were disappearing. Then look upon this other who recognises in all that are his like, more, in all that lives, himself, his own essence: he casts his existence into the existence of all living beings and by death he loses only a feeble portion of that existence, for he subsists in all the others in whom he has always recognised, has always loved his own being, his own essence, and it is only the illusion that is now about to fall away from him, the illusion which separated his consciousness from all others.

A Defence of Indian Culture

XIV

The sculpture and painting of ancient India have recently been rehabilitated with a surprising suddenness in the eyes of a more cultivated European criticism in the course of that rapid opening of the western mind to the value of oriental thought and creation which is one of the most significant signs of a change that is yet only in its beginning. There have even been here and there minds of a fine perception and profound originality who have seen in a return to the ancient and persistent freedom of oriental art, its refusal to be shackled or debased by an imitative realism, its fidelity to the true theory of art as an inspired interpretation of the deeper soul values of existence lifted beyond servitude to the outsides of Nature, the right way to the regeneration and liberation of the aesthetic and creative mind of Europe. And actually, although much of Western art runs still along the old grooves, much too of its most original recent creation has elements or a guiding direction which brings it nearer to the eastern mentality and understanding. It might then be posssible for us to leave it at that and wait for time to deepen this new vision and vindicate more fully the truth and greatness of the art of India.

But we are concerned not only with the critical estimation of our art by Europe, but much more nearly

with the evil effect of the earlier depreciation on the Indian mind which has been for a long time side-tracked off its true road by a foreign, an anglicised education and, as a result, vulgarised and falsified by the loss of its own true centre, because this hampers and retards a sound and living revival of artistic taste and culture and stands in the way of a new age of creation. It was only a few years ago that the mind of educated India—"educated" without an atom of real culture—accepted contentedly the vulgar English estimate of our sculpture and painting as undeveloped inferior art or even a mass of monstrous and abortive miscreation, and though that has passed and there is a great change, there is still very common a heavy weight of secondhand occidental notions, a bluntness or absolute lacking of aesthetic taste, * a failure to appreciate, and one still comes sometimes across a strain of blatantly anglicised criticism which depreciates all that is in the Indian manner and praises only what is consistent with western canons. And the old style of European criticism continues to have some weight with us, because the lack of aesthetic or indeed of any real cultural training in our present system of education makes us ignorant and undiscriminating receptacles, so that we are ready to take the considered opinions of competent critics like Okakura or Mr. Laurence Binyon and the rash scribblings of journalists of the type of Mr. Archer, who write without authority because in these things they have neither taste nor knowledge, as of equal importance and the latter even attract a greater attention. It is still necessary therefore to reiterate things which, however obvious to a trained or a sensitive aesthetic intelligence, are not yet familiar to the average mind still untutored or habituated to a system of false weights and

* E. g. one still reads with a sense of despairing stupefaction "criticism" that speaks of Ravi Varma and Abanindranath Tagore as artistic creators of different styles, but an equal power and genius!

values. The work of recovering a true and inward understanding of ourselves—our past and our persistent self and from that our future—is only in its commencement for the majority of our people.

To appreciate our own artistic past at its right value we have to free ourselves from all subjection to a foreign outlook and see our sculpture and painting, as I have already suggested about our architecture, in the light of its own profound intention and greatness of spirit. When we so look at it, we shall be able to see that the sculpture of ancient and mediaeval India claims its place on the very highest levels of artistic achievement. I do not know where we shall find a sculptural art of a more profound intention, a greater spirit, a more consistent skill of achievement. Inferior work there is, work that fails or succeeds only partially, but take it in its whole, in the long persistence of its excellence, in the number of its masterpieces, in the power with which it renders the soul and the mind of a people, and we shall be tempted to go further and claim for it a first place. The art of sculpture has indeed flourished supremely only in ancient countries where it was conceived against its natural background and support, a great architecture. Egypt, Greece, India take the premier rank in this kind of creation. Mediaeval and modern Europe produced nothing of the same mastery, abundance and amplitude, while on the contrary in painting later Europe has done much and richly and with a prolonged and constantly renewed inspiration. The difference arises from the different kind of mentality required by the two arts. The material in which we work makes its own peculiar demand on the creative spirit, lays down its own natural conditions, as Ruskin has pointed out in a different connection, and the art of making in stone or bronze calls for a cast of mind which the ancients had and the moderns have not or have had only in rare individuals, an artistic mind not too rapidly mobile and self-

indulgent, not too much mastered by its own personality and emotion and the touches that excite and pass, but founded rather on some great basis of assured thought and vision, stable in temperament, fixed in its imagination on things that are firm and enduring. One cannot trifle with ease in these sterner materials, one cannot even for long or with safety indulge in them in mere grace and external beauty or the more superficial, mobile and lightly attractive motives. The aesthetic self-indulgence which the soul of colour permits and even invites, the attraction of the mobile play of life to which line of brush, pen or pencil gives latitude, are here forbidden or, if to some extent achieved, only within a line of restraint to cross which is perilous and soon fatal. Here grand or profound motives are called for, a more or less penetrating spiritual vision or some sense of things eternal to base the creation. The sculptural art is static, self-contained, necessarily firm, noble or severe and demands an aesthetic spirit capable of these qualities. A certain mobility of life and mastering grace of line can come in upon this basis, but if it entirely replaces the original dharma of the material, that means that the spirit of the statuette has come into the statue and we may be sure of an approaching decadence. Hellenic sculpture following this line passed from the greatness of Phidias through the soft self-indulgence of Praxiteles to its decline. A later Europe has failed for the most past in sculpture, in spite of some great work by individuals, an Angelo or a Rodin, because it played externally with stone and bronze, took them as a medium for the representation of life and could not find a sufficient basis of profound vision or spiritual motive. In Egypt and in India on the contrary sculpture preserved its power of successful creation through several great ages. The earliest recently discovered work in India dates back to the fifth century B. C. and is already fully evolved with an evident history of consummate previous creation behind it, and the

latest work of some high value comes down to within a few centuries from our own time. An assured history of two millenniums of accomplished sculptural creation is a rare and significant fact in the life of a people.

This greatness and continuity of Indian sculpture is due to the close connection between the religious and philosophical and the aesthetic mind of the people. Its survival into times not far from us was possible because of the survival of the cast of the antique mind in that philosophy and religion, a mind familiar with eternal things, capable of cosmic vision, having its roots of thought and seeing in the profundities of the soul, in the most intimate, pregnant and abiding experiences of the human spirit. The spirit of this greatness is indeed at the opposite pole to the perfection within limits, the lucid nobility or the vital fineness and physical grace of Hellenic creation in stone. And since the favourite trick of Mr. Archer and his kind is to throw the Hellenic ideal constantly in our face, as if sculpture must be either governed by the Greek standard or worthless, it is as well to take note of the meaning of the difference. The earlier and more archaic Greek style had indeed something in it which looks like a reminiscent touch of a first creative origin from Egypt and the Orient, but there is already there the governing conception which determined the Greek aesthesis and has dominated the later mind of Europe, the will to combine some kind of expression of an inner truth with an idealising imitation of external Nature. The brilliance, beauty and nobility of the work which was accomplished, was a very great and perfect thing, but it is idle to maintain that that is the sole possible method or the one permanent and natural law of artistic creation. Its highest greatness subsisted only so long—and it was not for very long—as a certain satisfying balance was struck and constantly maintained betwen a fine, but not very subtle, opulent or profound spiritual suggestion and an outward physical harmony of nobility and grace. A later work achie-

ved a brief miracle of vital suggestion and sensuous physical grace with a certain power of expressing the spirit of beauty in the mould of the senses ; but this once done, there was no more to see or create. For the curious turn which impels at the present day the modern mind to return to spiritual vision through a fiction of exaggerated realism which is really a pressure upon the form of things to yield the secret of the spirit in life and matter, was not open to the classic temperament and intelligence. And it is surely time for us to see, as is now by many admitted, that an acknowledgement of the greatness of Greek art in its own province ought not to prevent the plain perception of the rather strait and narrow bounds of that province. What Greek sculpture expressed was fine, gracious and noble, but what it did not express and could not by the limitations of its canon hope to attempt, was considerable, was immense in possibility, was that spiritual depth and extension which the human mind needs for its larger and deeper self-experience. And just this is the greatness of Indian sculpture that it expresses in stone and bronze what the Greek aesthetic mind could not conceive or express and embodies it with a profound understanding of its right conditions and a native perfection.

The more ancient sculptural art of India embodies in visible form what the Upanishads threw out into inspired thought and the Mahabharata and Ramayana portrayed by the word in life. This sculpture like the architecture springs from spiritual realisation, and what it creates and expresses at its greatest is the spirit in form, the soul in body, this or that living soul power in the divine or the human, the universal and cosmic individualised in suggestion but not lost in indlviduality, the impersonal supporting a not too insistent play of personality, the abiding moments of the eternal, the presence, the idea, the power, the calm or potent delight of the spirit in its actions and creations. And over all the art something of this intention broods and per-

sists and is suggested even where it does not dominate the mind of the sculptor. And therefore as in the architecture so in the sculpture, we have to bring a different mind to this work, a different capacity of vision and response, we have to go deeper into ourselves to see than in the more outwardly imaginative art of Europe. The Olympian gods of Phidias are magnified and uplifted human beings saved from a too human limitation by a certain divine calm of impersonality or universalised quality, divine type, *guna*; in other work we see heroes, athletes, feminine incarnations of beauty, calm and restrained embodiments of idea, action or emotion in the idealised beauty of the human figure. The gods of Indian sculpture are cosmic beings, embodiments of some great spiritual power, spiritual idea and action, inmost psychic significance, the human form a vehicle of this soul meaning, its outward means of self-expression; everything in the figure, every opportunity it gives, the face, the hands, the posture of the limbs, the poise and turn of the body, every accessory, has to be made instinct with the inner meaning, help it to emerge, carry out the rhythm of the total suggestion, and on the other hand everything is suppressed which would defeat this end, especially all that would mean an insistence on the merely vital or physical, outward or obvious suggestions of the human figure. Not the ideal physical or emotional beauty, but the utmost spiritual beauty or significance of which the human form is capable is the aim of this kind of creation. The divine self in us is its theme, the body made a form of the soul is its idea and its secret. And therefore in front of this art it is not enough to look at it and respond with the aesthetic eye and the imagination, but we must look also into the form for what it carries and even through and behind it to pursue the profound suggestion it gives into its own infinite. The religious or hieratic side of Indian sculpture is intimately connected with the spiritual experiences of Indian meditation and

adoration,—those deep things of our self-dicovery which our critic calls contemptuously Yogic hallucinations,—soul realisation is its method of creation and soul realisation must be the way of our response and understanding. And even with the figures of human beings or groups it is still a like inner aim and vision which governs the labour of the sculptor. The statue of a king or a saint is not meant merely to give the idea of a king or saint or to portray some dramatic action or to be a character portrait in stone, but to embody rather a soul state or experience or deeper soul quality, as for instance, not the outward emotion, but the inner soul-side of rapt ecstasy of adoration and God-vision in the saint or the devotee before the presence of the worshipped deity. This is the character of the task the Indian sculptor set before his effort and it is according to his success in that and not by the absence of something else, some quality or some intention foreign to his mind and contrary to his design, that we have to judge of his achievement and his labour.

Once we admit this standard, it is impossible to speak too highly of the profound intelligence of its conditions which was developed in Indian sculpture, of the skill with which its task was treated or of the consummate grandeur and beauty of its masterpieces. Take the great Buddhas—not the Gandharan,—the divine figures or groups in cave cathedral or temple, the best of the later southern bronzes of which there is a remarkable collection of plates in Mr. Gangoly's book on that subject, the Kalasanhara image, the Natarajas. No greater or finer work, whether in conception or execution, has been done by the human hand and its greatness is increased by obeying a spiritualised aesthetic vision. The figure of the Buddha achieves the expression of the infinite in a finite image, and that is surely no mean or barbaric achievement, to embody the illimitable calm of Nirvana in a human form and visage. The Kalasanhara Shiva is supreme not only by the majes-

ty, power, calmly forceful control, dignity and kingship of existence which the whole spirit and pose of the figure visibly incarnates,—that is only half or less than half its achievement,—but much more by the concentrated divine passion of the spiritual overcoming of time and existence which the artist has succeeded in putting into eye and brow and mouth and every feature and has subtly supported by the contained suggestion, not emotional, but spiritual, of every part of the body of the godhead and the rhythm of his meaning which he has poured through the whole unity of this creation. Or what of the marvellous genius and skill in the treatment of the cosmic movement and delight of the dance of Shiva, the success with which the posture of every limb is made to bring out the rhythm of the significance, the rapturous intensity and abandon of the movement itself and yet the just restraint in the intensity of motion, the subtle variation of each element of the single theme in the seizing idea of these master sculptors? Image after image in the great temples or saved from the wreck of time shows the same grand traditional art and the genius which worked in that tradition and its many styles, the profound and firmly grasped spiritual idea, the consistent expression of it in every curve, line and mass, in hand and limb, in suggestive pose, in expressive rhythm,—it is an art which, understood in its own spirit, need fear no comparison with any other, ancient or modern, Hellenic or Egyptian, of the near or the far East or of the West in any of its creative ages. This sculpture passed through many changes, a more ancient art of extraordinary grandeur and epic power uplifted by the same spirit as reigned in the Vedic and Vedantic seers and in the epic poets, a later Puranic turn towards grace and beauty and rapture and an outburst of lyric ecstasy and movement, and last a rapid and vacant decadence; but throughout all the second period too the depth and greatness of sculptural motive supports and vivifies the work

and in the very turn towards decadence something of it often remains to redeem from complete debasement, emptiness or insignificance.

Let us see then what is the value of the objections made to the spirit and style of Indian sculpture. This is the burden of the objurgations of the devil's advocate that his self-bound European mind finds the whole thing barbaric, meaningless, uncouth, strange, bizarre, the work of a distorted imagination labouring mid a nightmare of unlovely unrealities. Now there is in the total of what survives to us work that is less inspired or even work that is bad, exaggerated, forced or clumsy, the production of mechanic artificers mingled with the creation of great nameless artists, and an eye that does not understand the sense, the first conditions of the work, the mind of the race or its type of aesthesis, may well fail to distinguish between good and inferior execution, decadent work and the work of the great hands and the great eras. But applied as a general description the criticism is itself grotesque and distorted and it means only that here are conceptions and a figuring imagination strange to the western intelligence. The line and run and turn demanded by the Indian aesthetic sense are not the same as those demanded by the European. It would take too long to examine the detail of the difference which we find not only in sculpture, but in the other plastic arts and in music and even to a certain extent in literature, but on the whole we may say that the Indian mind moves on the spur of a spiritual sensitiveness and psychic curiosity, while the aesthetic curiosity of the European temperament is intellectual, vital, emotional and imaginative in that sense, and almost the whole strangeness of the Indian use of line and mass, ornament and proportion and rhythm arises from this difference. The two minds live almost in different worlds, are either not looking at the same things or, even where they meet in the object, see it from a different level or surrounded by a different atmosphere, and we

know what power the point of view or the medium of vision has to transform the object. And undoubtedly there is very ample ground for Mr. Archer's complaint of the want of naturalism in most Indian sculpture. The inspiration, the way of seeing is frankly not naturalistic, not, that is to say, the vivid, convincing and accurate, the graceful, beautiful or strong, or even the idealised or imaginative imitation of surface or terrestrial nature. The Indian sculptor is concerned with embodying spiritual experiences and impressions, not with recording or glorifying what is received by the physical senses. He may start with suggestions from earthly and physical things, but he produces his work only after he has closed his eyes to the insistence of the physical circumstances, seen them in the psychic memory and transformed them within himself so as to bring out something other than their physical reality or their vital and intellectual significance. His eye sees the psychic line and turn of things and he replaces by them the material contours. It is not surprising that such a method should produce results which are strange to the average western mind and eye when these are not liberated by a broad and sympathetic culture. And what is strange to us, is naturally repugnant to our habitual mind and uncouth to our habitual sense, bizarre to our imaginative tradition and aesthetic training. We want what is familiar to the eye and obvious to the imagination and will not readily admit that there may be here another and perhaps greater beauty than that in the circle of which we are accustomed to live and take pleasure.

It seems to be especially the application of this psychic vision to the human form which offends these critics of Indian sculpture. There is the familiar objection to such features as the multiplication of the arms in the figures of gods and goddesses, the four, six, eight or ten arms of Shiva, the eighteen arms of Durga, because they are a monstrosity, a thing not in nature. Now certainly a play

of imagination of this kind would be out of place in the representation of a man or woman, because it would have no artistic or other meaning, but I cannot see why this freedom should be denied in the representation of cosmic beings like the Indian godheads. The whole question is, first, whether it is an appropriate means of conveying a significance not otherwise to be represented with an equal power and force and, secondly, whether it is capable of artistic representation, a rhythm of artistic truth and unity which need not be that of physical nature. If not, then it is an ugliness and violence, but if these conditions are satisfied, the means are justified and I do not see that we have any right, faced with the perfection of the work, to raise a discordant clamour. Mr. Archer himself is struck with the perfection of skill and mastery with which these to him superfluous limbs are disposed in the figures of the dancing Shiva, and indeed it would need an eye of impossible blindness not to see that much, but what is still more important is the artistic significance which this skill is used to serve, and, if that is understood, we can at once see that the spiritual emotion and suggestions of the cosmic dance are brought out by this device in a way which would not be as possible with a two-armed figure. The same truth holds as to the Durga with her eighteen arms slaying the Asuras or the Shivas of the great Pallava creations where the lyrical beauty of the Natarajan is absent, but there is instead a great epical rhythm and grandeur. Art justifies its own means and here it does it with a a supreme perfection. And as for the "contorted" postures of some figures, the same law holds. There is often a departure in this respect from the anatomical norm of the physical body or else—and that is a rather different thing —an emphasis more or less pronounced on an unusual pose of limb or body, and the question then is whether it is done without sense or purpose, a mere clumsiness or an ugly exaggeration, or whether it rather serves some significance

and establishes in the place of the normal physical metric of Nature another purposeful and successful artistic rhythm. Art after all is not forbidden to deal with the unusual or to alter and overpass Nature, and it might almost be said that it has been doing little else since it began to serve the human imagination from its first grand epic exaggerations to the violences of modern romanticism and realism, from the high ages of Valmiki and Homer to the day of Hugo and Ibsen. The means matter, but less than the significance and the thing done and the power and beauty with which it expresses the dreams and truths of the human spirit.

The whole question of the Indian artistic treatment of the human figure has to be understood in the light of its aesthetic purpose. It works with a certain intention and ideal, a general norm and standard which permits of a good many variations and from which too there are appropriate departures. The epithets with which Mr. Archer tries to damn its features are absurd, captious, exaggerated, the forced phrases of a journalist trying to depreciate a perfectly sensible, beautiful and aesthetic norm with which he does not sympathise. There are other things here than a repetition of hawk faces, wasp waists, thin legs and the rest of the ill-tempered caricature. He doubts Mr. Havell's suggestion that these old Indian artists knew the anatomy of the body well enough, as Indian science knew it, but chose to depart from it for their own purpose. It does not seem to me to matter much, since art is not anatomy, nor an artistic masterpiece necessarily a reproduction of physical fact or a lesson in natural science. I see no reason to regret the absence of telling studies in muscles, torsos, etc, for I can not regard these things as having in themselves any essential artistic value. The one important point is that the Indian artist had a perfect idea of proportion and rhythm and used them in certain styles with nobility and power, in others like the Javan, the Gauda or

the southern bronzes with that or with a perfect grace added and often an intense and a lyrical sweetness. The dignity and beauty of the human figure in the best Indian statues cannot be excelled, but what was sought and what was achieved was not an outward naturalistic, but a spiritual and a psychic beauty, and to achieve it the sculptor suppressed, and was entirely right in suppressing, the obtrusive material detail and aimed instead at purity of outline and fineness of feature. And into that outline, into that purity and fineness he was able to work whatever he chose, mass of force or delicacy of grace, a static dignity or a mighty strength or a restrained violence of movement or whatever served or helped his meaning. A divine and subtle body was his ideal; and to a taste and imagination too blunt or realistic to conceive the truth and beauty of his idea, the ideal itself may well be a stumbling-block, a thing of offence. But the triumphs of art are not to be limited by the narrow prejudices of the natural realistic man; that triumphs and endures which appeals to the best, *sâdhu-sammatam*, that is deepest and greatest which satisfies the profoundest souls and the most sensitive psychic imaginations.

Each manner of art has its own ideals, traditions, agreed conventions; for the ideas and forms of the creative spirit are many, though there is one ultimate basis. The perspective, the psychic vision of the Chinese and Japanese painters are not the same as those of European artists; but who can ignore the beauty and the wonder of their work? I dare say Mr. Archer would set a Constable or a Turner above the whole mass of far eastern work, as I myself, if I had to make a choice, would take a Chinese or Japanese landscape or other magic transmutation of Nature in preference to all others; but these are matters of individual, national or continental temperament and preference. The essence of the question lies in the rendering of the truth and beauty seized by the spirit. Indian

sculpture, Indian art in general follows its own ideal and traditions and these are unique in their character and quality. It is the expression great as a whole through many centuries and ages of creation, supreme at its best, whether in rare early pre-Asokan, in Asokan or later work of the first heroic age or in the magnificent statues of the cave-cathedrals and Pallava and other southern temples or the noble, accomplished or gracious imaginations of Bengal, Nepal and Java through the after centuries or in the singular skill and delicacy of the bronze work of the southern religions, a self-expression of the spirit and ideals of a great nation and a great culture which stands apart in the cast of its mind and qualities among the earth's peoples, famed for its spiritual achievement, its deep philosophies and its religious spirit, its artistic taste, the richness of its poetic imagination, and not inferior once in its dealings with life and its social endeavour and political institutions. This sculpture is a singularly powerful, a seizing and profound interpretation in stone and bronze of the inner soul of that people. The nation, the culture failed for a time in life after a long greatness, as others failed before it and others will yet fail that now flourish ; the creations of its mind have been arrested, this art like others has ceased or fallen into decay, but the thing from which it rose, the spiritual fire within still burns and in the renascence that is coming it may be that this great art too will revive, not saddled with the grave limitations of modern western work in the kind, but vivified by the nobility of a new impulse and power of the ancient spiritual motive. Let it recover, not limited by old forms, but undeterred by the cavillings of an alien mind, the sense of the grandeur and beauty and the inner significance of its past achievement ; for in the continuity of its spiritual endeavour lies its best hope for the future.

The Future Poetry

THE SOUL OF POETIC DELIGHT AND BEAUTY

The light of truth, the breath of life, great and potent things though they are, are insufficient to give poetry the touch of immortality and perfection, even a little of which is enough to carry it safe through the ages, unless the soul and form of delight and beauty take possession of the seeing of truth and give immortality to the breath and body of the life. Delight is the soul of existence, beauty the intense impression, the concentrated form of delight; and these two fundamental things tend to be one for the mind of the artist and the poet, though they are often enough separated in our cruder vital and mental experience. These twin powers meet, make a consonance of the perfect harmony of his work and are the first deities he serves, all the others only group themselves about them, strive to be admitted to the soul of delight and the privilege of beauty and have to make themselves acceptable to them before they can mix with them in a compelling and attracting oneness. For the poet the moon of beauty and delight is a greater godhead even than the sun of truth or the breath of life, as in the symbolic image of the Vedic moon-god Soma, whose plant of intoxication has to be gathered on lonely mountain heights in the moonlight and whose purified juice and essence is the sacred wine and

nectar of sweetness, *rasa, madhu, amrita,* without which the gods themselves could not be immortal. A lightest trifle, if it manages to get itself saturated with this sweetness of poetic delight and beauty, will be preserved for its sake, while the highest strenuous labour of the thinking mind and the most forceful assertion of the life-power, if deprived of or deficient in this subtlest immortalising essence, may carry on for a time, but soon drops, grows old, sinks into the gulf of oblivion or has at most a lifeless survival and belongs to the dead history of literature, not to its eternal present. But beauty and delight, whatever form it takes,—for we may speak here of the two as one,—has an unaging youth, an eternal moment, an immortal presence.

The imperative instinct for beauty and the aesthetic demand which set that among the first needs and was not satisfied with anything else if this were neglected or put second in importance, are now things, that are almost lost, nowhere general to the human mind, but once they were the sign of the poetic and artistic peoples and the great ages of art and poetry and supreme creation. The ancient communities who created those fine many-sided cultures which still remain the fountain-head of all our evolving civilisation, had the instinct for beauty, the aesthetic turn of the temperament and formation of the mind almost, it would seem, from the beginning, planted in their spirit and their blood, colouring their outlook so that even before they got the developed intellectual consciousness of it, they created instinctively in the spirit and form of beauty and that is quite half the secret of the compelling and attractive power of the antique cultures. The earliest surviving poetry of ancient India was philosophical and religious, the Veda, the Upanishads, and our modern notions tend to divorce these things from the instinct of delight and beauty, to separate the religious and the philosophic from the aesthetic sense; but the miracle of these antique wri-

tings is their perfect union of beauty and power and truth, the word of truth coming out spontaneously as a word of beauty, the revealed utterance of that universal spirit who is described in the Upanishads as the eater of the honey of sweetness, *madhwadam purusham;* and this high achievement was not surprising in these ancient deep-thinking men who discovered the profound truth that all existence derives from and lives by the bliss of the eternal spirit, in the power of a universal delight, Ananda. The idea of beauty, the spontaneous satisfaction in it, the worship of it as in itself something divine, became more intellectually conscious afterwards, was a dominant strain of the later Indian mind and got to its richest outward colour and sensuous passion in the work of the classical writers, while the expression of the spiritual through the aesthetic sense is the constant sense of Indian art, as it is also the inspiring motive of a great part of the later religion and poetry. Japan and China, more especially perhaps southern China, for the north has been weighted by a tendency to a more external and formal idea of measure and harmony, had in a different way this fusion of the spiritual and aesthetic mind and it is a distinguishing stamp of their art and culture. The Persian had a sort of sensuous magic of the transforming aesthesis born of psychic delight and vision. Ancient Greece did all its work of founding European civilisation by a union of a subtle and active intelligence with a fine aesthetic spirit and worship of beauty. The Celtic nations again seem always to have had by nature a psychic delicacy and subtlety united with an instinctive turn for imaginative beauty to which we surely owe much of the finer strain in English literature. But there these spontaneous miracles of fusion end and in the mind of later peoples who come in and take possession with a less innate, a more derivative culture, the sense of beauty works with a certain effort and is clogged by many heavier elements which are in conflict with and prevent the sure-

ness of the aesthetic perception. There is in their cruder temperament and intelligence a barbaric strain which worships rudely the power and energy of life and is not at home with the delight of beauty, an ethical and puritanic strain which looks askance at art and beauty and pleasure, a heavy scholastic or a dry scientific intellectual strain which follows after truth with a conscientious and industrious diligence but without vision and fine aesthesis. And the modern mind, inheritor of all this past, is a divided and complex mind which strives at its best to get back at the old thing on a larger scale and realise some oneness of its many strands of experience, but has not yet found the right meeting-place ; and it is besides still labouring under the disadvantage of its aberration into a mechanical, economical, materialistic, utititarian civilisation from which it cannot get free, though it is struggling to shake off that dullest side of it for which a naked and unashamed riot of ugliness could be indulged in without any prickings of the spiritual conscience but rather with a smug self-righteousness in the hideous, the vulgar and the ignoble. The day when we get back to the ancient worship of delight and beauty, will be our day of salvation ; for without these things there can be neither an assured nobility and sweetness in poetry and art, nor a satisfied dignity and fullness of life nor a harmonious perfection of the spirit.

An insufficiently profound and intimate perception of the real deep soul of poetic delight and beauty is the first obstacle to a recovery of the old strong soundness of the aesthetic sense and spontaneity of the aesthetic impulse. This comes from the peculiar character of the modern intelligence and its want of harmony between our internal selves and our external experience ; there is little spontaneous joy of their meeting, an active labour to assimilate, but no happy, deep or satisfied possession either of self or life, a continual seeking but no repose in the thing found,

a feverish restlessness without home and abiding-place. The spirit of man can make its home in either one of two things, the depths of our self arrived at through vision of self-knowledge, through power of self-mastery or through ecstasy, or a profound, a glad and satisfied acceptance of the truth, the delight and beauty of the world and life, of existence and experience. And either of these things can help too to bring in the other,—possess the inner self and life can become happy and illumined by a full sense of its hidden significance, or get hold of the complete delight and beauty of life and the world and you have then only a thin layer of shining mist to break through to get also at the self and spirit behind it, the eater of the honey of sweetness who is seated in the soul of man and extends himself through the universe. The ancient peoples had in a very large measure this foundation of satisfaction and harmony, took the greatest interest in the reality of the inner self, as once in India and China, the Atman, the Tao, and life and the world as its field of expression and self-experience or, like the Greeks, felt at once the naturalness and profundity of human existence and gave to it an immediate and subtle aesthetic response. The modern mind on the contrary looks little into our deepest self, takes little interest in sounding that depth and has hardly any confidence in its reality, and concentrates not on the truth and delight and beauty of life, but upon the stress of its results and circumstances, which in themselves have only an incidental and no satisfying and harmonious meaning, and on the agitating or attractive turmoil of the mind excited by their contact or their siege*. This difference results in a

* This is the result perhaps of an ill-assimilated christian influence intervening on the external vitalism of the Teutonic temperament and on Latin intellectualism, and bringing in new needs and experiences which disturbed the mind and emotions without possessing the soul with peace or arriving at a harmony of spiritual emotion and spiritual self-knowledge.

fundamental difference of aesthesis. The pure aesthetic spirit ought be left free, trusted in, made master of its own action and creation and it will then create with greatness and beauty, in a calm and satisfied ecstasy, and yet safely harmonise its action with the other spiritual powers of our existence, the need of the life-soul, the insistent seeking of the thought-mind, the demand of the active will and the senses. But we now make the aesthetic sense and intelligence a servant of these other powers; it is condemned to serve first and foremost our external interest in life or our interest in thought or in troubled personality or the demand of the senses or passions and bidden to make them beautiful or vivid to us by an active aesthetic cerebration and artistic manufacture of the word or a supply of carefully apt or beautiful forms and measures. The secondary things are put in the first rank, the primary, the one thing needful has to get in as best it can to give some firm base to the creation. This aesthesis aided by the vast curiosity of the modern intelligence has done some great and much interesting work, but it arrives with difficulty at the readily fused harmonies and assured stamp of the perfect way of spiritual creation.

There is a profound intrinsic delight and beauty in all things and behind all experience whatever face it wears to the surface mind, which makes it to a spirit housed within us other than its first appearance, makes it, that is to say, no longer a thing exciting mental interest, pain, pleasure, but rather a revelation of the truth and power and delight of being and our feeling of it a form of the universal Ananda of the old philosophical thinkers, the calm yet moved ecstasy with which the spirit of existence regards itself and its creations. This deeper spiritual feeling, this Ananda is the fountain of poetic delight and beauty. It springs from a supreme essence of experience, a supreme aesthesis which is in its own nature spiritual, impersonal, independent of the personal reactions and passions of the mind, and that

is why the poet is able to transmute pain and sorrow and the most tragic and terrible and ugly things into forms of poetic beauty, because of this impersonal joy of the spirit in all experience, whatever its nature. And as, therefore, the subject of the poet is all that he can feel of the infinite life of the spirit that creates in existence and all that he can seize of the infinite truth of God and Nature and our own and the world's being, so too what he brings out from his subject is all that he can pour into speech of his vision of eternal and universal beauty, all that he can express of the soul's universal delight in existence. That is what he has to reveal, and to make others share in, to render more expressive and firmly present to them what experience they have of it and help the race towards its greater fullness in the soul of man and embodiment in our mind and life. This Ananda is not the pleasure of a mood or a sentiment or the fine aesthetic indulgence of the sense in the attraction of a form, superficial results and incidents which are often mistaken for that much deeper and greater thing by the minor poetic faculty, the lesser artistic mind, but the enduring delight which, as the ancient idea justly perceived, is the essence of spirit and being and the beauty which all things assume when the spirit lives in the pure joy of creation and experience.

The universality of this delight and beauty does not mean that we can take whatever we will straight from life and experience, just as it is, and by making it precise and vivid through word and image or dressing it in imaginative colour achieve poetic effect and beauty. That is the theory by which a great deal of our modern endeavour at poetry seems to be guided, as it is the ruling method of inferior poets and the mark too of the lesser or unsuccessful or only partially successful work of greater writers. The error made is to confuse the sources of poetic delight and beauty with the more superficial interest, pain and pleasure which the normal mind takes in the first untrans-

muted appeal of thought and life and feeling. That in its first crude form or a little deepened by sensitiveness of emotion and a reflective intelligence is the response to existence of the natural mind, the only instrument of the majority, and what it is apt to expect from the poet is that this is what he too shall give to the world and only think it more profoundly, feel it more sensitively, live it with a greater excitement and find for it beauty of word and attraction of rhythm. The poet has in him a double personality, a double instrument of his response to life and existence. There is in him the normal man absorbed in mere living who thinks and feels and acts like others, and there is the seer of things, the supernormal man, the supersoul or delight-soul in touch with the impersonal and eternal fountains of joy and beauty who creates from that source and transmutes by its alchemy all experience into a form of the spirit's Ananda. It is easy for him, if the demand of his genius is not constant or if he is not held back by a natural fineness of the poetic conscience, to subject this deeper and greater power to the lower and general demand and put it at the service of his superficial mental experience He has then to rely on the charm and beauty of word and form to save the externality of his substance. But the genius in him when he is faithful to it, knows that this is not his high way of perfection nor the thing his spirit gave him to do; it is a spiritual transmutation of the substance got by sinking the mental and vital interests in a deeper soul experience which brings the inevitable word and the supreme form and the unalysable rhythm. The poet is then something more than a maker of beautiful word and phrase, a favoured child of the fancy and imagination, a careful fashioner of idea and utterance or an effective poetic thinker, moralist, dramatist or storyteller; he becomes a spokesman of the eternal spirit of beauty and delight and shares that highest creative and self-expressive rapture which is close to the original ecstasy

that made existence, the divine Ananda.

This rapture, the Platonic divine possession and enthusiasm, is born not of mental, but of soul experience, and the more the surface mind gets into the way, the more this divine passion is weakened and diluted by a less potent spirit. The surface mind is powerfully attracted by the stir of the outward passion and excitement, the stress of immediate thought, life and action, hastens to embody it in speech or in deed and has no leisure to transmute life into those greater abiding values of which the soul in its depths is alone capable. But the higher faculties are given us as keys to a deeper experience ; the seer, the poet, the artist, the children of the spirit's light and intuition are only true to themselves when they live in the depths of the soul, refuse to be hurried away by the surface call of mind and life and wait rather for their own greater voices. The poetry which insists on an external effectiveness, on immediate thought and life and experience, may seize very powerfully the ear of the moment, but is singularly frail in its affectation of power and even if it has strength of body, is hollow and null inside ; it fails because it is concerned with immediately vital things perhaps, but not with that which is immortal. That is just why patriotic poetry, war poetry or poetry of the occasion and the moment are so difficult to write greatly and, although it would seem that these things are among the most dynamic and should move most easily to powerful utterance, are oftenest poor in poetic substance and inferior in value. For life they may be dynamic, but they are not so readily dynamic for art and poetry, and precisely because the vital interest, the life attraction is so strong that it is difficult to draw back from the external to the spiritual delight and the spiritual significance. A great poet may do it sometimes, because the constant instinct of his genius is to look beyond the surface and the moment to that which is universal and eternal behind the personal experience and the

occasion is only for him an excuse for its utterance. The drama of action and mere passion is for the same reason short-lived in its gusto of vitality, fades in a century or less into a lifeless mask, while the drama of the soul abides, because it gets near to the subtler eternal element, the soul's essential aesthesis, the spirit's delight in self-creation and experience. Philosophical and religious poetry too fails so often by a neglect of the same fine destinction, because the interest of the thought pursued by the intellectual activity, the interest of the mind in its surface religious ideas and feelings get the upper hand and do not consent to sink themselves in the spiritual emotion of the seeing of truth and the abiding spiritual experience. The mental and vital interest, pleasure, pain of thought, life, action is not the source of poetic delight and beauty and can be turned into that deeper thing only when they have sunk into the soul and been transmuted in the soul's radiant memory into spiritual experience,—that perhaps was what the Greeks meant when they made Mnemosyne the eternal mother of the muses; the passions can only change into poetic matter when they have been spiritualised in the same bright sources and have undergone the purification, the *katharsis*, spoken of by the Greek critic; the life values are only poetic when they have come out heightened and changed into soul values. The poetic delight and beauty are born of a deeper rapture and not of the surface mind's excited interest and enjoyment of life and existence.

The ancient Indian critics defined the essence of poetry as *rasa* and by that word they meant a concentrated taste, a spiritual essence of emotion, an essential aesthesis, the soul's pleasure in the pure and perfect sources of feeling. The memory of the soul that takes in, broods over and transmutes the mind's thought, feeling and experience, is a large part of the process which comes by this aesthesis, but it is not quite the whole thing; it is rather only a common way by which we get at something that

stands behind, the spiritual being in us which has the secret of the universal delight and the eternal beauty of existence. That which we call genius works or comes out from something deep within which calls down the word, the vision, the light and power from a level above the normal mind and it is the sense of the inrush from above which makes the rapture and the enthusiasm of illumination and inspiration. That source, when we know better the secrets of our being, turns out to be the spiritual self with its diviner consciousness and knowledge, happier fountains of power, inalienable delight of existence. The cultures that were able directly or indirectly to feel the joy of this self and spirit, got into the very strain of their aesthesis the touch of its delight, its Ananda, and this touch was the secret of the generalised instinct for beauty which has been denied to a later mind limited by intellectual activity, practical utility and the externals of life : we have to go for it to exceptional individuals gifted with a finer strain, but the wide-spread aesthetic instinct has been lost and has yet to be recovered for the common mind and recognised one more as a part of human perfection as indispensable as intellectual knowledge and at least as necessary to happiness as vital well-being. But this Ananda, this delight, this aesthesis which is the soul of poetic beauty works like other things, like poetic truth or the poetic breath of life, on different levels, in different provinces of its action, with the same law that we have observed in the rest, of the emergence of a richer and profounder face of itself the more it gets inward and upward from the less to the more occult powers of its revelation. This finer soul of delight throws itself out on the physical mind and being, takes up its experiences and turns them by its own innate and peculiar power into things of beauty, fuses into itself the experiences of the life soul and transmutes to beauty their power and passion in the surge of its poetic ecstasy, takes up all life and form into the reflective thought-mind and changes

them in the beauty and rapture of thought discovering and embodying new values of soul and Nature and existence. And in all its working there is felt its own essence of an intuitive delight which acts in these moulds and gets into them whatever it can of its own intimate and eternal delight values. But when that intuitive mind self-finding, self-seeing, self-creating in a higher power of light and vision than is possible on the intellectual or other levels gets out into full play, and now there is some sign of this emergence, then we come nearer to the most potent sources of universal and eternal delight and beauty, nearer to its full and wide seeing, and its all-embracing rapture. This inner mind is the first native power of the self and spirit dropping its lower veils and the very life and aesthesis of the spirit in its creation is a life of self-experiencing spiritual delight and a luminous Ananda.

The beauty and delight of such a greater intuitive inspiration, a poetry of this spiritual Ananda making all existence luminous and wonderful and beautiful to us may be one of the gifts of the future. It is that of which we stand in need and of which there is some promise in the highest strains that we have now begun to hear. This change will mean that poetry may resume on a larger scale, with a wider and more shining vision the greater effect it once had on the life of the race in the noble antique cultures. At one time poetry was a revelation to the race of the life of the gods and man and the meaning of the world and the beauty and power of existence and through its vision and joy and the height and clarity of its purpose it became creative of the life of the people. Ananda, the joy of the spirit in itself carrying in it a revelation of the powers of its conscious being, was to the ancient Indian idea the creative principle, and ancient poetry did thus creatively reveal to the people its soul and its possibilities by forms of beauty and suggestions of power in a way we have to a great extent lost by our later pettier use of this

always great art and medium. One might almost say that ancient India was created by the Veda and Upanishads and that the visions of inspired seers made a people. That sublime poetry with its revelation of godhead and the joy and power of life and truth and immortality or its revelation of the secrets of the self and the powers of its manifestation in man and the universe and of man's return to self-knowledge got into the very blood and mind and life of the race and made itself the fountain-head of all that incessant urge to spirituality which has been its distinguishing gift and cultural motive. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana revealing to it in forms of noble beauty and grandiose or beautiful or telling types of character the joy of its forms of life, the significance of its spiritual, ethical and aesthetic ideals, the powers and dangers of the human soul, its godheads and its titanisms have played a great and well-recognised formative part second only to religion and the stress of religio-social training in the life of the Indian peoples. And even later the religious poetry of the Vaishnavas, Shaivas, Shaktas has entered powerfully into the life of the nation and helped to shape its temperament and soul-type. The effect of the Homeric poems in Greece, the intimate connection of poetry and art with the public life of Athens sprang from a similar but less steep height of poetic and artistic motive. The epic poems revealed the Hellenic people to itself in the lucid and clear nobility and beauty of an uplifting of life and an aesthetic sense of the humanity and divinity of man; the later art and poetry interpreted to Athens her religious ideas, her thought, her aesthetic instincts, the soul of grandeur and beauty of her culture.

And in all these instances, as in others like the art and poetry of Japan and of China, a more or less profoundly intuitive creation from the depths and expression through poetic delight of the soul of a people has been the secret of this effect and this power of creation or influence. But in

other times and places poetry has been more a servant of aesthetic pleasure than a creative master of life and great spiritual agent; when it is at all great, it cannot fail to be that to a certain extent, but it has not so acted as a whole, centrally, in the same large and effective way or with the same high conscience of its function. It has leaned too much on the surface or external interests of life for the pleasure of the intellect and imagination and failed too much to create life from within by a deeper delight in the power of vision of the soul and spirit. The high energy of English poetry has done great and interesting things; it has portrayed life with charm and poetic interest in Chaucer, made thought and character and action and passion wonderful to the life soul in us in Shakespeare, seen and spoken with nobility and grandeur of vision and voice in Milton, intellectualised vigorous or pointed commonplace in Pope and Dryden, played with elegance and beauty on the lesser strings with the Victorians or cast out here and there a profounder strain of thought or more passionate and aspiring voice, and if the most spiritual strains have been few, yet it has dreamed in light in Shelley or drawn close in Wordsworth to the soul in Nature. And it may seem hard to say in the face of all this splendour and vigour and glow and beauty and of the undeniable cultural influence, that something was too often lacking which would have made the power of this poetry more central and intimate and a greater direct force on the life of the people, and yet this is, I think, true in spite of exceptions, not only here, but of almost all the later European literature. To get back to a profounder centre, to create from within in a more universal power of the spirit and its vision and delight of existence will supply the missing element and make poetry once again young and mighty and creative and its word deeply effective on life by the power of a greater Ananda.

The mind of man, a little weary now of the superfi-

cial pleasure of the life and intellect, demands, obscurely still, not yet perceiving what will satisfy it, a poetry of the joy of self, of the deeper beauty and delight of existence. A merely cultured poetry fair in form and word and playing on the surface strings of mind and emotion will not serve its purpose. The human mind is opening to an unprecedented largeness of vision of the greatness of the worlds, the wonder of life, the self of man, the mystery of the spirit in him and the universe. The future poetry must seek in that vision its inspiration, and the greater its universality of joy in existence, the more it seeks through intuitive sight and aesthesis the deepest fountains of poetic delight and beauty, the more it will become powerfully creative of a greater life for the race. The modern poet is perfectly right in a way in breaking down in whatever direction the bounds erected by the singers of the past around their magic palace and its grounds; he must claim all things in heaven or earth or beyond for his portion: but that care for a fine poetic beauty and delight which they safeguarded by excluding all or most that did not readily obey its law or turn to fair material of poetic shaping, he must preserve as jealously and satisfy by steeping all that he finds in his wider field in that profoundest vision which delivers out of each thing its spiritual Ananda, the secret of truth and beauty in it for which it was created; it is in the sense of that spiritual joy of vision, and not in any lower sensuous, intellectual or imaginative seeing, that Keats' phrase becomes true for the poet, beauty that is truth, truth that is beauty, and this all that we need to know as the law of our aesthetic knowledge. He is right too in wishing to make poetry more intimately one with life, but again in this sense only, in going back to those creative fountains of the spirit's Ananda from which life is seen and reshaped by the vision that springs from a moved identity,—the inmost source of the authentic poet vision. The beauty and delight of all physical things illumined by the

wonder of the secret spiritual self that is the inhabitant and self-sculptor of form, the beauty and delight of the thousand-coloured, many-crested million-waved miracle of life made a hundred times more profoundly meaningful by the greatness and the sweetness and attracting poignancy of the self-creating inmost soul which makes of life its epic and its drama and its lyric, the beauty and delight of the spirit in thought, the seer, the thinker, the interpreter of his own creation and being who broods over all he is and does in man and the world and constantly resees and shapes it new by the stress and power of his thinking, this will be the substance of the greater poetry that has yet to be written. And that can be discovered only if and so far as the soul of man looks or feels beyond even these things and sees and voices the eternal and knows its godheads and gets to some close inward touch of the infinite ecstasy which is the source of the universal delight and beauty. For the nearer we get to the absolute Ananda, the greater becomes our joy in man and the universe and the receptive and creative spiritual emotion which needs for its voice the moved tones of poetic speech.

ERRATUM

For	page	450	read	500
	,,	451	,,	501
	,,	452	,,	502
	,,	453	,,	503
	,,	454	,,	504

आर्य

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th April 1920

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA..... Aurobindo Ghose
The Supreme Secret (1)

THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... Paul Richard
The Eternity of Beings

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G.
Ch. LXV. The Action of the Divine Shakti

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE XV

THE FUTURE POETRY
The Power of the Spirit

RUPAM

Essays on the Gita

THE SUPREME SECRET

(1)

The Teacher has completed all else that he needed to say, worked out all the central principles and the supporting suggestions and implications of his message, elucidated the principal doubts and questions that might rise around it, and now all that rests for him to do is to put in decisive phrase and penetrating formula the one last word, the heart itself of the message, the very core of his gospel. And we find that this decisive, last and crowning word does not merely give the essence of what has been already said, the concentrated description of the self-discipline, the Sadhana, and the greater spiritual consciousness which is the result of its effort and its askesis, but sweeps out, as it were, yet farther, breaks down every limit and rule, canon and formula and opens into a wide and illimitable spiritual truth of an infinite potentiality of significance. And that is a sign of the profundity, the wide reach, the greatness of spirit of its teaching. An ordinary religious teaching or philosophical doctrine is well enough satisfied to seize on certain great and vital aspects of truth and turn them into utilisable dogma and instruction, method and practice for the guidance of man in his inner life and the law and form of his action ; it does not go farther, it does not open doors out of the circle of its own system,

does not lead us out into some widest freedom and unimprisoned largeness. This limitation is useful and indeed for a time indispensable. Man bounded by his mind and will has need of a law and rule, a fixed system, a definite practice selective of his thought and action, he asks for a hewn path hedged, fixed and secure to the tread, the limited horizons, the enclosed resting-places. It is only the strong and few who can move through freedom to freedom. And yet in the end the free soul ought to have an issue out of the forms and systems in which the mind finds its account and takes pleasure. To exceed our ladder of ascent, not to stop short even on the topmost stair, but move untrammelled and at large in the wideness of the spirit, is a release important for our perfection, the spirit's absolute liberty our perfect status. And this is how the Gita leads us: it lays down a firm and sure but very large way of ascent, a great Dharma, and then it takes us out beyond all that is laid down, beyond all dharmas, into infinitely open spaces, divulges to us the hope, lets us into the secret of an absolute perfection founded in an absolute spiritual liberty, and that secret, *gûhyatamam*, is the substance of what it calls its supreme word, the hidden thing, the inmost knowledge.

And first the Gita restates the body of its message, the whole outline and essence, in the short space of fifteen verses, lines of a brief and concentrated expression and significance which miss nothing of the kernel of the matter and are of the most lucid precision and clearness. And they have therefore to be scanned with care—being read always in the light of all that has gone before—because here it is evidently intended to extract what the Gita itself considers to be the central sense of its own teaching. The statement sets out from the starting-point of the thought in the book, the enigma of human action, the difficulty of living in the highest self and spirit and yet doing the works of the world. The easiest way is to give

up the problem as insoluble, life and action as an illusion or an inferior movement of existence to be abandoned as soon as we can rise out of the snare of the world into the truth of spiritual being. That is the ascetic solution, if solution it can be called, but at any rate a decisive and effective way out, to which ancient Indian thought of the highest and most meditative kind turning away at an incline from a first large and free synthesis was moving with an always increasing preponderance. The Gita like the Tantra and on certain sides the later religions attempts to preserve, maintaining the original substance and foundation, but in another form and in the light of a developing spiritual experience the ancient balance. It does not back out of the difficult problem of reconciling the full active life of man with the inner life in the highest self and spirit, it advances what it holds to be the real solution. It does not at all deny the efficacy of the ascetic renunciation of life for its own purpose, but it sees that it cuts instead of loosening the knot of the riddle and therefore it accounts it an inferior method and its own the better way. The two paths both lead us out of the lower ignorant normal nature of man to the pure spiritual consciousness and so far must both be held to be valid and even one in essence : but where one stops short, the other goes on, completes man in God and unites and reconciles in the spirit soul and Nature.

