

Complete works of
Dr. K.C. VARADACHARI

(Volume - Four)

AUROBINDONIAN PHILOSOPHY

COMPLETE WORKS OF DR.K.C.VARADACHARI

VOLUME - 4

AURONINDONIAN PHILOSPHY

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PUBLISHERS NOTE

Sri Ramchandra Publishers in close coordination with the Institute of Sri Ramchandra Consciousness have been publishing the works of the Master Sri Ramchandraj Maharaj along with the commentaries and notes of aspirants in the path and has also been publishing the works of Dr. K.C. Varadachari M.A. Ph.D a renowned Professor of Philosophy and a person who has travelled in the path of Yoga to its utmost limits under the guidance of the Master. He has written profusely on Yoga and Philosophy of the six Darshanas. Naturally our first priority was to publish his works on the system of Sri Ramchandra's Rajayoga which was released as Vol I on April 30th 1999 during the Birth Centenary of Sri Ramchandraj Maharaj. The Vol II which dealt with his perceptions of the Living Teachings of Vedanta and his learned talks at the University of Madras during his tenure as first incumbent of the Vivekananda Chair for Comparative Philosophy and Religion was released on the Sri Krishna Jayanthi in 1999. The Vol III which dealt with Indian Philosophy, Vedas, Upanishads, Nyaya, Samkhya and Yoga systems was released in April 2000 under the kind auspices of S.V.University Tirupati. The present Volume is the fourth in the Series and deals with Aurobindonian Philosophy. The author was a close confidant and follower of Sri Aurobindo in his early years and the present volume clearly expounds the depth of the author with regard to Aurobindonian Yoga. One of the chapters viz Sri Aurobindo and His Philosophy was personally appreciated by Sri Aurobindo.

We sincerely extend our grateful thanks to Prof G.Srinivasan, Retired Professor of Philosophy, University of Mysore and one of the old student and junior colleague of Dr.K.C.Varadachari for having kindly consented to write the foreword for this volume.

We graciously acknowledge the services of our associates Sri S.S.Redddy, Sri K.C.Sri Krishna, Sri P.Shasidar and Sri V. Sreekanth Reddy for having coordinated the work of Proof Reading, editing etc and ensuring the timely publication of this Volume.

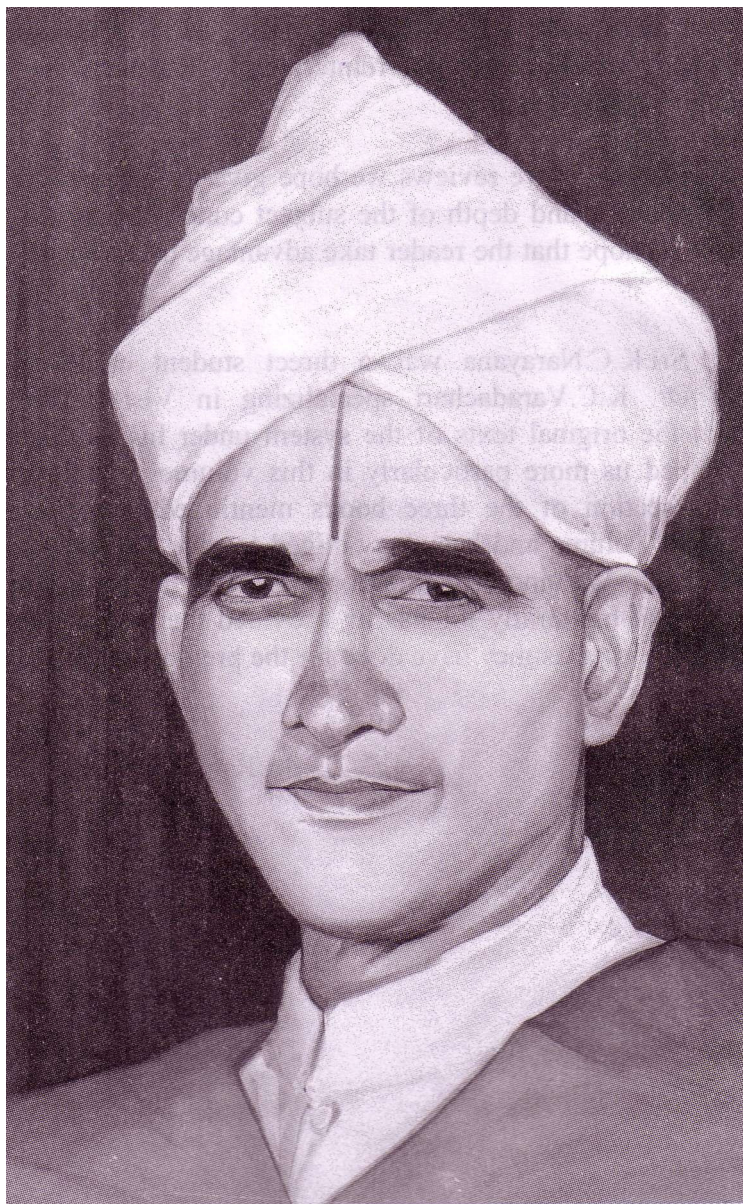
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Dr. K. C. VARADACHARI - The Author

THE AUTHOR

Dr.K.C.Varadachari was born in a small Agraharam Village near Tiruchanoor a temple town of Sri. Padmavathi Ammavaru on 14th August 1902, in the asterism of Moola and Vrschika Lagna. His father was a resident of Tirupati Town belonging to a traditional Sri Vaishnavites family. The family tradition is very ancient and has its origin in the Nallan Chakravarthy a contemporary and a close disciple of Sri Bhashyakar Srimad Ramanuja of 11th Century A.D.His great grand fathers' grand father came from a village called Karumbur a village near Kanchi of Lord Varada.

He had his school education in the then Mahant Hindu High school upto the Matriculation Standard. His contemporaries in the school include Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. He did his F.A. and B.A(hons)from the Christian College, Madras. He had consistently a distinguished educational career and had he not opted for B.A.(Hons) Philosophy which in those days was considered a prestigious course to do he would have been an Agricultural Scientist as he got admission for B.A(Agri) also. He was a gold medallist of the Madras University in his B.A.(Hons).He was a Research Scholar of the Madras University and later a Research Fellow of the Andhra University then located at Guntur. He joined the Christian College as a Lecturer in Philosophy. His first book Metaphysics of Sri Ramanujas' Sribhashya was published before he did his Ph.D. He married in 1926 from the distinguished family of Patrachariars. His wife's' uncle was Rao Bahadur Narasimhachariar who was District Judge in the then Madras Presidency. His own father was a senior Police officer in the Govt of Madras Presidency. But he participated in the freedom movement along with his cousin Sri Ramanujam who was a pioneer in spreading the Ragi

Malt culture and home made table salt apart from many other products of beauty. But he was won over by his father and the uncle of his wife and continued his research. He took his Ph.D. from Madras University in 1932. After being a lecturer in the Union Christian College, he worked for a brief period as Lecturer in the College at Alwayee. Later he worked at Lingaraj College, Belagaum. In 1939 his father retired from Govt.Service.

At the same time Sri Venkateswara Oriental Institute was started by the T.T.D. The most revered Vedantacharya of the day, Sriman Mahamahopadhyaya Chetlur Narasimhachariar Swamin was the first Professor of the Chair of Visistadvaita and Bhagavadvishaya in the Sri Venkateswara Oriental Institute. He invited Dr.K.C.Varadachari to join the Institute and thus he moved into his native place where was to work till his retirement in the S.V.University in 1962.

During his tenure at the Oriental Institute and later he developed close association with Sriman D.T.Tatachariar along with whom he has written many commentaries on the Upanishads notably Isa, Kena, Katha and Prasna. From the Oriental Institute he was transferred to S.V.Arts College when it was started in the early 1940's as Professor of Philosophy. Later when the S.V.University was started he was appointed as Reader and Head of the Dept.of Philosophy. He retired from the S.V.University in 1962.He had delivered University Lectures at Madras, Mysore, Travancore and Utkal. He is a popular broadcaster on the All India Radio Madras, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam. He was President of the Metaphysics Section of the Indian Philosophy Congress in 1947 at Banares.He was President of the Religion Section of the All India Oriental Conference 1965 at Gauhati. He was the Pratap Seth Lecturer on Vedanta of the Indian Philosophical congress in 1965. In

1965 he was invited by the Madras University to be the first occupant of the Sri Vivekananda (Centenary) Chair of Comparative Religion, Ethics and Philosophy.

His specialisations are Visistadvaita, Integral Metaphysics, Logic, Yoga Psychology of the Minor Upanishads, Comparative Religion, Mysticism and Rajayoga. He has written profusely on the Visistadvaita system of philosophy of Vedanta, Sri Aurobindo and later on the system of Rajayoga propounded by Sri Ramchandraj Maharaj of Shahjahanpur, U.P., India. He was a regular reviewer to the Hindu for more than three decades. His important works include Metaphysics of Sri Ramanujas' Sri Bhashya, Theory of Knowledge of Ramanujas' Philosophy, Living Teachings of Vedanta, Idea of God, Aspects of Bhakti, Visistadvaita as Philosophy and Religion, Introduction to Logic, Sri Aurobindo, New Darshana of Sri Ramchandra, Commentaries on Ten Commandments of Sri Ramchandra, Commentary on Efficacy of Rajayoga, Commentary on the Philosophy of Sri Ramchandra and many more. He has profusely written articles on the subjects of his specialisations which run to over 300 articles and his reviews are on over 400 books.

His life was not limited to academic excellence. He had personal contact with great saints of the day, namely Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo, The Mother, Jiddu Krishnamurthy and as already mentioned with renowned scholars of Visistadvaita Vedanta. He was sought to be emulated by Professors of Philosophy and Psychology like C.T.Krishnamachari of Christian College, Dr.Boaz of Madras University, Dr.G.Srinivasan of Mysore University and many more. He had close association with Sriman Yamunachariar of Mysore University apart from many others.

Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh whom he never met personally yet wrote about him as “With disarming simplicity and effortless dignity that characterises his written works Dr.K.C.Varadachari has consistently and persistently yoked the services of his philosophical acumen towards the errors of a purely intellectual approach of life and has sought to defend and advance with adequate persuasion and power the claims of higher and spiritual values both for the attainment of deeper philosophical insights into the nature of the individual, the Word and the Ultimate Reality as also for the perfection and integration of the individual personality in a scheme of living that results in the fullest enjoyment of the prizes of this world and the gifts of the world beyond.”

Dr K.C.Varadachari’s talks on the system of Sri Ramchandra’s Raja Yoga carry a depth of understanding of the subject and deep concern and commitment to the persons to whom they are addressed. In his own words, as recorded in his diary, his understanding of the system led him to remake himself in a new way. His approach to the system and the subject is best expressed by himself.

“ Thus I found myself made to abjure the old theoretical ways of approach. I had to remake myself in a new way. I had to take stock of my whole past. All sectarian and caste conceptions had to be rethought. Philosophies help bind people to set notions. Thus I was to meet the challenge of the New.

It happened that I should meet Shri Ram Chandraji. Firstly his views were clearly different from my whole past.

- (i) The conception of the Ultimate as Zero was quite against my philosophic inclination. Having failed with the positive concept it is time to experiment

with this - Is it likely to be true? The zero has to be understood as the Beginning or Origin of all possibilities being nothing of what it becomes.

- (ii) The concept of Invertendo shows how the deformation of evolution is natural and the power inherent is Zero (nirguna). I began understanding the meaning of *Vivarta*. All flow necessitates the inversion and it is natural.
- (iii) The formations of the descent are clearly on this principle of inversions.
- (iv) The vast Brahman extends up to our knowledge of it. Thus Truth, Consciousness and Bliss themselves are attributes which get transcended in higher approaches. Saccidananda are not the Ultimate Reality, they too being terms of knowing - Sankara too gets transcended.
- (v) The individual is continuous with the Universal and the Ultimate, and is not abolished. The Pralaya or mergence is cosmic and supracosmic and then all are withdrawn into the Ultimate.
- (vi) The individual ray of the Ultimate has created for itself an organic organisation of physical-vital, mental and supramental centres and organs. These may well be the knots which have demarcated the several systems known as the physical, vital, mental or the bonal, muscular,

circulatory, alimentary, hormonal, nervous, supranervous, and psychic etc. They have become autonomous in a sense but have to be opened up for higher control. This is possible only by bringing down the highest power of the Centre and not merely the higher power just above the human. It is the necessity to mould the lower in terms of the highest through the higher which has also to mould itself to receive the highest. That leads to going beyond Sri Aurobindonian Vijnana - moulding of the mental, vital and physical.

- (vii) This is done by means of the transmission or descent of the highest consciousness or condition (Zero) itself into the lowest region of the human heart or the organism as it is.
- (viii) The yogic process is this transmission from the Ultimate which alone can shape the entire being, of the abhyasi for the experience and realisation of one's own physical, vital, mental, and supramental levels - called by Shri Ramchandraji, the Pinda, Brahmanda, Para Brahmanda and Central Regions working under the direct force of the Centre"

He was Director of the Sahaj Marg Research Institute started at Tirupati in 1965 and continued in that capacity till his Maha Samadhi on 31st January 1971. It is not all that

certain that prizes of this world were got by him, perhaps he never bothered about it; but surely he got the gifts of the Beyond as was attested by Mahatma Sri Ramchandraji Maharaj of Shahjahanpur.U.P. According to Sri Ramchandraji Maharaj he has attained a state of negation and was in total mergence with his Master.

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FOREWORD

It is a matter of pleasure to me to write a foreword to this volume of collected works of my late revered teacher Dr. K.C.Varadachari. I take this rare opportunity to tell the readers of this book ‘the kind of thinker’ he was as revealed in his writings. I think this is a service, which I really owe to my late teacher, as the posterity my not become aware of it otherwise. This would be a humble homage paid by me to that ‘great master of philosophy’.

I had the rare privilege of serving as a much younger colleague of Dr K.C.Varadachari in the Department of Philosophy, S.V.University and also had the good fortune to be guided by him in my doctoral research during 1958 – 60. Our relation was one of “Guru – Sishya Sambandha “ ever since I entered service in 1955 till his retirement and continued to be the same as long as he lived, even after I left Tirupati in 1966. The letters, which he wrote to me afterwards were brief but affectionate, and only in his last letter, I remember, he wrote to me that his health was not good. Only a few days later I received the sad news from a friend of mine that my revered teacher passed away.

This long contact which I had with Dr. K.C.Varadachari for well over a decade enabled me to personally and directly acquaint myself with the ‘type’ of

philosophical standpoint and attitude with which he identified himself. He was a man who took to philosophy 'seriously' with a sense of complete commitment and involvement. He wanted others too to take it 'seriously' and never tolerated any flippant remark against philosophy or philosophers. But his leanings were always towards value-oriented philosophies and not towards the type of analytical philosophy which was fast becoming 'popular' among the younger generation during those days.

Dr. K.C.Varadachari was always fond of emphasizing the 'experiential' approach to philosophy and upholding the adequacy and satisfactoriness of the organismic or integral philosophy. The criterion of philosophical truth for him was not to be provided by 'abstractionist' logical training which would give us only piece-meal and distorted conception of Reality but would fail to reveal the nature of Reality in its integrity and dynamic unity. Reality in its true integral nature of dynamic unity can be best comprehended only in 'experience' lived intensely and inwardly.

Dr. K.C.Varadachari was a realist, not in the restricted sense of confining the dimensions of reality to what could be known through sense-experience, but in the wide sense of admitting as 'real' all that could be experienced inwardly through cultivation of appropriate attitudes or moods. He was never tired of affirming that the nature of Reality was something to be 'felt' directly, 'lived' with involvement in its concrete, dynamic unity, not something to be objectified and analysed into premises and conclusions and thereby distorted by the abstractionist, discursive thinking. He was an idealist, not in the sense of regarding the changing world as unreal, but in the sense of regarding it as the 'universal status' of the transcendent Infinite Spirit or the Absolute

which necessarily combines in itself the 'delight of becoming' with 'peace of being'.

All these views of Dr. K.C.Varadachari have found appropriate expression in his various philosophical writings, written on different occasions. He was very much influenced by the integral philosophy of Sri Aurobindo since these views had received a systematic and comprehensive presentation in it, and it is for the same reason that he came to be regarded as a highly competent, academic exponent of Sri Aurobindo's integral philosophy.

In the several informal philosophical discussions I had with him over years, I found that in his philosophical temperament he had greater affinity to Aristotle than to Plato because of the former's emphasis on the conception of final cause, more to Spinoza than to Descartes because of the former's mystical attitude, more to Hegel than to Kant because of the former's emphasis on the dynamic aspect of Reality, more to Bergson than to Bradley because of the former's emphasis on the reality of change. Among the other philosophers whom he admired much were Leibniz because of his Law of Sufficient Reason and Hermann Lotze because of his world-view expressed in his work 'Macrocosmus'. He was very well acquainted with the complex 'organic' philosophy of A.N.Whitehead, even though it still remains to be untaught in most of the Indian Universities because of its high degree of complexity. He had great admiration for Whitehead's 'organic' philosophy, even though he would not agree with it entirely.

Among the contemporary Indian Philosophers, Dr. K.C.Varadachari was in his early years influenced by the writings of Swami Vivekananda who imbibed into him the enthusiastic love for Vedanta Philosophy. Later he

associated himself with J.Krishnamurthi in his philosophical deliberations and also became a well-known exponent of Sri Aurobindo's integral philosophy. Much later in his life, he developed a firm conviction in the teaching of Sri Ramchandraj Maharaj and dedicated himself to spiritual service by becoming an active exponent and practical, spiritual preceptor of his "Sahaj Marga".

Dr. K.C.Varadachari's life was thus one of incessant search for truth – experience and was more like a river which constantly flows gathering into itself the past waters, than like a static pond with 'stagnant' water. In his philosophical discussions, he would not be mild in his criticism, but was always a "hard hitter" (to use his own expression), without however meaning any 'ill-feeling' towards the person concerned. He was a scholar of very high stature in the traditional philosophies of both East and West, but that had not made him 'dogmatic' or indifferent to contemporary viewpoints. His mind was always 'open' to receive fresh ideas, assess them properly and assimilate them into his own thought – structure. He was also a thinker who believed that in philosophy 'clarity is not enough' and if profundity of thought requires complex or apparently obscure verbal expressions, one should not have any hesitation in using them.

My intention in this foreword is not to provide a summary of this book, which I believe is unnecessary and may even prove to be a hindrance to the readers in their direct comprehensive understanding of the book. I have only tried to stress the main philosophical standpoint of 'Integralism' which serves as a general background to the readers for a detailed study and appreciation of the rich thought-content of this book. I am sure a careful perusal of

this book will be highly rewarding to all serious students of philosophy.

It is, of course, never possible for a pupil to assess the scholarly depths of his own master fully and this is true in my case also. Nevertheless, I accepted it as my 'duty' to write this foreword when the request for the same came from the publishers and I have written this with all the gratitude and respect which I had for my teacher, Dr. K.C. Varadachari.

I hereby congratulate the publishers of this volume on their successful endeavor in bringing out this valuable book and making the philosophical thought of Dr. K.C. Varadachari available to the interested readers.

Bangalore
21-06-2000

G. Srinivasan

1. SRI AUROBINDO AND THE VEDANTA

Ekamevadvitiam

“In liberation the individual soul realises itself as the One (that is yet Many). It may plunge into the one and merge or hide itself in its bosom—that is the *laya* of Advaita; it may feel its oneness and yet, as part of the Many that is the One, enjoy the Divine that is the Visistadvaitic liberation; it may lay stress on its Many aspect and go on playing with Krishna in the eternal Brindavan, that is the Dvaita liberation. Or it may, even being liberated remain in the Lila or Manifestation, or descend into it as often as it likes. The Divine is not bound by human philosophies—it is free in its play and free in its essence.”

Sri Aurobindo

The test of a system in Indian thought is its capacity to grant liberation (*moksa*). This test is inescapable and it is the differentia between Western philosophy and Eastern philosophy. True love of wisdom which is the meaning of philosophy is to be had not in pursuing what is said to be truth but the wisdom that is life in freedom. Thus whatever secures freedom for the self is philosophy and not merely an intellectual edifice erected by the logic of the finite mind or bondage and called a systematic presentation of Reality in terms of the intellect. Once this is grasped it naturally follows that Vedanta is not a mere intellectual construction nor a dialectical display of system but a profound search for the final liberation which alone would present a Vision (*darsana*) the Ultimate Reality. Such a darsana would not only be a synoptic Vision but an organic whole which could be called a harmony rather than a synthesis of standpoints. The manysided nature of reality is well known but its oneness is also what is perceived in a measure and in a sense even

in our ordinary life but to reason and still more to our intuitive apprehension.

Sri Aurobindo may be said to follow the great leaders of Vedanta in so far as he has through his original approach of yogic *anubhava* and *adhyatmic* (introspective meditative) approach sought to arrive at his own synthesis of the knowledge in the Veda, Upanishads, and Gita. The *prasthanatraya* or threefold texts for Vedanta are recognised to be the Upanishads, Vedanta Sutras and the Gita. Sri Aurobindo has not attempted to comment on the Vedanta Sutras since its reference was to the Upanishads rather than to the Veda, and a direct awareness of the Upanishads provides all that is necessary for a fuller knowledge of the same. The *Vedanta Sutras* are however valuable as a support for one's interpretation of the Upanishads. It is however Badarayana's synthesis of the teachings of the Upanishads and worthy of respect and regard. The question came up rather sharply when the same Sutras began to be considered as teaching as many divergent doctrines such as Advaita, Visistadvaita, Bhedabheda, Dvaita and so on and commentaries have been growing from time to time to defend one or other of these interpretations. When in recent times efforts have been made by Western savants (supported indeed by some in India) to explain that the Advaita is the thesis of the Upanishads, whereas the Visistadvaita is that of the *Vedanta Sutras*, the matter required a different approach. Indeed one has been forced to solve this divergency by an appeal to divine or intuitive experience if such could be got, and Sri Aurobindo instead of resorting to linguistic and other measures seriously took up the Yoganubhava for the knowing of the Vedic Knowledge from which obviously all the Upanishads as well as the Bramhanas were derived. The parlous state to which the Bramhanas had arrived thanks to the purely ritualistic interpretation of its profound truth had made the problem still more critical as there had grown a rift between the Bramhanas

and the Upanishads, very early—far earlier than Shankara himself. Thus the need for an integral approach to the problem of the Vedanta arose. As it is well-known Vedanta means the philosophy of the Upanishads which form the concluding (*anta*) portion of the Vedic literature. Sabda or scriptural valid truth applies to the whole literature—mantra, brahmana and Upanishad and not to any one of them. The first integrality which Sri Aurobindo restored was the integrity of the triple (quadruple?) strands of the Veda which in one sense can be said to be the adhidaivic, adhibhautic and adhyatmic portions but which in another sense, applies to the totality of the Vedic literature. It is however the adhyatmika approach that will prove fruitful in sadhana and attainment of liberation, not the others. Sri T.V.Kapali Sastriar has beautifully shown the relationship between the ritualistic interpretations of Sayana and the psychological interpretations of Sri Aurobindo in his studies entitled - *Lights on The Upanishads and Veda* and other works. Sri M.P. Pandit also has attempted to continue the gallant work of Srīman Kapali Sastry in his *Mystic Approach to the Veda and the Upanishads*.

The Advaita approach claims to be based on the *anubhava* of oneness that comes to one who has strenuously contemplated on the basic sentences or propositions of the scripture such as (i) *Tat tvam asi* (Thou art that); (ii) *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman); *So'ham Asmi* (He or That am I); (iii) *Sarvam khailvidam Brahma* (all this verily is Brahman), (iv) *Ekamevadvitiyam* (Only one without a second). It may well be asked whether mere contemplation of Brahman passages such as the above will lead to realisation of the truths contained therein. This *sruti-janya jnana* is not enough. What is necessary is the attainment of the Brahman through devotion and grace.

To substantiate this view some schools of Advaita have recourse to the doctrine of Maya or illusion of the world and the individual selves, since it is said that there is only One entity and that is Brahman. This one being is to be known only through Scriptural teaching such being the nature of all other experiences which only show manyness and differences of all kinds.

There is hardly any doubt that there are two ways of approaching Reality, one by positive knowledge and another by negative knowledge. The positive knowledge grants us the knowledge of the Ultimate Being and the *Sruti* does give us positive or definitive knowledge which is not capable of being given by other means of knowledge such as perception, inference or analogy and so on. The negative knowledge proceeds by a series of steps denying the characteristics of the perceived and inferred and compared objects of the Ultimate. The former is called *saguna* and latter *nirguna* approach. The *Sruti* contains both approaches. Mayavada however exalts the nirguna over the saguna, and relegates the latter to the level of maya-covered Absolute Brahman or *Asvara*. The logic of negation dominates the whole approach and it is perhaps the climate of the times that this logic of the negative which was the Nihilistic Buddhists was used to refute it also. That the principle of Negation is not a satisfactory principle can be shown: it cannot give definite knowledge of anything and indeed all negation assumes positive existence and does not precede it. Thus the negative dialectic based on the finite logic cannot help to arrive at the goal of the Absolute and sole existence of Brahman, and it is with the help of a *tour de force* of psychologically doubtful value that the mayavada can be a solution. Nor is it the philosophy of the Upanishads taken as a whole or integrally. That Reality is one and that this Oneness is Brahman that is Spirit different indeed from everything that we know or see is the truth to which it calls attention. But it hardly explains the existence of the many and

the different kinds of many such as the conscient souls and inconscient matter (or atoms). To deny is not to explain. To grant even a phenomenal reality requires the explanation of their origin and illusion as such can explain nothing. The logic of abstract or absolute monism raises more problems not only for the finite mind but also for the Vedic mind, for the Vedic Mind did not deny plurality or manyness, nor hierarchy of the planes of existence, nor did it deny Oneness (*Ekam sat*). Thus the Advaita Mayavada is wrong but not Advaita, therefore thinkers have always striven to do justice to the twofold character of Absolute Reality.

Visistadvaita and *Dvaita* and *Bhedabheda* do not accept mayavada, whilst they accept the principle of One Sovereign existence, Brahman, who is One only without a second. There is no second principle of unity other than Brahman. That is why He is said to be the One and only Iswara or Godhead. Whilst *Bhedabheda* conceded that manyness is a passing affair, a temporary interlude when the Brahman is conditioned or self conditioned, in the state of freedom the manyness is lost. In the creative period manyness exists, in the dissolution oneness remains. The former is due to creational condition, and is of bondage. Since freedom is the goal of life, one should seek to move towards the dissolution for attaining oneness with Brahman. This however is not again quite adequate for the explanation of the Vedic Oneness-Manyness. There are obviously logical difficulties too in this makeshift arrangement of the zones of manyness and oneness, even in Mayavada. If we agree that Advaita need not be wedded to Mayavada or the refutation of Plurality, it follows that there can be other schools of advaita, which are more consistent expression of the Vedic *Ekam-Sat*.

Before we proceed let me state certain fundamental assumptions of all Vedantas:

1. There is one and only One Supreme Being or Existence. This is absolutely distinct in a sense from all that are seen also to exist, which are not supreme, divisible, divided and having the nature of dependents on something else for their being and Nature.

1a. The Supreme principle which is One however sustains and supports and manifests and withdraws all the others.

1b. This Supreme Principle is Vastness as well as Minutest. It is thus the internal and external principle of all that is vast and minute.

1c. If we definitely assert that the Substance is that which is all and as such all are dependent on it, in the relation of attributes or modes or bodies, then there is Only One substance. All the rest are included in it.

2. That the Brahman can be known through a different method Of Upasana (devotional contemplation through knowledge) and not through mere reciting, reading of scriptures, or works or charity or alms-giving, or mere sacrifice.

2a. This is possible but one requires the grace of God, that arises through establishing mental peace(prasada) or silence that is spiritual.

2b. To say that to be an object of knowledge is to be also inconscient is not necessary. To emphasise subjective knowing of the object or intuitive knowing of it is not the same as the objectification of the subjective or mental states. Advaita of Mayavada accepts this axiom which is not axiomatic.

2c. Nor can it be said that to be a knower is the condition of all things at all times. This is the prerogative of the Supreme Brahman. Brahman is the Object of all souls for attainment of Him alone means liberation. Thus the Objectivity of God cannot be denied. Nor can it be said of the individual souls who have the dual capacity even like God of being objects of Grace of God and subjects of experience of Nature and God.

2d. The only question then is about the World or Nature or the Inconscient (*acit*). Its existence is said to be of the enjoyability or the enjoyable. It is in that sense objectivity. But It is never without the Godhead and as such it derives a subjectivity of a peculiar kind of being enjoyable to the Divine. This subjectivity cannot be derived from the acceptance of its being conscious or animated by consciousness or entelechies or monads or jivas. All the universe being considered to be thus a college of souls or an aggregate of them, at different levels of consciousness.

2e. Thus Nature seems to be accepted as a triple threaded force or energy of sattva, rajas and tamas, *rohita, sukla, krsna or tejas, ap and prithvi* which undergoes the modifications for the embodiment of the souls in manifestation.

2f. It is possible that the threefoldness is a reflection or correspondence or degradation or grossening of the primal spiritual triplicity of sat, cit and ananda.

3. The transcendence of the Nature and mere isolated soul of souls is the goal of Being and the restoration of Reality to the soul as well as the restoration of the imbalance of Nature.

3a. This is by a Return or *nivritti* to God beyond or above manifestation.

3b. The Return is a withdrawal from the manifestation or the gross manifestation or even a subtle manifestation, for it is a return into God or Absolute Reality. The renunciation of the relative Reality follows as a consequence or the renunciation of attachment to whatever is offered by relative realities or some of them for the sake of higher and freer enjoyment of others, or it is the enlightened divine way of enjoyment of manifestation as the body of God which has been offered as the field of enjoyment.

3c. The assertion of a world of enjoyment of unalloyed bliss beyond the world of karma such as the world of lower Nature is also the assertion of a transcendent way of enjoyment through God-knowledge rather than 'misery' (enjoyment with attached or selfish enjoyment of the soul).

Thus we find that the assumptions of the Vedanta point out to the necessity of a person for loving and attaining God or absolute Reality-status. This is the primary condition of all spiritual pursuit. All Vedantins accept that the moral and spiritual or yogic preparation is the *sine qua non* of spiritual ascent. The Causal Principle (*karana*) is to be attained (*karanantu dhyeyah* say the Vedanta sutras). The attainment of Brahman is a process of dedication or philosophy by which one grows into the being of Brahman. Thus the famous statement that one who knows Brahman attains Brahman. Being and Becoming become synonymous for the infinity of Being is such that it is a continuous becoming of oneself its Nature. Frontal aspects (*pratika*) of Brahman are not Brahman, for the Brahman has to be known from within through surrender and dedication or self-offering or sacrifice (*yajna*).

Mayawada we have shown does not recognise the Reality of the process or even attainment for ultimately it culminates in a kind of non-creationism (*ajata*). The static Reality is said to be permanent and the Real. However it is a

radical intellectualism with the mystic concept of Unchanging Experience thrown in.

The problem of *Visistadvaita* is not of the mechanical order of the dialectic. It is of the organic order. Reality is an organic unity in God of the souls (*cit*) and Nature (*acit*) with God as the Self of all. The very growth of the soul from its low state of bondage to freedom is assured by this ascent of the soul in God through the 'living breath of Grace' which sustains all its embodied as also its disembodied condition.

The problems raised by the Organic view are of a different kind. It is of course futile to compare and contrast the mechanical and the organical for the two have two different kinds of logic.

Metaphysical theories there have been which have explained the organic in terms of necessary relationships between the several parts of the organic whole which are necessary to each other. The whole is shown to be necessarily sustaining the parts, and the parts are explainable only in terms of the whole and not in terms of other parts alone. Indeed the principle of consistency yields place to the principle of coherence or inherence or implication. The metaphysical idealists have thus made the organic just a variety of the necessary and have proceeded to reveal it in terms of the mechanical which is shown to be just an aggregate.

There have been other organicists who have claimed to show the organic nature of the Process or Reality bringing in concepts of ingression of elements into reality which makes and realises the unity of the whole.

Sri Ramanuja's organic theory does not explain reality by means of the principle of inseparable relationship

(*aprathaksiddha sambandha*) alone, for he realises the need for the lower consciousness or mechanical to explain it. It is perhaps his covert suggestion that the extraneous concept of *samavaya* (inherence should be better expressed as *aprathaksiddha-sambandha*). There are so many entities in the organic which claim separability but there are some which are not. The principle of inseparability is not so much between the substance and attribute as between a substance and its dependent substance. Thus the souls become dependent on the substance of God absolutely even like the body on the soul. The withdrawal of the soul from the body or material mansion means the death and disintegration of the latter, so too the withdrawal of God from the soul means its loss or disintegration of its consciousness. Sri Ramanuja emphasizes the need to recognize the dynamic nature of this metaphysical union or Organic in one's own experience.

The second characteristic of the Organic which we have begun to realise is the principle of Growth, evolution, and this means that we come back to the empirical level about the organism. This may be considered to be a set back and a return to empiricism from the scriptural transcendentalism. However the problem is serious and in fact it is one of the most important for realisation means the attainment of that organic oneness with God so much so that one perceives that all that one does, sees, hears and experiences is all by the Divine Himself directly, and who carries the individual swiftly to the highest mansions of His being. The problem of religions is not so much the worship of gods or God but the attainment of that truth of one's being with God, the All, and through God with all the rest.

That there is to be an ascent or call it growth, to the highest level is the philosophic impulse which is undeniably secret in the hearts of all. That this ascent is seen to happen in some way by the passing of certain forms of life and organic

existence into higher and more perfect types of life and existence is also clear. Thus we have plant-life, animal-life and human-life broadly revealing the ascent of life-patterns and forms and the emergence of other forms of consciousness. Indian thought did conceive of there being a continuity and in a sense a passing of one kind of soul through maturity or other factors to the higher kinds of bodies and life and mind. Modern thought and science have put forward the theory of evolution as a principle of growth from form to form as well as the adaptation of forms to their changing environments which are constantly modifying themselves. Sri Aurobindo's Divine evolutionism realises the significance of the ancient intuition of progress through ascending births or re-births at different levels of consciousness ranging from the Absolute to the veriest concealed or veiled consciousness of the material called inconscient. This is possible because of the original impulse to descend and ascend the ladder of manifestation. If the first is called the descent (*avidya*), plunging into inconscient, ascent is the (*vidya*). Together they complete the cycle of individual evolution. But it is not a solitary soul that is involved in this descent-ascent. It is the many of the One supreme Being who are in the throes of evolutionary descent and ascent. The problems of the evolution are in a sense empirical but in another sense they furnish a metaphysical proof of the problem of oneness-mannyness which seem to be so characteristic of all search for Oneness. The Organic is one way of unity of one-many. The evolutionary process is another form of the organic. The organic form or pattern of reality rightly includes the reality of both the One and the Many. The many are subordinated to the One and the One is the self of the many, in every sense of the term, whether the many are conceived as souls or intelligences, or atoms, or Matter of the higher luminous stuff or of the inferior stranded stuff.

Sri Aurobindo's organic conception through evolution gives concrete shape and meaning to the metaphysical form of the organic presented by Sri Ramanuja. In this sense it is richer and more germane to our sadhana, approach to the Divine by a direct plunge into the centre of our being or the heart. It is not enough to realise that one is a part or ray or many of Brahman's Organism, but it is necessary also to grow into Him to be in a sense filled by Him and be born of Him. The Upanishads are not unaware of this birth of the soul of Brahman, of becoming filled with Brahman, or growing in the vastness of Brahman or moving in the Brahman according to the Supreme Law of Being (*Rtam Brhat*)

The logic of the mechanical or rectilinear logic is replaced by the dynamic logic of the Organic of growth, of ascent, of liberation and birth in Brahman, surpassing or transcending ignorance that is confined to the search for freedom in the dark interiors of it which are revealed by such concepts as realisation without ascent or transcendence which truly are possible without realising or ascending since all are maya or illusion or limitations on the unchanging and non-many or One.

Sri Aurobindo's exposition of the several vidyas (or rather as shown by Sriraman Kapali Sastry) show the absolute necessity for a dynamic conception of the Reality as a wonderful process of evolution which makes for the play of the Many in the One and of the One in the Many. The Lila is then not merely a mirage play or miracle play but a supreme Act of creative Delight which has been said to be the heart of Brahman. It is clear that Dvaita's supreme quality of differences together with the unifying doctrine of paratantrya or dependence lends itself to the play of the many in the One. The profound question would yet arise as to whether the many and the one are of

equal status, in which case the many would not be the souls or atoms, but Brahman Himself.

Sri Aurobindo therefore considers that the Eternal One is also eternally many. This view is of course very basically different from the concept of many antaryamins since there will be the identification of the souls which are in evolution and involution in different levels and planes with the inner spirit immortal in all on the one hand and on the other with the incarnating deity in the heart of the Devotees. This however explains the identity formula between the soul and God directly without the Ramanujaic concept of body (sarira).

Sri Aurobindo's Vedanta, if 'we may so speak of his interpretation of the Upanishads metaphysically, realises the organic view as also the peculiar kind of bhedabheda between the many and the one, not merely during the periods of creation and dissolution but eternally. There is a profound play of the two at all times, perhaps with the shift of poises when oneness is dominant and when manyness is dominant with perhaps an intermediating oneness-mannyness realising itself in all manifestation and liberation.

The question of questions is whether this approach to the Upanishads will yield the results of a coherent philosophy. The answer to this question will be that it is only actual abhyasa or upasana of this profound psychological kind that will prove the rightness of this view. Dialectical thought and mere interpretation based on finite logistics will fail to satisfy much less explain the profound seer-wisdom of the Vedic Rishis and the mystics of the South. One has to enter into the practice or upasana, and psychological opening into the Ultimate Reality by intuition should naturally follow. The intuition of the unity of the Creative principle with the reality of the Oneness-Mannyness is one of the most important discoveries of Sri Aurobindo. The further intuition that the

above is the real amazing formula of the Vedic Rishis is of far-reaching importance. The formula that Sri Aurobindo has given has wonderful efficacy in its capacity to explain almost all divergent facts of the different areas of human life and culture and growth.

It is not merely a synthesis but rather an intuitive analysis of the nature of Reality in its basic twofold poises or diunities.

2. SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY AND **A JUSTIFICATION OF MAYAVADA**

Prof. G.R. Malkani undertakes to justify Mayavada as part and parcel of Advaita in the Philosophical Quarterly Vol. 18 (p.221) and in this connection, he states that his justification of this doctrine was prompted by his reading of the *Life Divine*, of Sri Aurobindo. Obviously his first complaint is that all those who attacked Mayavada accused it without taking into consideration its birth and growth under the shadowing wings of Advaita or Monism.

He pleads that a system must satisfy the following criteria in order to satisfy him. The first condition is that it must *be grounded in and justified by our experience so that there is nothing in it that transcends our experience*. He naively adds ‘after all we can only interpret this experience and not speculate about things that fall outside our experience.’ (p. 222). Let me first of all point out what he really means by this test. First and foremost, he rules out any experience that transcends his present experience, his limited conscience, if we may so call this overweening vanity of ignorance parading as experience. Secondly, he speaks of being grounded in and justified by our experience as almost purely an experiential affair, though, to be sure, this justification is to be sought and the grounding is to be discovered by his very corruptive rationality or conceptualization. Thirdly, no one denies the right of Prof Malkani to pat himself on his back with his being so very less speculative than others who have at least the wisdom to admit their limits.

The second test is not serious and indeed is welcome. No system must have ‘internal incoherence or instability’. Now even here the second term very much recalls a metaphysical reference to toppling from a table when placed in unstable

position. We shall show that Mayavada itself is a very unstable thing, and its coherence with Reality is intolerably difficult, not to speak of its being simply unacceptable and intolerable.

The third criterion is that no problem should be left unsolved. Now the fundamental truth of Mayavada rests on inexplicability of any problem, and there is nothing for it to solve, for all is a mighty mysterious illusion. What problems can remain before this grand disaster? Unanswered they ever will remain.

The fourth and the last criterion is 'There must be nothing hypothetical about its truth; for a philosophical truth cannot be verified. It must be absolutely certain and self-evidently true. This is only possible when the certainty is both rational and intuitive' (p.222). This last is a very fine sample of the kind of argumentation that pervades the thesis of Prof. G.R. Malkani. First let me start with the last sentence. The certainty of the system must be both rational and intuitive. Now is it the rational or the intuitive experience that falls within our competence? Further are rational and intuitive apprehensions of reality mutually contradictory or complementary? Does not the evidence of reason contradict the evidence of intuition? If they are complementary or supplementary, then, is not the figment of Mayavada, a construction, a conceptual construction, itself negated? The world as objective is stated to be a conceptual fiction-an illusion: What is the experience that brought it about? Is not our experience itself of the sensory level or intuitive level and not of the rational level. If philosophy is of the rational level which contradicts the evidence of the senses and intuition, is not a system conceptually erected on what might be called coherency of concepts a ghost-frame work? Is not philosophy then itself impossible even as the mayavada that has been brought into existence by such a philosophy is impossible? Is there any possibility of self-evidence to intuition? If intuition has to legislate for reason how can the learned professor seek the

help of something that he states to be akin to delusion or mysticism? At least Sri Sankara was more aware of the need for the super-rational intuitive as the final arbiter of philosophical intuition than the pseudo-attempts made to reconcile the relational *savikalpaka-jnana*, and the unrelational *aparoksa-jnana*, which made one directly aware of Reality as the entire One indivisible experience, super-sensory, super-discriminatory. The self-evidence of Reality is the direct exhibition of its totality in intuition, which includes a powerful annihilation of all differences of subject and object and revels in Supreme Spiritual subjectivity of Oneness, Plurality as separate existences ceases on its attainment.

Having thus shown that Prof. Malkani's four axioms of Advaita are open to serious internal incoherence, I shall then see what are his justifications.

First, Prof. Malkani takes up the question of our knowledge of the external world. He sees that the *prima facie* refutation of Mayavada consists in pointing out that since all is Brahman without external or internal difference, the very fact of the existence of something called the world or its explanation the Maya is a secondary fact that impugns the sovereign unity of the One Brahman.

Thus there results a dualism worse indeed in some respects than the original dualism of Spirit and World. He answers, 'we never know the world at all, all the time we have been knowing only Brahman alone.' We merely *conceive* it. Reality is what we *know* but the world we only *conceive*. Last we should ask the question as to what difference is there between knowing and conceiving, he answers that knowing is absolutely immediate to consciousness or coincides with it, whereas conception is that which is outside consciousness and distinct from it. He proceeds to point out that consciousness alone, can be utterly coincident with itself and therefore reality

is consciousness. The thesis so established firstly seeks to make 'knowing' some thing of immediate intuition; but this goes further and makes out that Reality is not known at all, for nothing as such remains. Of course mentists are not baffled by this non-existence of Reality other than their consciousness. The primary question is firstly why conceptualizing? Secondly, why *Outside* Consciousness? Even if conceptualizing cannot stand by itself, and therefore must have a consciousness to support it and can only stand as a Self, how did it ever arrive at that outsideness and objectivity? These things are not answered, and Prof Malkani quietly says, "there is nothing forced about this view". Surely what else but forced is a view which forces concepts to be outside the self or consciousness, though this equation of consciousness as self itself is something of a mystery unexplained in the exposition: "The author however leads us to quite a different topic in order to prove that conceptions or perceptions never *fall apart* from the self (p.225).

Having found that conceptions and perceptions do not *fall apart* from the self if we sufficiently go back in time in our experience, he concludes the world never existed because the truth is that there is no self and no conception. Indeed there are no knowings.

Silence is the Truth. If after so much laborious argumentation this mouse came into existence (or non-existence?) why deny the charge leveled against them that they are nihilists or ajativadins? And why try to *prove* this with the help of a repertory of useless dialectics? Prof. Malkani again says that 'a dualism *to us* need not be a dualism *in reality*' feeling perhaps certain qualms of conscience at having to give up his job any way of being a philosopher. And uncertainly he seeks to bridge the gulf between the human and the Real standpoints, with the hope, - anent the first axiom of his system-building criteria-that the Real is something that falls within his experience, though he himself, to be sure, is a conceptualization

of some reality which he conceptually professes to understand, and ill. The truth is grasped by Prof. Malkani when he writes, “No amount of juggling with thought can succeed in eliminating all dualism” (225 p.). Do we forget that the fourth axiom stated that when we feel uncomfortable with reason that distinguishes and discriminates and analyses we should have recourse to intuition to support and save not reality, but us, from utter damnation? Unfortunately the problem of the many to be reconciled in unity or oneness refuses to be solved as he wishes. Damn it: let us like Canute say: “It shall not be”. That satisfies our conceit – the conceit of Reality; the soul of man has become the Superman, the One, without a second!

Then, having prefaced this wonderful Reality-exposition, as above, Prof. Malkani finds that Maya must have a reason! There is something contained in the concept of Maya that came to explain of existence of duality or manyness. “The opposition between Brahman and the cosmos of our experience has to be resolved; and it is resolved through the concept in question. But does this concept successfully achieve this result?” asks Prof. Malkani (p.227). or does it refute itself or does it add to his griefs? * *

The whole contention of even advaitically-minded schools of philosophy is that Mayavada is not a satisfactory instrument for the purposes for which it was devised, and therefore the advaita can exist without the acceptance or even through a refutation of it. Firstly let us see what are its benefits.

* LifeDivine vol.1,p.261.

- (i) We contend that the world is not made at all. It is simply a product¹ of illusion. Maya is the name for this illusion, the illusion of Brahman appearing as the world. It is ultimate irrationality.
- (ii) Either the world is real to us or the Brahman but never the two simultaneously. The illusory never is.
- (iii) Maya can be a power in a general sense in which an illusion is a power. But Maya has not created or produced the illusion. We cannot say there is illusion because there is Maya.

Then follow these questions: “Can we not explain this illusion in some way? Can we not go beyond it?” to which he answers, “We contend that we cannot.”

However he contends also in the same breath that we can go beyond illusory appearance. Then follow a series of propositions which hinge round this getting out of the illusory appearance, which are all due to the ultimate irrationality (p.229), which he straight away equates with the *avarna* and *vikshepa*, *avidya*, *upadhi* etc., all those entities which make diversity possible. And with quiet resignation is uttered the words, “Beyond this we cannot go” (p.229, 230).

Then he begins begging the question that has been at issue, how and why did the individual superimpose the quality of self-hood upon the non-self, why should there be illusion in the ever infinite consciousness, the so called *asraya* and *vishaya* of itself? To this question alone was an answer demanded, and it is evaded by saying that it is a mystery or fundamental irrationality. ‘Beyond that we cannot go’.

¹ The distinction between making and producing is a rather knotty one and is hidden under the cloak of these two synonyms which mean the same activity.

No one denied that the reality behind everything is Brahman, the support of all things is in Him, and by Him are all kept in their appointed places. By denying the individual soul or the reality of the world we have not untied the knot nor 'dissolved' it by any means (p.231). The learned professor has debunked it.

The imputation of ignorance to all the pramanas does not avail. The precise process or manner of the deepening of the self in each or the 'perception' (very uncomfortable word that for an Advaitin to use) of the self within which cancels the world and ourselves certainly presupposes the two-fold knowledge of present ignorance and the truth, *simultaneously*, even if this simultaneity be only for a moment. Indeed Advaita has found it necessary in actual practice to accept the period of simultaneous experience of illusion and reality to be considerable-as witnessed to by its postulation of *badhitanuvritti*.

The problems of error as fact, error as *ajnana*, and that illusion is not nothing but that is really resolves into its ground, are then discussed, and not always happily, because the confusion reigns in the mind of Prof. Malkani that knowledge is not awareness, that knowledge is relational and infected with error, a position which we shall have to remember as inconsistent with his thesis, that knowledge or knowing is immediate absolutely (p.223). Finally with a gusto declares Prof. Malkani: 'Maya! There is no Maya and no problem of Maya'! (p.238).

It is a thin defence but the best possible under the circumstances perhaps; it could have been done better, if only he were loyal to Sankara who at least did not make reason an ultimate arbiter, though he shewed that reason could only demolish and it is intuition that could grant. Advaita monistics is intellectual, incurably intellectual; and an inverted intellectuality pervades it; for it makes the real world a conceptual creation,

and the primal cause which it has discovered as the truth of its intuition, the transcendent, it makes into an unattainable unknowable substrate, and as such also a conceptual entity. Maya is the concretizing force it has recourse to, but this, true to its main purpose, it makes into an element of complete and utter irrationality or unintelligibility, since, for Prof. Malkani, it does not explain illusion; it explains not itself, and it can be of no help to Brahman, the sole existent; it cannot explain emergence. It had never been and therefore why talk about it?

Then, that is, after having to his own satisfaction established the non-existence and non-problem of Maya, having after all thought that Maya yet is something to be talked about, he proceeds to answer the objections raised against this non-existent problem. We may well remark that it is he who found a convenient inexplicable peg to hang his brand of advaita, not we, and he cannot get away with its argumentation about its 'unlimited' or penultimate existence or reality. We have every right to ask whether the reality that is awareness is an existence or not, is it or is it not. No recourse to two standpoints in reference to the same thing is available, for its self-contradiction is patent on the face of it. He now begins answering objections.