And therefore in the first five of these verses the Gita so phrases its statement that it shall be applicable to both the way of the inner and the way of the outer renunciation, and we have only to give some of their common expressions a deeper and more inward meaning to get the sense and thought of the method favoured by the Gita. The difficulty of human action is that the soul and nature of man seem fatally subjected to many kinds of bondage, the bondage of ignorance, of the ego, of the passions, of the life of the moment, an obscure and limited circle without an is-

sue. The soul shut up in this circle of action has no freedom, no leisure or light of self-knowledge to make the discovery of its self, except such hints of its being as it can get from its active personality, and the standards of its perfection it can erect there are much too temporal, restricted and relative to be a satisfactory key of its own riddle. How, while absorbed and continually forced outward by the call of its active nature, is it to get back to its real self and spiritual existence? The ascetic renunciation and the way of the Gita are both agreed that it must renounce this absorption and, casting from it the external sollicitation of outward things, must first separate silent self from active nature and be able to identify itself with and live in the silence. It must first arrive at an inner inactivity, *naishkarmya*. It is therefore this saving inner passivity that the Gita puts here as the first object of its Yoga, the first necessary perfection in it or Siddhi. "An understanding without attachment in all things, a soul self-conquered and empty of desire, man attains by renunciation a supreme perfection of *naishkarmya*".

This ideal of renunciation, of a self-conquered stillness, spiritual passivity and freedom from desire is common to all the ancient wisdom. The Gita gives us its psychological foundation with an unsurpassed completeness and clearness. It rests on the common experience of all seekers of self-knowledge that there are two different natures and as it were two selves in us, the lower self of the ignorant mental, vital and physical nature subject to ignorance and inertia in the very stuff of its consciousness and especially in its basis of material substance, kinetic and vital indeed by the power of life but without inherent self-possession and self-knowledge in its action, attaining indeed to some knowledge and harmony, but only with difficult effort and by a constant struggle with its own disabilities, and the higher nature and self of our spiritual being self-possessed and self-luminous but in our ordinary

mentality inaccessible to our experience; for we get glimpses of it, but do not live in its light and calm. The first is the Gita's nature of the three gunas. Its seeing of itself is centred in the ego idea, its principle of action is desire born of ego whose knot is an attachment to the objects of the mind and sense, and the inevitable constant result of all these things is bondage, subjection to a lower control, absence of self-mastery, absence of self-knowledge. The other is the nature and being of the pure spirit unconditioned by ego, that which is called in Indian philosophy self and impersonal Brahman. Its principle of being is an infinite and an impersonal existence one and the same in all; and, since this impersonal existence is without ego, conditioning quality or desire, it is immutable, eternally the same, and regards and supports but does not share or initiate the action of the universe. The soul throwing itself out in its active Nature is the Gita's kshara or mutable Purusha; gathered back into pure silent self and essential spirit, it is the Gita's akshara or immutable Purusha.

Then evidently the straight and simplest way to get out of the close bondage of the active nature and back to spiritual freedom is to cast away entirely all that belongs to the first and to convert the soul into a pure spiritual existence. That is what is called becoming Brahman, *brahmabhûya*. It is to put off the lower mental and to put on the pure spiritual being. That can best be done by the intelligence and will, buddhi, turning away from the things of the lower existence and first and foremost from its effective knot, attachment to the objects pursued by the mind and senses. One must become an understanding unattached in all things, *asaktabuddhih sarvatra*. Then all desire passes away from the being, it is free from all longings, *vigata-spriha*. That brings with it or it makes possible the conquest of the lower and the possession of the higher self which begins by a complete self-mastery, *jitâtmâ*. And all this amounts to a complete inner renun-

ciation, *sannyâsa*. Renunciation is the way to this perfection and the man who has thus renounced inwardly is described by the Gita as the true Sannyasin. But because the word usually signifies as well an outward renunciation or sometimes even that alone, it uses another word, *tyâga*, to distinguish the inward from the outward renunciation and says that Tyaga is better than Sannyasa. The ascetic way goes farther, is enamoured of renunciation for its own sake, insists on an outward giving up of life and action, a complete quietism of soul and nature. That, the Gita replies, is not possible entirely so long as we live in the body. It may be done so far as possible, but such a rigorous diminution of works is neither indispensable nor really or ordinarily advisable. A complete inner quietism is the Gita's sense of *naishkarmya*. If we ask why this should be when our object is to become the pure self or Brahman, and the pure self is described as inactive, *akartâ*, the answer is that that is not the whole truth of our spiritual being. Self and Nature are in the end one thing; a perfect spirituality makes us one with all the Divine both in self and in nature; the becoming Brahman on the side of self, *brahmabhûya*, is only the necessary base for a greater divine becoming, *madbhâva*. And to get that greatest spiritual perfection we have to be silent in the self, but to act in the highest spiritual power of the self, Prakriti. And if we ask how that simultaneity of what seem to be two opposites is possible, the answer is that this is the very nature of our being. The impersonal self is silent; we too have inwardly to be silent, impersonal, withdrawn into the self. The impersonal self looks on all action as done not by it but by Prakriti and regards with a pure equality all the working of her qualities; and the soul too impersonalised in the self has so to regard all our actions, as done not by itself but by the qualities of Prakriti, and to be equal to all things. And in order that we may not stop here, in order that we may eventually go

farther and find a spiritual rule and direction in our works we have to impose on the intelligence and will the attitude of offering all this action as a sacrifice to the Lord of Nature, the Being of whom she is the self-power, *swâ prakritih*, the supreme Spirit, and eventually to give it up all into his hands and keep our natural selves only as an instrument of his works. These things have been already explained fully and the Gita does not here insist, but uses simply without farther qualification the common terms, *sannyâsa* and *naishkarmya*.

The completest inner quietism once admitted as a necessary means for living in the pure impersonal self, how practically it brings that about is the next question. "Having attained this perfection, how one thus attains to the Brahman, hear from me, O son of Kunti,—that which is the supreme concentrated direction of the knowledge." The knowledge meant here is the Yoga of the Sankhyas,—the Yoga of pure knowledge as it is described in the Gita, *jnâna-yogena sânkhyânâm*, so far as it is one with its own Yoga which includes also the way of works of the Yogins, *karmayogena yoginâm*. But for the moment all mention of works is kept back. For by Brahman here is meant at first the silent, the impersonal, the immutable. The Brahman indeed is both for the Upanishads and the Gita all that is and lives and moves and not only an impersonal Infinite or an unthinkable and incommunicable Absolute, *achintyam avyavahâryam*. All this is Brahman, says the Upanishad, all this is Vasudeva, says the Gita, the supreme Brahman is all that moves or is stable and his hands and feet and eyes and heads and faces are on every side of us. But still there are two aspects of this All; there is this immutable eternal self of him that supports existence and there is the power of the self that moves abroad in the world movement. It is by losing our limited ego personality in the impersonality of the self that we can best arrive at the calm and free oneness by which we shall possess

also unity with the universal power of the Divine in his world movement. Impersonality is a denial of limitation and division, and the cult of impersonality is a condition of true being, true knowledge and therefore of true action. It is very clear that we cannot become one self with all or one with the universal Spirit and his vast self-knowledge, will and world-purpose by insisting on our limited personality; for that divides us from others and it makes us bound and self-centred in our view and our will in action. Imprisoned in personality we can only get at a limited union by sympathy, by some relative accomodation of ourselves to the view-point and feeling and will of others. To be one with all and with the Divine and his will in the cosmos we must become at first impersonal and free from our ego and its claims and from the ego's way of seeing ourselves and the world and others. And we cannot do this if there is not something in our being other than the ego, an impersonal self one with all existences. To lose ego and be this impersonal self, to become this impersonal Brahman in our consciousness is the first movement of this Yoga.

How then is this to be done? First, says the Gita, by a union of our purified intelligence with the pure spiritual being in us by the yoga of the buddhi, *buddhyâ vishuddhayâ yuktah.* This spiritual turning of the buddhi is the essence of the Yoga of knowledge. The purified understanding has to control the whole being, *atmânam niyamya,* and draw it away from attachment to the outward-going desires of the lower nature by a firm and a steady will, *dhrityâ,* which in its concentration faces entirely towards the impersonality of the pure spirit. The senses to abandon their objects, the mind to cast away the liking and disliking which they excite in it,—for the impersonal self has no desires and repulsions, these are mental reactions of our personality to the touches of things, and the response of the mind and senses to these touches is their basis,—a

complete control to be acquired over the mind, speech and body, over even the vital and physical reactions, such as hunger and cold and heat and physical pleasure and pain, so that the whole being shall become indifferent to and unaffected by these things and equal to all outward touches and to their inward reactions, this is the most direct and powerful method. There has to be a complete cessation of desire and attachment, *vairâgya*, a resort to impersonal solitude, a constant union with the inmost self by meditation. The object is not to be self-centred in some supreme egoistic seclusion and tranquillity of the sage and thinker averse to the trouble of participation in the world-action ; the object is to get rid of the ego. One must put away utterly first the rajasic egoism, egoistic strength and violence, arrogance, desire, wrath, the sense and instinct of possession, and then egoism of all kinds, even of the most sattwic type, and make oneself free from all I-ness and my-ness, *nirmama*. The extinction of ego and its demands of all sorts is the method put before us. For the pure impersonal self which supports the universe has no egoism, makes no demand on thing or person, is calm, is luminously impassive and silently regards all things and persons with an equal and impartial eye of self-knowledge and world-knowledge. Then clearly it is by living inwardly in such an impersonality that the soul within, released from the siege of things, can best become capable of oneness with the immutable Brahman which regards and knows but is not affected by the forms and mutations of the universe.

This first pursuit of impersonality brings with it evidently a certain completest inner quietism and is identical in its inner parts and principles of practice with the method of Sannyasa. And yet there is a point at which its tendency of withdrawal from the claims of the external world is checked and a limit imposed to prevent the inner quietism from deepening into the physical withdrawal.

The renunciation of their objects by the senses, *viçayâns twaktwâ*, is to be of the nature of Tyaga, is to be a giving up of the sensuous attachment, *rasa*, but is not to be a refusal of the the intrinsic necessary activity of the senses. One must move among and act on the objects of the sense-field with a pure and simple operation of the senses for their utility to the spirit in divine action, *kevalair indriyaiç charan*, and not for the fulfilment of desire. There is to be *vairâgya*, not in the common significance of disgust of life or distaste for the world action, but of the giving up of *raga*, as also of its opposite, *dwesha*, of all mental liking as of all mental disliking, so that there may be a perfect equality in which the spirit can give an unhampered and unlimited assent to the integral and comprehensive divine vision of things and divine action in Nature. The continual resort to meditation, *dhyânayoga-paro nityam*, is the given means by which the soul of man can realise its spiritual self, and yet there is to be no abandonment of the active life for a life of pure spiritual meditation ; action is always to be done as a sacrifice to the supreme Spirit. This movement of recoil which in the path of Sannyasa is a preparation for absorption in the Brahman by the giving up of action and life in the world, is in the Gita's path of Tyaga a preparation for the turning of the whole life and existence into a oneness with the being, consciousness and will of the Divine and the passing upward of the soul out of the lower ego to the perfection of the supreme spiritual nature, *parâ prakriti*.

The decisive departure is indicated in the next two verses, of which the first runs with a significant sequence, "When one has become the Brahman, neither grieves nor desires and is equal to all beings, then one gets the supreme love and devotion to Me." But in the other path of knowledge bhakti, devotion to the personal Godhead, can be only an inferior preparatory movement and the end is the disappearance of personality in a featureless oneness

with the impersonal Brahman in which there is no place for bhakti because there is none to adored and none to adore : all else is lost in the identity of the Jiva with the Atman. Here there is given to us something higher than the Impersonal,—the supreme Self, the supreme Soul with its supreme nature, the Purushottama who is beyond the personal and impersonal and reconciles them in his being. The ego personality disappears in the silence of the Impersonal, but at the same time there remains even with this silence at the back the action of a supreme Self greater than the Impersonal, no longer the lower action of the ego and the three gunas, but the self-determining movement of an infinite spiritual Force, Shakti, all Nature becoming the power of the one Divine Being and all action the action of the Divine through the individual as channel and instrument. In place of the ego there is manifest the true spiritual individual in his real nature, status, relation to the Divine, a portion of the supreme Godhead, *mamaivangshah sanâtanah, parâprakritir jîvabhûta.* The soul of man then feels itself to be one in a supreme spiritual impersonality with the Purushottama and still in its universalised personality a manifest power of his being; its knowledge is a light of his knowledge, its will a force of his will, its unity with all in the universe a play of his eternal oneness. It is in this double realisation, this union of two sides of an ineffable Truth of existence by either or both of which man can approach his infinite being, that the liberated man has to live, act, feel, determine or rather have determined for him by a power of his supreme self his relations with all and all the inner and outer workings of his spirit. And in that realisation adoration, love, devotion are not only still possible, but are a large, a crowning portion of the highest experience. The One who eternally becomes the Many, the Many who in their apparent division are still eternally one, and the Highest who displays in us this secret and mystery of existence,

this is the integral knowledge, the reconciling experience which makes one capable of liberated action, *muktasya karma*.

This knowledge comes, says the Gita, by bhakti. It is attained when the mind exceeds itself by the supramental, the high spiritual seeing of things and when the heart too rises in unison beyond the more ignorant mental forms of love and devotion to the love that is luminous with the widest knowledge, to the supreme delight and adoration of the Divine, to the spiritual Ananda. When the soul by losing the separative personality has become the Brahman then, living in the true Person, it attains to a supreme bhakti for the Purushottama and comes to know him utterly by the power of that bhakti, *bhaktyâ mâm abhijânâti*.. This is the integral knowledge, *samagram mâm jnâtwâ*. "He comes to know Me" says the Gita "who and how much I am, in all the reality and principles of my being, *yâvân yaschâsmi tattwatah*." This integral knowledge is the knowledge of the Divine present in the individual, the Lord secret in the heart of man, but revealed now as the supreme self of his existence, the Sun of all his knowledge, the Master and Power of all his works, the divine Fountain of all his soul's love and delight, the Lover and Beloved of his worship and adoration. It is the knowledge too of the Divine extended in the universe, the Eternal from whom all proceeds and in whom all lives and has its being, the Self and Spirit of the cosmos, Vasudeva who has become all this that is, the Lord of all cosmic existence and of all the works of Nature. And it is the knowledge too of the divine Purusha luminous in his transcendent eternity, the form of whose being escapes all thought of the mind, the absolute Self, Brahman, Soul, Godhead, who is at the same time even in that highest status the originating Spirit of the cosmic action and Lord of all these beings. The soul of the liberated man then enters by a reconciling knowledge, by a perfect delight in the transcendent

Divine, the Divine in the individual, the Divine in the universe, into the Purushottama, *mam viçate tadanantaram.* He becomes one with him in his self-knowledge and self-experience, one in being and consciouness and knowledge and will, one with him in the universe and in his unity with all beings in the universe and one with him beyond world and individual in the transcendence of the eternal being, *çâçwatam padam avyayam.* This is the culmination of the supreme bhakti that is the core of the supreme knowledge,

And it then becomes evident how action continual and unceasing and of all kinds without diminution or abandonment of any part of the activities of human life can be not only quite consistent with but as much as and along with bhakti and knowledge a means of reaching this highest spiritual condition. "And by doing also all actions always lodged in Me he attains by my grace the eternal and imperishable status." This liberating action is of the nature of works done in a union of the will and active part of our being with the Divine in ourself and the world, first as a sacrifice with the idea still of our self as the doer, then without that idea and with a perception of the Prakriti as the sole doer, then with the knowledge of that Prakriti as the supreme power of the Divine and a giving up of all our actions to him with our individual being as the channel only and the instrument. Our works then proceed from the Self and Divine within us and are a part of the indivisible universal action and are performed for the sake of the Lord seated in the heart of every man, the Godhead in the individual being and the fulfilment of his will in us, for the sake of the Divine in the world and for the good of all beings and the fulfilment of the world action and the world-purpose, for the sake of the Purushottama and done really by him through his universal Shakti. These divine works, whatever their form or outward character, cannot bind, but are rather a potent means

for rising out of this lower nature of the three gunas and their mixed or limited dharmas to the perfection of the supreme, divine and spiritual nature and the immortal Dharma which comes by being one in all our consciousness with the Purushottama. That oneness brings the power to rise to and exist in his eternal transcendence.

Thus these eight verses carefully read in the light of the knowledge already given by the Teacher are a brief, but still a comprehensive indication of the whole essential idea of the complete Yoga of the Gita.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK III

I

THE ETERNITY OF BEINGS

He who has a mistaken idea of life, will always have a mistaken idea of death.—He who looks on the forms of existence as a form or a mirage, shall not see death.—He who regards the body as a mirage or as a flake of foam on the waves, shall no longer see death.—In death he sees life.

The individual dies, the kind is indestructible. The individual is the expression in time of the kind which is outside time.

Men perish because they cannot join the beginning and the end.

All existences are unmanifest in their origin and beginning, manifest in their middle and unmanifest again in their passing; what cause is here to lament?

The soul that dwells in the body of every man is unslayable, and therefore thou shouldst not weep for all these beings.—The wise weep not for the dead nor the living: all of us were before and shall not cease to be hereafter.

There is no death, the word mortal has no signifi-

1) Tolstoy.—2) Sanyutta Nikaya.—3) Dhammapada.—4) Bâha-ullah.—5) Schopenhauer.—6) Alcineon.—7) Bhagavad Gita. II. 28. —8) id. II. 30.—9) id. II. 11, 12.—10) Hermes.

cance ; death would be destruction and nothing is destroyed in the universe.

*
* *

11 The destruction of things is their return to the
12 cause that has produced them.—The origin of things is the Infinite : necessarily they disappear into that which put them into birth.

13 I will say more : there is no birth of terrestrial things and there is no disappearance of them by death's destruction, but only a reunion and a separation of materials assembled together : birth is only a
14 word habitual to the human mind.—None dies except in appearance. In fact what is called birth is the passage from essence to substance, and what is called death is on the contrary the passage from substance to essence. Nothing is born and nothing dies in reality, but all first appears and then becomes invisible. The first effect is produced by the density of matter, the second by the subtlety of essence which remains always the same but is sometimes in movement, sometimes in repose.

15 Nothing dies, but what was composed is divided : this division is not a death, it is the analysis of a combination; but the aim of this analysis is not destruction, it is a renewal.

16 Life begins a long series of transformations, manifesting itself under innumerable forms, fashioning for itself in the sequence of the ages a multitude of transitory but ever more perfect organisms, thus per-
17 fecting itself by the progress of its faculties.—Perfec-

11) Sankhya Pravachana.—12) Anaximander.—13) Empedocles.—14) Apollonius of Tyana.—15) Hermes.—16) Antoine the Healer.—17) Confucius.

tion is the end and the beginning of all things, and without perfection they could not be.

*
* *

18 There is an eternal Thinker, but his thoughts are not eternal.

19 All that is has already existed, but will not remain
20 in the form in which we see it today.—All that exists in the world, without exception, is the seat of a movement of augmentation or of diminution. All that moves is alive, and the universal life is a necessary transformation : nothing is destroyed and nothing lost. If that is so, all is immortal, matter, life, intelligence, the breath, the soul, all that constitutes the living being.

21 Nothing is born of nothing, nothing can be annihilated, each commencement of being is only a transformation.

22 Life and death, waking and sleep, youth and age are one and the same thing, for one changes into the
23 other, that into this.—All that is born, is corrupted to
24 be born again.—There is in all this only transformations of things one into another; there is no annihilation: a regulated order, a disposition of the ensemble, that is all. There is nothing else in a departure, it is only a slight change. There is nothing else in death, it is only a great change. The actual being changes, not into a non-existence, but into something it is not at present.

25 All manifest things are born from that which is unmanifest at the coming of the day, and when the night arrives they dissolve into the unmanifest ; thus

18) Katha Upanishad.—19) Baha-ullah.—20) Hermes.—21) Thales. —22) Heraclitus.—23) Hermes.—24) Epictetus. 25) Bhagavad Gita, VIII. 18, 20.

all this host of beings continually come into existence and they disappear at the advent of the night and are born with the approach of the day. But beyond the non-manifestation of things there is another and greater unmanifest state of being which is supreme and eternal, and when all existences perish, that does
26 not perish.—The world possesses a thought and a sensation which is not like that of man nor so varied but superior and more simple. The world has only one sentiment, only one thought, to create all
27 things and make them reenter into itself.—This universal order is the same for everything; neither God nor man has created it; it has always been, it is and will be always an eternally living Fire which kindles itself periodically and is again extinguished.
28 The work of eternity is the world, which has not been produced once for all but is always produced by eternity. Thus it will never perish, for eternity is imperishable, and nothing is lost in the world because the world is enveloped in eternity.

*
* *

29 All goes, all returns, the wheel of existence turns for ever. All dies, all reblossoms, the cycle of existence pursues its course for ever. All is broken, and all again brought together, the same structure of existence is built and rebuilt for ever. All separates and greets again, the ring of existence is faithful to itself for ever. Existence is beginning at each moment.

30 There where all ends, all is eternally beginning.

31 Time which destroys the universe, must again cre-
32 ate the worlds.—Time takes away everything and

26) Hermes.—27) Heraclitus.—28) Hermes.—29) Nietzsche.—30) Hermes.—31) Mahabharata.—32) Giordano Bruno.

gives everything; all changes but nothing is abolished, it is a thing immutable, eternal and always identical and one.

33 There exists an unborn, an unproduced, uncreated, unformed. If this Permanent did not exist, there would be no possible issue for that which belongs to the world of the born, the produced, the created, the formed.

34 But since there is a Permanent, there is also a possible issue for that which belongs to the world of the impermanence.

35 The smallest drop of water united to the ocean no
36 longer dries.—If the atom is lost in the sun of immensity, it will participate, although a simple atom, in its eternal duration.

*
* *

37 What is it that is? It is that which was. And what is it that was? It is that which is. There is noth-
38 ing new under the sun.—The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be, and that which is done, it is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already
39 of old time which was before us.—That which is not cannot come to being and that which is cannot cease
40 to be.—That which is in all reality cannot begin to be
41 nor be annihilated.—That which is was always and al-
42 ways will be.—All that exists in the world, has always
43 existed.—There is no before or after: what will
44 come tomorrow, is in fact in eternity—The question "What will happen" belongs to time; the soul is outside time. The soul has not been and will not

33) Udanavarga.—34) id.—35) A Hindu Thought.—36) Farid-ud-din-attar.—37) Giordano Bruno.—38) Ecclesiastes. VIII. 9, 18. —39) Bhagavad Gita. II. 16.—40) Schopenhauer.—41) Melessus.—42) Antoine the Healer.—43) Angelus Silesius.—44) Tolstoy.

be, it always is. If it were not, there would be nothing.

45 Nothing is lost in the world because the world
46 is enveloped in eternity. — What is cannot perish.
47 —There is not a grain of dust, not an atom that can become nothing, yet man believes that death is the
48 annihilation of his being — Madmen are they, and counselled by an imprisoned mind and by narrow thoughts, who think that what was not before can be born or what is be utterly abolished in death and
49 dissolution.—There is nothing, whether in its totality or its parts, which is not living :...how can that be corrupted which is a part of the incorruptible or
50 something of God perish ?—The thought of God is the movement of the universe : never at any time can there perish a being, that is to say, a portion of God, for God contains all beings; nothing is outside
51 him and he is outside of nothing.—All beings are from all eternity.

---

45) Hermes.—46 Apollonius of Tyana.—47) Schopenhauer.—48) Empedocles.—49 Hermes.—50) id.—51) Açwaghosha.

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LXV

THE ACTION OF THE DIVINE SHAKTI

This is the nature of the divine Shakti that it is the timeless power of the Divine which manifests itself in time as a universal force creating, constituting, maintaining and directing all the movements and workings of the universe. This universal Power is apparent to us first on the lower levels of existence as a mental, vital and material cosmic energy of which all our mental, vital and physical activities are the operations. It is necessary for our sadhana that we should thoroughly realise this truth in order to escape from the pressure of the limiting ego view and universalise ourselves even on these lower levels where ordinarily the ego reigns in full force. To see that we are not the originators of action but that it is rather this Power that acts in ourselves and in all others, not I and others the doers, but the one Prakriti, which is the rule of the Karmayoga, is also the right rule here. The ego sense serves to limit, separate and sharply differentiate, to make the most of the individual form and it is there because it is indispensable to the evolution of the lower life. But when we would rise above to a higher divine life we must loosen the force of the ego and eventually get rid of

it—as for the lower life the development of ego, so for the higher life this reverse movement of elimination of the ego is indispensable. To see our actions as not our own but those of the divine Shakti working in the form of the lower Prakriti on the inferior levels of the conscious being, helps powerfully towards this change. And if we can do this, then the separation of our mental, vital and physical consciousness from that of other beings thins and lessens; the limitations of its workings remain indeed, but they are broadened and taken up into a large sense and vision of the universal working; the specialising and individualising differentiations of Nature abide for their own proper purpose, but are no longer a prison. The individual feels his mind, life and physical existence to be one with that of others amid all differences and one with the total power of the spirit in Nature.

This however is a stage and not the whole perfection. The existence, however comparatively large and free, is still subject to the inferior nature. The sattwic, rajasic and tamasic ego is diminished but not eliminated; or if it seems to disappear, it has only sunk in our parts of action into the universal operation of the gunas, remains involved in them and is still working in a covert, subconscient fashion and may force itself to the front at any time. The sadhaka has therefore first to keep the idea and get the realisation of a one self or spirit in all behind all these workings. He must be aware behind Prakriti of the one supreme and universal Purusha. He must see and feel not only that all is the self-shaping of the one Force, Prakriti or Nature, but that all her actions are those of the Divine in all, the one Godhead in all, however veiled, altered and as it were perverted—for perversion comes by a conversion into lower forms—by transmission through the ego and the gunas. This will farther diminish the open or covert insistence of the ego and, if thoroughly realised, it will make it difficult or impossible for it to assert itself in

such a way as to disturb or hamper the farther progress. The ego-sense will become so far as it interferes at all, a foreign intrusive element and only a fringe of the mist of the old ignorance hanging on to the outskirts of the consciousness and its action. And, secondly, the universal Shakti must be realised, must be seen and felt and borne in the potent purity of its higher action, its supramental and spiritual workings. This greater vision of the Shakti will enable us to escape from the control of the gunas, to convert them into their divine equivalents and dwell in a consciousness in which the Purusha and Prakriti are one and not separated or hidden in or behind each other. There the Shakti will be in its every movement evident to us and naturally, spontaneously, irresistibly felt as nothing else but the active presence of the Divine, the shape of power of the supreme Self and Spirit.

The Shakti in this higher status reveals itself as the presence or potentiality of the infinite existence, consciousness, will, delight, and when it is so seen and felt, the being turns towards it in whatever way, with its adoration or its will of aspiration or some kind of attraction of the lesser to the greater, to know it, to be full of and possessed by it, to be one with it in the sense and action of the whole nature. But at first while we still live in the mind, there is a gulf of division or else a double action. The mental, vital and physical energy in us and the universe is felt to be a derivation from the supreme Shakti, but at the same time an inferior, separated and in some sense another working. The real spiritual force may send down its messages or the light and power of its presence above us to the lower levels or may descend occasionally and even for a time possess, but it is then mixed with the inferior workings and partially transforms and spiritualises them, but is itself diminished and altered in the process. There is an intermittent higher action or a dual working of the nature. Or we find that the Shakti for a time raises

the being to a higher spiritual plane and then lowers it it back into the inferior levels. These alternations must be regarded as the natural vicissitudes of a process of transformation from the normal to the spiritual being. The transformation, the perfection cannot for the integral Yoga be complete until the link between the mental and the spiritual action is formed and a higher knowledge applied to all the activities of our existence. That link is the supramental or gnostic energy in which the incalculable infinite power of the supreme being, consciousness, delight formulates itself as an ordering divine will and wisdom, a light and power in the being which shapes all the thought, will, feeling, action and replaces the corresponding individual movements.

This supramental Shakti may form itself as a spiritualised intuitive light and power in the mind itself, and that is a great but still a mentally limited spiritual action. Or it may transform altogether the mind and raise the whole being to the supramental level. In any case this is the first necessity of this part of the Yoga, to lose the ego of the doer, the ego idea and the sense of one's own power of action and initiation of action and control of the result of action and merge it in the sense and vision of the universal Shakti originating, shaping, turning to its ends the action of ourselves and others and of all the persons and forces of the world. And this realisation can become absolute and complete in all the parts of our being only if we can have that sense and vision of it in all its forms, on all the levels of our being and the world being, as the material, vital, mental and supramental energy of the Divine, but all these, all the powers of all the planes must be seen and known as self-formulations of the one spiritual Shakti, infinite in being, consciousness and Ananda. It is not the invariable rule that this power should first manifest itself on the lower levels in the lower forms of energy and then reveal its higher spiritual nature. And

if it does so come, first in its mental, vital or physical universalism, we must be careful not to rest content there. It may come instead at once in its higher reality, in the might of the spiritual splendour. The difficulty then will be to bear and hold the Power until it has laid powerful hands on and transformed the energies of the lower levels of the being. The difficulty will be less in proportion as we have been able to attain to a large quiet and equality, *samatâ*, and either to realise, feel and live in the one tranquil immutable self in all or else to make a genuine and complete surrender of ourselves to the divine Master of the Yoga.

It is necessary here to keep always in mind the three powers of the Divine which are present and have to be taken account of in all living existences. In our ordinary consciousness we see these three as ourselves, the Jiva in the form of the ego, God—whatever conception we may have of God, and Nature. In the spiritual experience we see God as the supreme Self or Spirit, or as the Being from whom we come and in whom we live and move. We see Nature as his Power or God as Power, Spirit in Power acting in ourselves and the world. The Jiva is then himself this Self, Spirit, Divine, *so'ham*, because he is one with him in essence of his being and consciousness, but as the individual he is only a portion of the Divine, a self of the Spirit, and in his natural being a form of the Shakti, a power of God in movement and action, *parâ prakritir jîvabhûtâ*. At first, when we become conscious of God or of the Shakti, the difficulties of our relation with them arise from the ego consciousness which we bring into the spiritual relation. The ego in us makes claims on the Divine other than the spiritual claim, and these claims are in a sense legitimate, but so long as and in proportion as they take the egoistic form, they are open to much grossness and great perversions, burdened with an element of falsehood, undesirable reaction and consequent evil,

and the relation can only be wholly right, happy and perfect when these claims become part of the spiritual claim and lose their egoistic character. And in fact the claim of our being upon the Divine is fulfilled absolutely only then when it ceases at all to be a claim and is instead a fulfilment of the Divine through the individual, when we are satisfied with that alone, when we are content with the delight of oneness in being, content to leave the supreme Self and Master of existence to do whatever is the will of his absolute wisdom and knowledge through our more and more perfected Nature. This is the sense of the self-surrender of the individual self to the Divine, *âtma-samarpana*. It does not exclude a will for the delight of oneness, for participation in the divine consciousness, wisdom, knowledge, light, power, perfection, for the satisfaction of the divine fulfilment in us, but the will, the aspiration is ours because it is his will in us. At first, while there is still insistence on our own personality, it only reflects that, but becomes more and more indistinguishable from it, less personal and eventually it loses all shade of separateness, because the will in us has grown identical with the divine Tapas, the action of the divine Shakti.

And equally when we first become aware of the infinite Shakti above us or around or in us, the impulse of the egoistic sense in us is to lay hold on it and use this increased might for our egoistic purpose. This is a most dangerous thing, for it brings with it a sense and some increased reality of a great, sometimes a titanic power, and the rajasic ego, delighting in this sense of new enormous strength, may instead of waiting for it to be purified and transformed throw itself out in a violent and impure action and even turn us for a time or partially into the selfish and arrogant Asura using the strength given him for his own and not for the divine purpose: but on that way lies, in the end, if it is persisted in, spiritual perdition and

material ruin. And even to regard oneself as the instrument of the Divine is not a perfect remedy; for when a strong ego meddles in the matter, it falsifies the spiritual relation and under cover of making itself an instrument of the Divine is really bent on making instead God its instrument. The one remedy is to still the egoistic claim of whatever kind, to lessen persistently the personal effort and individual straining which even the sattwic ego cannot avoid and instead of laying hold on the Shakti and using it for its purpose rather to let the Shakti lay hold on us and use us for the divine purpose. This cannot be done perfectly at once—nor can it be done safely if it is only the lower form of the universal energy of which we are aware, for then, as has already been said, there must be some other control, either of the mental Purusha or from above,—but still it is the aim which we must have before us and which can be wholly carried out when we become insistently aware of the highest spiritual presence and form of the divine Shakti. This surrender too of the whole action of the individual self to the Shakti is in fact a form of real self-surrender to the Divine.

It has been seen that a most effective way of purification is for the mental Purusha to draw back, to stand as the passive witness and observe and know himself and the workings of Nature in the lower, the normal being; but this must be combined, for perfection, with a will to raise the purified nature into the higher spiritual being. When that is done, the Purusha is no longer only a witness, but also the master of his prakriti, *îshwara*. At first it may not be apparent how this ideal of active self-mastery can be reconciled with the apparently opposite ideal of self-surrender and of becoming the assenting instrument of the divine Shakti. But in fact on the spiritual plane there is no difficulty. The Jiva cannot really become master except in proportion as he arrives at oneness with the Divine who is his supreme Self. And in that oneness and in his unity

with the universe he is one too in the universal self with the will that directs all the operations of Nature. But more directly, less transcendentally, in his individual action too, he is a portion of the Divine and participates in the mastery over his nature of that to which he has surrendered himself. Even as instrument, he is not a mechanical but a conscious instrument. On the Purusha side of him he is one with the Divine and participates in the divine mastery of the Ishwara. On the nature side of him he is in his universality one with the power of the Divine, while in his individual natural being he is an instrument of the universal divine Shakti, because the individualised power is there to fulfil the purpose of the universal Power. The Jiva, as has been seen, is the meeting-place of the play of the dual aspect of the Divine, Prakriti and Purusha, and in the higher spiritual consciousness he becomes simultaneously one with both these aspects, and there he takes up and combines all the divine relations created by their interaction. This it is that makes possible the dual attitude.

There is however a possibility of arriving at this result without the passage through the passivity of the mental Purusha, by a more persistently and predominantly kinetic Yoga. Or there may be a combination of both the methods, alternations between them and an ultimate fusion. And here the problem of spiritual action assumes a more simple form. In this kinetic movement there are three stages. In the first the Jiva is aware of the supreme Shakti, receives the power into himself and uses it under her direction, with a certain sense of being the subordinate doer, a sense of minor responsibility in the action,—even at first, it may be, a responsibility for the result; but that disappears, for the result is seen to be determined by the higher Power, and only the action is felt to be partly his own. The sadhaka then feels that it is he who is thinking, willing, doing, but feels too the divine Shakti or Prakriti behind driving and shaping all his thought, will, feeling

and action: the individual energy belongs in a way to him, but is still only a form and an instrument of the universal divine Energy. The Master of the Power may be hidden from him for a time by the action of the Shakti, or he may be aware of the Ishwara sometimes or continually manifest to him. In the latter case there are three things present to his consciousness, himself as the servant of the Ishwara, the Shakti behind as a great Power supplying the energy, shaping the action, formulating the results, the Ishwara above determining by his will the whole action.

In the second stage the individual doer disappears, but there is not necessarily any quietistic passivity; there may be a full kinetic action, only all is done by the Shakti. It is her power of knowledge which takes shape as thought in the mind; the sadhaka has no sense of himself thinking, but of the Shakti thinking in him. The will and the feelings and action are also in the same way nothing but a formation, operation, activity of the Shakti in her immediate presence and full possession of all the system. The sadhaka does not think, will, act, feel, but thought, will, feeling, action happen in his system. The individual on the side of action has disappeared into oneness with universal Prakriti, has become an individualised form and action of the divine Shakti. He is still aware of his personal existence, but it is as the Purusha supporting and observing the whole action, conscious of it in his self-knowledge and enabling by his participation the divine Shakti to do in him the works and the will of the Ishwara. The Master of the power is then sometimes hidden by the action of the power, sometimes appears governing it and compelling its workings. Here too there are three things present to the consciousness, the Shakti carrying on all the knowledge, thought, will, feeling, action for the Ishwara in an instrumental human form, the Ishwara, the Master of existence governing and compelling all her action, and ourself as the soul, the Purusha of her individual action

enjoying all the relations with him which are created by her workings. There is another form of this realisation in which the Jiva disappears into and becomes one with the Shakti and there is then only the play of the Shakti with the Ishwara, Mahadeva and Kali, Krishna and Radha, the Deva and the Devi. This is the intensest possible form of the Jiva's realisation of himself as a manifestation of Nature, a power of the being of the Divine, *parâ prakritir jîvabhûtâ.*

A third stage comes by the increasing manifestation of the Divine, the Ishwara in all our being and action. This is when we are constantly and uninterruptedly aware of him. He is felt in us as the possessor of our being and above us as the ruler of all its workings and they become to us nothing but a manifestation of him in the existence of the Jiva. All our conciousness is his consciousness, all our knowledge is his knowledge, all our thought is his thought, all our will is his will, all our feeling is his Ananda and form of his delight in being, all our action is his action. The distinction between the Shakti and the Ishwara begins to disappear; there is only the conscious activity in us of the Divine with the great self of the Divine behind and around and possessing it; all the world and Nature is seen to be only that, but here it has become fully conscious, the Maya of the ego removed, and the Jiva is there only as an eternal portion of his being, *ansha sanâtana,* put forth to support a divine individualisation and living now fulfilled in the complete presence and power of the Divine, the complete joy of the Spirit manifested in the being. This is the highest realisation of the perfection and delight of the active oneness; for beyond it there could be only the consciousness of the Avatara, the Ishwara himself assuming a human name and form for action in the Lila.

A Defence of Indian Culture

XV

The art of painting in ancient and later India, owing to the comparative scantiness of its surviving creations, does not create quite so great an impression as her architecture and sculpture and it has even been supposed that this art flourished only at intervals, finally ceased for a period of several centuries and was revived later on by the Moghuls and by Hindu artists who underwent the Moghul influence. This however is a hasty view that does not outlast a more careful research and consideration of the available evidence. It appears on the contrary that Indian culture was able to arrive at a well developed and an understanding aesthetic use of colour and line from very early times and, allowing for the successive fluctuations, periods of decline and fresh outbursts of originality and vigour, which the collective human mind undergoes in all countries, used this form of self-expression very persistently through the long centuries of its growth and greatness. And especially it is apparent now that there was a persistent tradition, a fundamental spirit and turn of the aesthetic-sense native to the mind of India which links even the latest Rajput art to the earliest surviving work still preserved in the rock-cut retreats of Ajanta.

The materials of the art of painting are unfortunately

more perishable than those of any other of the greater means of creative aesthetic self-expression and of the ancient masterpieces only a little survives, but that little still indicates the immensity of the amount of work of which it is the fading remnant. It is said that of the twenty-nine caves at Ajanta almost all once bore signs of decoration by frescoes; only so long ago as forty years sixteen still contained something of the original paintings, but now six alone still bear their witness to the greatness of this ancient art, though rapidly perishing and deprived of the original warmth and beauty and glory of colour. The rest of all that vivid contemporaneous creation which must at one time have covered the whole country in the temples and viharas and the houses of the cultured and the courts and pleasurehouses of nobles and kings, has perished, and we have only, more or less similar to the work at Ajanta, some crumbling fragments of rich and profuse decoration in the caves of Bagh and a few paintings of female figures in two rock-cut chambers at Siguriya. These remnants represent the work of some six or seven centuries, but they leave gaps, and nothing now is left of any paintings earlier than the first century of the Christian era, except some frescoes, spoilt by unskilful restoration, from the first century before it, while after the seventh there is a blank which might at first sight argue a total decline of the art, a cessation and disappearance. But there are fortunately evidences which carry back the tradition of the art at one end many centuries earlier and other remains more recently discovered and of another kind outside India and in the Himalayan countries carry it forward at the other end as late as the twelfth century and help us to link it on to the later schools of Rajput painting. The history of the self-expression of the Indian mind in painting covers a period of not less than two milleniums of more or less intense artistic creation and stands on a par in this respect with the architecture and sculpture.

The paintings that remain to us from ancient times are the work of Buddhist painters, but the art itself in India was of pre-Buddhistic origin. The Tibetan historian ascribes a remote antiquity to all the crafts, prior to the Buddha, and this is a conclusion increasingly pointed to by a constant accumulation of evidence. Already in the third century before the Christian era we find the theory of the art well founded from previous times, the six essential elements, *shadanga*, recognised and enumerated, like the more or less corresponding six Chinese canons which are first mentioned nearly a thousand years later, and in a very ancient work on the art pointing back to pre-Buddistic times a number of careful and very well-defined rules and traditions are laid down which were developed into an elaborate science of technique and traditional rule in the later Shilpasutras. The frequent references in the ancient literature also are of a character which would have been impossible without a widespread practice and appreciation of the art by both men and women of the cultured classes, and these allusions and incidents evidencing a moved delight in the painted form and beauty of colour and the appeal both to the decorative sense and to the aesthetic emotion occur not only in the later poetry of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and other classical dramatists, but in the early popular drama of Bhasa and earlier still in the epics and in the sacred books of the Buddhists. The absence of any actual creations of this earlier art makes it indeed impossible to say with absolute certainty what was its fundamental character and intimate source of inspiration or whether it was religious and hieratic or secular in its origin. The theory has been advanced rather too positively that it was in the courts of kings that the art began and with a purely secular motive and inspiration, and it is true that while the surviving work of Buddhist artists is mainly religious in subject or at least links on common scenes of life to Buddhist ceremony and legend, the references in the epic

and dramatic literature are usually to painting of a more purely aesthetic character, personal, domestic or civic, portrait painting, the representation of scenes and incidents in the lives of kings and other great personalities or mural decoration of palaces and private or public buildings. On the other hand there are similar elements in Buddhist painting, as, for example, the portraits of the queens of King Kashyapa at Siguriya, the historic representation of a Persian embassy or the landing of Vijaya in Ceylon. And we may fairly assume that all along Indian painting both Buddhist and Hindu covered much the same kind of ground as the later Rajput work in a more ample fashion and with a more antique greatness of spirit and was in its ensemble an interpretation of the whole religion, culture and life of the Indian people. The one important and significant thing that emerges is the constant oneness and continuity of all Indian art in its essential spirit and tradition. Thus the earlier work at Ajanta has been found to be akin to the earlier sculptural work of the Buddhists, while the later paintings have a similar close kinship to the sculptural reliefs at Java. And we find that the spirit and tradition which reigns through all changes of style and manner at Ajanta, is present too at Bagh and Siguriya, in the Khotan frescoes, in the illuminations of Buddhist manuscripts of a much later time and in spite of the change of form and manner is still spiritually the same in the Rajput paintings. This unity and continuity enable us to distinguish and arrive at a clear understanding of what is the essential aim, inner turn and motive, spiritual method which differentiate Indian painting first from occidental work and then from the nearer and more kindred art of other countries of Asia.

The spirit and motive of Indian painting are in their centre of conception and shaping force of sight identical with the inspiring vision of Indian sculpture. All Indian art is a throwing out of a certain profound self-vision for-

med by a going within to find out the secret significance of form and appearance, a discovery of the subject in one's deeper self, the giving of soul-form to that vision and a remoulding of the material and natural shape to express the psychic truth of it with the greatest possible purity and power of outline and the greatest possible concentrated rhythmic unity of significance in all the parts of an indivisible artistic whole. Take whatever masterpiece of Indian painting and we shall find these conditions aimed at and brought out into a triumphant beauty of suggestion and execution. The only difference from the other arts comes from the turn natural and inevitable to its own kind of aesthesis, from the moved and indulgent dwelling on what one might call the mobilities of the soul rather than on its static eternities, on the casting out of self into the grace and movement of psychic and vital life (subject always to the reserve and restraint necessary to all art) rather than on the holding back of life in the stabilities of the self and its eternal qualities and principles, guna and tattwa. This distinction is of the very essence of the difference between the work given to the sculptor and the painter, a difference imposed on them by the natural scope, turn, possibility of their instrument and medium. The sculptor must express always in static form; the idea of the spirit is cut out for him in mass and line, significant in the stability of its insistence, and he can lighten the weight of this insistence but not get rid of it or away from it; for him eternity seizes hold of time in its shapes and arrests it in the monumental spirit of stone or bronze. The painter on the contrary lavishes his soul in colour and there is a liquidity in the form, a fluent grace of subtlety in the line he uses which imposes on him a more mobile and emotional way of self-expression. The more he gives us of the colour and changing form and emotion of the life of the soul, the more his work glows with beauty, masters the inner aesthetic sense and opens it to the thing his art better gives us than any other,

the delight of the motion of the self out into a spiritually sensuous joy of beautiful shapes and the coloured radiances of existence. Painting is naturally the most sensuous of the arts, and the highest greatness open to the painter is to spiritualise this sensuous appeal by making the most vivid outward beauty a revelation of subtle spiritual emotion so that the soul and the sense are at harmony in the deepest and finest richness of both and united in their satisfied consonant expression of the inner significances of things and life. There is less of the austerity of tapasya in his way of working, a less severely restrained expression of eternal things and of the fundamental truths behind the forms of things, but there is in compensation a moved wealth of psychic or warmth of vital suggestion, a lavish delight of the beauty of the play of the eternal in the moments of time and there the artist arrests it for us and makes moments of the life of the soul reflected in form of man or creature or incident or scene or Nature full of a permanent and opulent significance to our spiritual vision. The art of the painter justifies visually to the spirit the search of the sense for delight by making it its own search for the pure intensities of meaning of the universal beauty it has revealed or hidden in creation; the indulgence of the eye's desire in perfection of form and colour becomes an enlightenment of the inner being through the power of a certain spiritually aesthetic Ananda.

The Indian artist lived in the light of an inspiration which imposed this greater aim on his art and his method sprang from its fountains and served it to the exclusion of any more earthly sensuous or outwardly imaginative aesthetic impulse. The six limbs of his art, the *shad anga*, are common to all work in line and colour : they are the necessary elements and in their elements the great arts are the same everywhere ; the distinction of forms, *rûpabheda*, proportion, arrangement of line and mass, design, harmony, perspective, *pramâna*, the emotion or aesthetic

feeling expressed by the form, *bhâva*, the seeking for beauty and charm for the satisfaction of the aesthetic spirit, *lâvanya*, truth of the form and its suggestion, *sâdriçya*, the turn, combination, harmony of colours, *varnikâbhanga*, are the first constituents to which every successful work of art reduces itself in analysis. But it is the turn given to each of the constituents which makes all the difference in the aim and effect of the technique and the source and character of the inner vision guiding the creative hand in their combination which makes all the difference in the spiritual value of the achievement, and the unique character of Indian painting, the peculiar appeal of the art of Ajanta springs from the remarkably inward, spiritual and psychic turn which was given to the artistic conception and method by the pervading genius of Indian culture. Indian painting no more than Indian architecture and sculpture could escape from its absorbing motive, its transmuting atmosphere, the direct or subtle obsession of the mind that has been subtly and strangely changed, the eye that has been trained to see not as others by a constant communing of the mental parts with the self beyond mind and the spirit to which forms are only a transparent veil or a slight index of its own greater splendour. The outward beauty and power, the grandeur of drawing, the richness of colour, the aesthetic grace of this painting is too obvious and insistent to be denied, the psychical appeal usually carries something in it to which there is a response in every cultivated and sensitive human mind and the departures from the outward physical norm are less vehement and intense, less disdainful of the more external beauty and grace,—as is only right in the nature of this art,—than in the sculpture: therefore we find it more easily appreciated up to a certain point by the western critical mind, and even when not well appreciated, it is exposed to milder objections. There is not the same blank incomprehension or violence

of misunderstanding and repulsion. And yet we find at the same that there is something which seems to escape the appreciation or is only imperfectly understood, and this something is precisely that profounder spiritual intention of which the things the eye and aesthetic sense immediately seize are only the intermediaries. This explains the remark often made about Indian work of the less visibly potent and quieter kind that it lacks inspiration or imagination or is a conventional art: the spirit is missed where it does not strongly impose itself, and is not fully caught even where the power which is put into the expression is too great and direct to allow of denial. Indian painting like Indian architecture and sculpture appeals through the physical and psychical to another spiritual vision from which the artist worked and it is only when this is no less awakened in us than the aesthetic sense that it can be appreciated in all the depth of its significance.

The orthodox western artist works by a severely conscientious reproduction of the forms of outward Nature; the external world is his model, and he has to keep it before his eye and repress any tendency towards a substantial departure from it or any motion to yield his first allegiance to a subtler spirit. His imagination submits itself to physical Nature even when he brings in conceptions which are more properly of another kingdom, the stress of the physical world is always with him, and the Seer of the subtle, the creator of mental forms, the inner Artist, the wide-eyed voyager in the vaster psychical realms, is obliged to subdue his inspirations to the law of the Seer of the outward, the spirit that has embodied itself in the creations of the terrestrial life, the material universe. An idealised imaginative realism is as far as he can ordinarily go in the method of his work when he would fill the outward with the subtler inner seeing. And when, dissatisfied with this confining law, he would break quite out of the circle, he is exposed to a temptation to stray

into intellectual or imaginative extravagances which violate the universal rule of the right distinction of forms, *rûpabheda*, and belong to the vision of some intermediate world of sheer fantasia. His art has discovered the rule of proportion, arrangement and perspective which preserves the illusion of physical Nature and he relates his whole design to her design in a spirit of conscientious obedience and faithful dependence. His imagination is a servant or interpreter of her imaginations, he finds in the observation of her universal law of beauty his secret of unity and harmony and his subjectivity tries to discover itself in hers by a close dwelling on the objective shapes she has given to her creative spirit. The farthest he has got in the direction of a more intimately subjective spirit is an impressionism which still waits upon her models but seeks to get at some first inward or original effect of them on the inner sense, and through that he arrives at some more strongly psychical rendering, but he does not work altogether from within outward in the freer manner of the oriental artist. His emotion and artistic feeling move in this form and are limited by this artistic convention and are not a pure spiritual or psychic emotion but usually an imaginative exaltation derived from the suggestions of life and outward things with a psychic element or an evocation of spiritual feeeling initiated and dominated by the touch of the outward. The charm that he gives is a sublimation of the beauty that appeals to the outward senses by the power of the idea and the imagination working on the outward sense appeal and other beauty is only brought in by association into that frame. The truth of correspondence he depends upon is a likeness to the creations of physical Nature and their intellectual, emotional and aesthetic significances, and his work of line and wave of colour are meant to embody the flow of this vision. The method of this art is always a transcript from the visible world with such necessary transmu-

tation as the aesthetic mind imposes on its materials. At the lowest to illustrate, at the highest to interpret life and Nature to the mind by identifying it with deeper things through some derivative touch of the spirit that has entered into and subdued itself to their shapes, *praviçya yah pratirûpo babhûva*, is the governing principle.

The Indian artist sets out from the other end of the scale of values of experience which connect life and the spirit. The whole creative force comes here from a spiritual and psychic vision, the emphasis of the physical is secondary and always deliberately lightened so as to give an overwhelmingly spiritual and psychic impression and everything is suppressed which does not serve this purpose or would distract the mind from the purity of this intention. This painting expresses the soul through life, but life is only a means of the spiritual self-expression, and its outward representation is not the first object or the direct motive. There is a real and a very vivid and vital representation, but it is more of an inner psychical than of the outward physical life. A critic of high repute speaking of the Indian influence in a famous Japanese painting fixes on the grand strongly outlined figures and the feeling for life and character recalling the Ajanta frescoes as the signs of its Indian character : but we have to mark carefully the nature of this feeling for life and the origin and intention of this strong outlining of the figures. The feeling for life and character here is a very different thing from the splendid and abundant vitality and the power and force of character which we find in an Italian painting, a fresco from Michael Angelo's hand or a portrait by Titian or Tintoretto. The first primitive object of the art of painting is to illustrate life and Nature and at the lowest this becomes a more or less vigorous and original or conventionally faithful reproduction, but it rises in great hands to a revelation of the glory and beauty of the sensuous appeal of life or of the dramatic power and moving interest of character and

emotion and action. That is a common form of aesthetic work in Europe: but in Indian art it is never the governing motive. The sensuous appeal is there, but it is refined into only one and not the chief element of the richness of a soul of psychic grace and beauty which is for the Indian artist the true beauty, *lâvanya*: the dramatic motive is subordinated and made only a purely secondary element, only so much is given of character and action as will help to bring out the deeper spiritual or psychic feeling, *bhâva*, and all insistence or too prominent force of these more outwardly dynamic things is shunned, because that would externalise too much the spiritual emotion and take away from its intense purity by the interference of the grosser intensity which emotion puts on in the stress of the active outward nature. The life depicted is the life of the soul and not, except as a form and a helping suggestion, the life of the vital being and the body. For the second more elevated aim of art is the interpretation or intuitive revelation of existence through the forms of life and Nature and it is this that is the starting point of the Indian motive. But the interpretation may proceed on the basis of the forms already given us by physical Nature and try to evoke by the form an idea, a truth of the spirit which starts from it as a suggestion and returns upon it for support, and the effort is then to correlate the form as it is to the physical eye with the truth which it evokes without overpassing the limits imposed by the appearance. This is the common method of occidental art always zealous for the immediate fidelity to Nature which is its idea of true correspondence, *sâdriçya*, but it is rejected by the Indian artist. He begins from within, sees in his soul the thing he wishes to express or interpret and tries to discover the right line, colour and design of his intuition which, when it appears on the physical ground, is not a just and reminding reproduction of the line, colour and design of physical nature, but much rather what seems to us a psychical

transmutation of the natural figure. In reality the shapes he paints are the forms of things as he has seen them in the psychical plane of experience : these are the soul-figures of which physical things are a gross representation and their purity and subtlety reveals at once what the physical masks by the thickness of its casings. The lines and colours sought here are the psychic lines and the psychic hues proper to the vision which the artist has gone into himself to discover.

This is the whole governing principle of the art which gives its stamp to every detail of an Indian painting and transforms the artist's use of the six limbs of the canon. The distinction of forms is faithfully observed, but not in the sense of an exact naturalistic fidelity to the physical appearance with the object of a faithful reproduction of the outward shapes of the world in which we live. To recall with fidelity something our eyes have seen or could have seen on the spot, a scene, an interior, a living and breathing person, and give the emotion of it to the mind is not the motive. There is here an extraordinary vividness, naturalness, reality, but it is a more than physical reality, a reality which the soul at once recognises as of its own sphere, a vivid naturalness of psychic truth, the convincing spirit of the form to which the soul, not the outward naturalness of the form to which the physical eye bears witness. The truth, the exact likeness is there, the correspondence, *sâdriçya*, but it is the truth of the essence of the form, it is the likeness of the soul to itself, the reproduction of the subtle embodiment which is the basis of the physical embodiment, the purer and finer subtle body of an object which is the very expression of its own essential nature, *swabhâva*. The means by which this effect is produced is characteristic of the inward vision of the Indian mind. It is done by a bold and firm insistence on the pure and strong outline and a total suppression of everything that would interfere with its boldness,

strength and purity or would blur over and dilute the intense significance of the line. In the treatment of the human figure all corporeal filling in of the outline by insistence on the flesh, the muscle, the anatomical detail is minimised or disregarded : the strong subtle lines and pure shapes which make the humanity of the human form are alone brought into relief; the whole essential human being is there, the divinity that has taken this garb of the spirit to the eye, but not the superfluous physicality which he carries with him as his burden. It is the ideal psychical figure and body of man and woman that is before us in its charm and beauty. The filling in of the line is done in another way ; it is effected by a disposition of pure masses, a design and coloured wave-flow of the body, *bhanga*, a simplicity of content that enables the artist to flood the whole with the significance of the one spiritual emotion, feeling, suggestion which he intends to convey, his intuition of the moment of the soul, its living self-experience. All is disposed so as to express that and that alone. The almost miraculously subtle and meaningful use of the hands to express the psychic suggestion is a common and well-marked feature of Indian paintings and the way in which the suggestion of the face and the eyes is subtly repeated or supplemented by this expression of the hands is always one of the first things that strikes the regard, but as we continue to look, we see that every turn of the body, the pose of each limb, the relation and design of all the masses are filled with the same psychical feeling. The more important accessories help it by a kindred suggestion or bring it out by a support or variation or extension or relief of the motive. The same law of significant line and suppression of distracting detail is applied to animal forms, buildings, trees, objects. There is in all the art an inspired harmony of conception, method and expression. Colour too is used as a means for the spiritual and psychic intention, and we can see this well

enough if we study the suggestive significance of the hues in a Buddhist miniature. This power of line and subtlety of psychic suggestion in the filling in of the expressive outlines is the source of that remarkable union of greatness and moving grace which is the stamp of the whole work of Ajanta and continues in Rajput painting, though there the grandeur of the earlier work is lost in the grace and replaced by a delicately intense but still bold and decisive power of vivid and suggestive line. It is this common spirit and tradition which is the mark of all the truly indigenous work of India.

These things have to be carefully understood and held in mind when we look at an Indian painting and the real spirit of it first grasped before we condemn or praise. To dwell on that in it which is common to all art is well enough, but it is what is peculiar to India that is its real essence. And there again to appreciate the technique and the fervour of religious feeling is not sufficient; the spiritual intention served by the technique, the psychic significance of line and colour, the greater thing of which the religious emotion is the result has to be felt if we would identify ourself with the whole purpose of the artist. If we look long, for an example, at the adoration group of the mother and child before the Buddha, one of the most profound, tender and noble of the Ajanta masterpieces, we shall find that the impression of intense religious feeling of adoration there is only the most outward general touch in the ensemble of the emotion. That which it deepens to is the turning of the soul of humanity in love to the benignant and calm Ineffable which has made itself sensible and human to us in the universal compassion of the Buddha, and the motive of the soul moment the painting interprets is the dedication of the awakening mind of the child, the coming younger humanity, to that in which already the soul of the mother has learned to find and fix its spiritual joy. The eyes, brows, lips, face,

poise of the head of the woman are filled with this spiritual emotion which is a continued memory and possession of the psychical release, the steady settled calm of the heart's experience filled with an ineffable tenderness, the familiar depths which are yet moved with the wonder and always farther appeal of something that is infinite, the body and other limbs are grave masses of this emotion and in their poise a basic embodiment of it, while the hands prolong it in the dedicative putting forward of her child to meet the Eternal. This contact of the human and eternal is repeated in the smaller figure with a subtly and strongly indicated variation, the glad and childlike smile of awakening which promises but not yet possesses the depths that are to come, the hands disposed to receive and keep, the body in its looser curves and waves harmonising with that significance. The two have forgotten themselves and seem almost to forget or confound each other in that which they adore and contemplate, and yet the dedicating hands unite mother and child in the common act and feeling by their simultaneous gesture of maternal possession and spiritual giving. The two figures have at each point the same rhythm, but with a significant difference. The simplicity in the greatness and power, the fullness of expression gained by reserve and suppression and concentration which we find here is the perfect method of the classical art of India. And by this perfection Buddhist art became not merely an illustration of the religion and an expression of its thought and its religious feeling, history and legend, but a revealing interpretation of the spiritual sense of Buddhism and its profounder meaning to the soul of India.

To understand that we must always seek first and foremost this kind of deeper intention is to understand the reason for the differences between the occidental and the Indian treatment of the life motives. Thus a portrait by a great European painter will express with sovereign power

the soul through character, through the active qualities, the ruling powers and passions, the master feelings and temperament, the active mental and vital man: the Indian artist tones down the outward-going dynamic indices and gives only so much of them as will serve to bring out or to modulate something that is more of the grain of the subtle soul, something more static and impersonal of which our personality is at once the mask and the index. A moment of the spirit expressing with purity the permanence of a very subtle soul quality is the highest type of the Indian portrait. And more generally the feeling for character which has been noted as a feature of the Ajanta work is of a similar kind. An Indian painting expressing, let us say, a religious feeling centred on some significant incident will show the expression in each figure varied in such a way as to bring out the universal spiritual essence of the emotion modified by the essential soul type, different waves of the one sea, all complexity of dramatic insistence is avoided, and so much stress only is laid on character in the individual feeling as to give the variation without diminishing the unity of the fundamental emotion. The vividness of life in these paintings must not obscure for us the more profound purpose for which it is the setting, and this has especially to be kept in mind in our view of the later art which has not the greatness of the classic work and runs to a less grave and highly sustained kind, to lyric emotion, minute vividness of life movement, the more naive feelings of the people. One sometimes finds inspiration, decisive power of thought and feeling, originality of creative imagination denied to this later art; but its real difference from that of Ajanta is only that the intermediate psychic transmission between the life movement and the inmost motive has been given with less power and distinctness : the psychic thought and feeling are there more thrown outward in movement, less contained in the soul, but still the soul motive is not only

present but makes the true atmosphere and if we miss it, we miss the real sense of the picture. This is more evident where the inspiration is religious, but it is not absent from the secular subjects. Here too spiritual intention or psychic suggestion are the things of the first importance. In Ajanta work they are all-important and to ignore them at all is to open the way to serious errors of interpretation. Thus a highly competent and very sympathetic critic speaking of the painting of the Great Renunciation says truly that this great work excels in its expression of sorrow and feeling of profound pity, but then, looking for what a western imagination would naturally put into such a subject, he goes on to speak of the weight of a tragic decision, the bitterness of renouncing a life of bliss blended with a yearning sense of hope in the happiness of the future, and that is singularly to misunderstand the spirit in which the Indian mind turns from the transient to the eternal, to mistake the Indian art motive and to put a vital into the place of a spiritual emotion. It is not at all his own personal sorrow but the sorrow of all others, not an emotional self-pity but a poignant pity for the world, not the regret for a life of domestic bliss but the afflicting sense of the unreality of human happiness that is concentrated in the eyes and lips of the Buddha, and the yearning there is not, certainly, for earthly happiness in the future but for the spiritual way out, the anguished seeking which found its release, already foreseen by the spirit behind and hence the immense calm and restraint that support the sorrow, in the true bliss of Nirvana. There is illustrated the whole difference between two kinds of imagination, the mental, vital and physical stress of the art of Europe and the subtle less forcefully tangible spiritual stress of the art of India.

It is the indigenous art of which this is the constant spirit and tradition, and it has been doubted whether the Moghul paintings deserve that name, have anything to do

with that tradition and are not rather an exotic importation from Persia. Almost all oriental art is akin in this respect that the psychic enters into and for the most part lays its subtler law on the physical vision and the psychic line and significance give the characteristic turn, are the secret of the decorative skill, direct the higher art in its principal motives. But there is a difference between the Persian psychicality which is redolent of the magic of the middle worlds and the Indian which is only a means of transmission of the spiritual vision. And obviously the Indo-Persian style is of the former kind and not indigenous to India. But the Moghul school is not an exotic; there is rather a blending of two mentalities: on the one side there is a leaning to some kind of externalism which is not the same thing as western naturalism, a secular spirit and certain prominent elements that are more strongly illustrative than interpretative, but the central thing is still the domination of a transforming touch which shows that there as in the architecture the Indian mind has taken hold of another invading mentality and made it a help to a more outward-going self-expression that comes in as a new side strain in the spiritual continuity of achievement which began in prehistoric times and ended only with the general decline of Indian culture. Painting, the last of the arts in that decline to touch the bottom, has also been the first to rise again and lift the dawn fires of an era of new creation.

It is not necessary to dilate on the decorative arts and crafts of India, for their excellence has always been beyond dispute. The generalised sense of beauty which they imply is one of the greatest proofs that there can be of the value and soundness of a national culture. Indian culture in this respect need not fear any comparison: if it is less predominantly artistic than that of Japan, it is because it has put first the spiritual need and made all other things subservient to and a means for the spiritual

growth of the people. Its civilisation, standing in the first rank in the three great arts as in all the things of the mind, has proved that the spiritual urge is not, as has been vainly supposed, sterilising to the other activities, but a most powerful force for the many-sided development of the human whole.

The Future Poetry

THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

A poetry born direct from and full of the power of the spirit and therefore a largest and a deepest self-expression of the soul and mind of the race is that for which we are seeking and of which the more profound tendencies of the creative mind seem to be in travail. This poetry will be a voice of eternal things raising to a new significance and to a great satisfied joy in experience the events and emotions and transiences of life which will then be seen and sung as the succession of signs, the changing of the steps of an eternal manifestation; it will be an expression of the very self of man and the self of things and the self of nature; it will be a creative and interpretative revelation of the infinite truth of existence and of the universal delight and beauty and of a greater spiritualised vision and power of life. This can only come if the mind of the race takes actually the step over which it is now hesitating and passes from the satisfaction of the liberated intellect which has been its preoccupation for the last two centuries to the pursuit of the realisation of the larger self, from the scrutiny of the things that explain to the experience of the things that reveal, the truths of the spirit. The progress of the mind of humanity takes place by a constant enlarging attended with a constant transmutation of its experience which is reflected in its ways of self-expression, and the tendency of this progression is always more and more

inward, a movement that cannot cease till we get to the inmost, and even then there can be no real cessation because the inmost is the infinite. The progress of poetry, as it has been viewed in these pages, has been an index of an advance of the cultural mind of humanity which has enlarged its scope by a constant raising of the scale of the soul's experience and has now risen to a great height and breadth of intellectual vision and activity, and the question is at present of the next step in the scale of ascension, and whether it can now be firmly taken or will be missed once more with a fall back to another retracing of the psychological circuit. That will determine the character of the coming era of the mind and life of man and consequently the character of all his methods of aesthetic self-expression.

The one thing that man sees above the intellect is the spirit, and therefore the developed intellect of the race, if it is at all to go forward, must open now to an understand and seeing spirituality, other than the rather obscure religionism of the past which belonged to the lower levels of the life and the emotion and which has had its bounds broken and its narrownesses condemned by the free light of intellectual thought : this will be rather an illumined self-knowledge and God-knowledge and a world-knowledge too which transmuted in that greater light will spiritualise the whole view and motive of our existence. That is the one development to which an accomplished intellectualism can open and by exceeding itself find its own right consummation. The alternative is a continual ringing of changes in the spinnings of the intellectual circle which leads nowhere or else a collapse to the lower levels which may bring human civilisation down with a run to a new corrupted and intellectualised barbarism. This is a catastrophe which has happened before in the world's history, and it was brought about ostensibly by outward events and causes, but arose essentially from

an inability of the intellect of man to find its way out of itself and out of the vital formula in which its strainings and questionings can only exhaust itself and life into a full illumination of the spirit and an enlightened application of the saving spiritual principle to mind and life and action. The possibility of such a catastrophe is by no means absent from the present human situation. On the one hand the straining of the intellect to its limits of elasticity has brought in a recoil to a straining for unbridled vital, emotional and sensational experience and a morbid disorder in the economy of the nature and on the other there have come in, perhaps as a result, perturbations of the earth system that threaten to break up the mould of civilisation, and the problem of the race is whether a new and greater mould can be created or instead a collapse and decadence intervene and a recommencing of the circle. The hope of the race in this crisis lies in the fidelity of its intellect to the larger perceptions it now has of the greater self of humanity, the turning of its will to the inception of delivering forms of thought, art and social endeavour which arise from those perceptions and the raising of the intellectual mind to the intuitive supraintellectual spiritual consciousness which can alone give the basis for a spiritualised life of the race and the realisation of its diviner potentialities. The meaning of spirituality is a new and greater inner life of man founded in the consciousness of his true, his inmost, highest and largest self and spirit by which he receives the whole of existence as a progressive manifestation of the self in the universe and his own life as a field of a possible transformation in which its divine sense will be found, its potentialities highly evolved, the now imperfect forms changed into an image of the divine perfection, and an effort not only to see but to live out these greater possibilities of his being. And this consciousness of his true self and spirit must bring with it a consciousness too of the oneness of the individual and the race

and a harmonious unity of the life of man with the spirit in Nature and the spirit of the universe.

The voice of a new deeper intuitive poetry can be a powerful aid to this necessary change of seeing and aspiration, because what the thought comprehends with a certain abstraction, it can make living to the imagination by the word and a thing of beauty and delight and inspiration for the soul's acceptance. This poetry will speak of new things and of old things in a new way and with a new voice, not by any exclusion or diminution of its province, but by a great heightening above, a great intimacy within, a great enlargement and wideness around, a vision of inmost things and therefore a changed vision of the world and life and the untold potentialities of the soul's experience. It will restore to us the sense of the Eternal, the presence of the Divine which has been taken from us for a time by an intellect too narowly and curiously fixed on the external and physical world, but it will not speak of these things in the feeble and conventional tones of traditional religion, but as a voice of intuitive experience and the rhythm and chant of the revelation of an eternal presence. The voice of the poet will reveal to us by the inspired rhythmic word the God who is the Self of all things and beings, the Life of the universe, the Divinity in man, and he will express all the emotion and delight of the endeavour of the human soul to discover the touch and joy of that Divinity within him in whom he feels the mighty founts of his own being and life and effort and his fullness and unity with all cosmic experience and with Nature and with all creatures. The note which has already begun and found many of its tones in Whitman and Carpenter and A. E. and Tagore will grow into a more full and near and intimate poetic knowledge and vision and feeling which will continue to embrace more and more, no longer only the more exceptional inner states and touches which are the domain of mystic poetry, but

everything in our inner and outer existence until all life and experience has been brought within the mould of the spiritual sense and the spiritual interpretation. A poetry of this kind will be in a supreme way what all art should be, a thing of harmony and joy and illumination, a solution and release of the soul from its vital unrest and questioning and struggle, not by any ignoring of these things but by an uplifting into the strength of the self within and the light and air of its greater view where there is found not only the point of escape but the supporting calmness and power of a seated knowledge, mastery and deliverance. In the greatest art and poetry there should be something of the calm of the impersonal basing and elevating the effort and struggle of the personality, something of the largeness of the universal releasing and harmonising the troubled concentrations of the individual existence, something of the sense of the transcendent raising the inferior, ignorant and uncertain powers of life towards a greater strength and light and Ananda. And when art and poetry can utter the fullest sense of these things, it is then that they will become the greatest fortifiers and builders of the soul of man and assure it in the grandeur of its own largest self and spirit. The poetry of Europe has been a voice intensely eager and moved but restless, troubled and without a sure base of happiness and repose, vibrating with the passion of life and avid of its joy and pleasure and beauty, but afflicted also by its unrest, grief, tragedy, discord, insufficiency, incertitude, capable only of its lesser harmonies, not of any great release and satisfaction. The art and poetry of the East have been the creation of a larger and quieter spirit, intensely responsive as in the far east to deeper psychic significances and finding there fine and subtle harmonies of the soul's experience or, as in India, expressing in spite of the ascetic creed of vanity and illusion much rather the greatness and power and satisfied activity of human thou-

ght and life and action and behind it the communion of the soul with the Eternal. The poetry of the future reconciling all these strains, taking the highest as its keynote and interpreting the rest in its intensity and its largeness, will offer to the human mind a more complex aesthetic and spiritual satisfaction, express a more richly filled content of self-experience raised to a more persistent sight of things absolute and infinite and a more potent and all-comprehending release into the calm and delight of the spirit.

And this poetry must bring with it too a new depth of the intimacies of the soul with Nature. The early poetry of Nature gave us merely the delight of the forms of objects and the beauty of the setting of the natural world around man's life, but not any inner communion between him and the universal Mother. A later tone brought in more of the subtleties of the vital soul of the natural world and a response of the moved sensation and emotion of the life-spirit in us and out of this arose an intellectual and aesthetic sense of hidden finer and subtler things and, more profound, in the poetry of Wordsworth, Byron and Keats and Shelley an attempt at communion with a universal presence in Nature and a living principle of peace or light and love or universal power or conscious delight and beauty. A more deeply seeing and intimate poetry will take up these things into a yet greater Nature sense and vision and make us aware of the very self and soul and conscious being of Nature, her profoundest psychic suggestion and significance, the spirit in her and the intuition of all that she keeps hidden in her forms and veils and reveals more and more to the soul that has entered into unity with that spirit. The more intuitive human mind of the future, delivered from its presnt limitation of sympathy by the touch of the one self in all being, will feel as has not been felt before a unity with other consciousness in Nature and hear the voice of self-revelation of all that is mute to

us, the soul and life of things that now seem inert and lifeless, the soul and life of the animal world, the soul and life of the things that grow in silence and are enclosed in the absorbed dream of their own half-conscient existence. And it will open to and interpret not only man and terrestrial Nature, for a poetry concerned with that alone excludes large ranges of self-experience, but other domains also of our spirit. It will give the key of the worlds of supernature, and allow us to move among the beings and scenes, images and influences and presences of the psychic kingdoms which are near to us behind their dark or luminous curtain and will not be afraid to enter into vaster realms of the self and other universal states and the powers that stand behind our life and the soul's eternal spaces. It will do this not merely in a symbol of greatened human magnitudes, as the old poets represented the gods, or in hues of romantic glamour or in the far-off light of a mystic remoteness, but with the close directness and reality that comes from intimate vision and feeling, and make these things a part of our living experience.

A poetry of large spiritual inspiration must necessarily be, when it is not dealing directly with eternal things and turns its eye on the movement of time and the actual life and destiny of man, largely present and futurist in its insistence. The poet will continue though in a new way and with a new eye to transfigure the past for us, but will not feel that need to live in an imaginative preoccupation with the past which withdraws compelled from the unmanageable and transformable actuality of the present: for to live in the spirit is to be able to distinguish the eternal in the transient forms of the moment and to see too in these forms a revelation of the spirit's greater significances. His vision will search all the ways of the present and interpret deeply to man the sense of that which is making him and which he is making; it will reveal the divinity in all its disguises, face all even that is ugly and terrible

and baffling in the enigma of our actual human life, find its deeper aesthesis, disengage what is struggling untransformed in its outsides and make out of it by poetic sympathy material of spiritual truth and beauty. This is a strain that has been growing in recent poetic creation and it suffers as yet too often from an insufficient fineness of insight and a too crude handling, but, that immaturity once overcome, must hold a large and assured place among the great poetic motives. But epecially a clearer and more inspiring vision of the destiny of the spirit in man will be a large part of the poetry of the future. For the spiritual eye is not only able to see the divinity in man as he is, the divinity in his struggle and victory and failure and even in his sin and offence and littleness, but the spirit is master of the future, its past and present in time not only the half-formed stuff of its coming ages, but in a profound sense it is the call and attraction of the future that makes the past and present, and that future will be more and more seen to be the growth of the godhead in the human being which is the high fate of this race that thinks and wills and labours towards its own perfection. This is a strain that we shall hear more and more, the song of the growing godhead of the kind, of human unity, of spiritual freedom, of the coming supermanhood of man, of the divine ideal seeking to actualise itself in the life of the earth, of the call to the individual to rise to his godlike possibility and to the race to live in the greatness of that which humanity feels within itself as a power of the spirit which it has to deliver into some yet ungrasped perfect form of clearness. To embellish life with beauty is only the most outward function of art and poetry, to make life more intimately beautiful and noble and great and full of meaning is its higher office, but its highest comes when the poet becomes the seer and reveals to man his eternal self and the godheads of its manifestation.

These new voices must needs be the result of the

growth of the power of the spirit on the mind of man which is the promise of a coming era. It is always indeed the spirit in him that shapes his poetic utterance; but when that spirit is preoccupied with the outward life, the great poets are those who make his common life and action and its surroundings splendid and beautiful and noble to him by the power of their vision; when it is the intellect through which it labours, the great poets are those who give a profound enlightening idea and creative interpretation of the world and nature and all that man is and does and thinks and dreams, but when the spirit turns to its own large intuitive will and vision, then it is yet profounder things to which the great poet must give utterance, the inmost sense of things, the inmost consciousness of Nature, the movement of the deepest soul of man, the truth that reveals the meaning of existence and the universal delight and beauty and the power of a greater life and the infinite potentialities of our experience and self-creation. These may not be the only strains, but they will be the greatest and those which the highest human mind will demand from the poet and they will colour all the rest by their opening of new vistas to the general intelligence and life sense of the race. And whatever poetry may make its substance or its subject, this growth of the power of the spirit must necessarily bring into it a more intense and revealing speech, a more inward and subtle and penetrating rhythm, a greater stress of sight, a more vibrant and responsive sense, the eye that looks at all smallest and greatest things for the significances that have not yet been discovered and the secrets that are not on the surface. That will be the type of the new utterance and the boundless field of poetic discovery left for the inspiration of the humanity of the future.

"Rupam"

(An illustrated quarterly journal of Oriental Art, chiefly Indian, edited by O. C. GANGOLY.)

The appearance of this superb quarterly admirable in its artistic get-up and its fine reproductions of Indian sculpture and painting, admirable in the accomplished excellence of its matter,—the name of the editor, Mr. O. C. Gangoly, the one man most especially fitted by his knowledge and capacity for this work, is of itself a sufficient guarantee of excellence,—is a significant indication of the progress that is being made in the revival of the aesthetic mind of India. Assailed and corrupted in a time of cultural decline and arrest of its creative and artistic faculty by an alien aesthesis and ideals antithetic to its own spirit, it is returning to a right view and understanding of its past greatness, and though much way has still to be made before there can be any universal recovery of the artistic eye and taste, the first steps have been taken

with some rapidity and firmness and are all in the right direction. This new and fine effort of the Indian Society of Oriental Arts is likely to be of invaluable aid towards this reawakening; its magnificent illustrations are in themselves a revelation of the old beauty and greatness and, admirably selected and supported by illuminating articles, ought to be sufficient to open even the most blinded vision to the meaning and value of our ancient painting and sculpture.

The subjects of the four articles in this number are all of a considerable interest and touch points or raise and answer questions which have either a central importance or a vital though second-plane prominence in Indian art, and each article is a remarkably just, full, efficient and understanding interpretation of its subject. The frontispiece is a panel from a Pallava temple at Mahabalipuram intended to convey at once the essential character and appeal of Indian sculpture by an example which offers no difficulty of understanding or appreciation even to a non-Indian mind or to an uninstructed knowledge and is accompanied by a brief but clear and sufficient article. This example from one of the great styles and periods shows, as is justly said, and shows very perfectly, the Indian principle in the treatment of the human figure, the suppression of small particulars and trivial details in order to secure an extreme simplicity of form and contour,—the best condition for accomplishing the principal object of the Indian sculptor which was to fill the form with the utmost power of spiritual force and significance. The figure of this princely doorkeeper of the temple in its union of calm, grave, sweet and restful serenity with a latent and restrained heroic energy in its stillness, noted by the writer as the distinctive power of this creation, is indeed equal, as he suggests, in its dignity and repose to any Greek statue, but it carries in it a more profound and potent meaning; it is a perfect interpretation of the still and

intense Godward feeling, seized in one deep mood, in one fixed moment of it, which was the soul of the great ages of Indian religion. There is here a perfection of form with a perfection of significance. This restraint in power, this contained fullness opening an amplitude of infinite suggestion is not rare or exceptional, it is a frequent greatness in the art of India.

The second article on Garuda in Bengal and Java by Akshaya Kumar Maitreya besides its interesting and discerning treatment of its subject, the inception and humanising of the Garuda figure and the artistic use of the mythus, touches an issue which has not yet, I think, received sufficient consideration, the place of the art of Gauda in the development of the spirit of Indian sculpture. The putting side by side of the two sculptures from Java and Varendra, on one side the heroic force, majesty, dignity and beauty of the ancient art in one of its finest developments, on the other the moved nobility, grace and loveliness and the fervour of spiritual emotion and tenderness of a time when the antique Aryan spirit was softening into the sweetness of the religions of bhakti, makes of itself an illuminating suggestion. This sculpture is eloquent of that transition and the art of Gauda with its lyrical sweetness of emotion and, at its best, suggestive depths, begins the curve of the stream of spiritual feeling which came down through the Vaishnava art and poetry, found its most gracious and lucid embodiment in the poets of Bengal, has now taken enriched by new elements a large and living development in the lyrics of Tagore and the paintings of the Calcutta school and has yet a vital part to play in the spiritual future of India.

Another article contains a full and discriminating account, copiously illustrated by numerous figures, of the history of the Kirtimukha, a standing feature in Indian architecture, and the development of its use as a constant decorative element and in Java a prominent structural

motive. The right understanding of these details is a necessary equipment for the complete comprehension of the art of India. The writer handles his subject with a consummate mastery and includes in a small compass all that is needed to give us a full idea about this "glory face." The one thing not included in his intention is its psychological significance, a question of great interest, for it is an evolution as the writer indicates from an element common to the ancient art of Asia and there were kindred things in Greece and mediaeval Europe. It is the result, I would suggest, of an imagination or an experience that has entered into the psychic worlds and found there a side of things dangerous and distorted and terrible that have yet to be compelled by the adventure of the self-conquering spirit into an element of divine harmony and significance.

The remaining article by Mr. E. Vredenburg on the continuity of pictorial tradition in the art of India treats a question of the most central importance and brings to it a fine aesthetic instinct even more necessary than historic and archaeological accuracy of information in such a discussion, for one may have the latter and yet miss the truth for lack of a more essential equipment of the art critic. Mr. Vredenburg enters a still much needed protest against the constant tendency to attribute a foreign origin to whatever survives of Indian creation. The instances he gives are indeed evidences of an extraordinary perversity of judgment, such as the well-known refusal to leave the credit of the Tajmahal to India, "the numerous attempts that have been made to ascribe the Ajanta paintings to the Greeks, Persians or Chinese," and last but not least colossally absurd, "the truly astounding statement that the Kangra paintings are of European inspiration and that they were painted for the English market"! Only yesterday while reading Mr. Jouveau-Dubreuil's able historical monograph I found myself brought

up short by the sweepingly positive but hardly judicial and certainly not judicious statement that "the Deccan like the North was inspired by the Greek and Roman arts and the marbles of Amaravati can be compared to the sculptures of Gandhara." The plain fact is that whatever outside influences there may or may not have been in India as elsewhere, even the earliest work shows a characteristic Indian mentality and touch; and as for Gandharan art it has the air of an inefficient attempt of the Hellenistic mind to absorb this spirit rather than an effort of India to imitate Greece. And in any case the great characteristic work could no more have been the creation of a foreign mind or of its influence than the sculptures of Phidias can be attributed to an Assyrian, Egyptian or Chinese origin. A psychological insensibility to the spiritual significance of Indian work is probably at the root of these errors and, so long as that subsists, the most erudite knowledge will be no protection against gross misunderstandings.

Mr. Vredenburg is chiefly concerned in this article with filling up the gap between the Ajanta frescoes and the later art of India. He is able to do this up to the eleventh or twelfth century: for the beautiful coloured reproductions of exquisite Buddhist miniatures from an illuminated manuscript of that period which are the most attractive feature of this number, evidence a complete continuity of the Ajanta style. Most striking are the two enlargements which show at once and conclusively that these miniatures are in their whole spirit, method and every characteristic reductions of the old style of mural painting. He appeals also to the typically Ajantesque character of the coloured panels of Man Singh's palace which date from the fifteenth or sixteenth century. It will be interesting to follow the farther development of this argument in the forthcoming number.

I could wish I had space for adequate comment on

the many points of stimulating interest with which this number abounds, but I have, I think, indicated enough to show that every lover of Indian art and culture ought to possess " Rupam ". He will find it one of the luxuries that are necessities.

अ ए

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th May 1920

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA..... Aurobindo Ghose
The Supreme Secret (2)

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G.
Ch. LXVI. Faith and Shakti

THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... Paul Richard
Thou Art

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE XVI

THE FUTURE POETRY
The Form and the Spirit

Essays on the Gita

THE SUPREME SECRET

2

Notice.

We have posted the April number of Arya on the 24th of May to all our subscribers. Those who have not received it are kindly requested to enquire at their respective post-offices; we have also intimated the post office here.

Manager,
ARYA.

of nature and existence, to possess and be possessed by the divine consciousness, to be one with the One in love and delight and universality, one in him with all beings, to do works as an adoration and a sacrifice on the divine foundation of a world in which all is God and in the divine status of a liberated spirit, is the sense of the Gita's Yoga. It is a transition to the supreme and real truth of our being and one enters into it by putting off the many limitations of the separative consciousness and the mind's attachment to the passion and [illegible] and ignorance,

the lesser light and knowledge, the sin and virtue, the dual law and standard of the lower nature. Therefore, says the Teacher, "devoting all thyself to me, giving up in thy conscious mind all thy actions into Me, resorting to Yoga of the will and intelligence be always one in heart and consciousness with Me. If thou art that at all times, then by my grace thou shalt pass safe through all difficult and perilous passages; but if from egoism thou hear not, thou shalt fall into perdition. Vain is this thy resolve, that in thy egoism thou thinkest, saying 'I will not fight'; thy nature shall appoint thee to thy work. What from delusion thou desirest not to do, that helplessly thou shalt do bound by thy own work born of thy swabhava. The Lord is stationed in the heart of all beings, O Arjuna, turning all beings mounted on a machine by his Maya. In him take refuge in every way of thy being and by his grace thou shalt come by the supreme peace and the eternal status."

These are lines that carry in them the innermost heart and lead to the crowning experience of this Yoga and we must understand them in their innermost spirit and in the whole truth of that experience. The words express a most intimate and living relation between God and man, are instinct with the concentrated force of the religious feeling that springs from the human being's adoration, his surrender of his whole existence and utter self-giving to the transcendent and universal Divinity from whom he comes and in whom he lives, and this stress of feeling is in entire consonance with the high and enduring place that the Gita gives to bhakti, to the love of God, as the spirit and motive of the supreme action and the crown and core of the supreme knowledge. The phrases used and the spiritual emotion with which they vibrate seem to give the most intense prominence possible and the utmost importance to the personal truth and presence of the Godhead. There is no abstract Absolute of the philo-

sopher, no indifferent impersonal Presence or ineffable Silence intolerant of all relations, by whom this complete surrender of all our works is demanded and this closeness and intimacy of oneness in all the parts of our conscious existence made the condition and law of our perfection or of whom this divine intervention and protection and deliverance are the promise. It is a Master of our works, a Friend and Lover of our soul, an intimate Self of our life and all our being who alone can utter to us this near and moving message. And yet this is not that relation between man living in his sattwic or other ego-mind and some personal form and aspect of the Deity constructed by that mind or offered to it to satisfy its ideal, aspiration, desire, which is the ordinary sense and actual nature of the normal mental being's religious devotion. It is the Jiva, the essential soul, the original spiritual being of man the individual Purusha, delivered from the limiting and ignorant ego-sense and knowing himself as an eternal portion and power and soul-becoming of the Divine, *angsha sanâtana*, and established by the passing of his ignorance in the light and freedom of his own true and supreme nature which is one with that of the Eternal, who thus enters into his perfect and real relation of delight and union with the origin and continent and governing Self and Power of his being. And it is the Purushottama, the eternal Godhead, the supreme Soul of all beings and all Nature, the original transcendent Spirit, of whom an immutable impersonal self-existence is the first spiritual presence and substance revealed to the experience of our liberated knowledge and a universal and transcendent Person or Purusha the mysterious secret of his being, unthinkable in form of mind, *achintya-rûpa*, but very near and present to the powers of our consciousness, emotion, will, knowledge when they are lifted out of themselves into a supramental, a spiritual delight and power and gnosis,—it is He, transcendent Absolute but also Friend and Lord and Enlightener and

Lover, who is the object of this devotion and approach and this intimate inner becoming and surrender. This union, this relation is a thing lifted beyond the forms and laws, *dharmas*, of the limiting mind, it is a truth of our self and spirit; and yet or rather therefore, because it is the truth of our self and spirit, the truth of its oneness with that Spirit from which all comes and by which and as its derivations and suggestions all exists and travails, it is not a negation but a fulfilment of all that mind and life point to and bear in them as their secret and unaccomplished significance. Thus it is not by a nirvana, an exclusion and negating extinction of all that we are, but by a nirvana of ignorance and ego and a consequent fulfilment of our knowledge and will and heart's aspiration, an uplifted and limitless living of them in the Divine, in the Eternal, *nivasishyasi mayyeva*, a transference to a greater inner status that there comes this supreme perfection and release in the spirit.

The crux of the spiritual problem, the character of the transition of which it is so difficult for the normal mind of man to get a true apprehension, turns altogether upon the distinction between the life of the ego and the lower nature and the existence of the liberated Jiva in its own true spiritual nature. The renunciation of the first must be complete, the transition to the second absolute. This is the distinction on which the Gita dwells here with all possible emphasis, the difference of the egoistic condition of consciousness, *ahaugkrita bhâva*, the crippling narrowness of the separative personality according to whose view-point we ordinarily think and act, feel and respond to the touches of existence, and on the other hand the spiritual condition of immortal fullness, bliss and knowledge to which we come by union with the divine being of which we are a manifestation and expression, and it is the completeness of this union which is indicated by the Gita's *satatam mach-chittah*. The life of the ego is

founded on a construction of the apparent mental truth of existence, a nexus of pragmatic relations between the individual soul and Nature, an intellectual, emotional and sensational interpretation of things used by the little bounded I in us to maintain and satisfy the ideas and desires of its separate personality amid the vast action of the universe. All the ordinary standards by which we determine our view of things, our knowledge and our action proceed upon this narrow and limiting basis, and to follow them even in the widest wheelings round our ego centre does not carry us out of this petty circle. It is a circle in which the soul is subject to the compulsion of Nature; Purusha veiling himself, his divine and immortal being, in ignorance is subject to the law of an insistent limiting Prakriti, and that is the compelling law of the three gunas. It is made up of the law or dharma of the tamasic man inertly obeying in a customary action the suggestions and impulses, the round of will of his material, half-intellectualised vital and sensational being, the law of the rajasic man, vital, dynamic, active, attempting to impose himself on his world and environment but only increasing the weight of the yoke of his passions, desires, egoisms, restless kinetic self-will, the yoke of his own rajasic nature, and the law or dharma of the sattwic man attempting to erect and follow his limited personal standards of reasoning knowledge, enlightened utility or regulated virtue, mental systems and constructions which do not agree with the totality of the meaning of life and are constantly being broken in the movement of the wider universal purpose. The dharma of the sattwic man is the highest in the circle of the gunas, but it too is a limited view and standard temporarily satisfying to the enlightened personal ego, but not founded either on the whole truth of the self or the whole truth of Nature.

And in fact the actual life of man is not at any time one of these things alone, neither a mechanical routine

execution of first crude law of Nature, nor the struggle of a kinetic soul of action, nor a victorious emergence of conscious light and reason and good and knowledge, but a mixture of all these dharmas out of which our will and intelligence makes a more or less arbitrary construction to be realised as best it can, but never in fact realised except by compromise with other compelling things in our nature. Our sattwic ideals of the enlightened will and reason are either themselves compromises, at best progressive compromises, subject to a constant imperfection and flux of change, or if absolute in their character, to be followed as a counsel of perfection; but when we imagine we have completely realised them, it is by ignoring the mixture of other powers and motives, and that self-ignorance constitutes the whole vanity of human reason and self-righteousness, of the egoism of knowledge and virtue. The best human knowledge is a half knowledge and the highest human virtue a thing of mixed quality and, however absolute in standard, yet relative in practice. And as a general law of life the absolute sattwic ideals cannot prevail in practice and, however needed as a power for the betterment and raising of personal aspiration and conduct, their insistence modifies life, but cannot wholly change it, and their perfect fulfilment images itself only in a dream of the future or a world of heavenly nature free from the mixed strain of our terrestrial existence. It cannot be otherwise because neither the nature of this world nor the nature of man is or can be one single piece made of the pure stuff of sattwa. The first door of escape we see out of this limitation and confused mixture of dharmas is in a certain trend towards impersonality, towards something large and universal and calm and free and right and pure behind the limiting mind of ego. The difficulty is that while we can feel a certain release into this impersonality in the quiet and silence of our being, an impersonal activity is by no means so easy to realise. The pursuit of an

impersonal truth or an impersonal will in our conduct is vitiated so long as we live at all in our normal mind by that which is natural and inevitable to that mind, the law of our personality, the colour of ego. That turns the pursuit of impersonal truth into a system of intellectual preferences supported by a limiting mental insistence and converts the pursuit of a disinterested impersonal action into a greater authority given to our personal will's selections and preferences. And on the other hand an absolute impersonality would seem to impose an absolute quietism and that would mean that all action is of the ego and of the three gunas and to recede from life and action is the only way out of the circle.

This however is not the last word of wisdom in the matter because it is not the only way and crown of self-realisation open to us and there is a fuller spiritual experience of the highest kind in which egoistic personality and the mind's limitations are lost in a greater self than the ego and yet life and action are not only still possible but arrive at their fullest spiritual completeness and significance. The thought of the Mahayana approached this realisation through the idea and experience of a complete desirelessness, an utter freedom from attachment and sanskaras and an universal altruism and compassion which became as it were the outpouring of the Nirvanic state in life and action. This was also the sense of the spiritual experience, more conscious of a world significance, more profound and comprehensive on the side of action, nearer to the thought of the Gita, which was aimed at in the utterances of the Taoist thinkers. There is an impersonal ineffable Eternal who is spirit and at the same time the one life of the universe supporting and flowing impartially into all things, *samam brahma*, the One that is nothing because other than all that we perceive and is yet the totality of all these existences; and the personality that is formed in this Infinite with its attachments and dislikings

and fixed mental distinctions is a thing that veils and deforms to us the one reality which can only be seized by losing personality in this universal and eternal Presence and then we live in that and have another greater consciousness which makes us one with all things. Here, as in the Gita, there is a complete self-surrender to the Supreme. "Your body is not your own," says the Taoist thinker "it is the delegated image of God: your life is not your own, it is the delegated harmony of God: your individuality is not your own, it is the delegated adaptability of God." And here too perfection and liberated action are the result of the surrender. The action of personality is a separative running counter to the bias of universal nature and this must be replaced by a wise and still passivity in the hands of the universal and eternal Power which makes one adaptable to the infinite action and in harmony with its truth, and then the man who has this harmony within, may indeed be motionless and absorbed within in silence, but his Self will appear and the divine power will be at work in him and while he abides in tranquillity and inaction, *naishkarmya*, the myriads of things and beings will gather under his influence. Or, in other words, the divine impersonal power of the Self takes up his works no longer deformed by ego and acts in him for the keeping together and control of the world and its peoples, *lokasangrahârthâya*. This is in fact the Gita's renunciation of desire and attachment and ego, its passing beyond the gunas, its living in the Self, its seeing of the Self in all and all in the Self and of all as the Self, *Vâsudevah sarvam*, and its renunciation of all actions to the Self, the Eternal, the Brahman, *atmani sannyasya, brahmani*. It is the highest and largest possible experience of an at once quietistic and active living in the impersonal reality of the one immortal and eternal Existence.

But the Gita adds, *atmani atho mayi*, to see all things in the self and then in Me, to renounce all action into

Brahman and so into the Purushottama. And here it points to a still greater and completer spiritual experience which carries with it a larger explanation of the significance of human life and of the cosmic action. The stress on pure impersonality has this incompleteness for us that it reduces the person, the individual, that persistent miracle of our inmost being, to a temporary and always mutable formation in the Infinite which alone exists without any regard or any real or permanent relation to the soul of man, for that is then only a temporary phenomenon in the Eternal. And it is true that the ego and its limited personality are a temporary and mutable formation of Nature, but that is not true of the real person, the individual Purusha. The ego limitation disappears, the soul feels and lives in its unity with the One and its universal unity with all things, but still it is our soul that enjoys this oneness and the universal action, though felt as the action of one and the same energy in all, still takes different forms in different souls of men, and spiritual knowledge and the universal delight of being flows into and around and concentrates itself in and flows out on the surrounding world from each as from a centre of living spiritual being whose circumference is lost in the infinite, a little universe of divine existence which is at the same time inseparable from and one with the whole infinite universe of the divine self-manifestation. And even when the soul merges itself in the cosmic consciousness or in the transcendent Absolute, it is still the individual soul in man that is the enjoyer of this release, as it was the living spiritual centre of the divine action and manifestation. This mystery of our existence signifies that what we are is not only a temporary name and form of the One, but as we may say, a soul and spirit of the Divine, and our spiritual individuality of which the ego is only a shadow and projection in the ignorance has or is a truth which persists beyond the ignorance in the supreme nature of the Purushottama. This is the pro-

found comprehensiveness of the teaching of the Gita that it recognises the truth of our universalised impersonality into which we enter by the extinction of ego, *brahma-nirvâna*, but recognises too the persistent spiritual truth of our personality as a factor of the highest experience. It is the Ishwara, Vasudeva who is all things, who takes up our mind and life and body for the enjoyment of the lower Prakriti, it is the supreme Prakriti, the original spiritual nature of being, of the supreme Purusha that holds the universe and appears in it as the Jiva, and this Jiva, this living power of divine spiritual being is not merely a temporary form, but an eternal portion, an eternal conscious ray of the divine existence, and as eternal as that Prakriti. The highest perfection and status of our being therefore is to assume the supreme spiritual nature, to dwell in the being of the supreme Purusha and there to have the joy of the eternal spiritual oneness.

This mystery of our being implies necessarily a similar supreme mystery, *rahasyam uttamam*, of the being of the Purushottama, not an exclusive impersonality of the Absolute, but the miracle of an Impersonal, an immutable Self of all things which manifests itself here in infinite and multiple personality and reveals itself to our last, closest, profoundest experience as an illimitable Being who accepts us and takes us to him, *sarvabhâvena*, in all the ways of our conscious existence. This highest experience, this largest way of seeing gives a profound, moving and complete significance to things in us, our knowledge, will, heart's love and adoration, which is lost or diminished in the exclusive stress on the impersonal, because that suppresses or minimises or does not allow of the intensest fulfilment of movements and powers in us that are of the deepest and are attached to the closest essential fibres of our self-experience. It is not by the austerity of knowledge alone, but by the heart's love and aspiration illumined and uplifted by knowledge that we get the widest, the deepest,

the most integral experience of our oneness with all the Divine. It is this nearest oneness in all the being, profoundly individual in a divine passion even in the midst of universality, that is here enjoined on the human soul as its way of possession of the perfection and divine consciousness to which it is called. The intelligence and will have to turn the whole existence in all its parts to the Ishwara, the divine Self and Master of our whole existence, *buddhiyogam upâçritya*. The heart has to cast all other emotion into the delight of oneness with him and the love of Him in all beings, the sense spiritualised has to see and hear and feel him everywhere, the life has to be utterly his life in the Jiva, all the actions have to proceed from his sole power and sole initiation in the will, knowledge, organs of action, senses, vital parts, body. It is in this way impersonal and yet intimately personal that one has to be always united in the whole consciousness with him, *satatam machchittah*.

The refusal of Arjuna to persevere in his divinely appointed work proceeded from the ego sense in him, *ahankâra* : it was a mixture and confusion and tangled error of ideas and impulsions of the sattwic, rajasic, tamasic ego, the fear of sin and its personal consequences, the recoil from individual grief and suffering, the covering of egoistic impulses by the clouded reason's plea of right and virtue, the ignorant shrinking from the ways of God because they seem other than the ways of man and impose things terrible and unpleasant, *apriyam*, on his nervous and emotional being and intelligence. And the spiritual consequences will be infinitely worse now than before, now that a higher truth and a greater way and spirit of action have been revealed to him, if yet persisting in his egoism he perseveres in a vain and impossible refusal. For it is a vain and impossible resolution, since it springs only from a temporary failure of strength and a deviation from the principle of the energy of his inmost character and not the true will and way of his nature. If now he casts down his

arms, he will yet be compelled by that nature to resume them when he sees the battle and slaughter go on without him, his abstention a defeat of all for which he has lived, the cause for whose service he was born weakened and bewildered by the absence or inactivity of its protagonist and afflicted by the strength of the champions of self-regarding unrighteousness and injustice. It is a confusion of the ideas and feelings of the ego mind that impel his refusal, and it is his nature working through a restoration of the characteristic ideas and feelings of the ego mind that will compel him to annul his refusal. But this continued subjection to the ego will mean a worse, a more fatal spiritual refusal, a perdition, *vinashti*, a falling away from a greater truth of his being than that which he has followed in the ignorance of the lower nature. He has been admitted to a higher thing, a new self-realisation, the possibility of a divine instead of an egoistic action, a divine and spiritual in place of a merely intellectual, emotional, sensuous and vital life. He has been called to be no longer a great but blind instrument, but a conscious soul and power and vessel of the Godhead.