The first objection: "If Brahman is the only reality why speak of Maya at all? But if we have to admit the principle of Maya in order to explain out present experience, there will always be some form of ultimate dualism. Maya will have some relation to Brahman." (p.238)

Prof. Malkani begins with the preface that thought can start with some kind of dualism, and admits otherwise it has no scope. He speaks immediately about planes. Are there planes in Brahman or in us and if in us or in anything else why are they? He says that it is the fault of philosophizing itself. Of course no body expects one to jump over one's own shadow. Naively comes the sentence: "Maya (the problem) is the end of all

problems” – rather we do not see any end to it. But no sooner he says this than he recovers his philosophical judgment and remarks “Maya is an entity which is real only in the absence of discriminating thought”. Well may one exclaim, where are we going to? Thought is essentially dualistic; yet only without thought can we see that maya is an end of all problems; and now maya is refuted by thought. Thought indeed walks in three paces to suit the logical incoherency of the three planes*. But then what can be coherent in this world? The second criterion (that of coherency) is crashing on us and is being swallowed up by the fastest running river in the ravine. “Surely the concept of maya is liquidating itself and all dualism.” The naivety is all the more true to type, constant throughout, “And there is no forced logic about it.” “the maya stands fully revealed to thought in its true nature when it is described as “*anirvachaniya*”.

The whole argument is a sample of the incoherency of the structure of thought raised by the learned professor. An omnibushowl that there is no problem; incomprehensibility is something that stands revealed, acceptance of Ignorance of true nature is understanding; - these are all of a piece with the attitude that does not see that the whole approach to the problem of Unity. Multiplicity has misfired, and this cussedness pervades the entire thesis so efficiently carried out in its presentation as in its defence.

The second objection: “The world cannot be all an illusion. The illusory is never really known to us but merely conceived. The world is not merely conceived by us. It shows the reign of law and order. It has real objectivity...” The

* Life Divine I. “Nowhere in the Upanishads is it actually laid down that the three-fold status is a condition of illusion or the creation of an unreality; it is constantly affirmed that all this that is – this universe we are now supposing to have been constructed by Maya – is the Brahman, the Reality.”

objection is a consequence of the first, for it attacks the maya-concept from the side of the effect – the world.

Prof. Malkani admits that “Thus we have to admit that the illusory is just like any real object” (p.240), and proceeds to make both the illusory objects and the ‘so-called real’ objects conceptual or rather a ‘construct of thought’. He airily propounds that every thing about the world could ultimately be traced to thought. But is it not the thought that taught him to discriminate? Changing the front he may explain that thought has two modalities (i) constructive or creative and (ii) discriminative analysis. He holds that once we separate the one from the other, we shall arrive at a stage when we shall have no objectivity. And as we shall have no objectivity, neither is there a place for subjectivity. Prof. Malkani however wants to make out that illusion, imagination and conception are different; but having reduced everything to what we are not capable of ever knowing, he assumes that perception, conception and imagination are all of the same kind (p. 241). But he contends also that there is a difference between conception and imagination, using the so-well-known but well-exploded myth of free-association in the one case, and controlled-association in the other. This resort has already been so thoroughly ruined by the Psycho-analytic school which shows that free-association is in fact an association or re-intergrative process that takes place under the guidance of the Unconscious and repressed subliminal consciousness, that we may well call our conceptualizing more free than that; but then, even this is impossible for the control exercised by the unconscious or the subliminal consciousness is of the universal instincts, the most universal and racial, and as such it is spurious subjectivity that pervades the free-association process. It appears then that the specific conceptualization that takes place when I conceive a chair and not a table, the control is of the object and not of the subject and there is no choice left for Prof. Malkani to call it by any other name.

Prof. Malkani here diverts himself by describing the illusory as *consciously* perceived and not *consciously* imagined. The rub then is consciousness, and not either objectivity or imagination or perception, and as for that consciousness surely there can be no imputation that it is doing havoc. But precisely the whole complaint of Mayavada is against this Consciousness, this Absolute Consciousness, that does all this tricky business of appearing illusorily in imagination, in perception and in conception too. This truth is, as Sri Aurobindo has stated, and there are weighty authorities and testimonies of Sri Ramanuja, Sri Bhaskara, Sri Madhva, Sri Krishna Chaitanya and a whole host of mystics who point out that there is absolutely no meaning in holding that the 'created', 'manifested', 'exhibited', is less real than the Uncreate, Unborn, Unmanifest, Unexhibited or Uncreatable, Unmanifestable, Unexhibitable, which however does appear, does exhibit itself to itself, so to speak. The *vivarta-vada* is an expedient in a refutation of Buddhism; it is futile as an explanation of Vedic and Upanishadic Intuition. The whole doctrine of unreality of the three states of waking dreaming and sleeping propounded by Mayavada under the distinguished auspices of the Karika-kara-Gaudapada, is alien to the structure of spiritual experience and whatever experience is at the back of the value theories of Mayavada, it is a sheer disservice to the Reality of the Supreme Consciousness, Being-Bliss.

The reply to the third objection (c) (p.241) complains, in one word, that the refuter of the Mayavada has unfortunately a notion and the objector here holds, that there are real individuals, real knowledge and real liberation. True, these have absolutely no place in Advaita Mayavada indeed there is no place therein for anything, not even for Sachchidananda. Having argued however that much may be said in favour of the common-sense position seeking a real liberation for a real individual, he holds that freedom is not 'change of a quality for another quality on the part of a self-identical entity' (p.241); for

he holds that freedom is not equivalent to changing of one quality, that of being bound, to one of freedom, for here there is no modification but a dropping of limitation. Change here is certainly not the word to be employed except as a general term. The whole difficulty for Prof. Malkani is that he starts with a very wrong use of the word 'real' and refuses to see that it is leading him and his like to the *cul de sac* of perfect darkness: witness his impervious sentence. "A real bondage could not disappear through right knowledge, but a false bondage must" (p.243) and perhaps students of Mayavada will recall the analogy of fire dying out alone with that which burns in it applied to the right knowledge itself; for you will remember that real individuals, real knowledge, and real liberation are unacceptable to Advaita. For blatant logic without relevance this piece is hard to beat. But then we are in such a world and the freedom granted to the individual is, in the Grace of the Divine, to be a *kamacari*. The accusing fingers of many thinkers who are also mystics, and not any intellectual bourgeoisie, are raised against the advaitic view that He is Brahman and point out that the *upasana* of *Aham-brahmasmi* is itself capable of being misdirected towards the exaltation of egoism as in the case of the mythical heroes. And the mystical finger raised against the school of Advaita Mayavada cannot be rebutted unless there is the acceptance of humility by the one who achieving salvation of cancellation of his existence sees not others as even waiting to be liberated or cancelled, though he (?) continues his high spiritual cancellation-business remaining out of the world. Sri Aurobindo as a Seer-mystic lays his unerring finger on this which Prof. Malkani with his own brand of self-justified consciousness(?) speaks of as a private grievance (p.244). Further Prof. Malkani betrays his lack of understanding of the metaphysical theory of Sri Aurobindo when he says that the individual is 'a phenomenal existence' and a creation of the Lord! (footnote to page 244).

Then comes the reply to the objector who really works out a *reductio ad absurdum* by saying “If indivisible consciousness is the only reality then the world is not and never existed, can never have been conceived.” “for do we not first conceive it and *then* deny it?” Now comes Prof. Malkani with his reply; no doubt we have to accept at the level of thought – the terms of duality and multiplicity, - (quite a convenient excuse for thinking in terms of that). Then with as much dogmatism he asserts that ‘a unity which accommodates multiplicity can only be, as we have shown, a spurious unity’ – the showing as we point out at once is a mere affirmation, not sanctioned by logic, by experience, not even by integral experience. This is sheer non-sense; for the whole problem of any metaphysics is to discover the unity, that unity which shall not cancel but uphold the multiplicity and make experience possible. Abolishing is a child’s act of solution and canceling; sublating and other terms are but veils of this process of a mentality which is unable to stand up to a critical exposition of integrity of Reality. The fact is, it needs a painstaking effort to understand the secret of unity, Identity is the first-look solution and a false solution. And ‘after all we can only realise a real unity when we can go with the aid of thought beyond thought and its dualities,’ is a statement of despair when one never makes up his mind to go to that bleak height but goes on rather towards excellent suppers at professorial concerts. And Prof Malkani’s ways of thinking, having been seen for what they are, cannot through any effort on his part but involve his thinking his position to be *reductio ad asburdum*. But the problem of the one and the many is crucial, and has other repercussions on the very structure of society and ethics and these are all debunked by the sweeping phrase, Hitlerian as people will admit, ‘Cancel’, which is another way of saying ‘put them in the bucket’ like puppies. And we know they cannot survive, even the stoutest of them.

The last objection is against the existence of Maya:

Maya *is*, the duality therefore *is*, but we can, from what has gone before, conclude that the explanation will be swift and surely given Maya never *is*, never was, never will be. But he allows that the whole business is irrational, and we must of course recognize it. After all, that is what philosophy is out to make known, our limits and possibilities. Surely no one underrated the dimensions of the task undertaken to make irrationality respectable and even honourable. No doubt, the Mayavadin has taken all this trouble not for nothing but to make thought irrational and cancel it if possible in a super-irrational which swallows up all the appearance, for that is the meaning of sublation (p.237) – a swallowing up by the ground leaving no residue either positive or negative – though what exactly this second alternative means, I leave the reader to discover. Force of habit, you know, in dialectics! We have arrived at intuition – an intuition that succeeds to the throne where intellect has failed (p.247). This is a grand quack-business. The magic wand has after all come and lifted us up, our problems, our freedoms as well as our bondages have all disappeared. You know Intuition – it is Omnivorous.

Unfortunately there are intuitionists, revelationists, enjoyers of God, in his absolute Transcendence as His supreme wonderful immanence, who having simultaneously seen and moved and had their being in all the Supreme Vastness, Bliss and Reality, hold that a superficial attraction, a false attraction alone has been presented by Mayavada; an attraction to the Divine so that they may for a while withdraw their own identifications with the world in order to perceive the Divine relationships. Or even when there is to be had indeed a fundamental physical identity realised by the individual soul, it is not the essence of the search; for God alone is realized as the most perfectly absorbing Reality, and the completest immanence in Him is seen to be the finale or rather the most complete realization of the union, this being the purpose of the search with

which the soul started on its struggle after liberation. Complete surrender gives the fullest immanence of oneself in the Divine in every respect, including the loss of this egocentricism that has marked it out as separate and self. It then perceives what it should ever know that as in the absorption and this total unification which permits the soul to be able to say 'I am not; Thou alone art' or rather 'I am thou' to use the most pregnant usage of the Upanishads, for 'I no longer am or can be divested of Thee' and 'Thou art all that is I', so also it knows that the vastness infinity of the Divine had always held it to itself and in itself in an inseparable relationship a fundamental mystic and wonderful unity which alone the individual soul did not become aware of and therefore fell into the avidya; even this avidya is for the purpose of the Divine Essence to enjoy Himself, in an extensity and separation that is not separation in essence, in the externally in separably related souls (*aparthaksiddha-sambandha*).

It is equally true that the panthesism that is sought to be arrived at by certain thinkers is not the whole truth about the reality; and monism can never be considered to be anything but an intellectual version of the deeper unity or integral Organicistic Personality of the Divine. So truly have certain advaitic thinkers themselves realized the fruitlessness of the reasonings and so completely have western thinkers and philosophers exhibited with their thorough-going consistency the goal of monism, whether it is the Haeckelian, Hegelian, Bergsonian or Machian kinds, to be the outcome of the intellectual attempt to discover the uniformities of nature, that it is a noteworthy development when we see them claiming that their monism is of the intuitional order. The seven refutations of the Mayavada made by Sri Ramanuja give classical examples of its shifty logic and inspired inconsistency and they have yet to

be answered fully. Nor are the objections raised by Prof. Malkani all that can be stated against the school, for the orthodox have many more objections*

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Sri Ramanuja refutes advaita notion of the Absolute as Consciousness as suffering from very serious faults; he shows that consciousness as substance is faulty, for in fact it is but the function of a self and may be called a substance because it changes not because it is changeless. It is not something that subsists as substrata of all states for as pointed out it is but the activity or function of a knower; it is not eternal either because it is an interim activity as our experience itself points out that we cognized, we did not cognize etc.; our contraction or limitation of consciousness or intelligence is due to Karma that is beginningless and this limitation does not affect or infect the knowing self; further it is inconceivable that this consciousness as *anubhuti* should be capable of being deflected or segmented by different avidya or mayas; for if it were so and if this *anubhuti* be indeed the reality which becomes knowers, known objects and knowings, then avidya would overwhelm all uniformly. But this cuts at the root of the theory of Uniform Reality. This is not the teaching of the Scriptures (of course Prof. Malkani has not had recourse to scriptures in his article and has treated it from the standpoint of the modern western-philosophers). The whole theory of Nescience or Avidya is unprovable, by which we mean a wholesale universal nescience, Sri Venkatanatha refutes the Advaita in the following manner:

“Since it is said that all that is other than Brahman is illusion, there is no testimony at all by which to intimate that thing. Nor could the transcendental Brahman prove any of these. Even if the testimony of the phenomenal consciousness is accepted, soon after the phenomena have ceased to appear as true, there can be no adherence to one’s own tenets, as they are said to become false and are identical with dream evidence. Further they themselves have surrendered the validity of testimonies as something not belonging to the transcendent being.... And because of the illusoriness of both the unqualifiedness (of Brahman itself) and the world illusoriness, the knowledge of other systems, the knowledge of the world etc., thereby becoming true, these (other and opposed views) would become valid knowledge!” Further he writes “To this thinker who affirms that through the false the truth is gained, (we have to say that) not one of the examples he brings forward helps or harmonises with his doctrine.” (paramatabhanga: Ch. XI, my trans. ISVOL.1)

Prof. Malkani wishes to point out that Sri Aurobindo accepts indeed Maya and whether he calls the same *daivi or apara maya*, one of these answers to the maya of the advaita.

That whole chapter should be read for a thorough going refutation. Thus it can be seen that the whole procedure of Mayavada has been to go the way of nihilism, and nothing can prevent one from going that way once we abandon the criteria we have. The sorriest plight is that of Prof. Malkani who started with the four-point programme of being loyal to *human* experience, and has straightway disloyally sought to refute every human reality and standard and has finally ended by saying that Ignorance never was, Maya never was, World never was, Reality never was or is or will be. As Sri Ramanuja stated, in every respect Mayavada is an unacceptable doctrine.

Bhaskara, an earlier commentator on the Vedanta Sutras, has severely criticized Sankara's theory. "In seeking to establish the stability of the absolute the Mayavadin cuts at the root of knowledge" by his theory *vivartavada*, and this certainly goes against the scriptural texts which teach *sad-vidya* and *sat-karya-vada*; false judgement cannot lead to real knowledge, and there is no sublation of one state of the self by the other, and it culminates in that inexplicable nescience, called *sarva-anirvaaniyatva*. Nor can the practice of upasanas and the resort to intuition have any place in the system of identity. The two-standpoint theory is a fertile source of self-delusion. Students who would like to know more about the orthodox way of refutation should read Prof. P.N. Srinivasacharya's work on the *Bhedabheda Philosophy* (p.57-73). He calls these refutations as anticipations of Sri Ramanuja's *Saptavidha-anupapatti*.

Madhva defends the difference theory against the Advaita theory and shows even as Sri Ramanuja does that there is no cognition by any pramana of the undifferenced; and the identity texts must be interpreted in consonance with the Dvaita, the difference-view. Sri Ramanuja alone grants that both the texts-advaitic and dvaitic- must take into consideration the texts which are mediating (ghataka-srutis), which in one sense form the key to the whole science of textual criticism.

The word Maya is derived by Sri Aurobindo from the root *ma*, measure, and higher maya is that which ‘exhibits’ the ‘vast illimitable truth of infinite existence’ whilst the lower is delusive, separative and of the ignorance. Sri Aurobindo also accepts two levels of evolution, the evolution in the Ignorance and the evolution in the knowledge; the material, vital and mental evolution are of the Ignorance. What is precisely the status of this Ignorance, since ‘Self-Ignorance is the

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root of all perversity of our existence?’ No advaita can accept the view, says Prof. Malkani, that reality, the most absolute, can ever suffer from self-ignorance not to speak of Ignorance. Now this cannot be explained by the theory of lapse into ignorance of the most perfect Consciousness-Force: he even holds that ‘falling away from Self-knowledge and Self-illumination into the lowest strata of inconscience can never be a play or *lila* which would fill the heart of reality or sachchidananda with joy’ (p.248). It cannot be that error or rather falling into error is a way to truth (p.248 footnote). Nor is evil inevitable. And triumphantly, says Prof. Malkani, once we admit or accept error as colouring our view of the cosmos or of the things as they are in themselves, we must simply go all the way with Advaitism and admit no explanation of the world except in terms of *maya* or the power of illusion.” (p.249)

The above statements of Prof. Malkani betray a complete lack of intuition into fundamentals of spiritual life. We have already referred to his definitions of reality or the real, his conception of maya, his conception of knowing and conceiving and imagining, and his complete confidence that nothing really can be and nothing has been and we are ever as we were. The advaitic technique suffers from a vague identification of reality with permanence, illusion with knowing and a confusion between intellect and intuition which is facilitated by a surreptitious hypostatizing of intellectual monism into an intuitive realization or awareness. The truths of spiritual life reveal the grades of ascent of the consciousness, and as Sri Ramanuja pointed out eight centuries ago the technique of Advaita is to deny every evidence and finally hold that all evidences point to their own destruction and to the awareness of Reality. A psychological somersault is the need. The advaitin cannot explain the wherefore of this illusion, while the realists at least realise the actual fact of untruth and seek to get over it and find in the blaze of the illumination that all the untruths have

indeed been real and really revealing the wonderful beneficence and even reality of the ascent to Divine nature. True it is that there are several stand-points: the stand-point of the human reveals the maya working out the passion of the manyness or multiplicity of souls each seeking an individual ascent into the Divine mansion and it may appear technically as that of the ignorance since it operates diffusively; but this is an ignorance which is implicit or veiled knowledge in the depths and appears to the Supreme Transcendent or the Supermind not as an ignorance but as the puissance of the Self-illuminated operating of the extremest limit of the multiplicity which it gathers in the Divine evolution into the Unity of these in the higher. The language of dimensions is essentially symbolic and yet true of the mystical life, and none who is a mystic can miss these terms in literature. Rightly thus Sri Aurobindo has said "For this ignorance is still in reality a knowledge seeking for itself behind the original mask of Inconscience and missing and finding; its results are the true consequence of the lapse,—in a way, even the right working of the recovery from the lapse" — this sentence is nothing more than what I have stated, that the implicit multiplicity in its creative urge of expansion affirms at once on one side the multiplicity as separately working out a harmony or an affirmation through the many individualized personalities, affirming egoism, mind, vital movement, material distension etc., while all through the secret unity, in the depths, sustains and leads and projects these upward and organizes in its own freedom the essential ecstasy of the perfections of the Divine. Sin, error ignorance are the inevitable representations of the figures of these movements on the surface, real and poignant to the individual souls, but in the final culmination of their ascent into the Supermind these can be seen as the real, essential and necessary steps of its ascent in these integral processes or integrating processes. The secret of the system of Sri Aurobindo lies in this essential dictum: the Divine Oneness seeks the self-delight in terms of the eternal and implicit multiplicity of its

nature in each and in all simultaneously or successively in space-time nexus.

Mayavada cannot bear this large formulation of the Nature of Brahman, being absorbed by the Oneness, staticism, permanence as statically construed and not dynamically possible without lapse into imperfection or unconsciousness. Sri Aurobindo shews that the two, Oneness and multiplicity, Change and Permanence, Transcendence and Immanence, are all *sat-cit-ananda*, and the *Anandatva*, *chaitanyatva*, and *satyatva* are characteristic of both types of Self-existence, only they are expressed in terms of the typical formulation and both are at every point capable of being perceived as co-existent. That is to say, to the seer-vision there is visible change in Permanence, as permanence is seen in change; oneness in multiplicity as well as multiplicity in oneness: transcendence in nature or immanence as well as immanence in the transcendence: the stress being different. In the creative Process what we perceive are the dynamic, multiplicity, change, immanence which express the permanent, oneness, transcendence, in terms of process in a space-time. It is in this sense the Supreme is supremely wonderful mystery and the *sachchidananda* requires and has its dynamic formulation in the Supermind-consciousness; in this sense too we can speak of dual-governance, *dampatya*, of the Divine in diunity as Siva and Sakti, Vishnu-Laksmi; it is this that is the essentially mystic reality which derealises nothing that is or was or will be but uplifts all and integrates all in the supreme ecstasy of an integral experience. Thus the final criticism of Prof. Malkani that Sri Aurobindo colours his scheme with error and that therefore he must walk into the mayavadic parlour is disposed of as merely a rhetorical pose needing summary rejection.

Prof. Malkani does not raise the value questions to which idealists usually resort having made no success with logic; and that saves our trouble a lot. In a universe wherein everything has

no value, and all, values are cancelled summarily by closing one's eyes to the problems, there happens not sublation of the values nor yet the transvaluation of all values but the values do not exist at all, the only value being the hypostatized intellectual Absolute raised to the status of a mystical Reality by thinking so hard that it has passed to the level of intuition (or is it hallucination?).

3. SRI AUROBINDO AND HIS PHILOSOPHY **OF THE INDIVIDUAL SELF**

Sri Aurobindo's contribution to Indian philosophical problems are important and his rare insight into the literature of Indian philosophy coupled with an earnestness and serious purposiveness make it imperative on the part of students of Indian Philosophy to study him with care and disinterestedness. Sri Aurobindo in his philosophy tries to synthesise the manifold views of the world and points out that realization consists in the total understanding of Brahman which satisfies the demands of knowledge and experience, freedom and immortality.

His philosophy of the individual self is unique in some respects. How the One Supreme Brahman could become the many whilst continuing to be the one transcendent Brahman, is the main problem for the metaphysicians. The one-many problem as we shall call this, has given rise to several schools of philosophy such as Advaita, Visistadvaita, Bhedabheda and Dvaita; and all these theories have striven to prove the truth of the One or the many. What do we really mean by the term One? The term 'many' signifies that there are more than one or two entities which claim to be treated as separate and ultimate. We have many objects or things in the universe, many types of creatures, many kinds of trees and elements, and diverse kinds of gods. Do all these belong to or are all these derived from one single substance? If so what is the unitary nature of these which makes it possible for us to infer that they were all created from one single thing, even as many kinds of pottery are made out of mud or many varieties of ornaments are made out of gold. Is there any thing, or characteristic in common between matter, the souls and the Divine? We have to face this problem squarely and explain how the unconscious or inconscient is a degradation of the superconscious which is declared to be the source of all these. How does the involvement occur- an involvement which

annihilates for all practical purposes the very nature of conscient existence? Sankara explained this process of degradation by his theory of *vivarta*; Bhaskara explained it by his theory of limitation (*upadhi*); and Ramanuja explained this as due to a beginningless ignorance or karma on the part of the individual soul which undergoes this degradation of its own perceptive or cognitive consciousness though not its substantial consciousness. Yadavaprakasa explained this as due to the self-limitation manifesting itself in triple divisions of its own pure Cit-nature. Sri Aurobindo explains this degradation or more truly involution as the descent of the Spirit itself into material nature. Matter itself is but the involved consciousness, consciousness wrapped in its own inner repetitiveness. If all is Brahman, the postulation of either an illusory principle or limiting adjunct or even the principle of beginningless karma or self-fulguration into triple utterly different kinds of substances would be untenable. We have to find this principle in the Divine itself. This is the involutive or descent activity in the Divine or Brahmic nature itself. It manifests itself in matter. Equally does it in the vital, conscient intellectual, conscient intuitional, superconscious Overmind and superconscient supermind and others. Thus we explain the source of the manyness of the planes. But what of the manyness of the objects themselves, or for that matter the more important manyness of the souls themselves? Is the ego of the individual ultimately immortal and eternal, that is, incapable of being refunded or absorbed into the One Eternal, or is it to exist in it?

It may be asked how the multiplicity of souls could be explained. We know full well that the difficulty in the case of *derivation* of all souls from one primeval substance is greater than in the case of matter. For matter, it has been conceded by all, is something that changes, that is, it is that which undergoes change in the form of origination and destruction. Not so souls which are considered to be immortal, unborn (*aja*). The main target of criticism of the Pancaratra theory is alleged to be the

doctrine of origination of the souls. The manyness in advaita is explained as due to illusion or avidya. This explanation of the many is no explanation in one sense, for the manyness is denied not explained. Manyness had never been. But what Sri Aurobindo points out is that the manyness cannot be explained away. The many are real. But what about the unity acclaimed, the unity that does not go contrary to the immortality and unbornness of the souls? Sri Aurobindo solves it by saying that Brahman is himself the multiplicity. It is necessary to consider Brahman is a real many metaphysically, causally and logically. Metaphysically Brahman is the transcendent substance; causally it is the primary cause that co-exists with manyness in bringing about the various planes of matter, mind, overmind and others; and logically it is the ground, the unchanging self-identical Being who is the reason for the cosmos and becoming. The teleological purpose of Brahman, if we have to speak of that, is Delight, a Delight that is of being as well as of becoming.

“It is the Lord Himself, the Isvara, who by virtue of the *eternal multiplicity in His oneness*., exists for ever as the *immortal* soul within us and has taken up this body and goes forth from the transcendent frame-work when it is cast away to disappear into the elements of nature.” (*Essays on the Gita*. pp. 276-277.)

Again in the Life Divine Sri Aurobindo writes:

“The one harmonic rhythm of a complex world-existence – not of the material universe alone, as we shall see – is the music indeed of one existence whom in its completeness, purnam, inconceivable by our limited minds, we call the Absolute, but its oneness is not an exclusive unity; it is *eternally multiple and manifold*.”

Thus Brahman is at once the eternal oneness in His manyness. It is the sutra, the thread which runs centrally, that is upholding unities in all the planes.

The concept of underlying unity in multiplicity is illustrated at least in one instance in the philosophy of the tantras namely the Pancaratra. It is the *antaryamin*. The idea of the antaryamin in the upanisads can be correlated with this. The antaryamin is the Divine Transcendent Himself who has entered into the creation after having created it. This entering by the supreme into the heart of each of the creations as their *antar-atma* is conceivably the manyness of the One transcendent Brahman. This it is that makes it possible for the seer to see the Divine in all things.

It may be thus taken for granted that the antaryamin concept is fruitful and can act as the source and inspiration of this concept of unity in multiplicity. The transcendent enters into the creation as the soul of creatures and in so doing does not lose its transcendent nature. This points to a difference however between the Pancaratra concept of the antaryamin and that of Sri Aurobindo. The souls are treated as separate from the antaryamin who is their ruler immortal, but the antaryamin is not the soul itself. It is what the soul aspires to reach and attain, and attains in its mystic union, as also within itself as its own deepest self Sri Aurobindo however postulates the identity of the souls and the antaryami.

We conclude that in thus blending the several planes and categories of reality in an integral manner, Sri Aurobindo gives us a truer picture of reality, a truer metaphysical basis than the speculative fictions of idealism or essentialism or realism. Sri Aurobindo points out that if metaphysics means a theory of reality, then, that metaphysics should not do away with the reality of experience of any grade whatever. That the higher planes of consciousness are seen to uphold the lower is the real starting-point. Spirit even is lower than Brahman. Brahman is all and sustains all, and is that which displays Itself in a two fold manner as Delight in Being and Delight in Becoming which It weaves in the texture of Process or Divine Evolution. The

Syntheses achieved by vital *prana* in the immobile matter, by the lower mind in *prana* and matter, by the over-mind in mind, *prana* and matter reveals the progressive unfoldment of the secret of unity.

But the truth of this great Divine Synthesis or Yoga is to be consciously accepted by man. As against the common view that “evolution happened in the animal, it has to be willed in the human”, the view that Sri Aurobindo upholds is that this willing on the part of the human being consists in the acceptance, surrender and offering of himself and all that he holds dear to the Divine, so that the divine may fulfil the synthesis on the unique laws of the superconscient of which the human is hopelessly unaware. This *sadhana* is thus the consecrated surrender for the purposes of the evolution of the Divine. Man has to withdraw himself from the material orgy, and, in so withdrawing himself, behold the still, unflickering light of the Divine, become dynamically receptive to its treatment and ordering. He must offer himself and all that he means to himself in fullest submission to the Antaryamin, prefigured here as the Mother, as the Teacher, Guru, and as the most supreme Self of all.

4. The Individual Self in the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo

The individual problem is the world problem. All enquiries into reality revolve round the status of the individual, the enquirer into the nature of reality who is a part and parcel of it. It is he who feels his bondage, and it is indeed he who seeks to surmount it and all that it connotes or signifies. The nature of the individual has itself been a real problem, for we find various explanations for his existence are given. The individual soul is said to be apart of the material nature or a simulacrum of spiritual ego or reality; its cognitive nature has been stated to be due to an accident of connection with outer objects and not belonging to it as a sentience-point. Its substantiality has been questioned by some who called it but a congeries or constellation of cognitions, feelings and desireful volitions rather than a cognizer; its immortality has been seriously assailed; some have called it limited in duration to the period of segmentation of reality by some indescribable but real adjuncts; or to the period of veiling by Maya. Thus the Mayavada and Bhaskara monists have throughout denied eternity to the individual soul; whilst the one granted reality to it during the period of its existence also, the other denied that too to it. Nyaya Philosophy affirmed its atomicity, a bare abstract spirituality bereft of consciousness when no objects are perceived or contacted; Buddhism denied its substantiality though it affirmed its real momentariness as a constellation, and pleaded for the acceptance of an ever-recurring continuity of the originations of this constellation as a series. In all the above systems there is no clear-cut need for postulating the existence of the soul or individual self at all nor its efforts to arrive at salvation¹.

¹ Vedanta Sutra I. I. 4 (Sri Bhasya)

The individual soul is a psychic fact. We cannot however find any reasons whatever for postulating its immortality as an unchangeable spiritual entity, nor can we affirm its Incarnations in matter in the theory of rebirths without any modification of its nature, as the theories of atomic, abstract point-souls or monads or Mayavada or Buddhism affirm. There can be no theory of rebirth without a theory of immortality of the individual soul, and the acceptance of rebirth in their systems is unwarranted. Whether it is the materialistic theory or the superconscient theory of a Changeless Being or the Nihilistic theory, we arrive at one conclusion: "the apparent soul or spiritual individuality of the creature is not immortal in the sense of eternity, but has a beginning and an end in Time, is a creation by Maya or by Nature Force or cosmic Action out of the Inconscient or Superconscient, and is therefore impermanent in its existence. In all three, rebirth is either unnecessary or else illusory; it is either the prolongation by repetition of an illusion, or it is an additional revolving wheel among the many wheels of the complex machinery of the Becoming, or it is excluded since a single birth is all that can be asked for by a conscious being fortuitously engendered as part of an inconscient creation." (The Life Divine: Vol II p. 690).

It is only in the realistic (who were also theistic) schools of Vedanta we have the acceptance of the reality and plurality of the individual souls, and their relationship to the One Divine Lord is not of such a kind as to involve at any time the abolition of the individuals. It is in *laya*, dissolution that they lose ' their activity so as to look as stones, inconscient, whilst in Liberation or *mukti* their relationship is one of perfect illumination of consciousness, with the Divine as their inner self and Lord from which state of ecstatic oneness or unity there can be no fall. The theory of rebirth in these theories is due to their beginning less ignorance or *anadi-pravaha-karma*, as a series of experiences of pleasure and pain sorrows and strivings which perfect the

individual or imperil its ascent into the kinds of births that make their devotion to the Divine perfect and incorruptible. The immortality of the individual souls is vouchsafed here in so far as their innate spiritual natures persist undispersed into original atoms of matter at death but continue the voyage interrupted here on other planes or return here itself. The soul beginning undoubtedly with little consciousness-vision in the lowest stratum of existence gets its consciousness purified and perfected or more properly enlarged till at the human level it is enabled to discriminate the real values of life from the false.

Growth is predicated of the soul not indeed in the sense that it becomes big or vast as it ascends in the scale of existence according to the size of its body as the Jainas said, but intensively and extensively in terms of the ambit of consciousness or more truly *divya-jnana*, superconsciousness till it becomes omniscient or omnipervasive. Even when occupying a body of matter this limit might be reached, for consciousness understood not as the human consciousness but as the highest consciousness identical with the Divine consciousness which knows no limitation at any time is eternally vast, illimitable, omniscient, omnipervasive, beneficent and puissant.

In the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo immortality of the individual soul is accepted and therefore its rebirths are also accepted. The purpose of the individual atomic soul in trying to achieve its real nature of immortality in and through the process of rebirths into matter and other lower forms of life is not explained as adequately as may be desired in the philosophies of realistic Vedanta. If Maya had been inexplicable in Mayavada, it is no less true of the Karma. The explanation that it is inexplicable because its origination is unknown will not fully satisfy the seeker after a real and valuable explanation. We find in the philosophies of realisms too, Maya gets a place if not as a deluding agent, at least as a power-concept or knowledge-concept. The creative act is one of Delight of Brahman or God.

If creation is a deluding operative or degrading action or punitive expedition, it cannot be the Divine's action but of a Nero. It cannot be *lila* whether understood as the Grace of the Divine or as the *Krida* of the Divine.¹

According to Sri Aurobindo "The Universe is a self creative process of the Supreme Reality whose presence makes spirit the substance of things, - all things are there as the spirit's powers and means and forms of manifestation. An infinite existence, an infinite consciousness, an infinite force and will, an infinite delight of being is the Reality secret behind the appearances of the universe; its divine Supermind or Gnosis has arranged the cosmic order, but arranged it indirectly through the three subordinate and limiting terms of which we are conscious here Mind, Life and Matter. The material universe is the lowest stage of a downward plunge of the manifestation, an involution of the manifested being of this triune Reality into an apparent nescience of itself, that which we now call the Inconscient; but out of this nescience the evolution of that manifested being into a recovered self-awareness was from the very first inevitable. It was inevitable because that which is involved must evolve; for it is not only there as an existence, a force hidden in its apparent opposite, and every such force must in its inmost nature be moved to find itself, to realise itself, to realise itself into play but it is the reality of that which conceals it, it is the self which the Nescience has lost and which therefore it must be the whole secret meaning, the constant drift of its action to seek for and recover. It is *through the conscious individual being that this recovery is possible*; it is in him that the evolving consciousness becomes organized and capable of awakening to its own Reality. The immense importance of the individual being which increases as he rises in the scale, is the most remarkable and significant

¹ cf. my Concept of Lila: JBHU vol. I 1937.

fact of a universe which started without consciousness and without individuality in an undifferentiated Nescience. This importance can only be justified if the Self as individual is no less real than the Self as cosmic Being or Spirit and both are powers of the Eternal. It is only so that can be explained the necessity for the growth of the individual and his discovery of himself as a condition for the discovery of the cosmic self and consciousness and of the Supreme Reality. If we adopt this solution, this is the first result, the reality of the persistent individual; but from that first consequence the other result follows, that rebirth of some kind is no longer a possible machinery which may or may not be accepted, it *becomes a necessity*, an inevitable outcome of the root nature of our existence.” (ibid., pp. 703-4) (italics mine).

The above long extract is to put in clearest light the entire relevancy of the growth of the individual immortal soul from a concealed or veiled consciousness towards the superconscious consciousness of the Divine shaping its immortality with its ascent in the Organic through reducing the impenetrable and refractory Inconscient in a series of rebirths. The individual soul’s delight it is, and not its karma, that mystifying force of bondage, beginningless and mechanical, that propels it to organize the Inconscient, plane by plane, and to integrate them in the single organism of his highest achievement – the Divine Body, pure, immortal too, a perfect instrument of its own inner light, truth, delight and Consciousness-power. Thus the individual soul in its involution and evolution is undoubtedly persistent, not in an unreal manner nor in the manner of a fictitious stream nor is it helplessly caught up in the vice-grip of a terrible fate or karma or kismet or *adrasta*, wheeled forward and backward from one place of existence to another. In fact, the individual soul is a shaper of its own inner law of ascent and descent for the sake of enjoying that secret delight of its existence even when it is being overwhelmed by the tribulations of its ascending journey. It is, at first appearance, a coarse,

selfish aggressive egoism placed in opposition to matter, struggling for survival, against it as well as against all that came to be with it. Thus the philosophies that devote themselves exclusively to the realization of the Inner Transcendent Self or Atma or Brahman or the Purusottama are forced to explain their togetherness, opposition, and their indivisible solidarity in respect of genus, race or vocation or aspiration or need, with the other selves or souls which display identical urge to transcend the limitations of environment, and seek to arrive at social harmony. It is therefore important to remember that the individual is not single but a multiplicity having within it the problems of unity and struggle and competition. In the modern world it is this aspect that is occupying a large portion of the thought of thinking men. Not without justice. The problem of social harmony and the individual freedom is not a simple calculus of gives and takes, but a real question of discovery of the foundations of our life, materially, vitally and spiritually, which can be the basis of our future ends or *purusarthas*. A material or economic equality is indeed necessary for all, equally a vital equality to work and endeavor as well as the spiritual equality in respect of transcendent goals of religious and cultural and artistic things. These are not all. But yet without these the individual is no more than an abstraction, a ghost that is without any vestige of actuality.

II

There are two ways of approach in metaphysics in respect of the derivation of the social consciousness and the individual consciousness. The individual is derived from the homogeneous mass of Nature or the group of crowd as a gradual disruption of its unity through the unconscious focalisation of interests of each part. The purpose of this disruption into many may be conceivable for the sake of greater social development which is indeed for the sake of social unity; such a unity impels

its own self-divisioning into an infinite plurality. Such a thesis has to be accepted by all schools, whether they call this pluralization real or unreal, temporary or permanent. The One-many problem is thus the rock on which absolutisms and phenomenalisms are wrecked.

The second way is to derive the social mass or homogeneity from the collections of individuals or the 'many through devices of absorption, subordination or subsumption, annihilation of uniqueness in each individual or reduction to uniformity through impositions of conformity to routine law, and logically to evolve a general idea (jati) which is hypostatized into a real thing. The social unity or unification is achieved as the inner necessity of the individual plurality. All pluralists are forced to accord to plurality a unity or God or harmony of co-existence or order of service so that they could be together in harmony without rift or divergent pulls. They too have to accept Unity or Oneness of the plurality whether they are prepared to call this real or unreal, temporary or permanent.

In both these ways there is inevitable the affirmation of evolution of the individual or the evolution of the social unity or Universe, the former involving the abolition of the society or mass uniformity or Nature in the raw, and the latter involving the abolition of the individual uniqueness.

Sri Aurobindo finds that the truth of the Oneness is its eternal manyness, expressed or unexpressed in the texture of experience, whilst the truth of the manyness lies in their oneness, an eternal and compelling oneness that substands the divergent currents of life. Thus the individuals are not mere fragmentations or proportions, sundered apart, of the Divine, but are charged intrinsically with the *nisus* to unity, even whilst the social homogeneity or Nature is impelled unconsciously to realise the infinite potentialities of manyness enfolded in it.

“For the initiation of the evolutionary emergence from the Inconscient works out by two forces, a secret cosmic consciousness and an individual consciousness manifest on the surface. The secret cosmic consciousness remains secret and subliminal to the surface individual, it organizes itself on the surface by the creation of separate objects and beings. But while it organizes the separate object and the body and mind of the individual being, it creates also collective powers of consciousness which are large subjective formations of cosmic Nature; but it does not provide for them an organized mind and body, it bases them on the group of individuals, develops for them a group mind, a changing yet continuous group body.” (ibid., pp. 606-7).

These two movements are in a supramental Divine worked out simultaneously from the realm of Nature or matter as a constant fulguration of its unity, and from the realm of souls as a constant effort at discovering the secret of unity. The soul’s apparent finitude is the cause or reason for its search after a larger and profounder synthesis, not indeed in terms of the Nature from which it has emerged, as its owning a body reveals to it, but in terms of the spiritual Oneness interpenetrating all that exists.

Thus the perfection of the natural world with its diversities due to the individuating process within it that after all leads to the foundation of groups, and the perfection of the unifying impulse in souls due to their *nisus* to Unity or transcendence of their differences, are what appear superficially as two opposite movements of evolution. It should be clear also that we cannot speak of the involutive and evolutive movements in respect of these two processes, for both these are really evolutive in so far as they are registering progress by throwing up the unique diversities of individuals on the one hand equipped with highly developed organic bodies and revealing heights of consciousness and intelligences far superior to the

inconscience or nescience, and on the other hand, the individuals are evolving types of social organization from the crudest of associative groups to the spiritual utopia of *bhagavatas*, souls forged in the fire Divine, lit within with the light Divine, free, joyous and true. Since these two movements are simultaneous or successive, “it follows that only as the individuals become more and more conscious can the group-being also become more and more conscious; the growth of the individual is the indispensable means for the inner growth as distinguished from the outer force and expansion of the collective being. This indeed is the dual importance of the individual that it is through him that the cosmic spirit organizes its collective units and makes them self -expressive and progressive and through him that it raises Nature from the Inconscience to the Superconscience and exalts it to meet the transcendent.” (ibid., p. 607).

Thus the souls are in their highest development just the Divine in His manyness, upheld in the supramental unity of His Divine Oneness. They may be considered to be the infinite perfections of the Divine upheld by the Supreme Perfection of His Self-Identity in all of them, which is their solid reality, benediction, wherefore He is the *satyasya Satyam*. The essential delight of His nature makes all these souls in their unique multiplicity or individualities, seek that profound and ultimate and everlasting plenitude of Delight that is of the Oneness. The seeking or searching or the divining of that Delight (*Vanam*, as the *Kenyopanisad* puts it) is the *nisus* of the individual souls, because they discover that to be their integral need for undiluted happiness. It is that which necessitates their realization of the delight in the Oneness even as they have in some measure realised their delight in His manyness. The One without the other ends in the realisation of an isolated and truly pathetic egoism or egoness, whilst the other alone stands in the gloom of Divine Solitariness, even as it has been described by the *Upanisads*. The metaphysical truth that Sri Aurobindo has

pointed out in his formulation of the Advaita is that the multiplicity involved in Matter and in progress can find its fulfillment only in and through the Divine Oneness, and there its culmination does not mean annulment or liquidation or absorption but exaltation in the light, power, delight of the simultaneous experience of Oneness-Manyness, which are both eternal and eternally true of the Supreme Being.

III

The sufferings of the individual souls are the signs of their birth-throes, not signs of imperfection and finitude as such, for indeed there are no essential or intrinsic imperfections, but of the propelling inward need or drive to arrive at the formula of unity with the rest. One has to individualise oneself ere one can individualise oneself completely. This dual movement is always present. The individual soul is a concentration of the Total All so that it might in return arrive at the fullest diffusion of the Total All in and through its secret unity within it. We can understand thus the soul's voyage through material (*sic*) forms of matter, life and mind and overmind, so as to emerge as the patent one of the Many gathering within itself fully all the knowledge and delight inherent in the Total All as its essential *amsa*, or organ, through a series of rebirths, not meaningless rounds alone nor regressive rebirths compelled by the inexplicable Maya or Karma or Avidya. The fulfillment of the Universe is in the growing personality of the individual as a superconscious One of the Divine One in His eternal manyness, unique significant *vibhuti*; fulfilling some supreme delight of His in the terrestrial movement or *lila*. Rebirths need not at all times be a sign of decadence or descent into a lower form – a torture of dwelling in the wombs of imperfect creatures; it might as well be a deepening sense of oneness with Matter which is also spiritual, endowed with its riches of change and modifications, and convertibility. The birth of a soul in matter or

material or vital form is, as it were, a sign of matter's essential transformability or transmutability. It is a secret of evolution of the individual's immortal pursuit; it is not a sign of failure but a sign of integrative action brought about by processes of compensations and accelerations and retardations of some parts at the expense of other parts till in the long run, there emerges a full-blown integral personality that does not act in subordination to matter but controls and shapes it and exhibits its own true spiritual nature and thus achieve delight for itself in terms of its own being.

Thus whether it is the breaking up of social organizations or of individuals, there emerge constantly recurrences or rebirths of these social forms and individuals till the equation of the social perfection and individual integral perfection is realised in all levels of true spiritual being.

The relationship between the individual and the society appears at first look to be one of part and whole. The society is seeking its fulfillment in and through the individuals even as the fulfillment of the individuals is affirmed to consist in the fullest realisation of Society. The *angangi-bhava* (whole and part relation) or *sesa-sesi* (dependent-principal relation) between the society and the individual is the highest that humanism has been able to offer as a consolation to the distraught world. Of course from the standpoint of the idealistic metaphysics the reality of the individual is only the society or the Absolute. Pluralistic idealism has in modern years affirmed that the individual has a uniqueness that is to be considered to be at its highest in harmony with the uniqueness of other souls or personalities. The aim of philosophy is to present in clearest light the nature of the fundamental harmony that subsists between the souls. This harmony is something inherent in the very existence of the multiplicity but it is also necessary to make it conscious or superconscious in the individuals composing the society. Leibnitz affirmed a kind of ascent and descent of souls in the

wheel of progress, but it was a kind of mechanical procession having in essence no necessity towards integral revelation of a full-blown personality. The *monadus monadum* was also in constant peril of losing its primacy to its successors, in the chain of process. The organic view, on the other hand, affirms the evolution of the individual from the simple mechanical structure of the protoplasm to the highly diversified human organism characterized by mind, vital life and material organization. The social life typical of the animal herds and cell-life such as the bee-hive or ant-colony, is one in which the unity is organic, for a loss of its central life, or member in the Queen Bee or Ant involves a total disruption of the entire colony. The earlier organizations of the human being dominated by the leadership of a King or Tyrant (born, not made) were very similar to the above vitalistic organizations and in this respect there is a lot of truth in the contention that the State is an Organism whose soul or head is the King or Tyrant or Dictator. This however is a condition that has not seen the emergence of individuals *qua* individuals. If in the words of M. Bergson¹ we consider the first development to be one moment of the dialectical frenzy, the exhaustion of this entails the second development of the individual effort at recovering his freedom that was inevitably and forcibly suppressed and stopped by the first. The specific descriptions of the twofold frenzy by M. Bergson do not bring out the metaphysical basis for the diversifications of functions in the organism or their unification or synthesis or integration in the light of the intuitive or supramental, in the individuals nor, for the matter of that, in the society developing its moral and religious life. In this respect he follows his own original thesis of instinct *versus* intellect, to explain the two fold frenzy of individual struggle after freedom from conformity and discipline in the lives of its members. In Sri Aurobindo's thesis, however,

¹ Two Sources of Morality and Religion, p. 256 f.

we have a clear enunciation of the metaphysical reality of the society as well as the integrity of the individuals through his unique thesis of eternal oneness in the eternal multiplicity, whether it be of the organism or the society, planes or powers, individuals or the Deity. It is this metaphysical basis that makes multiplicity seek the freedom for its many individuals even as the individuals are impelled towards some sort of unity wherein lies their strength. The two moments in the history of growth of individual freedom in society and achievement of social solidarity are, even when in frenzied movement, explained by his thesis.

The individual soul truly grows into a universal being, that is, a being having universal responsiveness and love and value for all, even as the universal Being is enabled to manifest itself in and through each of the individuals. The mystical consciousness which is the pioneering spirit ever after adventure into planes and spaces beyond the intellect, according to M. Bergson, seeks to evolve into the universal consciousness by a leap or a burst into the same through concentration, not indeed of its consciousness nor by a surrender to the Divine All, but by the strength of its vital impulse (*élan vital*). This explanation does scant justice to the fundamental uniqueness of each soul and the continuity of evolution, as it aims at the abolition of the true individuality in the expanse of Mind-energy of the intuitive level. It forgets that the mystics are realists and are unique personalities who, inspite of their universal outlook and disinterested activity, are strong personalities. On the other hand, according to Sri Aurobindo, the individual is a real one of the eternal multiplicity of the Divine, mounting or ascending the evolutionary rungs by rejecting the lower with the help of the Divine, so that ultimately the lower may be orientated or transmuted so as to express more and more fully the higher and highest planes of the individual soul, which indeed is a Divine personality.

Thus the individual in the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo does not have merely a temporary existence nor is it a term in the phenomenal creation due to the operation of a *Maya* or *upadhi*; on the other hand, it can be a portion, *amsa*, a ray, or organ of the Divine, if by these terms we understand an integral oneness of the soul with the Divine One in every respect as one of the eternal multiplicity. Thus it is that the individual soul is capable of realising the supreme formula of its identity with the Divine of Brahman in a real manner through a real evolution and real surrender to the Divine which it apprehends to be its complementary and not a counter-reality.

The doctrine of limitational manifestation of Bhaskara has no place in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo for the individual is in no sense a gross perversion or segmentation of the seamless garment of Reality. The Brahman is indivisible and the limitation, even when real, cannot limit really. Nor is the fulgurational theory of Yadava Prakasa any more in place, for the reason that Matter, souls and Isvara cannot have the *nisus* or effort to recover their liberation. There can be no endeavor or aspiration in the souls nor in the inconscient matter towards the achievement of the evolutionary culmination in the Transcendent vision of the One-many Unity. The Isvara is less than the All. Further, in both these systems the individual soul is impermanent. The *bhedabheda* or identity- difference theories suffer usually from the defect of postulating identity and difference between the Divine One and the individual many and the multiplicity of Nature *simultaneously and unlimitedly*, that is to say; without reference to space and time or causality. In the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, the Original Nature of the Divine as an eternal oneness in eternal multiplicity rescues it from the attacks directed against the former schools. The One is eternally manifested in or motivating the many, whilst the many are manifesting or yearning to manifest the Oneness in the forms of harmony, organization, unity or union of themselves. The many and the One are the one same Divine.

The descent into matter, life, mind, overmind and the triple superminds above, as also the ascent worked out in terms of these seven planes by the eternal multiplicity of His nature does not entail the loss of the soul's nature as consciousness-delight-*Cidananda-svarupa*. On the contrary, this *Cidananda* it is that is the informing principle in these planes which shapes the ascent of matter and the other succeeding grades of evolution to their own fullest possibilities as all great art reveals.

It may be asked with appropriateness whether this eternal multiplicity cannot be considered to be a 'a body' (*sarira*) of the Divine, a thing or entity that is absolutely existing for the sake of the Divine being supported and controlled and enjoyed by Him, whilst it is that which lives and moves and has its being in Him.¹ The view of Sri Aurobindo does not envisage this thesis of Ramanuja except indirectly. The many may be considered to be the body of the One but what is likely to be missed by the *sarira-sariri-bhava* even when it is considered to be *aprathaksiddha*, inseparable or eternal, is that there is the affirmation of the soul as a *sariri* in respect of its body whilst it has to be or play the role of the *sarira* in respect of the Divine simultaneously for the purposes of an identical act. The individual soul then will become a passive or receptive conduit of the Infinite's Purposes. If we accept this we will be forced to accept or at least are open to a possible objection that the individual soul can be reduced to the status of a sheath of the Atma (*jnana-maya-kosa*, for example, as in Advaita), and this is certainly not what the eternal multiplicity is. It is true that Ramanuja was against this type of identification of the *jiva* or

¹ Sri Bhasya: *yasya cetnasya and dravyam sarvatmana svarthe niyantum dharayitum ca sakyam*
Yacchesataika svarupam ca tat tasya sariram. (II. I. 9)

soul with a *kosa* and his definition of the *sarira* does not lend itself to this interpretation.

If again we accept the Divine is resident in the heart of every self in the literal sense we shall have a dyarchy or dual government of the individual organism however harmonious their relationship might be through the willing and consecrated surrender of the individual soul to the Divine. Ramanuja saw clearly this possibility but it was inevitable *in the ascent*, as also in intimate union, to dislodge or absorb the individual into the One Divine.¹ The highest consciousness at which he arrived was the experience of love that means co-existence *samanadhi-karanya* in mystical consciousness.

In the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo since the individual souls are not impermanent, and are not sheaths but real eternal many of the Divine, and cannot be at any time merged or absorbed into the One except in the sense of being withdrawn into the potential condition (*suksmavastha*), their freedom or liberation is the freedom in the One. This *mukti* is something that enriches the soul or the self and is different from the causal condition of potential existence, the inchoate homogeneity. The liberated condition in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is one rich integral omniplanal perfection lit with the experience of Seership. This is due to the evolutionary ascent of delight culminating in the double experience of multiplicity and oneness simultaneously. Such an experience is impossible in the mechanical dispensation of *acchadana* or veilings or limitations, for according to the systems of *Maya* and others, liberation is

¹ The defect of Kalpana-gauravam or multiplication of categories in violation of the principle of the Occam's razor is refuted by orthodox logicians in cases where the Sruti or Sabda-pramanam sanctions or affirms more categories in violation of the intellectual principle.

indistinguishable from *laya*, cosmic withdrawal, or when individually applied *nirvana*, cessation. Ramaja saw clearly this truth even as Sri Aurobindo has. The evolutionary theory of Sri Aurobindo however grants to the eternal multiplicity of the Divine a possibility of the Vision of ultimate transformation and attainment of all that exists in the One Atman, in and through Itself. Thus the radical affirmation of the oneness of the individual soul with the Divine is rendered possible. Such a unity-experience is impossible without the Divine being that in its multiplicity. The individual soul is in any case not originated nor annulled; it is a real individual, finite in so far as it is the many, but it is not because of that imperfect, incapable of developing or evolving in process into the divine Nature. It is not the All though it is the All in its manyness. The Divine One in His totality is more than all the multiplicity put together, for He is not a college of souls nor a community of persons however evolved, perfected and harmonized in Divine Unity. The Transcendent transcends every height and group.

IV

The individual soul or self or personality that we have so far described as one of the eternal multiplicity of the Divine, is not a bare point of consciousness, qualityless and contentless nor a false embodied creature whose one business it is to get rid of its imperfect and false body at the earliest possible moment nor is it a windowless monad incapable of becoming a master of

the universe of matter, life and mind except impermanently and uncertainly, condemned to an eternal chain of successions in Ignorance or ever at the grim mercy and pleasure of the inconscient Prakrti. If this be not the destiny of the individual, and if his continuous commerce with Inconscience, vital and mental and overmental planes by means of his continuous births in them have meaning and value to his own superb destiny, that is to say, if he does indeed become enriched in every manner in every plane through an intimate and interior knowledge of these in his own widest actuality of terrestrial experience, then the individual is a unique personality manifesting divine life and perfection and eternity here and now, even in the body of matter, life, mind and overmind transformed in the Divine Light and Knowledge for the sake of the Delight. The true sense of immortality on all levels is attained since it no longer means mere persistence in or amid changes and stripping off of the sheaths which had covered the inner nature of the spiritual being. *Amrtatva* is worked out possibly in terms of *Anandatva* of Oneness of the multiplicity of the Divine, and not through descent into the ascent from Ignorance and Inconscience.

The destiny of the human individual is not to attain *after death* a transcendental or divine body (*aprakṛta-sarīra*) or to achieve a mergence or Divine Oneness after such a donning of the eternal luminous body, but even here to feel the Divine in oneself in His Oneness as also in His eternal multiplicity, and because of that presence undergo the changes in nature which are verily the formation of the *Aprakṛta-divya-sarīra*. This is the significant possibility of the indwellingness of the Supreme Divine 'superiorly' in the individual through a radical surrender and prayer to Him. The *Jivan-mukta* ideal is reinforced by the *siddha*-ideal, for it is not the *jivan-mukta* of the Advaita Vedānta that we arrive at but a more integral realisation of the Divine Personality in the individual. This is so much the case that the final movement of the Total Liberation of all individuals, if indeed that should happen, will be such that the eternal

multiplicity is to remain a multiplicity of perfect unique personalities of the Divine and would on no account become liquidated in the Oneness of the Divine of the principle of '*Identity of indiscernables*' of Leibnitz.

Certain Western philosophers of the pluralistic school have canvassed the possibility of the ultimate society of such individuals being a-religious, a-theistic, a-moral and anarchistic. Some thinkers other than these have beheld the final emergence of a society to consist of children of God in a Heaven, blissfully enjoying the governance of God, the father, without being assailed by the forces of Evil which presumably have been permitted by the Divine to work a purgatory for the religious and a hell for the rest on Earth. Some theologians have hoped that after the attainment of salvation abandoning their bodies the freed souls would enjoy continuously the beatific glory, beauty and ecstasies of union, even as the eternally freed souls (*nitya-muktas*) of the Divine Godhead do. These thinkers envisage a community characterized by equality as between these freed souls, by freedom for each soul to manifest itself fully super-consciously and by a sense of fullness in stature, communion of love and delight.

Thus whether we have the political utopia of 'ingenuous philosophers outside history' or the theological utopias outside the temporal sojourn on this refractory planet, the fulfillment of the Divine consummation of integral all-sided existence is beyond the possibilities of the soul. In the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, the ideal of human unity is fashioned in the Superconscient life of each individual who has ascended and thereby fulfilled the mission set before himself at the beginning of the creature adventure to realise the divine pattern of his unique evolution of the Total All in the Divine, in His eternal multiplicity. The individual indeed becomes a *buddha* and *siddha*, not in the sense of having attained to a state of *nirvana* nor yet in the sense of possessing occult powers, but

in the sense of fulfilling the Divine Eternity, Truth, Delight and Reality in terms of the Divine Knowledge of Gnosis. In that supreme consummation there is *purnatva*, fullness in the individual as it is in the Divine, constantly renewing the Divine activity of bliss and love and varied infinities of relationships, none of which limit to detriment, frustrate to annihilation or force into neurosis or veil to bind. Every individual personality of the Divine in his fullest vision perceives all as the play of the Divine and himself as the exponent of unique beauties and creative *mayas* of the Divine.

The mechanical theocratic government is not at all the truth of the Divine World Order, nor can it be the ideal of the Gnostic individual. Nor is it the materialistic view of reality that develops into a type of communistic or fascistic or imperialistic competitive nostrums which promise all individual development, social harmony and efficient government. The constant peril under which our humanity lies is the peril of its own regression, due to excessive and ill-balanced application of the principles of government at the back of the above three kinds of State. Unless mankind is changed fundamentally inwardly, the individual who has been a child of the material evolution and vital aspiration will not be secure even in the humanity to which he has ascended. Mere rationalism or intellectualism has indeed been helpful and yet it has not been able to see the essential structure or shape of the evolutionary process. A pseudo-mystical religion or pseudo-religious mysticism may lead to the attainment on the part of one or more individuals to the top-point of human evolution but a fundamental change is impossible without the help of an education based on the essential reality of the Divine Evolutionism that is being worked out in terms of the conflict between the individual's freedom and social unity. The divine nature must be achieved, and it can only be achieved with the help of the Divine in each individual (*antaryamin*) who can and does perform the transformation and transvaluation of the individual's life at the conscious and willing surrender of the

individual to Him of all his firm attachments to material, vital and mental assets. The Divine does not demand of the individual the surrender of his social life nor even the love that beautifies his ugly sufferings; what is demanded of him is the abnegation of all ways of material, vital and mental approach to them. A divine approach is all that is needed, and this cannot happen except through total surrender in freedom or through total self-giving. Without an intelligent understanding of the divine situation and divine need, not all the rationalistic hopes of humanists will avail. A complete unification of society or rather the foundation of real society involves the recognition that the Divine is the Society of perfect individuals in His eternal manyness in terms of process of *lila*, whilst His own eternal Oneness performs the office of the Divine Ruler-*Niyanta*. Both are real and both are to be realised by the striving soul if an integral realisation should happen.

The theory of classless society adverted to by many socialists and religious men, is when considered in the context of the highest evolution a matter of no great consequence, for in that state there can be nothing exploited or no one exploitable. An infinite diversity of functions will always remain which may however cast no shadow on the faces of others. Is it so strange then that in ancient Indian mythology its Gods have no shadows?

Sri Aurobindo's interest, and his main and abiding concern in all that he has given us, is in the future of the human individual, his race, and his prospects. In the Divine Life, Divine Race and Divine Unity he sees the secret founts of aspiration of man so far. His meridian or culmination is all that can make man yield his lower treasures, not once for all but only for a time so that attaining he could descend to transform or even in ascending transform his world and society and relationships in the pattern of transcending delights.

5. SRI AUROBINDO AND HIS PHILOSOPHY*

To write about any thinker who has reached the peak of his efforts is a difficult task. More so in the case of writers of the stamp of Sri Aurobindo, who claim to bring to bear on all that they write the eternal message of a transcendent sphere. It is imprudent, in one sense, to attempt to state their philosophies within the brief compass of an article and in doing it, less than justice might be done to their thoughts.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is a philosophy of life, of evolution, of growth into the consciousness of the divine. It is like most Indian Philosophies a way of life towards the realisation of freedom from *samsaric* bondage. In attempting to sketch out a way out of this apparently interminable *samsara*, which Buddha has even described as a hopeless cycle of births and deaths, it is evident that a clear conception of all the several motives and purposes and ends striven for must be known. The nature of this bondage, the nature of the world and all that it signifies to man and his hopes require clearest perception and understanding. Sri Aurobindo finds that the motive for getting out of the present state of discontent, for that is clearly the psychological situation, is fourfold.

‘The earliest preoccupation of man in his awakened thoughts and as it seems his inevitable and ultimate preoccupation - for it survives the longest periods of scepticism and returns after every banishment - is also the highest which his thoughts can envisage. It manifests itself in the divinisation of

* In a letter to Sri Krishnaiah a sadhaka of the Aurobindo Yoga, Sri Aurobindo has written that he liked this exposition.

Godhead, the impulse towards perfection, the search after pure truth and unmixed bliss, the sense of secret immortality! ’

The struggle to get out of present and to aspire for a state where this discontent cannot prevail at any time from which there can be no sliding or fall back into the mire of bondage, thus, whatever form it takes, is the fact about all attempts at knowing, for it is clear that knowledge alone can get rid of all ills, Samsara. Nanyah pantha ayanaya vidyathe.

It is however the second of the endeavours that seems to be the most distinctive feature of the view of Sri Aurobindo, namely, the impulse towards perfection. The reason is not far to seek, for, whatever may be the initial conscious goal of man, man returns to the one resounding note of his terrestrial life, the sense of free occupation, undisturbed with frailty and faults, unoppressed by environment and a sense of dismay at life itself, and unthwarted in his love and humanity.

There are theories of life such as the materialistic or worldly view, the *lokayata*, which are at their best only glorifications of this world and its impermanence. Delighting in this impermanence man seeks to enjoy the world for what it is worth at any one moment without thought of the morrow. ‘Eat and laugh and be merry, for tomorrow though mayest die.’ A wider variation of this view may take up the attitude of the behaviourists of modern times, who whilst accepting mind and life and other categories of existence, assert that they are offshoots or aberrations of matter itself and nothing more. It may accept evolution as a fact upto the level of mind, and not beyond what we know of the ‘objective’ mind and such as its behavior limited to the external observation of it can display; but it refuses to entertain any introspective understanding of the levels of mind and consciousness, which it categorically asserts are ‘pathological’.

But it is precisely the business of any synthetic Philosophy not to explain away as pathological or epiphenominal anything that has a right to be considered on its own merits, due to its *actual* existing. The behaviouristic view does not accept an inward impulsion that pushes forward matter itself, even if we accept it as the primal matrix of all the evolutes, as in the Philosophy of Samkhya. Accordingly, it fails to bring that immortal quality of the spiritual life, into its sphere of consideration.

As an anti-thetical movements to this terrestrial view., there has grown up amongst us a superterrestrial view sponsored by most religions and the mystics, a view not evolutionary in conception, but metaphysical mainly, which asserts the existence of other worlds, spiritual and perfect and luminous, to which we shall have to go, once we abandon this body of ours belonging to the imperfect and ignorant universe. Immortality of the soul is accepted, because it is because of this immortality, there can be a more luminous existence for it elsewhere.

But this view seems to have as its aim only freedom from this universe which it finds itself to be unjust, imperfect, unenjoyable and impermanent. It is the recoil from its impermanence that makes it conjure up a world of perfection, a realm of pure essences or Ideas, a domain of permanence and utter enjoyability. The body is the bar to progress, a limitation on knowledge, a prison of the soul. This view does scant justice to life itself. It cannot bring into reality on this human plane that immortal sense that we seek to discover in art and beauty. But with all that has been promised in the future land of Hope, there has been on the part of the believers in the superterrestrial domain a feverish anxiety to reflect on this in-corrigible planet something of that profound hereafter.

When we come to the absolutistic or illusionistic theory, we find that neither the reality nor the value of this terrestrial

existence is accepted. In this view, ‘ evolution itself is a mistake, a delirium of the will to live ‘ and the will to grow powerful, which is a living error conjured up by an ignorance that has *somehow* found its way to veil the incorruptible and transcendent Being of infinite knowledge and, in some cases, has become even the very power, *Shakti*, of that Pure Being. The illusionistic theory is a theory of either the relativistic variety or the absolutistic variety. It cannot be said that all kinds of absolutism also hold a theory of relative reality. The relative reality theory when inspected reveals that at one stage there is an inner contradiction, which makes it impossible for it to be called a theory of *reality* at all, since its apex culminates in a grand unreality, from which a psychological twist or jump alone can land us on its opposite pole, the *Real* or Absolute. Whilst it may be rightly conceded that Spirit or Intelligence is most supremely valuable, and that it is the only force that can create a world if at all, even if it be a world of delusion, and not matter however glorified it might be, it cannot be said that evolution, the one supreme fact of our experience, is itself delusion and a product of a myth-making function, as Bergson might say.

There is a single Spirit working in diverse ways at different stages. It is that which upholds the universe of different planes of matter, life, mind, intellect, intuition, supermind, overmind and other planes. The running thread of unity of Brahman or spirit is present in all and grants them the reality that is there because of Him, but it also reveals the evolution of each into the other, which is but an expression of the psychological shift of enjoyment of Brahman in each plane either successively or simultaneously.

The Truth then is capable of being grasped only by intuition into the nature of evolution as well as of Being. Such an intuition will reveal that the principle of evolution is the ‘thread’ that binds all planes of being and experience from the inconscient metal, subconscient plant and animal, to the

conscient man and the superconscient Divine. Accordingly we see that there are grades of existence and experiences, each with its own peculiar law of being, suited to the fullest expression and experiencing of its nature. This can be seen clearly in the sciences.

The law of solids are not really the laws of liquids or gases, and the laws of biology are not the laws incidental with the laws of matter. As we can see, the law of progress and synthesis in evolution reveals that man sustains and is adapted to the laws of physics, chemistry, biology and psychology at once. Following this then we conclude that the Superconscient sustains, controls and moves and lives and enjoys itself in all planes, according to its own unique laws of synthetic or total or integral existence. This view does justice to the terrestrial in so far as it grants reality and value of its own order to it; to the superterrestrial view in as much as it accepts the integral immortality of the soul and the actual existence of mansions of spirit over and above the perceived universe of matter, and asserts however that the two are unreal in so far as they deny the truth of one another. They form the two faces of the one continuous reality of Brahman or Spirit. It would be clear that from the foregoing, the third view, the Absolutistic, is denied categorically by Aurobindo. But it is not so. For we can see that whilst illusionist is denied, the relative value of the higher and the highest planes are recognized, for without that vision even the material and the vital and the mental cannot be appreciated and enjoyed adequately. We may say adapting Yagnavalkya's words that not for the sake of matter is matter dear but for the sake of the Self is the matter dear.

Sri Aurobindo seizes upon the central fact of his intuition into evolution, the Sacchidananda, which is not merely the *libido* of the psychoanalyst or the *elan vital* or mind-energy of Bergson, but the Supremest Spirit of which these are but vital and mental and intuitional manifestations, according to the plane

in which they work, and enunciates the necessity of realising oneself as at one with it. This Supreme Consciousness ever-present in all, appearing as it does in manifold ways through its power, wonderful, *Maya* is the one force of evolution. Man, who is struggling for the knowledge, perfection and enjoyment of the free state of being, must become cognizant of this Supreme Consciousness as the central fact, indeed as the soul and self of himself, and offer himself to it his total being. By such a total surrender and offering, complete emancipation from the law of its mind happens to the soul, and the soul is guided into the recognition and acceptance and obedience to the law of the Highest Plane of Reality, namely, the Brahman. This is the evolution into the Nature of the Divine, possible as a total fulfillment of the original promise of 'divination of Godhead, impulse towards perfection, search after pure truth and unmixed bliss and the sense of secret immortality.'

The Divine Life, *Brahma-sampatti*, is the fulfillment of the integral synthesis of all planes in the existence of the individual. It is God Himself who manifests individually uniquely His infinite perfections, even in the manifestation of the soul.

6. SRI AUROBINDO'S THEORY OF EVOLUTION

A CRITICISM BY Prof. MALKANI EXAMINED

The first sentence of the criticism runs thus “No theory of creation is ever likely to be true; for it implies transcendent causes. The category of causality has scope only within the empirical. A transcendent cause is really no cause.” Thus creation is not; transcendent causes are not; and since the empirical being is not, there can be no causes either there.

Creation-theories are humanizations of the truth, a story and not truth. Our truth is, there was only Being and anything that appeared (why, the Absolute knows! at some place) was illusory. God made truth or was truth and man made error. This in short is the theory of Prof. Malkani. Now why did man appear? illusorily to whom? to himself(?) or to Brahman the ever undeludable? Whose is this story or this humanisation, and for whom is this story of creation or illusory appearance? The whole self confident assertion of No Cause, Transcendent Cause, Story, Appearance is itself no better than stories of an intellectual dialectic and as such the reactions of the human intellect to the evanescent Reality in an opposite direction. Two persons can play at the same game of rejecting the human and criticizing the intellect.

Prof. Malkani concedes that Sri Aurobindo's theory of creation is not like the old story of mechanical creation as the potter does his pots. Indeed he holds that the Brahman becomes the world and thus the world is not a magician's illusory projection as in mayavada. Then he draws out a series of thirteen items of the process of evolution from out of Brahman the saccidananda, through a first movement into the Supermind out of its primal poise which exhibits the immanent or implicit multiplicity in Saccidananda. But this supermind exhibits just

one and not all the possibilities of the *Saccidananda* though it is aware of all of them. Prof. Malkani considers that this is fraught with difficulty. The infinite possibilities in the *Saccidananda* cannot be *present* at the same time; he contends that if these are implicit nothing *new* is created, and straightaway proceeds to say that no *real* putting forth can occur (*italics mine*). Certainly on the same count Maya is a real putting forth of appearance, for surely a *new* thing is *real*; the entire structure of the Mayavada collapses by this admission, which he brought into the criticism of a theory which holds that Brahman really creates and creating means only manifesting one of many infinite possibilities in this particular creative period, and in this there is nothing unreal. The real is both the possible in the Absolute Divine as well as the actual in terrestrial evolution.

The second complaint made by Prof. Malkani refers to the arbitrariness of choice in choosing to create this particular possibility rather than any other possibility. And he states that 'Sri Aurobindo's idealism is not based upon the *truth* of existence but the arbitrariness of the limiting idea—let there be such and such a thing.' This is criticism of a kind that has been used against Leibnitz too for his stating that the present one is the best of all possible worlds, a contention which he upheld by the theory of divine beneficence. If Freedom be the essence of reality, then the manifestation of this Freedom is what makes the choice possible and it cannot be held that freedom is arbitrary. There is at least a beneficence at work in the universe, whereas the theory of Mayavada is a mockery of the Absolute Brahman, and as for the *truth* of existence, it is indeed as real as the actual act in Prof. Malkani's way of argument when he defends a position of utter inconsequence to reality which he straightaway dismisses or cancels with his magic arbitrariness of maya. The protest against the impossibility of reconciling being with freedom of force is again *his* difficulty and it is not for one who knows how to act and live or exist or plan or evolve into the higher rungs, or for the matter of that for the Real Idea of the

Artist (even the most humble) which proceeds to actualize itself limited only by itself and not by the arbitrariness of Prof. Malkani's wish to create without thought a delusion or illusion in order to gratify his own licence in logic.

Nor again is the third objection valid, that awareness is already reality and there need be no actuality aware of the actual creative activity of the artist or sculptor, and it also betrays a lack of insight into the delight of creativity. He makes much of the distinction between the possibility and the known, and says, that possibilities are conceived and not known, and thus betrays the misunderstanding into which he had fallen of not taking into account the nature of the *Saccidananda* and the Supermind which perceive all possibilities and do not infer them or conceptualise them and thus do not hypostatize essences into existence, to use the convenient distinction that George Santayana has made. The reality of the planes or levels in the Created or manifested Brahman gives the clue to the distinction between the possibilities in the Supermind and Saccidananda which permits one possibility to work out itself in all the planes; this possibility may be only in freedom and the individual many too in freedom work out this Real-Idea which works its way spontaneous from within them and does not appear as the command of a deity or arbitrary fiat of the Divine. The spiritual society or Nature or being does not tolerate arbitrary fiat and exacts freedom for each and all as the condition of a self-revelation that shall culminate in the Delight that is Evolution into the Divine. It is because it works under and within each one of the Divine multiplicity that there is freedom to err or sin or ascend or descend and each in a way contributes towards the divine delight, for each is indeed superconsciously moving towards the Divine Manifestation on all levels. It cannot be stated that Sri Aurobindo is contradicting himself when he states that 'world is a maya because it is not the essential truth of infinite existence, but only a creation of self-conscious being... The world is not the essential truth of That, but phenomenal

truth of its free multiplicity and infinite superficial mutability and not truth of its fundamental and immutable unity” (p. 256); for Sri Aurobindo is merely pointing out what is clearly understood in any evolutionary theory or value question, that the multiplicity is the phenomenal status of the Oneness and the world is a phenomenal status of the real and is a real phenomenon. It certainly does not mean that the cosmos does not represent the real truth of being; it represents it truly and eternally as much as the Oneness; only there are two forms of the self-same Brahman. The supreme mystery of the Divine Nature consists in the supreme relationship of togetherness or inseparable oneness of the world and Deity, souls and Gods, and this may be expressed as the relationship of *sarira-sariri* or eternal oneness in eternal multiplicity. Lila is the essential delight in *sarira* or multiplicity of the *sariri* of the Eternal oneness, and the primacy of *sariri* or Oneness is always there in creation as well as prior to creation, *aloka* or *loka*.

The fourth objection then is against the view that the world is conscious Birth of That which is beyond mind into forms of itself; for Prof. Malkani contends that “while it is to a certain extent intelligible” to accept that God’s thought is constitutive of reality. “it is not intelligible how that which is already true in God comes further to birth in the forms of a mental, vital and material cosmos,” either the latter is non-existent in God in which case their creation would be pure conception or if they are already in some sense existent in Him, where is the scope for creation at all?” His own solution is to say that the world was never created at all or that it is a conceptual figment.

All the arguments of Prof. Malkani can be referred to the principle of *vivarta-vada*, a species of *asatkarya-vada*, which says that things appear otherwise. The learned writer does not see the mote in his own eye while he challenges the beam in others when he writes (and we are forced to remark, unkindly to be sure) naively ‘But what do we mean by manifestation? We

can only mean making appear.' The question will naturally arise making appear to whom? "It cannot be God." Why not, we rejoin, for it is precisely the will and knowledge of the Divine to manifest to Himself for His own Delight that which is possible to Him and in Him. The whole difficulty for the learned critic consists in this impossibility of self delight and self-willing, for to him all these in his system mean limitation, error and do not exist. For whom is Maya, we ask, in a system that cannot explain appearance of the world, unreal or real? The whole criticism smacks of inability to comprehend the difference between the unmanifest and the manifestation to be not a difference in reality, for both are equally real, but the moreness in the one or transcendence in the one and the immanence of the transcendence in the effect. *Sat-karya-vada* means in Samkya and Visistadvaita and Sri Aurobindo's philosophy nothing more than what it affirms, the reality of the cause as well as that of the effect; the effect is the exhibition, revealment of that which was in subtle state in the cause. The *sukhma* becomes *sthula*. There is nothing absolutely new and birth is merely the statement of the emergence to our limited and even planal vision of that which is in the bosom of infinity of the Divine. Every birth is a passage from one plane to another and this is what is stated to be the truth about initiation, conversion or *avatar*-phenomena. It is a figure that represents the stage at which the soul has arrived in the process of ascent or descent into actuality that is the phenomenal *jagrat*, waking consciousness. The next charge of *parinama-vada* affecting the very nature of the Divine is equally full of flaw; for, though the effect is a change of cause into effect-nature, this change does not affect the Saccidanda and Oneness-nature of God at any time. Sri Ramanuja got over this problem by holding that the *sarira* or *cidacid-visista*-Brahman and not Brahman changed from the causal to the effect state; and the objection that one part cannot undergo change whilst the other remained changeless, is groundless for the change is shown to be not affecting thereby the main *sariri* or Brahman; in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy we can see that, as already stated,

the *parinama* is of the self-extension of the Divine which does not affect the self-concentration in Himself; the multiplicity is not opposed to oneness and the *parinama* affecting the many is supported by the *saccidananda* and oneness of the Brahman. Prof. Malkani's argument proceeding through disjunction of either or—that is, “either it is created by God through an act of His will or God is the ground and reality of world—essentially misses the principle of the System, and this either-or business is a device of the intellectual logic that is incapable of precisely seeing what alternatives are real alternatives, as Sri Ramanuja has so splendidly shewn in the opening lines of the *Mahasiddhanta*. And it is the essential trouble of Advaita Vedanta to have placed the world neither in God nor outside Him but in His illusion; and it bespeaks lack of ordinary humour to speak of placing the world somewhere neither outside nor inside Brahman. The mystical insight is amazingly beyond the grasp of the critic's mind.

Tadejati tadu naijati taddure tadvantike.

Tadantarasya sarvasya tadu sarvasyasya bahyatah.

No more this and this has been throughout stated in ever so many ways in the Upanisads. Further, pray what is the meaning of the statement in the same Upanisad which speaks of the establishment of things in their true forms from sempiternal years:

Yathotathyato arthan vyadadat sasvatibhyah samabhyah

Thus the essential reality of the universe is granted by the mystical insight and our ordinary understanding even does not belie it and no argument or testimony upholds the doctrine of *vivarta-vada* or *asatkaryavada* or *mayavada* in the sense understood by theorists.

The other questions about the nature of the Supermind and the *Saccidananda* are questions that labour under the first cloud of misunderstanding about the nature of poise, understanding, creativity, reality and possibility, and these are explained by Sri Aurobindo himself in his *Life Divine* so completely that no further explanation can and need be given. But one question under (10) calls for a remark: "For if the delight of being is logically prior and if it is also full and complete, then there is no scope for the delight of becoming " (p. 263); the delight of being may be full and complete and this does not imply anything more than this that there is complete *purnatva* in its perfection; and the delight of becoming is a variation of the *purnatva* in the enjoyment of its multiplicity-possibilities. The whole fact is a mysterious movement of the Divine and we can only quote the scriptural statement.

Purnamadah purnamidam purnat purnamudacyate-

Sri Ramanuja's theory however does not involve this explanation because of his acceptance of the redemption of the Individual souls as one of the greatest concerns of the Divine Lord which makes His assumption of creativity as a redemptive act. The true philosophy of reality cannot but be a philosophy of the Divine – a philosophy of Religion. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of Divine Life shows the supreme creative manifestation of the Process as an ascent of the souls, the eternal multiplicity of His nature, moving through the planes which have been fashioned by His descent for this delight in Becoming of matter, life, mind, overmind, supermind and others till finally they realise in the Supermind the delight of the many gathered up in the events of an ascent which now registers happiness and delight in every movement and action as the instruments of the Divine One superconsciously known by them. The pains and pleasures, the avoided reactions or the avidly searched for responses or objects equally reveal the supreme ecstasy in which both are perceived as the interweaving of the delights. The

contention that knowledge, this knowledge alone, can put an end to all our present suffering is correct, but this knowledge is not the Advaitic's recoil-knowledge, nor are the sufferings surmounted in the manner he wishes but in the transvaluation of these and an ability to respond from delight to all the stimuli of the Divine Universe; for, then, in that supermind plane man is face to face with the Divine Universe.

It is somewhat candid to say that Sri Aurobindo's theory is after all Vedantic, and the only quarrel between the Mayavada and his theory consists in the interpretation of the world and the real nature of Sachchinanda; this is certainly a vast difference.

Prof. Malkani has of course taken great pains to answer the questions raised by Sri Aurobindo's theory, and this is in one respect due to the present writer of this criticism having drawn pointed attention in the *Philosophical Quarterly* 1942 to the importance of Sri Aurobindo to modern philosophical reconstruction of Vedanta. Prof. Malkani has thus rendered service to Vedanta in general, though, frankly speaking, he has not been able to show any advantage to the Spiritual life by his defence of an Abstract Absolute that can bear no reality and expunge all evolution, growth, progress, perfection in the name of Supreme Intuition, which is not proved by any mystic without equivocation.

It is indeed true that Mayavada has a great exponent in the Maharsi Sri Ramana of Tiruvannamalai; and he holds that the world is maya, a conceptual construction, and the reality that has to be known is the self, the self that appears as all things, illusorily. The question of spiritual value is implicit in this. Know the self, what you are and who you are; then you can say which is and which is not. The real for you is the central fact as to who you are who suffer and struggle. In this sense, then, the urgency, the poignancy and therefore the reality or rather actuality of pain and confusion, this infinite tossing of the soul in

griefs and rounds of frustrations, cause one and should indeed cause one to address to oneself the fundamental question about the nature of the self or who? Sri Ramanuja clearly initiates this catharsis in his Yoga called Mahayoga. But it is precisely this Mahayoga that has to culminate in the Purnayoga. It is in this sense that Advaita of Mayavada gives a grand schooling to thinkers and students of Yoga-albeit negative.

This negative attitude is an impermanent status; and though this negative status described as *nirvana* and *moksa* are sought to be explained as not merely negative but positively as bliss by certain modern interpreters of Buddhistic thought, it is what it denotes but negatively. The passage from the impersonal of nirvana to the suprapersonal is the passage that entails the depths of the Ananda. It is not certainly denied that the negative has not charm and even a kind of deep delight not comparable to the human and as different from it as anything, being a revolution in the very structure of experience; but deeper and finer and richer is the Superpersonal Divine which manifests the Divine to the illumined vision, no longer under the throes of recoil and passed beyond the impersonal universal. As a modern Russian writer has stated: "There can be no greater error than to interpret mystical experience in terms of monistic metaphysics. Monism postulates rationalization, a mental process rather than experience." "The idiom of mysticism is founded on love rather than precepts." "Mystical experience is a triumph over creatureliness—an achievement which cannot be adequately described in terms of theological concepts. Thus theology interprets this as pantheism, whereas it is nothing of the sort, but something dynamic and inexpressible." (*Spirit and Reality*: N. Berdyaev). It is thus clear that when Sri Aurobindo affirms the supreme possibility of Divine immanence in the human which entails a restoration of the human now transfigured into a divine-nature, the mystery of real universal indwellingness in the terrestrial human personality is explained. There is no impossibility in the Divine Evolution as it is the logical outcome

of the Creative History of the Divine which has so far levelled up the microcosm to the human level. In Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy its authentic realisation is affirmed as the core of New Spirituality.

To live on you past cultural capital is to end in bankruptcy and pauperism. The past has to be used always as mobile and current capital for some larger profit, acquisition and development, and to gain we must spend, we must part with something in order to grow and live more richly, –that is the universal law of our existence. Otherwise the life within will stagnate and perish.

Though the Spirit is eternal in its essence and in the fundamental principles of harmony immutable, its actual rhythm of its self expression in form is ever mutable; immutable in being and the powers of its being, but richly mutable in life, that is the very nature of the spirit's manifested existence.

(From Sri Aurobindo's "Is India Civilised").

7. DIVINE EVOLUTIONISM

No seer has a richer harvest of philosophic and religious literature to his credit than Sri Aurobindo whose seventy-first birthday falls on the 15th August, 1942. The author of this humble contribution, which is in lieu of altar flowers, has been influenced in manifold subtle ways by Sri Aurobindo's teachings and feels happy on this great occasion of moment to world history. It is as it were the moment when the abashed Prakrti has withdrawn her dark inconscient hold on the purusa, the ignorant, so that he may perceive himself as the One in the many in relative manifestation born out of delight. Such an epoch is possible to human ignorance because of varied factors which reveal the constant descent and ascent of the Spirit Divine in many ways.¹

There are three facts in reality which have to be accepted, whatever metaphysical or occult status we grant to them either substantially or functionally; these three are God, Nature and Man (or soul) that is related to both in two different ways. Some philosophers have affirmed that Nature is all and have reduced the soul to the level or figure of herself endowed with an epiphenomenal phosphorescence called consciousness and have denied God or else accepted God as merely Glorified Nature. Some others have maintained the opposite view that the soul endowed with consciousness, being capable of creative imagination and reproductive memory, does not require any nature apart from its own mental states for its existence. These have denied nature and affirmed themselves as the final or ultimate entities. A third class of thinkers have seen the fate of

¹ I refer here to the fivefold descents of the Divine in the Pancharatra Literature.

svabhava (nature) niyati, kala,² and others and having observed the ludicrousness of a soul that is ignorant (ajna) posing itself as the Grand Ultimate, however much it may be radically superior to the Inconscient, have affirmed a Deity that is Perfect Consciousness and Delight and Power over every other entity, soul or nature, and enjoying its varied delights in and through them. They have even tended to affirm a causal relationship or rather derivative relationship between the entities. This is the central theory of any evolutionary hypothesis, that the entities must have a unitary original substance from which all are pressed out or expressed, or on which all forms are impressed, or which is veiled or self-veiling in order to yield the other graded entities.

In ancient Indian Philosophic thought, there are said to be four theories of manifestation or mere exhibition, such as the *secaka*, *jalaka*, *barhina* and *abhivyakta* or *unmesa*. Creation is merely the exhibition of the veiled: it is a spreading out of the immanent, and what is in *sukhma* or subtle contracted form is revealed as gross, *sthula*. This is the theory of creation which posits that the three entities are really shooting out or exhibition or manifestation of the One super-entity that enfolds them within itself in the subtle state which, for whatever reason of *lila* or delight of self-expression, manifests itself like the peacock its feathers, like the fisherman his net, like the cloud-burst. But, as will be seen, these theories do not exhibit the inner ascent of the Divine in and through the process. It is well-known that ancient Vedic thought not merely did affirm that the Lord became many, but also, that having created all the material universe, He entered into it as the many whilst remaining the One Supreme Being that He as Cause was. Thus when speaking of the totality of creation

² .Svet Up. I. 2.

we should have to go far beyond the ordinary limits of a mere manifestative or exhibitionistic theory.

There is to be assumed at the very beginning a substantial descent of spirit, a possession or assumption of the nature of matter with all its grades of Inconscience, for indeed there cannot be assumed a positing or '*anstoss*' of a not-self or non-consciousness standing over against the self or spirit. It is a veiled or self-veiled consciousness for the purpose of working out a creative end a secret and occult activity in and through the inconceivable opacity and resistance of the matter it has formed. Now it may be asked whether it is possible for a consciousness to veil itself in such a way as almost to abolish its very nature as consciousness. It may, therefore, be held that the consciousness will remain conscious, but what veils is a different entity, a maya or prakrti, upadhi or what not, which is different from the consciousness. Now we may say that if we merely accept the causal theory of *derivation* from consciousness of the matter then we will be faced with the problem of determining the 'how'. We should not forget that Primal Consciousness should be perfect, self-delighting and self-perfect, which can be at once the change and changeless, becoming and being and all. The Supreme Consciousness can and does manifest itself as and in the matter wherein it plays its supreme role of a firm and foundational substance of life and mind and all else that follow on its wake, as the firm tenement of life that possesses mind and all the planes above and below. On this foundation of matter, there is the descent *again* from the Supreme and of the supreme spirit in renewed manifestation, gradually and successively, of the informing principles of organization of matter, rescuing it from the dull beat of repetition and round of existence to a sense of the awakening potencies of its own elemental nature. Life grows out of this homogeneous matter and diversifies its forms and thus reveals its manifoldness. But when life began, there also manifested the individuating function of diversity, which is sometimes referred to matter itself but which in reality must be

considered to be the core of the spiritual multiplicity that has descended firstly as life, and grew into mind, and is now moving forward to the recognition of that unique unity that is concealed from itself in order to discover the delight of the many. For there is in truth a delight in manyness as there is in oneness, a delight in relative manifestation as there is in absolute existence, and if the self or spirit wished to participate in that isolation of itself from the rest and even as against the rest, whatever the consequences of the disrupted harmony, it has to veil itself or become ignorant or play the role of ignorance of the rest and the all else to which it is absolutely tied. For ignorance is this non-cognition of the relationship and unity, and reality of this unity. The soul or man is thus incarnate amidst matter already having registered his growth and therefore mastered the intricate mechanism of matter having lived and moved and had his being in it as a child of matter, playing the ignorant (ajna) for the purpose of some inward delight of his many-nature. The supreme Spirit in its manyness has descended into the womb of matter, vivified it and made life emerge out of it through His inner propulsion in order to extricate the potencies of his own Perfections in the conditions of relative and opaque existence. This is the secret of the inwardness of evolution. There is here seen no outward force, a carpenter or maker, a Twastr, who fashions the armaments or ornaments or animals or objects, but an innate undeniable propulsion which seems to organize life in patterns of unique complexity.³

It is a secret of spiritual evolution that the force or power that operates within matter and living forms and leads up to new

³ Bergson was right when he affirmed that in evolution he did not see goal but an inward propulsion from behind urging on the *élan vital*. The inwardness is the essential characteristic of organism, though this inwardness in instinct is conditioned by the environment to which it adjusts.

and higher planes of ascent, identifies itself with the initial substance or foundation and rears itself as if it were that substance itself that has decreed its ascent and innate revelation. If man appears as a child of matter, and even consciousness appears as an effect or resultant or emergence out of matter, itself a form of that Spirit, an earlier form, has so clearly wrought the instruments and organisms and senses out of it by closest association with it.

“For man is precisely that term and symbol of higher existence descended into the material world in which it is possible for the lower to transfigure itself and put on the nature of the higher and the higher to reveal itself in the forms of the lower” (Arya, I, p.39).

“For man, the head of terrestrial nature, the sole earthly frame in which her full evolution is possible is a triple birth. He has been given a living frame in which the body is the vessel and life the dynamic means of a divine manifestation. His activity is centred in a progressive mind which aims at perfecting itself as well as the house in which it dwells and the means of life which it uses and is capable of awaking by a progressive self-realization to its own nature as a form of the Spirit. He culminates in what he always really was, the illumined and beatific spirit which is intended at last to irradiate life and mind with its now concealed splendours” (ibid., p. 172).

Thus the evolutionary theory of the moderns is accepted in so far as the evolution is a gradual unfolding of greater and greater complexities in the inner structure of matter which lead to emergence of new characteristics of life and mind. Man has thus a triple birth, a birth in matter, a birth in life and a birth in mind. His body is thus an expression of his varied and continuous adaptations through many births and rebirths where in his adaptations have made him master of the principles of

material and vegetative and mental life. But with mind there has happened a stupendous transformation. Man began to be aware of the intrinsic gulf that separates himself from the vast mass of matter and even other forms of life. Though Biology has striven to show that there is no break in evolution, yet it has been unable to show that there are no yawning gulfs or missing links. Nor has embryology been able to substantiate that man indeed recapitulates the life-history of the universe during his embryonic state. One other thing also has been observed that so far as the differentiations of the senses and mental functions are concerned there has been the maximum of material possibility achieved in man's evolution.

A mechanical theory, a vitalistic theory and a mental theory of evolution are all that modern science has been able to arrive at, and the result is disappointing. The vitalistic theory surrenders something fundamental to the mechanical, and the mentalistic theory cannot explain the inward drive of the process of evolution. The spiritual theory of evolution makes a departure. It is concerned with the continuous richness of the spiritual nature in all planes, and according to or in tune with the laws of each plane there is registered the perfection of exhibition of the spiritual nature. The individual or cosmic evolution is determined by a consciousness or self-consciousness of the mastery of the lower. In cosmic evolution such as in matter or Inconscience or Ignorance, there is not the self-conscious effort to control and determine the environment. When mind came into existence there has also happened the need to adapt consciousness to ends that are desirable to it. It is here we have the great gulf. But here even, science has shown that there is no opposition between mind and matter, for mind governs and adapts and understands the laws of matter and vital life and utilizes them for its own conscious and planned purposes. But this is not much. Inventions reveal the creative possibilities of mind, but they do not reveal the possibility of a total transformation of the material and vital nature that man is, not to

speak his own mental nature. There are two worlds or rather three worlds or levels, – the world of the body with its sympathetic nervous system which is not amenable to his will except under great tapas or yogic control, his vital plane which moves in unconscious ignorant ways of instinct, not again amenable to consciousness and intellectual government, and lastly, the ineffectual angel of mind that struggles with forces it does not understand except superficially. It may be asked whether man cannot evolve a new consciousness and whether he is not indeed aware of a type of consciousness within himself that is higher than what he has—an intuitional or overmind consciousness which can grasp the inner necessity of evolution. As yet such a consciousness has not become the chief power on own planet. It has not become general; only in particular minds or souls have it manifested with something of that force that transforms minds into superminds or gods.

We must ask ourselves here whether this upward process that has happened so far has not been the inward propelling force cosmically of the Spirit, and when mind came into the field, this Spirit as the indwelling seer has informed and led man to his present mental plane which has in some measure organized itself on the foundations of the prior productions or emergences. The need for this *interiorising of spirit* in matter and life and finally as indwelling seer (*antaryamin*) in the mental creation in each individual shows that for the first time the *antaryamin* manifested his unique *unitas multiplex* nature in the texture of mind or the ego. But the vicissitudes of this mind with its superficiality and pseudo-simplicity has led up to this present state. The *antaryamin* thus far has been propelling, even in an unconscious manner, and guiding, even in a subliminal manner, the mind in its conduct and relation and commerce with the universe of other souls. It is here we find the maladjustments between mind and nature, mind and mind, and misery instead of delight has begun to play the major role. Man now faces a new environment of conflict and his former adaptations are capable

of helping him in the new situations. Man must be surpassed if mankind itself has to realize the immense possibilities of the Spirit. The human individual has indeed striven in manifold ways to solve the riddle of the Sphinx. Theories of Illusion, Superterrestrialism, Materialism and partial perfectionism through occult practices, have all been tried to the limit in Buddhism, Jainism, Absolutism and Illusionism, and Carvakism. Mental theories suffer from one radical defect of being based on mere inference and partial understanding and partial emphasis. Even eclecticism of the mind do not bear the stamp of truth and appear as jumbles; and the several eclecticism, Greek or Hindu, are comparable to the varied shake-ups of the kaleidoscope, not fundamental integral expressions of Spiritual Reality. Sri Aurobindo's great contribution consists in having realized at the very start that philosophies of mind suffer from a radical defect and can lead only to Agnosticism ultimately, however enlightened that may be.

So far we have seen evolution as being an inward propulsion leading to the manifestation of variegated forms of life and mind and already promising that culmination by means of an idealism which seeks an inward drive, it does not find, in the material and vital and the mental. Man caught up in the net of his own illusions has now to discover within himself and above himself a power and a consciousness exceeding immensely anything that he knows of. Baulked and thwarted, mind has come across the radical knot of its own existence and has become unhappy. Seeking to escape from itself, it has discovered that all ways of escape lead to prison-houses of illusion and nihilism. As Bergson pointed out, it is imperative, as it has been imperative, on the part of some rare souls to break through the shell of intellect and mere vitality and materiality into the free open spaces of the higher consciousness that is pure duration. Sri Aurobindo recognizes this possibility in the Divine descent as Avatar, just as I have pointed out the descent of God as

antaryamin, the many of the One. The importance of the avatar to evolution does not consist in the mere statement of the fourth adhyaya of the Gita:

“Paritrānaya sādhanam vinasaya ca duskṛtam.....”

but more the upliftment of humanity itself to the acceptance of the Higher and Highest consciousness which the Spirit Transcendent brings into play on the material or terrestrial plane. A close inspection of the avatar doctrine will reveal that each descent either direct, that is, *ayonija*, or through human wombs (*yonija*) registers a large upheaval of material and organic orders which resonate with the Descent and thus gather into themselves something of that germ or seed which would organize new life in them. But the acceptance of the law of the higher, and not merely the tolerance of the higher, is the key-note. For the avatar is not merely a catalytic agent nor a kathartic principle, but an evolutionary principle – a germ or seed thrown into the womb of mind to grow in it and manifest itself in it as a child of mind. Thus the avatar is not to be considered as a miraculous intervention, as a mere messiah of hope or avenging angel but a creating God, a transforming Spirit; and so is it accepted in the figure of Trivikrama, He who made three strides and has become the Lord God of All.

The Lord, who is the avatar, is not therefore the warrior fighter for the God and destroyer of the Evil alone, but also the Teacher of mankind about the Higher Principle, the principle that He is indeed in all, as the person who propels the round of existence in all (*bhramayan sarvabhutani*) through His Infinite Power. Thus it is in and through this Divine Teacher that the human disciple can ever hope to break through the restricting forces of the earlier formations, suited admirably though they are to those limited purposes. It is the Teacher Divine who informs the individual that he is not a mere constellation of desires, nor a mere ego isolated and limited, but in verity the instrument of the

Divine Antaryamin. To turn inward to this central principle within one self who is, be it known, also the central principle of all else, is the saving knowledge. To enter into this inner *sanctum sanctorum* of one's being, the antaryamin, is to establish a continuity that has been sundered by the earlier diversifications for the realization of this unique diversity that resolves itself into or resonates with or mirrors the entire universe. It is therefore that evolution has to proceed on lines of higher consciousness that at once appears inward and interiorised self of oneself and all that one is and yet is transcendent to it in a continuity that goes far beyond all cosmic limits. It is this that is at once the strength and the soundness of the evolutionary ascent into Divine Nature.

Whatever might be the finality or goal visible to matter and mere life and there is certainly no possible way of speaking of any finality to material evolution or vitalistic evolution⁴ – the human being is conscious of fourfold ends of dharma-arthakama-moksa, which it is incapable of deciding or determining with any conclusiveness. Hastening confusedly to unknown ends modern man has come at last to a state of perilous apology for life, knowing not definitely as to what is dharma, what is real wealth, what is desirable and what is liberation. It would be beyond the scope of this essay to detail the intellectualistic, mystical, economic and politico-ethical attempts. Suffice it to say that no man seems to be certain about any one of his many pursuits. Under such circumstances, the necessity is for a clear and decisive 'way of welfare', the true path of ascent into a nature that shall satisfy the inward being.

⁴ Bergson and the emergent evolutionists have denied any goal to Duration and Process. Novelty seems to be their one fixed idea!