The ordinary mind and life of man is a half enlightened, mostly ignorant development and a partial uncompleted manifestation of something concealed within him and concealed from himself, the obscure veil of an action not wholly his own the secret of which he has not yet mastered. Man finds himself in the world thinking and willing and feeling and acting and he takes himself instinctively or intellectually conceives, or at least conducts his life, as a separate self-existent being who has the freedom of his thought and will and feeling and action, the burden of sin and error and suffering, the responsibility and merit of his knowledge and virtue, the right to satisfy his sattwic, rajasic or tamasic ego and the power to shape his own destiny and to turn the world to his own uses. It is this idea of himself through which Nature works in

him, and she deals with him according to his own conception, but fulfils all the time the will of a greater Spirit within her. The error of this self-view of man is the ignorance that makes him identify himself only with the outward mechanical part of him which is a creation of Nature and miss the greater inner spirit within which gives to all his mind and life and creation and action its whole significance. A universal Nature here, obeying the power of the Spirit who is the master of the universe, shapes each creature and determines its action according to the law of its own nature, Swabhava, and man too and his action according to the law of nature of mankind, and each man and his individual action according to the law of his own type and the variation of his individual swabhava. It is this universal Nature that shapes and directs not only the mechanical workings of the body and the instinctive operations of our vital and nervous parts,—there our subjection to her is very obvious,—but the action too of our sense-mind and will and intelligence. Only, while in the animal the mind workings too are a wholly mechanical obedience to Prakriti, man has this distinction that he embodies a conscious development in which the soul more actively participates, and that gives to his outward mentality the sense of a certain freedom and increasing mastery of his instrumental nature. Still this freedom and mastery cannot be complete and are hardly even real until he becomes aware of and in possession of his own real self and spirit other than the ego, *âtmavân*, because it is that which the nature is expressing in mind and life and body, it is that which imposes on Nature this or that law of being, Swabhava, and it is that which shapes the outward destiny and the evolution of the soul within us. And then, when we enter into that inmost self of our being, we come to know that in us and in all is the one Spirit and Godhead whom all Nature serves and manifests and we ourselves are soul of this Soul, spirit of

this Spirit, our body his delegated image, our life a movement of the rhythm of his life, our mind a sheath of his consciousness, our senses his instruments, our emotions and sensations the seekings of his delight of being, our actions a means of his purpose, our freedom a shadow and suggestion of his immortal freedom, our masteries a reflection of his power at work, our best knowledge a partial light of his knowledge, the highest most potent will of our spirit a projection and delegation of the will of this Spirit in all things who is the Master and Soul of the universe. The Lord seated in the heart of every creature has been turning us in all our inner and outer action as if mounted on a machine on the wheel of this Maya of the lower Nature and it is for him in us and him in the world that we have our existence. To live in this knowledge and this truth of our being is to escape from ego and break out of Maya, and all other highest dharmas are only a preparation for this Dharma, and all Yoga is only a means by which we can come by some kind of union with the Master and supreme Soul and Self of our existence. The highest dharma, the greatest Yoga is to take refuge from all the perplexities and difficulties of our nature with this indwelling Lord of all Nature, to turn to him with our whole being, with the life and body and sense and mind and heart and understanding, with our whole dedicated knowledge and will and action, *sarvabhâvena*, in every way of our conscious self and our instrumental nature. And when we can at all times and entirely do this, then the divine Light and Love and Power takes hold of us, fills both self and instruments and leads us safe through all the doubts and difficulties and perplexities and perils that beset our soul and our life to a supreme peace and the spiritual freedom of our immortal and eternal status, *parâm çântim, sthânam çâçwatam.*

And then after giving this deepest essence of its Yoga, after saying that beyond all the secrets revealed to the

mind of man by the transforming light of spiritual knowledge, *gûhyât*, this is a still deeper more secret truth, *gûhyataram*, the Gita suddenly declares that there is still a supreme word that it has to speak, *paramam vachah*, and a most secret truth of all, *sarva-gûhyatamam*. This the Teacher will tell to Arjuna as his highest good because he is the chosen and beloved soul, *ishta*. And this supreme word is spoken in two brief, direct and simple slokas and these are left without farther comment or enlargement to sink into the mind and reveal their own fullness of meaning in the soul's experience,—which alone can make evident the infinite deal of meaning with which are pregnant these words apparently so slight and simple,—as if it were this for which it was being prepared all the time and the rest only an enlightening and enabling discipline and doctrine. "Become my-minded, my lover and adorer, a sacrificer to me, to me bow thyself, to me thou shalt come, this is my pledge and promise to thee, for dear art thou to me. Abandon all dharmas and take refuge in me alone. I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve." The Gita throughout has been insisting on a great and well-built discipline of Yoga, a large and clearly traced philosophical system, on the Swabhava and the Swadharma, on the sattwic law of life as leading out of itself by a self-exceeding exaltation to a free spiritual dharma of immortal existence beyond the limitation of even this highest guna, on many rules and means and injunctions and conditions of perfection, and now suddenly it seems to break out of its own structure and says to the human soul, "Abandon all dharmas, give thyself to the Divine within thee alone and that is all that thou needest, that is the truest and greatest way, that is the real deliverance." The Master of the worlds in the form of the divine Charioteer and Teacher of Kurukhshetra has revealed to man the magnificent realities of God and Self and Spirit and the nature of the complex world and the relation of man's

mind and life and heart and senses to the Spirit and the victorious means by which through his own spiritual self-discipline and effort he can rise out of mortality into immortality and out of his limited mental into his infinite spiritual existence. And now speaking as the Spirit and Godhead in man and in all things he says to him, "All this personal effort and self-discipline is not needed, all following and limitation of rule and dharma can be thrown away, if you can make a complete surrender to Me, rely alone on the Spirit and Godhead within you and all things, and trust to its sole guidance. Turn all the mind to me and fill it with the thought of me and my presence, turn all the heart to me, make every action whatever it be into a sacrifice and offering to me, leave me to do my will with life and soul and action, and do not be grieved or perplexed by my dealings with your mind and heart and life and works or troubled because they do not seem to follow the laws and dharmas man imposes on himself to guide his limited will and mentality. My ways are the ways of a perfect wisdom and power and love and I am here to give the full assurance that I am bringing you to me and to a complete divine life in the universal and an immortal existence in the transcendent Spirit."

The secret thing, *gûhyam*, which spiritual knowledge reveals to us, mirrored in various teachings and justified in the soul's experience, is for the Gita the secret of the spiritual self hidden within us of which mind and external Nature are only manifestations or figures, the secret of the constant relations between soul and Nature, Purusha and Prakriti, the secret of an indwelling Godhead who is the lord of all existence and veiled from us in its forms and movements. These are the truths taught in many ways by Vedanta and Sankhya and Yoga and synthetised in the earlier chapters of the Gita. And amidst all their apparent distinctions they are one truth and all the different ways of Yoga are various means of spiritual self-discipline by

which stilling the mind and life or turning all towards this many-aspected One we can make the secret truth of self and God real to us and live and dwell in it or lose our separate selves in it and no longer be compelled at all by the mental Ignorance. The more secret thing, *gûhyatara*m, developed by the Gita is the profound reconciling truth of the divine Purushottama, at once self and Purusha, Brahman and Godhead. That gives to the thought a larger more deeply understanding foundation for the synthesis and to the spiritual experience a greater, more fully comprehending and comprehensive Yoga. It is founded on the secret of the supreme spiritual Nature and of the Jiva, an eternal portion of the Divine in Nature and of one essence with him in his immutable self-existence, of the Transcendent beyond the world who is at the same time Vasudeva who is all things in all worlds and the Lord standing in the heart of every being and the self of all existences and the origin and meaning of everything that he has put forth in his Prakriti, and manifested in his Vibhutis, and the Spirit in Time compelling the action of the world, and the Sun of all knowledge, and the Lover and Beloved of the soul, and the Master of all works and sacrifice. And the result of the knowledge of this more secret thing is the Gita's Yoga of integral knowledge, integral works and integral bhakti, of spiritual universality and a free and perfected spiritual individuality, of an entire union with God and entire dwelling in him as the frame of immortality and the support and power of a liberated action in the world and the body. And now there comes this supreme word and most secret thing of all, that the Spirit and Godhead is free from all dharmas and though he conducts the world according to fixed laws and leads man through his dharmas of ignorance and knowledge, sin and virtue, right and wrong, liking and disliking and indifference, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow and rejection of these opposites, through his phy-

sical and vital, intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual laws and rules and standards, yet the Spirit and Godhead transcends all these things, and if we too can cast away all dependence on dharmas, surrender ourself to this free and eternal Spirit, trust to the light and power and delight of the Divine in us and, unafraid and ungrieving, accept only his guidance, then that is the truest, the greatest release and that brings the absolute and inevitable perfection of our self and nature. This is the way offered to the chosen of the Spirit, to those in whom he takes the greatest delight because they are nearest to him and most capable of oneness and of being even as he, consenting to Nature, transcendent and universal in the spirit.

A time comes in spiritual development when we become aware that all our effort and action are only our mental reactions to the silent and secret insistence of a greater Presence in and around us and that all our Yoga, our aspiration and our endeavour are imperfect or narrow forms, because disfigured or at least limited by the mind's associations, demands, prejudgments, predilections, mistranslations or half translations of a vaster truth, mental images of greatest things which would be done more perfectly, directly, freely, largely, more in harmony with the universal and eternal will by that Power itself in us if we could only put ourselves passively as instruments in the hands of a supreme and absolute strength and wisdom. That Power is not separate from us, but our own greatest self one with the self of all others and at the same time a transcendent and an immanent Being. Our existence, our action taken up into this greatest Existence would be no longer, as it seems to us now, individually our own in a mental separation, but an Infinity and a Presence and the constant spontaneity of formation and expression in us of this greatest universal self and this transcendent Spirit. The Gita indicates that in order that this may wholly be, the surrender must be without reser-

vations, our Yoga, our life, our state of inner being not predetermined by the insistence on this or that dharma or any dharma. The divine Master of the Yoga, *yogeshwarah krishnah*, will take up our Yoga and raise us to our perfection, not the perfection of any external or mental standard or limiting rule, but vast and comprehensive, a perfection developing according to the whole truth, first indeed of our human swabhava, but afterwards of a greater thing into which it will open, illimitable, immortal, free, all-transmuting, the divine and infinite nature. All must be given as material of that transmutation. The Spirit will take up our knowledge and our ignorance, our truth and our error, cast away their forms of insufficiency, *sarvadharmân parityajya*, and transform all into his infinite light, take up our virtue and sin, right and wrong, cast away their tangled figures, *sarvadharmân parityajya*, and transform all into his transcendent purity and universal good, take up our joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, cast away their discordances and imperfect rhythms, *sarvadharmân parityajya*, and transform all into his transcendent and universal delight. All that all the Yogas can do will be done and more, but in a greater seeing way, with a greater wisdom and truth than any human teacher, saint or sage can give us. The inner spiritual state to which this supreme Yoga will take us, will be above and yet comprehensive of all things and without limitation or bondage, *sarvadharmân parityajya*. Only the infinite existence, consciousness, delight of the Godhead in its calm silence and bright boundless activity will be there, the Divine made manifest and whenever and as he wills building in us whatever shapes of the Infinite, translucent forms of knowledge, thought, love, spiritual joy, power and action according to his self-fulfilling will and immortal pleasure. And there will be no binding effect on the free soul and the unaffected nature, no unescapable crystallising into this or that inferior formula. All the action will be execu-

ted by the power of the Spirit in a divine freedom, *sarvadharmân parityajya*. An unfallen abiding in the transcendent Spirit will be the foundation and the assurance, a oneness with universal being released from all the evil and suffering of the separative mind the power, a constant delight, oneness and harmony of the eternal individual with the Divine and all that he is the effect of this integral liberation. The baffling problems of our human existence of which Arjuna's difficulty stands as an acute example, are created by our separative personality and this Yoga putting the soul of man into its right relation with God and world-existence, making our action God's, the knowledge and will shaping and moving it his and our life the harmony of a divine self-expression, is the way to their total disappearance.

The whole Yoga is revealed, the great word of the teaching given, and Arjuna the chosen human soul is once more ready, no longer in his egoistic mind, but in this greatest self-knowledge for the divine action, the divine life in the human, the works of the liberated soul, *muktasya karmâ*. Destroyed is the illusion of the mind, the soul's memory of its self and its truth concealed by life has returned to it, all doubt and perplexity gone it can turn to the execution of the command, whatever work for God and humanity be appointed and apportioned to it by the Master of its being, the Spirit and Godhead self-fulfilled in Time and universe.

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LXVI

FAITH AND SHAKTI

The three parts of the perfection of our instrumental nature of which we have till now been reviewing the general features, the perfection of the intelligence, heart, vital consciousness and body, the perfection of the fundamental soul powers, the perfection of the surrender of our instruments and action to the divine Shakti, depend at every moment of their progression on a fourth power that is covertly and overtly the pivot of all endeavour and action, faith, *çraddhâ*. The perfect faith is an assent of the whole being to the truth seen by it or offered to its acceptance, and its central working is a faith of the soul in its own will to be and attain and become and its idea of self and things and its knowledge, of which the belief of the intellect, the heart's consent and the desire of the life mind to possess and realise are the outward figures. This soul faith, in some form of itself, is indispensable to the action of the being and without it man cannot move a single pace in life, much less take any step forward to a yet unrealised perfection. It is so central and essential a thing that the Gita can justly say of it that whatever is a

man's *çraddhâ*, that he is, *yo yachchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*, and, it may be added, whatever he has the faith to see as possible in himself and strive for, that he can create and become. There is one kind of faith demanded as indispensable by the integral Yoga and that may be described as faith in God and the Shakti, faith in the presence and power of the Divine in us and the world, a faith that all in the world is the working of one divine Shakti, that all the steps of the Yoga, its strivings and sufferings and failures as well as its successes and satisfactions and victories are utilities and necessities of her workings and that by a firm and strong dependence on and a total self-surrender to the Divine and to his Shakti in us we can attain to oneness and freedom and victory and perfection.

The enemy of faith is doubt, and yet doubt too is an utility and necessity, because man in his ignorance and in his progressive labour towards knowledge needs to be visited by doubt, otherwise he would remain obstinate in an ignorant belief and limited knowledge and unable to escape from his errors. This utility and necessity of doubt does not altogether disappear when we enter on the path of Yoga. The integral Yoga aims at a knowledge not merely of some fundamental principle, but a knowing, a gnosis which will apply itself to and cover all life and the world action, and in this search for knowledge we enter on the way and are accompanied for many miles upon it by the mind's unregenerated activities before these are purified and transformed by a greater light : we carry with us a number of intellectual beliefs and ideas which are by no means all of them correct and perfect and a host of new ideas and suggestions meet us afterwards demanding our credence which it would be fatal to seize on and always cling to in the shape in which they come without regard to their possible error, limitation or imperfection. And indeed at one stage in the Yoga it becomes necessary to refuse to accept as definite and final any kind of in-

tellectual idea or opinion whatever in its intellectual form and to hold it in a questioning suspension until it is given its right place and luminous shape of truth in a spiritual experience enlightened by supramental knowledge. And much more must this be the case with the desires or impulsions of the life mind, which have often to be provisionally accepted as immediate indices of a temporarily necessary action before we have the full guidance, but not always clung to with the soul's complete assent, for eventually all these desires and impulsions have to be rejected or else transformed into and replaced by impulsions of the divine will taking up the life movements. The heart's faith, emotional beliefs, assents are also needed upon the way, but cannot be always sure guides until they too are taken up, purified, transformed and are eventually replaced by the luminous assents of a divine Ananda which is at one with the divine will and knowledge. In nothing in the lower nature from the reason to the vital will can the seeker of the Yoga put a complete and permanent faith, but only at last in the spiritual truth, power, Ananda which become in the spiritual reason his sole guides and luminaries and masters of action.

And yet faith is necessary throughout and at every step because it is a needed assent of the soul and without this assent there can be no progress. Our faith must first be abiding in the essential truth and principles of the Yoga, and even if this is clouded in the intellect, despondent in the heart, outwearied and exhausted by constant denial and failure in the desire of the vital mind, there must be something in the innermost soul which clings and returns to it, otherwise we may fall on the path or abandon it from weakness and inability to bear temporary defeat, disappointment, difficulty and peril. In the Yoga as in life it is the man who persists unwearied to the last in the face of every defeat and disillusionment and of all confronting, hostile and contradicting events and powers

who conquers in the end and finds his faith justified because to the soul and Shakti in man nothing is impossible. And even a blind and ignorant faith is a better possession than the sceptical doubt which turns its back on our spiritual possibilities or the constant carping of the narrow pettily critical uncreative intellect, *asûyâ*, which pursues our endeavour with a paralysing incertitude. The seeker of the integral Yoga must however conquer both these imperfections. The thing to which he has given his assent and set his mind and heart and will to achieve, the divine perfection of the whole human being, is apparently an impossibility to the normal intelligence, since it is opposed to the actual facts of life and will for long be contradicted by immediate experience, as happens with all far-off and difficult ends, and it is denied too by many who have spiritual experience but believe that our present nature is the sole possible nature of man in the body and that it is only by throwing off the earthly life or even all individual existence that we can arrive at either a heavenly perfection or the release of extinction. In the pursuit of such an aim there will for long be plenty of ground for the objections, the carpings, *asûyâ*, of that ignorant but persistent criticising reason which founds itself plausibly on the appearances of the moment, the stock of ascertained fact and experience, refuses to go beyond and questions the validity of all indices and illuminations that point forward; and if he yields to these narrow suggestions, he will either not arrive or be seriously hampered and long delayed in his journey. On the other hand ignorance and blindness in the faith are obstacles to a large success, invite much disappointment and disillusionment, fasten on false finalities and prevent advance to greater formulations of truth and perfection. The Shakti in her workings will strike ruthlessly at all forms of ignorance and blindness and all even that trusts wrongly and superstitiously in her, and we must be prepared to abandon a

too persistent attachment to forms of faith and cling to the saving reality alone. A great and wide spiritual and intelligent faith, intelligent with the intelligence of that larger reason which assents to high possibilities, is the character of the *çraddhâ* needed for the integral Yoga.

This *çraddhâ*—the English word faith is inadequate to express it—is in reality an influence from the supreme Spirit and its light a message from our supramental being which is calling the lower nature to rise out of its petty present to a great self-becoming and self-exceeding. And that which receives the influence and answers to the call is not so much the intellect, the heart or the life mind, but the inner soul which better knows the truth of its own destiny and mission. The circumstances that provoke our first entry into the path are not the real index of the thing that is at work in us. There the intellect, the heart, or the desires of the life mind may take a prominent place, or even more fortuitous accidents and outward incentives; but if these are all, then there can be no surety of our fidelity to the call and our enduring perseverance in the Yoga. The intellect may abandon the idea that attracted it, the heart weary or fail us, the desire of the life mind turn to other objectives. But outward circumstances are only a cover for the real workings of the spirit, and if it is the spirit that has been touched, the inward soul that has received the call, the *çraddhâ* will remain firm and resist all attempts to defeat or slay it. It is not that the doubts of the intellect may not assail, the heart waver, the disappointed desire of the life mind sink down exhausted on the wayside. That is almost inevitable at times, perhaps often, especially with us, sons of an age of intellectuality and scepticism and a materialistic denial of spiritual truth which has not yet lifted its painted clouds from the face of the sun of a greater reality and is still opposed to the light of spiritual intuition and inmost experience. There will very possibly be many of those trying obscurations of which

even the Vedic Rishis so often complained, "long exiles from the light," and these may be so thick, the night on the soul may be so black that faith may seem utterly to have left us. But through it all the spirit within will be keeping its unseen hold and the soul will return with a new strength to its assurance which was only eclipsed and not extinguished, because extinguished it cannot be when once the inner self has known and made its resolution. * The Divine holds our hand through all and if he seems to let us fall, it is only to raise us higher. This saving return we shall experience so often that the denials of doubt will become eventually impossible and, when once the foundation of equality is firmly established and still more when the sun of the gnosis has risen, doubt itself will pass away because its cause and utility have ended.

Moreover not only a faith in the fundamental principle, ideas, way of the Yoga is needed, but a day to day working faith in the power in us to achieve, in the steps we have taken on the way, in the spiritual experiences that come to us, in the intuitions, the guiding movements of will and impulsion, the moved intensities of the heart and aspirations and fulfilments of the life that are the aids, the circumstances and the stages of the enlarging of the nature and the stimuli or the steps of the soul's evolution. At the same time it has always to be remembered that we are moving from imperfection and ignorance towards light and perfection, and the faith in us must be free from attachment to the forms of our endeavour and the successive stages of our realisation. There is not only much that will be strongly raised in us in order to be cast out and rejected, a battle between the powers of ignorance and the lower nature and the higher powers that have to replace them, but experiences, states of thought and feeling, forms of realisation that are helpful and have to be accept-

* *Sankalpa, vyavasāya*

ed on the way and may seem to us for the time to be spiritual finalities, are found afterwards to be steps of transition, have to be exceeded and the working faith that supported them withdrawn in favour of other and greater things or of more full and comprehensive realisations and experiences, which replace them or into which they are taken up in a completing transformation. There can be for the seeker of the integral Yoga no clinging to resting-places on the road or to half-way houses; he cannot be satisfied till he has laid down all the great enduring bases of his perfection and broken out into its large and free infinities, and even there he has to be constantly filling himself with more experiences of the Infinite. His progress is an ascent from level to level and each new height brings in other vistas and revelations of the much that has still to be done, *bhûri kartwam*, till the divine Shakti has at last taken up all his endeavour and he has only to assent and participate gladly by a consenting oneness in her luminous workings. That which will support him through these changes, struggles, transformations which might otherwise dishearten and baffle,—for the intellect and life and emotion always grasp too much at things, fasten on premature certitudes and are apt to be afflicted and unwilling when forced to abandon that on which they rested,—is a firm faith in the Shakti that is at work and reliance on the guidance of the Master of the Yoga whose wisdom is not in haste and whose steps through all the perplexities of the mind are assured and just and sound, because they are founded on a perfectly comprehending transaction with the necessities of our nature.

The progress of the Yoga is a procession from the mental ignorance through imperfect formations to a perfect foundation and increasing of knowledge and in its more satisfyingly positive parts a movement from light to greater light, and it cannot cease till we have the greatest light of the supramental knowledge. The motions of the

mind in its progress must necessarily be mixed with a greater or lesser proportion of error, and we should not allow our faith to be disconcerted by the discovery of its errors or imagine that because the beliefs of the intellect which aided us were too hasty and positive, therefore the fundamental faith in the soul was invalid. The human intellect is too much afraid of error precisely because it is too much attached to a premature sense of certitude and a too hasty eagerness for positive finality in what it seems to seize of knowledge. As our self-experience increases, we shall find that our errors even were necessary movements, brought with them and left their element or suggestion of truth and helped towards discovery or supported a necessary effort and that the certitudes we have now to abandon had yet their temporary validity in the progress of our knowledge. The intellect cannot be a sufficient guide in the search for spiritual truth and realisation and yet it has to be utilised in the integral movement of our nature. And while therefore, we have to reject paralysing doubt or mere intellectual scepticism, the seeking intelligence has to be trained to admit a certain large questioning, an intellectual rectitude not satisfied with half-truths, mixtures of error or approximations and, most positive and helpful, a perfect readiness always to move forward from truths already held and accepted to the greater corrective, completing or transcending truths which at first it was unable or, it may be, disinclined to envisage. A working faith of the intellect is indispensable, not a superstitious, dogmatic or limiting credence attached to every temporary support or formula, but a large assent to the successive suggestions and steps of the Shakti, a faith fixed on realities, moving from the lesser to the completer realities and ready to throw down all scaffolding and keep only the large and growing structure.

A constant *çrâddhâ*, faith, assent of the heart to the life too are indispensable. But while we are in the

nature the heart's assent is coloured by mental emotion and the life movements are accompanied by their trail of perturbing or straining desires, and mental emotion and desire tend to trouble, alter more or less grossly or subtly or distort the truth, and they always bring some limitation and imperfection into its realisation by the heart and life. The heart too when it is troubled in its attachments and its certitudes, perplexed by throw-backs and failures and convictions of error or involved in the wrestlings which attend a çall to move forward from its assured positions, has its draggings, wearinesses, sorowings, revolts, reluctances which hamper the progress. It must learn a larger and surer faith giving in the place of the mental reactions a calm or a moved spiritual acceptance to the ways and the steps of the Shakti which is in its nature the assent of a deepening Ananda to all necessary movements and a readiness to leave old moorings and move always forwards towards the delight of a greater perfection. The life mind must give its assent to the successive motives, impulsions activities of the life imposed on it by the guiding power as aids or fields of the development of the nature and to the successions also of the inner Yoga, but it must not be attached or call a halt anywhere, but must always be prepared to abandon old urgency and accept with the same completeness of assent new higher movements and activities, and it must learn to replace desire by a wide and bright Ananda in all experience and action. The faith of the heart and the life mind, like that of the intelligence must be capable of a constant correction, enlarging and transformation.

This faith is essentially the secret *çraddhâ* of the soul, and it is brought more and more to the surface and there [illegible] sustained and increased by an increasing assurance and certitude of spiritual experience. Here too the faith in us must be unattached, a faith that waits upon Truth and is prepared to change and enlarge its understanding of

spiritual experiences, to correct mistaken or half true ideas about them and receive more enlightening interpretations, to replace insufficient by more sufficient intuitions, and to merge experiences that seemed at the time to be final and satisfying in more satisfying combinations with new experience and greater largenesses and transcendences. And especially in the psychical and other middle domains there is a very large room for the possibility of misleading and often captivating error, and here even a certain amount of positive scepticism has its use and at all events a great caution and scrupulous intellectual rectitude, but not the scepticism of the ordinary mind which amounts to a disabling denial. In the integral Yoga psychical experience, especially of the kind associated with what is often called occultism and savours of the miraculous, should be altogether subordinated to spiritual truth and wait upon that for its own interpretation, illumination and sanction. But even in the purely spiritual domain, there are experiences which are partial and, however attractive, only receive their full validity, significance or right application when we can advance to a fuller experience. And there are others which are in themselves quite valid and full and absolute, but if we confine ourselves to them, will prevent other sides of the spiritual truth from manifestation and mutilate the integrality of the Yoga. Thus the profound and absorbing quietude of impersonal peace which comes by the stilling of the mind is a thing in itself complete absolute, but if we rest in that alone, it will exclude companion absolute, not less great and needed and e, of the bliss of the divine action. Here too our faith ust be an assent that receives all spiritual experience, but with a wide openness and readiness for always more light and truth, an absence of limiting attachment and no such clinging to forms as would interfere with the forward movement of the Shakti towards the integrality of the spiritual being, consciousness, knowledge, power, action

and the wholeness of the one and the multiple Ananda.

The faith demanded of us both in its general principle and its constant particular application amounts to a large and ever increasing and a constantly purer, fuller and stronger assent of the whole being and all its parts to the presence and guidance of God and the Shakti. The faith in the Shakti, as long as we are not aware of and filled with her presence, must necessarily be preceded or at least accompanied by a firm and virile faith in our own spiritual will and energy and our power to move successfully towards unity and freedom and perfection. Man is given faith in himself, his ideas and his powers that he may work and create and rise to greater things and in the end bring his strength as a worthy offering to the altar of the Spirit. This spirit, says the Scripture, is not to be won by the weak, *nâyam âtmâ balahînena labhyah*. All paralysing self-distrust has to be discouraged, all doubt of our strength to accomplish, for that is a false assent to impotence, an imagination of weakness and a denial of the omnipotence of the spirit. A present incapacity, however heavy may seem its pressure, is only a trial of faith and a temporary difficulty and to yield to the sense of inability is for the seeker of the integral Yoga a non-sense, for his object is a development of a perfection that is there already, latent in the being, because man carries the seed of the divine life in himself, in his own spirit, the possibility of success is involved and implied in the effort and victory is assured because behind is the call and guidance of an omnipotent power. At the same time this faith in oneself must be purified from all touch of rajasic egoism and spiritual pride. The sadhaka should keep as much as possible in his mind the idea that his strength is not his own in the egoistic sense but that of the divine universal Shakti and whatever is egoistic in his use of it must be a cause of limitation and in the end an obstacle. The power of the divine universal Shakti which is behind our asnira-

tion is illimitable, and when it is rightly called upon it cannot fail to pour itself into us and to remove whatever incapacity and obstacle, now or later; for the times and durations of our struggle while they depend at first, instrumentally and in part, on the strength of our faith and our endeavour, are yet eventually in the hands of the wisely determining secret Spirit, alone the Master of the Yoga, the Ishwara.

The faith in the divine Shakti must be always at the back of our strength and when she becomes manifest, it must be or grow implicit and complete. There is nothing that is impossible to her who is the conscious Power and universal Goddess all-creative from eternity and armed with the Spirit's omnipotence. All knowledge, all strengths, all triumph and victory, all skill and works are in her hands and they are full of the treasures of the Spirit and of all perfections and siddhis. She is Maheshwari, goddess of the supreme knowledge, and brings to us her vision for all kinds and widenesses of truth, her rectitude of the spiritual will, the calm and passion of her supramental largeness, her felicity of illumination : she is Mahakali, goddess of the supreme strength, and with her are all mights and spiritual force and severest austerity of tapas and swiftness to the battle and the victory and the laughter, the *attahâsya*, that makes light of defeat and death and the powers of the ignorance : she is Mahalakshmi, the goddess of the supreme love and delight, and her gifts are the spirit's grace and the charm and beauty of the Ananda and protection and every divine and human blessing : she is Mahasaraswati, the goddess of divine skill and of the works of the Spirit, and hers is the Yoga that is skill in works, *yogah karmasu kauçalam*, and the utilities of divine knowledge and the self-application of the spirit to life and the happiness of its harmonies. And in all her powers and forms she carries with her the supreme sense of the masteries of the eternal Ishwari, a ra-

pid and divine capacity for all kinds of action that may be demanded from the instrument, oneness, a participating sympathy, a free identity, with all energies in all beings and therefore a spontaneous and fruitful harmony with all the divine will in the universe. The intimate feeling of her presence and her powers and the satisfied assent of all our being to her workings in and around it is the last perfection of faith in the Shakti.

And behind her is the Ishwara and faith in him is the most central thing in the *çraddhâ* of the integral Yoga. This faith we must have and develop to perfection that all things are the workings under the universal conditions of a supreme self-knowledge and wisdom, that nothing done in us or around us is in vain or without its appointed place and just significance, that all things are possible when the Ishwara as our supreme Self and Spirit takes up the action and that all that has been done before and all that he will do hereafter was and will be part of his infallible and foreseeing guidance and intended towards the fruition of our Yoga and our perfection and our life work. This faith will be more and more justified as the higher knowledge opens, we shall begin to see the great and small significances that escaped our limited mentality and faith will pass into knowledge. Then we shall see beyond the possibility of doubt that all happens within the working of the one Will and that that will was also wisdom because it develops always the true workings in life of the self and nature. The highest state of the assent, the *çraddhâ* of the being will be when we feel the presence of the Ishwara and feel all our existence and consciousness and thought and will and action in his hand and consent in all things and with every part of our self and nature to the direct and immanent and occupying will of the Spirit. And that highest perfection of the *çraddhâ* will also be the opportunity and perfect foundation of a divine strength: it will base, when complete, the development and manifestation and the works of the luminous supramental Shakti.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK III

I

THOU ART

1 Birth and death are two limits; beyond those limits there is a sort of uniformity.

2 And shall I then no longer be? Yes, thou shalt be, but thou shalt be something else of which the world
3 will have need at that moment.—Can it be that change terrifies thee? But nothing is done without it.

4 Await with calm the moment of extinction or perhaps of displacement.

5 Restore to heaven and earth that which thou owest unto them...But of this dead man there is a portion that is immortal.

6 Thyself awaken thy self: then protected by thyself and discovering thy own deepest secret, thou shalt not change.

7 Thou remainest the same and thy years shall not fail.

8 The moment that this mystery has been unveiled to thy eyes that thou art no other than Allah, thou

---

1) Tolstoy.— 2) Epictetus.— 3) Marcus Aurelius.— 4) id. —) Rig Veda.— 6) Hindu Wisdom— 7) Hebrews I. 12— 8) Mohyddin-ibn-arabi.

shalt know that thou art thine own end and aim and that thou hast never ceased and canst never cease to be.

9 If thou canst raise thy spirit above Space and Time, thou shalt find thyself at every moment in
10 eternity.—Thou art.

*
* *

11 If in the morning you have heard the voice of celestial reason, in the evening you can die.

12 Thence you can see that it is in a clear knowledge that is found our eternal life.

13 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

14 I do not die, I go forth from Time.

15 I begin life over again after death even as the sun every day.

16 I was dead and, behold, I am alive for evermore.

17 The day dies, I go towards repose, tomorrow evening the monastery bell shall ring out its accustomed voice, but no longer for me; I shall not hear it again as this I, but swallowed up in the great All I shall hear it still.

18 I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

19 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?...Death is swallowed up in victory.

---

9) Angelus Silesius— 10) Delphic Inscription.— 11) Confucius.— 12) Ruysbroeck.— 13) Psalms XXIII. 4.— 14) Lebrun.— 15) Book of the Dead.— 16) Revelation I. 18.— 17) Anammander.— 18) II Timothy IV. 7. 8.— 19) I Corinthians XV.56.55.

A Defence of Indian Culture

XVI

The arts which appeal to the soul through the eye are able to arrive at a peculiarly concentrated expression of the spirit, the aesthesis and the creative mind of a people, but it is in its literature that we must seek for its most flexible and many-sided self-expression, for it is the word used in all its power of clear figure or its threads of suggestion that carries to us most subtly and variably the shades and turns and teeming significances of the inner self in its manifestation. The greatness of a literature lies first in the greatness and worth of its substance, the value of its thought and the beauty of its forms, but also in the degree to which, satisfying the highest conditions of the art of speech, it avails to bring out and raise the soul and life or the living and the ideal mind of a people, an age, a culture, through the genius of some of its greatest or most sensitive representative spirits. And if we ask what in both these respects is the achievement of the Indian mind as it has come down to us in the Sanskrit and other literatures, we might surely say that here at least there is little room for any just depreciation and denial even by a mind the most disposed to quarrel with the effect on life and the character of the culture. The ancient and classical creations of the Sanskrit tongue both in quality and in body

and abundance of excellence, in their potent originality and force and beauty, in their substance and art and structure, in grandeur and justice and charm of speech and in the height and width of the reach of their spirit stand very evidently in the front rank among the world's great literatures. The language itself, as has been universally recognised by those competent to form a judgment, is one of the most magnificent, the most perfect and wonderfully sufficient literary instruments developed by the human mind, at once majestic and sweet and flexible, strong and clearly-formed and full and vibrant and subtle, and its quality and character would be of itself a sufficient evidence of the character and quality of the race whose mind it expressed and the culture of which it was the reflecting medium. The great and noble use made of it by poet and thinker did not fall below the splendour of its capacities. Nor is it in the Sanskrit tongue alone that the Indian mind has done high and beautiful and perfect things, though it couched in that language the larger part of its most prominent and formative and grandest creations. It would be necessary for a complete estimate to take into account as well the Buddhistic literature in Pali and the poetic literatures, here opulent, there more scanty in production, of about a dozen Sanskritic and Dravidian tongues. The whole has almost a continental effect and does not fall so far short in the quantity of its really lasting things and equals in its things of best excellence the work of ancient and mediaeval and modern Europe. The people and the civilisation that count among their great works and their great names the Veda and the Upanishads, the mighty structures of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti and Bhartrihari and Jayadeva and the other rich creations of classical Indian drama and poetry and romance, the Dhammapada and the Jatakas, the Panchatantra, Tulsidas, Bidyapati and Chandidas and Ramprasad, Ramdas and Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar and Kam-

ban and the songs of Nanak and Kabir and Mirabai and the southern Shaiva saints and the Alwars,—to name only the best-known writers and most characteristic productions, though there is a very large body of other work in the different tongues of both the first and the second excellence,—must surely be counted among the greatest civilisations and the world's most developed and creative peoples. A mental activity so great and of so fine a quality commencing more than three thousand years ago and still not exhausted is unique and the best and most undeniable witness to something extraordinarily sound and vital in the culture.

A criticism that ignores or belittles the significance of this unsurpassed record and this splendour of the self-expressing spirit and the creative intelligence, stands convicted at once of a blind malignity or an invincible prejudice and does not merit refutation. It would be a sheer waste of time and energy to review the objections raised by our devil's advocate : for nothing vital to the greatness of a literature is really in dispute and there is only to the credit of the attack a general distortion and denunciation and a laborious and exaggerated cavilling at details and idiosyncracies which at most show a difference between the idealising mind and abundant imagination of India and the more realistically observant mind and less rich and exuberant imagination of Europe. The fit parallel to this motive and style of criticism would be if an Indian critic who had read European literature only in bad or ineffective Indian translations, were to pass it under a hostile and disparaging review, dismiss the Iliad as a crude and empty semi-savage and primitive epos, Dante's great work as the nightmare of a cruel and superstitious religious fantasy, Shakespeare as a drunken barbarian of considerable genius with an epileptic imagination, the whole drama of Greece and Spain and England as a mass of bad ethics and violent horrors, French poetry as a suc-

cession of bald or fawdry rhetorical exercises and French fiction as a tainted and immoral thing, a long sacrifice on the altar of the goddess Lubricity, admit here and there a minor merit, but make no attempt at all to understand the central spirit or aesthetic quality or principle of structure and conclude on the strength of his own absurd method that the ideals of both Pagan and Christian Europe were altogether false and bad and its imagination afflicted with a "habitual and ancestral" earthiness, morbidity, poverty and disorder. No criticism would be worth making on such a mass of absurdities, and in this equally ridiculous philippic only a stray observation or two less inconsequent and opaque than the others perhaps demands a passing notice. But although these futilities do not at all represent the genuine view of the general European mind on the subject of Indian poetry and literature, still one finds a frequent inability to appreciate the spirit or the form or the aesthetic value of Indian writing and especially its perfection and power as an expression of the cultural mind of the people. One meets such criticisms even from sympathetic critics as an admission of the vigour, colour and splendour of Indian poetry followed by a conclusion that for all that it does not satisfy, and this means that the intellectual and temperamental misunderstanding extends to some degree even to this field of creation where different minds meet more readily than in painting and sculpture, that there is a rift between the two mentalities and what is delightful and packed with meaning and power to the one has no substance, but only a form, of aesthetic or intellectual pleasure for the other. This difficulty is partly due to an inability to enter into the living spirit and feel the vital touch of the language, but partly to a spiritual difference in similarity which is even more baffling than a complete dissimilarity and otherness. Chinese poetry for example is altogether of its own kind and it is more possible for a western mentality, when it does not altogether pass it

by as an alien world, to develop an undisturbed appreciation because the receptivity of the mind is not checked or hampered by any disturbing memories or comparisons. Indian poetry on the contrary, like the poetry of Europe, is the creation of an Aryan or Aryanised national mind, starts apparently from similar motives, moves on the same plane, uses cognate forms, and yet has something quite different in its spirit which creates a pronounced and separating divergence in its aesthetic tones, type of imagination, turn of self-expression, ideative mind, method, form, structure. The mind accustomed to the European idea and technique expects the same kind of satisfaction here and does not meet it, feels a baffling difference to whose secret it is a stranger, and the subtly pursuing comparison and vain expectation stand in the way of a full receptivity and intimate understanding. At bottom it is an insufficient comprehension of the quite different spirit behind, the different heart of this culture that produces the mingled attraction and dissatisfaction. The subject is too large to be dealt with adequately in small limits: I shall only attempt to bring out certain points by a consideration of some of the most representative master works of creative intuition and imagination taken as a record of the soul and mind of the Indian people.

The early mind of India in the magnificent youth of the nation, when a fathomless spiritual insight was at work, a subtle intuitive vision and a deep, clear and greatly outlined intellectual and ethical thinking and heroic action and creation which founded and traced the plan and made the permanent structure of her unique culture and civilisation, is represented by four of the supreme productions of her genius, the Veda, the Upanishads and the two vast epics, and each of them is of a kind, a form and an intention not easily parallelled in any other literature. The two first are the visible foundation of her spiritual and religious being, the others a large creative interpretation of

her greatest period of life, of the ideas that informed and the ideals that governed it and the figures in which she saw man and Nature and God and the powers of the universe. The Veda gave us the first types and figures of these things as seen and formed by an imaged spiritual intuition and psychological and religious experience ; the Upanishads constantly breaking through and beyond form and symbol and image without entirely abandoning them, since always they come in as accompaniment or undertone, reveal in a unique kind of poetry the ultimate and unsurpassable truths of self and God and man and the world and its principles and powers in their most essential, their profoundest and most intimate and their most ample realities,—highest mysteries and clarities vividly seen in an irresistible, an unwalled perception that has got through the intuitive and psychological to the sheer spiritual vision. And after that we have powerful and beautiful developments of the intellect and the life and of ideal, ethical, aesthetic, psychic, emotional and sensuous and physical knowledge and idea and vision and experience of which the epics are the early record and the rest of the literature the continuation ; but the foundation remains the same throughout, and whatever new and often larger types and significant figures replace the old or intervene to add and modify and alter the whole ensemble, are in their essential build and character transmutations and extensions of the original vision and first spiritual experience and never an unconnected departure. There is a persistence, a continuity of the Indian mind in its literary creation in spite of great changes as consistent as that which we find in painting and sculpture.

The Veda is the creation of an early intuitive and symbolical mentality to which the later mind of man strongly intellectualised and governed on the one side by reasoning idea and abstract conception, on the other hand by the facts of life and matter accepted as they present

themselves to the senses and positive intelligence without seeking in them for any divine or mystic significance, indulging the imagination as a play of the aesthetic fancy rather than as an opener of the doors of truth and only trusting to its suggestions when they are confirmed by the logical reason or by physical experience, aware only of carefully intellectualised intuitions and recalcitrant for the most part to any others, has grown a total stranger. It is not surprising therefore that the Veda should have become unintelligible to our minds except in its most outward shell of language, and that even very imperfectly known owing to the obstacle of an antique and ill understood diction, and that the most inadequate interpretations should be made which reduce this great creation of the young and splendid mind of humanity to a botched and defaced scrawl, an incoherent hotch-potch of the absurdities of a primitive imagination perplexing what would be otherwise the quite plain, flat and common record of a naturalistic religion which mirrored only and could only minister to the crude and materialistic desires of a barbaric life mind. The Veda became to the later scholastic and ritualistic idea of Indian priests and pundits nothing better than a book of mythology and sacrificial ceremonies, while European scholars seeking in it for what was alone to them of any rational interest, the history, myths and popular religious notions of a primitive people, have done yet worse wrong to the Veda and by insisting on a wholly external rendering still farther stripped it of its spiritual interest and its poetic greatness and beauty.

But this was not what it was to the Vedic Rishis themselves or to the great seers and thinkers who came after them and developed out of their pregnant and luminous intuitions their own wonderful structures of thought and speech built upon an unexampled spiritual revelation and experience. The Veda was to these early seers the

Word discovering the Truth and clothing in image and symbol the mystic significances of life. It was a divine discovery and unveiling of the potencies of the word, of its mysterious revealing and creative capacity, not the word of the logical and reasoning or the aesthetic intelligence, but the intuitive and inspired rhythmic utterance, the mantra. Image and myth were freely used, not as an imaginative indulgence, but as living parables and symbols of things that were very real to their speakers and could not otherwise find their own intimate and native shape in utterance, and the imagination itself was a priest of greater realities than those that meet and hold the eye and mind limited by the external suggestions of life and the physical existence. This was their idea of the sacred poet, a mind visited by some highest light and its forms of idea and word, a seer and hearer of the Truth, *kavayah satyaçrutayah*. The poets of the Vedic verse certainly did not regard their function as it is represented by modern scholars, they did not look on themselves as a sort of superior medicine-men and makers of hymn and incantation to a robust and barbarous tribe, but as seers and thinkers, *rishi*, *dhîra*. These singers believed that they were in possession of a high, mystic and hidden truth, claimed to be the bearers of a speech acceptable to a divine knowledge, and expressly so speak of their utterances, as secret words which declare their whole significance only to the seer, *kavaye nivachanâni nihyâ vachânsi*. And to those who came after them the Veda was a book of knowledge, and even of the supreme knowledge, a revelation, a great utterance of eternal and impersonal truth as it had been seen and heard in the inner experience of inspired and semi-divine thinkers. The smallest circumstances of the sacrifice around which the hymns were written were intended to carry a symbolic and psychological power of significance, as was well known to the writers of the ancient Brahmanas. The sacred verses, each by itself held

to be full of a divine meaning, were taken by the thinkers of the Upanishads as the profound and pregnant seed-words of the truth they sought and the highest authority they could give for their own sublime utterances was a supporting citation from their predecessors with the formula *tad eshâ richâbhyuktâ*, "This is that word which was spoken by the Rig Veda." The western scholar chooses to imagine that these successors of the Vedic *rishis* were in error, that, except for some later hymns, they put a false and non-existent meaning into the old verses and that they themselves divided from the Rishis not only by ages of time but by many gulfs and separating seas of an intellectualised mentality know infinitely better. But mere common sense ought to tell us that those who were so much nearer in both ways to the original poets had a better chance of holding at least the essential truth of the matter and suggests at least the strong probability that the Veda was really what it professes to be, the seeking for a mystic knowledge, the first form of the constant attempt of the Indian mind, to which it has always been faithful, to look beyond the appearances of the physical world and through its own inner experiences to the godheads, powers, self-existence of the One of whom the sages speak variously—the famous phrase in which the Veda utters its own central secret, *ekam sad viprâ bahudhâ vadanti.*

The real character of the Veda can best be understood by taking it anywhere and rendering it straightforwardly according to its own phrases and images. A famous German scholar rating from his high pedestal of superior intelligence the silly persons who find sublimity in the Veda, tells us that it is full of childish, silly, even monstrous conceptions, that it is tedious, low, commonplace, that it represents human nature on a low level of selfishness and worldliness and that only here and there are a few rare sentiments that come from the depths of the

soul. It may be made so if we put our own mental conceptions into the words of the Rishis, but if we read them as they are without any such false translation into what we think early barbarians ought to have said and thought, we shall find instead a sacred poetry sublime and powerful in its words and images, though with another kind of language and imagination than we now prefer and appreciate, deep and subtle in its psychological experience and stirred by a moved soul of vision and utterance. Hear rather the word itself of the Veda.

States upon states are born, covering over covering * awakens to knowledge : in the lap of the mother he wholly sees. They have called to him, getting wide knowledge, they guard sleeplessly the strength, they have entered into the strong city. The peoples born on earth increase the luminous (force) of the son of the White Mother ; he has gold on his neck, he is large of speech, he is as if by (the power of) this honey wine a seeker of plenty. He is like pleasant and desirable milk, he is a thing uncompanioned and is with the two who are companions and is as a heat that is the belly of plenty and is invincible and an overcomer of many. Play, O Ray, and manifest thyself †.

Or again in the succeeding hymn,—

Those (flames) of thee, the forceful (godhead), that move not and are increased and puissant, uncling the hostility and crookedness of one who has another law. O Fire, we choose thee for our priest and the means of effectuation of our strength and in the sacrifices bringing the food of thy pleasure we call thee by the word...O god of perfect works, may we be, for the felicity, for the truth, revelling with the rays, revelling with the heroes."

And finally let us take the bulk of the third hymn that follows couched in the ordinary symbols of the sacrifice,—

As the Manu we set thee in thy place, as the Manu we kindle thee : O Fire, O Angiras, as the Manu sacrifice to the gods for him

* Or, "the coverer of the coverer."

† Literally, "become towards us"

who desires the godheads. O Fire, well pleased thou art kindled in the human being and the ladles go to thee continually...Thee all the gods with one pleasure (in thee) made their messenger and serving thee, O seer, (men) in the sacrifices adore the god. Let the mortal adore the divine Fire with sacrifice to the godheads. Kindled, flame forth, O Bright One. Sit in the seat of Truth, sit in the seat of peace."[*]

That, whatever interpretation we choose to put on its images, is a mystic and symbolic poetry and that is the real Veda.

The character of Vedic poetry apparent from these typical verses need not surprise or baffle us when we see what will be evident from a comparative study of Asiatic literature, that though distinguished by its theory and treatment of the Word, its peculiar system of images and the complexity of its thought and symbolised experience, it is in fact the beginning of a form for the poetic expression of spiritual experience which reappears constantly in later Indian writing, the figures of the Tantras and Puranas, the figures of the Vaishnava poets,—one might add even a certain element in the modern poetry of Tagore,—and has its kindred movements in certain Chinese poets and in the images of the Sufis. The poet has to express a spiritual and psychical knowledge and experience and he cannot do it altogether or mainly in the more abstract language of the philosophical thinker, for he has to bring out, not the naked idea of it, but as vividly as possible its very life and most intimate touches. He has to reveal in one way or another a whole world within him and the quite inner and spiritual significances of the world around him and also, it may well be, godheads, powers, visions and experi-

[*] I have translated these passages with as close a literalness as the English language will admit. Let the reader compare the original and judge whether this is not the sense of the verses.

ences of planes of consciousness other than the one with which our normal minds are familiar. He uses or starts with the images taken from his own normal and outward life and that of humanity and from visible Nature, and though they do not of themselves actually express, yet obliges them to express by implication or to figure the spiritual and psychic idea and experience. He takes them selecting freely his notation of images according to his insight or imagination and transmutes them into instruments of another significance and at the same time pours a direct spiritual meaning into the Nature and life to which they belong, applies outward figures to inner things and brings out their latent and inner spiritual or psychic significance into life's outward figures and circumstances. Or an outward figure nearest to the inward experience, its material counterpart, is taken throughout and used with such realism and consistency that while it indicates to those who possess it the spiritual experience, it means only the external thing to others,—just as the Vaishnava poetry of Bengal makes to the devout mind a physical and emotional image or suggestion of the love of the human soul for God, but to the profane is nothing but a sensuous and passionate love poetry hung conventionally round the traditional human-divine personalities of Krishna and Radha. The two methods may meet together, the fixed system of outward images be used as the body of the poetry, while freedom is often taken to pass their first limits, to treat them only as initial suggestions and transmute subtly or even cast them aside or subdue into a secondary strain or carry them out of themselves so that the translucent veil they offer to our minds lifts from or passes into the open revelation. The last is the method of the Veda and it varies according to the passion and stress of the sight in the poet or the exaltation of his utterance.