This path is the path of transcendence and perfection through a growing into the Divine Nature by a personal and intimate relationship which is forged and fostered by total offering of the entire nature for the play of the higher forces. Man is now a square peg in a round hole. It is through the incidence of the Higher Power and Consciousness that he could adapt himself totally to the universe of the Divine. At the present state, man is not able to find any refuge in philosophy or incomplete religion of the mind but only in the transcendent descending force of the Divine.

In the earlier descents we have not any adverse force nor individuated protest from the lower. But in the mind and its body there have been set up autograms which refuse to yield up their structure and their function or modify their functions or obey the dictates of the mind and the higher consciousness. Man has made a prison-house, perfect, well-protected against new rays of light. It is for him to throw open his prison-house for he is also the prison-keeper. This is the next step in the spiritual ascent which has to be taken, for man has built up a notion of liberty which truly is the inward initiative in all evolutionary processes which cannot be smothered at all even through the threat of annihilation. It is the instinct for liberty—that mystico-fanatical zeal for freedom which is the sign of a living and growing consciousness which rebels against every encroachment by whomsoever. This inwardness of the instinct for freedom, expressed as moksa, vinasa, has to be turned into account by a free choice of the Higher Supramental Consciousness, whose knowledge is the Vidya that is necessary for any ascent. Then also is *sambhuti* possible, the fourth birth, which is the beginning of a birth that knows no lower descents, or degradation into the realm of matter, for it can live in these lower levels too with a freedom and omniscience and perfection without losing its poise and power and puissance. Beyond this fourth are other levels of Consciousness which the present man cannot appreciate.

Thus whilst we appreciate that the thirst for the supramental light and evolutionary propulsion reaching up to it are all that man can possess, we have to seek the germinating light and transcendent power from above, woo it through prayer and surrender, through consecrated act and integral offering of our entire body, vitality and mind, so that it may create a new being of us, and through us.

It would be clear that nothing less than the descent of the Divine into us in an integral manner can alter our mental, vital and physical nature without annihilating them. This is the purna yoga—a total union leading up to a total perfection and total delight of Being and Consciousness.

We can see here that Sri Aurobindo clearly points out that the explanation of evolution and its very nature must be sought in a Dynamic Perfect Consciousness which is propelling the lower types upwards from behind. This is in line with the most modern view of evolution maintained by Prof. MCDougall and Prof. Bergson. Secondly, the evolutionary hypothesis is not complete if it merely accepts a mere inner drive towards multiple forms that only register repetition and duplication but not progress. On the other hand, the theory of inheritance of acquired characters of Lamarck, which had fallen into disfavour at one time and has been returning to its own, does not go far except as showing that life has a wonderful capacity for adapting to changing environment and retaining this knowledge in an almost unconscious manner. It is when we come to mind and consciousness, we find that the ramifications, and demands on life are so great that adaptation seems to be running on no settled lines except in certain limited lower mental planes. But what with the diversities of mental capacities and inventive ability and memory and selectivity, evolution has passed far beyond the age of mere adaptation to environment. Mind began to adapt the environment to its needs. Limitations soon came up and destructive possibilities of mind began to loom large. Witness

the calamitous results of a progressive, inventive and masterful science yoked to the aboriginal demands of space and food and leisure. Sri Aurobindo points out that it is imperative that this situation must be changed, and changed immediately, by a total acceptance of life and matter and mind: matter with its materialistic foundation, life with its dynamical activity, and mind with its intellectual discernment are all needed, but they have to operate in tune with the laws of Spirit, the Supramental Divine. This is a departure in the history of evolutionary hypothesis. It was, however, known early enough in Indian Yoga that the transformation of personality (*kaya-siddhi*), salvation or liberation (*mukti*) just like inspiration and vision are not mechanical effect of ritualistic practices or psycho-physical askesis but are due to the Grace of God or due to the actual descent of God Himself into this human vessel in some fullness or partialness.

The Pancaratra system has spoken of fivefold descents of the Supreme Transcendent into His creation and his creatures, registering the continuity of His indwellingness in all through His power, knowledge, lordship, strength, luminosity and Consciousness. Evolution of the world is sustained as a continuous process by Him. Having created the world of matter, as the Cosmic Deity who is three-fold as *Samkarsana*, *Aniruddha* and *Pradyumna*, He entered into the creation instigating and impelling the material categories up to the level of the mind and ego and senses. Then He descended into the many selves as their indwelling Lord Ruler *Antaryamin*, and even into matter itself as the object of adoration and perfection of Deity as the *Arca*. When man had arrived at the level of mind and intellection and was craving for guidance, He descended into the terrestrial as the *Avatar*, showing the path and destroying false paths, rescuing and restoring the knowledge of the Divine who is the One Supreme Lord manifest at the five-fold—*unitas quintuplex nature*. Corresponding with this description of the Deity we should conceive of the five-fold

births⁵ or evolutionary steps till we reach in the integral understanding of the Acra in matter or visible form, the Antaryamin in all souls, the Avatar in higher or supramind, the Cosmic unity of matter and spirit in the Vyuhā and finally the Great Transcendent, Para, beyond all our comprehension.

In pancaratra literature however except for the Avatars, and to some extent the Arca-images, the rest may have come into existence on this terrestrial scheme successively, as it has been said that they too have come into being for the good of creation. The Avatars and the Arca are considered to be descents full and complete of the Divine as much as the rest but having a personal relationship of teacher and adored objects of the devotees. For it is personal relationship that is the path and the way to transcendence: a surrender to the Avatar or Arca is the immediate cause of the flow in of the Prasada or Grace which is not merely of love but of supernal light and knowledge, reciprocating the individual's willingness to follow Him alone. Periodic inundation or descent of the Higher or supramental consciousness or Spirit Force has been the one sign of a jump over to a new life, transformation or conversion. The constancy with which this inundation occurs till it becomes like the unceasing flow of oil (tailadhara) or like the Himalayan-soured Ganges (which in mystical or occult consciousness signifies the

⁵ Life Divine, Vol.ii, p.719: "May the people of the five births accept my sacrifice; those who are born of the light and worthy of worship." Rg.V. X, 53.5.

Cf.

Visvakssena Sam: Caturvidhasya Bhagavan mumuksunam hitaya vai
Anyesamapi lokanam srstisthiyanta siddhaye

Jayakhya Sam: speaks of Purusa, Acyuta and Satya as the vyuhas of Para
Visnu or Vasudeva instead of Pradyumna Aniruddha
and Samkarsana.

Another aspect of these descents lies in the fullness of manifestation of the divine in each of the descendents. Cf. Santi sloka of Vaj. Samhita

Supramental force that destroys all faults and sins and elevates and emancipates and transforms), will determine whether this human vessel will stand it or not. But stand it must and it will. The flood of supramental force will move slowly into the individual, thanks to the guiding hand and seer-wisdom of the Teacher, and transform and strengthen till it has made itself capable of withstanding the full flood of the Supramental Power even as the Ancient Siva has shown it to be possible. Siva is our Teacher, the standing Avatar of Master Supramental consciousness which he doles out to his devotees – the devotees of the Higher Heaven. The story of Bhagiratha-Sagara really reveals this great supramental descent into veriest matter which gave to it life and mind and has struggled to lead up to supramental regions but is awaiting the tapas and the Surrender of modern man to stand up to it.

Sri Aurobindo's theory of descent and ascent as the cardinal principle of evolutionary existence which leads up to the Divine integration of all levels under and through the Supramental Consciousness far exceeds any explanation that has been given by modern evolutionists.

8. SRI AUROBINDO

The philosophy and the personality of Sri Aurobindo have been before the world-public for well nigh quarter of a century. They have revealed meaning to us – the goal towards which mankind has been moving. That goal is the perfection of the individual in the context of world purposes. The dignity of the human individual which has received such great emphasis and attention in recent times has a source and goal other than the human individual as we know him in the history of human development. Man is seeking ends of perfection and peace, of unity and unifiedness, of values and worthiness. The great ideals of mankind were started again and again by the mystics on the one hand and perfectionists on the other. There have been men who have sought immortality in the physical body and held this to be the goal to be aimed at – alchemists and siddhas have been many. Evolutionists have added their own strength to this belief – mankind is to be transcended and the goal of evolution is the beyond-man, or the Superman. Man is the link towards godhood. The earth itself is the place for making of the gods. The ideals of liberty for man, equality of all men, and the fraternity of all have been adumbrated by the politicians following on the footsteps of religious mysticism. But how man himself could achieve these ideals or realise them has been the problem.

Religious ideals seem to demand the climate of renunciation of all life-values, such as wealth, power and comfort. Everywhere the saints preferred to go to the desert and attain their liberation as well as their communion with God or the Absolute of Religion. This is the wisdom (*viveka*) that supports the renunciation (*vairagya*) and liberates from the bondage of the world, its fears and terrors and sorrows. But political life as well as ethical life demand the actualisation of the ideals in the context of the society – human society. Political ideals and religious ideals seem to need each other and in fact we have the

great attempts to bring down the ideals of religion into the context of political and social life, this being thought of as the bringing down of the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. A student of political history can discern this continuous process by which the mystico-religious tradition has attempted to influence and modify the political and social life of peoples. The relation between the Church and the State has been characterised by unity, conflict and dictatorship of one or the other. There is however no solution to their problems-intractable is the one word by which their relationship could be characterised. This conflict could not be got over in any region of the globe. Modern studies of history on the globe scale as well as on the anthropological scale have confirmed the law of inevitable conflict between the religious ideals and the political and social ideals. The reason has been shown to be the notion of power-its essential dialectic as well as its essential *nisus* towards indivisibility. Humane efforts to solve these tensions with the help of the reasons which seeks unity and harmony of ethical and religious interests with the political power-interests have borne fruit undoubtedly in the several constitutions drafted. But the ideal seems to be receding all the while. Man has come to a point where something more than legalistic devices of mutual control of checks and balances is necessary to secure smooth social functioning. The entry of the economic into the field of politics boded the disappearance of the religious-the conflict finally had become the conflict between the economic (materialistic) ideals of equality and liberty and the religious (spiritual) ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity.

We are today striving to solve this conflict, easy enough as it should be because linguistically the ideals seem to be the same for the materialist and the spiritualist (idealist). This however is not possible for we find today that the materialists themselves are betraying their inevitable tendency to disintegrate into sects and factions even as the religious aspirations have tended to divide and sub-divide themselves. As Sri Aurobindo states this is

the flaw of the materialistic mind of our intellect itself which is following the curve of matter. So any attempt to solve the present conflict between the materialist and spiritual factors should have to seek the aid of higher-than-intellect – namely, intuition and supermind. Man's rationality which has been such a great help for his evolution has come to that point where it has to become transformed into a higher faculty or be substituted by it. Surely this appears to be almost an expression of a deep pessimism about the power of our reason and our consciousness. Many have been and are the critics who think that this call to a higher-than-reason is a betrayal of a most faithful ally and servant in our evolutionary struggle. These critics identify the intellect with man and his dignity and resolutely refuse to take the help of the more stable and satisfying function and power within man, that deeper and profoundly unifying force which lies within man himself, namely, the divine insight and inspiration which formulated in such blazing light the basic call to universal harmony and peace through the practice of fraternity, from which flow equality of opportunity and liberty of individual development.

Today we are convinced that the deep and abiding function or power of our consciousness to seek ideals owes its strength to the Consciousness above it. It is cosmic consciousness, integral vision, and unifying insight. The utilisation of this Consciousness, beyond our reason and intellect is the necessity. The discovery of this instrument of being is our present urgent concern. Its truth-nature has been testified to by scores of saints and prophets all the world over. Instead of depending on the divisive intellect or reason that creates more problems that it solves and is today at the service of lower instincts which are still more divisive, man must seek out this higher-than-intellect, the supermind, to solve his problems of living and being.

The ideal of human unity can be realised only when men begin to work in and through the higher-than-mind-and-intellect

in all their work. Just as philosophers began by distrusting their senses and depended on their reason for determining the nature of truth or truth itself and reality, so too man has to realise more and more illusory problems and solutions. The world of *maya* is not only sovereignly ruled by sense but by intellect as well. Ignorance not only persists in the realms of intellectual thought but deepens out the shadows of illusion. As the Ishopanishad states knowledge leads to greater darkness as it were—*tato bhuyaiva te vidyayagm ratah*—.

The ancient thinkers had acknowledged the Ultimate superiority of the Revelational knowledge contained in the scriptures, especially the Veda in India. Its paramount purpose was to reveal the Ultimate Reality in its eternal or true nature and also to help the attainment of freedom from death and immortality. These goals are the Ultimate goals of man, everywhere. Sri Aurobindo acknowledges this primacy and sovereignty of the *apta-vacana* or Veda. But what he really has done in modern times is to reveal that this mode of apprehension of Reality as it is in itself is not to be the peculiar and unique position of saints but of all aspiring humanity. It is something that has to be sought after seriously. Even as the *elan* for survival through adaptation to the challenging environment has produced the evolutionary process upto man, it is possible to urge mankind itself onward by striving after this new organon or instrument to transcend man. Human survival is possible only through this seeking of the higher-than-mind, to be divinised entirely in all one's parts. Not only should man be remade but also transformed into divine Nature.

The dynamics of this process is Yoga through integral surrender or total dedication to the supermind or God Himself. This union with God through surrender and total offering of oneself immediately makes for the descent of this superconscious or supramental force into one's Nature and gradually begins to transform him. Similarly it brings about

dynamic changes in the environment and relations through the unifying quality of its action. May be cooperation, may be said to get first emphasis against competitive approach, peaceful co-existence or tolerance might replace fanaticism and bigotry and warfare. But this is undoubtedly due to the already present operation of the higher type consciousness through the mental being – thanks to the work of the ancient seers and sages. The total change is called for today because of the increased knowledge of science and the discoveries made by man. These too are due to the operations of the higher-than-intellect consciousness as even the scientists have stated. Intuition or the inventive unconscious, or what you will, has made for the leaps in our knowledge and techniques. The religious would call it the act of grace of God, whereas the materialist would affirm that it is due to insight and intuition-natural operations of mind itself in its confrontation of matter and situation. May be even the mind itself is the operation of matter or otherwise. In any case in the fields of science intuition or the higher mind has been continuously operative. The stretch of this operation into fields of human behaviour or sociology would lead to formation of new associations or units of social organization which would abolish the lower-type associations of the beehive and ant-hill, or primitive clan and social colour-units or economic units or functional units or castes or patterns of culture. If at first the higher type associations seem to break up the lower ones it is only to erect a more dynamic and universal union. Thus at the beginning there was the rise of religions which sought unification of all mankind under the ideology or the ritual of one creed or church. However this religious approach to the whole of mankind helped only to some extent. The unification of man took several steps and directions, and history is replete with the stories of these religious, political, national, sectional, unions or sects whose rivalry and struggle have littered it. Sri Aurobindo in his two seminal works *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity* has canvassed this large area brilliantly. The progress of man however has nevertheless been maintained. The

ideal has been often dimmed but never completely abolished from man's vision. Seers and saints, warriors of knowledge have striven to untarnish and uncover the ideal to man, so that he may be aware of his large destiny. A world union is undoubtedly our goal, but it cannot be achieved either by the consuming zeal of baptismal religions or economic socialism such as communism that drives out the individual. It must be known that the real strength of communism is its drive towards human worth and dignity of being for himself in and through the society. Nationalism, itself a unity, becomes at a later stage an obstacle to world unity. Racialism is itself confronting a new dimension of human relationship. Only the souls in all strata and all religions and cultures who have listened to the call of the superman and partaken of the supramental activity can forge the unity of man in Godhood, brotherhood and freedom. Our techniques of international cooperation in all fields are today informed unconsciously by the supramental goals and this itself is due to the descent of the supramental Nature into everyman awakened or unawakened to its ingress.

Sri Aurobindo chanted this great mantra of the superman and held out the hope of a world union through divine consciousness that is love or true fraternity and sharing. It is our duty to remember Him with gratitude on this day of our political and national and spiritual freedom.

* (Broadcast from A.I.R Madras on 17.8.1963)

9. SRI AUROBINDO^{*}

I am very grateful for the opportunity that has been given to me to speak this evening on the eve of the celebration of the Jayanti of Sri Aurobindo...

As for the important question raised, I can say that I have been very sincerely trying to follow a different line of thought, which my country has given to me through tradition. I must confess, that I am fundamentally convinced of certain truths of one system of philosophy of which I am aware. It is also a matter for confession that I understood my Ramanuja much better through Sri Aurobindo than I was able to do through others. He, it was that made me enter into the *sadhana* of the whole thing. Whilst I am very clear as to what is *tattva*, *hita* and *purusartha* and that in India we are not interested in what is called *kama* and *artha* and whilst we have throughout guided ourselves to the one single goal which any man ought to seek and will seek inevitably, that is freedom, I feel that this freedom requires a series of delineations. I consider that Sri Aurobindo has provided a fundamentally integral knowledge of the *hitas* and *purusarthas*. About his *tattva*, I think he has not deviated from the most ancient statement: “Ekam Sat, Viprah Bahudha vadanti – Sarvam khalvidam Brahma”. He has not played a different tune, nor are we prepared to play a different tune. That is the most important fact we have to recognise. Whether you call God or the Ekam, ‘Brahman’ or Eswara or by whatever name He is known, or by whatever personality He dominates the world, I can say that it is not at all in contradiction to this

^{*} from an Address delivered at the Jayanti celebrations in August 1956 under the auspices of Sri Aurobindo Study Circle, Madras.

original statement of “Ekam Sat, viprah bahudha vadanti – Sarvam khalvidam Brahma”.

We have had evolution, may be historically conditioned. We have worshipped Sri Vishnu at one time, Shiva at another time and Brahma at yet another time. We may also be worshipping lesser ones that is, the sons of these or personalities of the One. But I need not take you to mythology. Mythologies grow in the consciousness of the people, and have value for a particular people. A truth might have to be emphasized for the particular purpose of divine action, but that certainly does not mean that you ought not to search for Him and that you are merely to accept what is called a custom in the matter. It is necessary for us to know the whole Brahman, if it is possible. That it is impossible, some have told us. I am not grudging them that truth. But I am saying that I want to know the whole. Nobody can tell me that I should not aspire to know the whole. I hold that the Gita is a fundamental scripture. It is, and it is claimed by everybody who has some reverence for Sri Krishna that it is a Upanishad. It is a distilled essence of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Please note that it is not something that contradicts any portion of the Vedas. It is something that is the essence of the Vedas, the Brahmanas, Mantras and Upanishads put together. There are many people who pay lip homage to Brahmanas. I feel that the mantras are interpreted in the Brahmanas. The meaning of the mantras cannot be understood apart from the Brahmanas in which they are used. I am not making a very wild statement, but I will rather trust in the genius of the ancients who have put them together as one scripture. Again, I must say, to Sri Aurobindo’s credit that he brought us back to this recognition.

Nobody else has drawn attention to the great volume of Brahmana literature, which is slighted by the Westerners as meaningless rituals and so on. Sri Aurobindo said that there is another cue offered in the matter. That cue is that yoga is not to

be understood in the naturalist way, but in the *adhyatmika* way. Even for that suggestion we should be grateful. We are provided with an apparatus of mind to see that particular literature with a different vision and hope. To-day, if there is something which we hold as fundamentally capable of providing us a clear knowledge of the hereafter, the Brahmanas provide it. Take away the Brahmanas. There is no after-life to be explained hereafter. Even the Upanishads cannot grant you knowledge of after-life. It can grant you freedom and that freedom may be meaningless. So far as that point is concerned, I feel that Sri Aurobindo has given us a lead, if not a fuller explanation. I do not say that he has reconciled, or that he has supplanted this in order to implant himself in that place. Not at all. He has provided a modern apparatus for thinking afresh on our old philosophy.

Secondly, we are accustomed to value our Gita. Sri Aurobindo holds that the Gita is a Gita of liberation. He agrees with our ancestors that the Gita is the Moksha Sastra, not at all intended for the lonely purpose of having an action done and somehow done. That is one way of looking at it. If it is a Moksha Sastra, what is the moksha we are seeking? The greatness of Gita would depend upon its richness of contribution towards general liberation, starting with a little liberation from my doubt as to the conflict between custom and my duty, or a higher or new morality introduced into the world—the morality of *Ahimsa*, the morality of social welfare or social life, or preservation of social *dharma* and individual *dharma*. I believe that here again the problem, if it is faced as a mental being, will not be very simple.

You all know that the *Essays on the Gita* were written by Sri Aurobindo at a time when Sri Bal Gangadhar Tilak was projecting his work. In the earliest number of “*Arya*” Sri Aurobindo made the statement: “I hear that Sri Bal Gangadhar Tilak is going to bring out *Gita Rahasya*. I am sure it is going to

be very valuable, but I am also told that he holds that the Gita gives you Karma Yoga and I believe it is not the complete truth". So, he projected his own Essays on the Gita and it was written under such conditions. He held, even as some of the ancients of India have held, that Karma Yoga may be the beginning. It is necessary, but it is not the whole meaning. Even the capacity for you to perform Karma properly will not arise unless you have got the Jnana. In fact Jnana may grow by action, by performing the ritual actions. Even the performance of ritual actions will certainly lead you to Jnana, but that would not be enough, for that Jnana would only be building up itself for a greater and fuller absorption in the Divine, the enjoyment of the Divine—that is Bhakti. Jnana will transform itself into Bhakti and you will find that your works will transform themselves into devotional duties. Everything then would become just subsidiaries to Bhakti. Bhakti is the culmination. Now, the modern interpreters of the Gita would be satisfied with this type of interpretation. I should feel that most of us are satisfied with this integration of our human faculties or modes of consciousness. Mentally you can assimilate a wee bit of this and a wee bit of that, but the main contradiction between the conative, cognitive and affective levels of our Being would remain. A solution would not have come and therefore, a *sadhana* is inculcated in the whole process. Yoga is a means of *sadhana*. Yagna is a means of *sadhana*. Yagna and yoga have all the same purpose, that is the transformation of one's relationship between oneself, the world and the gods. Karma Yoga will bring a relation between the higher worlds and one's world. Yagna is for the realization for a particular dynamic interdependence of the higher and the lower worlds. As for Yaga, this may also be taken as above. But what is Yoga? Yoga is a particular relationship, which one establishes between oneself and God through knowledge. This relationship can be three-fold. It can be done through works; but it would not be done if you do only works. It is necessary to find that the Divine is within yourself and yourself is the seat of the Divine action and if you do not

know that it is the Seer, the guiding *Niyanta* within you, that is the Esvara, there is no possibility of getting into real Jnana Yoga. You must identify your true self with Brahman, but that identification can happen through works or devotion or affection. But mere *Tattva Jnana* even is meaningless. It cannot stand on its own stem. It has no roots. It must manifest itself in the action which is considered to be what we call *kainkarya* – devotional service or what we call devotion. Devotion, according to His Will is a particular methodology of approach. It is not everything that becomes Bhakti. There are two types of Bhakti. There is a particular methodology called Ashtanga Yoga in Bhakti. This is an important part of devotion for it fixes one's mind on God in surrender and submission. Bhakti would demand Ashtanga Yoga. Some ask the question "Can you love God really? Does every part of your being respond to the love of God? Is your nail loving God?" that is an important question. Nobody can love truly unless God grants one such love through His Grace. To love truly means that one cannot live without Love of God. By Love of God should one live or hold on to life. Some of the great men have withstood the test. That is why their lives, even through the shadow of time, shine. The modern interpreter of Gita is more satisfied with saying that the three Yoga have correspondence with the three attitudes or the modes of consciousness of man. I consider that the Gita goes a little deeper. It is to this point that Sri Aurobindo leads us. I do see that one important Yoga to which Sri Vaishnavism has referred is Bhara Samparpana Yoga or Nyasa Yoga. This is a unique feature of Gita. Says our Lord "*sarvadharmam parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja; aham tvam sarvapapebhyo moksayisyami, ma sucah*" – "If you cannot do all these three yogas and even if you are lingering over, surrender all of them and take me alone as your sole Refuge. Surrender unto me and I shall take you through the whole yoga." *Yogaksemam vahamyaham*. Here *ksema* is freedom; and Yoga is again to eternally abide with one's God, in all parts. This Mantra, has been expounded with extraordinary lucidity by the Sri Vaishnava Acharyas – I should

say, reverence – by the commentators of Gita. This particular verse has a broader deliberate meaning in Sri Aurobindo. Just as it has a meaning for the immediate solution of one's problems or even the higher solutions of problems in Visishtadvaita, one does not have anything that goes beyond to the higher evolution of man. For example you may find that you are not capable of achieving your self, either because of your birth or because of your status or because of your condition or because of the debacle that comes to man at any time. You may find that you are helpless on occasions. You may ask, "To whom shall I go? Who shall be the person who will save me?" it may be that I am against God also. Such a moment occurs even to an atheist. Well then, the Lord says "Even if Ravana came to me for refuge I shall save him". God says, "Surrender unto me and then see how I save you. It may not be according to your terms that I am going to save you, but it will be according to my terms. Save you, I shall." This faith in God's words you should develop. If you can do that, it is all right. I consider that the Alvars have stated this position of the omnipotence of God's Grace very firmly. Sri Ramanuja has stated it also very firmly. They have stated that surrender is a fundamental thing and that will lead us further to the ultimate state of living in God. Do not have any doubts about God's Grace. Your capacity for reasoning into God's nature or your capacity to perform Yajnas which are very costly according to some people, but which are very simple and not at all costly according to others is very slight. But we do not, nowadays, have even teachers to tell us how to perform them. For example, we all are aware that we are not able to do Karma Yoga, nor able to follow Jnana Yoga. Most of us do not know how to do Astanga Yoga and follow Panchakala Vidhi. Gita says, "I am the path. I am the *Upaya*; I am your Purushartha; In me you shall find your freedom." As to what that freedom is and what the content of that freedom is, at that point, the Gita stops. The Gita tells one to surrender unto Him. Of course Sri Krishna preaches earlier "Become of my mind, do my actions, think of me, surrender unto me and I shall do everything." Here the full

instruction is given. If a man is solely devoted to God and surrenders to Him, he has done all that has to be done (*krtakrtya*). If he does it, and does it consistently through *abyasa*, that is, pursues it, holding on to the feet of the Lord without that vice of mankind, namely *asuya*, envy and greed, he will achieve the goal, namely God Realisation which is Moksha. That is how the whole thing has been so brilliantly summarized in the last chapter of the message of Gita.

But here Sri Aurobindo was not quite happy at that particular point of conclusion. Where the Gita has left the Yoga, he starts. It is not the final conclusion of the Yoga. He starts the beginning of spiritual life or describes God's Yoga as leading to Divine Evolution. He says "You must find the Lord acting through you in every one of your limbs and in everyone of your parts and see the transformation of mind and body." The surrender of each part is necessary. You may say it is a very difficult process. You may say, "How can I surrender?" the answer is "Do not worry. Be surrendering to God. Only keep yourself fit for God. Do not obstruct God's activity." I consider this is a very great revolution of the concept of Yoga, which Sri Krishna has given to us. It is to the merit of Sri Aurobindo, I should say, that he seized upon this particular point and utilised it to its fullest, for the sake of divinisation of man. I do not say it was not anticipated.

Then, there is the problem of getting rid of the ego. In this divine Yoga, your ego would have ceased to exist without any effort on your part. It is such a difficult thing nowadays for people to get rid of their ego. Ego is the obstructor. I cannot get rid of it, for every effort to get rid of it makes it more powerful. I simply cannot liquidate my ego by own efforts. When I become humble, I claim I am the *most* humble. When I become a servant of the people, I am tempted to claim that I am the *humblest* servant of the people and I develop a peculiar *satwic* conceit, and that can be terrible. No one knew about this fact better than

the Seer of the Isha-Upanishad himself. There is this problem of getting rid of the egoness without getting rid of it actually. You cannot abolish the ego. It must be made the vehicle of the Divine. That is the only way of liquidating the ego. You must become only an instrument of the Divine. There is no other alternative. Try every other method, even by devotion. It is action, divine *kainkarya* that can liquidate egoness. It must be practised in the context of divine life with our understanding of society and man, the world and the society etc.

I hold that Sri Aurobindo is the most orthodox of modern thinkers, if only people could understand him. That is why I hold on fundamentally to the view the East is different from the West, because our value concepts are different and these are Orient and belong to the East, whereas the value concepts of the West are money and mammon, power and pelf and human comfort and pleasure. They are what we call our enemies—Kama and Artha, but that does not mean that in God's world they are not there, used through the divine attitude for the Divine. What is the purpose of God ? you may ask that question. Am I the person to say that God must do this and do that? The Sastras do say that all the four Purusharthas should be desired, but under restraint and regulation. Sovereignty, power and pelf for whom should we have, for whom should we exercise, through whom should we exercise and who should exercise? These are the three factors that have to be remembered. You start the work. The question is for whom, by whom and who? If you abolish yourself and if all are for God, by God and God's work, one can go to the forests with as much ease as one could walk into a palace; and he becomes verily a sage. It must be said that only when the human consciousness is changed, then only his present standards of action can get changed. Unless one has peace that is of God, he can hardly be fit for change. One must think of that particular aspect that peace comes only through the Divine.

It is asked, "How does evolution really proceed at that point? Is material transformation possible? Should we think of a better fitted man for the enjoyment of Divine existence other than the present human being? Is the body, which the superman gets, different from ours? Should it be different from ours or should we get some experience beyond this body?" All these are definite questions. Is evolution possible beyond this particular human being in this world? I am not here, of course, standing as a Zoologist or anyone of those who are speculating as to the past and future of man. I leave it to those people who think that matter moves the mind. I wish they accept it. But for me and for those who think like me – who are a very small band of people—I hold that mind rules matter and it has been ruling matter so far. Now, I want the Divine mind to rule this matter. That is all the difference. The Gita has stated it in so many words. I have not even extended its meaning. It is there, but the problem that is posed is this: Is a general evolution of all possible, which is not in consonance with Darwinian Theory of Evolution? The concept of Sarvamukti, general higher evolution, bristles with difficulties. That is, firstly an individual must change himself and then others could follow the course of Evolution. I consider that the individual must change himself first. The nucleus of a new higher Evolution is dependent on the human individual's individual evolution spiritually. For this one must know one's real nature. *Svadharmā* understood in the highest sense. Is it not then clear that each man must follow his *svadharmā*? Everybody who reads the Gita thinks that he is an Arjuna. But fighting is not the duty of everybody in the world; certainly not the duty of philosophers. That is not their *dharma* at any rate. One has to know one's *svadharmā* and act accordingly. Sri Krishna himself says: "If you refuse to fight now, you will fight later. Your *Svabhava* will make you do it." That is very important. So if I want to-day to fight, I don't know whether I may not run away from the fight as soon as it starts. That is why I say any nation, which does not give to their people, the freedom for *Svadharmā* and *Svabhava*, will not prosper. Therefore, I hold that Sri

Krishna was right in asking Arjuna to fight. Do not say that Gita is only telling me this and I am only to fight. Even if a nuclear bomb comes here, I am not going to fight. I may not fight. There may be no need to fight. What I am saying is that one has to find out the Divine in oneself and that is a path that leads to good conduct and this is unique in Hinduism. Sri Aurobindo emphasizes this aspect that Divine multiplicity is something, which you must revere as a unique universal fact. The individual is the universal; the universal is the individual, provided at this point you make yourself a perfect instrument, delegate or part of the supreme consciousness of God.

Now, as for the transformation, Sri Aurobindo says we have gone so far up to this point in Natural Evolution. The truth of Natural Evolution should be sought in Spiritual Evolution that is underway. We find that, that with all our religions for the past 5,000 years, nobody seems able to transform or bring God to Earth. Some say that the best that a man can afford to do in this world is to get himself liquidated for ever, having no rebirth. That may be a very easy solution. We cannot have a future here. Why should we have a future here, when there are other worlds, which are much better? Surely, I admit that. I do not like to leave my country. We are a people who are having what we may call a "land-love". Why should I go away? Can I not make my house, which is dusty and stupid, much better? Well, let me ask that question. So also, I ask of the human being "Can he not be changed for the better?" God has given me some transcendent desires, which the *artharthis* (material mindedness) cannot fulfil. It is here that Sri Aurobindo's emphatic assertion that there is a way and manner, the very Gita way and the Gita manner, comes in. God descends to lift up, rescue and transform the human world into Divine World—or a world that reveals the Eternal Divine Laws. This is possible because the Divine is all love and love is the only thing that descends or condescends to transform the human process of Evolution. God's love for man is something very different from man's love for God. With the best

of intentions man asks something of God. Even if he says "I do not want anything from you", he lurkingly wishes something to be given in return for his offering, for his prayers or surrender. It may be just ecstasy that he craves. Therefore, I consider that true Bhakti seeks of *Bhoga* of the Divine Form. It is an enjoyment of God through Yajna and Yoga. The three yogas in the light of God's yoga become the divinised Yogas of Love (*Bhoga*), yoga and Yajna. Thus the defects of commission and omission in Karma, Jnana and Bhakti Yogas transcended. For when you surrender your love not for the fulfilment of your limited personality, but by the entire offering of it to God for His fulfilment, what happens to you? There, God reveals his love to you by giving Himself to you. He takes up his residence in you consciously and moulds it and changes you wholly. He wants to see whether by giving all the ecstasies of *Bhoga*, Yoga and Yaga He can make you feel yourself with Him. The order of the Yogas gets reversed, if I may say so, and all knowledge and works proceed on the basis of Love or full enjoyment of God's Nature. You see that the Divine action is from top to bottom and not from bottom to top. This is what we mean by descent (*avatarana*), which transforms the individual and leads to his ascent or evolution. He must act in you. What is the vehicle of His action? What is the particular structure that He creates within you, that structure which will act through you? In earlier evolution, up to man, the human finite rational mind with all its logical dialectical patterns and characteristics was created by God through which knowledge flowed to man of higher things. Now, Sri Aurobindo says, the Divine has got His own Divine Mind through which He acts. That is what I call, the apprehension by man of a particular structure, which acts universally in all men. On the other hand, you want some clarity on the operations of the super-mind, through even your mind, or your ego, which the supermind has begun to use. In the case of the human mind or *manas*, it is a delegate of the ignorant ego. It is doing the functions of the finite ego. This position is altered. The supermind becomes the ruler and your finite ego becomes

the ruled. A new function is taken over by the ego. It becomes the instrument of the Universal Supermind of God. That is why I say, “the Supreme Mind is the mind of God, acting through me”. Why I should say, the mind of God? For, we cannot extricate a structure from a function and a structure—a particular shape or pattern or logic of the infinite is necessary for functioning as Infinite or instrument of the Infinite. This is the rationale for postulating the actual existence of the Supermind. Another question has been raised. Whether this Supermind will be inherited as in the case of the human mind in a biological sense? I emphasise the Divine is much bigger than any mind – even the Divine Mind, because Divine is Divine and Infinite and it is merely something projecting in a universal way which will act as a common Mind for every soul which has offered itself to Him. It is not, I think, perfectly correct to say that when we speak of an inheritance of biological characteristics, there is no inheritance of acquired characteristics of spiritual life also. I will only say that we are unable to say about spiritual things, because it depends upon conscious acceptance of the Divine in one’s life by each. Samskaras in Hindu Religion played this role for mind and for the birth of the Divine Mind in us. Our Western friends are yet to tell me about how mind is getting inherited at all in the human species, because they are under the grip of a new famine, the famine of spirituality, being essentially materialistic in their approach. That is why I hold they are not the persons to explain to me what my spiritual situation is, what the human situation is and so on, because I find that on every point they are wrongly approaching the problem. The lower law cannot explain the higher phenomenon. Consciousness cannot be explained by Unconsciousness.

A point was raised with regard to the rationality of the concept of Avatar. It has been said that the order of the Ten Avatars shows ancient’s knowledge of the evolutionary process. Here again, we should not accept that it is mere Natural Evolution. Even Prof. Haldane has not given his full credence to

this. Well, I do not think Sri Aurobindo himself depended upon this explanation very much. The real argument hinges on the transformation of the man made by the Descent of God in a plane of being so as to being about the evolution of a mental structure, appropriate for a higher kind of life, not by the individual and not through a resistance or reception to the environment or as a response to the challenges of new situations. The Divine has provided earlier the type of mind which creates its structure for each level of Evolution. To-day we have the Divine providing the Supermind which creates its functional structure for a higher humanity. It must be inheritable by future Humanity through such integration as have achieved with It. There is a need for a consciousness that can accept a profounder concept of Spiritual Evolution, which is an extension of the Natural Evolution, in a sense, even modifying our views of it.

Sri Aurobindo's main thesis is very similar to that of theosophy on certain lines. There is no contradiction so far as the main points are concerned. I have only to say that the formation of what is called the Supermind, which is very different from what Mr. Fichte or Nietzsche or any other person from the West thought about it, is a Structure with its own unique functions and laws. This may be called the Mother also or Mother-Consciousness. There is appropriateness in it. The appropriateness lies in this, that just as the human race was mothered by the mind - *manas* and has become *manava*, so also the Supermind is the womb of those willing loving minds, which will be transformed and be made divine. Our Mind has to be born anew of it. This is a very important point, because many people who think that evolution is coming from below do not know that Sri Aurobindo emphasized that the Avatar concept, even by the formation of the higher levels of consciousness, is much more important and in fact the precursor of the ascent of the lower. The Higher attracts the lower to Itself, even as if something magnetic is placed above, the lower jumps to it. I consider that seventy five years ago this has been already

postulated by the great masters of the Theosophical Society and later on continued with such profound luminosity and conviction of the traditional style of Sri Aurobindo. I hold the view was open to the question that it was non-traditional and unorthodox in the Hindu Sense; but even that particular charge cannot be leveled against Sri Aurobindo. For, however much, he may differ from Sayana (and Sri Ramanuja differed from Sankara and Madhva still more from Sankara – that did not make them alien to orthodoxy), Sri Aurobindo has been loyal to the Ancient Prasthanas of Vedanta. It was as much our part of the tradition and Sri Aurobindo has given us a renewed tradition. For the confirmation of his Spiritual Truths Sri Aurobindo went to the Vedas, Upanishads, the Gita and above all he went to the *Agamas*, namely the *Tantras* and in one of his biographical incidents it is narrated that he taught some of his disciples the Bhagavatsastra Pancharatra. Sri Aurobindo taught us to actually see that the Divine descends in each one of us and actually acts within us. Regarding Sarva Mukti, that it is what all will evolve to have, he was speaking in a sensible way. He was quite certain that if a few people will take to this new *sadhana*, this evolution will lead to the general spiritual evolution. All evolution, including natural evolution started with a change or mutation in some individual or individuals and later was by a process of inheritance biologically proliferated and become general. Thus a few individuals will form the nucleus of a Race, a New Race. The Divine Humanity will mean Heaven on Earth – Infinite Consciousness – Bliss here by the transformation of the Earth or finite consciousness and Ignorance. Here, there can be Heaven. Our Great Acharyas have spoken that where God is, there is their Vaikunta. They did not want to go to the other world. This truth Sri Aurobindo has reaffirmed with great beauty and power. Therefore, I salute the Great Teacher who has given me, in my own life, some aspiration to realize what the great teachers of the past have told us and has added just that little force, may be a mighty force, by which my life may be completely transformed and made Divine. I only hope and pray that it will be

Humanity's good fortune too. Earn the measure of that great man's blessings for humanity, by which he brought the Supermind into himself and has striven to have his Yoga spread to all so that he who goes for it and who is fit, can accept it and grow in it into the Divine Nature in all his parts.

10. Sri Aurobindo - The Future of Philosophy

Every age demands a new interpretation of experience. A new interpretation however is not usually undertaken except when the already ready made traditional or conventional or old patterns of interpretation no longer could satisfy one's own conscience so to speak in respect of explanations of the new facts that swim into one's ken.

The rationalist or intellectual line of approach has been to follow the method of conservatism and seek to exhaust every way by which the facts could be explained with its sets of axioms and precedents of solutions. There is excuse for it. If it does not explain, it rationalizes and, even as in morals, there is a large amount of casuistry. We can instance the case of fundamentalists in religion and determinists in science.

The experiential approach, when it does not run to the other extreme of revolutionary thinking, realises the experience of the new factors, or the emergence of new situations, and demands a new act of philosophising. This, it may at once be stated, may appears to reflect the 'instrumentalist' method of knowledge which again feels in reason or intellect, an omnipotent tool of philosophising, albeit of life also. And there need be no contradiction between life and intellect.

A new interpretation has become imperative: this every one knows to be necessary because old ways of 'knowing' or interpreting the world around us, have not the capacity to satisfy our present needs. The instrumentalists or pragmatic way of knowledge through action is indeed valuable because it has a close relationship with facts. But even a 'will to believe' in the capacity or ability of reason to rise up to tempo of discoveries and inventions and industrial situations and

technology, has led to severe shocks on our will. An indomitable will, of course, goes a long way. The burden of civilization however is not so much the presence of new patterns of cultures emerging in the context of discoveries and modern science, but the tardy Nature of human ability to cope up with them. The significant question then for action as well as philosophy is our intellect capable of effectively coping up with the situation brought about unconsciously by science, unconsciously in the sense that applied science did not anticipate the many consequences in their turn, other than what they originally anticipated?

It must be remembered that glorious discoveries and still more the inventions of science that have made us understand the nature of the physical universe in a manner that one would have simply brushed aside as sheer impossibility, are due to the precise and deliberate and patient workings of intellect logically, and yoked to the observations and experimental methods, also products of intellect or reason. Reason and experience yoked together had undoubtedly triumphed over the inanities of both partners. How then do we justify the search for another way of knowledge than reason? This is the question that one is bound to hear for a long time Intellect can solve our problems, and rational approach or scientific approach to the problem of life and truth (at least truths necessary for life) is the best and not any abandonment of it in favour of superstition and the irrational methods of thought and action dependent on such ‘knowledge’ as may be given by them.

There are very serious thinkers of this kind, be they the realists and pragmatists or idealists. The Ultimate test of any truth is consistency or coherency with the intellectual order and senate order or action or verifiability or fruit.

As has been stated the victories of intellect are stupendous. Intellect has widened the horizon of man's mind and extended the dimensions of space and time 'infinitely'. It may perhaps be even granted that its empire would still extend what with the possibilities of space-travel. The sensate world has of course always and recently suffered eclipse, for ultra-sensory and extra-sensory phenomena are coming into the picture of modern man's facts. Will intellect solve these as indeed it has in a measure solved the sensate?

As instinctive responses have not helped to solve the problems of extended experience, and intellect was devised by evolution for meeting the new fields of sensation and action so too the extra-sensory and extra-conscious fields of life enforce the evolution of a higher than intellect tool of knowledge and action. This evolution of a higher-than-intellect being seems to be implied by the logic of growth and expansion and is not merely a speculative or imagined need. It is not a poetic anticipation or a dreamer's fantasy, though it must be confessed that true *sankalpa* may inform their fantasies, which years of hard travail of research and experimentation had tended to confirm as possible.

The crux of the matter then is: Do we need a philosophy which would lean on the old crutches of intellect and mere sensate methods of science and end up with the new techniques of 'probabilities' replacing certainties or hypotheses, or/and a philosophy that would not brush aside the new emerging awarenesses (or are they old but brushed-aside awarenesses) of fields of knowledge beyond the pale of the sensate? At the beginning let us concede that we might employ new techniques to investigate the new fields of supernormal experiences. The fact has been conceded that this is not so easy or simple a matter. Sciences deal with particulars and determine in fields of human experience laws only on the basis of calculation of probabilities – thanks to the

growing employment of statistics called a science paradoxically. The yearning for certainty may be an ideal dream and for lack of better guidance from thought as it is working in the fields of human relations and activities we may be satisfied with the ‘reliable ‘ but not the indubitable, the probable and precarious contingency of the possible. Certainty is a promise never to be kept except perhaps in the circumscribed realm of mechanical phenomenon.

But truth is an ideal value in the sense that it is what can satisfy the fullest and final yearning of man for certitude. So too beauty and love and knowledge. It would be perhaps legitimate to note at once that these so called ultimate values are integral to one another and imply one another.

There are inherent contradictions in the logic of the intellect which make it impossible to help realise the ideal values of life. However much humanists may try to discover the potentialities of intellect and a logic of integration or synthesis for it, intellect’s preoccupation with one aspect of life alone, and its inveterate bent towards analysis as the means to understand synthesis, its incurable obstinacy in the use of atomistic or fragmented sensory experiences as such unfit it for the task of ‘philosophy’ which is the apprehension of Reality as such as a whole and all elements as organic within it. Intellect is governed by (and manifests in human beings however advanced) the logic of the finite mind which however is aware of its limitations and finitude. It does not know or even become aware of the nature of the Infinite and Whole: it is a *terra incognata*.

The presence of mind or intellect higher than the finite mind and intellect is not a speculation but a real thing: and some of the world’s greatest literature which deal with ‘eternal things’ or felt to be eternal presents the features of the workings of such an overmental mind. Such an overmental

mind has certain broad features :It seems to be acting or working through a process of insight which no amount of analysis or synthesis or putting together of facts or even observation can even suggest. Its directness and immediacy and validity are beyond mind, though its presence has been in smaller measure seen to be present in all processes of life, animal and human. A steady dependence on this overmental sense or intuition or insight had produced some of the most significant works of poetry and philosophy and religion, which have the self certifying character or validity for consciousness. This is also the basic assumption of rationalism which depends on ‘axiomatic ‘ nature of truth for its starting point. That may explain why the deductive method was adopted so as to ‘govern ‘ and condition the entire process of thinking whose natural habit is to forget this ‘ system ‘ of insights.

This overmental need was stressed by Bergson and unconsciously by the irrationalists of course on grounds of both practicality and pure cognitivity or knowledge. A critique of intellect, invaluable in itself, would yet not be sufficient, and even a modification of intellect through seeking a transcendence from its mechanical practicalness and trenchant dichotomies would not meet the situation.

Not that efforts are wanting on the part of pragmatic philosophers and sociologists to rehabilitate intellect as a function devised for social action taken in its broadest sense; it has become apparent that Western Philosophy has come to a state of futility. Western Philosophy has culminated through the technological bent given to it by science in an unprecedented condition of insufficiency and incoherence.

It is not strange that it should have discovered logical positivism or linguistic logic and semantics – which Indian thinkers long ago anticipated in their derision of logical

pugilists and grammarian-dialecticians. Grammatic knowledge is no substitute for real knowledge or knowledge of Reality as All or Whole, which alone can be a saving knowledge.

Knowledge is a means to liberation from all finitude, and as means it implies a sense of efficiency or practical usefulness. Indian thought has really never served this, though what it really served was the use of knowledge for life as it is lived as merely the cycle of earning and spending, birth and death, winning and losing and so on.

Thus we return to the condition of having to reinterpret the problems of life in the West; and the East may profitably help solving the problems.

Would it not be sufficient if we just taught Vedanta to the West? Would it fill the gap or prove an incentive to philosophise with the possibilities of giving a satisfactory account of Reality with all its new discoveries and protean changes brought about by technological advance of the atomic age? The fair answer cannot be favourable to Vedanta as it is today.

Indian Philosophy has had a long history even as western Philosophy had, perhaps a longer one. In its history there are clear evidence of different levels and scales of thinking and being and adapting to the world around. Indeed this is a significant fact that several systems of thought and realisation of liberty (this ‘pragmatic’ of philosophy was never forgotten) had endeavored to present systems of reality which took into consideration several types of humanity determined by the pursuit of ends. Indeed philosophies of Nature as well as philosophies of soul, and philosophy of the Whole or the Greatest that includes both, thus entailing approaches to the conception of Reality from the physical,

psychical and total or spiritual had flourished. The Vedic including the *Upanishadic* thought and function have been taken from the Spiritual point mainly though it did define the nature of soul and Nature from its standpoint. It was in fact a true and parallel incentive that made the *Jaina* system seek a comprehensive and synthetic point of view but it was found to be a quasi-intellectual standpoint. Here we find that the systems or *darsanas*, though intrinsically capable of being derived from the large overmental standpoint of the Vedic seers who said to be the founders of these systems, later on at the hands of the interpreters or *Sutrakaras* even and *Vrittikaras* and *Bhasyakaras*, suffered an intellectual treatment, and gradually this treatment turned out to be translating in a queer way the Vedic intuition or the Rishi-intuitions. The definition of philosophy as a consistent or persistent intellectual attempt to explain reality seemed to take philosophy out of the field of experience, or restrict it to the field of sensate interpretation or interpretation of sensate experiences alone. All knowledge proceedings from the known to unknown became restricted to the knowing of the supersensory or transcendent to sense in terms of sense – a proceeding that could not but lead to anomalous and paradoxical results. Philosophy in turning to illuminate experience in terms of popular language and experience tended to foredoom itself to failure. The traditional interpretations of the sutras of several *darsanas* unfortunately record this intellectualising of supersensory experience and thus render the luminous truths granted by the use of a overmental vision dark and obscure and indeed definitely unintelligible and contradictory to sensate experiences governed by the ends of physical security and advance.

Knowledge surely is related to ends (*Purusarthas*), and is to be indeed interpreted in their terms. This is a truth that would demand consideration. But to have a knowledge of the

highest end of man would include the understanding and attainment of all in terms of that enlightenment.

Vedic knowledge as gleaned from the Upanishads that teach the Ultimate Nature of Reality and its relationship to the soul and Nature in terms of Spiritual Identity left a gap so to speak, and this gap has unfortunately not been able to be filled by our finite rationality or rationality devoted to finite ends, namely physical security and pleasure and pseudo-liberty of social dharma or law. Indeed dharma in the earliest period had reference to ritual work of the Divine, but later it had become the interpretation of social conduct so as to facilitate the pursuit of ends, the most diverse and divided, according to station, type and birth. This too is an intellectual finite process albeit not characterized by mere division and conflict. It was based on cooperation and recognition, rather too realistic, of the basic existence of differences that demand a unity. All this showed that the earlier darshanas fulfilled a limited function, and even in that they failed when they began to communicate their truths in the language of the common man or for the purposes of the understanding and emancipation of all men from ignorance. By the very same token it became impossible for all men to emancipate themselves from the language of ignorance – which is the application of language belonging to a particular level of awareness and scale of perceptions to levels of awareness and scales of perception below it.

The popular slogan in the democratic age of emancipating all, which every reformer or idealist (sometimes mystics also enter this group and perhaps even encourage such possibilities) is all to the good and commendable, but it does not work, and perhaps works when it does yielding paradoxical results.

Double-talk then seems enforced on the mystic but it may not always or in every case turn out to be a case of

cheating or hypocrisy. Provided the seer is of major character and stature, the communication of knowledge to the lower mental being or mental being is creative of a condition when it can rise up to the overmental realisation. Suggestion or creative suggestion and symbolism and use of myths and parables are implicit in the use of language of a different kind. It is the teacher of realisation or realised being who can perform this satisfactorily. But when higher truths are interpreted atomistically and literally without the backing of the creative suggestion then it becomes a grave cause of ignorance.

Philosophy of this interpretative kind or scholastic type tends to promote rather than remove ignorance and cultivates a security of knowledge that is profoundly disturbing. Obviously Sri Krsna referred to them by his significant phrase – *panditamaninah*. Professor Popper's criticism of Plato in his major work 'Open Society' misses a great point due mainly to his incapacity to perceive the different levels of awareness between men and the double talk would be seriously taken exception of when it happens on the same plane of experience, such as politics or economics or law. Surely ends do not justify the means but the question is not one of ends and means but one of growth from the levels of submental, lower mental to the mental and to the overmental levels of experience. Even within the same field of experience it is well known that some of the most advanced techniques and interpretations of science are incommunicable and popular magazine-writings of great discoveries would testify to the mystifying nature of the jargon used. The climate created by propaganda can be seriously mischievous and confusing or lead to self-deception.

Thus it would be necessary to state at once that Indian Philosophy had tended to scholastic formalism and has hardly affected the life of the people. A new revaluation of its

material is necessary, and it cannot be on the plane of intellectual rationality to which western philosophy has more seriously attached us during the past one century.

Thus to conclude our preliminary survey of present tendencies in philosophy, we can state that firstly, philosophy has tended to discard its universal function; secondly, it has tended to limit itself to the deliverance of sensate intellect as that which can give us a knowledge and realisation of the entire Reality; thirdly, it has been unable to explain a large part of Reality and committed a mistake comparable to the other serious mistake of dealing with the worlds of diverse experiences as a play of Maya or illusion or phenomenon; fourthly it has sought to make intellect just a function of practical activity in a world that is constantly developing new patterns of knowledge and community, and has ceased to consider the vaster arena of Being, which thanks to developing concern for psychic phenomena and extrasensory perceptions and yogic experiences has to be taken consideration in interpreting this fragment of Reality. The logic of the finite mind is seriously unsuited for purposes of the synoptic and organic nature of the Whole and the Infinite. Transcendent values are values of the higher consciousness and even the very cogent explanations and interpretations of the Philosophy of the Spirit by Hegel and Benedetto Croce leave the vast bulk of being out.

The darsanas in India are not in better condition. The recent interest revived in Buddhism and its values have not been radical enough and the interest seems to be rather referable to other causes than its sufficiency as a metaphysic of Reality or Society even or even Freedom.

Modern Indian Philosophers undoubtedly have been seized with these considerations and have been actively and even creatively interpreting the ancient Indian Philosophical

schools. But the climate of interpretation is for them the understanding of the West and exposition is based on the technique of western exposition with intellectual categories. Thus intuition or *Sruti* is something is but an intensified or universalised intellect and is capable of leading to Direct knowledge or *saksatkara*. But we have already pointed out that this cannot be for the overmental is not just the universalisation of and intensification of intellect but a radically different and interior knowing by identity.

In an age of confusion of tongues it is that serious thinkers try to see their way either by a return to the past or to an insight into the future guided by the goals that seem to be desirable. In the fields of philosophical thought, we can see the methods of ‘*return*’, and a careful seeker can find that with certain explainable differences the old ideas return in new garbs. In India however it is the effort to rehabilitate the past thought of the Upanishads, of the Bhagavad Gita, of the Vedas, and the yogas of karma, jnana, and bhakti and Rajayoga and so on. In every case it has not been possible to reinstate the old, for the simple reason that the world or the *zeit geist* has changed.

It must however be said that these forerunners in the Indian scene had done something that is of inestimable value. They anticipated the crises(not a single crisis but many) of the modern situation and ‘planned’ to guide the change; and the work of Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, Rabindranath, Dayananda Sarasvati, Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, and Ramana Maharshi and others at the present day can be said to prepare the dynamic of cultural change that does not seriously imperil the eternal values of the past. It is not a resurgence of the Old but the traditional coming to steady the present confusion of cultural interactions resulting in the chaos both in the individuals and the world. The urge to recover the ancient heritage or the demand to experience the

truths of Being enunciated by the ancient thinkers or both have not a little contributed to the spurt of philosophical activity. It can also be said that both the processes have been taking place. Professors like Dr.Radhakrishnan had begun writing Indian philosophical interpretative treatises and stimulated an eagerness to know the ancient past: Men of the stature of Sri Ramana and Sri Ramdas or Sivananda have stimulated an eagerness for experience or Yoga or Mystic Realisation(*Anubhava*), and the work of Sri Aurobindo seems to fall into both classes. A profound knowledge and scholarship of the language and literature of Ancient India the Vedas, Upanishads, Tantras, both Vaisnava and Sakta, The Itihasas and classical sanskrit literature, had made for the sweep of scholarship that is one of genuine understanding. His efforts to translate or understand the Upanishad and the Mantras of the Veda through his own personal experience led to his serious undertakings in Yoga. Thus anubhava and sruti met in his person. One could almost say that nothing that Sri Arubindo wrote savours of the mere scholar or the grammarian: nor should it be said that it is mere poetry or imaginative reconstruction or lyrical rhapsody. There is a profound experience of the integral consciousness which he discovered in his Yoga, to which he grants the name Vijnana (supermind). Indian Psychology had in the Upanishadic period itself discovered levels and scales of being and named them. Knowledge of these scales of being meant cognitions of several kinds and laws of perception. An intellectual objective methodology would have, as it in fact did, misunderstood all these. Indeed we see even now how certain psychological terms have lost their distinctions and become wooden lexicographical synonyms. The flexible and fluid nature of language suited to the similar nature of Mind or Soul and Spirit no longer could do anything but a denotative function. Sri Aurobindo's first effort one feels was to search for the inner deep psychological import of Vedic experiences and language and the starting point was made in the Adhyatmika

method of interpretation. It is certainly not like the higher criticism of the Bible in the West where spiritual experiences had to stand the test of the sensate intellectual or scientific crucible. The contributions in this regard were surely amazing, and we have yet in India and elsewhere to know more about it and continue the work so gallantly begun. One must hasten to add that it cannot be done with the help of a new dictionary of terms but by a consistent endeavor to achieve the integral consciousness and then focus that as an instrument of our understanding. The usual ways of applying merely his technique without the stature or poise of integral consciousness could only repeat the failure of the past in the sphere of the darsanas.

Spiritual literature requires to be investigated in the only way that is open to man, that is through his awakened consciousness of the higher powers of man, beyond the pragmatic rationality that is man's reason today all the world over. It is this truth that Sri Aurobindo emphasized and by his interpretation of the Rig Veda Mantras and the Upanishads and the Gita showed not only to be possible but the only testament of inestimable value to spiritual evolution.

Indeed his synthesis on Yoga is a marvel of exposition of the several lines of Yoga and every one who has the patience to go through any one of the chapters would already be in the presence of one who touches the central or key word of realisation. Anubhava of the Integral Reality or the Transcendent Absolute Reality is not a dream of darsanikas but a possibility within one's lifetime. It is surely a dynamic way of presenting the oldest and eternal Reality (which almost seems to have faded in these days of sensate empiricism and utilitarian ethics into the distance) by saying that the Experience of Absolute or Integral Reality can be had by the proper method of using the adequate pramana. It is being realised more and more that micro-organisms cannot be

perceived with the help of naked eyes, nor can macro-bodies. Proper instruments are necessary, and in the psychic field and of spiritual evolution it is indeed the preparation of the mind and body to be able to develop the *vijnana* or *supermind* even as the human being uses (do all do this?) the *jnana* and *citta* or *buddhi*.

This leads to the question of *Pramanas* and Sri Aurobindo discusses this very luminously in his Introduction and exposition of the *Kenopanishad* and the *Life Divine*. There is no use in merely quarrelling with one's tools or limit oneself to one's available organs or tools. There is creative necessity to evolve higher and finer organs or tools. This is truer of spiritual life and evolution than the biological and physical.

It is not of course intended to do anything more than grant to *sruti* a position that they have been amenable to higher than the practical consciousness known as *reason*. Nor does *anubhava* mean the practical verification of a sensate consciousness as in the case of scientific hypotheses seeking verification in the fields of the physical and other sciences. The *anubhava* of the saint verifies undoubtedly the truths of the *Sruti*; so too the *supramental anubhava* verifies the Vedic truths and gives meaning to them too in the application of those truths in *Yajna* or *Brahmana*. The *svatah pramana* theory or theory of self-validity comprises then the fields of *mantra-brahmana* and Upanishad, and despite the 'directness' the 'immediacy' or 'self-evident' force of the Vedic utterances, they demand verification in their experience by the seeker (whose qualifications have been prescribed) in his knowledge, Works and attainment of Bliss or fulfillment.

If for one thing alone Sri Aurobindo could be said to be the father of future philosophy this discovery of the new Organon of knowledge the *Supermind*, it would be correct.

Undoubtedly there will be efforts to rehabilitate the fortunes of intellect and science of the sensate, but as already pointed out, intuitive insight and supramental apprehensions of Reality which are of the universal and the organic integral, will play a major part in dynamic philosophy. No longer will the sciences with their atomised thinking and perceptual processes and compartmentalised and divided knowledges so nicely described by Indian seers as ‘*avidyas*’ play any significant role. Nor can a synthetic mind so called that tries to put together even in a consistent way the results of the sciences even including humanistic hopes ever really be an integral mind, thinking and acting and living and feeling not merely individually wholly but with the Reality as a Whole. Sri Aurobindo’s “Life Divine” expounds clearly the movement and nature and function of the Supermind in the future of mankind.

Sri Aurobindo himself reveals in his various works and in the practical guidance of the spiritual evolution at his Ashram the supermental integrality to be a different kind of ‘integrality’ which no intellectual synoptic or synthetic can catch upto.

The dynamics of Evolution has been one of the most important scientific facts of the century. Not that some kind of explanation was not always available: creationism and evolutionism, in India known as *arambhavada* and *parinamavada*, sought to explain the existence of the world and its process. Darwin and his followers have scientifically explained certain other features of this process of evolution: the motive or purpose of evolution the process of evolution as a gradual ascent (rather than descent), and growing need to ‘will’ an evolution hereafter or plan an evolution rather than merely abide by the natural evolution, are all significant. A speculative mind would have jumped as indeed we witness in the writings of Fichte and Nietzsche to the anticipations of the

coming race of super men, endowed with higher powers hidden to and in man at present. Theosophy spoke of the next root-race to come almost at the beginning of this century. The idea of Superman therefore is not new: it was anticipated. But it was a mere ideal. It cannot be said that Sri Aurobindo merely sought to give it the sanction of his Yoga. Herbert Spencer, wrote his speculative philosophy: Henri Bergson finally anticipated in his modified finalism that the world is for the making of the Gods who are mystic 'open'-society-men, in whom the creative evolution would discover a new frontier though not the Ultimate or the final end.

The synthesis, if it has to be so called of the Divine Evolutionism, is a unique one. There is of course the descent of Spirit (as Prakriti of the Samkhya) reaching up to a plane of being that is veriest matter in which the spirit is secret and occult. The establishment of the planes of Being culminating in Matter having been accomplished, in which the Oneness of the Spirit has discovered its manyness, the return or the Ascent (called Evolution) is made through the many linking up in an organic history matter, life and mind and so on. Let it be granted for man that he is the last term of evolution so far, but his own mind enforces because of its limitations and sense of bondage and limitations brought home to it in its sufferings and defeats, a further step. The development of the ego to its level of consciousness now enforces its discarding the practical ego for the purposes of higher consciousness or higher evolution. Evolution is of consciousness and the secret of evolution is the linking up in unity the diversity: it is the play of oneness-manyness in disjunctive unity and conjunctive division.

A close student of Indian Philosophy looking at the darsanas will find the splendid and brilliant suggestiveness underlying their readings, thanks to the subtle suggestions of

the supramental metaphysics and psychology of Sri Aurobindo.

Thus in the field of interpretation of the darsanas as in his Vedic interpretations, Sri Aurobindo recovers for the student of Philosophy the instrument by which he can discern the unity and meaningfulness of apparently contradictory notions so detailed by the recent commentators.

It is true that Sri Aurobindo is opposed to *Mayavada*, as a serious mystic. Mayavada is precisely the intellectual dialectic that it inherited from that so called '*Doctrine of Reason*' of the Buddha (there used as a limited instrument to get rid of attachment to sensate and perishing fleeting experiences), and but for the supreme attachment of Advaitins to the Absolute, it would have led Advaita to the very haven of *nihilism* or *scepticism*. In an age where intellect gets unduly worshiped, Mayavada can not be distinguished from *sunyavada* dialectics: and added to it the climate of immoralism or utilitarianism removes the one safeguard that early buddhism provided. Today unless Mahatma Gandhi's ethics can be rehabilitated in the minds of all the citizens of India, the doctrine of Buddha revived as purified, Vedanta, will not lead to any spiritual development or even social amelioration.

It is however not enough to provide ethical safeguards alone. For ethical norms get their real basis in the spiritual goal of being. A being that is impoverished of all the richness of values and culminates in a negation neither can be real goal nor be an incentive. It may be true to say that the values of Good and truth and Intelligence or Saccidananda get more and more definite and definable in new contexts and consciousnesses and as such incapable of being defined with a set of frames that our present ends and needs have defined for us. The eternal yearning for perfection and the awareness that

impinge on man's consciousness of a higher and fuller perfection and being when he has traversed the evolutionary journey is sufficient enough to justify the hope that a constant 'transvaluation of values' is necessary. Beyond Good and Evil have significance for this unceasing ascent of life and it is precisely this awareness of higher ends that makes definition of higher realities imperative. The ethics without metaphysics even like a Religion without God is Hamlet without the prince of Denmark. But a great reconstruction of the nature of knowledge as it infiltrates our consciousness in the fields of ethics, politics and economics on the one side and as it would modify the conceptions entertained in the fields of matter (physics) and biology (life) and other sciences can never be adequately achieved except when one is trained in such an apprehension of the Whole. One of our present problems is precisely how best to consolidate the science which have tended to fall apart and not merely diverged and indeed developed mutual contradictions and conflict. No sooner than this was perceived there would happen an attempt to swing back, despite resistances of specialists and extremists.

There are very fruitful lines of development envisaged in the fields of psychology of the individual and social development and the more mundane activities of man which would demand in the years to come the operations of the Supramental consciousness. There is always a serious difficulty when men forget that the ideals of social unification and political and individual development do not pull together. Liberty, fraternity and equality have been dynamic mantras of the modern age and the attempts to incorporate them all in the context of the individual and his co-members and the society has entailed several paradoxical projects of adjustment, compromise and cooperation, despite the intellect having devised the ready method of dialectic of ideas and forces economic and cultural. The Philosophy of Spirit demanded a new formulation, and indeed is today one of the basic needs.

Every new age is ushered in by the emergence of a new idea provided it is capable of being accepted as the significance of one's life and being. The Mantra of the New Age is Supermind according to Sri Aurobindo and its fruit is the Life Divine. A new level of consciousness develops its own technique of manifestation in and through the individuals who surrender to that Ideal. It is something that would make the potent and real ideals of human dignity such as liberty, Equality and Fraternity integral to individual personality and united Society, so much so these no longer would appear as ideals but spontaneous responses and activities in the lives of all individuals. If it could be achieved in the life of a community of persons it would in the process of time be the living reason of the world community and all.

It is perhaps necessary to refer to a criticism against this 'expansive metaphysic' since it affirms the existence of higher levels of consciousness beyond the human. Whether we like it or not the view that this 'expansive' metaphysic would be unintelligible to the large mass of mankind trained in practical methods of fragmentary living and survival, or hedonistic ethics, may be true. However in a sense even the superstitions of the ages seem to have percolated into the very intellectual sensate minds and express the mystical trans-sensate and trans-intellectual truths of higher mind. In India this is especially true. Its effective loss in the West has been the cause of much of the misery that dialectical thinking or thinking in opposites, has unfortunately produced. It is not without a lot of justification that Sri Aurobindo contrasted the basic genius of the East with the West.

There is always a danger in trying to be acute or too optimistic about the results. Sri Aurobindo had done one important thing and that is to show how the supramental interpretation of the ancient traditions have to be carried out,

and how it attempts to solve the problems so very pressing on mankind as a result of the phenomenal developments in almost all fields of knowledge entailing superior intelligence in respect of ends and means. In a sense when ‘men seem to be hastening unknown ends’ in the language of Dr. Radhakrishnan, even any light thrown on the future is welcome. The supramental may at first begin as one way and may by the results turn out to be the only way.

It is not necessary to hold that Sri Aurobindo has given a complete picture of the supermind or its activities and functions. It has been conceded that it is the beginning of a great expanse of the zone above the world of Ignorance. There are perhaps further zones of being beyond the supermind. We are already aware of the overmental and other higher levels of mind which are intermediate. But it is a fundamentally unified mind and beyond ignorance completely. It can become a future mind of mankind by its descent in the evolution of the individuals. The zone is very vast – veritable Brahmanda and its powers of universal Nature. Sri Aurobindo has opened up that vast terrain of illimitable possibilities free from the ignorance which has haunted all that is of evolution up to and including *homosapiens*.

The future of Philosophy no longer would be just one history of Western Philosophy or of Indian Philosophy but a truly universal philosophy – not merely a study of comparative philosophies or religion or ethics and anthropologies, - carried on by superminds, as Sri Aurobindo has described with larger goals and more serious endeavours of Human Unity and Culture.

Sri Aurobindo a superman with a supermind, indeed is the father of future universal philosophy.

11. Sri Aurobindo - the Future of Philosophical studies*

Among the many important discoveries of the twentieth century the discovery of Sri Aurobindo must be reckoned as one. The developments in the fields of science and political theory had their impacts on cultural valuations. The seesaw of interests and the dialectics of thought had their importance realized in the diverse ways the cultural process had moved. It is indeed a very significant fact that during these five decades, the world has tended to come together and its parts have begun to realize that though each area has its distinctive treasures of thought and culture to preserve and offer to the whole, the total picture of the world culture is bound to sacrifice some of the 'essentials' so called of each. It is, however, not easy to estimate the extent of sacrifices. A world government or an agency that will look after the whole area of human civilization is already in embryo. All these have not been achieved in a day. Two wars have certainly aided this movement towards world government. It must be remembered that the work of promoting, or more fundamentally, of germinating these creative thoughts has been through the most spiritual beings. Significantly the work was undertaken in the last quarter of the last century and we owe deep debt of gratitude to all those who brought the world's ends together, who worked for the present experimentation in common government, common welfare without considerations of race or colour, ideology or forms of government. Swami Vivekananda brought America and India together and some of the finest minds of America had impressed India with a love for human dignity, and years that have rolled by have only enhanced the reputation of America because it has been dynamically experimenting with common solutions in the idea of One world.

We have, however, passed these many years by way of preparation. The dignity of man has been recognized but man himself has at pains to discover his real universal nature. Humanity has itself to undergo a lot of change; it has to pass beyond the fragmentary ways of thinking, and piecemeal planning; it has to adapt itself to universal needs and not merely collective security (as the latter involves some of the most ugly features of the maxim: ‘all ways are good so long as we win or hold what we have’). The world requires of man quite a different kind of yoga or method of realizing the goal of man. The goal of man cannot be man himself, for this self-concern for mankind, however laudable, finally makes man a stagnant being caring only for his physical existence. Man is not a value intrinsic; what is intrinsically valuable is surely something more than man. Whenever a living being rests on its own achievement and begins to contemplate on its own beauty or narcissistically adores itself, that living being cannot evolve, and must in due course become static and arrested and live a life of gradual degeneration. Mankind in several parts had gone through this experience whenever it arrived at this conclusion, consciously or unconsciously. One of the important ideas thrown up during the last century was the idea of evolution and many have been the writers who have discussed it threadbare as a scheme of philosophy or as a theory of science. The idea that man is not the goal of man is an ancient one. Men-like-gods has been a common conception. Man must surpass his mere humanity and rise to divinity. The concept itself of a higher evolution or future for man has been the implicit faith of all spiritual striving, and that entailed the discrimination of the nature of man and his body and the nature of individual life and spirit or self. Sri Aurobindo had the fortune of being alive to this basic stimulates of the evolution theory to the modern world. Though it had a restricted scientific application in the biological theories, following Herbert Spencer and Henri Bergson he saw that it was a vital force in the evolution of the

human consciousness itself and would set free the forces of humanity to new and fuller endeavours for the reconstruction of a new One World.

Man must be surpassed or transcended, not of course in the sense assumed by Nietzsche by denying humanity or by enslaving it, but by getting rid of his ignorance that in a myriad ways distorts the unity, pulverizes it and makes it impossible for it to have a grasp of the Reality.

Intellectual thought has, despite its most brilliant exponents, failed to generate that dynamic element that makes for higher evolution. Evolution itself has been expounded by means of the dialectical process by rationalistic idealism, and, by a strange irony, it has been expounded by even inverting that philosophical position. Intellect reveals more paradoxes that arrest evolution rather than stimulate it. The escape into irrationalism or other scientific substitutes for it has not been successful. Intellect becomes a mere tool and no more. Its high prestige has suffered grievously. It is impossible to think that we can have philosophies of the intellect at all in the future. Though it is the finest tool or instrument or organon of knowledge that man has devised and perfected in a sense that even the earliest of the geniuses could never have envisaged, it has become just a human instrument, useful for man as he is and wishes to be-it cannot lead man to higher perceptions or help crossing his ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo sees that the present age requires a new organon, a need felt also by the Russian Ouspensky. It is not for me here to enter into a comparative appraisal of the merits of the tertium organum of the latter writer. The ways of intellect had led to a lot of scholastic word chopping and humanity has not moved forward. Intellectual activity, instead of being moulded in the patterns of growth, has become a mere tool of stabilizing and preserving old patterns of thought

and action; in other words, it has become incapable of inspiring one to move up to the higher levels of thought existence so clearly declared by the master-seers of humanity at the dawn of human history. The mystical writings or revelational scriptures all bear witness to a power of intellectual activity that urged man to grow beyond his intellect itself. This transcending function of intellect seems to have lost force during the centuries that followed and mankind has been left with an intellect that is incapable of performing this high evolutionary function. Thus we have the growth of several divergent schools of intellectual thought so called, ranging from rank scepticism and materialism to idealistic absolutism, static and impotent. There are many things that had made the renunciation of intellect in favour of some kind of irrationalism in the fields of political theories had been bitter. Suspicion of any kind of anti-intellectualism is justified. But it is precisely here that mankind has to be wary and vigilant. Any irrationalism that abridges the liberty of the individual must be false and condemnable, but such non-intellectualism as enhances the liberty of the individual by dispensing the perception of higher values must be considered different. It would not be irrational, nor regressive, but super-rational and progressive. Indian thought had from the beginning sought to arrive at a vision of Reality that discloses the higher values of life such as can transform and integrate our actual living.

Sri Aurobindo is showing the limits of intellect did not merely rest content with widening the operations of the intellect by applying it to wider fields and areas of human understanding and work, but showed also that such ‘trancendental’ applications, if we may so speak of these wider applications, entailed the very modification of the principles of intellectual activity. Not merely does the instrument of human understanding, intellect or reason, undergo change in this process of self-adaptation to cosmic

needs, it also reveals its incapacity to change or adapt beyond particular limit. A new faculty in man has to be drawn out, latent as it is in him, the true spiritual force or psychic truth in him, and that would be able to do the work of a cosmic existence and a new world would be opened to the vision of man. Such a faculty or power is not only a psychological possibility but also an evolutionary principle emerging in man at the present time. This evolutionary force is the supermind or gnostic mind, its operations far exceed the operations of the human intellect, both in respect of the finite world and the infinite spirit.

No longer is man satisfied with an intellectual apprehension or systematization of Reality which he grasps by sections and fragments and unifies in terms of his own laws of systematization, such as consistency or coherency, which indeed are incapable of achieving their own ideal. Man lives in a world of increasing complexity in social and international and inter-racial relationships as well as inter-ideological perceptions. To plead for the *status quo* or to seek a divorce between different areas of human life cannot carry him far. The fundamental need today is that of integration the different segments of human life, and the Ultimate integrating principle is that higher power of consciousness which Sri Aurobindo has called the supermind. Sri Aurobindo has clearly seen that the operations of the supermind are necessary and inevitable, sooner or later. The Global thinking demands universal perceptions rather than collective thinking, which is all that the human mind has been able to improvise at the present time. The notion of the general will in politics during the past two centuries has this forestalling effect of the real universal will, though the Absolute of the Hegelians as the rational is a pseudo-universal, which has failed of its purpose.

The intuition of philosophers has its own history, even as the intellect has. The higher consciousness alone

synthetically presents the truth of Reality which somehow comes to man severed as intuition and intellection, as apprehension and coherence. The operation of higher mind is something known to all those who have closely studied the facts of perception and reasoning. We shall not enter into a survey of the history of philosophy to show how analytical thinking prone to atomistic intellectually makes it impossible to arrive at the original synthesis presented to the higher consciousness of man. The unity of the inward psychological life, thanks to ignorance or attachment to particularities and fragments of experience or concentration on them, gets divided and hence arises the difficulty of restoring the original oneness or synthesis.

Though mankind in the course of its cultural history became aware of several levels of mind beyond the intellect such as inspiration, overmental consciousness, intuition and so on, it was rather a difficult thing for them to present a comprehensive account of Reality. There is one exception however. Indian thought had reckoned as the most important *pramana* or source of right knowledge in respect of transcendental facts, Sabda or Sruti. The whole of the Vedas was considered to be the direct perception of Reality, not by sense nor by reason or intellect, nor even by the analogizing mind of the poet. It is something that is granted by the divine vision or *divya-jnana* or *atma darsana*. Its knowledge about Reality is intimate and is available in Yoga and is achieved by *yajna*(self-offering) and *yaga*(self-sacrifice) – all understood in the psychological sense (*adhyatma*). Veda is a *pramana*, and it is only when man becomes possessed of this seer-vision (*rsi-jnana*), that he begins to perceive Reality wholly and as indivisible and transcendental (*nirguna*), and as supreme value (that which grants value to everything, being the ground of all). Sri Aurobindo thus found that this achievement of the Veda-pramana in one's psychological consciousness is the most urgent need, for therein lies a key to the new

philosophical understanding of Reality. But when he himself undertook this task of applying this supramental understanding or Vedic understanding to the Vedas themselves, he found that it as the first step rather than the final step in knowledge or integral knowledge. He therefore; declared that the Veda opens a way to the still higher levels and *pramanas* (instruments of knowledge). The understanding of the Veda-pramana unfortunately became so thoroughly scholastic and intellectual during the past thousand and odd years that it no longer was considered to be an organon of knowledge like the intellect or mind but a book and a scripture, to be understand as best as one may. This seems to have been much more serious in the case of other sacred revelational literature also. The spiritual instrument of transcendental Reality was not used at all; instead the intellect was made to interpret and exegetize them. The result was scholasticism, and divergences in interpretations, clever, contradictory and confusing. Systems (*darsanas*) began to spring up instead of a *darsana*, the integral vision. Schisms developed within them. Heretical systems, first differing from certain accepted kinds of interpretation, later abandoned dependence on the original revelational scriptures, feeling that intellect can explain adequately the Reality. A careful look at the *darsanas* or schools of thought will present certain circumscribing limits fixed for the understanding, and the total apprehension was surrendered even as an ideal. Some like Buddhism and Jainism and the other *darsanas* gave up the attempt to see the whole steadily and as one. Sri Aurobindo seeks in his *magnum opus* to undo precisely this disintegrative process of the *darsanikas*, though his presentation was addressed to all philosophical and other enterprises of the schools Eastern and Western. Underlying his great and original exposition through his *pramana* (*divyanubhava*) so nearly resembling the Veda-pramana, and supplementing and correcting it, is this discernment of the defects of an intellectualizing of scholasticism, which even the modern

mind has not escaped from. We are yet governed by the logic of the finitizing mind, its dichotomies and dialectical procedures. If Sri Aurobindo had not throughout his work proceeded to expound his vision of the one integral Reality through the supermind, it might have become utterly alien to the human mind of the present age. One suspects that the perception would be as radically distinct even as Sankara had stated about his two words, the *paramarthika* and *vyavaharika*, the Ultimate and the conventional. But the integral conception of Sri Aurobindo bridges the gulf and shows that in the vast perception of the supermind, the appearance gains rather than loses the Real, and the Real permeates the appearance; the supermind transfigures the mental world and rids it of the ignorance and mortality. The logic of the supermind is the 'logic of the Infinite', it is usually said. That at many times in history men thought of the logic of the Infinite is true. But the definitions of the nature of the Infinite and the lack of perception that it is not merely a limiting concept of the intellect prevented a more definite formulation of the logic and law of the Infinite Being. Identical mathematics had somehow developed on abstract lines. It must be said that after the complete overthrow of the abstract ideas from the field of philosophy, thanks to British empiricists, it was found that they can have play only in mathematics. Modern mathematical and symbolic logicians have unfortunately not learnt the lesson of history. The Infinite is not only a category of mathematics but is, as being, a category of integral philosophy, recognized by the integral *pramana* or consciousness, as experience.

A full and fair presentation of this application of the integral consciousness to the several problems of philosophy has been done by distinguished exponents of Sri Aurobindonian thought, such as Dr S.K.Maitra and Dr Haridas Chaudhuri, in recent years.

Thus the future of philosophical studies should be considered to be bright. The inanities of the past twenty years would be things of the past. Aware that there is a new method of approaching the problems of philosophy and life, and indeed a true creative method is inevitable if human intellect itself should cease to despair of its own future, man may boldly go forward towards an international discovery of this new principle in himself. We know that though all men are rational, it is hardly this reason that we draw out in the affairs of the world. Democracy in its true sense should attempt to draw out this inward principle of man in all affairs social, political and spiritual, so that the universality affirmed of reason might be operating at all times and continuously. This, however, is not being done, or else it is seen that this reason is circumscribed and limited to welfare socialisms and politics which more often than not divide nations and people. The creative obligation is forgotten and man tends to wither for lack of incentives to inward peace and spiritual progress.

Supramental Yoga would entail the constant attempt to apply the logic of the supermind or the infinite. In all affairs there is need for drawing out this inward psychic principle, for the very fulfillment of man entails this self-transcendence.

Sri Aurobindo has with a penetrating insight surveyed the fields of sociology and political theory for the reformulation of the *dharma* of the modern age in terms of eternal values. Individual psychology has itself to undergo modifications; and the regressive interpretations of the human in terms of the rabbit and rat and other species or in terms of the abnormal have to be checked and revalued. A large 'transvaluation of values' not in terms of Nietzschean ideology but in terms of the supermind has to take place and the theory of 'beyond good and evil' has to be reformulated in terms of the Real Good. But all these do not involve the liquidation of the human and his world and values but 'open'

up the ‘closed’ societal conditions and individual consciousness.

In religious consciousness and the methods of attainment of the supramental experience again one has to pass beyond the purely aesthetical conception and limitation of religious experience and arrive at the integral method of total approach. Thus to the psychology of religious experience and the science of yoga Sri Aurobindo has brought the approach of the integral mind.

During and original as these contributions have been, it must be clear that the philosophical method of the integral consciousness or supermind is not capable of being appreciated at once. The integral approach releases a new creative movement that ‘breaks’ through the shell of ‘closed’ finite mental intellections as well as abstract intellectual constructs, even as the *elan vital* of Bergson is said to do. But with a difference; the integral approach seeks to comprehend both being and becoming, eternity and time, status and dynamis, in its sweeping vision. The infinite opens up its unlimited horizons to the supermind and man realizes his real being and existence in terms of it.

Thus it can be seen that Sri Aurobindo reveals a new and dynamic possibility for the philosophical enterprise in the years to come, different from any past renaissance or mystical resurgence or intellectual revival, based upon sceptical modes of thought and contradictions between theory and practice.

From an unbiased and open-minded study of Sri Aurobindonian literature, it would be plain that Sri Aurobindo has opened a new chapter in philosophic thinking – a chapter of all – embracing integration of the fundamental categories of existence and values of life. In the years to come he would

more and more be recognized as the most dynamic thinker of twentieth century.

12. SRI AUROBINDO'S EIGHTY-SEVENTH BIRTHDAY*

We are assembled today to celebrate the 87th Jayanthi of the Seer of the New Age or the Prophet of the superman, Sri Aurobindo. This also happens to be the birthday celebration of New India, the Free India for which Sri Aurobindo fought and lived and achieved through the tapasya or Yoga. This coincidence of the two birthdays is a divine one and so was it considered by Sri Aurobindo himself as the sanction of God to his first dream necessary for the realisation of his second dream, the dream of supramental humanity. His passing away nine years ago has only accentuated the realisation of that dream. His spirit is moving and shaping the lives of innumerable individuals and it is not a little due to the loving service of the Mother who has been carrying on the Sri Aurobindonian burden and tradition illustriously.

During the past ninety years many mighty events have happened in India and the world. A very great age of science and economic and political history emerged and has reached peaks of achievement which no amount of criticism of materialism that has animated it can close its eyes to. The success of materialism is solid and even philosophy has become a hand maid of such shifts of the needs of the age. Side by side however mystic minds who saw the threat to spirituality in the areas of commerce and politics dominated by materialistic science and hedonistic goals, saw in this development an opportunity to transform these trends into

* Address delivered at the 15th August 1959 celebration under the auspices of Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir, Calcutta.

vehicles of a higher consciousness that could wield power over the course of cosmic history. Their vision *sub specie aternitatis* saw the possibility of historic materialism and scientism towards divine evolutionism which had been passing through the ages of natural, emergent and creative evolutionisms. Such then is the slow interweaving of the threads of materialism and mysticism, which we have been witnessing in the movements known to us as Theosophy, Christian Science, and Sri Aurobindo's divine evolutionism.

The old order has been severely and rudely shaken. The new order has been slowly defining its goals hesitantly and experimentally. Morals and ethical values are in the crucible. A new ethical theory is the need; and pragmatism does not provide except social and relativistic ideals. Small traditions built round 'closed' ethos or cultures are finding their dissolution.

This is an age that has also seen the collapse of empires and old regalia. This is an age that sought to erect new foundations for democracy that was by ancient thinkers dismissed as self-contradictory to human Nature and utopian. The impossible ideal was sought for under the wings of science and evolution. A great thing indeed in an age when men of vision called for the birth of Hero (Carlyle), the Obermann, Superman, and Messiah and Avatar, and who worshipped such men as Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini and other dictators who seemed to satisfy the craving for being worshipped and worshipping. As one critic¹ in the heyday of Dictatorships in the period between 1930-1940 wrote, it is not so much the dictators tending to become scupperers and it not

¹ Y.Y. in New Statesman and Nation (July 1934.)

so much an act of unfaith in the extraordinary man but the faith in the 'ordinary man' that makes democracy a tremendous force.

That our extraordinary men of this age have fully justified disbelief in them is a fact of capital importance. Mankind is sick of them. When the great thesis of superman was put forward as a biological desideratum or a spiritual fulfillment of man the world climate was all in its favour but the abortive manifestations of the same in the personalities of the political adventures who behaved already as 'beyond all good and evil' and 'above morals meant for men' had led to firm disillusionment. Supermen came under a cloud and there are so signs that it is passing. In the meanwhile the people or democracy of the people seeks to be stepping into the scupperners' shoes. Indeed we have been discovering a new phenomenon—that the word 'people' has hardly a Reality, for behind all the camouflage there are intriguing men who seize power and hold it 'for the people'. Dictatorship continues in a new grab. It is the inevitable phenomenon of power that it should be tied up in the hands of one or a few and never the all. The eclipse of the superman today only shows that the types of supermen we got so far or who were thrown up have not been truly such. Sri Aurobindo when he criticised Nietzsche's Superman perhaps hardly visualised that he would have experimental verification of his criticisms. There is all the difference between god-consciousness and asura-consciousness. Mankind has chosen not to have the latter. Does it need the other? If not, can it ever realise the truly significant choice of democracy as the self-rule of the ordinary man? Man has been built from below. He carries within him what our evolutionists have discerned as strains of his materialistic, plantistic, animalistic past. Some have withered as not so very useful but some others have been persisting even vestigially. May be there is an inner secret in such persistency of tendencies and organs. He has been

discerning farther shores of being, as and when he had arrived at a particular stage. He has been given the credit for being able to adapt himself. This capacity to adapt himself to his new surroundings through apparently biological and placed in the life-impulse is not all. There is a stage when man discerns that not all kinds of adaptation give meaning and value to life. Life itself discovers other values to be its need than mere persisting in a vegetative stupor or animal turpitude. It is this apprehension of higher than life which life discerns however unconsciously that leads to the widening of its horizons. Mind itself presages the same and seeks the supermind on *vijnana* and the *ananda* as its fulfillment. It is of course not to be expected that it has the full apprehension of what they are but it has the glimpse that enchants and encourages it to move forward or upward to it. This becomes its goal or ideal. All ideals are indeed in the last resort forms or functions that go to satisfy, assuage, complete or fill up the individual and such are true ideals that can really satisfy and others are false or chimerical when they cannot justify their claims. Indeed man has at his stage discovered that certain values are just chimerical. Indeed at one stage in India and elsewhere the world with all its glamour for wealth, sex and desires and power, and lordship, indeed all the basic perfection's of Godhead such as *aisvarya*, *virya*, *tejas*, *sakti*, *bala* and *jnana* have turned out to be chimerical. They are virtues for the divine not the human-alas. The theory of illusion of the world is a reactive metaphysics of disillusionment of the threefold aims of man—dharma, artha, and kama. One virtue however was left with no content at all— namely, freedom itself from the snare of the world and its allurements.

However a modern reappraisal of the situation demanded a new and radical approach to the problems of human existence since all ancient modern solutions have tended to fail after initial success. To this situation Sir Aurobindo brought a radical integral vision.

Sri Aurobindo nearly forty two years ago in his *Renaissance in India* spoke about the eternal and permanent features of Indian Culture and stated that though they are spirituality, prolific abundance of life and energy and strong intellectuality, yet it is the first that is the directing principle in all her adventures in the fields of science and arts, logic and intellectuality. Truly her spirituality is basically related to the search for the infinite freedom coupled with the harmony of the whole. They never could fall apart from one another. In a sense here is an organic unity and organic infinity which is the supreme characteristic of Indian spirituality. Whatever trends of secularism were there—they have always been and still continue to be, even in India of today and once again, —they are just partial views of Reality or goals, chosen for pragmatic attainments. They always lapsed into inanities and puerilities. However the fundamental integrality of the Indian spiritual consciousness even during the periods of *mayavada* and other worldliness, revealed itself through the abundant multifarious urge for the infinite in the 'finite'; the process of infinitising the finite has been one of the chief or dominant notes of great and eternal Art and nowhere has this been expressed than in Indian Art. Nor is it uniform multiplicity of manifestations. The very diversity of the manifestations of the Infinite in the finite many reveals that no real frontiers could be raised between the finite and the Infinite.

Already in those days Sri Aurobindo anticipated that the fascination of the Indian mind for western modes of thought and action and dress would pass away and throw up the resources of the Spiritual India to the front. It appeared for a while that anticipation would be justified. Forces indeed there were at the time that promised the reversal of the trend of europeanising of India or occidentalising of the Orient. However now it appears it was an optimism that is unproved by events after the World War II and the clock has been put

back because of the so-called need to meet a global perspective.

A more basic return to Spiritual India that is the mother of the Universal culture is the need. Sri Aurobindo's call for the restoration of *satya* and *rta* is indeed the call to dharma of the individual and the Divine in Yoga.

Today the problem of Indian crisis is being diagnosed more accurately, as not only comprising *svadesi*, *svarajya* but also *svadharma* and *svatantrya*. These are basic concepts that have been most powerful in maintaining the unique tradition of India that realised wonderfully the harmony between cosmic *dharma* and individual dharma and value and worth that can only be realised in the context of his freedom. Sri Aurobindo saw most clearly that true spirituality depends on the significant metaphysical truth realised and practiced by the ancient seers— the eternal manyness of the eternal One Being. The individual souls in a sense are the eternal many related to or inherent in or basically inseparable from or organic to the One Reality known to Indian Upanishadic thought as Brahman. That the basic Reality cannot be reduced to the mere abstract or absolute One nor could it be retained as a fulgurated many but as only as many in one and one in many. This is the truth to which Sri Aurobindo had drawn our attention as inherent in the letter and spirit of the Vedanta.

Thus reconciliation of the many-one that Sri Aurobindo envisaged is unique and rescues his philosophy and *ipso facto* his sociology and political philosophy from becoming identified with the absolutism of either the idealistic or

materialistic variety. His is an integral pluralism², as it may appropriately be called, as indeed it has been as well as integral monism.

The integral pluralism of Sri Aurobindo insists on the supreme value of each individual in the many and seeks his evolution to the status or poise of the Supreme Divine of whose many it is one. Indeed India has been striving in her spiritual aspiration for the emergence of the individual divine. This is the real content of freedom or *moksa*; for in it is concealed the delight of existence that is the nature of the Divine *Saccidananda*.

There is resolved the apparent contradiction of the four poises of our development as a nation and as individuals, by the basic acceptance of their Reality and value, *satya* and *dharma*.

A new age has dawned with the crisis attending upon the individual. The only true value the individual has is his *svatantrya* or independence according to his inward and spiritual dharma. A crisis like the present was not unanticipated by the great pioneers of spirituality. Quietly they had prepared the people for the return to spirituality by their life and teaching. Man has to change himself radically; his preoccupation with matter and hedonism should not degenerate into sense-bound pursuits; a return to the ideal of the spiritual man who does not refuse to recognize and transform lower values of the mental, vital and the physical material or, in the context of the society, the intellectual,

² Integral Pluralism means the real eternal many in the One. It has been stated similarly about Visistadvaita that it is *visistadvaita*.

emotional and material values (such as *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*) has been discerned as the radical call of the inward spirit of man. The inner man revolts against matter for matter as it is in the contradiction of his being. Yet the integral man is a necessity and he must either be born or made. The secret of transformation of the mental, vital and physical man (or the intellectual, emotional and mechanical man to use the language of the teachers of the Fourth Way) lies in the descent of a higher kind of force. This is the force that makes the human being rise to a level of awareness of the higher worlds of freedom open to man. Mere appeals to our ancient traditions is of no use. A new force has to be brought into play in the world and a force far higher than what mankind has yet known. Our recent mantras of 'Return to the Upanishads', 'Return to the Gita' or 'the Veda' or 'Shakti' or the more omnibus term 'Return to Religion' have left us almost with a sense of impotence though doubtless they have awakened man somewhat to his mighty past and may be a mightier future. However a new force is needed and it has to have the power to free man from his modern chains, the chains of pseudo-science and sense-bound methods of science and their ends.

However the spirit moves slowly conquering its territory by insinuating itself. The truth of the collective is now being annulled or corrected by the more basic truth of the individual. There is the call of the infinite and the eternal to the individual for something that should awaken and fulfil it. It is to this spiritual voice that Sri Aurobindo had listened and obeyed and he has given us the mantra of the New Man—the superman—one who rejoices in the freedom of all individuals rather than strives to annihilate and absorb them all into Himself. The spiritual evolution of man to the status of the godhead who is a perfect being in and through the cosmic and transcendent consciousness and acts by the logic of the Infinite is the inevitable step. He is, if we adopt the ancient notions now

revived, one who is characterised by *svarajya*, *svatantrya* and *svadharmya*.

Sri Aurobindo undoubtedly saw that great endeavours require true men of the highest spirituality, the yogins. He saw beyond India too and saw the grand possibilities of India becoming the saviour of the world. India is to be the cradle of a new race of supermen, who manifest in themselves the oneness—manyness in a harmony of action or dynamic existence. They would lead humanity in fellowship all over the Earth. The dream of all religions—the Kingdom of God on Earth as it is in Heaven can only be truly realized when God-consciousness descends to transform all into its own nature, beyond the pleasure-principles and ego-principles that are dominating mankind.

Religions generally have failed, though individual men among them have not. It is the *sadhana* in and through individuals and their steady aspiration towards God consciousness or gnostic being that can rescue religions from being pompous institutions rather than real schools of spiritual training. The transformation of man cannot obviously be undertaken by the institutions of religions as they stand. It is therefore by a different technique that the divine consciousness is likely to descend to illuminate every heart and make it love the divine and detach itself from the lower values. Sri Aurobindo saw that nothing but the transformation of the earth consciousness can justify man's faith in the omnipotence of the Divine force. It is not the will to power nor the will to imagine nor even the apparent sacrifices that man makes that lead to the transformation of the earth consciousness either individually or collectively. It is one of the profound intuitions of Sri Aurobindo that saw clearly the ancient truth that the divine force alone can change or modify human consciousness and much more and that too in a shorter span of time. The unique and differentiating doctrine of Sri

Aurobindo however is that though avatars have been many and they have brought down great realisation yet the evolutionary possibility of man is not exhausted; it as to be completed by the incorporation at first of a new kind of transmuted mind or the Supermind in the texture of the physico-psychic frame of man by means of Yoga. Such an incorporated mind divine shall have to become native to or 'emerge' in the future humanity. This phenomenon cannot be such as might make men think that it is not inheritable or transferable. On the other hand it can be inherited or transferred because of the changes that the Force is capable of moving in the very constitution of man which is governed by the three strands *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* undergo change and there such that not one of them remains as such. A fourth force transforms their ignorance into knowledge, their darkness into light, their changeableness into immutability.

Spiritual evolution and the birth of the superman is the only solution to our terrestrial maladies. It is in order to demonstrate its great possibilities and power that Sri Aurobindo dedicated himself to the bringing down of that divine supermind to integrate itself in the homo sapiens, not as a graft indeed but as an occult principle inherent in the yearning of man towards fulfillment and completion and freedom. The real truth of the individual yearning lies in this higher fulfillment. This fulfillment is its inevitable end or goal to which it has been moving through ignorance enjoying pain and pleasure, sorrow and frustration, disease and disaster. This goal however is not a prefigured plan already ready for being accomplished or already accomplished but a growth and evolution which proceeds diversely and not uniformly. The infinity of the Divine or rather the infinite manyness of the one Divine reveals the most varied and unpredictable possibilities for the very nature of the Supramental Reality or the Divine is that freedom which exhibits that the unique multiplicity of His oneness is also the harmony of the

transcendent lila. The transformation of man thus is inevitable: the very vastness of the undertaking in the world, rolled into one with such speed and precipitousness, has posed quite a challenge to the human mind. That the human mind has not hesitated to accept the challenge with its old and tested and tried instruments of its past and present manufacture in all fields of human life is a fact witnessed to by the innumerable international organizations. However there is an element of dialectical frenzy, altogether irrational, seizing the minds, and one is not certain at all whether there can be a solution to these problems except that man has indeed himself to undergo transformation.

It is undoubtedly pessimistic to say that man has to commit *harakiri* for the sake of his transformation and this some serious thinkers do not wish to accept as a solution. But the human heart and man's emotive and idealistic being, notwithstanding all their optimism, are facing an enormous crisis in mutual relations and dealings, both collective and individual. State policies cannot annul or assuage the sorrows of the human breast. Educational regimentation, by whatever name called, can hardly touch the core of the problem. There is something radically wrong in such optimism. What is wanted is a total change in the human logic or mind, in the human goals and means.

Nowhere has this been more demonstrated than in the recent past. Civilization is on trial. A mind that can grasp the problems in their complexity and unite the knots that have been tied is the need. Further the human tinkering with Nature are bringing for the problems of greatest concern to mankind as a whole. A mind that works with division and separation, by analysis and opposition, can hardly cope with it. Thus we come back to the solution divined by Sri Aurobindo—the need for the emergence of the divine mind in man.