The poets of the Veda had another mentality than ours, their use of their images is of a peculiar kind and an

antique cast of vision gives a strange outline to their substance. The physical and the psychical worlds were to their eyes a manifestation and a twofold and diverse and yet connected and similar figure of cosmic godheads, the inner and outer life of man a divine commerce with the gods, and behind was the one spirit or being of which the gods were names and personalities and powers. These godheads were at once masters of physical Nature and its principles and forms their godheads and their bodies and inward divine powers with their corresponding states and energies born in our psychic being because they are the soul powers of the cosmos, the guardians of truth and immortality, the children of the Infinite, and each of them too is in his origin and his last reality the supreme Spirit putting in front one of his aspects. The life of man was to these seers a thing of mixed truth and falsehood, a movement from mortality to immortality, from mixed light and darkness to the splendour of a divine Truth whose home is above in the Infinite but which can be built up here in man's soul and life, a battle between the children of light and the sons of Night, a getting of treasure, of the wealth, the booty given by the gods to the human warrior, and a journey and a sacrifice; and of these things they spoke in a fixed system of images taken from Nature and from the surrounding life of the war-like, pastoral and agricultural Aryan peoples and centred round the cult of Fire and the worship of the powers of living Nature and the institution of sacrifice. The details of outward existence and of the sacrifice were in their life and practice symbols, and in their poetry not dead symbols or artificial metaphors, but living and powerful suggestions and counterparts of inner things. And they used too for their expression a fixed and yet variable body of other images and a glowing web of myth and parable, images that became parables, parables that became myths and myths that remained always images, and yet all these things were to them in a way that

can only be understood by those who have entered into a certain order of psychic experience actual realities. The physical melted its shades into the lustres of the psychic, the psychic deepened into the light of the spiritual and there was no sharp dividing line in the transition, but a natural blending and intershading of their suggestions and colours. It is evident that a poetry of this kind, written by men with this kind of vision or imagination, cannot either be interpreted or judged by the standards of a reason and taste observant only of the canons of the physical existence. The invocation "Play, O ray, and become towards us" is at once a suggestion of the leaping up and radiant play of the potent sacrificial flame on the physical altar and of a similar psychical phenomenon, the manifestation of the saving flame of a divine power and light within us. The western critic sneers at the bold and reckless and to him monstrous image in which Indra son of earth and heaven is said to create his own father and mother; but if we remember that Indra is the supreme spirit in one of its eternal and constant aspects, creator of earth and heaven, born as a cosmic godhead between the mental and physical worlds and recreating their powers in man, we shall see that the image is not only a powerful but in fact a true and revealing figure, and in the Vedic technique it does not matter that it outrages the physical imagination since it expresses a greater actuality as no other figure could have done with the same awakening aptness and vivid poetical force. The Bull and Cow of the Veda, the shining herds of the Sun lying hidden in the cave are strange enough creatures to the physical mind, but they do not belong to the earth and in their own plane they are at once images and actual things and full of life and significance. It is in this way that throughout we must interpret and receive the Vedic poetry according to its own spirit and vision and the psychically natural, even if to us strange and supranatural, truth of its ideas and figures.

The Veda thus understood stands out, apart from its interest as the world's first yet extant Scripture, its earliest interpretation of man and the Divine and the universe, as a remarkable, a sublime and powerful poetic creation. It is in its form and speech no barbaric production. The Vedic poets are masters of a consummate technique, their rhythms are carved like chariots of the gods and borne on divine and ample wings of sound, and are at once concentrated and wide-wayed, great in movement and subtle in modulation, their speech lyric by intensity and epic by elevation an utterance of great power, pure and bold and grand in outline, a speech direct and brief in impact, full to overflowing in sense and suggestion so that each verse exists at once as a strong and sufficient thing in itself and takes its place as a large step between what came before and what comes after. A sacred and hieratic tradition faithfully followed gave them both their form and substance, but this substance consisted of the deepest psychic and spiritual experiences of which the human soul is capable and the forms seldom or never degenerate into a convention, because what they are intended to convey was lived in himself by each poet and made new to his own mind in expression by the subtleties or sublimities of his individual vision. The utterances of the greatest seers, Viswamitra, Vamadeva, Dirghatamas and many others, touch the most extraordinary heights and amplitudes of a sublime and mystic poetry and there are poems like the Hymn of Creation that move in a powerful clarity on the summits of thought on which the Upanishads lived constantly with a more sustained breathing. The mind of ancient India did not err when it traced back all its philosophy, religion and essential things of its culture to these seer-poets, for all the future spirituality of her people is contained there in seed or in first expression.

It is one great importance of a right understanding

of the Vedic hymns as a form of sacred literature that it helps us to see the original shaping not only of the master ideas that governed the mind of India, but of its characteristic types of spiritual experience, its turn of imagination, its creative temperament and the kind of significant forms in which it persistently interpreted its sight of self and things and life and the universe. It is in a great part of the literature the same turn of inspiration and self-expression that we see in the architecture, painting and sculpture. Its first character is a constant sense of the infinite, the cosmic, and of things as seen in or affected by the cosmic vision, set in or against the amplitude of the one and infinite; its second peculiarity is a tendency to see and render its spiritual experience in a great richness of images taken from the inner psychic plane or in physical images transmuted by the stress of a psychic significance and impression and line and idea colour; and its third tendency is to image the terrestrial life often magnified, as in the Mahabharat and Ramayana, or else subtilised in the transparencies of a larger atmosphere, attended by a greater than the terrestrial meaning or at any rate presented against the background of the spiritual and psychic worlds and not alone in its own separate figure. The spiritual, the infinite is near and real and the gods are real and the worlds beyond not so much beyond as immanent in our own existence. That which to the western mind is myth and imagination is here an actuality and a strand of the life of our inner being, what is there beautiful poetic idea and philosophic speculation is here a thing constantly realised and present to the experience. It is this turn of the Indian mind, its spiritual sincerity and psychic positivism, that makes the Veda and Upanishads and the later religious and religio-philosophic poetry so powerful in inspiration and intimate and living in expression and image, and it has its less absorbing but still very sensible effect on the working of the poetic idea and imagination even in the more secular literature.

The Future Poetry

THE FORM AND THE SPIRIT

A change in the spirit of poetry must necessarily bring with it a change of its forms, and this departure may be less or greater to the eye, more inward or more outward, but always there must be at least some subtle and profound alteration which, whatever the apparent fidelity to old moulds, is certain to amount in fact to a transmutation, since even the outward character and effect become other than they were and the soul of substance and movement a new thing. The opening of the creative mind into an intuitive and revelatory poetry need not of itself compel a revolution and total breaking up of the old forms and a creation of altogether new moulds : it may, especially where a preparatory labour in that sense has been doing a work of modification and adaptation, be effected for the most part by an opening up of new potentialities in old instruments and a subtle inner change of their character. Actually, however, while the previous revolutions in the domain of poetry have moved within the limits of the normal and received action of the poetic intelligence, the upward and inward movement and great widening of which the human mind is now in labour is an effort of such rapidity and magnitude that it appears like an irresistible breaking out of all familiar bounds and

it is natural that the mentality in its effort at a completely new creation should wish to break too the old moulds as a restriction and a fettering narrowness and be desirous of discovering novel and unprecedented forms, fitting tenements and temples of the freer, subtler, vaster spirit that is preparing to enter into occupation. To remould seems to be an insufficient change, the creation of a new body for a quite new spirit the commanded discovery and labour. There must certainly take place in order to satisfy the changed vision a considerable departure in all the main provinces of poetic creation, the lyric, the drama, the narrative or epic, and the question for solution is how far and in what way the technique of each kind will necessarily be affected or should with advantage be transformed so as to allow free room for the steps and the constructive figures of a finer and ampler poetic idea and a changed soul movement and a just correspondence to it in the art of the poet.

The lyrical impulse is the original and spontaneous creator of the poetic form, song the first discovery of the possibility of a higher because a rhythmic intensity of self-expression. It wells out from the intensity of touch and the spiritualised emotion of a more delicate or a deeper and more penetrating sight and feeling in the experience, captures and sustains the inevitable cadences of its joy or its attraction, sets the subtle measure of its feeling and keeps it by the magic of its steps in sound vibrating on the inner strings and psychic fibres. The lyric is a moment of heightened soul experience, sometimes brief in a lightness of aerial rapture, in a poignant ecstasy of pain, of joy or of mingled emotion or in a swift graver exaltation, sometimes prolonged and repeating or varying the same note, sometimes linking itself in a sustained succession to other moments that start from it or are suggested by its central motive. It is at first a music of simple melodies coming out of itself to which the spirit listens

with pleasure and makes eternal by it the charm of self-discovery or of reminiscence. And the lyrical spirit may rest satisfied with these clear spontaneities of song or else it may prefer to weight its steps with thought and turn to a meditative movement or, great-winged, assume an epic elevation, or lyricise the successive moments of an action, or utter the responses of heart to heart, mind to mind, soul to soul, move between suggestions and counter-suggestions of mood and idea and feeling and devise a lyrical seed or concentration of drama. The widest in range as it is the most flexible in form and motive of all the poetic kinds, the others have grown out of it by the assumption of a more settled and deliberate and extended speech and a more ample structure. It is therefore in the lyric nearest to the freshness of an original impulse that a new spirit in poetry is likely to become aware of itself and feel out for its right ways of expression and to discover with the most adaptable freedom and variety its own essential motives and cadences, first forms and simpler structures before it works out victoriously its greater motions or ampler figures in narrative and drama.

The freshest and most spontaneous liquidities of song utterance abounded in past literature at times when the direct movement of the life-spirit, whether confined to simple primary emotion and experience or deepening to the more vivid probings of its own richer but still natural self-aesthesis, has been the fountain-head of a stirred poetic utterance. It is then that there come the pure lyric outbursts and the poet is content to sing and let the feeling create its own native moulds of music. The thought satisfied with its own emotion is not too insistent to elaborate the lyrical form for its more intricate purposes or to give it certainly a weightier but almost inevitably a less simply rapturous movement. The intellectual ages sing less easily. It is their care to cut and carve the lyrical form with a self-conscious and considering art and their

practice arrives at measures and movements of a consummate literary perfection, much power of modulation, a moved thinking and sentiment deliberately making the most of its own possibilities; but except in the voices of the one or two who are born with the capacity and need of the pure lyrical impulse, the too developed intellect cannot often keep or recover life's first fine careless rapture or call the memory of it into its own more loaded tones and measures. The lyric poetry of the ancient classical tongues is largely of this character and we find it there confined to a certain number of highly developed forms managed with a perfect and careful technique, and the movement of poetic feeling, sometimes grave, sometimes permitted a lighter and more rapid impulsion, is chastened and subdued to the service of the reflective poetic intelligence. The absolute simplicities and spontaneities of the soul's emotion which were the root of the original lyric impulse get only an occasional opportunity of coming back to the surface, and in their place there is the movement of a more thoughtful and often complex sentiment and feeling, not freshets of song, but the larger wave of the chant and elegy and ode: the flowers of the field and mountain self-sown on the banks or near the sources are replaced by the blossoms of a careful culture. Still however reined in or penetrated and rendered grave by thought, the life of feeling is still there and the power and sincerity of the lyrical impulse abide as the base of the workings of the moved intelligence. But in the literary ages that are classical by imitation, there is ordinarily a great poverty, an absence or thinness of the lyrical element, the sincerity and confident self-pleasure of the feeling indispensable to the lyrical movement wither under the coldly observant and too scrutinising eye of the reflective reason, and the revival of song has to await the romantic movement of interest of a more eager and a wider intelligence which will endeavour to get back to

some joy of the intimate powers of life and the vivid lyricism of the heart and the imagination. There is then a return by an imaginative effort to old cultivated forms of lyrical expression and to early simple movements like the ballad motive and in the end a great variety of experiments in new metrical moulds and subtle modifications of old structures, an attempt of the idea to turn back the thought mind to grave or happy sincerities of emotion or impose on it a more absolute assent to bare simplicities of thought and feeling and finally a living curiosity of the intelligence in the expression of all kinds and shades of sensation and emotion. The work of this developed poetic intellectuality differs from the early work whose spirit and manner it often tries hard to recover because it is the thought that is primarily at work and the form less a spontaneous creation of the soul than a deliberately intelligent structure, and while the movement of the pure lyrical impulse is entirely shaped by the feeling and the thought only accompanies it in its steps, here the thought actively intervenes and determines and cannot but sophisticate the emotional movement. This distinction has many consequences and most this pregnant result that even the simplicities of a developed poetical thought are willed simplicities and the end is a curiosity of work that has many triumphs of aesthetic satisfaction but not often any longer the native tones of the soul when the pure lyrical feeling was still possible.

The turn to a more direct self-expression of the spirit must find out its way first by the emergence of a new kind of lyrical sincerity which is neither the directness of the surface life emotions nor the moved truth of the thought mind seizing or observing the emotion and bringing out its thought significances. There are in fact only two pure and absolute sincerities here, the power of the native intuition of itself by life which has for its result a direct and obvious identity of the thing felt and its ex-

pression, and the power of identity of the spirit when it takes up thought and feeling and life and makes them one with some inmost absolute truth of their and our existence. There is a power too of the sincerities of thought, but that is an intermediary between life and the spirit and only poetic when its fills itself with the sense of one of the others or links them together or aids to bring them to oneness. It is therefore a transition from the lyricism of life weighted by the stresses of thought to the lyricism of the inmost spirit which uses but is beyond thought that has to be made. And here we notice a significant tendency, an endeavour to present life in an utmost clarity of its intention and form and outline stripped and discharged of the thought's abundant additions, made naked of the haze of the reflective intelligence, the idea being that we shall thus get at its bare truth and feeling, its pure vital intuition where that starts out of the subconscious suggestion and meets the seeing mind and a conscious identity can be created with its sense in our souls by the revealing fidelity of the expression. There is often added to this endeavour the injunction that the rhythmic movement should follow the fluctuations of life with a subtle adaptation of the verbal music, and this notion is used to justify the now common free or else irregular and often broken-backed verse which is supposed to be the medium of a subtler correspondence than is at all possible to the formal rigidity of fixed metres. But in actual fact this kind of verse, whatever its power of lyric intention, sensibly fails to give us the satisfaction of a true lyrical form, because it ignores the truth that what sustains the lyrical spirit is the discovery and consistent following of some central cadence revealing the very spirit of the feeling and not at all the sole pursuit of its more outward movements and changes: these can only rightly come in as a modulation of the constant essential music. This double need may possibly be met by a very skilful free movement, but

not so easily, straightforwardly and simply as in a fidelity, much more really natural than these overdone niceties, to the once discovered fixed cadence. And besides the bare truth of the vital intuition is not that inmost truth of things our minds are striving to see; that is something much greater, profounder, more infinite in its content and unending in its suggestion; not our identity in sight and spiritual emotion with the limited subconscient intention of life, but rather a oneness with something in it at once superconscient, immanent and comprehensive of which that is only a blind index will be the moving power of a greater utterance. And until we have found, whether by spiritual experience or poetic insight, this identity and its revelations in ourselves and in things, we shall not have laid a sound and durable basis for the future creation.

The essential and decisive step of the future art of poetry will perhaps be to discover that it is not the form which either fixes or reveals the spirit but the spirit which makes out of itself the form and the word and this with so sure a discovery, once we can live in it and create out of it without too much interference from the difficult and devising intellect, that their movement becomes as spontaneously inevitable as the movements and their mould as structurally perfect as the magical formations of inconscient Nature. Nature creates perfectly because she creates directly out of life and is not intellectually self-conscious, the spirit will create perfectly because it creates directly out of self and is spontaneously supra-intellectually all-conscious. It is no doubt this truth of a spiritually just and natural creation that some of the present ideas and tendencies are trying to adumbrate, but not as yet as understandingly as one could desire. The decisive revealing lyrical outburst must come when the poet has learnt to live creatively only in the inmost spiritual sight and identity of his own self with the self of his objects and images and to sing only from the deepest spiritual emotion which is the

ecstasy of feeling of that identity or at least of some extreme nearness to its sheer directness of touch and vision. And then we may find that this Ananda, this spiritual delight, for it is something more intimate and rapturous than emotion, has brought with it an unprecedented freedom of manifold and many-suggestioned and yet perfectly sufficient and definite formation and utterance. The poetry born from the inmost spirit will not bind the poet in any limiting circle or narrow theory of an intellectual art principle, but create at will according to the truth of the spirit's absolute moments. According to the innate rightnesses of the motive and its needed cadence the spirit will move him to discover infinite possibilities of new spiritual measure and intonation in time-old lyrical rhythms or to find a new principle of rhythm and structure or to make visible developments which will keep past treasures of sound and yet more magically innovate than can be done by any breaking up of forms in order to build a new order out of chaos. The intimate and intuitive poetry of the future will have on the one side all the inexhaustible range and profound complexities of the cosmic imagination of which it will be the interpreter and to that it must suit a hundred single and separate and combined and harmonic lyrical tones of poignantly or richly moved utterance, and on the other it will reach those bare and absolute simplicities of utter and essential sight in which thought sublimates into a translucidity of light and vision, feeling passes beyond itself into sheer spiritual ecstasy and the word rarifies into a pure voice out of the silence. The sight will determine the lyrical form and discover the identities of an inevitable rhythm and no lesser standard prevail against the purity of this spiritual principle.

A spiritual change must equally come over the intention and form of the drama when once the age has determined its tendencies, and this change is already foreshadowed in an evolution which is still only at its com-

mencement and first tentatives. Hitherto there have been two forms consecrated by great achievements, the drama o life, whether presenting only vivid outsides and significant incidents and morals and manners or expressive of the life-soul and its workings in event and character and passion, and the drama of the idea or, more vitally, of the idea-power that is made to work itself out in the life movement, lay its hold on the soul's motions, create the type, use the character and the passion for its instruments and at its highest tension appear as an agent of the conflict of ideal forces that produce the more lofty tragedies of human action. The paucity of great creation in the modern drama after one very considerable moment of power and vision has been due largely to an inability to decide between these two motives or to discover a great poetic form for the drama of the idea or effect in the poetic imagination some fusion of the intellectual and the life motive which would be an effective dramatic rendering of the modern way of seeing man and his life. The only recent vital and effective dramatic writing has been in prose and that has taken the questionable shape of the problem play which is peculiarly congenial to the dominating interests of the highly intellectualised but always practical mind of humanity today. The poetic form has long been for the most part a reproduction of past moulds and motives without any roots of vitality in the living mind of the age; but recently there has been a more inward and profounder movement which promises some chance of replacing this sort of unsatisfying imitation by a novel and a sincerer kind of dramatic poetry. An attempt has been initiated to create an inner drama of the soul with the soul itself for the real stage. There is in the spirit and the forms of this endeavour a predominance as yet of the lyrical rather than the dramatic motive, an insufficient power of making the characters living beings rather than unsubstantial types or shadows of soul movements or even the figures of a veiled

allegory and parable; and there is needed perhaps for a greater vitality a freer and more nobly aesthetic stage which would not be limited by the external realism that now stands in the way of a living revival of the poetic and artistic theatre. Nevertheless this attempt is a true though not a complete index of the direction the creative mind must take in the future.

The soul of man, a many-motioned representative of the world-spirit, subsisting and seeking for itself and its own meanings amid the laws and powers and moving forces of the universe and discovering and realising its spiritual relations with others will be the vision and intention of a dramatic poetry fully reflective of the now growing intuitive mind of the future. All drama must be a movement of life and of action because its mode of presentation is through the speech of living beings and the interaction of their natures, but equally the real interest except in the least poetic kinds is an internal movement and an action of the soul because dramatic speech is poetically interesting only when it is an instrument of human self-expression and not merely a support for a series of stirring incidents. The drama of the future will differ from the romantic play or tragedy because the thing which dramatic speech will represent will be something more internal than the life soul and its brilliant pageant of passion and character. The external web of events and action, whether sparing or abundant, strongly marked or slight in incidence, will only be outward threads and indices and the movement that will throughout occupy the mind will be the procession of the soul phases or the turns of the soul action: the character, whether profusely filled in in detail in the modern fashion or simply and strongly outlined in the purer ancient method, will not be mistaken for the person, but accepted as only an inner life notation of the spirit: the passions, which have hitherto been prominently brought forward as the central

stuff of the drama, will be reduced to their proper place as indicative colour and waves on the stream of spiritual self-revelation. And this greater kind will differ too from the classical tragedy of which the method was some significant and governing idea working out its life issues, because the idea will only be to a larger human mind better instructed in the secret of existence the self-view by the soul of its own greater and more intimate issues and of the conscient turns of its existence. The personage of the play will be the spirit in man diversified or multitudinous in many human beings whose inner spiritual much more intimately than their external life relations will determine the development, and the culminations will be steps of solution of those spiritual problems of our existence which after all are at the root of and include and inform all the others. The drama will be no longer an interpretation of Fate or self-acting Karma or of the simple or complex natural entanglements of the human life-movement, but a revelation of the Soul as its own fate and determiner of its life and its karma and behind it of the powers and the movements of the spirit in the universe. It will not be limited by any lesser idealisms or realisms, but representing at will this and other worlds, the purpose of the gods and the actions of men, man's dreams and man's actualities each as real as the other, the struggles and the sufferings and the victories of the spirit, the fixities of Nature and her mutabilities and significant perversions and fruitful conversions, interpret in dramatic form the inmost truth of the action of man the infinite. It will not be limited either by any old or new formal convention, but transmute old moulds and invent others and arrange according to the truth of its vision its acts and the evolution of its dramatic process or the refrain of its lyrical or the march of its epic motive. This clue at least is the largest and the most suggestive for a new and living future creation in the forms of the drama.

The spirit and intention of the narrative and epic forms of poetry must undergo the same transmuting change. Hitherto the poetical narrative has been a simple relation or a vivid picturing or transcript of life and action varied by description of surrounding circumstance and indication of mood and feeling and character or else that with the development of an idea or a mental and moral significance at the basis with the story as its occasion or form of its presentation. The change to a profounder motive will substitute a soul significance as the real substance, the action will not be there for its external surface interest but as a vital indication of the significance, the surrounding circumstance will be only such as helps to point and frame it and bring out its accessory suggestions and mood and feeling and character its internal powers and phases. An intensive narrative, intensive in simplicity or in richness of significant shades, tones and colours, will be the more profound and subtle art of this kind in the future and its appropriate structures determined by the needs of this inner art motive. A first form of the intensive and spiritually significant poetic narrative has already been created and attempts to replace the more superficially intellectual motives, where the idea rather supervened upon the story or read into it the sense of its turns or its total movement, but here the story tends more to be the living expression of the idea and the idea itself vibrant in the speech and description and action the index of a profounder soul motive. The future poetry will follow this direction with a more and more subtle and variable inwardness and a greater fusion and living identity of soul motive, indicative idea, suggestive description and intensely significant speech and action. The same governing vision will be there as in lyric and drama; the method of development will alone be different according to the necessities of the more diffused, circumstanced and outwardly processive form which is proper to narrative.

The epic is only the narrative presentation on its largest canvas and at its highest elevation, greatness and amplitude of spirit and speech and movement. It is sometimes asserted that the epic is solely proper to primitive ages when the freshness of life made a story of large and simple action of supreme interest to the youthful mind of humanity, the literary epic an artificial prolongation by an intellectual age and a genuine epic poetry no longer possible now or in the future. This is to mistake form and circumstance for the central reality. The epic, a great poetic story of man or world or the gods, need not necessarily be a vigorous presentation of external action: the divinely appointed creation of Rome, the struggle of the principles of good and evil as presented in the great Indian poems, the pageant of the centuries or the journey of the seer through the three worlds beyond us are as fit themes as primitive war and adventure for the imagination of the epic creator. The epics of the soul most inwardly seen as they will be by an intuitive poetry, are his greatest possible subject, and it is this supreme kind that we shall expect from some profound and mighty voice of the future. His indeed may be the song of greatest flight that will reveal from the highest pinnacle and with the largest field of vision the destiny of the human spirit and the presence and ways and purpose of the Divinity in man and the universe.

ARYA

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th June 1920

CONTENTS

THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G.
The Nature of the Supermind

ESSAYS ON THE GITA..... Aurobindo Ghose
The Message of the Gita (1)

THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... Paul Richard
The Unity of Beings

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE XVII

THE FUTURE POETRY
The Word and the Spirit

PARASARA'S HYMNS TO THE LORD OF THE FLAME

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE NATURE OF THE SUPERMIND

The object of Yoga is to raise the human being from the consciousness of the ordinary mind subject to the control of vital and material Nature and limited wholly by birth and death and Time and the needs and desires of the mind, life and body to the consciousness of the spirit free in its self and using the circumstances of mind, life and body as admitted or self-chosen and self-figuring determinations of the spirit, using them in a free self-knowledge, a free will and power of being, a free delight of being. This is the essential difference between the ordinary mortal mind in which we live and the spiritual consciousness of our divine and immortal being which is the highest result of Yoga. It is a radical conversion as great as and greater than the change which we suppose evolutionary Nature to have made in its transition from the vital animal to the fully mentalised human consciousness. The animal has the conscious vital mind, but whatever beginnings there are in it of anything higher are only a primary glimpse, a crude hint of the intelligence which in man becomes the splendour of the mental understanding, will, emotion, aesthesis and reason. Man elevated in the heights and deepened by the intensities of the mind becomes aware of something great and divine

in himself towards which all this tends, something he is in possibility but which he has not yet become, and he turns the powers of his mind, his power of knowledge, his power of will, his power of emotion and aesthesis to seek out this, to seize and comprehend all that it may be, to become it and to exist wholly in its greater consciousness, delight, being and power of highest becoming. But what he gets of this higher state in his normal mind is only an intimation, a primary glimpse, a crude hint of the splendour, the light, the glory and divinity of the spirit within him. A complete conversion of all the parts of his being into moulds and instruments of the spiritual consciousness is demanded of him before he can make quite real, constant, present to himself this greater thing that he can be and entirely live in what is now to him at the best a luminous aspiration. He must seek to develop and grow altogether into a greater divine consciousness by an integral Yoga.

The Yoga of perfection necessary to this change has, so far as we have been considering it, consisted in a preparatory purification of the mental, vital and physical nature, a liberation from the knots of the lower Prakriti, a consequent replacement of the egoistic state always subject to the ignorant and troubled action of the desire soul by a large and luminous static equality which quiets the reason, the emotional mind, the life mind and the physical nature and brings into us the peace and freedom of the spirit, and a dynamical substitution of the action of the supreme and universal divine Shakti under the control of the Ishwara for that of the lower Prakriti,—an action whose complete operation must be preceded by the perfection of the natural instruments. And all these things together, though not as yet the whole Yoga, constitute already a much greater than the present normal consciousness, spiritual in its basis and moved by a greater light, power and bliss, and it might be easy to rest satis-

fied with so much accomplished and think that all has been done that was needed for the divine conversion.

A momentous question however arises as light grows, the question through what medium is the divine Shakti to act in the human being? Is it to be always through the mind only and on the mind plane or in some greater supramental formulation which is more proper to a divine action and which will take up and replace the mental functions? If the mind is to be always the instrument, then although we shall be conscious of a diviner Power initiating and conducting all our inner and outer human action, yet it will have to formulate its knowledge, will, Ananda and all things else in the mental figure, and that means to translate them into an inferior kind of functioning other than the supreme workings native to the divine consciousness and its Shakti. The mind spiritualised, purified, liberated, perfected within its own limits may come as near as possible to a faithful mental translation, but we shall find that this is after all a relative fidelity and an imperfect perfection. The mind by its very nature cannot render with an entirely right rightness or act in the unified completeness of the divine knowledge, will and Ananda because it is an instrument for dealing with the divisions of the finite on the basis of division, a secondary instrument therefore and a sort of delegate for the lower movement in which we live. The mind can reflect the Infinite, it can dissolve itself into it, it can live in it by a large passivity, it can take its suggestions and act them out in its own way, a way always fragmentary, derivative and subject to a greater or less deformation, but it cannot be itself the direct and perfect instrument of the infinite Spirit acting in its own knowledge. The divine Will and Wisdom organising the action of the infinite consciousness and determining all things according to the truth of the spirit and the law of its manifestation is not mental but supramental and even in its formulation near-

est to mind as much above the mental consciousness in its light and power as the mental consciousness of man above the vital mind of the lower creation. The question is how far the perfected human being can raise himself above mind, enter into some kind of fusing union with the supramental and build up in himself a level of supermind, a developed gnosis by the form and power of which the divine Shakti can directly act, not through a mental translation, but organically in her supramental nature.

It is here necessary in a matter so remote from the ordinary lines of our thought and experience to state first what is the universal gnosis or divine supermind, how it is represented in the actual movement of the universe and what are its relations to the present psychology of the human being. It will then be evident that though the supermind is suprarational to our intelligence and its workings occult to our apprehension, it is nothing irrationally mystic, but rather its existence and emergence is a logical necessity of the nature of existence, always provided we grant that not matter or mind alone but spirit is the fundamental reality and everywhere a universal presence. All things are a manifestation of the infinite spirit out of its own being, out of its own consciousness and by the self-realising, self-determining, self-fulfilling power of that consciousness. The Infinite, we may say, organises by the power of its self-knowledge the law of its own manifestation of being in the universe, not only the material universe present to our senses, but whatever lies behind it on whatever planes of existence. All is organised by it not under any inconscient compulsion, not according to a mental fantasy or caprice, but in its own infinite spiritual freedom according to the self-truth of its being, its infinite potentialities and its will of self-creation out of those potentialities, and the law of this self-truth is the necessity that compels created things to act and evolve

each according to its own nature. The Intelligence—to give it an inadequate name—the Logos that thus organises its own manifestation is evidently something infinitely greater, more extended in knowledge, compelling in self-power, large both in the delight of its self-existence and the delight of its active being and works than the mental intelligence which is to us the highest realised degree and expression of consciousness. It is to this intelligence infinite in itself but freely organising and self-determiningly organic in its self-creation and its works that we may give for our present purpose the name of the divine supermind or gnosis.

The fundamental nature of this supermind is that all its knowledge is originally a knowledge by identity and oneness and even when it makes numberless apparent divisions and discriminating modifications in itself, still all the knowledge that operates in its workings, even in these divisions, is founded upon and sustained and lit and guided by this perfect knowledge by identity and oneness. The Spirit is one everywhere and it knows all things as itself and in itself, so sees them always and therefore knows them intimately, completely, in their reality as well as their appearance, in their truth, their law, the entire spirit and sense and figure of their nature and their workings. When it sees anything as an object of knowledge, it yet sees it as itself and in itself, and not as a thing other than or divided from it about which therefore it would at first be ignorant of the nature, constitution and workings and have to learn about them, as the mind is at first ignorant of its object and has to learn about it because the mind is separated from its object and regards and senses and meets it as something other than itself and external to its own being. The mental awareness we have of our own subjective existence and its movements, though it may point to, is not the same thing as this identity and self-knowledge, because what it sees are mental figures of our

being and not the inmost of the whole and it is only a partial, derivative and superficial action of our self that appears to us while the largest and most secretly determining parts of our own existence are occult to our mentality. The supramental Spirit has, unlike the mental being, the real because the inmost and total knowledge of itself and of all its universe and of all things that are its creations and self-figurings in the universe.

This is the second character of the supreme Supermind that its knowledge is a real because a total knowledge. It has in the first place a transcendental vision and sees the universe not only in the universal terms, but in its right relation to the supreme and eternal reality from which it proceeds and of which it is an expression. It knows the spirit and truth and whole sense of the universal expression because it knows all the essentiality and all the infinite reality and all the consequent constant potentiality of that which in part it expresses. It knows rightly the relative because it knows the Absolute and all its absolutes to which the relatives refer back and of which they are the partial or modified or suppressed figures. It is in the second place universal and sees all that is individual in the terms of the universal as well as in its own individual terms and holds all these individual figures in their right and complete relation to the universe. It is in the third place, separately with regard to individual things, total in its view because it knows each in its inmost essence of which all else is the resultant, in its totality which is its complete figure and in its parts and their connections and dependences,—as well as in its connections with and its dependences upon other things and its nexus with the total implications and the explicits of the universe.

The mind on the contrary is limited and incapable in all these directions. Mind cannot arrive at identity with the Absolute even when by a stretch of the intellect it conceives the idea, but can only disappear into it in a

swoon or extinction : it can only have a kind of sense or an intimation of certain absolutes which it puts by the mental idea into a relative figure. It cannot grasp the universal, but only arrives at some idea of it through an extension of the individual or a combination of apparently separate things and so sees it either as a vague infinite or indeterminate or a half determined largeness or else only in an external scheme or constructed figure. The indivisible being and action of the universal, which is its real truth, escapes the apprehension of the mind, because the mind thinks it out analytically by taking its own divisions for units and synthetically by combinations of these units, but cannot seize on and think entirely in the terms, though it may get at the idea and certain secondary results, of the essential oneness. It cannot, either, know truly and thoroughly even the individual and apparently separate thing, because it proceeds in the same way, by an analysis of parts and constituents and properties and a combination by which it erects a scheme of it which is only its external figure. It can get an intimation of the essential inmost truth of its object, but cannot live constantly and luminously in that essential knowledge and work out on the rest from within outward so that the outward circumstances appear in their intimate reality and meaning as inevitable result and expression and form and action of the spiritual something which is the reality of the object. And all this which is impossible for the mind to do, but possible only to strive towards and figure, is inherent and natural to the supramental knowledge.

The third characteristic of the supermind arising from this difference, which brings us to the practical distinction between the two kinds of knowledge, is that it is directly truth-conscious, a divine power of immediate, inherent and spontaneous knowledge, an Idea holding luminously all realities and not depending on indications and logical or other steps from the known to the unknown

like the mind which is a power of the Ignorance. The supermind contains all its knowledge in itself, is in its highest divine wisdom in eternal possession of all truth and even in its lower, limited or individualised forms has only to bring the latent truth out of itself,—the perception which the old thinkers tried to express when they said that all knowing was in its real origin and nature only a memory of inwardly existing knowledge. The supermind is eternally and on all levels truth-conscious and exists secretly even in mental and material being, surveys and knows the things, even obscurest, of the mental ignorance and understands and is behind and governs its processes, because everything in the mind derives from the supermind —and must do so because everything derives from the spirit. All that is mental is but a partial, a modified, a suppressed or half suppressed figure of the supramental truth, a deformation or a derived and imperfect figure of its greater knowledge. The mind begins with ignorance and proceeds towards knowledge. As an actual fact, in the material universe, it appears out of an initial and universal inconscience which is really an involution of the all-conscient spirit in its own absorbed self-oblivious force of action ; and it appears therefore as part of an evolutionary process, first a vital feeling towards overt sensation, then an emergence of a vital mind capable of sensation and, evolving out of it, a mind of emotion and desire, a conscious will, a growing intelligence. And each stage is an emergence of a greater suppressed power of the secret supermind and spirit.

The mind of man, capable of reflection and a coordinated investigation and understanding of itself and its basis and surroundings, arrives at truth but against a background of original ignorance, a truth distressed by a constant surrounding mist of incertitude and error. Its certitudes are relative and for the most part precarious certainties or else are the assured fragmentary certitudes

only of an imperfect, incomplete and not an essential experience. It makes discovery after discovery, gets idea after idea, adds experience to experience and experiment to experiment,—but losing and rejecting and forgetting and having to recover much as it proceeds,—and it tries to establish a relation between all that it knows by setting up logical and other sequences, a series of principles and their dependences, generalisations and their application, and makes out of its devices a structure in which mentally it can live, move and act and enjoy and labour. This mental knowledge is always limited in extent: not only so, but in addition the mind even sets up other willed barriers, admitting by the mental device of opinion certain parts and sides of truth and excluding all the rest, because if it gave free admission and play to all ideas, if it suffered truth's infinities, it would lose itself in an unreconciled variety, an undetermined immensity and would be unable to act and proceed to practical consequences and an effective creation. And even when it is widest and most complete, mental knowing is still an indirect knowledge, a knowledge not of the thing in itself but of its figures, a system of representations, a scheme of indices, —except indeed when in certain movements it goes beyond itself, beyond the mental idea to spiritual identity, but it finds it extremely difficult to go here beyond a few isolated and intense spiritual realisations or to draw or work out or organise the right practical consequences of these rare identities of knowledge. A greater power than the reason is needed for the spiritual comprehension and effectuation of this deepest knowledge.

This is what the supermind, intimate with the Infinite, alone can do. The supermind sees directly the spirit and essence, the face and body, the result and action, the principles and dependences of the truth as one indivisible whole and therefore can work out the circumstantial results in the power of the essential knowledge,

the variations of the spirit in the light of its identities, its apparent divisions in the truth of its oneness. The supermind is a knower and creator of its own truth, the mind of man only a knower and creator in the half light and half darkness of a mingled truth and error, and creator too of a thing which it derives altered, translated, lessened from something greater than and beyond it. Man lives in a mental consciousness between a vast subsconscient which is to his seeing a dark inconscience and a vaster superconscient which he is apt to take for another but a luminous inconscience, because his idea of consciousness is confined to his own middle term of mental sensation and intelligence. It is in that luminous superconscience that there lie the ranges of the supermind and the spirit.

The supermind is again, because it acts and creates as well as knows, not only a direct truth-consciousness, but an illumined, direct and spontaneous truth-will. There is not and cannot be in the will of the self-knowing spirit any contradiction, division or difference between its will and its knowledge. The spiritual will is the Tapas or enlightened force of the conscious being of the spirit effecting infallibly what is there within it, and it is this infallible operation of things acting according to their own nature, of energy producing result and event according to the force within it, of action bearing the fruit and event involved in its own character and intention which we call variously in its different aspects law of Nature, Karma, Necessity and Fate. These things are to mind the workings of a power outside or above it in which it is involved and intervenes only with a contributory personal effort which partly arrives and succeeds, partly fails and stumbles and which even in succeeding is largely overruled for issues different from or at any rate greater and more far-reaching than its own intention. The will of man works in the ignorance by a partial light or more often flickerings of light which mislead as much as they illuminate. His mind

is an ignorance striving to erect standards of knowledge, his will an ignorance striving to erect standards of right, and his whole mentality as a result very much a house divided against itself, idea in conflict with idea, the will often in conflict with the ideal of right or the intellectual knowledge. The will itself takes different shapes, the will of the intelligence, the wishes of the emotional mind, the desires of the passion and the vital being, the impulsions and blind or half-blind compulsions of the nervous and the subconscient nature, and all these make by no means a harmony, but at best a precarious concord among discords. The will of the mind and life is a stumbling about in search of right force, right Tapas which can wholly be attained in its true and complete light and direction only by oneness with the spiritual and supramental being.

The supramental nature on the contrary is just, harmonious and one, will and knowledge there only light of the spirit and power of the spirit, the power effecting the light, the light illumining the power. In the highest supramentality they are intimately fused together and do not even wait upon each other but are one movement, will illumining itself, knowledge fulfilling itself, both together a single jet of the being. The mind knows only the present and lives in an isolated movement of it though it tries to remember and retain the past and forecast and compel the future. The supermind has the vision of the three times, *trikâldrishti* ; it sees them as an indivisible movement and sees too each containing the others. It is aware of all tendencies, energies and forces as the diverse play of unity and knows their relation to each other in the single movement of the one spirit. The supramental will and action are therefore a will and action of the spontaneous self-fulfilling truth of the spirit, the right and at the highest the infallible movement of a direct and total knowledge.

The supreme and universal Supermind is the active

Light and Tapas of the supreme and universal Self as the Lord and Creator, that which we come to know in Yoga as the divine Wisdom and Power, the eternal knowledge and will of the Ishwara. On the highest planes of Being where all is known and all manifests as existences of the one existence, consciousness of the one consciousness, delight's self-creations of the one Ananda, many truths and powers of the one Truth, there is the intact and integral display of its spiritual and supramental knowledge. And in the corresponding planes of our own being the Jiva shares in the spiritual and supramental nature and lives in its light and power and bliss. As we descend nearer to what we are in this world, the presence and action of this self-knowledge narrows but retains always the essence and character when not the fullness of the supramental nature and its way of knowing and willing and acting, because it still lives in the essence and body of the spirit. The mind, when we trace the descent of the self towards matter, we see as a derivation which travels away from the fullness of self, the fullness of its light and being and which lives in a division and diversion, not in the body of the sun, but first in its nearer and then in its far-off rays. There is a highest intuitive mind which receives more nearly the supramental truth, but even this is a formation which conceals the direct and greater real knowledge. There is an intellectual mind which is a luminous half-opaque lid which intercepts and reflects in a radiantly distorting and suppressively modifying atmosphere the truth known to the supermind. There is a still lower mind built on the foundation of the senses between which and the sun of knowledge there is a thick cloud, an emotional and a sensational mist and vapour with here and there lightnings and illuminations. There is a vital mind which is shut away even from the light of intellectual truth, and lower still in submental life and matter the spirit involves itself entirely as if in a sleep and a night, a sleep plunged

in a dim and yet poignant nervous dream, the night of a mechanical somnambulist energy. It is a reevolution of the spirit out of this lowest state in which we find ourselves at a height above the lower creation having taken it up all in us and reaching so far in our ascent only the light of the well-developed mental reason. The full powers of self-knowledge and the illumined will of the spirit are still beyond us above the mind and reason in supramental Nature.

If the spirit is everywhere, even in matter—in fact matter itself is only an obscure form of the spirit—and if the supermind is the universal power of the spirit's omnipresent self-knowledge organising all the manifestation of the being, then in matter and everywhere there must be present a supramental action and, however concealed it may be by another, lower and obscurer kind of operation, yet when we look close we shall find that it is really the supermind which organises matter, life, mind and reason. And this actually is the knowledge towards which we are now moving. There is even a quite visible intimate action of the consciousness, persistent in life, matter and mind, which is clearly a supramental action subdued to the character and need of the lower medium and to which we now give the name of intuition from its most evident characteristics of direct vision and self-acting knowledge, really a vision born of some secret identity with the object of the knowledge. What we call the intuition is however only a partial indication of the presence of the supermind, and if we take this presence and power in its widest character, we shall see that it is a concealed supramental force with a self-conscient knowledge in it which informs the whole action of material energy. It is that which determines what we call law of nature, maintains the action of each thing according to its own nature and harmonises and evolves the whole, which would otherwise be a fortuitous creation apt at any moment to collap-

se into chaos. All the law of nature is a thing precise in its necessities of process, but is yet in the cause of that necessity and of its constancy of rule, measure, combination, adaptation, result a thing inexplicable, meeting us at every step with a mystery and a miracle, and this must be either because it is irrational and accidental even in its regularities or because it is suprarational, because the truth of it belongs to a principle greater than that of our intelligence. That principle is the supramental; that is to say, the hidden secret of Nature is the organisation of something out of the infinite potentialities of the self-existent truth of the spirit the nature of which is wholly evident only to an original knowledge born of and proceeding by a fundamental identity, the spirit's constant self-perception. All the action of life too is of this character and all the action of mind and reason,—reason which is the first to perceive everywhere the action of a greater reason and law of being and try to render it by its own conceptional structures, though it does not always perceive that it is something other than a mental Intelligence which is at work, other than an intellectual Logos. All these processes are actually spiritual and suprathental in their secret government, but mental, vital and physical in their overt process.

The outward matter, life, mind do not possess this occult action of the supermind, even while possessed and compelled by the necessity it imposes on their workings. There is what we are sometimes moved to call an intelligence and will operating in the material force and the atom (although the words ring false because it is not actually the same thing as our own will and intelligence),—let us say, a covert intuition of self-existence at work,—but the atom and force are not aware of it and are only the obscure body of matter and of power created by its first effort of self-manifestation. The presence of such an intuition becomes more evident to us in all the action of life because that is nearer to our own scale. And as life

develops overt sense and mind, as in the animal creation, we can speak more confidently of a vital intuition which is behind its operations and which emerges in the animal mind in the clear form of instinct,—instinct, an automatic knowledge implanted in the animal, sure, direct, self-existent, self-guided, which implies somewhere in its being an accurate knowing of purpose, relation and the thing or object. It acts in the life force and mind, but yet the surface life and mind do not possess it and cannot give an account of what it does or control or extend the power at its will and pleasure. Here we observe two things, first, that the overt intuition acts only for a limited necessity and purpose, and that in the rest of the operations of the nature there is a double action, one uncertain and ignorant of the surface consciousness and the other subliminal implying a secret subconscient direction. The surface consciousness is full of a groping and seeking which increases rather than diminishes as life rises in its scale and widens in the scope of its conscious powers; but the secret self within assures in spite of the groping of the vital mind the action of the nature and the result needed for the necessity, the purpose and the destiny of the being. This continues on a higher and higher scale up to the human reason and intelligence.

The being of man also is full of physical, vital, emotional, psychical and dynamic instincts and intuitions, but he does not rely on them as the animal does,—though they are capable in him of a far larger scope and greater action than in the animal and lower creation by reason of his greater actual evolutionary development and his yet greater potentiality of development of the being. He has suppressed them, discontinued their full and overt action by atrophy,—not that these capacities are destroyed but rather held back or cast back into the subliminal consciousness,—and consequently this lower part of his being is much less sure of itself, much less confident of the

directions of his nature, much more groping, errant and fallible in its larger scope than that of the animal in his lesser limits. This happens because man's real dharma and law of being is to seek for a greater self-aware existence, a self-manifestation no longer obscure and governed by an ununderstood necessity, but illumined, conscious of that which is expressing itself and able to give it a fuller and more perfect expression. And finally his culmination must be to identify himself with his greatest and real self and act or rather let it act (his natural existence being an instrumental form of the expression of the spirit) in its spontaneous perfect will and knowledge. His first instrument for this transition is the reason and the will of the rational intelligence and he is moved to depend upon that to the extent of its development for his knowledge and guidance and give it the control of the rest of his being. And if the reason were the highest thing and the greatest all-sufficient means of the self and spirit, he could by it know perfectly and guide perfectly all the movements of his nature. This he cannot do entirely because his self is a larger thing than his reason and if he limits himself by the rational will and intelligence, he imposes an arbitrary restriction both in extent and in kind on his self-development, self-expression, knowledge, action, Ananda. The other parts of his being demand too a complete expression in the largeness and perfection of the self and cannot have it if their expression is changed in kind and carved, cut down and arbitrarily shaped and mechanised in action by the inflexible machinery of the rational intelligence. The godhead of the reason, the intellectual Logos, is only a partial representative and substitute for the greater supramental Logos, and its function is to impose a preliminary partial knowledge and order upon the life of the creature, but the real, final and integral order can only be founded by the spiritual supermind in its emergence.

The supermind in the lower nature is present most

strongly as intuition and it is therefore by a development of an intuitive mind that we can make the first step towards the self-existent spontaneous and direct supramental knowledge. All the physical, vital, emotional, psychic, dynamic nature of man is a surface seizing of suggestions which rise out of a subliminal intuitive self-being of these parts, and an attempt usually groping and often circuitous to work them out in the action of a superficial embodiment and power of the nature which is not overtly enlightened by the inner power and knowledge. An increasingly intuitive mind has the best chance of discovering what they are seeking for and leading them to the desired perfection of their self-expression. The reason itself is only a special kind of application, made by a surface regulating intelligence, of suggestions which actually come from a concealed, but sometimes partially overt and active power of the intuitive spirit. In all its action there is at the covered or half-covered point of origination something which is not the creation of the reason, but given to it either directly by the intuition or indirectly through some other part of the mind for it to shape into intellectual form and process. The rational judgment in its decisions and the mechanical process of the logical intelligence, whether in its more summary or in its more developed operations, conceals while it develops the true origin and native substance of our will and thinking. The greatest minds are those in which this veil wears thin and there is the largest part of intuitive thinking, which often no doubt but not always brings with it a great accompanying display of intellectual action. The intuitive intelligence is however never quite pure and complete in the present mind of man, because it works in the medium of mind and is at once seized on and coated over with a mixed stuff of mentality. It is as yet not brought out, not developed and perfected so as to be sufficient for all the operations now performed by the other mental instruments, not trained

to take them up and change them into or replace them by its own fullest, most direct, assured and sufficient workings. This can indeed only be done if we make the intuitive mind a transitional means for bringing out the secret supermind itself of which it is a mental figure and forming in our frontal consciousness a body and instrument of supermind which will make it possible for the self and spirit to display itself in its own largeness and splendour.

It must be remembered that there is always a difference between the supreme Supermind of the omniscient and omnipotent Ishwara and that which can be attained by the Jiva. The human being is climbing out of the ignorance and when he ascends into the supramental nature, he will find in it grades of its ascension, and he must first form the lower grades and limited steps before he rises to higher summits. He will enjoy there the full essential light, power, Ananda of the infinite self by oneness with the Spirit, but in the dynamical expression it must determine and individualise itself according to the nature of the self-expression which the transcendent and universal Spirit seeks in the Jiva. It is God-realisation and God-expression which is the object of our Yoga and more especially of its dynamic side, it is a divine self-expression in us of the Ishwara, but under the conditions of humanity and through the divinised human nature.