Clear and definite indeed was this conclusion, and Sri Aurobindo's amazing intuition is incomparable in the sense of having anticipated that no other solution was possible, historically and ideologically; he saw that the sooner mankind seized this opportunity the better it was. A mere universal religion of humanity on either the socialistic or materialistic or any other form cannot lead man out of the critical danger.¹ He himself believed that this solution is an undiscovered fact for all the ancient seers seem to have attained the truth-consciousness or bypassed it to the ultimate *Saccidananda*, but that did not permit itself to possess and inhabit man as he is. The Supermind did not come down to reside and modify the human species itself. The earlier *rsi*-consciousness did not see this possibility. We shall not here discuss the exact nature of their consciousness but this much can be said that their consciousness did not admit of the transformation of the lower levels of matter, life and mind but a dissolution of them. It was transcendent to the terrestrial or the so-called phenomenal levels. Since it was seen that these dissolve at the touch of that consciousness they have been considered to be not only contradictory to the Ultimate Spirit but, in a quaint sense, phenomenal and illusory. The Jivanmukta of the past conception is firstly not fully free for he patiently bears with his last links of karma whilst being internally free or has the assurance of being free. He has burnt to ashes his terrestrial connections. Not so the Jivanmukta of Sri Aurobindonian conception. He is not detached from the earth consciousness

¹ In the words of Sri Aurobindo "While it is possible to construct a precarious and quite a mechanical unity by political and administrative means, the unity of the human race, even if achieved, can only be secured and can only be made real if the religion of humanity which is the highest active ideal of mankind, spiritualises itself and becomes the general inner law of human life".

but he is not attached to it either as it is. He seeks its transformation in all its levels material, vital and mental. The very qualities of prakriti such as sattva, rajas, and tamas which act as reactive forces of Nature in the ignorance begin to function as powers of truth, consciousness and delight in the knowledge. He is cosmically directed even whilst being the individual many of the One supreme. It is one who is born of the Divine—*brahmaja*—and knows himself to be such (*jna*), and who in all his affairs and dealings is firmly devoted to that one supreme secret of integral unity in God with all else in creation and beyond – he knows himself to be the One Divine in the manyness of His Integral Being. Such is not merely the vision of man but his realisation.

The practical school for achieving yogic transformation was founded by Sri Aurobindo. The execution of this undertaking has been characterized by diligence and psychic power. His guidance of his disciples is characterised by faultless technique. His own verifications of ancient yogic practices of all levels coupled with his superb educational techniques suited to the genius of India and Spirituality is a landmark. The importance of ‘fronting the psychic being’ in education cannot be exaggerated – it is precisely this lack that has led to our modern educational institutions being merely what they are.

One more important aspect of psychic training or yogic trainings which has been not adequately realised even in interested quarters is the principle of spiritual transmission of the Highest energy or the transforming Spiritual force. No one who has not reached that level can possibly be the conduit of that force. If a lesser personality or one who has reached a level that is not the very highest tries to bring down that energy it will not come and even if it does it will not flow in a continuous way or flow in a tortuous way.

In Yoga of the conscious path it becomes imperative that the individual himself has to open himself to the descending grace of God which can be the transmissional force. But the grace must be called to the transmutive or transformative function. An integral transformation of man into supermanhood is the minimum prayer that is needed on the part of the individual. Once this is available and the Master chooses his disciple for the transformation, he opens up lines of inner ascent progressively opening up the planes of being from which he had descended so that there can be integration, conscious or superconscious, so as to arrive at that gnostic being who is one with all in the Divine and for the Divine or the Ultimate.

It is firstly therefore necessary that this divine transmissional force should work through the Master, secondly, that it should operate steadily and without weakening or lag in the individual removing all that obstructs the ascent. True, the Supreme can never be obstructed finally or definitively once He happens to take up the work of transformation. But it is this activity of that Divine transmutive force that grants the individual his faith in the Master in his own destiny. Man's constant and continuous surrender and prayer to the Divine Master goes a wonderfully long way to achieve this descending power and draw it into himself till it fills him fully – this is the experience of *ananda* that is *ananta*.

Sri Aurobindo undoubtedly has created the very conditions for that great descent and transmission of the Spiritual Force divine. That it is already at work in the consciousness of men all the world over is becoming increasingly clear. Men are finding the need for a larger, — diviner—vision that embraces and ennobles all reality.

Sri Aurobindo has provided a definite philosophy for this evolution of man which would prove to be more satisfying than mere philosophies of the intellect. Rightly, he has shown that an intellectual philosophy does not work. It is only a philosophy that embraces the whole man that can satisfy all and provide for his work in the world with intelligence and skill. The very applications of the psychic activity in a collective life will show how the higher kinds of force act. The activity loses its sting of attachment and suffering.

Slow though the process of divine evolution is it is yet under way. It is also quite true to affirm that great spiritual personalities are at work on other levels and although Sri Aurobindo has passed away, the Work is going on because his living Presence has not failed and the work is the Ultimate Master's. The Power at work will produce powers and personalities commissioned to bring down the supramental and superconscious force without interruption for transforming man everywhere.

Can I predict that the centenary of the birth of Sri Aurobindo may well see the realisation of that Vision and Reality of a transformed society of divinised men? The Unity of the Human race cannot be achieved otherwise than when men find themselves in the Divine as inseparable many of that One. So may the Mantra of Sri Aurobindo taken from the Veda – *om namo devaya janmano* – ring in the Age of Supermen – divine men – who rejoice in universal truth, knowledge- power and delight for all.

13. KALIDASA AND MYSTICISM AND SRI AUROBINDO

It is very well-known that poetry and mysticism go together. Indeed poets are said to be the initiators of mystic tradition. Mysticism however is something much more serious than the expression of the process of immergence into the Infinite or the Absolute, the losing of oneself or ‘expiring’ in the Divine, and an expression of *anubhava* or experience that is beyond all thought and speech and even vision and audition. Though the Sruti is so called because of its ‘clairauditory nature’ yet the Absolute is beyond it also.

Kalidasa rightly known as Mahakavi and perhaps Bharat’s greatest Poet ever, has distinguished himself in so many directions. Creative Genius is his by natural right. Much has been spoken and written, and again and again. He has been through centuries adored and idolised not only by his countrymen but by eminent rasajnas, enjoyers of beauty of expression and thought. Indeed some of our modern writers are discovering layers and layers of divine meanings in his writings. One distinguishing feature of ancient poets and writers of India (perhaps elsewhere also), is that they had encyclopedic knowledge of arts and techniques – veritable *sarvatantra svatantras*, which gave them a polished simplicity of expression that could illuminate the deepest layers of individual consciousness and draw out of human hearts hidden and suppressed and repressed memories, feelings and sentiments, undreamt of by the waking consciousness. Suggestions or *dhvani* is of a more fundamental character than the mere evoking of other images on the basis of mere similarity of sounds or sound-effects.

It is not my present purpose to dilate on the glories of Kalidasa. Yet the dramatic element of his nature is by the best

considerations profoundly 'sublimative' of one's nature. By sublimation I mean the usual process by which the so called natural or lower processes of response are substituted by higher types of responses or are transformed imperceptibly into higher types of responses or creative responses. Dramatic presentation is distinguished from natural events of one's life by this 'imperceptible transformism' if I may so call this - though it is said to be a kind of catharsis or purification or a kind of midwifery even as the Socratean dialectic that attempts to through light and loveliness over the sordid and the ugly, terror and tyranny and so on, even whilst disclosing the highest and noblest of human values and divine destiny awaiting man.

The Meghaduta of Kalidasa reveals the sublimative process engendered by the contemplation of one's beloved that has entered the phase of deepest absorption in the ideal of one's eternal partner (sahadharmacharini). This srīngara-yoga attains the fullest fruition in the *viraha-yoga* and reveals the mystic possibility and meaning of the soul's separation from the Divine as a heightening of the meditative contemplation, a disjunctive unity, lighting up the entire beings of both the lover and the beloved, and fulfilling itself in a Samadhi (unitive intellectuality or co-existential experience). The Yaksha in being punished to a life of separation from his beloved was indeed lifted up to a higher level of absorption in his beloved. This abhyasa so to speak was what the Alvars had fully seen to be fruitful for the total absorption through uninterrupted contemplation-meditation (tailadharavacchina) which is really what was called bhakti or devotion in all its forms. This virahanubhava was exploited for ananyacintana and became a central force in srīngaranubhava so much to be identified with it.

The inward processes of the soul as it yearns for the beloved seem to be repeated at higher levels in the Mystic

heart and rapture of the soul as it approaches and recedes and recedes and approaches the being and personality of the Highest is fully brought out in this bhava. No wonder some have said that Sringara is the sole rasa.

The experiment with this rasa in the Meghaduta was indeed profoundly successful and reached sublimity – thanks to the spiritual genius of Kalidasa.

The dramatic experiment however is distinguished by another type of sublimity. The three dramas of Kalidasa form a grand trilogy in the spiritual sense. Differentiated as to the characters there runs a thread of continuity marking the spiritual ascent of the human to the level of a divine Nature. It is singularly inspiring to see in this the transformations of the hero and heroine: Malavika and Agnimitra, Sakuntala and Dushyanta, Urvashi and Pururavas. Malavika is a human woman, Sakuntala is a half-divine, Urvashi is fully divine. This means so much in the line of love which the human feels - a human amour in the first, dignified and yet amorous, the second is already fully saturated with divine passion that yearns for the divine and yet is not sure of its raptures and indeed this transcendence of human passion works itself through the motif of the viraha, and culminates in the reunion, the third is the yearning for the Divine in fullest measure but achieved again by a kind of twofold viraha, and transformations that bode a great final Union. Beneath the outward guise or the progress of love, we see another idea of deepest import: the use of the 'other woman' who makes one's life sublime, lifts the life of the human above the material and the too-human which the understanding queen fully appreciates and cooperates with. It is a significant truth that it is the purpose and fulfillment of women to lift her husband to greater heights. Kalidasa saw how this 'divine passion' can be ignited in the soul of man through the

alchemical activity of beauty purity and divinity of the ‘other’ woman.

The ancient thought had in the personality of Yagnavalkya the Sage par excellence, shown how Katyayani and Maitreyi were to him the earthy-wise and heavenly or divinely-wise spouses. Though bigamy is prohibited by law in our country – for other reasons of social and individual nature, the concept of two, one of the material order and the other of the transcendental was common. The gods of Hinduism have two spouses, earthy and heavenly – Bhudevi and Sridevi – representatives which show full life is had when both the spouses sublimate the life of the man and make for his transcendence to the highest nature. We know that the sublimating activity of the Divine Women is a common enough idea in ancient times – We can perceive the adulations given to Kadambari of Bana because of the supreme power and sacrifice of love seen in the lives of Mahalaksmi, Mahasveta and Kadambari herself which made for the restoration of Pundarika and Chandrapida. Women by her love can save. By her descent she can uplift the human man: this is Kalidasa’s great message.

That the three dramas of Kalidasa reveal the growing stature and personality of Man through the catalytic and igniting beauty purity and divinity of the ‘Other’ women is quite evident to any one who had begun to study them from this new angle of vision. This is no mere speculative thesis. For verily it is Malavika that becomes semi-divine in Sakuntala to lift Dusyanta to be the father of the glorious Bharata. It is she who becomes Urvashi, the daughter of Narayana, scheduled to act as a laksmi, reveals her love for man, the Purusa, who has reached the level worthy of the love of the Divine, Pururuvas. He verily is the uplifted Agnimitra, transformed Dusyanta, who has seen the alchemical function of transforming love divine, occult, mysterious and whilst

being infatuating not infamous. The Heatare of Greece are other women surely but the Indian Concept of the 'Other' woman (Itara) is supremely sublimating and sublime deep and earnest studies will reveal the dramatists skill in revealing that there is always a higher meaning in the apparent frivolous, suggestive of higher lines of consciousness which could only enter man by the backdoor of passion and Kalidasa shows that each one of his heroes has the supreme quality of virtuous life, self-controlled dharma-directed consciousness even when they had discovered their hearts due to some ancient occult attraction (love at first sight?) that would make their lives sublime.

It is not mere intellectual company but a great experiment in truth and bliss and being.

That the 'other' must be always higher in the sense that she could lead one to higher levels of awareness and divine exertion is certainly one supreme criterion. This surely all the three heroines fulfill or satisfy. The heroes become better men after they meet their 'other' woman rather than worse as happens with lesser woman. In this sense the 'other' woman is para-transcendence.

In tantra sadhana of the sahajiya we have reference to the 'Parakiya' – which is said to be better than svakiya. Much extraordinary and indeed wrong conclusions have been drawn. Parakiya means that one feels oneself as belonging to God or the Divine as contrasted with the svakiya as belonging to oneself. In an illuminating way Kalidasa himself uses this word parakiya as belonging to another or the other:

Artho ni kanya parakiya eva
Tam adya sampresya parigrahituh/
Jato mamayam visadah prakamam
Pratyarpita-nyasa ivantaratma//

(IV.Act Sakuntala)

A girl belongs to her husband (another) and has to be restored to her rightful Lord even like the soul that has to be restored to the supreme. This simile is very important for, as I had elsewhere* suggested, the higher level is shown to illumine the lower level on the basis of similarity. This is true upamana or instrument of true knowledge, the upameya is the ordinary restoration of the girl to the lawful husband who indeed in dharma shastras is Visnu or his amsa or symbolises Him, and obviously every girl is a Sri or laksmi or her amsa.

The parakiya sadhana in the reverse will be that practiced by all the devotees of the path of *nayaka-nayakibhava*. The turning of oneself into a woman symbolically as done by the devotees is said to be the artificial way whereas the practice of the same in the *sahaja* way entail the treatment of the 'other' as Beloved and Mother and so on. Sure it is the natural way is taken by the Divine woman in Kalidasa and the southern mystics have taken it in the metaphysical way, by turning themselves feminine in respect of the other deemed to be Male. The path of the female however is for the metaphysicians natural also as in the case of Andal, but difficult in the view that the other is woman and wife.

However it is clear that Kalidasa inclines to the sahaja method or natural way in a sophisticated sense that it acquires in later literature and sadhana. The purpose of Kalidasa is to reveal the occult secret work of the Heroine in the transfiguration of the male, and ultimate transmutation of man into his divine nature preparing for divine birth. It is the sense of transcendence that he brings into the ordinary core of life

* Aurobindo Patha Mandir Annual 1948 " Critique of the Pramanas "

through the vision of beauty purity and divinity that marks him out as the *Kavinam Kavih*.

That the *Vikramarvasie* is an Invaluable work intimating the descent. of the higher divinised Being as the 'Other' woman Into the life of the brave (dhira) who has ascended at least one step on the path of the Trivikrama (Visnu) (three stepped one) has been recognised by Sri Aurobindo more than any one else In the history of Drama. He has himself translated the work in his own inimitable manner.

But the life of Sri Aurobindo Himself testifies to the part played by the Mother in the process of His own evolution and the great transformation that He has been able to effect in conjunction with Her. The Mother's consciousness and His are one and in this integration which is possible to supramental consciousnesses of each lies the secret logic of the Infinite that is integral and integrating also of the lower planes in the light and power and possibilities undreamt of by them of themselves.

The leap to the higher consciousness that Urvasi gave to Pururavas or Vikrama has been heralded by a great experiment in ancient times in the Myth and Symbol of the Savitri. Vikrama has become Satyavan and Urvasi now becomes the Savitri and the ultimate conquest of Death that leads to the Immortal and the Real Creative Being of the transfigured being of truth. That the high meaning of the myths that charm the inner being of all becomes clear to only those that have risen by poetic vision to the truth vision. Sri Aurobindo saw the great epic poem of Savitri as the culmination of the Kalidasaeen mystic trilogy and gave to the world a magnificent Myth-Symbol-Reality of the Divine Evolutionism, the Savitri.

It is suggested that Hindu Myth always thought of the Mother triple; Akara-traya-sampannam Aravindanivasinim/
Asesa jagatah Isatrim Vande Varadavallabham//

“I salute thee,

O Mother, who dwellest in the Lotus endowed with triple forms (of Bhudevi, Sri Devi and Niladevi) Mistress of all the worlds without remainder, who art the Beloved of the Giver of the Best”.

Sri Aurobindo had suggested a fourfold Mother who leads us beyond to the Transcendent, the Para or paratpara. Transcendent of the Transcendent. The operations of the Mother in all her fourfold forms comprise the drama of Creative or Divine Evolution.

Thus Sri Aurobindo has shown that high metaphysical reality is not barren of all being and evolution – a ballet of bloodless categories – to which alone intellectual idealism had reduced philosophy if not to something much worse, but that which a true divine insight can portray in real poetry which is nearest to it (upamana or near measure of it) in which the words have gained and regained the original power (*sphota*) that includes the mythos, symbol and meaning that has significance for higher evolution and ultimate transcendence over death, ignorance, cyclical being and disintegrative and disjunctive multiplicity. In such poetry of dramatic attainment of the Highest Peace or Santi, a new rhythm of the Veda enters and supports and perpetually satisfies the highest needs of the psyche of the world and the Universe.

14. INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

Introduction:

That philosophy and psychology are interrelated and were most intimately so at one time not long ago is a well-attested fact. However when the so-called experimental method developed, which was experimental in the sense of the physical and chemical sciences, it was considered that the psychology of introspective analysis was arm-chair psychology and speculative in the sense of merely theoretical generalisations. The introspective method was criticised as not so very reliable as the objective experimental methods. However there is a large amount of truth in the so called empirical method and empiricism, and true enough the empirical psychology that led up to the empirical philosophies was rather poor stuff as psychology.

Indian philosophy claimed from the beginning to develop its metaphysics or assume its metaphysics on well-grounded facts of experience. Experience however was something that included not merely the physical sensory types of experience nor the rational processes of deduction and inductive types of reasoning nor their fallacies and illusions, nor even analogies from experience and presumptive types of inference, it includes such types of experience that go by the name of creative imagination and direct revelations that are not merely extra sensory but also extra-mental. That they should have included a close study of the processes of not only the waking consciousness but also the dream-work and deep sleep that carries on deep in one's personality spiritual awarenesses that sometimes come to the surface as insights and intuitions leading up to solutions of the most unexpected

of problems of life and invention is another important piece of work, that shows that their concern was not with any one aspect of life as such but of the human person both as he is and as his inner urge indicates. Thus the whole of human personality both in this embodied organic life and even as it turns out to be his disembodied nature came within the field of his Experience and knowledge. Thus it can well be said that Indian Philosophy depended ultimately on the psychology of human personality and his world was determined in a sense by the psychological.

Thus we can even say that Indian Philosophy and psychology recognized different levels of psychology or experience, and found also that though perfectly capable of being treated as autonomous spheres within certain limits they leaned on the higher levels of experience for their own explanation. These higher levels of experience were a priori assumptions to that level but were capable of becoming empirically realised or proved at the higher level. Thus metaphysics was not something that remains utterly unverifiable and beyond, but something that is capable of being experienced by one who is prepared to make the experiment or undertake the investigation. The method of psychical knowledge is unfortunately available either by report or by introspective meditation. Here again report by any experienced or trained introspector is better than by an untrained observer of one's own processes. What external observation or even the study of internal secretions or processes of the man can give ultimately do not show the psychological nature of the human person. Therefore aptavacans (expert statement) such as that of the Veda or Agama have a profound place leading upto abhyasa or dhyana which are not mere repetition of mantras or even sitting in certain poses or trying to concentrate on a point of pratika or icon or idol, either mentally hypostatized or physically installed. Dhyana is meditation, introspective analysis of the

inner states watching of how thoughts arise and sustain themselves and disappear, or how vasanās or emotional tendencies or desires arise and seek fulfilment and disappear.

Indian Philosophy and Psychology had a more definitive aim which made many think that they were more earnest about salvation and freedom than knowledge of the human personality. They however knew that unless one knew oneself fully and completely there is no possibility of attaining liberation fully. Knowledge is absolutely necessary. It is both practical and theoretical knowledge of the whole person and its present condition as also his future hope that leads to ultimate explanations. It is true that man seeks freedom, and it is a freedom that is being more and more expanded to cover every type of freedom. This we know from recent history of political developments. Indian Philosophy asked for a freedom that is real freedom from fall into lower levels of evolution or even a freedom to higher lines of evolution. This undoubtedly depends upon two factors, personal aspiration to grow and evolution into higher personality and possible and recognized descent of the Higher levels of consciousness into one's personal life and being capable of leading one up to them.

Thus Indian Philosophy and Psychology gathers into itself the whole range of living both personal and social and collective, religious and transcendental, all of which demands full knowledge of all that one is and shall be. Therefore to a serious student of Indian Psychology philosophy is the culmination of psychological data gathered from various levels of being and awareness, stimulations, urges and responses, physical, vital, mental and psychical.

Another important face to be noted in respect of the study of Indian Psychology that it more and more emphasizes the normal rather than the psychopathological and abnormal.

The so called para-psychological data referred to as yogic, are really possible to the normal man, and indeed occurring to him, only if he cares to pay heed to them. Yoga is for life and normal life. That a peculiar emphasis on its liberating power should make it appear as if it is intended for abnormal persons or only some kinds of persons is rather unfortunate. The psychology of the normal man includes the whole life of man in society. Neither the ascetical mood nor the hedonistic epicurean gives the general norm of the individual in society. Normal psychology takes into account all that goes to form his total life.

Indian Psychology along with this philosophy of total understanding thus canvas a large integral picture of man and his serious significance.

Thus Indian Philosophy claimed to be a darsana, a seeing or perception of the total Reality including the individual, nature and God. For each of these a peculiar or special pramana or source of instrument of knowledge was prescribed so to speak, and it was also instructed that moral preparation is specifically necessary for careful self-observation or observation of nature, without committing errors of perception or observation. A whole fields enquiry into perceptual fallacies or illusions and their causes was opened up. It is clear that Indian Psychology has put forward the normal as the special field and not the abnormal or sub-normal to which modern psychology owes its most spectacular successes as in Psycho-analysis.

Thus the prejudice against Indian Philosophy that it is metaphysical, that it is armchair or speculative psychology, woven out of the celebrations of yogis and so on, has to be shed if a proper appraisal of the contributions of Indian Psychology, has to be made. The yogi is no abnormal type of person. Indeed one of the most fruitful fields of personality

psychology was worked out in respect of ability and quality patterns in conduct and typological enquiries in manifold fields of applied sociology. The Bhagavad Gita and the Dharma sastra made it a very important matter in the appraisal of human nature and social conduct.

The normal type has to be discerned in the context of the society and development and work. That the Indian Psychologists did make use of clinical and pathological material is also known from the works of Ayurveda (the science of medicine). We have large amount of material which shows how closely the concepts of Matter of living matter had influenced the general nature of medicine.

Thus we can say that almost all concepts of Indian Philosophy have their origin in psychological investigations and in a sense this homeo-centric procedure had helped the building up of systems of philosophy, which have unfortunately turned to what we may call systematization of results from the standpoint of logical coherency or dogmatic authority or in the interests of a particular point of view. That is why we find that darsanas though their fundamentals reveal psychological understanding, being incomplete in themselves in some respects had ended up in mutual self-criticism logically or ontologically. Provided we can even now classify the same, we will be able to arrive at a large volume of interesting psychological materials.

Most interesting results are today being studied in the Yoga Institute at Poona. But we can get a first hand account of psychic material from the voluminous encyclopedic writings of Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramachandra of Shahjahanpur who affirm other psychic centres and forces than what physiological material modern sciences present.

Ancient Indian Psychology because of its synoptic perceptions and intuitions has developed a highly technical set of terms to convey the special features of experience at different levels. And this attested to by the number of so-called synonyms of the processes called consciousness which is said to function at least in a threefold manner in its embodied or personality, such as intellection or cognitivity, (sattva in terms of its body), conation (rajas in terms of its body) and affection (tamas in terms of its body). These cognitive processes operate through others and produce several distinctive cognitive processes. Indeed we have also to consider the vast amount of literature which has been called the scriptural testimony of the Veda and Agama which bears psychological or adhyatmika knowledge as recently Sri Aurobindo has been at great pains to show. We have to recognize that the critical psychological understanding of the several avenues of knowledge is necessary preparation for a proper logical evaluation of them. Indeed Indian Psychology has been at great pains to show that knowledge or experience is not capable of beings limited to any sensory or extra-sensory or imaginal perceptions or the intuition yet generalising the sensory. Four fundamental forms of knowing are available to man and one is supremely fitted to know all of them. It is not a little to the logicians that owe at once a clear restatement of their limitations as instruments or real knowledge of Reality and of oneself but also one is to confess the extraordinary confusion that has come into being in the field of Indian Psychology. It is not perhaps germane to this paper to list the causes of this confusion, but the most important may be mentioned, it is the hypothesis of degrees of reality and the power conferred for the higher so-called knowledge to 'sublate' or set aside the lower cognitions. Thus perception is said to be rolled out by inference or meditate knowledge, and both by Sruti or intuitive knowledge.

Therefore in each field of enquiry whether it be cognition, including perception, sensory, extra-sensory or super-sensory or Conation that embraces the unconscious, subconscient, inconscient, conscient and superconscient, or affection, unconsciousness, inconscient, subconscient or conscient and superconscient in Aesthetics, should be exhaustive and minute in the whole range of knowing as given by the Indian philosophers, psychologists, medical writers and aestheticians. Philological competence alone may not be sufficient but psychological insights which will grasp the full meaning of psychological concepts will be most helpful. A serious research project in this direction must be sponsored by the Psychological Societies in India.

It will be interesting for example to trace the growth of the verbs as applied to several behavioural patterns. The word *samkalpa* itself owes its origin to the word root *Kalpa* : to make, to imagine a conational term so to speak. Thus knowledge is said to be somewhat of a *sam-kalpa* or willing or imagination, a meaning we find expressed to its fullest in the concept of Reality as imagination. (*Yoga Vasista* is a work which works out this thesis so to speak to its absurdity). The first perception or sensation of an object is said to be *nirvikalpaka pratyaksa*. *Vi-kalpa* will be projective or defining of the perceived, a term that expresses a differentiation (*vivarta*: *varta* or *vivrtti*). Thus we find that *sa-vikalpa* is a transformed or modified or projected or individualised or personalized externality or definition is such a process of modification of the perceived undifferentiated sensation. A whole theory of metaphysics seems to be involved in these usages which vary from system to system. As psychologists our concern is not to read these from the standpoint of the philosophical pundit but take all views and examine them.

Another line of enquiry is opened up when we take up the word '*uha*': several meanings which include observing,

change modification, guess conjecture, determination, attributing, filling or supplying an ellipse are given. Several words have arisen from this basis word such as Sam-uha, Apoha: Moha. Each one of them has now got a meaning that has lost its parent meaning. To recover the yoga-meaning is one important function of the Indian Psychologist. Several wonderful texts have been interpreted unpsychologically because they have felt that the philosophical truth was to be kept in mind and others do not matter. Sam-uha means to be perplexed, infatuated, and apoha means according to some forgetfulness, or negative reasoning or removal of doubt, and in the Gita where it is stated that the Lord is smriti jnana and apoha; it is sometimes explained as the knowledge of the future, by the context or (should it be the knowledge that is got by the revelation which occurs by the removal of the lid that covers the face of truth signifying the meaning given in the Upanishad 'apa-vrinu : uncover). Equally interesting is the conception of Ma-uha or wrong imagination or that which causes bewilderment, which is the cause of delusion. This has been said to be caused by desire, attachment to objects.

The above examples are taken at random in order to show that a large area of special enquiry in Indian Psychology is yet available not only in the fields of Para-or Supernormal Psychology or Yoga, but even in the ordinary fields of enquiry.

It should not be forgotten however that the general climate of Indian Thinking by and large is devoted to knowing himself as out-growing his present embodied state and looking forward to a life of liberation not only here but beyond. Thus we have to arrive at different kinds of psychology devoted to different fields of behaviour both

individual, and social, and perhaps political, and above all the spiritual which transcends in its demand on human incentive and in its strength all the rest.*

* Paper discussed at the Madras Psychology Conference.

15. DOES INDIAN PHILOSOPHY **NEED RE-ORIENTATION**^{*}

Indian Philosophy: Freedom, Reality and Value

The basic problem of Philosophy in India is in a sense directed by the problem of Freedom which is more fundamental than the problem of Reality. Reality and Freedom are the fundamentals of philosophic exploration and attainment. The essential concept of Indian Philosophical thinking including the hedonistic Carvaka is Reality – Freedom, the essential axiological nature of truth. Truth is not merely to be known but is to be lived: this is the general teaching of Indian Philosophical Tradition. The attempt to separate the two spheres, as Western Philosophy appears to do, will be philosophically unsatisfactory. It will not be a reconstruction.

Neither Materialism nor Vitalism is helpful in solving the problem of Freedom. According to recent Psychology, even mental activities develop mechanistic tropisms; therefore the quest for freedom at these levels is vain. Like Indra, in the Chandogya Upanishad (8. . vii-15) we may progressively discover and reach new levels but each level may become an obstacle to further progress if it is treated as the final end. The realisation of absolute freedom is identical with the realisation of the highest Reality. This is the meaning of the concepts of *Moksa* and Reality in Indian Philosophy; these concepts are integral to each other.

^{*} The Indian Philosophical Congress, 1956

Our problem is whether this traditional knowledge is helpful to us at present. Our exclusive devotion to technical and economic interests in the contemporary age has obscured the concept of reality and value. Nevertheless, the concept of freedom is of fundamental importance to the contemporary world, and it is through this that we can link up the contemporary adventure in Scientifico-Economic-value with the concepts of *Reality-value* in Metaphysics and of Social Philosophy. This is parallel to the *Mukti-Purusartha* and the *Kamartha Purusartha* of ancient Indian thought.

Past Re-constructions in Indian Philosophy

Reconstruction is possible either from the Mechanistic or from the Idealistic stand-point. While the spiritual attitude is an experience pertaining to the axiological nature of Reality as Freedom, the materialistic attitude is the Freedom of a Hedonistic life. The concepts of *Iha* and *Para* (here and hereafter) illustrate this antithesis.

It is wrong to say that there has not been any reconstruction or re-formulation in Indian Philosophy in the past. All Vedantas are new formulations of the nature of the Reality. In the field of Dharma-Shastras, ethical and social dynamics, we have evidence of a continuous re-formulation of the Ethical Codes and Practices. The history of Indian Philosophy is a series of movements of thought seeking different formulations, if not solutions, of the problems of metaphysics and life. While Advaita has been exalted and the issue diverted to a discussion of Monism or Absolutism, other philosophical formulations in other schools of the Vedanta are accepted as giving as much consistent and satisfactory account of Reality as Advaita. In the field of Methodology, Indian Philosophy has been critical and the spirit of its Critical Method has given rise to the *Pramansastra*, Science of Methodology, which is an examination into the 'origin, conditions and limits' of the instruments of knowledge,

Perception, Inference, Intuition & etc. While some have emphasised' intuitive experience, there are methodological *revivalists* who affirm the validity of othermodes of knowledge and 'ways of knowing'.

That the history of Indian thought has never been static but has always been a process of examination and criticism could be shown by a study of the transformation that its major concepts have undergone. We could have several papers of research on the several concepts used in Indian Philosophy such as *Maya*, *Avidya*, *Karma*, *Sesa*, *Visesa*, *Vijnana* and so on. The concepts of mind (*manas*), *atman*, *prakrti* etc., also have undergone evolution. The two terms *Pravrtti* and *nivrtti* have had a history of their own. As Whitehead has stated echoing the words of Wallace: "The use of Philosophy is to maintain an active novelty of fundamental ideas illuminating a social system. Philosophy is mystical, for mysticism is direct insight into depths as yet unknown. But the purpose of Philosophy is to rationalise mysticism not by explaining it away but by introduction of novel verbal characteristics rationally coordinated." It is impossible to introduce novel verbal characteristics merely for the sake of introducing novelty in order to attract individuals to a new jargon. It is precisely because it is not easy to do so without what we call "experience" that we recognize a new philosophy as a New System only when we recognize the new experience underlying that philosophy. For the large mass of mankind insensitive to new development and in assimilation to customary ways of thinking, it is perhaps unnecessary to parade the idea of new philosophies. But we are now witnessing a new tempo of human activity, a development of mind which is becoming aware of the larger challenges of thought and life. So we may yet take our inspiration from the ancient Seer who spoke about the practice of togetherness of contraries (opposites) *vidyanca-avidyanca yas tad vedo ubhayam saha or sambhutamca vinasamca yas tad vedo*

ubhayam saha – and pursue our philosophic endeavour, which may lead us to real reconstruction in Indian Philosophy.

Many of the writers in the volume on *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* edited by Dr.S.Radhakrishnan, show us one of the ways in which the philosophies of Ancient India, mainly the Vedanta, lead to re-interpretation and reconstruction. This re-interpretation made by the Indian mind is, in the main, through the media of Western intellectual philosophy. These philosophies are in a profound sense impact-philosophies rather than integrative philosophies. These impact-conscious philosophies fail to arrive at a true integral apprehension and thought or what Sri Aurobindo calls, the Real Idea of Reality.

Sri Aurobindo

The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo has taken its stand on what we may call the integral realisation of Reality in all its planes of expression and experience. It is not merely a restatement but a reconstruction of the ancient unity of experience! The One–Many Changeless–Change, Process, Progress and Purpose, Individual–Universal, and *Nirguna* and *Saguna*, Personal and Impersonal, Ethical and Supraethical and so on, and a revaluation of the concepts of Evolution and Involution. The integralism of Sri Aurobindo reveals an insight into the integral Nature of Reality as Existence, as Intelligence and as Delight. Sri Aurobindo's reconstructive insight is richer and profounder than the best of the Eastern and the Western thinkers. The past is conserved and transformed in the context of the Integral Philosophy. Dr. S.K.Maitra (of the Banaras Hindu University) has demonstrated the new advance and modification made by Sri Aurobindo in the concepts of Western Philosophy in the light of Indian Philosophy.

The merit of Sri Aurobindo's approach is that his insight is claimed to be derived from the dynamic status of the Supermind. The transcendental concept of evolutionary power and plenitude is lacking in others, for this power is granted in a transmutive sense to the Ultimate Spirit or Person in the other and earlier philosophies and sadhanas. Prof. Malkani apparently holds that there is no need to assume the supermind as the Absolute Spirit or intellectual intuition is enough to explain transcendence. Intellectual intuition is a hybrid. It would not be correct to create a fundamental dichotomy between intellect and intuition merely because the intellect has taken the role of analysis through the principle of contradiction and has later attempted the synthesis on the basis of dialectic. This is of course inherently a vicious process, or, as the ancient Indian thought has stated, it is intellect that operates on the basis structure of *avidya*. It is perhaps the greatest merit of Aurobindonian analysis of the mind to show up this nature as the biological or evolutionary result, rather than a fundamental function of the intellect when it operates from the structure of the Supermind. This is to assert that the future of Philosophy lies not in the annihilation of Intellect (and its fulgurative functions—*prapancikarana*) or *nisprapancikarana* but its transformation as the instrument of the Supermind.

It is necessary to emphasize this aspect of the future possibility. The position taken by the exponents of the opposition between intellect and intuition is that philosophy is the attempt to explain reality in terms of the intellect and its accidental mode of finite intelligibility through the logic of the principles of contradiction, coherence and so on. The metaphysics of finite logic has been found to lead us nowhere. It is a dragon that slays the action **Error! Reference source not found.**, the creative being. It is necessary to instruct intellect with the logic of the infinite the real the thing-in-itself-which is grasped undoubtedly by the knowledge of the

transcendental *Saccidananda*. But where many see the end of Philosophy, (indeed this is said to be the highest of Experience) we have to see the beginnings of a new philosophy reconstructed by the intellect now laden with the logic of the Infinite. It was suggested by me several years ago at this Congress in 1947 that what we need is the spirit of philosophizing proceeding from the Logic of the Infinite to evaluate and understanding the darsanas from the point of view from which they were formulated (namely the supra-mental). This mode of evaluation seems to have been lost sight of and finally abandoned by most or all of the commentators of the darsanas, who have left us expositions based on the logic of the finite. It is necessary to reconstruct the darsanas too in the light of the supra-mental logic of the infinite.

It must have been something of a clear insight into this status of the intellect that was at the back of the exposition of its nature by Rene Guenon, the French Orientalist, in his study of the Hindu Doctrines (p. 41ff). In India also the word Buddhi as Vijnana is essentially different from the mental, for its activity is a liberating one; it reflects the eternal the Infinite, and goes beyond the limiting and dichotomising principle of contradiction.

Therefore it is clear that we are today in a position to undertake a careful reconstruction of the Indian Philosophical schools or Indian Philosophy itself that is based on the Logic of the Infinite and the Infinite experience. Though Vedanta may well claim that all has been said theoretically about the matter, it would yet be necessary to attain the Being that is Creative Eternity foreboded in the Concept of Supramental Evolution.

Not merely has Knowledge not come to an end with Being but it is itself the Being that is creative Infinity. This is

the inner dynamis of the Supermind. Philosophy in this New Key is yet to be fully articulated though some of the foundations have been well and truly laid by some of our modern seers Sri Aurobindo, Maharsi, Radhakrishnan and J. Krishnamurti.

16. HUMAN PROGRESS-ITS REALITY AND **MEANING**^{*}

For more than a quarter of a century these lectures have been delivered by very erudite and eminent scholars on the several phases of this most intriguing problem posed by the donor of this Endowment. The most arresting words (some one said 'catchwords') of the modern world are Evolution and Progress, and everything is being considered under this speculum so to speak. Nothing is capable of being considered scientific or modern enough unless it is approached from these two standpoints. The Principal Miller Endowment in conformity with this climate of the times has charged the lecturers with the task of elucidating, if not discovering, the 'inner meaning of human history as disclosing one increasing purpose'- (may be more than one but the monism is assumed). It shows that to the mind of the donor there is one increasing purpose in human history, and it is something that has to be discovered since it is not quite patent to the surface consciousness. It may not be entirely elusive to the human mind but it is something that we have to discover as more and more clearly coming to the surface or increasing in its intensity and extensity of action and influence. In any case it is clear that we have to discover this purpose in human affairs and history stretching for thousands of years and that this prime purpose is being more and more realised.

There have been many thinkers who have held that these assumptions are not only not self evident but positively untrue and unwarranted. Progress has not been proved. Evolution has not occurred. Adaptations and modifications

^{*} (Principal Miller 'Endowment Lectures 1954-55)

have neither been steady nor continuous. There have been periods of change, and every forward movement has been succeeded by a rearward and backward movement. Progress and regress have alternated. Biological speculations and theories are not quite satisfactory as they prove nothing about man. Nothing has basically changed in man. Again and again he has slipped back into his primitive nature, at the earliest opportunity. There is no doubt that something in him lifts him up to the levels of culture and civilized existence that cultivate peace and harmony and co-operation. The thousands of years of civilized life, that have elapsed between the savage and the saint, have not really made saintliness the common heritage of man in his dealings with all beings. Every great effort has only made the failure greater still. . Despite the veneer of civilization which covers rather thinly his animality and sensuality, the psychological development of man has hardly undergone change. He might have and indeed has changed the technique of survival but not the means or the ends for which he seeks to live. He is yet a biological being conditioned by his fighting and pugnacious instincts to which all his life is dedicated and attuned. Force is the arbiter of his fate. Clever weapons alone have been substituted for the teeth and claw of the brute and the javelins and arrows of the primitive savage. Therefore all these trappings of civilization are illusory covers, and man's progress is illusory.

This is not to deny that efforts have not been made by exceptional souls like Visvamitra, Buddha and Mahavira and the great Upanishadic seers to seek an alteration of the attitudes of man to Nature and higher realities within him. Such modifications in attitudes have certainly influenced some individuals for all time, but not all people for all time, but only for sometime. Revolutions in history have not been infrequent. Indian History does record both political and social as well as religious revolutions, which were in fact with bitterness and sorrow attended. We may not today appreciate

the genuine fears and equally intense and genuine hopes that engineered them. But even such revolutions after the fitful fever of struggle and victory had been won, settled back to the original condition which they had so much fought against making mankind fit for the new vision. Sometimes the results hoped for turned Paradoxical. Out of good come the evil and out of evil come the good.

There seems to be no intelligible result predictable. All seem to be irrational. Ideals and actualities belong to two orders of being. An irreconcilable dualism seems to be opposing any marriage; at least a permanent one is impossible. Divorce seems to be inevitable. All modern dialectical thought, in the fields of economics, and politics, seems to be in this predicament, neither ready for a divorce nor for a co-operative understanding that rises above the struggle of these contradictories. War settles nothing, indeed it probably raises more formidable problems. Mankind at least has come to learn something of this. This too is indeed a progress in our thought, but hardly have we formulated this, we are almost made to forget this and return to our old patterns of behaviour. We have come to believe that the generality of man—the common man—is incurably a paradox. The exceptional beings of the world are either messengers from a higher sphere or Heaven or unrealistic idealists. But to them every one turns in distress; they seem to give authentic advice and efficient guidance. The splendid uniformity of that advice is that man cannot progress on the route of matter and the world of time and space. He really belongs in his depths to a higher world and into that world must man awake. This world is riddled with illusion and sorrow. Transcendence over Time and space, and causality is necessary and possible.

This transcendental view of Reality has been one of the most important forces in History. It is that which has been kept bright and shining by scores of saints who have kept on a

relay race as it were, as witnesses to a great possibility. They have undoubtedly shown that there is One transcendental Reality which man has to achieve if he were to escape from the material snares and illusions of pleasure and achievement and conquest. All that man makes he mars with imperfection and unreality and transience. It may not be that they give us a sense of progress to the perfection here on this place of transitory things, but they assuredly give us a presence of the eternal light which ought to be known. Only the knowledge of the transcendent Being, Timeless Reality, can save us from world-weariness and sorrow and the cycle of illusory experience. It is that which has to be known and entered into, for that alone can rescue us from toil and tears, struggle and sorrow, frustration and failure. There can be no reality in the ways of the world, which is bondage to time and space and environment.

A radical dualism cannot but be the result of this transcendental view. The world in which we find ourselves with all its sensate values is a world of illusion; to pursue ends suitable to life in it would result in the annihilation of all that we know and experience as spiritual and of ourselves. It could only lead us into more and more ignorance and darkness. The world of Reality is not amenable to the senses or the mind which partake of the material world. By pure intellect we might realise that world which confers perfection and changeless Being. 'Reality and Perfection are one and the same thing', said Spinoza. Imperfection and unreality are synonymous terms. The world of Perfection and Reality is what a man should strive to know. That is true living not the life lived in this world of sensate values. Man's journey in this world would be meaningless and a cyclical merry go-round; his journey should be directed to going out of this world to the Eternal and the Immortal. This is the characteristic of otherworldliness or this-world negation which is a dominant

note of all transcendentalism. A flight away to that, a withdrawal from this, are both entailed by this conception.

Accordingly in this first lecture my problem is whether progress is Real at all? Once we are enabled to answer this question we might be in a position to answer the second question as to its meaning for us. The two problems however are closely linked up. We cannot divorce the meaning from reality for they are about one and the same thing, even like the word and the meaning (vak and artha about which the eternal poet Kalidasa speaks).

Is Progress a fact that we observe in the world's History? If progress means that we have moved from a particular point in the scale to another point far above the scale then we have to fix the standard or the scale itself. Things do move constantly, imperceptibly. Nothing remains stationary. We have been moving and changing, adapting ourselves to the environment. Are we better off than when humanity started on its unknown career? Materially, physically, economically and hedonistically one could see that man has been struggling to improve his lot. Surely men have changed much, pretty much from their early beginnings. Our clothing, our dwellings and our foods also have become refined and many industries have developed all over the world. Discoveries of science have been steady, and our knowledge of the external world has extended to envelop the whole globe. During the past two hundred years there has been quite a quickening of the pace. No longer is the world divided into two hemispheres of known and unknown continents, dark and illumined places, but men move from one to the other. The human being has certainly increased his knowledge of the world, through scientific discoveries of inestimable value for his survival and comfort. It is not merely good to survive but to live well and comfortably. Plan after plan has been framed to make man safe from penury and

disease and poverty. Surely we have progressed. We have recognized that we can improve our lot and the lot of all of us, through co-operation and planning for the future. We cannot perhaps have been so very sanguine of this possibility but for the advantages of co-operation and exchange in the fields of knowledge as we have had in the fields of commerce between different peoples. The latter was vitiated at the beginning by cupidity which led to mistrust and later to struggle and selfishness and separatism. But we seem to have discovered that trust and standards of conduct are not really alien to ordinary life but necessary and inevitable to good life or a life of happiness and freedom from fear. We have advanced much. Space-and-Time-saving devices have come in hundreds and thousands of ways. Health seems to be better now than in those days when one was precariously at the mercy of every epidemic, and they were by no means infrequent. The West has every reason to be proud of its achievements. It has sought the path of conquest of the world to human needs, to harness earth's forces to his better and richer life. Undoubtedly qualities of courage, persistence and perseverance and rationality have been actively co-operating to make the modern world. Even in the field of Politics and Social life, there have been continuous attempts to replace the competitive with the co-operative attitude. More and more, superstition has been replaced by science and statistics. Surely there has been wonderful progress, spectacular and splendid. No one in the presence of this tremendous surge of human intelligence, creative and matter **Error! Reference source not found.** of fact, can deny that we ought to be convinced of the fact of progress. This is the picture of the modern world. It is real indeed and cannot be dismissed.

But what do we feel or rather those who have been watching this great procession of scientific progress feel about all this? In India surely there was at the dawn of her history a wonderful set of people, seers by spiritual eminence and sight,

who have been indeed fathers of all seers in other parts of the World perhaps, who saw clearly world's progress in this manner in a different light. The age of perfect Knowledge and light was becoming less perfect—gradually the imperfection would be swallowing up three fourths of the light. The world was under eclipse—the age of *satya* has regressed to the age of *treta* (three-fourths dharma) and that to *dvapara* (two-fourths or half dharma) and is ending with a quarter (*kali*) of dharma. The age of the enlightened knowers of Brahman (the Vedic seers) who practised dharma integrally and fully in all the four planes of life, of wealth, or happiness, of dharma (sacrifices and duties) and moksa (liberation), rich in every sense was followed by the age of sacrifice of moksa as the ultimate end here and the dharma ruled the fields of government and commerce and labour, individual and social welfare. And so on we have regressed to a government of desire and hedonistic enterprise, greatest happiness being the one aim whether it was individual or social. Liberty one wanted, not to follow the law or the Right but to pursue ends of pleasure and carnal satisfaction. It has become a right—the fundamental right to err being included under the right to righteousness. And thus today we witness the entire dharma-fabric, so sedulously taught and practised earlier, under the disintegrating influence of a new interpretation. Even so, the religious movements during this vast period have proved not at all the preservers of the Vedic tradition but its most tireless critics who had brought with them the norms of a different age. No one who really studies the Vedic and the Buddhistic and the Jaina works can really resist the conclusion that there has happened a shift in standards. The old norms have been thrown away and new norms have been accepted. What is this but the adaptation of man to new demands of life? Why have the old failed, which claimed to be eternal and immutable truths of a Divine life, and about which we even today cannot but feel thrilled as we listen and ponder over them in the silence of our hearts? 'The old order changeth

yielding place to new'—but it does not follow,—and it was definitely assumed not to follow, that it was better or truer. We might only say with patience at the degeneracy, that such a truth is incompatible with the changing 'time'—a phenomenon to which no body has been able to give an adequate answer other than that it is the law of all things on earth and subject to Time and its triple states of birth, growth, decadence and death finally. Indian History shows how the independent people of this country have been enslaved consecutively or overrun by different races from outside in all kinds of ways. The pessimism that overcomes minds contemplating these events that have come to pass despite heroic efforts to bring back the power and the plenitude and the wisdom of the ancients is something profoundly actual. It would not do to dismiss all this as the play of a terrible and tragic illusion of time. Time seemed almost to follow the law of regression in this. Sanatana values have tended to wither and undergo changes and adaptations to the new conditions. Spiritual values and standards are no longer the norms of life. Sacrifices to the Gods, and the practice of sainthood are not really commendable things. Economic welfare is the one thing to which all have to be subordinated. In an earlier age reason was subordinate to revelation, which was claimed to be the 'all-sublator', but today the tables are turned; reason, economic reason, sublates all spiritual revelations. This is the zeit-geist in reverse.

As the West advances with science and envelops the Eastern mind, the Eastern spirituality withers and whines so to speak before this onslaught. In some sequestered place there may yet go on—as it will—the path of silent spirituality, lighting its inner fires, keeping and tending the flame of eternal Knowledge, steady and unruffled by the passage of time and the ages that succeed each other swallowing up the past ruthlessly. Progress in one part is simultaneously present with the regression in another part. The dualism in reverse-process

is clear. They have always been in active existence, in man and in society and everywhere. The human being is bi-partite, a soul and a body he has, a soul that belongs to the transcendental spirit universal but enclosed in the temporal changing material, and a body essentially a temporal event and congeries of elements, but ensouled by the transcendental Spirit. The progress of one towards its destiny seems to be a regress for the other. Does what protects and feeds the Soul also feed the body? Or is it otherwise? A great saint (Sathakopa) was asked what was that by which he lived and where did he reside? He answered that he was eating the Spirit and there he always abided. It was not different from the statement of another great lover of God (Spinoza, in the West) who said that he lived and moved and had his being in God alone. The transcendental is not an inaccessible Being but a truly accessible thing to the soul though it must be said that it is verily distant to the body and by which the body lives. Could the body be made to live by the soul or not? Again it is a fact, without this spiritual soul, the body becomes a corpse;—death results not merely because the body is not able to get the food it wants from the world of matter but when the soul departs from the body. This view raises far reaching problems for science and religion. The picture of the modern man who affirms that the body must be maintained by means of food and comfort and clothing and dwelling and work and not otherwise really is in contrast with the view that the body can and does live by the Self and soul alone. Is it a matter of loss of faith or is it a feature again of the deterioration in historical life ?

Progress is not universal. Nor is there an increasing purpose seen on the face of this process. Nature moves by frenzies and oscillations. There is the ever recurrent process or cycle of the same trends—individuals may arise for some time to pass away leaving behind unfulfilled the ideals of an eternal progress or even the convertibility of man to anything higher.

The standards or norms of human life seem to reverse themselves by a process of self-regulation, and man is in a terrific world of contradiction and confusion. History, universal History, presents no single tendency or unilinear progress in a particular direction.

It has been therefore concluded that perfection is not possible in the space-time-material world which is infected by the dialectic. The so-called dialectical form of evolution seething with inner contradiction proposed by philosophers, promises but cannot achieve the realisation that belongs to another plane of being.

The idealists have come to the conclusion that progress is illusory. The question that yet agitates them is of what is it the illusory form? There must be the substance of reality of which it is an illusion. No adequate answer could probably be given by saying that it is the temporal version of the Eternal that is being presented and as such it is the Eternal that is thus 'objectified', that is to say presented in the spatio-temporal-causal nexus as the History of the Spirit. Viewed in this light, it almost seems that there is an inevitable dynamism in the Spirit itself which makes it objectify itself—and thus the illusion gets the sanction of an appearance. But the main problem would yet remain. How could we know that the appearance is the appearance of the Absolute, unless we could perceive both¹ the poises of the Absolute as Subjective and as Objective – an impossible situation for the human being? This double poise of the Eternal is inescapable whether we think of

¹ *The criticism against representationalist theory of Truth would be valid here. But if there is, as it is affirmed there is, the experience of these as successive, then there is a possibility of valuation.*

them as the two modes or attributes of the Eternal (Spinoza) or as two statuses (Hegel), or paramarthika and vyavaharika (Sankara). It is the 'normativeness' of the Absolute that determines the illusoriness of the temporal presentation or representation. It is a valuational term.

Progress axiologically considered (and it cannot be otherwise) demands the definition of the standard of reference. When it has been stated that men have lost faith in Human Progress, thanks to the occurrence of Two Major World Wars within a generation, is it not because they have failed to come upto the standard of human conduct assumed earlier by the people to which all hoped to conform more and more? Peace and plenty for all—and freedom for all, these had been the norms of the earlier generation; liberty, equality, fraternity had been held to be the ideals of man and they tended to go ill together. The set-back to human progress due to this rude shock to the human conscience and the general theory of Spengler who spoke about the inevitability of the decline of civilization combined to enhance the illusoriness of Progress. But we know that there should be Progress towards perfection. We do see that mankind has been learning and growing from the experiences that had been challenging its survival. Human creativity has never been wanting. Evolution has been a fact demonstrated by the scientists.

Continuity of evolution has been acclaimed as one of the major discoveries. Man himself owes his being to the hoary past. His biological and even psychological nature has traces of that ascent. It is in Art truly that man has the power to create the Eternal in the canvass of the temporal. Creative art struggles to portray the sense of the Eternal in material media, marble and stone, painting and music or poetry. It may not attain perfect Idea or the Eternal Form, which is incommunicable fully, but it does suggest it, and there are degrees of suggestive perfection. The human mind does attempt different ways of representing in the context of the

temporal and perishing material the universal Truth. To say however, as some thinkers do, that it is the Eternal that is conveyed in the temporal would be but right; it at least shows that there is some possibility of representation of the Eternal in the temporal; the temporal is not absolutely opposed to the Eternal. A flight away from the temporal is not the only way towards the perfection; evolution itself shows how the eternal is sought to be held and made fugitive in the temporal but in the process also to become the mirror of the Eternal. This creative evolution (no doubt different from Bergson's) shows the infinite possibility of the temporal. We may not agree with the view that the temporal is the Eternal in process and the Eternal is the temporal in static perfection. Some have tried to show that quality is the summation or concentration of quantity and the reverse process would restore quantity from quality. Thus the temporal is said to be the quantification of quality and the Eternal is the intensive summation of the temporal (quantity). This undoubtedly is an analogy.

We have Yet to explain the process which seems to be real and seems to reveal revolutionary character. It is certainly characterised by the Preservation of the past in terms of biological memory.

Sri Aurobindo challenges the view that nothing changes or progresses in Nature. There can be an illusion of permanence in Nature. As very pertinently pointed out by Sri Aurobindo, Nature (in her temporal processes) "has still more subtle and disguised movements in her dealings with men by which she leads them to change without their knowing that they have changed. It is because she has employed chiefly this method in the vast masses of the East that the conservative habit of mind is so much stronger there than in the West. It is able to nourish the illusion that it has not changed, that it is immovable faithful to the ideas of the remote forefathers to their religion, their tradition, their

institutions, their social ideals, that it has preserved either divine or animal immobility both in thought and in the routine of life, and has been free from the human laws of mutation by which man and his social organisation must either progress or degenerate but can in no case maintain themselves unchanged against the attack of them.... It is only when we look close that we see the magnitude of the illusion. Buddha has gone out of India indeed, but Buddhism remains; it has stamped its impress on the spirit of the national religion leaving the forms to be determined by the tantricism with which it had made alliance and same sort of fusion in its middle growth. *What it destroyed no man has been able to restore; what it left no man has been able to destroy.* As a matter of fact the double cycle which India has described from the early Vedic times to India of Buddha and the philosophers, and again from Buddha to the time of European Iruption was in its own way as vast a change, religious, social, cultural, and even political and administrative as the double cycle of Europe” (italics mine: *Ideals and Progress*: p. 47-8). It is this conservation of net gains which has been the hallmark of Evolutionary Progress. There is thus a law of conservation of statuses, even as there are laws of conservation of matter, energy and ideas. The principle that a certain advance is always maintained and sustained in progress is the crux of the situation. Considered in this light our progress would be a spiral movement always ascending though there may appear to be recurrence of the same events. It is also to be remembered that the processes that happen in one place or country may be repeated in another at a later date, so much so, as Professor Hayek said, one may be enabled to go through the same experiences more or less in one's lifetime. This however does not mean that there is absolute recurrence but only appearance of recurrence—something very similar to the experience of octaves or harmonics in Music. We might even in this spiral adventure perceive ourselves as moving forward or retrograde and yet since the mechanical conception of the movement

would be with us we might delude ourselves into thinking that all movement is cyclical rather than spiral ascent.

These conceptions about progress would show that progress is a continuous process though it might appear to be temporary and transient. But we should not forget to note that all progress like life might appear to be under a sentence of death or reversal. Historical progress seems to be discontinuous, happening by spurts of splendid activity followed up by quite a period of stagnation. Differences in geography and culture do not reveal a different conclusion. The whole creation reveals the law of birth, growth, maturation, stagnation, decadence and final annihilation, and this series is implicit in the repetition seen in the lives of generations of different cultures, both Eastern and Western. Whatever is preserved is the 'form',—the individuals (or groups) come and pass. Birth-cycle or *samsara* reveals that nothing else abides. An illusion of progress always sustains us: we hope to be better than the past; we hope to improve on it; we feel that we have lot more of wisdom than the past only to be reminded painfully that our wisdom has less chance of helping us to survive than it did our ancestors. Wisdom lies in tradition which shows that one should discover as they did a different attitude of being than what we are in. We ought to discover that in order to survive. It is in the discovery of values and in the consistent pursuit of such values that help the enlargement of man's consciousness and welfare that we can perceive the norm by which to judge the process.

The study of human culture in a sense is the study of the growth of these values. The earliest preoccupation of man has been to discover these values. Ages of culture have been those when these values or rather the pursuit of these values had been cultivated by the large mass of the people; and ages of barbarism have been precisely those when these values had no longer been held worth pursuing.

What is that which makes the values of one age less valuable or even valueless in another? Are there eternal values, values which could be distinguished as more essential than other values? Do values change in their definition or alter in any way according to different situations and modify themselves to suit different individuals? Though these questions may look ethical in their scope yet we should recognize that they are not simply ethical. Every normative system recognizes that adaptation or conformation to the norm means better life and yet we might make this even a question of 'survival-value'. Ethical progress is ultimately one of the tests of culture. There was a time when ethics and economics were not considered apart, and we may well ask whether the separation of these two at the present time is not a sign of regression, though positivistically speaking it may be claimed to be an advance in so far as economics is removed from its dependence on ethics and is restored to autonomy. The problems we have proposed would be intractable unless we broadly recognize certain types of values to be dependent on particular conditions, and certain others to be independent, in the sense that they would have to be pursued under all conditions. Modern ethics unfortunately has rejected the latter as too formal and abstract for conduct-valuation or choice, and as having hardly 'survival-value'. But perhaps there is much more truth in these 'allegedly formal' norms than we know. Indian thought has held *artha* and *kama* to be relative concepts, and further that they are instrumental values rather than values in themselves. That is to say *artha* or wealth is a means to an end, even as *kama* is, though *kama* appears to be more an end than a means. But *kama* is dependent upon wants or lacks, and looks forward to goods or things of satisfaction of certain biological and physical needs. Properly speaking we can see that as our cultural life has progressed we have been enabled to distinguish more and more between ultimate values or ends and those that are but instrumental, if

at all, to those ends. The essential nature of things has to be distinguished from the unessential. That does not mean that the unessential are not capable of being in a very important sense instrumentally useful or valuable. But there is a sense in which such instrumental values tend to occupy much more of man's attention and as such are obstructive to the attainment of the intrinsic. Thus the scientific discoveries and inventions have this characteristic of being obstructive to human progress in so far as they tend to be used against the higher values of survival and enhancement of knowledge. The instrumental values tend to become ends in themselves, thanks to human cupidity, as the history of hedonism has clearly shown. This preoccupation with means rather than ends is the cause of much purblindness. This is equally true of the history of logic and aesthetics and politics.

The ultimate ends however are not arrived at by the inductive process. On the other hand they are perceived through inspiration and intuition. They are so self-evident to the inner consciousness of man that they derive their strength from this inner will – so interpreted as Good Will. These ends have the imperative character and demand to be realised by the soul. These are the ends which man finds have been fixed for him, and the race as well, to realise, and unless he moves towards them, there is no real progress at all. These can be realised and 'ought to be realised.' If they cannot be realised either because they are not capable of being ends on the plane of human life or because they are receding tantalising ideals, they could well be called illusions. Though it is claimed that the pursuit of ideals is much more exhilarating than the attaining of them, yet it would certainly be conceded that an end that cannot be attained will leave the individual without any meaning in his pursuit. But this precisely is the predicament of a man who is afraid of completing his job as no work would remain to be done. In such a case the only interesting job is to undo by night what one does by day like

Penelope in the Greek Myth. Whatever may be the truth of this hypothesis it does not make progress a reality, and the problem is by-passed. Life is certainly not a process of winding and unwinding, weaving and unweaving, life and death, light and night, though these do occur. Values of life are not seen in the perspective of human evolution. Men do seek the Eternal, for the Eternal is seen to have value, indeed the only valuable thing, more valuable than life itself.

The Eternal is the ultimate value and it is what one chooses whenever crises develop in human life. Life in fact is a series of crises of physical, moral and spiritual nature which demand the choice of that which grants to man the sense of reality and freedom. It is true that these crises are not as common to communities as a whole as they are to individuals. No doubt we are confronted with this peculiar crises of communities and races today, thanks to the physical nearness achieved by Science. The choice of certain ends in preference to certain others does not depend on the so-called psychological conditions of strength, intensity, attractiveness or pleasure-end but on certain spiritual laws. It is the choice of the ethical and the spiritual values as against the economic and hedonistic that ultimately is made by men. The reason is not far to seek; deep down in the conscience of mankind there is a core of discrimination which asserts itself in crises which are really points of intersection between two scales of values. The fact of choice in the life of a nation or community or individual is an inestimable index of the progress made towards the ultimate end. It is that which grants the immeasurable sense of eternal existence or perfection. The glimpse of this eternal existence is verily the beginning of an Ideal which is real and it is that which renders progress to it possible, for it is something implicit already in the vision of it. The emotional quality as well as the direction so definitely developed show that the end is already immanent in the process of attaining it. This is very much like the creative

artist whose vision of the Form is being steadily realised in the execution of it in the context of the material. The whole thing becomes a single transcending act of creation and representation. The division of ends and means ceases, for the end is dynamically sustaining the attainment by becoming more and more realised. It is in this sense perhaps we could speak of the Timelessness of the Eternal. The ancient thinkers spoke of the unity of *upaya* and *upeya*, in Brahman, even as they spoke of the *upadana* (material) and *nimitta* (efficient) *karanas* to be Brahman.

In the History of Mankind then there has always been the effort to fix the hierarchy of values, since this evolution of life seems to demand the double satisfaction of the soul or the spiritual being through the Eternal Values and of the body which is a spatio-temporal form constantly undergoing the processes of growth and decay. In India the values have been arranged in a fourfold order of *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* and *moksa*. *Artha* and *kama* are mainly for the preservation and perpetuation of the body and its series, whereas *dharma* or duty is that which regulates them so that they may be amenable and instrumental to the spiritual value of *moksa* (transcendence over body-values). Body itself is a means to the realisation of duty and freedom - *Sariramadyam khalu dharmasadhanam* - and it has been considered primarily to be of instrumental value.

As we have progressed it has become more and more clear that there is a more fundamental need in man, much more than wealth and welfare and pleasure or even the lawful use of these, for it seems to be that which makes all these less worthy in comparison and in a very important sense it is that which makes attainment of these even possible. That is freedom. Without freedom these other goods of the world seem to be unattainable. Life itself becomes meaningful as an opportunity for freedom, and valueless when it is not to be

had. Bondage had never inspired anybody. Regimented pleasures or pleasures that have been prescribed have always been unhappy in their consequences. The business of law is to grant freedom from interference in things that concern one's personality and its development. But once law becomes unmitigably oppressive, that is to say incapable of securing this personal freedom, then it is something that has to be shaken off. Then disobedience becomes a right. Revolt or resistance in the non-violent sense becomes duty.

The business of man is to realise his spiritual nature which is based on the twin principles of freedom and truth. The search for food and property, for partner and pleasure, for law and duty, are really attempts to free oneself from the precariousness of life dependent on such things and conditions and persons. The search for society also is included in the collective security that one is seeking in the world. All these grant freedom from fear; and yet the very transiency of these objects and goods and persons creates greater fears. We have undoubtedly built up, even like the organism, institutions which would be more stable and permanent than individuals for the sake of the security of individuals, but all of them are to be tested by this norm of freedom of the individual. The growth of these institutions, even like the organisms, is regulated indeed by the one principle of increasing freedom for its members and not merely for the purpose of security of itself. There have been thinkers who have pleaded for the preservation of the organism, and were willing to pay more attention to it than to the functional freedom which the organism has come into being to serve. Thus the periodic relapses into the lower sets of values are rendered possible by threats to the organism or the institutional structures.

Progress is to be measured in a social or individual context by both the quality and quantity of freedom. The scale of values then should be considered not as two different and

irreconcilable sets but indeed as one continuous set because of the increasing freedom that is granted and supported by the organism or the institutions. When such freedom is either not availed of or rendered impossible, the body or the institution disintegrates. Civilizations are such institutions, and when the spiritual quality of freedom is no longer effective within it, it becomes a victim to the disintegrative process. When its real dharma of freedom decays then it perishes. It is freedom that builds and organizes life and form in the temporal world in the image of the Eternal. Man is born in such a context of bodies and social institutions. To recognize the law of freedom in the institutions is one of the basic needs of education. The Hegelian writers were right in so far as they pointed out that institutions are objective freedom. But it is necessary that each individual should experience that freedom in performing duty as he finds when he pursues wealth or pleasure. This particular experience of course is of a different quality. Cultured progress is measured by the quantity of freedom that one has. Today we speak of more freedoms than we ever did before. This certainly does not mean that all these freedoms are of equal value or worth or that they are ultimate. The process through which these freedoms have been recognized is a long and weary one, but each one of them was recognized objectively as well as subjectively only after a long struggle with the forces of reaction.

The fourfold ends of man (*caturvidha-purusartha*) taught by the Ancient Indian thinkers provides an integral approach to the problem of life provided we know how to integrate them rather than divide them into two competing sets of value.

Today this integral view is being more and more entertained. The bifurcation of existence had led mankind nowhere. It only led to renunciation of the lower set of values (of *artha* and *kama*) as mundane and inferior and as belonging to

the sphere of ignorance. They have been said to be the source of all misery. *Kamini* and *Kancana* have been the two fundamental abominations of the spiritual man. Great thinkers and seers like Gautama Buddha, Mahavira and Sankara, and the Seers of the Upanishads (even like Socrates, Plato, Spinoza and Kant) had counselled the renunciation of the sensate *values* of life (not indeed either *artha* or *kama* objects as such) – for that is the precise condition of spiritual awareness. It is this that leads to spiritual intuition and experience of the Transcendent. Not until one gives up fear of insecurity and renounces security in order to prove it, does one ever become of the spiritual, which is always and eternally available to him. *Sanyasa* is the characteristic of *mumuksutva* (seeking real freedom) and means the renunciation of all types of security, physical, social, vital and mental to the Divine which alone is the abode of freedom and real security. The frames and institutions and logic made by men have to be renounced as limitations on the human spiritual freedom. That is why in the fundamental discussion on *Sannyasa*, the concept of *nyasa* or surrender or total unreserved offering of oneself to the Highest Reality conceived as God or the Transcendent Personality is important. *Vairagya* is concomitant of *viveka*; discrimination and detachment go together. A higher level of understanding arises out of a devotion to the highest values. By living in this highest, one develops the integral view which does not divide Reality, though for arriving at the higher poise of life and understanding the withdrawal of oneself from the lower sets of values is necessary. When the return does happen in so far as the lower values are seen to be non-antagonistic to the higher, the lower would have themselves undergone fundamental changes both in direction and in quality. They would have undergone transformation. This spiritualisation of all values, is the basic conception of the supramental evolution. It is also at the back of the conception of the sacramental universe.

But we are witnessing a going back in the world in which religion seems to have been the cause of great conflicts. Science has spirited away superstition; it has striven to give answers to problems from the experimental and rational standpoint. Things which cannot be proved by experimentation are not accepted by science. This attitude has paid high dividends. The remarkable developments in almost every field it had touched have registered a glorious chapter of progress. The success of the inductive and experimental methods shows that truth must be of this rational perceptual order alone. This conclusion of course is by no means certain. Today the only prophets we heed are the miracle-working scientists. Religion has not been equally successful, for its appeal is to the suprasensible reality. Secularism or the attempt to abolish all theoretical unverifiable explanations coupled with the deification of activity connected with the world-values has begun to dominate. It is the note of modern progress: whatever increases comfort, saves human effort, and secures worldly goods for all is typically the goal of humanism. It does not deny the higher values, but it does hold that the higher values can come in only after the satisfaction in full of the lower has taken place. Secularism and Science help the humanistic criterion of good life that man is the measure of all things. But the appeal of humanism is essentially shortsighted; and though the secular view of life may be scientific, it is not truly scientific in as much as it restricts the growing freedom of the individual, and the search for truth which is its real urge. All-sided truth or integral truth ought to be the real goal of science, and this is being more and more realised by scientists themselves, who are appalled by the lack of real humanism in scientific men, a lack of care for the values of life, truth, goodness and transcendence.

Even scientific men are appalled by the moral nihilism which has led to the disintegration of the humanistic ideal itself. Earlier ages would have prevented the making of the

A-bombs, and the makers of such bombs would have been imprisoned or put out of action. But the secularistic tendency, by a paradox as it were, has led to political, economic and ethical nihilism, and it "has set up a chain-reaction in the human mind: by a succession of bombardments our last inhibitions" have been removed. We are not amazed at the extent of the modern barbarism. It is seen clearly that "moral nihilism is the counterpart of the atomic bomb." Moral sensitiveness has gone. This surely is a degenerate state of affairs. But even as this current of the tide has been flowing counter currents have been set up. We are standing up to the ideal of real progress in terms of moral rearmament and growth of the ethical and spiritual personality. Disintegration it was prophesied would overcome integration but we are confronting the disintegration in its acutest form. It is because this has progressed to alarming proportions, the entire conscience of mankind is stirred to meet this threat. Progress indeed is being achieved slowly through the attempts at integration of values in the real manner. It is the clamour of values in helter-skelter that has led up to the modern pandemonium of '-isms' in this world: the organisation of them in a hierarchy is the necessity. A new spirituality or movement of spirit is imminent and it will help enlightenment and progress of the new age.

The tendency of progress today is not unilinear but multilinear lacking integration of the several lines that have so far developed to extremes so as to present a most conflicting and confusing array of developments. The organic fusion of these under the guiding spirituality or psychic integral being is the necessity. Our history has presented to our minds three fundamental mystical values of liberty, equality and fraternity, for being integrated in our social and spiritual life as well. Unless this integration has taken place within the individual, it may well be difficult to realise it in the social context. The history of Indian Religious thought reveals several attempts to

apply the spiritual concept of 'Equality' radically to the social set-up. The several Vaisnava and Saiva Agama seers tried to make all social organizations expressions of the Spiritual transcendental Reality. Equality in the eyes of God was first (in the Vedic period itself) shown to result in the equality of all in the eyes of the Law (*Rtam or karma*). It was shown that not merely seers should see all equally (*samadarsana*) but that any true religious practice must mean the practice of *samadarsana*. For man must do such as God would approve. That is the reason why caste was never considered to permit inequality in respect of the fundamental spiritual quality. The splendid experience open to the seer of the Eternal was sought to be the yoga so to speak for the ordinary man. That of course entailed the conflict with the social established orders based on *adhikaras* (fitnesses) of all kinds. Surely this adoption of the spiritual standard for ordinary life may be considered to be an advance or progress; but the same has been considered to be a misapplication of truths of one sphere to another and lower sphere and consequent distortion of the law of equality. This is a distortion and degeneracy according to the purists and fundamentalists. The standards of reference have shifted—a different standard has been devised. The invasions of Islamic and Christian rulers and the consequent enforcement of their standards of spiritual values, (which did not so much as emphasise the *adhikaribheda*—differences of fitnesses for the Experience of the Transcendental) led to the greater progress of the already adopted agamaic version of secular equality because of the possible spiritual equality. The spiritual has been incorporated in the secular, however precariously and even wrongly; the secular has adopted the spiritual and is, whether the secularists and materialists like it or not, on the way to be spiritualised. The grounds of progress have undoubtedly been laid—our modern legislations are well based on the secular possibility of Spirituality and the spiritual possibilities of the secular life. It is perhaps too soon to say one way or the other whether this attempt is going to be

successful or otherwise. There is undoubtedly hope for the success of this experiment. Progress to the complete realisation or perfection of the spiritual consciousness in the temporal scheme in the lives of all human beings may take long, may be attended by many vicissitudes and reverse movements and spirals of ascent, but will be achieved. The very influx of great seers of the Eternal who promise us the Eternal experience here and now, perfection in the yonder transcendent, and show us also that the Transcendent is eternally near in the heart of every one, which could be realised through tapas, brahmacarya, and satya and other practices, shows that the temporal world of change and movement can yet behold in their personalities the junction of the Eternal and the Temporal in perfection. Their appearance is not an illusion but a great and fundamental reality. They indeed show us the human possibility to be a reality and not an illusion. But the generality of mankind and humanity itself is in the context of evolution and growth and integration of values, striving to attain the Spiritual in the context of the material space-time conditions. Man may refuse to be a bridge to the higher species, for he may discover in his heart the Divine Transcendent. Nor may he like to be the step for the future race of man or superman and suffer for the sake of those men who may profit by his suffering, and reap what he sows. But we are both the posterity to the past and paternity to the future. We are not exhausted by either, for there is also the individual uniqueness which prepares for the revelation of Truth within and gives us the sense of Reality here and now. Individual Realisation is neither arrested by the progress of the human race to the higher level nor refuted. There is an inevitable complexity of both being realised and enhanced and integrated. This is the continuing delight of real evolution. Man is both the step and the status necessary for the fuller experience here and now of the Eternal but he serves the Eternal and the Temporal by progressing towards their unity in creative Existence, either as an ascent into the Eternal or as

the search for the integration of the Eternal in the temporal. This is achieved in the historical process of human personalities firstly, and then in the communities through the peculiar and purposeful creative universal activities of those personalities. The process of the temporal is not capable of repudiating the 'ingression' of the eternal values, though it is only through personalities that it is made to admit it. Evolution is the process of this activity; it has been going on; and the human being whether he is willing or not is participating in the great evolutionary progress which is inevitably underway.

The Eternal Truth is One and It manifests itself in manifold ways: but not in the manner interpreted by the mind but in an integral manner for it is indivisible. That it acts in different ways at different levels must also be conceded, but the different levels are not to be considered as divided but united in division and diversity. The meaning of this divided unity and united division or diversity would be a formulation in actual progress of the Spirit that has been and will be at the back of the temporal process.

The temporal process is neither a challenge nor a meaningless thing to Spirit. Nor is Spirit the mere transcendent spectator, somehow supporting this illusion of movement and recurrence and *samsara*. It is not merely a contrast and a contradiction to the Spirit, revelling in the negation of the Eternal and the Immortal and the Changeless. The call to the Vision of the Eternal means nothing more and nothing less than what it is. It alone can grant meaning to the process and the process would reveal the purpose and the progress that is being made in the History of mankind. A study of universal History, though it may be depressing may yet reveal that an eternal purpose urges man to move more and more to the sense of the Eternal and the Immortal and

grant an abiding hope about the future of man and the world in which he dwells.

II

"The true law of our development and the entire object of our social existence can only become clear to us when we have discovered not only, like modern science, what man has been in his past physical and vital evolution, but his future mental and spiritual destiny and his place in the cycles of Nature" said Sri Aurobindo. The meaning of our progress would thus become more and more clear as mankind advances, though this advance may be in terms of the cyclic process of Nature itself. It is not a fundamental bondage to Nature that has to be broken as an opportunity for the higher evolution. A mechanical conception of reality has always infected not merely scientific and materialistic thinkers but also the spiritual. Just as our metaphors and similes have this sensory nature, and the higher spiritual processes are expressed and explained in terms of similes of the mechanical and materialistic order, so also our interpretations of progress and purpose are considered to be intelligible only when they are done in terms of the lower planes of experience. The view that the higher levels of experiences should be explained in terms of lower forms of reaction, that higher mental faculties have to be explained in terms of neurology and reflexes belongs to this scientifico-materialist explanation of consciousness or planes of consciousness. It is only now that it is being recognized that the true meaning of the lower forms of matter and even life are to be seen only when interpreted in terms of consciousness and mental processes. This surely is not a version of animism or reversion to it. We have however to see clearly that when we think of human progress as a whole, that the entire world in which we are is a 'mentalised'

world, interpreted in terms of '*Mental*' processes which are incorrigibly human.

The organic events in a sense then are different from the mechanical, and the mental events are different from the merely organic. The events assume complexities. Yet they are all governed by laws of each level of experience. The environment assumes more and more complexities as the evolution of the organic and mental categories or planes of being emerge. The activities of the organic order are purposive or hormistic. Such hormism is directed towards the preservation of the organism, and in certain others in the preservation of the type of organism itself through 'social' or collective or gregarious preservation and perpetuation. We may see also that the growth of organisms from the single cell displays a collective hormism so to speak, analogically repeated at the level of the collective hormism of the race and community and tribe. This collective preservation is, of course, more than the preservative instinct of a single organism; and it is not merely a sum or aggregate of such instincts but a definite configuration or pattern of behaviour as a unity of units.

When Field Marshall Smuts explained the evolutionary process as not merely conditioned by the instincts or drives self-preservation and perpetuation through the struggle that leads to fitness to survive, but also by an evolution of 'organic wholes' (organisms) which become units of larger and larger wholes in increasing measure, he was of course making it very clear that there is an hormism in Nature which organizes a hierarchy of wholes. This by itself may not mean very much, for it is only to keep the collective unity much more permanent, as the individual units are bound to pass out of it sooner or later. The feature of our organism is that the katabolic and anabolic processes are not successive but constantly and simultaneously going on. The life-processes go

on at the same time as the death-processes, which shows that the hormic tendency however unclear to itself has discovered a unification of birth and death within the organism for maintaining it.¹ Taken at surface it would be meaningless.

But when we see this integration or union of mutual adjustment of processes to be the cause of preserving the whole organism, it becomes a meaningful disunity.

The death of certain organisms of a particular kind goes along with the production of organisms of the same kind for keeping the race-type or species-type going. (There are of course extraordinary cases when whole species have been wiped out). In the same way the human race has been perpetuated. The institutions in a sense have been hormically determined units for the preservation and continuation of particular unities. Indeed it has become clear that what at the beginning appeared to subserve a single end has been later on seen to subserve multiple ends as well. This is one of the important developments in our cultural life down the ages. Social traditions which form the hard core of our unity in society have been in fact the running thread of unity of all the members of a society, and this despite the several attempts to brush them aside. At the human level the meaning of evolution is certainly different. There have been many superstitions about our life and our activities. The cyclical theory of the inevitability of better times because we are going through bad times—that every night must be succeeded by the day,—has certainly suffered severe shocks in modern times, so much so the better time seems to be more and more thrust away to the post-death period. So also the nineteenth century

¹ Even death is only an instrument for reunification, regrouping, recreating for a new life

optimism about the inevitability of progress and its interminable ascent received the greatest of shocks when some men had shown that they could put the clock back ironically or cynically in the name of progress, human progress of course.

The whole conception of the inevitability of progress came under the most fierce fire and all those who claimed inevitability for any theory whether materialistic or idealistic were shown to be crypto-mechanists. But the whole question of progress was raised to the ethical level—'Evolution happened in the animal, but it has to be willed in the human!' said Dr. Radhakrishnan.. This willing of progress is not inevitable but based on choice and also on the manner of progress that we can will. This responsibility certainly is humanity's. It is being exercised undoubtedly too by the advanced minds, souls so intensely aware of the destination of man, as to keep the transcendent purpose of existence before mankind in every age. The fact that man had a rich past (which Modern Archeaology is discovering) had led certain persons to wonder whether we have progressed at all. But the human personality has been adjusting to certain fundamental dimensions and direction of its nature through the ages, and a little care and close inspection might well lay bare the directions of its progress and the advantages that it has gained over his hoary past. The march of humanity has been slow, but thanks to the inspiring geniuses of former ages, the flame of hope of a great future, not merely yonder and beyond the terrestrial scheme but even in the temporal, has been lighting the path.

The ideal has been therefore fixed, as the eternal goal of all mankind. One may deny that we are being urged forward to this predetermined goal. But the fact is there whether mankind has fixed it or a divinely inspired spirit has opened up that horizon for it. To that attainment mankind is heading,

struggling through a myriad hurdles. but yet steadily jumping over them and ascending. The goal has of course all the indefiniteness for the seeker. It is not because it is something that is of a higher plane of experience. The very insularity of the individual, his preoccupation with his own daily practical needs, makes it impossible for him to catch a clear idea of that. Yet even as it was remarked, if one but does his duty and goes on doing it, one would have travelled towards one's goal without knowing it. We are urged to move forward because we cannot stagnate; caught up in the cosmic movement, he who merely stands, is really moving, and this certainly is inevitable to the process of Nature within which man finds himself.

From the primitive men, of whom we do have standing traces in all continents, who have just refused to move forward but who by an irony of fate are forced to move forward thanks to their being discovered and pooled into general humanity, to the modern man who is cocksure about his own superiority over the former (but who alas discovers that his many psychological distempers are due to his close psychic affinities with the primitive), we have undoubtedly traversed a long distance. Our idea of man is certainly much more accurate and thanks to our openness of mind, is likely to regain and reinterpret the past knowledge for the purposes of integration of all our knowledge, East or West, physical or psychical. No longer are we prepared to create oppositions between Eastern and Western Philosophies, or cultures or religions, or even secularism and spirituality or the sciences. This surely is progress in attitudes.

Dropping the extraordinary interpretations of a cyclical repetitive mechanism of the process, we could see that mankind has been steadily moving towards a harmonious synthesis through assimilation by conquest or interpenetration, and has almost arrived at an 'organic conception of the world'.

We are not of course thinking of interpretations based on idealism or realism. The theory of correspondences between planes of existence is now more and more coming to be accepted. This linking of planes and philosophies through correspondential identity though poetical at first, has been seriously studied in different fields by those who have had the vision of the 'one Universe'.

All this vast knowledge of the several planes of life and being has been necessary for understanding the play of purpose and progress in this process of Time. More and more it must be clear that there is a Divine Purpose that is the meaning of the process of time, to achieve which the human being has been in travail. The future of that purpose is certainly in the hands of human beings, who have been equipped for the perception of that Divine End both as immediate and as remote but not impossible of attainment by the entire race. This vast world would be seen to be one of interconnected and interwoven nature building up in such a way as to lay bare the truth that all things in this world are both ends and means to the Highest Perfection, God. That is why the usual charge that men are being made means to the making of Gods or supermen in any theory of evolution loses much of its point. Everything in its plane of being is an end in itself but in respect of other planes especially of the higher planes it is a means. It would be wrong to make anything merely a means or rather only a means or only an end. By way of analogy from the metaphysical field, the Samkhya darsana considers that all evolutes are both *prakrtis* and *vikrtis*, causes as well as effects; the last of the categories become pure effects, whereas the first remains only the cause being not an effect of anything else. It is when we perceive the interrelatedness of categories that it becomes a meaningful process of causes and effects. Ethically considered we can see that the higher are more ends than means to the lower, lower ones are more means than ends. The individuals in this world

are to be treated as ends surely in so far as their existence and moral goodness and growth are considered, but they are also means to the good of the State. When individuals are to be treated merely as ends, individualism results, setting up a conflict with the society; if they are treated as mere means only to the welfare of the State, it leads to totalitarianisms. It is only now after the terrible conflicts between the two great Wars we are realising the dual role of each individual as well as the State, and are trying to reconcile them. It is in this context also we should see that the human individual *homo sapiens* in evolution whilst being an end to moral existence is a means to universal Divine Nature, for it is he who is the subject of divine evolution. He is a means to the birth of the greater type of men of infinite compassion. The Superman is the 'natural' goal of man, and, it should not be thought that is the annihilation of man.

It is the individual who is sought to be transformed and there is no possibility of his being annihilated. It is also clear that just as individuals cannot be abolished but only eclipsed for a time, so also nations too cannot be abolished. The smaller nations, having their own unique cultural patterns and linguistic unities have also refused to be cavalierly treated by imperialisms. They refuse to be means to the imperialistic ends. For imperialism is certainly not the end of the progress of Humanity. That should have become quite clear from the long history of humanity both in the East and in latest demonstrations of the West. The experiments in Imperialism have been as thorough as possible. They had served their purpose however negative the results might have been. Today humanity is yet presented the choice of living together through the knowledge of a deeper unity of End that is transcendent to the present but which will become immanent in the future.

The unity to which the world is moving is not particularly capable of being interpreted in terms of the logic of the pluralist or the finite mind. It is necessary to arrive at a unity that clearly exhibits not merely the oneness of the many or the manyness of the One but also the 'ingression' of the values of the many in their higher form as well as the enriched values of the One in terms of the many, That is what we actually find even in the lower rungs of the evolutionary ladder. This enrichment in meaning and action of the higher in terms of the lower is a continuous process. The meaning of the unity of all life so fundamentally assumed by the ethical religions of Buddha and Mahavira is not only a case of sympathy but also of the realisation of the realm of ends. And the progress that each living cell or animal or insect or man demands from its own nature is to become more and more than what it is, for there is an aspiration to grow vaster and vaster. Not merely is it a question of imitation on the human level but to realise the infinite in the finite. The meaning of its life is not then in itself and being for itself but for the Infinite that it more or less consciously feels within. The progress thus becomes seized with a frenzy so to speak of becoming more and more what it feels. This is the search for the Immortal, the Infinite. The history of philosophical or mystical or religious search would never have been anything but true because of this search for the Infinite which one feels one cannot but know. The progress of mankind would never have been dreamt of even in the little measures of a materialistic hedonism, temporary ameliorations and alleviations of human suffering and pain, but for the more and more clear indications of the unity that one is recognizing with the entire universe.

Many formulations of the nature of the world we live in have again and again, almost with regularity been advanced both in the East and the West, and we may not think of more than six or seven such views. In between these theories of

reality and theories of knowledge we have many intermediate eclectisms. This shows that the Infinite is never going to be comprehended through compromises and adjustments and combinations. It has to be known directly and by a method which transcends the human logical method. The Revelatory and intuitive character of the higher knowledge has been acknowledged but we have been striving to render it intelligible to the rational mind. All philosophy has been at pains to do this bringing down or rather 'stepping down' the unintelligible to the level of the intelligible. This is surely progress of a kind, for in the process we are undoubtedly raising and lifting the rational to the higher levels. The symbolic movement of thought and the apprehensions of analogical and the correspondential knowledge, have undoubtedly facilitated the growth of our knowledge which is wider than and overflowing the rational intellect with its neat set of formulas of intelligibility.

But the problems of mysticism are greater than those of philosophy which does duty to the transformation of the intellect. Its aim is not precisely Vision as such, though it is the fundamental necessity of that consciousness which seeks the Infinite to be comprehended or touched. This Vision is what 'Yoga had taught to be the goal of existence of all living beings; it is that which the Upanishad says one must have when one is living here: If not, there is great fear—*ihacet avedin mahato vinasthih*—(Kena Up). The process of evolution is facilitated by the Yoga or union with the Infinite which could be known dimly at first but more and more clearly as one grows into that Infinite Nature, though perhaps by definition full and complete comprehension is impossible. But the identity that one achieves in increasing measure makes for the perfect attunement and union with that Infinite. That is why perfection of union is the first step on the progressive march towards ultimate perfection. The most important feature of the mystic concept of the Perfect (*purna*) lies in the

fact that the interpenetrative fusion and correspondence (which is sought to be explained in terms of the principle of musical harmonies by certain modern mystic writers like Ouspensky) is seen in the experience when one moves towards the integral perception of the Unity of all in the Divine Oneness. The glory of this development is not on the plane of imperfections and the grades of imperfections, or degrees of unreality and degrees of imperfection but on the scale of degrees of Perfection in the sense of microcosmic and macrocosmic manifestations. That is, the human individual who attains to the transcendental awareness of Reality begins more and more to live in that and less and less in this private and lower levels of Nature. This becomes a spontaneous event and not an effortful one, though perhaps the first attempt to transcend the human and the temporal is attended by all those psychological states of being wrenched away from the known levels. The transitions from the lower to higher planes always have been attended with great pressure from within, known as aspiration and continuous meditation or contemplation or preparation of the body, vitality and mind, described as *yama* and *niyama* and the other stages of yoga. Yoga does at the human level what evolutionary nisus had done at the lower levels. The incidence or incarnation of the higher level or the breaking in of the highest Truth-consciousness or God is a perpetual miracle, not necessarily to be expected only at certain historical periods. The 'inbreaking of the highest consciousness' or the Godhead into the scheme of the world was claimed by the Russian theologian Nicolas Berdyeav to have a single possibility alone in Jesus, the Christ, (for the truly single or the significant alone is universal) and that it must always be a catastrophic one for the life of the world of terrestrial values and the inbreaking consciousness too. But a more realistic and at the same time the acceptable historical fact is that this inbreaking of the major type is usually a descent of the Highest for the purposes of the restoration of the progress that has been arrested half-way, and this is a

continuous process in so far as the souls which have acted as prophets of mankind have this same characteristic of keeping the ascent of mankind going. The incarnational theory is in fact the fundamental truth behind occasionalism of the Melebranche-school of thinkers. Even as the extraordinary occasion of world disorder and chaos of moral purposes needs the restoration of the equilibrium of the moral world, the spiritual nîsus in the world needs the dual forces of the immanent ascending character and the descending uplifting nature.

The organic evolution seems to be the fulfilment of this spiritual action on the temporal. It is a very long story. The fact that the organism is a psycho-physical unity arrived at by the so-called struggle between matter and spirit should show that the spiritual triumph at the lowest level is to be presumed to have meaning for the rest of the vast process. Call it hormism or holism or Divine Evolutionism, the same progress, with different paces, has been kept up. The body is not a meaningless thing, but the realisation of the unity that actualises the two truths or infinite truths (modes) of the One Transcendent-immanent Reality -or Omnîpervasive Reality.

The body has not only realised the unity in dynamic double action but exists for the purposes of the Divine Manifestation and Experience. That certainly is not exhausted by human evolution alone. It is as Sri Ramanuja pointed out that man exists for God and that includes God's Lila as well. Man is a means to God but surely not the *only* means. Man's imperfection urges him on to become a perfect instrument of God through surrender to the ideal of being a perfect instrument, willing and free. The freedom that he seeks is really the freedom of transcendence of limitations; as to what these limitations are is a matter of great dispute. That he manages to transcend most of the conditions of material and physical and spatio-temporal nature and has a sense of

freedom in the modern world, has not exhausted his possibility of fuller freedom. Ultimately the higher freedom from even the so-called necessities of life seems to have been sought individually by some of the yogins of old. But it did not entail a search or desire for a life divested of the organic form of life. That shows how experimenting on the ultimate foundations of life the Rishi (of the Taittiriya, Varuna) gradually unfolded that not food, not breath, not mind, not anything else but the Self of Delight is that by which everything in fact lives. This transcendence over the ordinary and well-known needs of the organic life is one of the amazing discoveries of the Vedic seer. So also in the wonderful episode of Maitreyi-Yajnavalkya, Yajnavalkya shows that everything is dear not for itself but for the Self incarnate in it (or capable of so incarnating-*vasyam*). The denial of organic life as such is not entailed by this transcendental awareness of realisation. On the other hand the progress of mankind would reach its ultimate culmination when the realisation of the Self would be sufficient for organic being itself. Not even Time or Fate (the superior law of the transcendent Nature) called '*daiva*,' are limiting conditions, except to the ignorant nature, for the transcendent life of the *Jivanmukta* stands above these conditions unaffected by them. This realisation was in fact achieved subjectively in particular individuals. But the evolutionary possibility of making these limitations themselves conditions of a perfect manifestation or meaningful, rather than meaningless impositions, has not been worked out either in the individuals or in communities. The fullest possibility of organic evolution has not been worked out. The organic has not yet been shown to have exhausted itself nor its possibility of being the abode and instrument and manifestation of the Transcendent perfection.

The Buddha-ideal, so similar to the Jivan-mukta, and the Jina-ideal² have once for all laid down the promise of a living here with transcended awareness and perfection. It was also shown by similar thinkers. The Vedic Rsis Rbhus are said to have attained the status of godhead (*devatva*). The story of Trisanku shows how physical immortality and ascent into higher levels was held up as an ideal but incapable of being achieved by mere sacrifices. The goal was visualised and never abandoned. The achievement of transcendent awareness and perfection, though denied to ordinary mortals, was shown to be the fact about the descents of the Supreme Consciousness into the temporal field of human history or creation itself.

The descent of the Divine produces serenity and freedom, and it is a transforming serenity. It transforms the mental and the organic; it purifies and illumines it. It makes the organic radiant—*suddha-sattva*, and *brahma-bhuta*. The dross is removed leaving pure matter divinised. The entire body responds to the divine touch; it is said to get a universal resonance: it is no longer an instrument of a private or fugitive ego but the radiant organ of a divinised universal consciousness or transcendent power and personality. The experience of the Transcendent as Transcendent may mean the withdrawal to the state of the non-organic and a-temporal state, but the experience by itself is not such as to exclude the organic life itself, though the organism itself would not necessarily mean the human type. It would perhaps change and modify itself to suit the superior and transcendental functions that it might be called upon to perform.

² The Buddha and Jina became ideals for the individuals and the race.

The Divine is not the Yonder Self alone but also the inward secret Self of all, seated in the hearts of all creatures, moving and sustaining and transforming them without remainder. This experience set in motion during the past millenium by such giant Vedantic teachers like Ramanuja and Sankara in two different ways was largely anticipated by the Upanisadic seers and Alvars, Nayanmars, Siddhayogis and Bhagavatas. The indwelling experience of the Transcendent firstly in oneself showed the remarkable incarnation within of the Divine. It was a precursor to the great transformation in evolution itself of a higher type of men. It was itself a miracle of Grace, and it resulted in that splendid transcendent state of '*tanmayatva*' (Godfilledness). It was indeed the supreme manner by which Tradition that had lost itself in the morass of ritual and objectification and interpretations of scholastic scholars could be restored and given an authentic verification in and through the divinised personalities. It was indeed this recovery of inner tradition, which did not contradict the ancient authentic Veda, that was to show the way for the great movements of living spiritually that flowed from these two great men at the beginning of this milleniun.

This may appear to be a resiling from the height of abstract thought to the emotional and sentimental life of devotion and duty, which have been said to be fit for the lower rungs of humanity alone. This was shown to be altogether a wrong notion. The three levels of consciousness in man are integral and form one unity. In the individual as well as in humanity as a whole this oneness exists and moves men. Events show this to be the case. The heart governs sometimes wiser than the head. Even the history of the past hundred years has its own points to offer. The purely socio-political and intellectual approach of the Ram Mohan Roy School gradually demanded the devotional element—the appeal to the heart—the religious. The study of the texts of the Upanisads (said to appeal to the head *alone*!) gradually led to the deeper

instruction of awakening the heart and the control of the senses and the motor organs also: the Gita provided inspirations for a further development. All this is clear to those who have studied the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana; Balgangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi.

Thus Men-like-Gods or God-men have been one of the earliest dreams of mankind. To become immortal and infinite and utterly blissful has been the ideal, for they seemed to be the meaning of one's existence, the content of one's perfection. Whether this immortality could ever be physical and temporal endlessness or death-lessness had been discussed by many and rejected on grounds of impossibility, or incompatibility with the otherness of the Spirit or because it meant an attachment to perishable nature. Some great souls rejected this physical transformation because it savoured of illusory attachment or it prevented the Transcendent from disposing them as He in His infinite mercy might. The soul being the instrument of God and His body cannot set limits to God. Extreme non-attachment was the test of supreme surrender to the Transcendent's Will. Even so was vairagya or renunciation of the world and all its promises of pleasure. It was a result of the knowledge of the Divine as the One goal of one's being, and as the Self of all things. But this was a transitory phase of the integral movement or adjustment to the Divine Purpose, whatever that might be seen to be. Sri Aurobindo shows that this goal is destined by the very nature of the Divine. It is true that the Nature of the Divine is not to be construed in the same sense as we construe ours. His nature is *Saccidananda* which is expressed and maintained through Freedom and determined, paradoxically by that freedom. Sri Aurobindo sees in this creative history of evolution, the integral purpose being maintained through the play of Oneness that is eternal and the manyness which is also eternal—and its culmination or finale must be inevitably the working out of the Eternal in the Temporal forms, though the interpretation of the external-

temporal forms would very much be different from our own. The expression 'inevitable' in respect of the destiny is again not to be construed as something mechanically determined or dialectically logically determined but by the self-determination in freedom of that eternal Oneness in eternal manyness. There is nothing repugnant in Nature nor in the individual manynesses to the Divine Spiritual Nature. We could proceed with either of the alternatives proposed: that matter and souls are different from Spirit but that they are dependent on Spirit for being what they are: this view may be designated dualism or theory of difference; or that matter and souls are but self-formations of the Divine in temporal series, projections so to speak of the Supreme Spirit which had framed the several planes of existence, extending from its own Supreme transcendence (Timeless Being) down to the unconscious matter-spirit wrapped in its self-concentration and manyness. This continuous formation of the several planes of knowledge where oneness dominates over multiplicity and the planes of Ignorance (where multiplicity dominates over oneness) are all of One Spirit- Brahman. This is the significant meaning of the Upanisadic Mantra – *sarvam khalv idam Brahma*. These two dismiss the illusory view or rather render it as an axiological valuation but not a meta-physical one. Evolution is the process by which the integration of all the planes is achieved in the Organism— which is the pattern of the Unity-dominated multiplicity. The transition from stage to stage of the evolutionary ascent involves the descent of a higher level into the lower. This may be analogous to the mutation theory,³ or Bergsonian impulse⁴

³ Unconscious adaptative variation not based on any ideal is mutation really.

⁴ Bergson denied an objective presupposed ideal but not an immanent urge.

to break through to the freedom of the higher planes which of course immediately makes one aware of the laws and determinations of that plane. The development of the organism has arrived at a point in human evolution that it has already been possible for the advance guards of Humanity to probe and break through the barriers that divide the human and the divine. Moksa would mean the attainment of the higher level and would yet not be the ultimate. The gradual process of evolution would demand not merely a breaking the barriers that divide the human and the divine worlds, but a bringing down or rather opening a pathway for the Divine world to break through with its light into the human for the large mass of mankind in trevail. This process is not all onesided, that is, from the human side alone, which does not know the Yonder world and its status and conditions and laws. The inevitability of 'progress' is not because there is an inner law of the human level which must record advance in human terms of perfection, but because the Divine order is included in the order of Nature and is organic to the human. Human beings seen, to be aware of the choice that would determine a better future for mankind—Paradise or death—even as Earl Russell only last month declared. If mankind could choose, if its leaders could weigh and decide, if it is left to them alone to have the final word, then this critical choice would have to be made, and mankind is free enough to make it. The future then would be unpredictable and not inevitable. The human being is aware that it is not left alone to decide to move forward to secure 'peace', the will of mankind as a whole has to decide so. We are in the world seized with haunting fears and it looks as though the powers that be today are also aware of the fate of mankind if it should choose to put the clock back by a billion years either by preparing a hell on earth or complete devastation which would make all life impossible and by a process of cosmic nivrtti—return to the original causal condition, and achieve an ironic *nisrapancikarana* (dissolution of the world-process) or pralaya.