Essays on the Gita

THE MESSAGE OF THE GITA

(1)

What then is in its core of meaning the message of the Gita and what its working value, its spiritual utility to the human mind of the present day after the long ages that have elapsed since it was written and the great subsequent transformations of thought and experience? The human mind moves always forward, alters its viewpoint and enlarges its thought substance, and the effect of these changes is to render past systems of thinking obsolete or, when they are preserved, to extend, to modify and subtly or visibly to alter their value. The vitality of an ancient doctrine consists in the extent to which it naturally lends itself to such a treatment, for that means that whatever may have been the limitations or the obsolences of the form of its thought, the truth of substance, the truth of experience on which its system was built is still sound and retains a permanent validity and significance. The Gita is a book that has worn extraordinarily well and it is almost as fresh and still in its real substance quite as new, because always renewable in experience, as when it first appeared in or was written into the frame of the Mahabharata. It is still received in India as one of the great bodies of doctrine that most authoritatively govern religious thinking

and its teachings acknowledged as of the greatest value if not wholly accepted by almost all shades of religious belief and opinion, and its influence is not merely philosophic or academic but immediate and living, an influence both for thought and action, and its ideas actually at work as a powerful shaping factor in the revival and renewal of a nation and a culture. It has even been said recently by a great voice that all we need of spiritual truth for the spiritual life is to be found in the Gita. It would be to encourage the superstition of the book to take too literally that utterance. The truth of the spirit is infinite and cannot be circumscribed in that manner. Still it may be said that most of the main clues are there and that after all the later developments of spiritual experience and discovery we can still return to it for a large inspiration and guidance. Outside India too it is universally acknowledged as one of the world's great scriptures, though there its thought is better understood than its secret of spiritual practice. What is it then that gives this vitality to the thought and the truth of the Gita?

The central interest of the Gita's philosophy and Yoga is its attempt, the idea with which it sets out, continues and closes, to reconcile and even effect a kind of unity between the inner spiritual life in its most absolute and integral realisation and the outer actualities of man's life and action. A compromise between the two is common enough, but that can never be a final and satisfactory solution. An ethical rendering of spirituality is also common and has its value as a law of conduct, but that is a mental solution which does not amount to a complete practical reconciliation of the whole truth of spirit with the whole truth of life and it raises as many problems as it solves. One of these is indeed the starting-point of the Gita; it sets out with an ethical problem raised by a conflict in which we have on one side the dharma of the man of action, a prince and warrior and leader of men, the

protagonist of a great crisis, of a struggle on the physical plane, the plane of actual life, between the powers of right and justice and the powers of wrong and injustice, the demand of the destiny of the race upon him that he shall resist and give battle and establish even though through a physical struggle and a giant slaughter a new era and reign of truth and right and justice, and on the other side the ethical sense which condemns the means and the action as a sin, recoils from the price of suffering, the social strife, unsettling and disturbance and regards abstention from violence and battle as the only way and the one right moral attitude. A spiritualised ethics insists on Ahinsa, on non-injuring and non-killing as the highest law of spiritual conduct: the battle, if it is to be fought out at all, must be fought on the spiritual plane and by some kind of non-resistance or refusal of participation or only by soul resistance, and if this does not succeed on the external plane, if the force of injustice conquers, the individual will still have preserved his virtue and vindicated by his example the highest ideal. On the other hand a more insistent extreme of the inner spiritual direction, passing beyond this struggle between social duty and an absolutist ethical ideal, is apt to take the ascetic turn and to point away from life and all its aims and standards of action towards another and a celestial or a supracosmic state in which alone beyond the perplexed vanity and illusion of man's birth and life and death there can be a pure spiritual existence. The Gita rejects none of these things in their place,—for it insists on the performance of the social duty, the following of the dharma for the man who has to take his share in the common action, accepts Ahinsa as part of the highest spiritual-ethical ideal and recognises the ascetic renunciation as a way of spiritual salvation; but yet it goes beyond them all, justifies all life to the spirit as a manifestation of the divine and asserts the compatibility of a complete human action and a

complete spiritual life lived in union with the Supreme, consonant with the highest Self, expressive of the perfect Godhead.

All the problems of human life arise from the complexity of our existence, the obscurity of its essential principle and the secrecy of the inmost power that makes out its determinations and governs its purpose and its processes. If our existence were of one piece, solely material-vital or solely mental or solely spiritual, or even the others entirely or mainly involved in one of these or quite latent in our being, there would be nothing to perplex us; the material and vital law would be imperative or the mental would be clear to its own pure and unobstructed principle or the spiritual self-existent and self-sufficient to spirit. The animals are aware of no problems, a mental god in a world of pure mentality would admit none or would solve them all by the purity of a mental rule or the satisfaction of a rational harmony, a pure spirit would be above them and self-content in the infinite. But the existence of man is a triple web, a thing mysteriously physical-vital, mental and spiritual at once, and he knows not what are the true relations of these things, which the real reality of his life and his nature, whither the attraction of his destiny and where the sphere of his perfection.

Matter and life are his actual basis, the thing from which he starts and on which he stands and whose requirement and law he has to satisfy if he would exist at all on earth and in the body. The material and vital law is a rule of survival, of struggle, of desire and possession, of self-assertion and the satisfaction of the body, the life and the ego. All the intellectual reasoning in the world, all the ethical idealism and spiritual absolutism of which the higher faculties of man are capable cannot abolish the reality and claim of the vital and material being or prevent the race from following under the imperative compulsion of Nature its aims and the satisfaction of its necessities or

from making its important problems a great and legitimate part of human destiny and human interest and endeavour. And the intelligence of man even, failing to find any sustenance in spiritual or ideal solutions that solve everything else but the pressing problems of our actual human life, often turns away from them to an exclusive acceptance of the vital and material life and the pursuit of its utmost possible efficiency, well-being and organised satisfaction. A gospel of the will to live or the will to power or of a rationalised vital and material perfection becomes the recognised dharma of the human being and all else is considered either a pretentious falsity or a subsidiary thing and of a minor and dependent consequence.

Matter and life however in spite of their insistence and great importance are not all that man is nor can he wholly accept mind as nothing but a servant of the life and body admitted to certain pure enjoyments of its own as a sort of reward for its service, an extension and flower of the vital urge, an ideal luxury contingent upon the satisfaction of the material life. The mind much more intimately than the body and the life is the man, and the mind as it develops insists more and more on making the body and the life an instrument—an indispensable instrument and yet a considerable obstacle, otherwise there would be no problem,—for its own characteristic satisfactions and self-realisation. The mind of man is not only a vital and physical, but an intellectual, aesthetic, ethical, psychical and emotional and dynamical intelligence, and in the sphere of each of its tendencies its highest and strongest nature is to strain towards some absolute of them which the frame of life will not allow it to capture wholly and embody and make here entirely real. The mental absolute of our aspiration remains as a partly grasped shining or fiery ideal which the mind can make inwardly very present to itself, inwardly imperative on its effort, effectuate even partly, but not compel all the facts of life into its

image. There is thus an absolute, an imperative of the intellectual truth and reason sought for by the intellectual being, an absolute, an imperative of right and conduct aimed at by the ethical conscience, an absolute, an imperative of love, sympathy, compassion, oneness yearned after by the emotional and psychic nature, an absolute, an imperative of delight and beauty quivered to by the aesthetic soul, an absolute, an imperative of inner self-mastery and control of life laboured towards by the dynamic will, as well as an absolute, an imperative of possession and pleasure insisted on by the vital mind. And the human intelligence not being able to realise entirely any of these things, much less all of them together, erects in each sphere standards, a dharma, its standards of truth and reason, of right and conduct, of delight and beauty, of love, sympathy and oneness, of self-mastery and control, of possession and vital efficiency and pleasure, and tries to impose them on life. The absolute ideals stand above and beyond our capacity and rare individuals approximate to them as best they can, the mass follow or profess to follow some established possible and relative standard: human life as a whole undergoes the attraction and yet rejects the ideal, life resists in the strength of some obscure infinite of its own and wears down or breaks down any established mental and moral order. And this must be either because the two are quite different and disparate though meeting and interacting principles or because mind has not the clue to the whole reality of life. The clue must be sought in something greater than and above the mentality of the human being.

The mind itself has the vague sense of and, in the pursuit of its absolutes, strikes against something of this kind, something that is near and within and inmost to it and yet immeasurably greater than and singularly distant and above it, something more essential, more absolute than its own absolutes, infinite, one, and it is that which

we call God, Self or Spirit. This then it attempts to know, enter, touch and seize wholly, to become, to arrive at some kind of unity with it or lose itself in a complete identity. The difficulty is that this spirit in its purity seems something yet farther than the mental absolutes from the actualities of life, something not translatable by mind into its own terms, much less into those of life and action. Therefore we have the intransigeant absolutists of the spirit who reject the mental no less than the material being and seek the pure spiritual existence by a dissolution, of all that we are in life and mind, a Nirvana. The rest of spiritual effort is a mental preparation or a compromise, a spiritualising of life and mind as much as possible. And because the difficulty most constantly insistent on man's mentality in practice is that presented by the claims of his vital being, by life and conduct and action, the direction taken is mainly a spiritualising of the ethical aided by the psychical mind or rather a bringing in of the spiritual power and purity to aid them in enforcing their absolute claim, in giving a greater authority than life allows to their ideal of right and truth of conduct and love and sympathy and oneness. These things are helped to some highest expression, given their broadest luminous basis by the assent of the reason and will to the truth of the oneness of the spirit and therefore the essential oneness of all living beings. This kind of spirituality linked on in some way to the demands of the normal mind of man, persuaded to the acceptance of useful social duty and current law of social conduct, popularised by cult and ceremony and image is the outward substance of the world's greater religions. These religions have their individual victories, call in something of a greater light, impose something of a larger spiritual or semi-spiritual rule, but cannot effect a complete victory, end in a compromise and in the act of compromise are defeated by life. Its problems remain and even recur in their fiercest forms—

even such as this grim problem of Kurukhsetra. The idealising intellect and ethical mind hope always to eliminate them, to discover some happy device born of and made effective by their own imperative insistence, which will end this aspect of life, but it endures and is not eliminated; the spiritualised intelligence offers too by the voice of religion the promise of some victorious millennium, but meanwhile half convinced of terrestrial impotence, of being a stranger and intruder upon earth, declares that after all not here in the life of the body or in the collective life of mortal man but in some immortal beyond lies the heaven or the Nirvana where alone is to be found the true spiritual existence.

It is here that the Gita intervenes with a restatement of the truth of the Spirit, of the Self, of God and of the world and Nature, the truth as it was developed by a later thought from the ancient Upanishads, and an endeavour to apply it to the problem of life and action. The solution offered by the Gita does not resolve all the problem as it offers itself to the modern mind; as stated here to a more ancient mentality, it does not meet the insistent pressure of the present mind of man for a collective advance, a collective life embodying a greater, rational and ethical and if possible a spiritual ideal. Its call is to the individual who has become capable of a complete spiritual existence and for the rest of the race it prescribes a gradual advance, to be wisely effected by following out faithfully with more and more of intelligence and moral purpose and with a final turn to spirituality the law of their nature. Its message touches the other solutions but, even in accepting them partly, to point them beyond themselves to a higher and more integral secret into which only the few individuals have shown themselves fit to enter. Its message to the mind that follows the vital and material life is that all life is indeed a manifestation of the universal Power in the individual, of the Self, the Divine, but actually of the

Self, the Divine veiled in ignorance, and to pursue that life for its own sake is to persist in and enthrone the ignorance and not at all to find the true truth and complete law of existence. A gospel of the will to live, the will to power, of the satisfaction of desire, force, strength, of the ego and its vehement acquisitive self-will and tireless self-regarding intellect is the gospel of the Asura and it can lead only to some gigantic ruin and perdition. The vital and material man must accept for his government a religious and social dharma by which, while satisfying desire and interest under right restrictions, he can train and subdue his lower personality to a higher law of the personal and communal life. Its message to the mind occupied with the pursuit of intellectual, ethical and social standards and insisting on salvation by the observance of established dharmas, is that this is indeed a very necessary stage, the dharma has indeed to be observed, but still it is not the complete and last truth of existence; the soul of man has to go beyond to some more absolute dharma of man's immortal being. And this can only be done by repressing and getting rid of the ignorant formulations of the lower mental elements and the falsehood of egoistic personality, impersonalising the action of the intelligence and will and living in the one self in all, the impersonal spirit. The mind moves under the limiting compulsion of the triple lower nature, erects its standards in obedience to the tamasic, rajasic or at highest the sattwic qualities, but the destiny of the soul is a divine perfection and liberation and that can only be fulfilled in the freedom of the self and by passing through its free impersonality beyond mind into an integral joy of union with the Supreme and Divine who is beyond all dharmas. Its message to those, absolutist seekers of the Infinite, who would carry this impersonality to the exclusive extreme, the passion for the extinction of life and action, and would hold it up as the one ultimate aim and ideal to cease from individual

being in the pure silence of the ineffable Spirit, is that this is indeed one way of entering into the Infinite, but the most difficult, the ideal of inaction a dangerous thing to hold up by precept or example before the world, this way, though great, yet not the best way for man and this knowledge, though true, yet not the integral knowledge.

The Supreme, the Infinite is not only a spiritual existence remote and ineffable, but is here in the universe and expressed through man and all beings, and it is by finding him not only in the immutable silence but in the world and man and all beings and in all self and all Nature and by raising to an integral as well as to a highest union with him all the activities of the intelligence, the heart, the will, the life that man can solve at once the problem of Self and God and that of the active human existence. Made Godlike, God-becoming, he can enjoy a supreme spiritual existence reached through action as well as love and knowledge and continuing a supreme and all-embracing divine activity, and that is the ultimate crown here of all works and being and sacrifice and the world's endeavour. This highest message is first for those who have the strength to follow after it, the master men, the great spirits, the God-knowers, God-doers, God-lovers who can live in God and for God and accept work for him and all in the world, a divine work uplifted above the limitations of the ego. At the same time, and here we get the gleam of a larger promise which we may even extend to the hope of a collective turn towards perfection,—for if there is hope for man, why should there not be hope for mankind?—the Gita declares that all can if they will, even to the lowest and sinfullest among men, enter into the path of this Yoga and succeed in it by self-surrender and an absolute faith in the indwelling Divinity. The decisive turn is what is needed, the belief in the Spirit, the will to live in the Divine, and in self to be one with him and in Nature where we are an eternal

portion of his being one too with his greater spiritual Nature, God-possessed in all our members and Godlike.

The Gita in developing its idea raises many questions, such as the determinism of Nature, the significance of the universal manifestation and the ultimate status of the liberated soul, which have been subjects of an unending debate. It is not necessary in this series of essays of which the object is a scrutiny and positive affirmation of the substance of the Gita and a disengaging of its contribution to the abiding spiritual thought of humanity and its practice, to enter far into these discussions or to consider where we may differ from, make any reserves to or go beyond its metaphysical teaching or its Yoga. It will be sufficient to close with a formulation of the living message it still brings for man the eternal seeker and discoverer to guide him through the present circuits and the possible steeper ascent of his life up to the luminous heights of his spirit.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK III

I

THE UNITY OF BEINGS.

1 To say eternal is to say universal.

2 To represent constantly the world as one single being with one single soul and one single substance.

3 This world is a republic all whose citizens are made of one and the same substance.

4 Thus even though it is not durable, there is no interruption in substance.

5-6 Soul is one, Nature is one, life is one.—In the multiple unity of the universal life, its innumerable species distinguished from one another by their differences are still united in such a way that the totality is one and all proceeds from oneness.

7 The being of the universe is one and equally present in each individual, part or member of the universe, in such sort that the totality and each part make from the view-point of substance only one.—

8 All men are separated from each other by the body,

---

1) Hermes.—2) [illegible].—3) Epictetus.—4) Lalita Vistara.—5) Hermes.—6) [illegible].—7) Giordano Bruno.—8) Tolstoy.

but all are united by the same spiritual principle which gives life to everything.

9 A river does not resemble a pond, a pond a tun, nor a tun a bucket : but in a pond, a river, a tun and a bucket there is the same water. And so too all men are different, but the spirit that lives in them all is the same.

10-11 There is one body and one Spirit.—And all beings are resumed and reduced into one sole being, and they are one and all are He.

12 All is Narayana, man or animal, the wise and the wicked, the whole world is Narayana, the Supreme Spirit.

* * *

13 The knowledge which sees one imperishable existence in all beings and the indivisible in things divided know to be the true knowledge.

14 The idea of thou and I is a fruit of the soul's ignorance.

15 Man understands his life only when he sees himself in each one of his kind.

16 Let the sage unifying all his attentive regard see in the divine Spirit all things visible and invisible.

17 He who in his neighbour sees no other thing but God, lives with the light that flowers in the Divi-
18 nity.—He that thus knoweth, becometh the self of all beings. As is that Divinity, such is he. And as to that Divinity all beings have good will, even so to him that thus knoweth all beings have good will.

19 That man who seeth the self in all beings and

---

9) id.—10) Ephesians, IV, 6.—11) Zohar.—12) Ramakrishna.—13) Bhagavad Gita.—14) Bhagavat Purana.—15) Tolstoy.—16) Manu.—17) Angelus Silesius.—18) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.—19) Isha Upanishad.

all beings in the self, has no disdain for any thing that is.

20 The sage regards the heart of every man in the millions of the crowd and sees only one heart.

***

21 When a corner of Maya, the illusion of individual life, is lifted before the eyes of a man in such sort that he no longer makes any egoistic difference between his own person and other men, that he takes as much interest in the sufferings of others as in his own and that he becomes succourable to the point of devotion, ready to sacrifice himself for the salvation of others, then that man is able to recognise himself in all beings, considers as his own the infinite sufferings of all that lives and must thus appropriate to himself the sorrow of the world. No distress is alien to him. All the torments which he sees and can so rarely soften, all the torments of which he hears, those even which it is impossible for him to conceive, strike his spirit as if he were himself the victim. Insensible to the alternations of weal and woe which succeed each other in his destiny, delivered from all egoism, he penetrates the veils of the individual illusion : all that lives, all that suffers is equally near to his heart. He conceives the totality of things, their essence, their eternal flux, the vain efforts, the internal struggles and sufferings without end ; he sees to whatever side he turns his gaze man who suffers, the animal who suffers and a world that is eternally passing away. He unites himself henceforth to the sorrows of the world as closely as the egoist to his own person. "How can he having such a knowledge of the

20) Tseng Tse.—21) Schopenhauer

world affirm by incessant desires his will to live, attach himself more and more to life and clutch it to him always more closely ? The man seduced by the illusion of individual life, a slave of his egoism, sees only the things that touch him personally and draws from them incessantly renewed motives to desire and to will : on the contrary one who penetrates the essence of things and dominates their totality, elevates himself to a state of voluntary renunciation, resignation and true tranquillity.

22 Yes, from thenceforward, is there any suffering for one who sees this unity of the universe, this unity of life, this unity of the All ? The separation between man and man, man and woman, man and child, nation and nation, that is the real cause of all the misery of the world. Now this separation is not at all real ; it is only apparent, it is only on the surface. In the very heart of things is the unity which is for ever. Go into yourself and you will find this unity between man and man, women and children, race and race, the great and the little, the rich and the poor, gods and men : all of us are one, even the animals, if you go down to a sufficient depth. And to the man who goes so far nothing can cause any illusion...where can there exist for him any illusion ? What can deceive him ? He knows the reality of everything, the secret of everything. Where can there exist any misery for him ? What can he desire ? He has discovered the reality of everything in the Lord who is the centre, the unity of all and who is the eternal felicity, the eternal knowledge, the eternal existence.

* * *

23 If after having traversed the hall of wisdom, thou wouldst reach the valley of Beatitude, close, O dis-

22) Vivekananda. — 23) Book of Golden Precepts.

ciple, thy senses to the great and cruel heresy of the
24 separation which severs thee from the rest.—One must learn to dissipate the shadow and live in the Eternal. And to that end thou shouldest live and breathe in all as all breathes in thee and feel that thou dwellest in all things in the self.

25 Christianity says, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." And I say. "Recognise thyself in thy neighbour and that all men are in reality one and the same substance."

26 And let this be our thought, "Our bodies are different, but we have one and the same heart."

27 Only after having the experience of suffering have I learned the kinship of human souls to each other.

---

24) id.—25) Schopenhauer— 26) Mahavagga.—27) Gogol.

A Defence of Indian Culture

XVII

The Upanishads are the supreme work of the Indian mind, and that it should be so, that the highest self-expression of its genius, its sublimest poetry, its greatest creation of the thought and word should be not a literary or poetical masterpiece of the ordinary kind, but a large flood of spiritual revelation of this direct and profound character, is a significant fact, evidence of a unique mentality and unusual turn of spirit. The Upanishads are at once profound religious scriptures,—for they are a record of the deepest spiritual experiences,—documents of revelatory and intuitive philosophy of an inexhaustible light, power and largeness and, whether written in verse or cadenced prose, spiritual poems of an absolute, an unfailing inspiration inevitable in phrase, wonderful in rhythm and expression. It is the expression of a mind in which philosophy and religion and poetry are made one, because this religion does not end with a cult nor is limited to a religio-ethical aspiration, but rises to an infinite discovery of God, of Self, of our highest and whole reality of spirit and being and speaks out of an ecstasy of luminous knowledge and an ecstasy of moved and fulfilled experience, this philosophy is not an abstract intellectual speculation about Truth or a structure of the logical intelligence, but Truth seen, felt, lived, held by the inmost mind and soul in the joy of utterance of an assured discovery and possession, and

this poetry is the work of the aesthetic mind lifted up beyond its ordinary field to express the wonder and beauty of the rarest spiritual self-vision and the profoundest illumined truth of self and God and universe. Here the intuitive mind and intimate psychological experience of the Vedic seers passes into a supreme culmination in which the Spirit, as is said in a phrase of the Katha Upanishad, discloses its own very body, reveals the very word of its self-expression and discovers to the mind the vibration of rhythms which repeating themselves within in the spiritual hearing seem to build up the soul and set it satisfied and complete on the heights of self-knowledge.

This character of the Upanishads needs to be insisted upon with a strong emphasis, because it is ignored by foreign translators who seek to bring out the intellectual sense without feeling the life of thought vision and the ecstasy of spiritual experience which made the ancient verses appear then and still make them to those who can enter into the element in which these utterances move, a revelation not to the intellect alone, but to the soul and the whole being, make of them in the old expressive word not intellectual thought and phrase, but Sruti, spiritual audience, an inspired Scripture. The philosophical substance of the Upanishads demands at this day no farther stress of appreciation of its value; for even if the amplest acknowledgement by the greatest minds were wanting, the whole history of philosophy would be there to offer its evidence. The Upanishads have been the acknowledged source of numerous profound philosophies and religions that flowed from it in India like her great rivers from their Himalayan cradle fertilising the mind and life of the people and kept its soul alive through the long procession of the centuries, constantly returned to for light, never failing to give fresh illumination, a fountain of inexhaustible life-giving waters. Buddhism with all its developments was only a restatement, although from a new standpoint and with fresh terms of intellectual definition and reasoning, of one side of its experience and it carried it thus changed in form

but hardly in substance over all Asia and westward towards Europe. The ideas of the Upanishads can be rediscovered in much of the thought of Pythagoras and Plato and form the profoundest part of Neo-platonism and Gnosticism with all their considerable consequences to the philosophical thinking of the west, and Sufism only repeats them in another religious language. The larger part of German metaphysics is little more in substance than an intellectual development of great realities more spiritually seen in this ancient teaching, and modern thought is rapidly absorbing them with a closer, more living and intense receptiveness which promises a revolution both in philosophical and in religious thinking; here they are filtering in through many indirect influences, there slowly pouring through direct and open channels. There is hardly a main philosophical idea which cannot find an authority or a seed or indication in these antique writings—the speculations, according to a certain view, of thinkers who had no better past or background to their thought than a crude, barbaric, naturalistic and animistic ignorance. And even the larger generalisations of Science are constantly found to apply to the truth of physical Nature formulas already discovered by the Indian sages in their original, their largest meaning in the deeper truth of the spirit.

And yet these works are not philosophical speculations of the intellectual kind, a metaphysical analysis which labours to define notions, to select ideas and discriminate those that are true, to logicise truth or else to support the mind in its intellectual preferences by dialectical reasoning and is content to put forward an exclusive solution of existence in the light of this or that idea of the reason and see all things from that viewpoint, in that focus and determining perspective. The Upanishads could not have had so undying a vitality, exercised so unfailing an influence, produced such results or seen now their affirmations independently justified in other spheres of inquiry and by quite opposite methods, if they had been of that character. It is because these seers saw Truth rather than merely thought it, clothed it indeed with a

strong body of intuitive idea and disclosing image, but a body of ideal transparency through which we look into the illimitable, because they fathomed things in the light of self-existence and saw them with the eye of the Infinite, that their words remain always alive and immortal, of an inexhaustible significance, an inevitable authenticity, a satisfying finality that is at the same time an infinite commencement of truth, to which all our lines of investigation when they go through to their end arrive again and to which humanity constantly returns in its minds and its ages of greatest vision. The Upanishads are Vedanta, a book of knowledge in a higher degree even than the Vedas, but knowledge in the profounder Indian sense of the word, Jnana. Not a mere thinking and considering by the intelligence, the pursuit and grasping of a mental form of truth by the intellectual mind, but a seeing of it with the soul and a total living in it with the power of the inner being, a spiritual seizing by a kind of identification with the object of knowledge is Jnana. And because it is only by an integral knowing of the self that this kind of direct knowledge can be made complete, it was the self that the Vedantic sages sought to know, to live in and to be one with it by identity. And through this endeavour they came easily to see that the self in us is one with the universal self of all things and that this self again is the same as God and Brahman, a transcendent Being or Existence, and they beheld, felt, lived in the inmost truth of all things in the universe and the inmost truth of man's inner and outer existence by the light of this one and unifying vision. The Upanishads are epic hymns of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and God-knowledge. The great formulations of philosophic truth with which they abound are not abstract intellectual generalisations, things that may shine and enlighten the mind, but do not live and move the soul to ascension, but are ardours as well as lights of an intuitive and revelatory illumination, reachings as well as seeings of the one Existence, the transcendent Godhead, the divine and universal Self and discoveries of his relation with things and creatures in this great cosmic

manifestation. Chants of inspired knowledge, they breathe like all hymns a tone of religious aspiration and ecstasy, not of the narrowly intense kind, proper to a lesser religious feeling but raised beyond cult and special forms of devotion to the universal Ananda of the Divine which comes to us by approach to and oneness with the self-existent and universal spirit. And though mainly concerned with an inner vision and not directly with outward human action, all the highest ethics of Buddhism and later Hinduism are still emergences of the very life and significance of the truths to which they give expressive form and force,—and there is omething greater than any ethical precept and mental rule of virtue, the supreme ideal of a spiritual action founded on oneness with God and all living beings. Therefore even when the life of the forms of the Vedic cult had passed away, the Upanishads still remained alive and creative and could generate the great devotional religions and motive the persistent Indian idea of the Dharma.

The Upanishads are the creation of a revelatory and and intuitive mind and its illumined experience, and all their substance, structure, phrase, imagery, movement are determined by and stamped with this original character. These supreme and all-embracing truths, these visions of oneness and self and a universal divine being are cast into brief and monumental phrases which bring them at once before the soul's eye and make them real and imperative to its aspiration and experience or are couched in poetic sentences full of revealing power and suggestive thought-colour that discover a whole infinite through a finite image. The One is there revealed, but also disclosed the many aspects, and each is given its whole significance by the amplitude of the expression and finds as if in a spontaneous self-discovery its place and its connection by the illumining justness of each word and all the phrase. The largest metaphysical truths and the subtlest subleties of psychological experience are taken up into the inspired movement and made at once precise to the seeing mind and loaded with unending sugges-

tion to the discovering spirit. There are separate phrases, single couplets, brief passages which contain each in itself the substance of a vast philosophy and yet each is only thrown out as a side, an aspect, a portion of the infinite self-knowledge. All here is a packed and pregnant and yet perfectly lucid and luminous brevity and an immeasurable completeness. A thought of this kind cannot follow the tardy, careful and diffuse development of the logical intelligence. The passage, the sentence, the couplet, the line, even the half line follows the one that precedes with a certain interval full of an unexpressed thought, an echoing silence between them, a thought which is carried in the total suggestion and implied in the step itself, but which the mind is left to work out for its own profit, and these intervals of pregnant silence are large, the steps of this thought are like the paces of a Titan striding from rock to distant rock across infinite waters. There is a perfect totality, a comprehensive connection of harmonious parts in the structure of each Upanishad ; but it is done in the way of a mind that sees masses of truth at a time and stops to bring only the needed word out of a filled silence. The rhythm in verse or cadenced prose corresponds to the sculpture of the thought and the phrase. The metrical forms of the Upanishads are made up of four half lines each clearly cut, the lines mostly complete in themselves and integral in sense, the half lines presenting two thoughts or distinct parts of a thought that are wedded to and complete each other, and the sound movement follows a corresponding principle, each step brief and marked off by the distinctness of its pause, full of echoing cadences that remain long vibrating in the inner hearing : each is as if a wave of the infinite that carries in it the whole voice and rumour of the ocean. It is a kind of poetry—word of vision, rhythm of the spirit,—that has not been written before or after.

The imagery of the Upanishads is in large part developed from the type of imagery of the Veda and though very ordinarily it prefers an unveiled clarity of directly illumina-

tive image, not unoften also it uses the same symbols in a way that is closely akin to the spirit and to the less technical part of the method of the older symbolism. It is to a great extent this element no longer seizable by our way of thinking that has baffled certain western scholars and made them cry out that these scriptures are a mixture of the sublimest philosophical speculations with the first awkward stammerings of the child mind of humanity. The Upanishads are not a revolutionary departure from the Vedic mind and its temperament and fundamental ideas, but a continuation and development and to a certain extent an enlarging transformation in the sense of bringing out into open expression all that was held covered in the symbolic Vedic speech as a mystery and a secret. It begins by taking up the imagery and the ritual symbols of the Veda and the Brahmanas and turning them in such a way as to bring out an inner and a mystic sense which will serve as a sort of psychical starting-point for its own more highly evolved and more purely spiritual philosophy. There are a number of passages especially in the prose Upanishads which are entirely of this kind and deal, in a manner recondite, obscure and even unintelligible to the modern understanding, with the psychic sense of ideas then current in the Vedic religious mind, the distinction between the three kinds of Veda, the three worlds and other similar subjects; but, leading as they do in the thought fo the Upanishads to deepest spiritual truths, these passages cannot be dismissed as childish aberrations of the intelligence void of sense or of any discoverable bearing on the higher thought in which they culminate. On the contrary we find that they have a deep enough significance once we can get inside their symbolic meaning. That appears in a psycho-physical pasing upward into a psycho-spiritual knowledge for which we would now use more intellectual, less concrete and imaged terms, but which is still valid for those who practice Yoga and rediscover the secrets of our psycho-physical and psycho-spiritual being. Typical passages of this kind of peculia

expression of psychic truths are Ajatashatru's explanation of sleep and dream or the passages of the Prasna Upanishad on the vital principle and its motions, or those in which the Vedic idea of the struggle between the Gods and the demons is taken up and given its spiritual significance and the Vedic godheads more openly than in Rik and Saman characterised and invoked in their inner function and spiritual power.

I may cite as an example of this development of Vedic idea and image a passage of the Taittiriya in which Indra plainly appears as the power and godhead of the divine mind or supermind :

He who is the Bull of the Vedas of the universal form, he who was born in the sacred rhythms from the Immortal,—may Indra satisfy me through the intelligence. O God, may I become a vessel of the Immortal. May my body be full of vision and my tongue of sweetness, may I hear the much and vast with my ears. For thou art the sheath of Brahman covered over and hidden by the intelligence.

And a kindred passage may also be cited from the Isha in which Surya the Sun-God is invoked as the godhead of knowledge whose supreme form of effulgence is the oneness of the Spirit and his rays dispersed here on the mental level are the shining diffusion of the thought mind and conceal his own infinite supramental truth, the body and self of this Sun, the truth of the spirit and the Eternal :—

The face of the Truth is covered with a golden lid: O fostering Sun, that uncover for the law of the truth, for sight. O fosterer, O sole Rishi, O controlling Yama, O Surya, O son of the Father of creatures, marshal and mass thy rays: the Lustre that is thy most blessed form of all, that I see, He who is this, this Purusha, He am I.

The kinship in difference of these passages with the imagery and style of the Veda is evident and the last indeed paraphrases or translates into a later and more open style a Vedic verse of the Atris :

Hidden by your truth is the Truth that is constant for ever where they unyoke the horses of the Sun. There the ten thousands stand together, That is the One : I have seen the supreme Godhead of the embodied gods.

This Vedic and Vedantic imagery is foreign to our present mentality which does not believe in the living truth of the symbol, because the revealing imagination intimidated by the intellect has no longer the courage to accept, identify itself with and boldly embody a psychic and spiritual vision ; but it is certainly very far from being a childish or a primitive and barbarous mysticism ; this vivid, living, luminously poetic intuitive language is rather the natural expression of a highly evolved spiritual culture.

The intuitive thought of the Upanishads starts from this concrete imagery and these symbols, first to the Vedic rishis secret seer words wholly expressive to the mind of the seer but veils of their deepest sense to the ordinary intelligence, link them to a less covertly expressive language and pass beyond them to another magnificently open and sublime imagery and diction which at once reveals the spiritual truth in all its splendour. The prose Upanishads show us this process of the early mind of India at its work using the symbol and then passing beyond it to the overt expression of the spiritual significance. A passage of the Prasna Upanishad on the power and significance of the mystic syllable AUM illustrates the earlier stage of the process.

This syllable OM, O Satyakama, it is the supreme and it is the lower Brahman. Therefore the man of knowledge passeth by this house of the Brahman to the one or the other. And if one meditate on the single letter, he getteth by it knowledge and soon he attaineth on the earth. And him the Riks lead to the world of men and there perfected in Tapas and Brahmacharya and faith he experienceth the greatness of the spirit. Now if by the double letter he is accomplished in the mind, then is he led up by the Yajus to the middle world, to the moon-world of Soma. He in the world of Soma experienceth the majesty of the spirit and returneth again. And he who by the triple letter again, even this syllable OM, shall meditate on the highest Purusha, is perfected in the light that is the Sun. As a snake putteth off its skin, even so is he released from sin and evil and is led by the Samans to the world of Brahman. He from this dense of living souls seeth the higher than the highest Purusha who lieth in this mansion. The three letters are afflicted by death, but

now they are used undivided and united to each other, then are the inner and the outer and the middle action of the spirit made whole in their perfect using and the spirit knows and is not shaken. This world by the Riks, the middle world by the Yajus and by the Samans that which the seers make known to us. The man of knowledge passeth to Him by OM, his house, even to the supreme spirit that is calm and ageless and fearless and immortal.

The symbols here are still obscure to our intelligence, but indications are given which show beyond doubt that they are representations of a psychical experience leading to different states of spiritual realisation and we can see that these are three outward, mental and supramental, and as the result of the last a supreme perfection, a complete and integral action of the whole being in the tranquil eternity of the immortal Spirit. And later in the Mandukya Upanishad the other symbols are cast aside and we are admitted to the unveiled significance. Then there emerges a knowledge to which modern thought is returning through its own very different intellectual, rational and scientific method, the knowledge that behind the operations of our outward physical consciousness are working the operations of another, subliminal,—another and yet the same,—of which our waking mind is a surface action, and above—perhaps, we still say—is a spiritual superconscience in which can be found, it may well be, the highest state and the whole secret of our being. We shall see, when we look closely at the passage of the Prasna Upanishad, that this knowledge is already there, and I think we can very rationally conclude that these and similar utterances of the ancient sages, however perplexing their form to the rational mind, cannot be dismissed as a childish mysticism, but are the imaged expression, natural to the mentality of the time, of what the reason itself by its own processes is now showing us to be true and a very profound truth and real reality of knowledge.

The metrical Upanishads continue this highly charged symbolism but carry it more lightly and in the bulk of their verses pass beyond this kind of image to the overt expression. The Self, the Spirit the Godhead in man and creatures and

Nature and all this world and in other worlds and beyond all cosmos, the Immortal, the One, the Infinite is hymned without veils in the splendour of his eternal transcendence and his manifold self-revelation. A few passages from the teachings of Yama, lord of the Law and of Death, to Nachiketas, will be enough to illustrate something of their character.

Om is this syllable. This syllable is the Brahman, this syllable is the Supreme. He who knoweth the imperishable Om, whatso he willeth, it is his. This support is the best, this support is the highest; and when a man knoweth it, he is greatened in the world of Brahman. The omniscient is not born, nor dies, nor has he come into being from anywhere, nor is he anyone. He is unborn, he is constant and eternal, he is the Ancient of Days who is not slain in the slaying of the body...

He is seated and journeys far, and lying still he goes to every side. Who other than I should know this ecstatic Godhead? The wise man cometh to know the great Lord and Self established and bodiless in these bodies that pass and has grief no longer. This self is not to be won by teaching nor by brain-power nor by much learning: he whom the Spirit chooses, by him alone it can be won, and to him this Spirit discloses its own very body. One who has not ceased from ill-doing, one who is not concentrated and calm, one whose mind is not tranquil, shall not get him by the brain's wisdom. He of whom warriors and sages are the food and death is the spice of his banquet, who knoweth where is He?...

The Self-born has cloven his doors outward, therefore man sees outward and not in the inner self: only a wise man here and there turns his eyes inward, desiring immortality, and looks on the Self face to face. The child minds follow after surface desires and fall into the net of death who is spread wide for us; but the wise know of immortality and ask not from things inconstant that which is constant. One knoweth by this self form and taste and odour and touch and its pleasures and what then is here left over? The wise man cometh to know the great Lord and Self by whom one seeth all that is in the soul that wakes and all that is in the soul that dreams and hath grief no longer. He who knoweth the Self, the eater of sweetness close to the living being, the lord of what was and what will be, shrinks thereafter from nothing that is. He knoweth him who is that which was born of old from Tapas and who was born of old from the waters and hath entered in and standeth in the secret cavern of being with all these creatures. He knoweth her who is born by the life

force, the infinite Mother with all the gods in her, her who hath entered in and standeth in the secret cavern of being with all these creatures. This is the Fire that hath the knowledge and it is hidden in the two tinders as the embryo is borne in pregnant women; this is the Fire that must be adored by men watching sleeplessly and bringing to him the offering. He is that from which the Sun rises and that in which it sets: and in him all the gods are founded and none can pass beyond him. What is here, even that is in other worlds, and what is there, even according to that is all that is here. He goes from death to death who sees here only difference. A Purusha no bigger than a thumb stands in man's central self and is the lord of what was and what shall be, and knowing him thenceforth one shrinks from nothing that is. A Purusha no bigger than a man's thumb and he is like a light without smoke; he is the Lord of what was and what shall be; it is he that is today and it is he that shall be tomorrow.

The Upanishads abound with passages which are at once poetry and spiritual philosophy, of an absolute clarity and beauty, but no translation empty of the suggestions and the grave and subtle and luminous sense echoes of the original words and rhythms can give any idea of their power and perfection. There are others in which the subtlest psychological and philosophical truths are expressed with an entire sufficiency without falling short of a perfect beauty of poetical expression and always so as to live to the mind and soul and not merely be presented to the understanding intelligence. There is in some of the prose Upanishads another element of vivid narrative and tradition which restores for us though only in brief glimpses the picture of that extraordinary stir and movement of spiritual enquiry and passion for the highest knowledge which made the Upanishads possible. The scenes of the old world live before us in a few pages, the sages sitting in their groves ready to test and teach the comer, princes and learned Brahmans and great landed nobles going about in search of knowledge, the king's son in his chariot and the illegitimate son of the servant-girl, seeking any man who might carry in himself the thought of light and the word of revelation, the typical figures and personalities, Janaka and the subtle mind of Ajatashatru, Raikwa of the

cart, Yajnavalkya militant for truth, calm and ironic, taking to himself with both hands without attachment worldly possessions and spiritual riches and casting at last all his wealth behind to wander forth as a houseless ascetic, Krishna son of Devaki who heard a single word of the Rishi Ghora and knew at once the Eternal, the asramas, the courts of kings who were also spiritual discoverers and thinkers, the great sacrificial assemblies where the sages met and compared their knowledge. And we see how the soul of India was born and how arose this great birth-song in which it soared from its earth into the supreme empyrean of the spirit. The Vedas and the Upanishads are not only the sufficient fountain-head of Indian philosophy and religion, but of all Indian art, poetry and literature. It was the soul, the temperament, the ideal mind formed and expressed in them which later carved out the great philosophies, built the structure of the Dharma, recorded its heroic youth in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, intellectualised indefatigably in the classical times of the ripeness of its manhood, threw out so many original intuitions in science, created so rich a glow of aesthetic and vital and sensuous experience, renewed its spiritual and psychic experience in Tantra and Purana, flung itself into grandeur and beauty of line and colour, hewed and cast its thought and vision in stone and bronze, poured itself into new channels of self-expression in the later tongues and now after eclipse reemerges always the same in difference and ready for a new life and a new creation.

The Future Poetry

THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

A development of the kind of which we are speaking must affect not only the frames of poetry, but initiate also a subtle change of its word and rhythmic movement. The poetic word is a vehicle of the spirit, the chosen medium of the soul's self-expression, and any profound modification of the inner habit of the soul, its thought atmosphere, its way of seeing, its type of feeling, any change of the light in which it lives and the power of the breath which it breathes, greatening of its elevations or entry into deeper chambers of its self must reflect itself in a corresponding modification, changed intensity of light or power, inner greatening and deepening of the word which it has to use, and if there is no such change or if it is not sufficient for the new intention of the spirit, then there can be no living or no perfect self-expression. The old habits of speech cannot contain the new spirit and must either enlarge and deepen themselves and undergo a transformation or else be broken up and make way for another figure. The conservatism of the human mind stands in the way of the transforming force and insists for a time on the authority of traditional or already current standards of literary and poetic perfection, but the eternally self-renewing spirit must have eventually its way

or else there will come a petrifaction, a decay by too much stability, which is a much worse danger than the decadence predicted by the purist when faced by what seems to him a morbid strangeness and distortion of the poetic moulds of speech or a perilous departure from safe and enduring rules of perfection. A change of this kind very considerable in its magnitude and force of renovation has been for some time at work in most living literatures.

I have already suggested that the governing spirit and intention of this change, not always very clearly envisaged even by those who are most active in bringing it about, is a turn to a more intimate and directly or fully intuitive speech and rhythm. The thing is in itself so subtle that it can better be indicated than analysed, adequately described or made precise to the intelligence. And moreover all poetry except that of the most outward kind,—a verse movement which is separable rather by distinction of form than power of the soul from prose,—is in its inmost inspiration and character intuitive, more a creation of the vision and feeling than of the intelligence, and the change made is one of the level or the depth of the self from which the poetic intuition, usually modified in transmission, immediately acts, and of its intervening psychological instrument rather than its primary initiating movement. The initiating inspiration must always be intuitive in a greater or lesser degree and it is the form or expression that differs. The intellect in its use of speech is apt to regard it as an intellectual device, a means for the precise connotation of object and idea or at most an elegant and pleasing or an effective and forceful presentation. The poetic view and use of speech is of a very different kind and enters more into the vital reality of the word and the more mystic connection between the movement of the spirit and the significances of the mental utterance. The poet has to do much more than to offer a precise, a harmonious or a forcefully presented idea to the intelligence : he has to

give a breath of life to the word and for that must find out and make full use of its potential power of living suggestion; he has to make it carry in it not only the intellectual motion but the emotion and the psychical sensation of the thing he would make present to us; he has to erect an image of its presence and appeal with which we can inwardly live as we live with the presence and appeal of the objects of the actual universe. As in the Vedic theory the Spirit was supposed to create the worlds by the Word, so the poet brings into being in himself and us by his creative word fragmentarily or largely, in isolated pieces or massed spaces an inner world of beings, objects and experiences. But all creation is a mystery in its secret of inmost process and it is only at best the most outward or mechanical part of it which admits analysis; the creative faculty of the poetic mind is no exception. The poet is a magician who hardly knows the secret of his own spell; even the part taken by the consciously critical or constructive mind is less intellectual than intuitive; he creates by an afflatus of spiritual power of which his mind is the channel and instrument and the appreciation of it in himself and others comes not by an intellectual judgment but by a spiritual feeling. It is that which must tell him whether the word that comes is the true body of his vision or whether he has to seek or to wait for another that shall be felt as its adequate, its effective, its illuminative, its inspired or its inevitable utterance. The distinction that I am trying to draw here between the various powers of the always intuitive speech of poetry can therefore better be felt than critically stated, but at the same time certain indications may serve to make it more clearly sensed in its spirit with the sympathetic aid of the critical intelligence.

The words which we use in our speech seem to be, if we look only at their external formation, mere physical sounds which a device of the mind has made to represent certain objects and ideas and perceptions,—a machinery

nervous perhaps in origin, but developed for a constantly finer and more intricate use by the growing intelligence; but if we look at them in their inmost psychological and not solely at their more external aspect, we shall see that what constitutes speech and gives it its life and appeal and significance is a subtle conscious force which informs and is the soul of the body of sound: it is a superconscient Nature-Force raising its material out of our subconscience but growingly conscious in its operations in the human mind that develops itself in one fundamental way and yet variously in language. It is this Force, this Shakti to which the old Vedic thinkers gave the name of Vak, the goddess of creative Speech, and the Tantrik psychists supposed that this Power acts in us through different subtle nervous centres on higher and higher levels of its force and that thus the word has a graduation of its expressive powers of truth and vision. One may accept as a clue of great utility this idea of different degrees of the force of speech, each separately characteristic and distinguishable, and recognise one of the grades of the Tantric classification, Pashyanti the seeing word, as the description of that degree of power to which the poetic mind is called to elevate itself and which is original and native to its manner of expression. The degree of word-force characteristic of prose speech avails ordinarily to distinguish and state things to the conceptual intelligence; the word of the poet sees and presents in its body and image to a subtle visual perception in the mind awakened by an inner rhythmic audition truth of soul and thought experience and truth of sense and life, the spiritual and living actuality of idea and object. The prosaist may bring to his aid more or less of the seeing power, the poet dilute his vision with intellectual observation and statement, but the fundamental difference remains that ordinary speech proceeds from and appeals to the conceiving intelligence while it is the seeing mind that is the master of poetic utterance.

This seeing speech has itself, however, different grades of its power of vision and expression of vision. The first and simplest power is limited to a clear poetic adequacy and at its lowest difficult to distinguish from prose statement except by its more compact and vivid force of presentation and the subtle difference made by the rhythm which brings in a living appeal and adds something of an emotional and sensational nearness to what would otherwise be little more than an intellectual expression; but in a higher and much finer clarity this manner has the power to make us not only conceive adequately, but see the object or idea in a certain temperate lucidity of vision. The difference can best be illustrated by an example of each kind taken at random, one from Dryden,

> Whate'er he did was done with so much ease,
> In him alone 'twas natural to please :—

and the other from Wordsworth,

> The waves beside them danced, but they
> Outdid the sparkling waves in glee :
> A poet could not but be gay
> In such a jocund company.

The first is in the manner of terse prose statement, but made just poetical by a certain life and vividness and a rhythmic suggestion touching though not deeply some emotional centre of response just sufficient to make it a thought felt and not merely presented to the conception : the other though not going beyond a luminously clear and strong poetical adequacy in its manner of speech is far away from this doubtful borderland and from the beginning a thing seen and lived within us and awakening a satisfied soul response. It has the native action of the seeing word and bears the stamp of a spiritual sincerity greater, profounder, more beautiful than that of the intelligence.

The second power tries to go beyond this fine and perfect adequacy in its intensities, attempts a more rich or

a more powerful expression, not merely sound and adequate to poetic vision, but dynamic and strongly effective. In prose also there is this difference and on its lower levels its attempt at effect takes the shape of rhetoric and appeals to a kind of nervous energy of the intelligence but, when its mood is more intellectually deep and sincere, it prefers to arrive rather by subtler means, suggestive turn, aptness and vividness and richness and beauty of phrase. Poetic speech follows the same methods but in another and higher manner and with a different atmosphere. There is indeed a poetic rhetoric which differs from prose rhetoic only in the same way as the lower kind of poetic adequacy differs from prose adequacy by just managing to bring in some element of rhythmic emotion and vision, and of this kind we may take an effective example from Pope,—

> Atoms and systems into ruins hurled
> And now a bubble burst and now a world.

A greater spirit and a less intellectual and more imaginative sincerity and elevation of thought, feeling and vision will give us a sublimer poetic rhetoric, as in certain lines of Milton belonging to his more external manner,—

> Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky
> With hideous ruin and combustion down
> To bottomless perdition.

At a more temperate pitch and more capable of a certain subtlety of suggestion we can see the adequate changing into the more rhetorical poetic manner, as in many passages of Wordsworth,—

> And oft when in my heart was heard
> Thy timely mandate, I deferred
> The task in smoother walks to stray.

A richer, subtler and usually a truer poetic effectivity is attained not by this rhetorical manner, but through a language succeeding by apt and vivid metaphor and simile

richness and beauty of phrase or the forceful word that makes the mind see the body of the thought with a singularly living distinctness or energy of suggestion and nearness,—Wordsworth's

> Her eyes as stars of twilight fair,
> Like twilight's too her dusky hair,
> But all things else about her drawn
> From Maytime and the cheerful dawn:

Shelley's

> When hearts have once mingled,
> Love first leaves the well-built nest,
> The weak one is singled
> To endure what it once possessed;

or

> Its passions will rock thee,
> As the storms rock the ravens on high;
> Bright reason will mock thee
> Like the sun from a wintry sky.

In this manner English poetry is especially opulent and gets from it much of its energy and power; but yet we feel that this is not the highest degree of which poetic speech is capable. There is a more intimate vision, a more penetrating spiritual emotion, a more intense and revealing speech, to which the soul can be more vibrantly sensible.

This comes to its first self-discovery when either the adequate or the dynamically effective style is raised into a greater illumination in which the inner mind sees and feels object, emotion, idea not only clearly or richly or distinctly and powerfully, but in a flash or outbreak of transforming light which kindles the thought or image into a disclosure of new significances of a much more inner character, a more profoundly revealing vision, emotion, spiritual response. This illumining poetic speech comes suddenly and rarely, as in Dryden's

> And Paradise was opened in his face.

breaking out of a surrounding merely effective poetical eloquence, or intervening at times as in Shelley's

> The heart's echoes render
> No song when the spirit is mute,
> No song but sad dirges
> Like the wind through a ruined cell,

where the effective force of image and feeling that makes us see and respond by a strong suggestion, at work throughout the rest of the lyric, passes now beyond itself into an illuminative closeness and then we feel, we bear, we ourselves live at the moment through the power of the poetic word the authentic identity of the experience. It comes in luminous phrases emerging from a fine and lucid adequacy and the justice or the delicacy makes place for a lustrous profundity of suggestion, as in Shelley's

> And now alas the poor sprite is
> Imprisoned for some fault of his
> In a body like a grave."

or it strikes across a movement of strong and effective poetical thinking, as in Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*,

> Me this unchartered freedom tires.

or leaps up at once to set the tone of a poem,

> She was a phantom of delight
> When first she gleamed upon my sight,
> A lovely apparition sent
> To be a moment's ornament.

And supreme examples within the limits of this power which will bring out all their difference from the more common texture of poetry, may be taken from the same poets,—Shelley's

> The silent moon
> In her interlunar swoon,

and Wordsworth's

> They flash upon the inner eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude.

Here we get the pure illuminative speech of poetry not mixed with or arising out of the lucid adequate or the richly or forcefully effective or dynamic manner, but changed into an altogether supra-intellectual light of intuitive substance and vision and utterance.

The difference here we find to be an increasing intensity and finally a concentrated purity and fullness of the substance and language of intuitive expression. In the less intense styles the thing conveyed is indeed something suggested to and by the intuitive mind,—only the least inspired poetry is purely intellectual in substance,—but it is expressed with a certain indirectness or else with a dilution of the body of the intuitive light, and this is due to an intellectualised language or to the speech of an imagination which tries to bridge the gulf between the intuitive mind and the normal intelligence. The two powers seem to lean on and support each other, at a certain point are brought very close and even up to the point of fusion, and then suddenly the border is crossed, the difficulty of getting out through the doors of the mind the pure untranslated language of intuitive vision overcome and we have a word of intense light in which the intellect and its imagination count for nothing and the mind's language, even while remaining in material the same, undergoes an unanalysable alchemy and spiritual change. And beyond this first language of intuitive illumination we arrive at a more uplifted range of an inspired poetic speech which brings to us not only pure light and beauty and inexhaustible depth, but a greater moved ecstasy of highest or largest thought and sight and speech and at its highest culminates in the inevitable, absolute and revealing word. This too is sometimes a magical transformation of the adequate manner, as in Wordsworth's

> **A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard**
> **In springtime from the cuckoo bird**
> **Breaking the silence of the seas**
> **Among the farthest Hebrides—**

sometimes of the richer or more dynamic imaged style,

> Flows laugh before thee in their beds
> And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
> And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh and strong

—and sometimes it is the illuminative speech powerfully inspired and rising suddenly into the highest revealing word,

> The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,
> No more shall grief of mine the season wrong,
> I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
> The winds come to me from the fields of sleep.

There the inspiration takes up the effort of the poetic intelligence and imagination into a stirred concentration of the speech of sight and in its last movement seems to leap even beyond itself and beyond any pursuit or touch of the intellect into a pure revelatory spiritual vision.

The genius of the poet can do work of a high beauty or of a considerable greatness in any of these degrees of poetic speech, but it is the more purely intuitive, inspired or revelatory utterance that is the most rare and difficult for the human mind to command, and it is these kinds that we peculiarly value. Their power not only moves and seizes us the most, but it admits the soul to a most spiritually profound light of seeing and ecstasy of feeling even of ordinary ideas and objects and in its highest force to thoughts and things that surpass the manner and range and limits of depth of the normal intelligence. The greatest poets have been those in whom these moments of a highest intensity of intuitive and inspired speech have been of a frequent occurrence and in one or two, as in Shakespeare, of a miraculous abundance. There is however this subtle farther variation that this kind of utterance, though essentially the same always, takes a different colour according to the kind of object vision and subjective vi-

sion which is peculiar to the mind of the poet in its normal action. The citations I have made have been all taken from writers in whom the poetic intelligence and its type of imagination have been the leading forces. The same power in poets who speak more with the direct voice of the life-soul assumes quite another hue and seems even of a very different texture of language. The characteristic distinction of its note from that of the more intellectualised intuition can best be illustrated from Shakespeare and by such a passage as the speech of Claudio,

> Ay, but to die and go we know not where ;
> To lie in cold obstruction and to rot ;
> This sensible warm notion to become
> A kneaded clod : and the delighted spirit
> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice ;
> To be imprisoned in the viewless winds
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendant world :

and the rest. There is an illumination, an intuitive intensity of the life spirit and its feeling in that thought and its speech which we can no longer command in the same direct and essential manner. And even the ideas that seem to belong to the region of the thinking intelligence have subtly in these poets the same inspiration. It is sufficient to compare Shakespeare's

> Life's but a walking shadow..
> it is a tale
> Told by an idiot full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing—

and Shelley's voicing of a kindred idea of transience,

> Heaven's light forever shines, earth's shadows fly ;
> Life like a dome of many-coloured glass
> Stains the white radiance of eternity.
> Until death tramples it to fragments.

The one has the colour of an intuition of the life-soul in one of its intense moods and we not only think the thou-

ght but seem to feel it even in our nerves of mental sensation, the other is the thought mind itself uttering in a moved, inspired and illuminative language an idea of the pure intelligence. It would be difficult for the present human mind to recover the same spirit as moved Shakespeare's speech ; it is nearer to that of the later poets and their voice of the brooding or the moved poetic intelligence or of the intuitive mind rising out of the intellect and still preserving something of its tones. Still the manner of the coming poetry is likely to recover and hold as its central secret something akin to the older poet, a greater straight impact and natural body of intuitive intensity, because it too will take up the thought and feeling into a concentrated expression of an equal though a different directness. It will be the language of a higher intuitive mind swallowing up the intellectual tones into the closenesses and identities of a supra-intellectual light and Ananda.

The future poetry, assuming it to be of the kind I have suggested, its object to express some inmost truth of the things which it makes its subject, must to be perfectly adequate to its task express them in the inmost way, and that can only be done if, transcending the more intellectualised or externally vital and sensational expression, it speaks wholly in the language of an intuitive mind and vision and imagination, intuitive sense, intuitive emotion, intuitive vital feeling, which can seize in a peculiarly intimate light of knowledge by a spiritual identity the inmost thought, sight, image, sense, life, feeling of that which it is missioned to utter. The voice of poetry comes from a region above us, a plane of our being above and beyond our personal intelligence, a supermind which sees things in their innermost and largest truth by a spiritual identity and with a lustrous effulgency and rapture and its native language is a revelatory, inspired, intuitive word limpid or subtly vibrant or densely packed with the glory

of this ecstasy and lustre. It is the possession of the mind by the supramental touch and the communicated impulse to seize this sight and word that creates the psychological phenomenon of poetic inspiration and it is the invasion of it by a superior power to that which it is normally able to harbour that produces the temporary excitement of brain and heart and nerve which accompanies the inrush of the influence. The inspired word comes, as said of old the Vedic seers, from the home of Truth, *sadanâd ritasya*, the high and native level of a superior self which holds the light of a reality that is hidden by the lesser truth of the normal sense and intelligence. It is rarely however that it comes direct and unaltered, ready embodied and perfect and absolute : ordinarily there is an influx and a a suggestion of its light and speech hidden in a cloud of formless lustre and we have to receive as best we can, to find and disengage or to reshape word and substance with the aid of our mental powers while they are still possessed and excited and enlightened by the influence. The word comes secretly from above the mind, but it is plunged first into our intuitive depths and emerges imperfectly to be shaped by the poetic feeling and intelligence, *hridâ tashtam manishâ*. An intuitive self in the depth of each of our parts of being, hid in sense, life, heart, mind, is the transmitting agent, a subliminal power concealed in some secret cavern within of which the curtained and crystal doors disclose only occasional and partial transparencies or are sometimes half open or ajar,—*nihitam guhâyâm, guhâhitam gahvarestham*. The less we are near and awake to this agent, the more externally intellectualised and vitalised becomes the tone and substance of the poetic speech ; the more we can bring in of its direct power and vision, the more intuitive and illumined becomes the word of our utterance. And the more we can light up the veil and have the direct transmission, the greater the force of inspiration and revelation and the nearer we shall get to

an absolute and inevitable word straight from the supramental sight and language.

The most characteristic trend of recent poetry has been an attempt, sometimes lucid, sometimes half understanding or obscure, to break open the doors of the luminous cavern and to get the seeing and phrase which would be that of this intuitive self of our intelligence and imagination and sensation and life and feeling. In a certain kind of continental poetry it is a search for the sheer intuitivities of sensation and of the more vital emotions and states and experiences and relations with objects and persons, the spirit's sense of itself, as it were, externalised and made vital and physical and some illumination of the inner meaning of this externality, that motives a new kind of utterance. Much of present-day English poetry drives in the same direction but with less subtlety and a more forceful outwardness of sight and tone. The Irish poets and in a different way the few Indians, Tagore and Chattopadhyay and Mrs Naidu, who have written in English or transferred their poetical thought into that medium, aim at pure intuitivities of a more psychic feeling, sensation and life-vision or a subtle and psychic or spiritualised imagination and intelligence. All however are secretly moved to their very different and often contradictory tendencies by the same fundamental endeavour of the Time-spirit. The difficulty has been to find the intuitive language which will be the true medium and the condition of perfect success of this endeavour. The old habits of poetic speech still cling around and encrust or dilute the subtler subtlety, the more luminous light, the intenser intensities, the deeper depths sought for by the intuitive utterance. These things however are already there and are shaping a new manner of speech, a basis for the more inner and illumined poetic language of the future. At its best, and oftenest in the greater poets, it emerges from the admixture of older methods and manifests the whole

and pure characteristic note of the intuitive manner. It is the greatening, deepening and making normal of this kind that is likely to bring the perfect voice of the poetry of the future.

The character of this change is a raising of what I have called the adequate and the dynamic degrees of poetic speech to the third intuitive and illuminative power or a touching and penetrating of them with its peculiar lustre. The more potent inspired or revelatory inevitable word occasionally intervenes as in the older poets, but it is the greater generalising of the intermediate, the first more purely intuitive degree that is the common feature, the level of the endeavour, the distinctive stamp where it succeeds of this new utterance. It takes the clear and strong or the lucid and delicate poetical adequacy of speech from which the older poets started and takes too the dynamic poetical eloquence or the richer suggestive and imaginatively effective power of language and tries to effect commonly what they were content to do only in moments of greater elevation,—to put into its mould or even surcharge it with a stronger or subtler content of illumination and this also to discharge of the intellectual tone and colour which so usually holds or else makes its way into all but their rarest utterances and to arrive at a pure intuitive expression of sensation and feeling and thought or of an inwardly intuitive vital vision or of a strong or a subtle psychic or spiritualised intelligence. This is a language which aims at bare or strange or subtle or pregnant identities between the mind's intuitive thought and perception and emotion and a rarer than the surface truth and meaning of the object or experience. And very often the work is done not so much by the language as the subtle sense suggestion of the rhythm and word music, the sound doing the alchemic labour of transfiguration which the expression is not yet strong and adult enough to lead and compass.

These are beginnings and beyond lies much that has

to be done to effectuate the complete change; an uncertain transition has yet to pass into a great transformation. The moulds or at least the spirit and manner of poetic expression have to be recast, very much as Shakespeare and his contemporaries recast the poetic speech of the English tongue so as to give shape and room to the surge of self-seeing and self-feeling and self-thinking of the life soul of man: but this time it has to be done in many languages by the minds of many nation entities at once and to make shape and room for the multitudinous vastitudes, the finer and finer subtleties, the absolute transparencies of the seeing, feeling, and thinking of the inmost self and spirit in man in intimate touch with the opening truths of all the levels of his existence and all his surroundings in Nature and in supernature. The voices we already have, the as yet strange and not yet universally accepted subtleties of some, the immature strainings and violences of others, the work of those who have something of the new substance but not a mastery of its native expression and those who have the new speech and rhythm but a poverty of the substance that should have made it rich and ample, the perfections attained even, are to be regarded only as incipient efforts and successes and stimulations to a more complete disclosure of the unfolding spirit. The speech that opens more constantly the doors of the intuitive self in the caverns of light of our nature has not done all that is to be done. The speech also has to be found that shall come by the rending or removal of the golden lid between our intelligence and the effulgent supra-intelligence and effect a direct and sovereign descent and pouring of some absolute sight and word of the spirit into the moulds of human language.

PARASARA'S HYMNS TO THE LORD OF THE FLAME

3

The Carrier of our gifts speeds on his way and reaches up towards heaven. He unravels out of the nights all that is stable and all that moves. This is he that becomes the one God who is around all the gods in his greatness.

All serve with gladness thy will to works when, O God, thou art born as the living being from a dry matter. All by thy movings get touch of the Truth and touch of immortality and they enjoy the Name, the Godhead.

He is the missioned impulse of Truth and the thinking of the Truth. He is the universal life and all do in him their works. To him who gives to thee and to him who takes of thee be knower of the knowledge and give him his portion of thy treasure.

He is the priest of the sacrifice who is seated in the Son of Man : he is the lord of these riches. The wise desire mutually his seed in their bodies and they come altogether to know him by their own discerning minds.

Those who listen to his word of instruction, those who are swift to the journey, serve gladly his will as sons the will of a father. He is the house of a multitude of riches and flings wide the door of his felicitous treasure. He is the dweller in the home and gives form to Paradise by the light of his stars.

उषा

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

15th July 1920

CONTENTS

ESSAYS ON THE GITA..... Aurobindo Ghose
The Message of the Gita (2)
THE SYNTHESIS OF YOGA..... A. G
Chap. LXVII The Intuitive Mind
THE ETERNAL WISDOM..... Paul Richard
The Fundamental Equality of Beings
A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE XVII
THE FUTURE POETRY
Conclusion
PARASARA'S HYMNS TO THE LORD OF THE FLAME

NOTICE.

"Arya" begins its seventh year with the 15th August 1920. We request our subscribers to send by money order the sum of Rs. 6 as subscription for the new year. In the absence of any direction to the contrary or of subscription by money order within the 10th August we shall send the August number as usual and realise the amount of Rs. 6 by V. P. P.

SECRETARY,
"ARYA"

Essays on the Gita

THE MESSAGE OF THE GITA

(2)

"The secret of action", so we might summarise the message of the Gita, the word of its divine Teacher, "is one with the secret of all life and existence. Existence is not merely a machinery of Nature, a wheel of law of being in which the soul is entangled for a moment or for ages, it is a constant manifestation of the Spirit : life is not for the sake of life alone, but for God, and the living soul of man is an eternal portion of the Divinity. Action is for self-finding, for self-fulfilment, for self-realisation and not only for its own external and apparent fruits of the moment or the future : there is an inner law and meaning of all things dependent on the supreme and the manifested nature of the self, and the true truth of action lies there and can be represented only incidentally, imperfectly and disguised by ignorance in the outer appearances of the mind and its action. The supreme, the faultless, largest law of action is therefore to find and live in the truth of our own highest and inmost existence and not to follow any outer standard and dharma. All life and action must be till then an imperfection, a difficulty, a struggle and a problem, and it is only by discovering our true self and living according to its true truth, its real reality that the

problem can be finally solved, the difficulty and struggle overpassed and all our doings become in the security of the discovered self and spirit an entirely right and authentic action. Know then your self, know your true self to be God and one with the self of all others, know your soul to be a portion of God and live in what you know, live in the self, live in your supreme spiritual nature, be united with God and Godlike ; offer, first, all your actions as a sacrifice to the Highest and the One in you, to the Highest and the One in the world and deliver last all into his hands for the supreme and universal spirit to do through you his own will and works in the world. This is the solution that I present to you and in the end you will find that there is no other."

Here it is necessary to state the Gita's view of the fundamental opposition on which like all Indian teaching it takes its position. This finding of the true self, this knowledge of the Godhead within us and all is not an easy thing, nor is it an easy thing either to make of this knowledge, even though seen by the mind, the stuff of our consciousness and the whole condition of our action. All action is determined by the effective state of our being, and the effective state of our being is determined by the state and basis of kinetic movement of our constant self-seeing will and active consciousness. It is what we see and believe with our whole active nature ourselves to be and our relations with the world to mean, it is our faith, our *çraddhâ*, that makes us what we are. But the consciousness of man is of a double kind and corresponds to a double truth of existence, a truth of the inner reality and a truth of the outer appearance. According as he lives in one or the other, he will be a mind dwelling in a human ignorance or a soul founded in a divine knowledge.

In its outer appearance the truth of existence is wholly what we call Nature or Prakriti, a Force operating

as the whole law and mechanism of being, creating the world which is the object of our mind and senses and creating the mind and senses as a means of relation between the creature and the objective world in which he lives. In this outer appearance man in his soul, his mind, his life, his body seems to be a creature of Nature differentiated from others by separation of body, life and mind and of the ego-sense which confirms and centralises the consciousness of this separateness and difference. All in him, his soul and mind action as well as the functioning of his life and body, is very evidently determined by the law of his nature, cannot get outside of it, cannot operate otherwise. He attributes indeed a certain freedom to his personal will, the will of his ego; but that in reality amounts to nothing, since his ego is only a sense which makes him identify himself with the creation that Nature has made of him, with the kind of mind and life and body she has constructed. His ego is itself a creation of her workings, and as is the nature of his ego, so will be the nature of its will and according to that he must act and he can no other.

This then is man's ordinary consciousness of himself, his faith in his own being, that he is a creature of Nature, a separate ego establishing whatever relations with others and with the world, making whatever development of himself, satisfying whatever will, desire, idea of his mind is permissible in her circle and consonant with her intention or law in his existence.

There is, however, something in man's consciousness which does not fall in with the rigidity of this formula; he has a faith, which grows greater as his soul develops, in another and an inner reality of existence. In this inner reality the truth of existence is no longer Nature but Soul and Spirit, Purusha rather than Prakriti. Nature herself is only a power of Spirit, Prakriti the force of the Purusha. A Spirit, a Self, a Being one in all is the master of the

world, which is only his partial manifestation, the upholder of Nature and her action, the giver of the sanction by which alone her law becomes imperative and her force and its ways operative, the Knower who illuminates her and makes her conscient in us, the Will who motives all her workings. The soul in man, a portion of this Divinity, shares his nature. Our nature is our soul's manifestation, operates by its sanction, embodies its self-knowledge and self-consciousness and its will of being.

The real soul and self of us is hidden from the mind by an ignorance of self, by a false identification, an absorption in the outward mechanism of the mind, life and body. But if the soul of man can draw back from this identification with its natural instruments, if it can see and live in the entire faith of its inner reality, then all is changed to it, life and existence take on another appearance, action a different meaning and character. The being becomes no longer this egoistic creation of Nature but a divine, immortal and spiritual being; the consciousness becomes no longer that of this limited and struggling mental and vital creature but an infinite, divine and spiritual consciousness; and the will and action too are no longer that of this bounded personality and its ego, but a divine and spiritual will and action, the will and power of the Universal, the Supreme, the All-Self and Spirit acting freely through the human being.

"This is the great change and transfiguration," runs the message of the Godhead in man, the Avatar, the divine Teacher, "to which I call the elect, and the elect are all who can turn their will away from the ignorance of the natural being to the knowledge of the inner self and spirit and the Divine. The elect are all who can accept this faith and this greater law. It is difficult indeed to accept for the mind attached to its own ignorance and to the habits of the mental, nervous and physical being; but once received it is a great and sure and saving way, be-

cause it is identical with the true truth of man's being and it is the authentic movement of his inmost and supreme nature.

"But the change is a very great one, an enormous transformation, and it cannot be done without an entire turning and conversion of your whole being and nature. There will be needed a complete consecration of your self and your nature and your life to the Highest and to nothing else but the Highest; for all will be held only for its sake, nothing accepted except as being in God and a form of God and for the sake of the Divine. There will be needed an admission and an entire turning and giving of the mind to a new knowledge of self and others and world and God and soul and Nature, a knowledge of oneness, a knowledge of universal Divinity, which will be at first an acceptance by the understanding but must become a vision and a consciousness and a permanent state of your being.

"There will be needed a will that shall make this new knowledge, vision, consciousness a motive of action and the sole motive, not of an action grudging, limited, confined to a few necessary operations of Nature or to the few things that seem helpful to a formal perfection, to a religious spirit or to an individual salvation, but rather all action of human life taken up by the equal spirit and done for the sake of God and the good of all creatures. There will be needed an uplifting of the heart in a single aspiration to the Highest, a single love of the Divine, a single God-adoration, and a widening too of the calmed and enlightened heart to embrace God in all beings. There will be needed a change from the habitual and normal nature of man as he is now to his supreme and divine spiritual nature. There will be needed in a word a Yoga which shall be at once a Yoga of integral knowledge, a Yoga of integral will and works, a Yoga of integral love, adoration and devotion and a Yoga of an integral spiritual perfection of the whole being and the whole nature,

"What is this knowledge that will have to be admitted by the understanding, supported by the soul's faith and made real and living to the mind, heart and life? It is the knowledge of the supreme Soul and Spirit in its oneness and its wholeness. It is the knowledge of One who is for ever, beyond Time and Space and name and form and world and beyond personal and impersonal being and yet from which all this proceeds and whom all this manifests in manifold nature and its multitude of figures. It is the knowledge of him as an impersonal eternal immutable Spirit, the thing we call Self, equal and always the same, unaffected and unmodified and unchanged amid all this constant changing and all this multitude of individual personalities and soul powers and Nature powers and forms and forces and eventualities of apparent existence. It is the knowledge of him at the same time as the Spirit and Power ever mutable in Nature, shaping himself to every form, modifying himself to every grade and degree and activity of his power, becoming all that is even while ever infinitely more than all that is, becoming man and animal and thing, subject and object, soul and mind and life and matter, every existence and every force and every creature.

"It is not by insisting on this or that side only of the truth that you can have this Yoga. The Divine whom you have to seek, the Self whom you have to discover, the supreme Soul of whom your soul is an eternal portion, is all these things simultaneously and you have simultaneously to know them in a supreme unity, enter into all of them at once, and in all states and all things see Him alone. If he were solely the Spirit mutable in Nature, there would be only an eternal and universal becoming, and if you limit your faith and knowledge to that, you cannot ever go beyond your personality and constant changeful becoming, you would be bound altogether in the revolutions of Nature. But you are not only a succession of soul

moments in Time. There is an impersonal self in you which supports the stream of your personality, and beyond this impersonality and personality, these two constant poles of what you are here, you are eternal and transcendent in the Eternal Transcendence.

"If again there were only the truth of the eternal impersonal self, then the world and your soul would be an illusion without any real basis, and if you limit your faith and knowledge to that, then the renunciation of life and action is your only resource. But God in the world and you in the world are realities; it and you are true and actual manifestations of the Supreme Being. Therefore accept and do not reject life and action, but be one with God in your impersonal essential self, turned to him by love and adoration in your spiritual personality, and make of your natural being what it is intended to be, an instrument, a channel, a power of the Divine. That it always is really, but unconsciously through a disfigurement by our ego. Make it that consciously, without ego, a power of the Divine in his supreme spiritual nature and of its will and its works. In this way you will live in the integral truth of your being and possess the integral God-union or Yoga.

"The Supreme is the Purushottama, eternal beyond all manifestation or limitation by Time, Space or Causality. But this does not mean that in that supreme eternity of his being he is unconnected with all that happens here, all world and Nature and all these beings. He is the supreme ineffable Brahman and he is impersonal self and he is all personal existences; spirit here and life and matter, soul and Nature and the works of Nature are aspects and movements of his infinite and eternal existence. He is the supreme transcendent Self and from him all comes into being and are forms of him and powers of the self, and as the one self he is here all-pervasive and equal and impersonal in man and animal and thing and object and every power of Nature. He is the supreme Soul and all

souls are flames of the one Soul and all beings are in their spiritual personality portions of the one Person or Purusha. He is the eternal Master of all manifested existence, Lord of the worlds and their creatures, originator of all actions though bound by no action, and to him go all action and effort and sacrifice. He is in all and all are in him and he has become all, and yet too he is above all and not limited by his creations. He is the transcendent Divine; he descends as the Avatar; he is manifest in power in the Vibhuti; he is the Godhead secret in every humanr being. All the gods whom men worship are only forms and names and mental bodies of the Divine.

"The Supreme has manifested the world from himself and in his own infinite existence and himself variously in the world. All things are his powers and figures and to the powers and figures of him there is no end, because he himself is infinite, He here as a pervading and containing impersonal self-existence informs and sustains equally and without any partiality, preference or attachment to any person or thing or happening or feature all this infinite manifestation in Time and the universe. This pure and equal Self does not act, but only supports impartially all the action of Nature. But it is also the Supreme who as the cosmic spirit, the Time Spirit wills and conducts and determines all the action of the world through the power of his own being, the power of the Spirit which we call Nature. He creates, sustains, destroys his creations. He is here seated also in the heart of every being and from there too in the individual he originates by the power of Nature, manifesting himself in quality of nature and in executive energy of nature, in each thing and being separately according to its kind, all action. It is this transcendent first origination from the Supreme and this constant universal and individual manifestation of Him in things and beings which makes all the nature of the cosmos.

"There are always these three eternal states of the

Divine, a one eternal immutable self-existence which is the basis and support of existent things, a Spirit mutable in Nature manifested by her as all these existences, and the transcendent Divine who can be here both of these at once, pure and silent spirit and the active spirit and life of the cycles of the universe, because he is something other and more than the two of them whether separately or together. The human soul is the Jiva, a spirit of this Spirit, a conscious power of the Supreme who carries in himself the whole of the immanent Divine and in Nature lives in the universal Divine, a soul acting and moving in the eternal Self, in the Infinite.

"The soul of man can live in either of these three states of the Spirit. Man can live here in the mutability of Nature and in that alone, ignorant of his real self, ignorant of the Godhead within him, knowing only Nature as a mechanical executive and creative Force and himself and others as her creations,—egos, separated existences in her universe. It is thus, superficially, that he now lives and all his thought and science until he exceeds this outer consciousness and knows himself can only be a shadow of light thrown upon screens and surfaces. This ignorance is possible, is even imposed, because the Godhead within is hidden by the veil of his own power ; his greater reality is lost to our view by the completeness with which he has identified himself in appearance with his creations and absorbed the mind in the workings of his own Nature. And it is possible also because the real, the spiritual Nature which is the secret of things in themselves is not manifest in the outward phenomena of things. The Nature which we see when we look outwards, the Nature which acts in our mind and body and senses is a lower Force, a derivation, a thing which creates figures of the Spirit, but hides the Spirit itself in its figures, concealing the self and making men look upon its masks, a Force which is only capable of a sum of secondary and depres-

sed values, not of the full power and glory and truth of the manifestation of the Divine. It is a Maya of the ego, of the dualities, of ignorance and the three gunas. And so long as the soul of man lives in the surface fact of mind and life and body and not in his self and spirit, he cannot see God and himself and the world as they really are, cannot overcome this Maya, but must do what he can with its terms and figures.

"It is possible by drawing back from this lower nature of his being in which man now lives, to awake to and live in the truth of the eternal and immutable self-existence. Man then is no longer bound up in his little personality, no longer sees himself as this little I that thinks and acts and feels and struggles and labours. He is merged in the vast and free impersonality of the pure spirit, becomes the Brahman, knows himself as one with the one self in all things. He is no longer aware of his ego, no longer troubled by the dualities, does not feel anguish of grief or disturbance of joy, is not shaken by desire, is not troubled by sin or limited by virtue. Or if the shadows of these things remain, he sees and knows them only as Nature working in her own qualities and does not feel them to be the truth of himself in which he lives. Nature alone acts and works out her mechanical figures: but the pure spirit is silent, inactive and free,—untouched by her workings, it regards them with a perfect equality and knows itself to be other than these things. This spiritual state gives freedom, but not the integral perfection, because it is not the integral God-knowledge and self-knowledge.

"A greater perfection comes by living in the supreme and the whole Divine. Then the soul of man is united with the Divine of which it is a portion, is one with all beings in the self and spirit, in God, is free, complete, ready for the supreme felicity and perfection. He sees the self to be the eternal and changeless Divine supporting all things, but he sees also Nature to be no mere mechanical

force working out things according to the mechanism of the gunas, but a power of the Spirit, the force of God in manifestation. He sees that the lower Nature is not the inmost truth of the spirit's action, but that there is rather a highest spiritual nature of the Divine in which is contained the source and truth of all that is imperfectly figured in the mind, life and body. Arising from the lower mental to this supreme spiritual nature, he is delivered there from all ego and he knows himself as a spiritual being one in his essence with all existences and in his active Nature a power of the one Godhead, an eternal soul of the transcendent Divine. He sees all in God and God in all; he sees all things as Vasudeva. He is delivered from all dualities of joy and grief, the pleasant and the unpleasant, desire and disappointment, sin and virtue. All henceforth is to him the will and working of the Divine. He lives and acts as a soul and portion of the universal consciousness and power and is filled with the transcendent divine delight, a spiritual Ananda. His action becomes the divine action and his status the highest spiritual status.

* * *

"This is the solution, the salvation, the perfection that I offer to all those who can hear the divine voice within them and are capable of this faith and knowledge. But to attain this condition the first necessity is to turn away from all that belongs to your lower Nature and fix yourself by concentration of the will and intelligence on that which is higher than either, higher than mind and heart and sense and body, on your own eternal and immutable self, impersonal and the same in all creatures. So long as you live in ego and mental personality, you will always spin in the same rounds and there can be no real issue. Turn then your will inward beyond the heart and its desires and the sense and its attractions and above beyond the mind and its associations and attachments, its bound-

ed will and thought and impulse. Arrive at something within you that is eternal, ever unchanged, calm, unperturbed, equal, impartial to all things and persons and happenings, not affected by any action, not altered by the figures of nature. Be that, be the eternal self, be the Brahman. Becoming that by a permanent spiritual experience, you have an assured basis on which you can stand delivered from the limitations of your mind-created personality, secure against any fall from peace and knowledge, free from ego.

Thus to impersonalise your being is not possible so long as you nurse and cherish and cling to your ego or anything that belongs to it. Desire and the passions that arise from it are the principal sign and knot of ego. It is desire that makes you go on saying I and mine and subjects you through a persistent egoism to satisfaction and dissatisfaction, liking and disliking, hope and despair, joy and sorrow, egoistic love and hatred, wrath and passion, attachment to success and things pleasant, the suffering of failure and of things unpleasant. Desire brings always confusion of mind, limitation of the will, an egoistic and distorted view of things, a failure and clouding of knowledge. Desire and its preferences and violences are the first root of sin and error. There can be while you cherish desire no assured tranquillity, no calm and pure knowledge, no right being—for desire is a perversion of the spirit—and therefore also no firm foundation for right thought, action and feeling. Desire, if permitted to remain under whatever colour, is a perpetual menace even to the wisest and can at any moment throw down the mind from even its firmest, most surely acquired foundation. Desire is the chief enemy of spiritual perfection.

"Slay then desire, put away attachment to the possession and enjoyment of the outwardness of things, of all that comes to you as outward touches and sollicitations, objects of the mind and senses. Learn to bear and reject

all the rush of the passions and remain securely seated in your inner self even while they rage in your members, until at last they cease to affect any part of your nature. Bear and put away similarly the attacks and even the slightest touches of joy and sorrow. Cast away all liking and disliking, destroy all preference and hatred and shrinking and repugnance. Let there be a calm indifference to all these things and to all the objects of desire in all your nature. Look on all things with the silent and tranquil regard of your impersonal spirit.

"The result will be an absolute equality, such as the universal spirit maintains with regard to all its creations and all the manifold action of Nature. Look with equal eyes, receive with an equal heart and mind all that comes to you, success and failure, honour and dishonour, the esteem and love of men and their scorn and persecution and hatred, every happening that would be to others a cause of joy and every happening that would be to others a cause of sorrow. Look with equal eyes on all persons, on the good and the wicked, on the wise and the foolish, on the Brahmin and the outcaste, on man at his highest and every creature, and on all men whatever their relations to you, lover or hater, friend and ally or neutral and indifferent or opponent and enemy. These things touch the ego and you have to be free from ego, are personal relations and you have to see all with the impersonal spirit, are temporal and personal differences and you have to see them but not be influenced by them, because you must fix not on these differences, but on that which is the same in all, the one self which all are, the Divine in every being, and on the one working of Nature which is the will of God in all things and all happenings.

"Action will still be done in you because Nature is always at work, but you must see this that your self is not the doer of the action. Observe simply the working of Nature and the play of her qualities. Observe this action

in yourself, look on all that is being done around you and see that it is the same working in others. Observe that the result of your works and theirs is constantly other than they themselves desired or intended, is not theirs or yours but that intended by the greater Power that wills and acts in universal Nature. Observe too that even the will in your works is not yours but Nature's: it is the will of the ego sense in you and is determined by the predominant quality she has developed or else brings forward at the moment, on the natural play of your personality. Draw back from it to your silent self and you will see that you the Purusha are inactive, while nature continues to do always her works according to her gunas. Fix yourself in this inactivity and no longer regard yourself as the doer. Remain seated in yourself, free from and above the action of the gunas, in the purity of the impersonal spirit, untroubled by any play that persists in your members.

"If you can do all this, then you will find yourself uplifted to a great release, a great freedom and peace. Then you will be aware and possessed of your immortal self-existence independent of mind and life and body, your pure spiritual being untouched by the reactions of Nature and passion and sin and pain and sorrow. Then you will depend for your joy and desire on no mortal or outward or worldly thing, but will possess inalienably the delight of your self-existence as a calm and eternal spirit. Then you will have ceased to be a mental creature and will have become the spirit, the Brahman. And into this eternity of the silent self you can, rejecting from your mind all thought as all desire, rejecting birth in the body, pass at your end by concentration on the pure eternal Spirit.

"This however is not all the truth of the Yoga and this end and way of departure, though a great end and a great way, is not the thing I propose to you. For I ask of

you action, not a passive consent to a mechanical action of Nature from which in your self you are wholly separated, indifferent and aloof, but a complete and a divine action as the willing and understanding instrument of the Divine for the good of the world. This action I propose to you, first as a means of perfection in the supreme spiritual Nature, but as part too of that perfection, part of the integral knowledge of God and an entire living in the Divine, to be continued after perfection and freedom are attained,—the action of the Jivanmukta, the works of the Siddha. Something then has to be added to the Yoga already described,—for that was only the Yoga of knowledge. There is also a Yoga of works to be done alongside and in the light of knowledge and made one with knowledge. It is the works that are done in a total self-vision and God-vision and vision of the world in God that are a part of knowledge and an indispensable means to spiritual perfection.

"Therefore now to the knowledge of the impersonal self add too the knowledge that the Supreme whom one meets as pure silent Spirit is to be met also as the Spirit who originates all works and who is the Lord of the worlds and the Master of man's action and endeavour and sacrifice. This apparently self-acting mechanism of Nature conceals a divine will that compels and guides it and shapes its purposes. That will you cannot feel or know while you are bound up in your personality, chained and blinded by your viewpoint of the ego and its desires: you can wholly respond to it only when you are impersonalised by knowledge and can see all things in the self and in God and the self and God in all things. All becomes here, all does its works by the power of the Spirit and by the immanence of God in things and his presence in the heart of every creature. The Creator of the worlds is not indeed limited by his creations, the Lord of works is not bound by his works, the divine Will is not attached to

its labour and the results of its labour, for it is omnipotent, all possessing and all-blissful, but still the Lord works in his creations, descends as the Avatar, rules from within all things in the steps of their nature. And you too have to do works in his being and after the divine nature without limitation, attachment or bondage for the good of all beings, for the maintenance of the movement of the world, for the support or leading of its peoples. The action asked of you is the action of the liberated Yogin, a free, an equal-minded, a selfless and desireless labour.

"The first step towards this free, equal and divine action is to put away attachment to the fruits and to work only for the sake of the work itself that has to be done. It is to recognise that the fruits do not belong to you, but to the Master of the world and to consecrate and leave them to the Spirit who manifests and fulfils himself in the movement of Nature. The result of your action is determined by Him alone and turned to the accomplishment of his purpose. Therefore an entirely desireless and disinterested working of the will and the whole nature is the first rule of the Karma-Yoga. Demand no fruit but accept whatever result is given to you with equality and a calm gladness and continue unafraid, untroubled and unwavering on the path of the divine action.

"This is only the first step. For you must be not only unattached to the result but unattached also to the work itself : you must cease to regard it as your own and as you have given up the fruits of your work, so you must give up the work also to the Lord of the action. First recognise that it is your nature that determines your action, rules your Swabhava, decides the turn and development of your spirit in the paths of the executive force of Prakriti. Bring in no longer any self-will to confuse the steps of your mind in following this path : accept the action proper to your nature and make of all you do from the greatest and most unusual effort to the smallest daily

act, act of your body, act of your heart, act of your mind, of every inner and outer movement, of every thought, will and feeling, a sacrifice to the Master of all sacrifice and Tapasya.

"Next know that since you are a portion of the Divine and nothing without him, nothing if not his partial self expression, it is the Divine who is fulfilled in your nature; learn that it is a divine power of being, a Shakti of the Lord which takes shape in and shapes your swabhava. Give up then all sense of being the doer and see him alone as the doer of the action and your natural being only as an occasion, instrument and means of manifestation. Offer up your will to him to make it one with his, give up all your actions through your self and spirit to the Master of your natural being. This cannot be really done or done perfectly so long as there is any ego sense in you; for action done in the least degree for the sake of the ego or tinged with the desire and will of the ego is not a perfect sacrifice. Nor can it be well and truly done so long as there is inequality and any kind of personal preference. But when there is a perfect equality to all works, results, things and persons, then it is that the divine Will shall determine without deflection by the ego and the divine Power execute freely without personal interference or reaction all works in your nature. Thus to allow works to be done through you by the divine Will is the highest degree of what is meant by the doing of works in Yoga. Your nature then acts in a complete, perfect and constant union with the Supreme, the highest Self, the Ishwara.

"This way of divine works is far better, a more perfect way and solution than the physical renunciation of life and works, because that is not entirely possible, is not in the measure of its possibility indispensable to spiritual freedom and perfection and is besides a dangerous example and influence on ordinary men. The best, the

greatest sets the standard which the rest strive to follow, and since action is the nature of the embodied spirit and the will of the Ishwara, the great spirits, the master minds should set this example of doing all works without reservation, but done freely and desirelessly, as a liberated soul and nature.

"The mind of knowledge and the will of action are not all man's being; there is also the heart whose demand is for delight, and here too in the heart's power and illumination and its demand for delight and love the nature must be turned and raised to unity with the Divine. The knowledge of the impersonal self brings the delight of the impersonality of the pure spirit: the knowledge that is integral brings at once the delight in the transcendent Being, in his universal impersonality and in all his manifestation in Nature, the integral Ananda. This Ananda takes in the Jiva, the eternal portion of the Divine, the form of an ecstatic delight in the Divine who is his source and supreme self and master of his being, an entire God-love and adoration which extends itself to a love of all beings, because in all the Divine is seen, found, adored, served and felt in oneness. Add to knowledge and works the crown of this delight and love and worship, make it one with knowledge and works and you will attain the perfect perfection.

"It is this Yoga of love which will give to you the highest force of unity and freedom. This must be a love which is one with God-knowledge. There is a devotion which seeks God in suffering for consolation and succour and deliverance; there is a devotion which seeks him for his gifts, for divine aid and protection, as a fountain of the satisfaction of desire; there is a devotion that turns to him for light, for knowledge: in these there may persist even in their highest and noblest Godward turning a working of the three gunas. But when the God-lover is also the God-knower, then the lover becomes one

self with the Beloved, the chosen of the Most High, the elect of the spirit. Develop in yourself this love and the heart spiritualised and lifted beyond the limitations of its lower nature will reveal to you not only the secrets of God's being and the whole touch and glory of the divine Power but the mysteries of his eternal rapture. It is perfect love that gives perfect knowledge.

"The integral God-love demands an integral work for the sake of the Divine in yourself and in all creatures. The ordinary man does works in obedience to some desire sinful or virtuous, low or high, common or exalted, or from some mixed desire motive. The work done by you must first be free and desireless,—for work done without desire creates no reaction and imposes no bondage. So done in perfect equality, calm and peace, but without any divine passion, it is at first a spiritual obligation or duty, *kartavyam karma*, then a divine sacrifice and at highest a calm and glad acquiescence in active oneness. The oneness in love will do more and replace the petty ardour of egoistic desire by the infinite rapture and Ananda, the moving sense, the pure and divine passion of the presence of the Beloved in your works and the joy of labour for God in yourself and for God in all beings. Love is the crown of works as of knowledge.

"This love that is knowledge and is at the heart of all your action will be your power for a complete consecration and a complete perfection. A complete union of your being with the Divine is the condition of the perfect spiritual life. Turn then altogether towards the Divine and make one with him by knowledge, love and works all your being and nature. Turn towards Him and give up into his hands your mind, your heart, your will, all your consciousness, your very senses and body. Let your consciousness be moulded by him into a mould of his divine consciousness; let your heart become a lucid or flaming heart of the Divine; let your will be an action of

his will ; let your very sense and body be the sensation and body of the divine. Adore and sacrifice to him with all you are, remember him in your every thought, feeling, impulsion and act, until all these things are wholly his and he takes up in them, even in most outward things as in the inmost chamber of your spirit his constant presence.

"This will also be the means by which you will rise wholly out of your lower into your supreme spiritual nature. That is the nature in which the Jiva is one with the infinite Divine, intimately of one law of being with him, and dwells wholly in him and not as now and here in an externalised Maya. This perfection and unity you can enjoy in a supreme supracosmic existence : but here also you may and must realise it in the human body and existence. It is not enough to be calm, inactive, free from the gunas in the inner self and to watch and allow their mechanic action in the outer members. The active nature as well as the self has to be given to the Divine and to become divine ; it must grow into one law of being with Me, with the Purushottama, *sâdharmya*, it must be my spiritual becoming, *madbhâva*. This complete surrender, this taking refuge with Me in all the ways of your being will bring about that great change and perfection.

"This consummation of the Yoga will at once solve or rather wholly remove and destroy the problem of action. The many perplexities of action—and human action is a thing full of difficulties and perplexities tangled and confused like a forest with a few more or less obscure paths cut into rather than through it—arise from the single fact that man lives in the ignorance of the mental nature, compelled by its qualities and yet afflicted with responsibility in his will because something in him feels that he is a soul who ought to be lord of his nature. All his laws of living, his dharmas, must be imperfect, temporary, provisional, only partly right or true until he knows him-

self and the real nature of the world in which he lives and the Eternal from whom he comes and in and by whom he exists. When he once knows that, there is no problem ; for then he acts freely out of himself, in accordance with the truth of his spirit and his highest spiritual nature, and that means at its fullest that it is the infinite Divine who acts in him in a liberated power and knowledge.

"Man in his natural being is a sattwic, rajasic and tamasic creature of Nature, and as one of her qualities predominates in him, so he makes and follows some law of life and action. The tamasic, material, sensational mind in him subject to inertia and fear and ignorance either obeys partly the compulsion of its environment and partly the spasmodic impulses of its desires or finds a protection in the routine following of its dull customary intelligence. The rajasic mind of desire struggles with the world in which it lives and trying to possess always new things, to command, battle, conquer, create, destroy, accumulate it goes forward tossed between success and failure, joy and sorrow, but in all, whatever law it may seem to admit, following really only the law of the lower self and ego, the restless, untired, self-devouring and all-devouring mind of the Asuric and Rakshasic nature. The sattwic intelligence surmounts partly this state, sees that a better law than that of desire and ego must be followed and erects and imposes on itself a social, an ethical, a religious rule, a Dharma, a Shastra. This is as high as the ordinary mind of man can go, to erect an ideal or practical rule for the guidance of the mind and will and as faithfully as possible observe it in life and conduct. This sattwic mind you must develop to its highest point where it succeeds in putting away the mixture of ego motive altogether and observes the Dharma for its own sake as an impersonal social, ethical or religious ideal, the thing disinterestedly to be done solely because it is right, *kartavyam karma*.

"The real truth of all this action of Nature is, however, less outwardly mental, more inwardly subjective. It is this that man is a soul embodied, involved in material and mental nature and following in it a progressive law of his development determined by an inner law of his being, his cast of spirit making out his cast of mind and life, his swabhava. You have therefore a swadharma, a law of your being which you must observe, find out and follow. The action determined by his inner nature, that is a man's real Dharma. To follow it is the true law of his development, to deviate from it is to bring in confusion, retardation and error. That social, ethical, religious law and ideal is best for him always which helps him to observe and follow out his Swadharma.

"All this however is subject to the ignorance of the mind and the play of the gunas. It is only when the soul of man finds itself that he can surpass the ignorance and the confusion of the gunas. Then, when you have found yourself and live in your self, still the nature will continue on its line and act for a time according to its gunas. Only, you can follow that action with a perfect self-knowledge and can make of it a sacrifice to the Master of your being. Therefore follow the law of your Swadharma, do the action that is demanded by your Swabhava whatever it may be, rejecting all egoism, all self-will, all rule of desire, until you can make the complete surrender of all the ways of your being to the Supreme.

"Then, when you are able to do that, give up all your actions to the supreme Godhead within you. Then you will be released from all laws of conduct, from all dharmas. The Divine within you will free you from all sin and evil and lift you above all human standards of virtue. For then you will live and act in the absolute and spontaneous right and purity of the spiritual being and its divine nature. The Divine and not you will enact his own will and works through you, not for your personal pleasure and

desire, but for the world-purpose and the general good of all beings. Then you will see the form of the Godhead in the world and in the works of Time, know his purpose, hear his command and your nature will do as instrument his will, whatever it may be, without question because with a perfect illumined assent to the divine wisdom and its significance. The battle will be his, his the victory, his the empire.

"This in the world, and beyond all worlds the supreme eternal status where you will dwell for ever in the being of the Supreme Spirit. The circle of birth and death, the fear of mortality need not distress you, for here in life you will have accomplished the expression of the Divine and your soul though descended into mind and body will already be living in the eternity of the Spirit.

"This then is the supreme movement, the complete surrender of your whole self and nature, abandoning all dharmas to the Divine, to your highest Self, to the supreme Soul and Spirit. Whenever you can do this, even if from the beginning, then whatever you are in your outward nature, your way is sure and your perfection : the Divine within you will take up your Yoga and carry it swiftly on the lines of your swabhava to its completion. And afterwards whatever your way of life and mode of action, you will be consciously living, acting, moving in him and the Divine will act through you in your every motion. This is the supreme way because it is the highest secret and mystery and yet a thing realisable by all; this is the inmost truth of your real, your spiritual existence."

The Synthesis of Yoga

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

CHAPTER LXVII

THE INTUITIVE MIND

The original nature of supermind is the self-conscience and all-conscience of the Infinite, of the universal Spirit and Self in things, organising on the foundation and according to the character of a direct self-knowledge its own wisdom and effective omnipotence for the unfolding and the regulated action of the universe and of all things in the universe. It is, we might say, the gnosis of the Spirit master of its own cosmos, *âtmâ jnâtâ îshwarah*. As it knows itself, so too it knows all things—for all are only becomings of itself—directly, totally and from within outward, spontaneously in detail and arrangement, each thing in the truth of itself and its nature and in its relation to all other things. And it knows similarly all action of its energy in antecedent or cause and occasion of manifestation and effect or consequence, all things in infinite and in limited potentiality and in selection of actuality and in their succession of past, present and future. The organising supermind of a divine being in the universe would be a delegation of this omnipotence and omniscience for the purpose and within the scope of his own action and nature and of all that comes into its province. The supermind in an individual would be a similar delegation on whatever

scale and within whatever province. But while in the god this would be a direct and an immediate delegation of a power illimitable in itself and limited only in action, but otherwise unaltered in operation, natural to the being and full and free always, in man any emergence of the supermind must be a gradual and at first an imperfect creation and to his customary mind the activity of an exceptional and supernormal will and knowledge.

In the first place it will not be for him a native power always enjoyed without interruption, but a secret potentiality which has to be discovered and one for which there are no organs in his present physical or mental system : he has either to evolve a new organ for it or else to adopt or transform existing ones and make them utilisable for the purpose. He has not merely to uncover the hidden sun of the supermind in the subliminal cavern of his secret being or remove the cloud of his mental ignorance from its face in the spiritual skies so that it shall at once shine out in all its glory. His task is much more complex and difficult because he is an evolutionary being and by the evolution of Nature of which he is a part he has been constituted with an inferior kind of knowledge, and this inferior, this mental power of knowledge forms by its persistent customary action an obstacle to a new formation greater than its own nature. A limited mental intelligence enlightening a limited mind of sense and the capacity not always well used of a considerable extension of it by the use of the reason are the powers by which he is at present distinguished from all other terrestrial creatures. This sense mind, this intelligence, this reason, however inadequate, are the instruments in which he has learned to put his trust and he has erected by their means certain foundations which he is not over willing to disturb and has traced limits outside of which he feels all to be confusion, uncertainty and a perilous adventure. Moreover the transition to the higher principle means not only a difficult

conversion of his whole mind and reason and intelligence, but in a certain sense a reversal of all their methods. The soul climbing above a certain critical line of change sees all its former operations as an inferior and ignorant action and has to effect another kind of working which sets out from a different starting-point and has quite another kind of initiation of the energy of the being. If an animal mind were called upon to leave consciently the safe ground of sense impulse, sense understanding and instinct for the perilous adventure of a reasoning intelligence, it might well turn back alarmed and unwilling from the effort. The human mind would here be called upon to make a still greater change and, although self-conscious and adventurous in the circle of its possibility, might well hold this to be beyond the circle and reject the adventure. In fact the change is only possible if there is first a spiritual development on our present level of consciousness and it can only be undertaken securely when the mind has become aware of the greater self within, enamoured of the Infinite and confident of the presence and guidance of the Divine and his Shakti.

The problem of this conversion resolves itself at first into a passage through a mediary status and by the help of the one power already at work in the human mind which we can recognise as something supramental in its nature or at least in its origin, the faculty of intuition, a power of which we can feel the presence and the workings and are impressed, when it acts, by its superior efficiency, light, direct inspiration and force, but cannot understand or analyse it as we understand or analyse the workings of our reason. The reason understands itself, but not what is beyond it,—of that it can only make a general figure or representation; the supermind alone can discern the method of its own workings. The power of intuition acts in us at present for the most part in a covert manner secret and involved in or mostly veiled by

the action of the reason and the normal intelligence; so far as it emerges into a clear separate action, it is still occasional, partial, fragmentary and of an intermittent character. It casts a sudden light, it makes a luminous suggestion or it throws out a solitary brilliant clue or scatters a small number of isolated or related intuitions, lustrous discriminations, inspirations or revelations, and it leaves the reason, will, mental sense or intelligence to do what each can or pleases with this seed of succour that has come to them from the depths or the heights of our being. The mental powers immediately proceed to lay hold on these things and to manipulate and utilise them for our mental or vital purposes, to adapt them to the forms of the inferior knowledge, to coat them up in or infiltrate them with the mental stuff and suggestion, often altering their truth in the process and always limiting their potential force of enlightenment by these accretions and by this subdual to the exigencies of the inferior agent, and almost always they make at once too little and too much of them, too little by not allowing them time to settle and extend their full power for illumination, too much by insisting on them or rather on the form into which the mentality casts them to the exclusion of the larger truth that the more consistent use of the intuitive faculty might have given. Thus the intuition intervening in the ordinary mental operations acts in lightning flashes that make lustrous a space of truth, but is not a steady sunlight illumining securely the whole reach and kingdom of our thought and will and feeling and action.

It appears at once that there are two necessary lines of progress which we must follow, and the first is to extend the action of the intuition and make it more constant, more persistent and regular and all-embracing until it is so intimate and normal to our being that it can take up all the action now done by the ordinary mind and assume its place in the whole system. This cannot wholly be done

so long as the ordinary mind continues to assert its power of independent action and intervention or its habit of seizing on the light of the intuition and manipulating it for its own purposes. The higher mentality cannot be complete or secure so long as the inferior intelligence is able to deform it or even to bring in any of its own intermixture. And either then we must silence altogether the intellect and the intellectual will and the other inferior activities and leave room only for the intuitive action or we must lay hold on and transform the lower action by the constant pressure of the intuition. Or else there must be an alternation and combination of the two methods if that be the most natural way or at all possible. The actual process and experience of Yoga manifests the possibility of several methods or movements none of which by itself produces the entire result in practice, however it may seem at first sight that logically each should or might be adequate. And when we learn to insist on no particular method as exclusively the right one and leave the whole movement to a greater guidance, we find that the divine Lord of the Yoga commissions his Shakti to use one or the other at different times and all in combination according to the need and turn of the being and the nature.

At first it might seem the straight and right way to silence the mind altogether, to silence the intellect, the mental and personal will, the desire mind and the mind of emotion and sensation, and to allow in that perfect silence the Self, the Spirit, the Divine to disclose himself and leave him to illuminate the being by the supramental light and power and Ananda. And this is indeed a great and powerful discipline. It is the calm and still mind much more readily and with a much greater purity than the mind in agitation and action that opens to the Infinite, reflects the Spirit, becomes full of the Self and awaits like a consecrated and purified temple the unveiling of the Lord of all our being and nature. It

is true also that the freedom of this silence gives a possibility of a larger play of the intuitive being and admits with less obstruction and turmoil of mental groping and seizing the great intuitions, inspirations, revelations which emerge from within or descend from above. It is therefore an immense gain if we can acquire the capacity of always being able at will to command an absolute tranquillity and silence of the mind free from any necessity of mental thought or movement and disturbance and, based in that silence, allow thought and will and feeling to happen in us only when the Shakti wills it and when it is needful for the divine purpose. It becomes easier then to change the manner and character of the thought and will and feeling. Nevertheless it is not the fact that by this method the supramental light will immediately replace the lower mind and reflective reason. When the inner action proceeds after the silence, even if it be then a more predominatingly intuitive thought and movement, the old powers will yet interfere, if not from within, then by a hundred suggestions from without, and an inferior mentality will mix in, will question or obstruct or will try to lay hold on the greater movement and to lower or darken or distort or minimise it in the process. Therefore the necessity of a process of elimination or transformation of the inferior mentality remains always imperative,—or perhaps both at once, an elimination of all that is native to the lower being, its disfiguring accidents, its depreciations of value, its distortions of substance and all else that the greater truth cannot harbour, and a transformation of the essential things our mind derives from the supermind and spirit but represents in the manner of the mental ignorance.

A second movement is one which comes naturally to those who commence the Yoga with the initiative that is proper to the way of Bhakti. It is natural to them to reject the intellect and its action and to listen for the voice, wait for the impulsion or the command, the *adesha*, obey

only the idea and will and power of the Lord within them, the divine Self and Purusha in the heart of the creature, *îçwarah sarvabhûtânâm hriddeçe.* This is a movement which must tend more and more to intuitivise the whole nature, for the ideas, the will, the impulsions, the feelings which come from the secret Purusha in the heart are of the direct intuitive character. This method is consonant with a certain truth of our nature. The secret Self within us is an intuitive self and and this intuitive self is seated in every centre of our being, the physical, the nervous, the emotional, the volitional, the conceptual or cognitive and the higher more directly spiritual centres. And in each part of our being it exercises a secret intuitive initiation of our activities which is received and represented imperfecly by our outer mind and converted into the movements of the ignorance in the external action of these parts of our nature. The heart or emotional centre of the thinking desire mind is the strongest in the ordinary man, gathers up or at least affects the presentation of things to the consciousness and is the capital of the system. It is from there that the Lord seated in the heart of all creatures turns them mounted on the machine of Nature by the Maya of the mental ignorance. It is possible then by referring back all the initiation of our action to this secret intuitive Self and Spirit, the ever-present Godhead within us, and replacing by its influences the initiations of our personal and mental nature to get back from the inferior external thought and action to another, internal and intuitive, of a highly spiritualised character. Nevertheless the result of this movement cannot be complete, because the heart is not the highest centre of our being, is not supramental nor directly moved from the supramental sources. An intuitive thought and action directed from it may be very luminous and intense but is likely to be limited, even narrow in its intensity, mixed with a lower emotional action and at the best excited and troubled, rendered unba-

laneed or exaggerated by a miraculous or abnormal character in its action or at least in many of its accompaniments which is injurious to the harmonised perfection of the being. The aim of our effort at perfection must be to make the spiritual and supramental action no longer a miracle, even if a frequent or constant miracle, or only a luminous intervention of a greater than our natural power, but normal to the being and the very nature and law of all its process.

The highest organised centre of our embodied being and of its action in the body is the supreme mental centre figured by the yogic symbol of the thousand-petalled lotus, *sahasradala*, and it is at its top and summit that there is the direct communication with the supramental levels. It is then possible to adopt a different and a more direct method, not to refer all our thought and action to the Lord secret in the heart-lotus but to the veiled truth of the Divinity above the mind and to receive all by a sort of descent from above, a descent of which we become not only spiritually but physically conscious. The siddhi or full accomplishment of this movement can only come when we are able to lift the centre of thought and conscious action above the physical brain and feel it going on in the subtle body. If we can feel ourselves thinking no longer with the brain but from above and outside the head in the subtle body, that is a sure physical sign of a release from the limitations of the physical mind, and though this will not be complete at once nor of itself bring the supramental action, for the subtle body is mental and not supramental, still it is a subtle and pure mentality and makes an easier communication with the supramental contres. The lower movements must still come, but it is then found easier to arrive at a swift and subtle discrimination telling us at once the difference, distinguishing the intuitional thought from the lower intellectual mixture, separating it from itsmental coatings, rejecting themere rapidities

of the mind which imitate the form of the intuition without being of its true substance. It will be easier to discern rapidly the higher planes of the true supramental being and call down their power to effect the desired transformation and to refer all the lower action to the superior power and light that it may reject and eliminate, purify and transform and select among them its right material for the Truth that has to be organised within us. This opening up of a higher level and of higher and higher planes of it and the consequent re-formation of our whole consciousness and its action into their mould and into the substance of their power and luminous capacity is found in practice to be the greater part of the natural method used by the divine Shakti.

A fourth method is one which suggests itself naturally to the developed intelligence and suits the thinking man. This is to develop our intellect instead of eliminating it, but with the will not to cherish its limitations, but to heighten its capacity, light, intensity, degree and force of activity until it borders on the thing that transcends it and can easily be taken up and transformed into that higher conscious action. This movement also is founded on the truth of our nature and enters into the course and movement of the complete Yoga of self-perfection. That course, as I have described it, included a heightening and greatening of the action of our natural instruments and powers till they constitute in their purity and essential completeness a preparatory perfection of the present normal movement of the Shakti that acts in us. The reason and intelligent will, the buddhi, is the greatest of these powers and instruments, the natural leader of the rest in the developed human being, the most capable of aiding the development of the others. The ordinary activities of our nature are all of them of use for the greater perfection we seek, are meant to be turned into material for them, and the greater their development, the richer the prepara-

tion for the supramental action.

The intellectual being too has to be taken up by the Shakti in the Yoga and raised to its fullest and its most heightened powers. The subsequent transformation of the intellect is possible because all the action of the intellect derives secretly from the supermind, each thought and will contains some truth of it however limited and altered by the inferior action of the intelligence. The transformation can be brought about by the removal of the limitation and the elimination of the distorting or perverting element. This however cannot be done by the heightening and greatening of the intellectual activity alone ; for that must always be limited by the original inherent defects of the mental intelligence. An intervention of the supramental energy is needed that can light up and get rid of its deficiences of thought and will and feeling. This intervention too cannot be completely effective unless the supramental plane is manifested and acts above the mind no longer from behind a lid or veil, however thin the veil may have grown, but more constantly in an open and luminous action till there is seen the full sun of Truth with no cloud to moderate its splendour. It is not necessary, either, to develop the intellect fully in its separateness before calling down this intervention or opening up by it the supramental levels. The intervention may come in earlier and at once develop the intellectual action and turn it, as it develops, into the higher intuitive form and substance.

The widest natural action of the Shakti combines all these methods. It creates, sometimes at first, sometimes at some later, perhaps latest stage, the freedom of the spiritual silence. It opens the secret intuitive being within the mind itself and accustoms us to refer all our thought and our feeling and will and action to the initiation of the Divine, the Splendour and Power who is now concealed in the heart of its recesses. It raises, when we are ready, the centre of its operations to the mental summit and opens up the

supramental levels and proceeds doubly by an action from above downward filling and transforming the lower nature and an action from below upwards raising all the energies to that which is above them till the transcendence is completed and the change of the whole system integrally effected. It takes and develops the intelligence and will and other natural powers, but brings in constantly the intuitive mind and afterwards the true supramental energy to change and enlarge their action. These things it does in no fixed and mechanically invariable order, such as the rigidity of the logical intellect might demand, but freely and flexibly according to the needs of its work and the demand of the nature.

The first result will not be the creation of the true supermind, but the organisation of a predominantly or even a completely intuitive mentality sufficiently developed to take the place of the ordinary mentality and of the logical reasoning intellect of the developed human being. The most prominent change will be the transmutation of the thought heightened and filled by that substance of concentrated light, concentrated power, concentrated joy of the light and the power and that direct accuracy which are the marks of a true intuitive thinking. It is not only primary suggestions or rapid conclusions that this mind will give, but it will conduct too with the same light, power, joy of sureness and direct spontaneous seeing of the truth the connecting and developing operations now conducted by the intellectual reason. The will also will be changed into this intuitive character, proceed directly with light and power to the thing to be done, *kartavyam karma*, and dispose with a rapid sight of possibilities and actualities the combinations necessary to its action and its purpose. The feelings also will be intuitive, seizing upon right relations, acting with a new light and power and a glad sureness, retaining only right and spontaneous desires and emotions, so long as these things endure, and, when they pass

away, replacing them by a luminous and spontaneous love and an Ananda that knows and seizes at once on the right *rasa* of its objects. All the other mental movements will be similarly enlightened and even too the pranic and sense movements and the consciousness of the body. And usually there will be some development also of the psychic faculties, powers and perceptions of the inner mind and its senses not dependent on the outer sense and the reason. The intuitive mentality will be not only a stronger and a more luminous thing, but usually capable of a much more extensive operation than the ordinary mind of the same man before this development of the Yoga.

This intuitive mentality, if it could be made perfect in its nature, unmixed with any inferior element and yet unconscious of its own limitations and of the greatness of the thing beyond it, might form another definite status and halting place like the instinctive mind of the animal or the reasoning mind of man. But the intuitive mentality cannot be made abidingly perfect and self-sufficient except by the opening power of the supermind above it and that at once reveals its limitations and makes of it a secondary action transitional between the intellectual mind and the true supramental nature. The intuitive mentality is still mind and not gnosis. It is indeed a light from the supermind, but modified and diminished by the stuff of mind in which it works, and stuff of mind means always a basis of ignorance. The intuitive mind is not yet the wide sunlight of truth, but a constant play of flashes of it keeping lighted up a basic state of ignorance or of half-knowledge and indirect knowledge. As long as it is imperfect, it is invaded by a mixture of ignorant mentality which crosses its truth with a strain of error. After it has acquired a larger native action more free from this intermixture, even then so long as the stuff of mind in which it works is capable of the old intellectual or lower mental habit, it is subject to accretion of error, to clouding, to

many kinds of relapse. Moreover the individual mind, does not live alone and to itself but in the general mind and all that it has rejected is discharged into the general mind atmosphere around it and tends to return upon and invade it with the old suggestions and many promptings of the old mental character. The intuitive mind, growing or grown, has therefore to be constantly on guard against invasion and accretion, on the watch to reject and eliminate immixtures, busy intuitivising more and still more the whole stuff of mind, and this can only end by itself being enlightened, transformed, lifted up into the full light of the supramental being.

Moreover, this new mentality is in each man a development of the present power of his being and, however new and remarkable its developments, its organisation is within a certain range of capacity. Adventuring beyond that border—it may indeed limit itself to the work in hand and its present range of realised capacity, but the nature of a mind opened to the infinite is to progress and change and enlarge—it there becomes liable to a return, however modified by the new intuitive habit, of the old intellectual seeking in the ignorance,—unless and until it is constantly overtopped and led by the manifested action of a fuller supramental luminous energy. This is indeed its nature that it is a link and transition between present mind and the supermind and, so long as the transition is not complete, there is sometimes a gravitation downward, sometimes a tendency upward, an oscillation, an invasion and attraction from below, an invasion and attraction from above ,and at best an uncertain and limited status between the two poles. As the higher intelligence of man is situated between his animal and customary human mind below and his evolving spiritual mind above, so this first spiritual mind is situated between the intellectualised human mentality and the greater supramental knowledge.

The nature of mind is that it lives between half lights

and darkness, amid probabilities and possibilities, amid partly grasped aspects, amid incertitudes and half certitudes : it is an ignorance grasping at knowledge striving to enlarge itself and pressing against the concealed body of true gnosis. The supermind lives in the light of spiritual certitudes : it is to man knowledge opening the actual body of its own native effulgence. The intuitive mind appears at first a lightening up of the mind's half-lights, its probabilities and possibilities, its aspects, its uncertain certitudes, its representations, and a revealing of the truth concealed or half concealed and half manifested by these things, and in its higher action it is a first bringing of the supramental truth by a nearer directness of seeing, a luminous indication or memory of the spirit's knowledge, an intuition or looking in through the gates of the being's secret universal self-vision and knowledge. It is a first imperfect organisation of that greater light and power, imperfect because done in the mind, not based on its own native substance of consciousness, a constant communication, but not a quite immediate and constant presence. The perfect perfection lies beyond on the supramental levels and must be based on a more decisive and complete transformation of the mentality and of our whole nature.

The Eternal Wisdom

BOOK III

THE FUNDAMENTAL EQUALITY OF BEINGS

1 One can mount higher in a singular sort when the spirit soars above Time as high as eternity and there uniting itself with God becomes one thing with him and by that union knows and loves, not what is more or less noble, but all things in all things, considering them in that Object which is infinitely noble, all eminently reunited and in an equal degree of nobility. It is there that the spirit after it has raised itself above all that is, surpasses itself also and dwells imperturbable in an eternal repose, and the more it knows and loves, the more this eternity is affirmed and it becomes there itself eternal.

2 The foundation of man's life is the dwelling in him of the divine Spirit equal in all men. And that is why men among themselves are all equal.

3 The divine Spirit dwells in every man. How can we make a difference among those who carry in themselves one and the same principle ?

4 Man is right when he believes that in all the world there is not a single being above him, but he errs when he thinks that there is on earth a single man beneath him.

---

1) J. Tauler.— 2) Tolstoy,— 3) id.— 4) id.

5 Only one who knows not that God lives in him can attribute to certain men more importance than to others.

6 One could understand if men thought themselves unequal because one is stronger, loftier than another or more intelligent or more courageous or wiser or better. But it is not so that men are commonly distinguished from each other. It is deemed that men are not equal because one is called a count and the other a peasant, because one wears rich robes and the other wooden clogs.

7 Nothing divides men so much as pride, whether it be the pride of the individual, of the family, of the class
8 or of the nation. —The proud man wishes to distinguish himself from others and deprives himself thus of the best joy of life, of a free and joyful communion with men.

9 The vulgar say : "This is one of ours or a stranger." The noble regard the whole earth as their family.

10 Let the superior man regard all men who dwell within the four seas as his brothers.

* * *

11 The man who recognises in his own soul the supreme Soul present in all creatures, shows himself the same to all.

12 If there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing and say unto him, "Sit thou here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool," are ye not then partial in yourselves and become judges of evil thoughts ?

---

5) id.— 6) id. —7) id.— 8) id.— 9) Bhartrihari.— 10) Lun Yu.— 11) Manu.— 12) James II. 1-4.

13 When I see the chaste women of respectable families, I see in them the Divine clothed in the robe of a chaste woman; and again, when I see the public women of the city seated on their verandahs in their raiment of immorality and shame, I see also in them the Divine at play after another fashion.

---

13) Ramakrishna.

A Defence of Indian Culture

XVII

The Veda is thus the spiritual and psychological seed of Indian culture and the Upanishads the expression of the truth of highest spiritual knowledge and experience that has always been the supreme idea of that culture and the ultimate objective to which it directed the life of the individual and the aspiration of the soul of the people : and these two great bodies of sacred writing, its first great efforts of poetic and creative self-expression, coming into being at a time preceding the later strong and ample and afterwards rich and curious intellectual development, are conceived and couched in the language of a purely psychic and spiritual mentality. An evolution so begun had to proceed by a sort of enriching descent from the spirit to matter and to pass on first to an intellectual endeavour to see life and the world and the self in all their relations as they present themselves to the reasoning and the practical intelligence. The earlier movement of this intellectual effort was naturally accompanied by a practical development and organisation of life consciously expressive of the mind and spirit of the people, the erection of a strong and successful structure of society shaped so as to fulfil the mundane objects of human existence under the control of a careful religious, ethical and social order and discipline, but also so as to provide for the evolution of

the soul of man through these things to a spiritual freedom and perfection. It is this stage of which we get a remarkably ample and effective representation in the immediately succeeding period of Indian literary creation.

This movement of the Indian mind is represented in its more critical effort on one side by a strenuous philosophical thinking crystallised into the great philosophic systems, on the other by an equally insistent endeavour to formulate in a clear body and with a strict cogency an ethical, social and political ideal and practice in a consistent and organised system of individual and communal life and that endeavour resulted in the authoritative social treatises or Shastras of which the greatest and the most authoritative is the famous Laws of Manu. The work of the philosophers was to systematise and justify to the reasoning intelligence the truths of the self and man and the world already discovered by intuition, revelation and spiritual experience and embodied in the Veda and the Upanishads, and at the same time to indicate and systematise methods of discipline founded upon this knowledge by which man might effectuate the highest aim of his existence. The characteristic form in which this was done shows the action of the intuitive passing into that of the intellectual mentality and preserves the stamp and form expressive of its transitional character. The terse and pregnant phrase of the sacred literature abounding in intuitive substance is replaced by a still more compact and crowded brief expression, no longer intuitive and poetic, but severely intellectual,—the expression of a principle, a whole development of philosophic thought or a logical step burdened with considerable consequences in a few words, sometimes one or two, a shortest decisive formula often almost enigmatic in its concentrated fullness. These Sutras or aphorisms became the basis of ratiocinative commentaries developing by metaphysical and logical method and with a considerable variety of inter-

pretation all that was contained at first in the series of aphoristic formulas. Their concern is solely with original and ultimate truth and the method of spiritual liberation, *moksha*.

The work of the social thinkers and legislators was on the contrary concerned with normal action and practice. It attempted to take up the ordinary life of man and of the community and the life of human desire and aim and interest and ordered rule and custom and to interpret and formulate it in the same complete and decisive manner and at the same time to throw the whole into an ordered relation to the ruling ideas of the national culture and frame and perpetuate a social system intelligently fashioned so as to provide a basis, a structure, a gradation by which there could be a secure evolution of the life from the vital and mental to the spiritual motive. The leading idea was the government of human interest and desire by the social and ethical law, the Dharma, so that it might be made,—all vital, economic, aesthetic, hedonistic, intellectual and other needs being satisfied duly and according to the right law of the nature, —a preparation for the spiritual existence. Here too we have as an initial form the aphoristic method of the Vedic *grihya-sûtras*, afterwards the diffuser, fuller method of the Dharma Shastras,—the first satisfied with brief indications of simple and essential socio-religious principle and practice, the later work attempting to cover the whole life of the individual, the class and the people. The very character of the effort and its thoroughness and the constant unity of idea that reigns through the whole of it are a remarkable evidence of a very developed intellectual, aesthetic and ethical consciousness and a high turn and capacity for a noble and ordered civilisation and culture. The intelligence at work, the understanding and formative power manifested is not inferior to that of any ancient or modern people, and there is a gravity, a unified

clarity and nobility of conception which balances at least in any true idea of culture the greater suppleness, more well-informed experience and science and eager flexibility of experimental hardihood which are the gains that distinguish our later humanity. At any rate it was no barbaric mind that was thus intently careful for a fine and well unified order of society, a high and clear thought to govern it and at the end of life a great spiritual perfection and release.

The pure literature of the period is represented by the two great epics, the Mahabharata, which gathered into its vast structure the greater part of the poetic activity of the Indian mind during several centuries, and the Ramayana. These two poems are epical in their motive and spirit, but they are not like any other two epics in the world, but are entirely of their own kind and subtly different from others in their principle. It is not only that although they contain an early heroic story and a transmutation of many primitive elements, their form belongs to a period of highly developed intellectual, ethical and social culture, is enriched with a body of mature thought and uplifted by a ripe nobility and refined gravity of ethical tone and therefore these poems are quite different from primitive edda and saga and greater in breadth of view and substance and height of motive—I do not speak now of aesthetic quality and poetic perfection—than the Homeric poems, while at the same time there is still an early breath, a direct and straightforward vigour, a freshness and greatness and pulse of life, a simplicity of strength and beauty that makes of them quite another kind than the elaborately constructed literary epics of Virgil or Milton, Firdausi or Kalidasa. This peculiar blending of the natural breath of an early, heroic, swift and vigorous force of life with a strong development and activity of the ethical, the intellectual, even the philosophic mind is indeed a remarkable feature; these poems are the voice

of the youth of a people, but a youth not only fresh and fine and buoyant, but also great and accomplished, wise and noble. This however is only a temperamental distinction : there is another that is more far-reaching, a difference in the whole conception, function and structure.

One of the elements of the old Vedic education was a knowledge of significant tradition, Itihasa, and it is this word that was used by the ancient critics to distinguish the Mahabharata and the Ramayana from the later literary epics. The Itihasa was an ancient historical or legendary tradition turned to creative use as a significant mythus or tale expressive of some spiritual or religious or ethical or ideal meaning and thus formative of the mind of the people. The Mahabharata and Ramayana are Itihasas of this kind on a large scale and with a massive purpose. The poets who wrote and those who added to these great bodies of poetic writing did not intend merely to tell an ancient tale in a beautiful or noble manner or even to fashion a poem pregnant with much richness of interest and meaning, though they did both these things with a high success ; they wrote with a sense of their function as architects and sculptors of life, creative exponents, fashioners of significant forms of the national thought and religion and ethics and culture. A profound stress of thought on life, a large and vital view of religion and society, a certain strain of philosophic idea runs through these poems and the whole ancient culture of India is embodied in them with a great force of intellectual conception and living presentation. The Mahabharata has been spoken of as a fifth Veda, it has been said of both these poems that they are not only great poems but dharmashastras, the body of a large religious and ethical and social and political teaching, and their effect and hold on the mind and life of the people have been so great that they have been described as the bible of the Indian people. That is not quite an accurate

analogy, for the bible of the Indian people contains also the Veda and Upanishads, the Purana and Tantras and the Dharmashastras, not to speak of a large bulk of the religious poetry in the regional languages. The work of these epics was to popularise high philosophic and ethical idea and cultural practice; it was to throw out prominently and with a seizing relief and effect in a frame of great poetry and on a background of poetic story and around significant personalities that became to the people abiding national memories and representative figures all that was best in the soul and thought or true to the life or real to the creative imagination and ideal mind or characteristic and illuminative of the social, ethical, political and religious culture of India. All these things were brought together and disposed with artistic power and a telling effect in a poetic body given to traditions half legendary, half historic but cherished henceforth as deepest and most living truth and as a part of their religion by the people. Thus framed the Mahabharata and Ramayana, whether in the original Sanskrit or rewritten in the regional tongues, brought to the masses by Kathakas,—rhapsodists, reciters and exegetes,—became and remained one of the chief instruments of popular education and culture, moulded the thought, character, aesthetic and religious mind of the people and gave even to the illiterate some sufficient tincture of philosophy, ethics, social and political ideas, aesthetic emotion, poetry, fiction and romance. That which was for the cultured classes contained in Veda and Upanishad, shut into profound philosophical aphorism and treatise or inculcated in dharma-shastra and artha-shastra, was put here into creative and living figures, associated with familiar story and legend, fused into a vivid representation of life and thus made a near and living power that all could readily assimilate through the poetic word appealing at once to the soul and the imagination and the intelligence.

The Mahabharata especially is not only the story of the Bharatas, the epic of an early event which had become a national tradition but on a vast scale the epic of the soul and religious and ethical mind and social and political ideals and culture and life of India. It is said popularly of it and with a certain measure of truth that whatever is in India is in the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata is the creation and expression not of a single individual mind, but of the mind of a nation ; it is the poem of itself written by a whole people. It would be vain to apply to it the canons of a poetical art applicable to an epic poem with a smaller and more restricted purpose, but still a great and quite conscious art has been expended both on its detail and its total structure. The whole poem has been built like a vast national temple unrolling slowly its immense and complex idea from chamber to chamber, crowded with significant groups and sculptures and inscriptions, the grouped figures carved in divine or semi-divine proportions, a humanity aggrandised and half uplifted to superhumanity and yet always true to the human motive and idea and feeling, the strain of the real constantly raised by the tones of the ideal, the life of this world amply portrayed but subjected to the conscious influence and presence of the powers of the worlds behind it, and the whole unified by the long embodied procession of a consistent idea worked out in the wide steps of the poetic story. As is needed in an epic narrative, the conduct of the story is the main interest of the poem and it is carried through with an at once large and minute movement, wide and bold in the mass, striking and effective in detail, always simple, strong and epic in its style and pace. At the same time though supremely interesting in substance and vivid in the manner of the telling as a poetic story, it is something more,—a significant tale, Itihasa, representative throughout of the central ideas and ideals of Indian life and culture. The leading motive is the Indian idea of the

dharma. Here the Vedic notion of the struggle between the godheads of truth and light and unity and the powers of darkness and division and falsehood is brought out from the spiritual and religious and internal into the outter intellectual, ethical and vital plane. It takes there in the figure of the story a double form of a personal and a political struggle, the personal a conflict between typical and representative personalities embodying the greater ethical ideals of the Indian Dharma and others who are embodiments of Asuric egoism and self-will and misuse of the Dharma, the political a battle in which the personal struggle culminates, an international clash ending in the establishment of a new rule of righteousness and justice, a kingdom or rather an empire of the Dharma uniting warring races and substituting for the ambitious arrogance of kings and aristocratic clans the supremacy, the calm and peace of a just and humane empire. It is the old struggle of Deva and Asura, God and Titan, but represented in the terms of human life.

The way in which this double form is worked out and the presentation of the movement of individual lives and of the national life first as their background and then as coming into the front in a movement of kingdoms and armies and nations show a high architectonic faculty akin in the sphere of poetry to that which laboured in Indian architecture,and the whole has been conducted with a large poetic art and vision. There is the same power to embrace great spaces in a total view and the same tendency to fill them with an abundance of minute, effective, vivid and significant detail. There is brought too into the frame of the narrative a very considerable element of other tales, legends, episodes, the most of them of a significant character suitable to the method of Itihasa, and an extraordinary amount of philosophical, religious, ethical, social and political thinking sometimes direct, sometimes cast into the form of the legend and episode. The ideas of the

Upanishads and of the great philosophies are brought in continually and sometimes given new developments, as in the Gita; religious myth and tale and idea and teaching are made part of the tissue; the ethical ideals of the race are expressed or are transmuted into the shape of tale and episode as well as embodied in the figures of the story, political and social ideals and institutions are similarly developed or illustrated with a high vividness and clearness and space is found too for aesthetic and other suggestions connected with the life of the people. All these things are interwoven into the epic narrative with a remarkable skill and closeness. The irregularities inevitable in so combined and difficult a plan and in a work to which many poets of an unequal power have contributed fall into their place in the general massive complexity of the scheme and assist rather than break the total impression. The whole is a poetic expression unique in its power and fullness of the entire soul and thought and life of a people.

The Ramayana is a work of the same essential kind as the Mahabharata; it differs only by a greater simplicity of plan, a more delicate ideal temperament and a finer glow of poetic warmth and colour. The main bulk of the poem in spite of much accretion is evidently by a single hand and has a less complex and more obvious unity of structure. There is less of the philosophic, more of the purely poetic mind, more of the artist, less of the builder. The whole story is from beginning to end of one piece and there is no deviation from the stream of the narrative. At the same time there is a like vastness of vision, an even more wide-winged flight of epic sublimity in the conception and sustained richness of minute execution in the detail. The structural power, strong workmanship and method of disposition of the Mahabharata remind one of the art of the Indian builders, the grandeur and boldness of outline and wealth of colour and minute decorative execution of the Rama-

yana suggest rather a transcript into literature of the spirit and style of Indian painting. The epic poet has taken here also as his subject an Itihasa, an ancient tale or legend associated with an old Indian dynasty and filled it in with detail from myth and folklore, but has exalted all into a scale of grandiose epic figure that it may bear more worthily the high intention and significance. The subject is the same as in the Mahabharata, the strife of the divine with the titanic forces in the life of the earth, but in more purely ideal forms, in frankly supernatural dimensions and an imaginative heightening of both the good and the evil in human character. On one side is portrayed an ideal manhood, a divine beauty of virtue and ethical order, a civilisation founded on the Dharma and realising an exaltation of the moral ideal which is presented with a singularly strong appeal of aesthetic grace and harmony and sweetness; on the other are wild and anarchic and almost amorphous forces of superhuman egoism and self-will and exultant violence, and the two ideas and powers of mental nature living and embodied are brought into conflict and led to a decisive issue of the victory of the divine man over the Rakshasa. All shade and complexity are omitted which would diminish the single purity of the idea, the representative force in the outline of the figures, the significance of the temperamental colour and only so much admitted as is sufficient to humanise the appeal and the significance. The poet makes us conscious of the immense forces that are behind our life and sets his action in a magnificent epic scenery, the great imperial city, the mountains and the ocean, the forest and wilderness, described with such a largeness as to make us feel as if the whole world were the scene of his poem and its subject the whole divine and titanic possibility of man imaged in a few great or monstrous figures. The ethical and the aesthetic mind of India have here fused themselves into a harmonious unity and reached an unexampled

pure wideness and beauty of self-expression. The Ramayana embodied for the Indian imagination its highest and tenderest human ideals of character, made strength and courage and gentleness and purity and fidelity and self-sacrifice familiar to it in the suavest and most harmonious forms coloured so as to attract the emotion and the aesthetic sense, stripped morals of all repellent austerity on one side or on the other of mere commonness and lent a certain high divineness to the ordinary things of life, conjugal and filial and maternal and fraternal feeling, the duty of the prince and leader and the loyalty of follower and subject, the greatness of the great and the truth and worth of the simple, toning things ethical to the beauty of a more psychical meaning by the glow of its ideal hues. The work of Valmiki has been an agent of almost incalculable power in the moulding of the cultural mind of India : it has presented to it to be loved and imitated in figures like Rama and Sita, made so divinely and with such a revelation of reality as to become objects of enduring cult and worship, or like Hanuman, Lakshmana, Bharata the living human image of its ethical ideals, it has fashioned much of what is best and sweetest in the national character, and it has evoked and fixed in it those finer and exquisite yet firm soul tones and that more delicate humanity of temperament which are a more valuable thing than the formal outsides of virtue and conduct.

The poetical manner of these epics is not inferior to the greatness of their substance. The style and the verse in which they are written have always a noble epic quality, a lucid classical simplicity and directness rich in expression but stripped of superfluous ornament, a swift, vigorous, flexible and fluid verse constantly sure of the epic cadence. There is a difference in the temperament of the language. The characteristic diction of the Mahabharata is almost austerely masculine, trusting to force of sense and inspired accuracy of turn, almost ascetic in its

simplicity and directness and a frequent fine and happy bareness; it is the speech of a strong and rapid poetical intelligence and a great and straightforward vital force, brief and telling in phrase but by virtue of a single-minded sincerity and without any rhetorical labour of compactness, a style like the light and strong body of a runner nude and pure and healthily lustrous and clear without superfluity of flesh or exaggeration of muscle, agile and swift and untired in the race. There is inevitably much in this vast poem that is in an inferior manner, but little or nothing that falls below a certain sustained level in which there is always something of this virtue. The diction of the Ramayana is shaped in a more attractive mould, a marvel of sweetness and strength, lucidity and warmth and grace; its phrase has not only poetic truth and epic force and diction but a constant intimate vibration of the feeling of the idea, emotion or object: there is an element of fine ideal delicacy in its sustained strength and breath of power. In both it is a high poetic soul and inspired intelligence that is at work; the directly intuitive mind of the Veda and Upanishads has retired behind the veil of the intellectual and outwardly psychical imagination.

This is the character of the epics and the qualities which have made them immortal, cherished among India's greatest literary and cultural treasures, and given them their enduring power over the national mind. Apart from minor defects and inequalities such as we find in all works set at this pitch and involving a considerable length of labour, the objections made by western criticism are simply expressions of a difference of mentality and aesthetic taste. The vastness of the plan and the leisurely minuteness of detail are baffling and tiring to a western mind accustomed to smaller limits, a more easily fatigued eye and imagination and a hastier pace of life, but they are congenial to the spaciousness of vision and intent curio-

sity of circumstance, characteristic of the Indian mind, that spring as I have pointed out in relation to architecture from the habit of the cosmic consciousness and its sight and imagination and activity of experience. Another difference is that the terrestrial life is not seen realistically just as it is to the physical mind but constantly in relation to the much that is behind it, the human action is surrounded and influenced by great powers and forces, Daivic, Asuric and Rakshasic, and the greater human figures are a kind of incarnation of these more cosmic personalities and powers. The objection that the individual thereby loses his individual interest and becomes a puppet of impersonal forces is not true either in reality or actually in the imaginative figures of this literature, for there we see that the personages gain by it in greatness and force of action and are only ennobled by an impersonality that raises and heightens the play of their personality. The mingling of terrestrial nature and supernature, not as a mere imagination but with an entire sincerity and naturalness, is due to the same conception of a greater reality in life, and it is as significant figures of this greater reality that we must regard much to which the realistic critic objects with an absurdly misplaced violence, such as the powers gained by Tapasya, the use of divine weapons, the frequent indications of psychic action and influence. The complaint of exaggeration is equally invalid where the whole action is that of men raised beyond the usual human level, since we can only ask for proportions consonant with the truth of the stature of life conceived in the imagination of the poet and cannot insist on an unimaginative fidelity to the ordinary measures which would here be false because wholly out of place. The complaint of lifelessness and want of personality in the epic characters is equally unfounded : Rama and Sita, Arjuna and Yudhisthira, Bhishma and Duryodhana and Karna are intensely real and hu-

man and alive to the Indian mind. Only the main insistence, here as in Indian art, is not on the outward salience of character, for these are only used secondarily as aids to the presentation, but on the soul life and the inner soul quality presented with as absolute a vividness and strength and purity of outline as possible. The idealism of characters like Rama and Sita is no pale and vapid unreality; they are vivid with the truth of the ideal life, of the greatness that man may be and does become when he gives his soul a chance and it is no sound objection that there is only a small allowance of the broken littleness of our ordinary nature.

These epics are therefore not a mere mass of untransmuted legend and folklore, as is ignorantly objected, but a highly artistic representation of intimate significances of life, the living presentment of a strong and noble thinking, a developed ethical and aesthetic mind and a high social and political ideal, the ensouled image of a great culture. As rich in freshness of life but immeasurably more profound and evolved in thought and substance than the Greek, as advanced in maturity of culture but more vigorous and vital and young in strength than the Latin epic poetry, the Indian epic poems were fashioned to serve a greater and completer national and cultural function and that they should have been received and absorbed by both the high and the low, the cultured and the masses and remained through twenty centuries an intimate and formative part of the life of the whole nation is of itself the strongest possible evidence of the greatness and fineness of this ancient Indian culture.

The Future Poetry

CONCLUSION

The poetry of the future has to solve, if the suggestions I have made are sound, a problem new to the art of poetic speech, an utterance of the deepest soul of man and of the universal spirit in things, not only with another and a more complete vision, but in the very inmost language of the self-experience of the soul and the sight of the spiritual mind. The attempt to speak in poetry the inmost things of the spirit or to use a psychical and spiritual seeing other than that of the more outward imagination and intelligence has indeed been made before, but for the most part and except in rare moments of an unsually inspired speech it has used some kind of figure or symbol more than a direct language of inmost experience; or else, where it has used such a language, it has been within the limited province of a purely inward experience as in the lofty philosophic and spiritual poetry of the Upanishads, the expression of a peculiar psychic feeling of Nature common in far eastern poets or the poetic setting of mystic states or of an especial religious emotion and experience of which we have a few examples in Europe and many in the literature of western Asia and India. It is a different and much larger creative and interpretative movement that we now see in its first stages, an expansion of the inner way of vision to outer no less than to inner things, to all that is subjective to us and all

that is objective, a seeing by a closer identity in the self of man with the self of things and life and Nature and of all that meets him in the universe. The poet has to find the language of these identities, and even symbol and figure, when brought in to assist the more direct utterance, must be used in a different fashion, less as a veil, more as a real correspondence.

The first condition of the complete emergence of this new poetic inspiration and this significance of poetic speech must be the completion of an as yet only initial spiritualised turn of our general human feeling and intelligence. At present the human mind is occupied in passing the borders of two kingdoms. It is emerging out of a period of active and mostly materialistic intellectualism towards a primary intuitive seeking to which the straining of the intellect after truth has been brought in the very drive of its own impulse by a sort of slipping over unexpected borders. There is therefore an uncertain groping in many directions some of which are only valuable as a transitional effort and, if they could be the end and final movement, might lead only to a brilliant corruption and decadence. There is a vitalistic intuitivism sometimes taking a more subjective form, sometimes a more objective, that stays amid dubious lights on the border and cannot get through its own rather thick and often violent lustres and colours to a finer and truer spiritual vision. There is an emotional and sensational psychical intuitivism half emerging from and half entangled in the vitalistic motive that has often a strange beauty and brilliance, sometimes stained with morbid hues, sometimes floating in a vague mist, sometimes—and this is a common tendency—strained to an exaggeration of vital-psychic motive. There is a purer and more delicate psychic intuition with a spiritual issue, that which has been brought by the Irish poets into English literature. The poetry of Whitman and his successors has been that of life, but of life

broadened, raised and illumined by a strong intellectual intuition of the self of man and the large soul of humanity. And at the subtlest elevation of all that has yet been reached stands or rather wings and floats in a high intermediate region the poetry of Tagore, not in the complete spiritual light, but amid an air shot with its seekings and glimpses, a sight and cadence found in a psycho-spiritual heaven of subtle and delicate soul experience transmuting the earth tones by the touch of its radiance. The wide success and appeal of his poetry is indeed one of the most significant signs of the tendency of the mind of the age. At the same time one feels that none of these things are at all the whole of what we are seeking or the definite outcome and issue. That can only be assured when a supreme light of the spirit, a perfect joy and satisfaction of the subtlety and complexity of a finer psychic experience and a wide strength and amplitude of the life soul sure of the earth and open to the heavens have met, found each other and fused together in the sovereign unity of some great poetic discovery and utterance.

It is possible that it may be rather in eastern languages and by the genius of eastern poets that there will come the first discovery of this perfection : the East has always had in its temperament a greater constant nearness to the spiritual and psychic sight and experience and it is only a more perfect turning of this sight on the whole life of man to accept and illuminate that is needed for the realisation of that for which we are still waiting. On the other hand the West has this advantage that though it is only now emerging not so much into the spiritual light as into an outer half-lit circle and though it is hampered by an excessive outward, intellectual and vital pressure, it has at present a more widely ranging thought and a more questing and active eye, and if these once take the right direction, the expression is not so much encircled by past spiritual forms and traditions. It is in any case the shock

upon each other of the oriental and occidental mentalities, on the one side the large spiritual mind and inward eye turned upon self and eternal realities, on the other the free inquiry of thought and the courage of the life energy assailing the earth and its problems that is creating the future and must be the parent of the poetry of the future. The whole of life and of the world and Nature seen, fathomed, accepted, but seen in the light of man's deepest spirit, fathomed by the fathoming of the self of man and the large self of the universe, accepted in the sense of its inmost and not only its more outward truth, the discovery of the divine reality within it and of man's own divine possibilities,—this is the delivering vision for which our minds are seeking and it is this vision of which the future poetry must find the inspiring aesthetic form and the revealing language.

The world is making itself anew under a great spiritual pressure, the old things are passing away and the new things ready to come into being, and it may be that some of the old nations that have been the leaders of the past and the old literatures that have been hitherto the chosen vehicles of strong poetic creation may prove incapable of holding the greater breath of the new spirit and be condemned to fall into decadence. It may be that we shall have to look for the future creation to new poetical literatures that are not yet born or are yet in their youth and first making or, though they have done something in the past, have still to reach their greatest voice and compass. A language passes through its cycle and grows aged and decays by many maladies: it stagnates perhaps by the attachment of its life to a past tradition and mould of excellence from which it cannot get away without danger to its principle of existence or a straining and breaking of its possibilities and a highly coloured decadence; or, exhausted in its creative vigour, it passes into that attractive but dangerous phase of art for art's sake

which makes of poetry no longer a high and fine outpouring of the soul and the life but a hedonistic indulgence and dilettantism of the intelligence. These and other signs of age are not absent from the greater European literary tongues, and at such a stage it becomes a difficult and a critical experiment to attempt at once a transformation of spirit and of the inner cast of poetic language. There is yet in the present ferment and travail a compelling force of new potentiality, a saving element in the power that is at the root of the call to change, the power of the spirit ever strong to transmute life and mind and make all young again, and once this magical force can be accepted in its completeness and provided there is no long-continued floundering among perverted inspirations or halt motives, the old literatures may enter rejuvenated into a new creative cycle.

The poetry of the English language in direct relation to which I have made these suggestions, has certain disadvantages for the task that has to be attempted but also certain signal advantages. It is a literature that has long done great things but has neither exhausted its great natural vigour nor fixed itself in any dominant tradition, but rather has constantly shown a free spirit of poetical adventure and a perfect readiness to depart from old moorings and set its sail to undiscovered countries. It has an unsurpassed power of imaginative and intuitive language and has shown it to a very high degree in the intuitive expression of the life soul and to some degree in that of the inspired intelligence. It seems therefore a predestined instrument for the new poetic language of the intuitive spirit. The chief danger of failure arises from the external direction of the Anglo-Saxon mind. That has been a source of strength in combination with the finer Celtic imagination and has given English poetry a strong hold on life, but the hold has been also something of a chain continually drawing it back from the height and fullness of some

great spiritual attempt to inferior levels. Today however the language is no longer the tongue only of the English people: the Irish mind with its Celtic originality and psychic delicacy of vision and purpose has entered into this poetic field. It is receiving too for a time an element or at least an embassy and message from the higher spiritual mind and imagination of India. The countries beyond the seas, still absorbed in their material making, have yet to achieve spiritual independence, but once that comes, the poetry of Whitman shows what large and new elements they can bring to the increase of the spiritual potentialities of the now wide-spreading language. On the whole therefore it is here among European tongues that there is the largest present chance of the revolution of the human spirit finding most easily its poetic utterance. It is also here by the union of a great vital energy and a considerable possibility of the spiritual vision that there may be most naturally a strong utterance of that which most has to be expressed, the seen and realised unity of life and the spirit.

The pouring of a new and greater self-vision of man and Nature and existence into the idea and the life is the condition of the completeness of the coming poetry. It is a large setting and movement of life opening a considerable expansion to the human soul and mind that has been in the great ages of literature the supreme creative stimulus. The discovery of a fresh intellectual or aesthetic motive of the kind that was common in the last century initiates only an ephemeral ripple on the surface and seldom creates work of the very first order. The real inspiration enters with a more complete movement, an enlarged horizon of life, a widening of the fields of the idea, a heightening of the flight of the spirit. The change that is at present coming over the mind of the race began with a wider cosmic vision, a sense of the greatness and destiny and possibilities of the individual and the race,

the idea of humanity and of the unity of man with man and a closer relation too and unity of his mind with the life of Nature. It is the endeavour to make the expression of these things one with the expression of life that imparts to the poetry of Whitman so much more large and vital an air than the comparatively feeble refinement and careful art of most of the contemporary poetry of Europe—not that the art has to be omitted, but that it must be united with a more puissant sincerity of spirit and greatness of impulse and a sense of new birth and youth and the potencies of the future. The intellectual idea was yet not enough, for it had to find its own greater truth in the spiritual idea and its finer cultural field in a more delicate and complex and subtle psychic sight and experience. It is this that has been prepared by recent and contemporary poets. The expression of this profounder idea and experience is again not enough until the spiritual idea has passed into a complete spiritual realisation and not only affected individual intellect and psychic mind and imagination, but entered into the general sense and feeling of the race and taken hold upon all thought and life to reinterpret and remould them in their image. It is this spiritual realisation that the future poetry has to help forward by giving to it its eye of sight, its shape of aesthetic beauty, its revealing tongue and it is this greatening of life that it has to make its substance.

It is in effect a larger cosmic vision, a realising of the godhead in the world and in man, of his divine possibilities as well of the greatness of the power that manifests in what he is, a spiritualised uplifting of his thought and feeling and sense and action, a more developed psychic mind and heart, a truer and a deeper insight into his nature and the meaning of the world, a calling of diviner potentialities and more spiritual values into the intention and structure of his life that is the call upon humanity, the prospect offered to it by the slowly unfolding and now

more clearly disclosed Self of the universe. The nations that most include and make real these things in their life and culture are the nations of the coming dawn and the poets of whatever tongue and race who most completely see with this vision and speak with the inspiration of its utterance are those who shall be the creators of the poetry of the future.

PARASARA'S HYMNS TO THE LORD OF THE FLAME

4

He is as if a marvellous shining riches and like the wide seeing of the sun. He is as if life and the breath of our existence and he is as if our eternal child. He is like a galloper that bears us. He fastens on the woodlands. He gives of his substance as the cow its milk. He is wide and lustrous, he is very bright and pure.

He is pleasant like a home and holds all our good. He is to us like ripe corn. He is a conqueror of men and like a chanting Rishi ; the word of him is among the folk. He is like an exulting steed and he lays on us our birth to knowledge.

He is light in a house difficult to inhabit*. He is as an eternal will that acts in us ; he is like a wife in our chamber and sufficient to every man. When he burns out wonderful and manifold, he is as if the white horse in the peoples. He is like a chariot made of gold : he is like a keen flame in the battles.

He is like an army running to the charge and puts strength in us : he is like the flaming shaft of the Archer that has a keen burning face. He is the twin that is born and the twin who is that which is to be born. He is the lover of the virgins and the husband of the mothers.

---

* Or, "He is a light difficult to kindle."

When his light is kindled, we come to him as the herds come to their home: we come to him by your journeying, O gods, and we come to him by your sitting still. He is like a river running in its channel and sends in front the downward Waters: the herd of the Rays more to him in the seeing of the world of the Sun.

5

He burns out bright as if the lover of Dawn and fills the two equal worlds like the light of heaven. He is born by our will to works and he comes into being all around us. He is the son and becomes the father of the Gods.

This is the Fire that has perfect knowledge and is a creator whom none can rend asunder. He is as if the teat of the cows of light and the sweetness of the draughts of the wine. He is as if one happy in the creature and must be laid hands on where he sits blissful in the middle of the house.

He is as if our rapturous son born to us in the house and he is like a courser pleased and glad that carries to safety the peoples. When I call to the Nations who dwell in one lair with the Strong Ones, the Flame enjoys all the godheads.

None can impair the ways of thy works when thou hast created inspired knowledge for the Strong Ones. This is thy work that yoked with the equal Gods thou smitest and scatterest the powers of evil.

Very bright and lustrous is he like the paramour of Dawn. Let his form be known and his knowledge awake for this human being, let all bear him in themselves, swing wide the gates and walk in the vision of the world of the Sun.