It is not because the contemplation of such a fate is painful that we have to conjure up a vision of an utopia in the future or the Beyond; it is not because we are distressed over the tragedy of human good being caused by some of the diabolic forces that mankind yet harbours and worships and rationalises, that we think about an inevitable progress which would by a miracle of divine intervention save mankind and progress; but because the human world is not separate from the higher world to which it is indeed subordinate in the plane of values and in the pursuit of which human life itself is worth sacrificing. It is this spirit of worship and sacrifice of the human life and its life-values for the eternal values that marks the inevitability of the decision in human affairs. These qualities come to the fore only when the critical situation develops in human affairs. Both the forces of evil and that of Good emerge under such conditions and the human mind is faced with the decision to choose the Divine. For it is the sense of freedom that is the truth of real force, spontaneity or play (*lila* interpreted as *avalila*) that is incipient in the choice of the higher world for action.

The concept of sin has been one of the most important factors which had given rise to the theory of regression or fall. This world was considered to be the field of sin or results of sin, a sort of purgatory or a valley of shadow of death. Progress in human affairs is said to be rendered impossible because human nature is prone to sin against nature and God and men. What precisely this is due to has not been explained except as a disobedience to the Divine Order, or due to the positive egoism that erects itself against God's commands or the divine order and seeks to rule by itself and for itself. Ego thus is said to be the real difficulty whether it is conceived as the sum of the resistant forces and formations (*skandhas*) or as a private soul habituated to the lower values of life which it seeks to hold on to and 'enjoy' with tenacity.

The world-catastrophes are said to be due to this perverse action of a single or a collective ego and the sins produce the reactive results which break up the unity and put the evolutionary ascent back. The freedom to sin is undoubtedly emphasized by some thinkers as the very content of freedom, but it must be clear that such freedom as license, only helps the soul to discover for itself the tragedy of its private seekings or selfish aspirations. Nor is the collective sin less dangerous for the collective or the group (as in our own day the Nordic sin) can exhibit recessive characteristics which smite at the evolutionary ascent of man. But the transformation of man arises only through the actual (only in advanced souls in conceptual imagination) awareness of this regression. Nations decay because they lose sight of the goal of mankind. Civilizations too get destroyed because they lose sight of their destiny and can no longer move forward or get arrested. But these facts do not at all go to show that real progress is not taking place, in the sense of the integration of this human world with the world of Divine values. This is the meaning of the process. To be blind to the constant brooding presence of the Eternal always reproduces some of those peculiar ameliorative humanisms which emphasise the value of man as if he were an end in himself. But that is just half-way house to the atheism which denies God or the transcendent world or planes of consciousness. Humanistic progress is a short-sighted vision of the progress that has been going on but its value lies in its showing up the great responsibility of human beings to reflect the divine possibility in their own ordinary lives. This of course does not remove the other responsibility nor could it arrest the incentive to move higher to the levels of consciousness which would give us the Vision of Harmony of the diverse planes of being so far removed from the human consciousness.

It is becoming increasingly clear that man requires for his perception of the world as a unity in and amidst all

differences a new consciousness-vijnana-super-mentality. This is possible and this does not lie out of the line of Evolution. Nor does it deny the constant realisation of the Transcendental as the immediate possibility of any individual or even group, for it is because of this constant impact and ingress of the transcendental inspiration and vision and power (for as Sri Aurobindo affirmed this Transcendental is Saccidananda-Reality-Conscious-Power-Delight) that the progress is rendered possible and inevitable in the spiritual sense of raising the human beings to the status of being fully and truly organic with the Divine.

Therefore to deny progress or speak of it as alien to the perfection of the Transcendental Experience would be just to miss the alchemical miracle of transformation that is constantly at work in the free process of Evolution. The only sin of man is his being more open to the lower levels and its pressure of the Ignorance and the Unconscious. It is against this that he has to insulate himself from being influenced, and it is to the higher that he has to adapt himself by being open to it and to it alone. It is necessary in this process that one should seek this emergence of the Transcendent from within, that is to say as an inner revelation at the heart so that it may be more and more realised as an organic self-development of the Divine. This inner praxis is the Yoga of union with the Divine.

In no other country has this Yoga been developed *all-sidedly* as in India. It is the supreme merit of these Yogins in India that though there are several schools of Yoga, each claiming to achieve the highest state, they have all realised that the goal is transcendence of the human state of ignorance. The liberation from ignorance is more primary than the liberation from the cycle of transmigration and rebirths, for it has been discovered that ignorance and egoism, its nucleus, are the real causes of disintegration of the Organic harmony.

One more level of progress in the conception of Yoga which we can clearly visualise is that the individual Yoga has to be also followed up by the social or collective Yoga of a people. For the universal is the truth behind the individual and the collective consciousness and one is organic to the other. The Cosmic Yoga of the Divine is thus a double process of the individual transformation and collective transformation. The great developments in the world today show that the collective Yoga is as much important and the surrender of the collective egoism or selfishness for the purposes of the Divine Descent is the necessity. The modern racial movements and conflicts are indeed the disharmonious projections which emphasise the need for racial and national Yoga. The integration of the several parts of one's being is rendered possible by the Yoga of unification of states of consciousness (Mandukya Upanisad) and the modes of consciousness or personality (Bhagavad Gita). This has to be carried to the levels of the collective or social and racial units as well which also suffer from the division of their unity and suffer from the extraordinary disruptions which give rise to untold suffering to the individuals comprising the groups. The modern world suffers from too many of these disruptions within its individual and collective units.

But already the extraordinary activities of religious leaders and mystics, seized with the will to save mankind by the divine values of integration, show that progress has been made. The claims of peace in the world are indeed the claims for harmonious coexistence at the beginning in the hope that organic integration could be achieved and the distrust and fear that characterise human and national relationships could be abolished. This hope is un-doubtedly too sanguine but then all hopes are so. It is not possible to achieve the integration of all levels of consciousness by merely coexisting: it is necessary to be inspired by a larger awareness of life, and the values of

life are certainly not exhausted by peaceful coexistence or mere peace. The premature counsels of peace at any cost almost try to make peace a fundamental value, something very much like and on a par with the values of Truth, Beauty and Knowledge or Delight. Peace is necessary for the rational understanding of the harmony that is behind reality and is dynamically sustaining it. Peace, like Silence in Yoga, is a necessary step but peace at any price is neither welcome nor valuable.⁵ Progress and peace are not linked up except in the sense that they are not contradictory; progress may happen in peace as well as in conflict. It is therefore necessary clearly to understand the kind of peace that we need and the kind of conflict that cannot but be forced on any one. We have to see that the meaning of progress is an ascent to a higher and fundamentally different kind of consciousness than what today mankind has: it is not possible to have it till we quench the fires of psychological conflict and greed and selfishness and envy: this quenching is the silence and the peace that one must develop within. We cannot make it the end, for it is fundamentally a means to an end much richer than any that we know of, for it is the starting point of real creation universal, and true Lila.

Peace however in the Divine Sense is a genuine principle of harmony. The ancient thinkers felt that Santi is not to be merely a suspension of activities like sleep or death, but the creative harmony of blessedness. It is that which is the quality of integral living, the *turya* (fourth state). In that experience of *turya*, everything has the sanction of the Infinite, everything that is and will be has 'sufficient reason' as

⁵ A human peace is an impossible ideal. The best will of the human world abstracted from the Divine World or God can never confer Peace, an integral indivisible Peace. The only Peace to be sought is the Divine Peace which includes and supports the human and other worlds.

Leibniz put it. The very process of Time⁶ (*kala*) is seen to be most luminous with infinite meaning and not as field of chance. It is impossible to consider that blind chance decides the occurrence of events or the 'compossibles' and that out of thousand and one ways of meeting a particular situation only one materialises under the impulsion of chance, and that this arbitrary choice of fate is constantly repeating itself every moment of life. The whole of history may be seen to be a refutation of the 'Ifs' of history. There is behind all the possibilities of the universe the freedom of the Universal Intelligence or God or Spirit (or all these), for we perceive the meaningfulness of all events after the events have occurred.

To see this needs human effort of the will to change the manner of looking at Time itself or the process itself. We have to see time itself through the speculum of Eternity. This undoubtedly has been explained as the 'principle of Grace.' This inner revolution from within through the influx of the transcendent Grace, by itself produces the real feeling of immortality, Jivanmukti, freedom from the bonds of ignorance, and perfection here and now, as something immediate; it has been the aim of all spiritual leaders of mankind to produce this inner revolution. It is something quite different from the regressive revolution engineered by or rather planned by politico-socialist thinkers of all times. Though there is always a danger of spiritual truths being used as catchwords by the socialists and meliorists, yet under the guidance of spiritual leaders these have less opportunity for being so misused.

⁶ Time-*kala*=from *kala*-'divisibility' or 'partitioned' bit.

Non-violent satyagraha under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi has this inner revolutionary quality. But no sooner than that presence and personality had been withdrawn the socio-political scene seems to have changed somewhat. It is for this purpose that the permanent inner revolution which cannot lose its power and force or resile to the lower level of spiritual life, must be achieved. It cannot be achieved unless a higher supramental consciousness which cannot return to the lower levels of our fragmentating practical mind is made the permanent feature of human life itself. This is not merely an ideal; it is that alone which can make perfection immediate. This is the progress that mankind has been trying to make. The time is more opportune for this attainment by mankind now than at any other time. It is not merely an optimism of the intellect. Nor is it merely an imaginative speculation. It is the inevitable realisation demanded by the very nature of Freedom that mankind has been attaining both in evolution and in cultures and civilisations.. This is the cosmic purpose which is more and more becoming clear to mankind to pursue and realise. It is true that we do not know and cannot perhaps even dream of knowing the ultimate pattern of the Lila of the Divine but it may not be said that that we hardly know anything about it. It is also true as already pointed out that we have enlarged our ideas and patterns of thinking not merely in the fields of economics and enjoyment but also thanks to the complexity of forces of all kinds that impinge on them, in the fields of cosmic welfare and peace and psychology. Regressive manifestations, reprehensible though they have been and producing a sense of melancholy and pessimism have helped mankind to see clearly the dangers to progress. Spiritual values are more and more recognized as necessary for practical life. Secularism (this-worldliness) and Spiritualism (other-worldliness) have met only to realise that they are not except to a dichotomising intellect opposites, but complementary and interpenetrative to the sacramental conception of reality. This is the universal intuition of the

world's leading spiritual men, in all ages, and it burns brightest today than ever.

asato ma sat gamaya tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
mrtyo ma *amrtam gamaya*

would not have been spoken by the Vedic Seer if progress to that transcendental state was not possible to mankind. It is not a false hope but the most tested revelation of all times.

17. “PROGRESS STRIKES A PATH” **THE INDIAN WAY**

The concept of progress is a modern one. It involves the idea of a continuous or persistent movement towards an end or ideal. Thus it is usual to speak of one increasing purpose in history. But as Dr. Radhakrishnan said ‘men seem to be hastening confusedly to unknown ends’; so diverse are the means adopted, so different the goals striven after. That is why progress seems to be unreal. For still another reason is progress deemed to be unreal, because men seem to be returning to their earlier statuses after long meandering towards several ends. History repeats itself and returns to its starting points. Dismissing however the view that progress is unreal, it can be explained that there is progress, because progress is not merely a unilinear extension or movement but an integrating process taken in the large and in a universal sense. Progress then is a relative concept, relative to the end that men seek or rather ought to seek.

What are the ideas to which the several nations or cultures of today are moving? At first look, it may appear that there are different ideals. Some seek attainment of prosperity; some satisfaction of desires. Some strive after a good life. A few struggle to attain liberation from all limitations and perfection in wisdom. In Indian parlance, these ideals could be expressed as *artha, kama, dharma and moksa*. But this does not mean that those who seek any one of these are unaware of the rest or consider them to be of equal value. It is conceded, however, that some hold that they may involve the others, or it is fondly hoped that to realise the one, is to realise the rest. In other words, it is held that each of them can be a means as well as an ideal, means to the realisation of the other ideals. To have material prosperity is to be able to be free individuals: to fulfil one’s wishes or desires. Similarly in

respect of others. But there are times when one discovers that these ideals could be mutually exclusive. Men give up prosperity and wealth for the sake of love of objects, or for the sake of truth and righteousness, or for the sake of liberation. Thus it is possible to grade these ideals which seem to be important from the material economical, ethical and spiritual planes of human behaviour.

Progress can be either horizontal or vertical. That is to say, increment may be had in the material and economic spheres, and growth may be had in the sphere of desires. Fullness is the goal of poverty. But a vertical ascent is the movement of man and his conduct from the standards of the lower to the recognition of higher standards of conduct. In this transition from the lower to the higher, two things might happen, either the utter denial of the lower or renunciation of them, or the subordination of them to the higher and their regulation so as fit in with the shape and meaning of the higher. As already remarked, the modern age has progressed from the rural economics to highly industrialised economics, bringing with it all the implications and problems of human relationships, which demand an ethical justification. We have also progressed from the individualistic pleasure-seeking-interest or hedonism to a sense of universalistic pleasure-seeking, and are inventing more and more instruments for the gratification of the pleasure-principle or desire. We are, however, beginning to realise that this infinite or almost interminable progress towards inventions of increments, which we call the good of the world, requires drastic limitations of universal ethics. Modern industrialism is yoked to the production of not only the fundamental needs of man but also the instruments of pleasures, the most trivial and yet sharpening men's appetites for more. The modern age thus is in the grip of these two aims, material wealth and psychological pleasure, and it is different from the past in so far as men no longer deem it creditable to seek wealth for

themselves alone, but for all. This universalistic tendency is based on the growing realisation that men are all equal, or rather ought to be, and on the conception that men have rights for all these goods of the economic and the psychological orders.

It is, however, being more and more clearly realised that universality is a quality that for its recognition transcends the sensory factors and the private. Thus we become aware that to realise goods or pleasures requires a definite planning based on universally applicable laws. Law becomes thus important as a factor in the determination of the share or good of each and every one. The rule of law is the rule of order and system. No life which is not based on the law or system in all its phases and applications can be said to be rightly directed. The recognition by man of the rule of universal laws means his trying deliberately to act in accordance with them. The rule of *Dharma*, or the Universally Right for each individual or station or function in the body politic, conceived as a society, is an ideal to which all of us are moving. How history shows this can be shown in the gradual progress of small societies to more and more complex unities. But even here the fundamental principle has been to devise a society which will lead them to their fullest self-realisation or fullness. But then this *dharma* is conceived of variously, and could be, because of the diverse planes and phases of life to which it applies. A deeper meaning of *dharma* which includes and exceeds the political and moral duty, subjective and objective, gave rise to the religions of *Dharma* and to our excellent adaptation of the sign of the *dharma* - *chakra* as the symbol of non-attachment to any of the lower ends or goods or pleasures or sum of them. India, from the dawn of history, had held up two ideals, the ideal of *dharma*, and the ideal of freedom for each individual, not the abstract freedom from the lower universes, but a freedom in all the manifold activities of life and love, yet transcending them. Its one aim to which it had returned after

each banishment has been the realisation of freedom, that freedom which transcends but never negates the lower, but which, however, later undertakes the expression of itself in and through it with freedom and knowledge. Thus freedom and knowledge are the essential goals of man. Indeed knowledge alone grants real freedom from and freedom in Nature. It is this real freedom that is the cause of peace beyond all conflicts. *Santi* is the final resultant of a life of knowledge and freedom. And in a very vital sense knowledge itself becomes a means to and freedom itself an expression of that Peace.

India historically has been fitted for this role of leading men to real peace in an integral way. Though the crowded history of India shews nothing but a series of conflicts which obviously could never be reduced to the pattern of a dialectical process, yet there has happened a steady integrating process by which the higher processes of Thought and Spirituality have involved themselves in the texture of the material and hedonistic seekings of men, as in the customs and moral ideals of its diverse people. The steady influx of diverse elements into the body of India have had their own influence and reaction and assimilation in it. The Veda taught that Peace must be the chant – a peace founded on the sovereign principle of the Purusottama (or personality) manifest and called in various ways by knowers. Such a chant entailed the search for liberation of all and recognition of the duties of all to that Ideal. Peace must be sought through liberation and performance of duty to the Ultimate. But the Ultimate is also to be perceived in the Social, and *dharma* become a concept of duty to all and a pattern of conduct in relation to a multiphased social situation which included the religious recognition of super-social relations with the Unseen and the immortal powers. The great Epics of India, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, speak about the absoluteness of the *Dharma* understood in all its four aspects.

A proper maintenance of the balance between them in a spirit of enlightened unselfishness is the *sine qua non* of peace both within and without.

Gautama Buddha emphasised a conception of the *dharma* as a liberating principle: that is *dharma* which liberates and that is *adharma*, which restricts and binds. Buddha conceived of *dharma* in a unique way; it is truth itself not a quality of truth or soul or station or function, either metaphysical or social. Man must reverse the wheel of life, and instead of moving as a wheel of *karma* it should begin to move as the wheel of *dharma*. Mahavira spoke of being a victor over the process by renunciation and *ahimsa*. *Bhutadaya*, cosmic love of all creatures and reverence for each soul on its evolutionary movement is a note that has been uttered once for all. Thus the Indian way of Progress developed a definite pattern and a universal signature – it is the path to liberation, of liberating *dharma* through liberating love of all.

That is the seeing of the Divine in all and all in the Divine; through the dedication of all the material and vital and mental factors of human life to the achievement of harmony that is the status of the Supreme Godhead.

The teachings of our metaphysical thinkers like Sankara and Ramanuja, the spiritual saints like our great Hymnists in the period between the 1st century and the 9th century and later the rise of the bhakti school have all moulded the direction of our progress to the realisation of the love of all in God and through God.

But as already remarked the new historical conditions and climates of the present day world have brought forward the challenge of the material and the vital to the forefront. The dimensions of our task cannot be comprehended and dealt

with by sentiment or feeling but a deep and spiritual vision. Old ways of dealing with new situations as our Prime Minister Nehru stated would not show any 'sensibility' to the task ahead. But obviously he was not speaking about the first and fundamental end or goal of Indian thought and spirituality. A new spirituality more comprehensive in its sweep and understanding driving towards the Peace that passeth understanding based on a revolutionary sense of freedom and right of each is the ideal of the Gandhian and Aurobindonian attitudes. However much they might appear on the surface to differ from each other there is an identity of purpose. Sri Aurobindo's new spirituality is universalising as well as integralising of all the planes of being with the help of the Highest supramental consciousness. By its divine way and manifestation it could transform nature and its direction and appropriate it for the highest realisation of freedom and fullness in all planes. The face of matter and vitality and mind will be changed and would not merely subserve the ends of Spirit but become vehicles and manifestations of it. The new formulation of the ideal for India by Sri Aurobindo is the divinisation of all planes and the utilisation of all for the Divine.

In the modern world truth and right and liberty and the good are judged by the standards of material utility and workability and prosperity (*artha*). Similarly these have been sought to be evaluated in terms of their capacity to grant psychological pleasure-achievement (*kama*). This mood must be reversed. These are *preyas*, not *sreyas*. The Gaudhian way of ethical Religion goes about the task of reversing this valuation through emphasising truthfulness and non-violence and individual's dignity without any reference to the criteria of material prosperity and psychological pleasure. The Indian way has progressed long on this road so much that Gaudhi symbolises the rediscovery of the path of Progress. But beyond the pleasure-principle and material principle is yet

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another principle which is known as the ego-principle that is the cause of our mutual conflicts. Men must transcend this ego-principle through selflessness (*anasakti*) with an unlimited faith in the power of love of the One Supreme God in all manifestations and creatures. Thus godward action becomes a way to God and through God to an increasing sense of oneness with all.

The Indian way is towards the realisation of One God and fullness of knowledge and freedom. Progress in India strikes the path of transcendence of the human through integration functioning through the triple principles of love, peace and knowledge. This is its Yoga of liberation and *Santi padam*.

18. A CRITIQUE OF THE PHILOSOPHIES OF HISTORY

There have been Philosophies of History, that is to say, attempts to understand the meaning of the series of events which have occurred from the beginning of time and whose occurrence we cannot stop. History has been usually the story or biography of great men, usually rulers of nations who have attempted to build states or communities and organize them. Nations are in one sense made by these great men, soldiers and warriors of history, who have given the ‘consciousness of self’ to people, uniqueness in traits and character, which differentiate them from the masses. But the life-histories of great men, warriors so to speak, miss the broad cultural evolutions which seem to play a greater part in human affairs. More than the warriors, the religious seers have always played a dominant part in the organization of the mental shape and pattern of the people. The lives of individuals are closely linked up with the class or the mass, and the greatness of these individuals is relative to the influence which they exercise over it. The history of the reactions and responses of these masses is as important an aspect of history as the lives of individuals. This shift from the study of men (individuals) to the study of mass (community) is plainly the meaning of the ‘materialistic’ interpretation of history, even as it is the meaning of the shift from the cultural to the economic life in respect of ends pursued (*purushartha*).

History in the context of the modern world has been claiming a scientific status. There was a time (it looks almost quite a long time ago) when all sciences even wooed to be called philosophies. The tide has now turned. Even philosophy likes to be scientific. There is something to be said in favour of this movement. Sciences seek to determine laws,

discern the system within certain fields of investigation. Philosophy is the science of sciences, for it acts on the belief that all events are interrelated in a Whole or System or Experience or Reality. Philosophy affirms the certainties of the inductive generalisations and sanctions their validity. Sciences can only generalize and yet be uncertain in their conclusions. Philosophy certifies the validity on the basis of a large understanding of Reality. History as the succession of events, not merely pertaining to man but also to the entire creation or evolution of all life, is the latest comer into the fields of scientific enquiry. As science, history cannot be merely a catalogue of the succession of events but a determination of the laws of sequence, which always can be true. Every science is an 'IS,' which requires however the explanation of the uniformity that it perceives. But though science determines the 'eternal is,' the law and the truth, it cannot be limited to it. It has to determine the dimension and the direction of the process, its goal, its purpose, its finality. Final causes are as much relevant to it as material and efficient and instrumental causes. Thus history needs the philosophic touch. Science stops with the 'is', unable to comprehend the 'ought'. The meaning of process, the succession of contingent events, is to be gleaned only from the 'final' end to which all process tends. Positive science cannot but be a partial science of truth. Values emerge only in the context of the historical process seen to be moving towards a goal. This conception alone can make our life intelligible, and not the view of historical succession as a meaningless repetitions or chance revolutions and convulsions which seem to be as much part of reality as the repetitions themselves.

At this point of our enquiry certain important questions arise. Is History a process which is progressively realising perfection or unity or happiness? Is there a goal capable of being apprehended by the human intellect? Or are the goals just human postulations or ideals, fictions of imagination? Is

History a series of meaningless or purposeless events endlessly unrolling themselves in a uniform manner or cyclically repeating themselves? Is it a question of eternal recurrence or endless progression to higher levels of consciousness or human adaptation or civilization? Or is it, as the scientists hold, leading up to a final 'entropy', quiescence, or what not? Is meaning to be discerned only in the middle of the process not at the beginning nor at the end? Or should we also consider that the entire movement of history is the progress of the conception and achievement of liberty or freedom? Or after all is it a drama of illusion, or a delirium of the will, cosmic, or a lila of the Absolute Spirit that plays at hide and seek with itself or in relation to its own constituents, 'organs' (*angas*)?

All these questions have been raised during the course of the attempts to find meaning to life and its history. Several theories have been propounded. There are metaphysical interpretations, as also psychological, economico-materialistic or scientific-physical or biological-evolutionary interpretations. Many of these have a long history. But I shall content myself by taking the modern representatives of these views, since they claim to be more scientific than the older theories. I shall also try to canvas briefly the several views in the order of their emergence as explanations and finally give a synthetic view, however tentative it might be.

Metaphysical theories of history are interested in explaining the *raison d'être* of the process of change in Reality. The discussions centre round fundamental problem of being and becoming, absolute changeless-ness and change. The most important writers on this subject were the Absolutists who wanted to explain the facts of change, heterogeneity, diversity. The earliest efforts tended to explain these as due to sensory illusiveness, on the principle that reason is trustworthy not sensations. This division of the fields of

reality and illusion led to strange results till an attempt was made to show that it is permanence that is unreal and change real and rational.

All kinds of contradictions have been raised between these two spheres. Thus empiricism and rationalism have always sponsored the illusoriness of their contradictories. It was left to Hegel to show that reality is the notion of synthesis of these two opposite concepts of being and non-being, and that change is the synthesis of these two. But then this becoming is not permanent as such since it almost immediately takes itself to be 'being' which posits its contradictory non-being. Thus the entire process though negative in function builds up or gives rise to an endless process of synthesis. It must in this connection be remembered that Fichte, Hegel's predecessor in German Philosophy, assumed that the Absolute '*anstossed*' or posited an opposite against which it affirmed itself constantly. This idealistic positing by the Absolute of its opposite is said to be the explanation for the next step of the process of change by an effort to come to terms with it. Thus we find that in Herbert Spencer we have the original homogeneity urging itself to its opposite, the heterogeneity. Identity is real only when it realises itself in its manyness. And evolution itself has been described as the process of moving from identity to unity through the process of self-diversification and division, analysis and synthesis.

All that Hegel strove to present was the notion of the synthesis of opposites as the essential principle of History. The progressive realisation is logical. This process is real because it is logical (rational). Thus history is the process of the Absolute objectifying itself in and through self-determination by means of the dialectical dynamism which is inherent in thought itself. The particular efficacy of this dialectical process or apparatus lies in its clear-cut affirmation

of the perceived polarisations or positings of the opposites or negations which are necessary at each stage. Becoming, significant and every time increasingly enriched by prior syntheses, is the truth about reality and not non-change or non-being or abstract being. History then is the necessity of Reality. All reality, conversely speaking, is seething with process whether we explain it by a dialectical explanation or explain it as at once a self-analysing and self-revealing process or as a self-realising process. Hegelian dialectic is weak in so far as it does not clearly explain the process of emergence of new or novel characteristics. It can explain what have so far happened but not predict what might. It is strictly, logically teleological but not axiologically, for it is but a process of contradictories or anti-theses. Evolution-theories on the other hand reveal to us the presence of the unexpected or the emergence of alternative modes of meeting the conditions of life and environment, and the emergence of higher forms and planes of consciousness other than the unconscious, subconscious and the conscious and the self-conscious which cannot be said to be capable of being explained by the Thesis – Anti-thesis – Synthesis formula.

The dynamic formulation of the Marxian philosophy has not done much to ease this situation. All that it has done is to substitute for the logical procession of categories which emerge at each stage of the self-determinations of the Absolute (the only evolution being the emergence of these categories from the bosom of the Absolute) the processes of the economic institutions (capitalism, labour and so on which are not abstract negations of each other but polar and real opposites). History becomes concrete so far as the events themselves are concerned, since a logical evolution need not also be a concrete evolution whose each step is dictated by the logic of the previous step. Indeed it is this difficulty of discerning the real event to be the rational development or synthesis of the prior processes analysed as the dialectical

opposition of two polar opposites that makes both Hegelian and Marxian interpretations difficult to accept. It is an ‘Ought,’ and not an ‘Is’ of history. No one can yet discern on the horizon of the human evolution that dictator who could coerce events to conform to the dialectical pattern of the human mind, though we have amidst us such as would command and coerce human wills to do what they want. History is strewn with the derelicts of dictators – though each of them attempted gallantly “to make” history! Reason of the human mind is not the arbiter of the process of history. History transcends human measures. Indeed the larger patterns of human evolution have sometimes been marked by the confidence of the mind to order growth and development according to the logical will. But history has shown how the uncanny human mind gets beaten and debarred from imposing its logical intellectual solution. The Spirit behind the History or the Absolute seems to laugh at the intellect of man, for whilst using it to further its own scheme it lands it in discomfitures.

The modification made by that great Italian Philosopher, Senator Benedetto Croce, in the dialectic gives a more concrete picture of the integrative process of the Spirit which has a double poise or movement simultaneously operating without the one perhaps interfering with the other. His dialectic of distincts showed how in our logical and realistic understanding the four elements of our experience and action get integrated. Intuition is the basis of our logical apprehension and our practical conduct is based on the logical and is itself in turn the basis of the ethical life of the Good. Much of his exposition is devoted to showing this inevitable autonomy of each within its field, governed by its own development through the dialectic of opposites but in respect of the higher form getting subordinated or subsumed by the higher form. It is indeed a great contribution to show that the Thesis – Anti-thesis – Synthesis is not all in the logical nature

of the Absolute Spirit; it is as big a discovery as Hegel's own when he pointed out that there is this constant presence of the other forms of the Absolute which could not be brought into the Hegelian pattern. Indeed intuition and reason, and practical and good are not capable of being reduced to the status of opposites or anti-theses: they are rather the eternal quartets of being. But despite this discovery, history for Croce is no more than this synthesis of the opposites. This is a double- action interpretation, richer and more profound than the Hegelian, more liberal and logical than the Marxian, (since this includes the real or the practical and the political in the pattern of conflict and synthesis). But the essential process of the emergents in history or the true spiritual transcendence over reason or intellect is not brought under the scope of this interpretation.

Croce's contribution is indeed fundamentally an advance on the German theories and even over the British Hegelians but it is not quite comprehensive, being 'humanistic' rationality.

Professor R. G. Collingwood argues in his conception of History that historical positivism is just a collection and accumulation of facts, external series of events, dogmas and their interactions. It is descriptive, analytical and good so far as it goes. Even an effort to discover causes and efforts and the interaction between ideals and the environment may be beyond it, since there could be any number of possibilities of explanation of the events. It is true that there can be an anti-historical view of all these events which refers all these to the dialectical logical process. The uncertainty of events and the irrelevance of two or more orders of events always make history a mere medley or chaos without meaning and purpose to life. This is because we do not really take into consideration the 'internal history', as events are being made in the minds of men who play their part in the making of events or share in

impacts and adjustments. A biographical view of history has pretty much to commend itself. But the inner trend and psychological reactions of individual participants would yet be represented by a surface-expression of their reactions to the scene, not the integral revelation of the why and purpose underlying these. History is the life of its great men, men who have played their significant part by bringing into events the tempo and the characteristic of ideals which inwardly have made themselves possible of achievement in the external world. This 'ingression' of ideas such as we find in the values and their elaboration in Philosophic minds given to the contemplation on them, into the scheme of practical life of the people and the nation and the world is the internal process assimilated into the external form of history. The Kantian dictum that mere facts without theories are blind and theories without facts are empty is invariably true, and it is the meaning behind history that their mutual assimilation achieves in it. As Collingwood states "History like Philosophy is the knowledge of the one real world: it is historical subject to the limitation of time, because only that is known and done which has been known and done". Nor is it fully true to say that History is the knowledge of the particular whereas philosophy is the knowledge of the universal. Philosophical presuppositions of history are history, historically exemplified as the historian discerns the patterns of epochs.

Nicolai Berdyaev's conception of History is eschatological. The full meaning of History is already typified by a unique manifestation of the self-giving of God as Jesus for the redemption of mankind. The catastrophic manner of that incident is held by him to be its real significance. It is indeed God's revelation of Himself in and through History. History exhibits the influx, incarnation and ingression of the Divine and his own self and being and his values. The reality of freedom is the most significant realisation in History. History is not the inevitable causal chain of necessity. It is on

the other hand the patent manifestation of the Freedom which is the essence of spirit in the lives of the creatures who participate in the Creator's Spiritual nature. Freedom is not sin nor its essence but the essence of spirituality. The mystery of History lies in the realisation of fullness and love freely, that is to say, chosen freely. It is the fundamental quality of will to choose the God. No one demonstrated the free choosing of God through the sanctification of love of God more than Jesus. It is the measure of His love that led Him to the Cross rather than the refractoriness of Nature or Law. In the free choice of the Divine Will, the free consecration of one's will to do the Will of the Father in Heaven, to live for it and die for it and none other, lies at once its greatest strength and the tragedy. But what appeared to be a humiliation and a catastrophe revealed also the triumph and the conquest over the world. In one word Jesus, the Christ, kept the world from falling back into the freedom that leads away from God by showing the glory and the wisdom of the freedom that freely gives itself upto the enjoyment of the splendours of God-experience. Berdyeav's claim that this is the sole instance of Divine Influx or Incarnation and that is because there can be no other similar instance since such an occurrence would neither enhance nor strengthen it, can carry no valid conviction. On the other hand, Indian Historical eschatology claims firstly that God constantly, that is to say, in every age, reveals this Grace in descents, and that catastrophe is not and need not be the only means or measure of Love freely chosen and followed, and that different occasions demand differing types of incarnation, i.e., as Saviour, Redeemer, as Teacher, as Warrior – Ruler – or as Manu (Ruler) as Rishi, as Avatar, as Alvar or Acharya.

Professor Toynbee is one of the greatest philosophers of History of the XXth Century. His approach is clearly stated in the following passage taken from his *Civilization on Trial*.*

“We must accustom ourselves to taking a synoptic view of history as a whole – to perceive and to present to other people, the history of all the known civilizations, surviving and extinct. There are two ways of presenting it as an encounter between civilizations by which higher religions are born or as a study of all histories of civilizations as a unity looking at them as so many representatives of one particular species of the genus Human society – a morphology of the species of society called civilizations would be possible.” (p. 159)

In a sense Professor Toynbee sees that civilizations are contemporaneous. “Whatever chronology might say, Thucydides' world and my world had now proved to be philosophically contemporary. History in the sense of histories of human societies, so called civilizations, revealed itself as a sheaf of parallel contemporary and recent essays in a new enterprise”. This again is proved by the fact that there are in actual presence in the world today, though in a torpid condition, many primitive communities in out of the way places like New Guinea, Tierra del fuego etc. and Siberia, which now have begun to move again. And secondly, we find that the smallest intelligible fields of historical study were whole societies and not arbitrarily insulated fragments of them like the native states. There is thirdly parallelism of all these.

* In his Magnum Opus *Study of History*, Prof. Toynbee indeed canvasses a much larger panorama than his own summary above suggests.

Prof. Toynbee recognizes that his view is similar to Spengler's thesis which postulates the birth, growth and decline of human societies like human beings. This cyclical view is however *a priori* and non-empirical. It is not as if the passing of the individual means a complete passing; likewise the passing of the society does not mean its entire banishment. There is something absorbed and prepared for a greater successor. History is not cyclic merely, except in appearance. It is not a mechanical process. It is the masterful, progressive execution of a divine plan which is revealed to us in this fragmentary glimpse of the civilization at the top and another relegated to the limbo, so to speak, awaiting its opportunity and turn to play its role. Prof. Toynbee sees clearly that whilst every race had contributed to civilization, the black races have yet to play their part. There is again the inexplicability of the failure of the Mayaic civilization in the Andes and the collapse of the Aztecs. Nor are we able to explain how the sword triumphs over reason. And the question is very pertinent whether the Higher religions will make for the survival of the human society against the threats of mechanized civilization with its robotising of men and use of atom-power.

The Greco-Indian view of the process of History is that it is cyclical. Indeed there is an eternal recurrence so to speak; ages of gold are succeeded by those of silver, and copper and iron, or in another manner Ages of Truth are followed by those of Dharma, and Kama and Artha. There is the hope of an ascent to the age of Truth from that of Artha and Iron. Dropping for a while the long periods astronomically reckoned, these four ages may be considered to be not after all a pessimistic view which promises the golden return, the Utopia wherein truth in all its four parts would be established not in contradiction to the others but in a synthesis of the lower values and ends under and through the highest concept.

Prof. Toynbee rightly looks forward then to the manifestation of the divine plan, which obviously is beyond the human powers. He tries to synthesise the above Greco-Indian view with the Jewish Zoroastrian view of continuous progress. "After all if a vehicle is to move forward on a course which its driver has set, it must be borne along on wheels that turn monotonously round and round, while civilizations rise and fall and in falling give rise to others, some purposeful enterprise higher than others, may all the time be making headway, and in a divine plan, the learning that comes through suffering caused by the failures of civilizations may be the sovereign means of progress". (p. 15). A reconciliation between the cyclical and the progressive views of History may thus be got and this in a sense may be seen to be the incorporation of the two dialectics of Hegel and Croce in the concrete presentation of History with the added significance that this is an occult process unintelligible to the reason.

Criticising Professor Toynbee, Professor G. M. Trevelyan^{*} makes out that so far as he could see there can be no theory of the historical process. Prof. Toynbee's conception of History as a series of episodes or outbursts of activity in one region and then in another is interesting. The attempt to discover which challenges get which response is all worthy but there are indeed challenges which get no response whatever. Further the emergence of great men has always diverted the course of history. Nor could it be claimed that the same type of challenges gets the same type of response. It is indeed recognised by Prof. Toynbee that in this incapacity to respond lies the failure and arrest and decay of civilizations. There is

^{*} G. M. Trevelyan : *An Autobiography and Other Essays*. p 82 ff an essay on "Stray Thoughts on History (1948)"

according to Prof. Trevelyan a large play of chance – ‘this arbitrary choice of Fate is constantly repeating itself every moment of time’ rather than history repeating itself. There can be two ways of reading history as a repetition of events or as a non-repetition of events. On the other hand, history by itself may be treated more like an unfolding poem and it is only philosophy which tries to extract a scheme or a pattern from this process. Hegel may call it the development of the idea of freedom or the realisation of the Absolute, or Lord Acton may hold that this freedom grows out of the balance of opposing forces. But as for himself he has just a love of good things and hatred of bad and this bias alone is sufficient to guide the reading of History and the writing of History. Behind this denial of the ability to discern in events any ‘inevitability’ or logical necessity or any teleological purpose ‘that far-off event to which all creation moves’ which Tennyson envisages, one can see the critical appreciation by Prof. Trevelyan of the fact that freedom (by which is meant the freedom to shape the future according to the highest moral purposes) plays an important role in the conception of history as poetic experience. Count Hermann Keyserling held that there is an *antinomy* between the two views of History, namely that (1) history is a logical process, and (2) ideas and theories prevalent in a state count for nothing. The logic of history is governed not by the logical ideas or thoughts of the members as such. There is a spiritual process at work which works itself out in accordance with its own laws. This need not at all be according to the ideas and theories floating on the surface-consciousness. Only those ideas among the vast number of floating ideas, (or as Leibniz might say ‘possible’) which correspond with the spirit of the times, that is to say which appear obvious to the period in question, get approved and this might be referred to a psychic reality which corresponds to the unconscious will of that period. The fact that certain ideas get accepted however much they may be repugnant to intelligence of the past bespeaks of the real

condition of the soul of the people or the period. It may be logically false but becomes ‘compossible’ in the history of the people. Says Hermann Keyserling “To the extent ideas are the exponents of historic realities then logical development will be reflex of these, but not logical development be the exponent of historical realities”. (*World in the Making*-p. 207).

Thus the process of History must be understood from the totality of the *psychically real*, which comprehends or contains both (ideas and bare facts). The crucial fact however is the psychic reality. An analysis of the psyche reveals (i) a smallest minority even know what they are actually doing, (ii) creative action springs from the founts of the unconscious, (iii) a great many ideas are only interpreted as subjective compensations of true reality, and (iv) smallest number of ideologies are true.

And thus the *psyche* is almost the universal basic Unconscious, a superindividual if it might be so named, from which all the individuals take rise and seek ends, accept or approve or move towards ends of which they are but faintly conscious. The ideas which they propound and hug are symbols of a deep unconscious demand. In one sense it is that which grants momentum to the intellect or restricts the past body of the ideation or system. Thus when serious men wistfully look backward to the golden age or the age of Liberalism or Neutralism they are aware of the disjunction between their own ideals which no longer command the acceptance of the ‘psyche’ of the age nor correspond to the new ideals and ideas which have become ‘obvious’ to it.

Ages of rationalism are succeeded by ages of irrationalism. There is thus compensatory action even in the swing of the pendulum of the psyche which contains both the intellectual and the romantic ideals. That the liberal arts no

longer hold the centre of consciousness is not a wonder because the cult of the chaffeur, the mechanic, the practical scientist has taken the stage. This is a version of the cyclical progress from humanities to science, from truth and goodness and law of human conduct to the possessive life of triumph over Nature. Every age gets its prophet, and such a sage or prophet is above all in close touch with the time-spirit or the psyche which makes him divine its direction and clearly lead his people or the state. The prophet is a realist. Such was Rousseau. Such a person was Lenin according to Keyserling. But we must assume that the age of Lenin has passed. The age seems to be with Gandhi and Nehru. Such men have the initiative of the Spirit; such are persons in whom the 'real idea' of the 'one world' has become flesh. They do not possess 'theoretically' the idea; they might not be even clear about its detailed presentation. They do not, like idealists, merely abuse the wicked world; they go about redeeming it according to their dominant 'elemental' unconscious psychic reality, which moves millions to one grand upsurge of transformation. That this transformation or conversion of the social conscience may not be permanent does not bother them in the least. Theirs is the optimum of energy of the psyche in a free movement of itself in the lives of the community, race or humanity itself. And it appears as an awakening to the great creative possibility of itself. The prophet thus becomes a statesman and the liberator of mankind. He accepts the responsibility of his task, the task the *Zeit geist* has called upon him to perform.

Summarising in the words of Sri Aurobindo :

“Scientific history has been conceived as if it must be a record and appreciation of the environmental motives of Political action of the play of economic forces and developments and the course of institutional evolution.

The few who still value the psychological element have kept their eye fixed on individuals and are not far from conceiving of history as a mass of biographies.

The true and more comprehensive science of the future will see that these conditions apply to the imperfectly selfconscious period of national development.”

Sri Aurobindo: *HUMAN CYCLE*, p39. (*Am. Ed.*)

So far we have surveyed the attempts of the most great and fine minds of history, philosophy and religion who have attempted to give us the explanation of the process. There seems to be the necessity for a belief in religion and higher spirituality to make us strive after a transcendent goal, which seems to be the meaning and purpose of all this creative adventure.

Though he sought to deny finalism in favour of Creative Evolution, Henri Bergson, was at last convinced that the destiny of the evolution was to make Gods on earth; though some thinkers question why we should ever think that evolution would get its finest product on earth at all.

* We have also theories of Progress which trace development of individuals and their societies or communities through hunting, pastoral, agricultural, industrial stages. This cultural epoch theory is of the same order as the biogenetic theory in a sense that ‘each individual recapitulates the evolution of the race’ – ‘ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny’. This view is very valuable in educational theories. In India, this conception of process or development is from Sudra to Vaisya, Vaisya to Ksatriya and Ksatriya to Brahmana – labour to capital, capital to conquest, conquest to self conquest or culture. The second correspondence is from Bramacharya (Sudra) to Grahastha (Vaisya), Grahastha to Vanaprastha (Ksatriya), Vanaprastha to Sanyasa (Brahmana). This is individual recapitulation.

The scientific mind of H. G. Wells and Sir Charles Galton and Darwin can see in the future nothing more glorious than the degeneration of the human, as there can be nothing of the modification of the mind of man that is absolutely necessary for the transcendence of the contradictions. Even the modern mood of Bertrand Russell does not change the prospect of a scientific triumph over the barbarian within us. The speculative genius of these scientific men does not see any way by which the entropy-law could be circumvented. Whilst we live we ought to make the best of our virtues and make life happy for all. Socialism in a sense is all that we can achieve, and like Stoics (the Stoics however believed in a divine spirit every where) accept with grace the world that is around us. But the very consciousness of a transcendent destiny for man or for evolution of life is abolished. There is not so much of an atheism as an agnosticism in this unwillingness to trust the inner pulse of spirit within each which yearns for freedom from the precariousness of all life and society and civilization.

So far my study of the philosophies of history shows that almost all the standpoints are partial explanations and not one of them is capable of helping us to discover the meaning and process of History fully; even taken together they do not become a consistent explanation. I cannot venture to present to you any constructive thesis. But let me indicate the Philosophy of History which Indian thought has presented.

The Philosophy of History in Indian Thought: -

The philosophy of History in Indian Thought is, as is to be expected, closely linked with the concept of purushartha and of God. The purpose of evolution or process is to realise freedom, moksa ; and moksa is therefore called the parama-purushartha. The economic and vital satisfactions and fulfilments are indeed the lower ends which are more or less

organic ends of life in general. The evolutionary history or creation story is shown to have one purpose, the realisation of the Absolute in and through the process as the fundamental truth. Indeed there have been a large number of interpretations of the realisation of the Absolute, and the theories of realisation are closely tied up with them. The realisation of the Nature of the Absolute is said to be the purpose of this process, which is otherwise meaningless Maya, indescribable illusion and delirium of the will to be separate. Thus in one sense the creative history is the increasing realisation of the heterogeneity as the real, but such a realisation leads to sorrow. This pravrtti is self-destroying in its effects. Nivrtti, the return to the Identity or Oneness, is the significant reversal to be made by the soul. This is indeed the negation of the historical and the attainment of the eternal. Thus there is a school of thought which assumes the contradiction between the temporal history or process and the eternal state of non-process. Transcendence of history is the truth to be striven after assiduously. History is bondage. The Absolute has no history.

Whilst this view is held by a large number of philosophers, yet there is another view also shared by an equally large number. History is not merely a tracing of the course of events with just the intimation of causal connection needed to explain succession of events. It is a significant perception of the events as interrelated to a totality which exceeds the human level of mind and includes the sub-human and the supra-human forces operating in and through the events. The world of experience is the world of the Absolute which is the creator of the process and the sustainer of it. Further the Indian conception of History also saw behind the process of the reigns of kings and the struggles of men the extraordinary movement of the Divine process which was upholding the law and putting down the unlaw and showing that all causes breed their effects in and through the plane to

which one prepares oneself. The law of karma is the strict law of equation of causes and their effects; though quantitatively true at the level of matter it becomes significantly true and equal in a qualitative sense also. It operates between the individual in his two incarnations or rebirths as well as between the individual and his environment within which his activities had their resultant effects. And since man lives not only among men but preys on other animals as well, the consequences of his activities on the sub-human levels are also included in this law of commensurate effects or deserts. Nor is that the limit, since it might also be shown that the improvidence of man in respect of inorganic things (e.g. in respect of food, water, light or air or metal or fuel) leads to distressing consequences which rebound on his existence and make life itself intolerable and unsufferable. Thus the process of History can be shown to be a struggle for survival against Nature (even as the Darwinians claim) with all its consequences in respect of the forces of Nature. The Modern age is once again witnessing on a colossal scale and in an undreamt of manner the harnessing of Nature to man's economic and amusement needs, needs which are unfortunately not the highest nor the most helpful to his realisation. As against the impoverishment of Nature to satisfy the men, lusting after comfort, we have also a second endeavour made to utilize the animal kind also firstly as a method of survival against competing lives and latterly as a method of feeding and clothing mankind. These two have mounted up to phenomenal scales. All these have made man undoubtedly a king among animals, dependent however on Nature and animal. Culture was a word connoting strength, freedom from dependence on Nature and animal, but now it has become a byword for enjoyment and comfort. It is such ages as these that are stated to be *asuric ages* or *kali ages*.

Hindu thought conceived Time as divided into the cyclical progress of four kinds of ages: *krta* when dharma rules with

all its four legs (the metaphor is that of the cow of dharma), the treta (when dharma rules with three feet standing), the dvapara (when the dharma rules with two feet standing), and kali (when it stands on one foot alone).^{*} The ages move on in a cyclical manner. But this does not mean that there is eternal recurrence in respect of the individuals and the events as Nietzsche held, but the process of creation proceeds on the general pattern of this division of time. There has been also the view that this process is cyclical because it is concerned not merely with individuals but with the entire souls which are on the ascending process of evolution to greater freedom. The concept of time is closely linked up with the dharma or the law of liberating endeavour or freedom. A secondary conception has been introduced by the saints who have held that even though the large mass of mankind is under the grip of kali (*kama* and *artha*), the presence of dharma cannot be denied and indeed can be availed of by the mystical yogi. The yogi then can create for himself the krta yuga and can manage to create it for a large number. This is the passion for the Kingdom of God on Earth. It is also conceded that this return to the krta from kali is by an act of descent of the Absolute into the creation, an avatar, to restore the dharma on its four legs (in respect of purusharthas which are four) and (which are related very integrally to the concept of the four ashramas and varnas) *dharmasamsthapanaya*. Thus History is the recurrent feature of this avatars periodically whenever dharma declines utterly and the principle of revolution, constructive and not destructive, is introduced in fact. If at each age we find that the revolution brings about a degeneration of values, there is a fundamental revolution towards the restoration of

* Sri Aurobindo refers to the Psychological Theory of Human Social Development of Lamprecht Which assumes it to have passed through four distinct stages : viz. Symbolic, Typal, Conventional and Individual-subjective; these four stages are cyclical.

the highest values of liberty of the soul and responsibility for works and the beneficent acquisition and service subsumed under the general principles of moksha and dharma.

It is true Hindu thought also conceived of the intermediate attempts by great seers to restore the *krta* even during the periods of *treta*, *dvapara* and *kali*. Thus subdivisions of the *yugas* have also been made such as periods of *krta* in *treta* *dvapara* and *kali*, and so on. All these can be granted provided we also appreciate the principle behind the conception of the four *yugas* to be the general structure of time in relation to the transcendent influx or ingression of fundamental values which are apprehended and chosen by the minds of great men (*mahatmas*) in each age.

Thus we have the concept of the 'entropy' or decadence view of reality along with the renewal view of History, justifying the faith in the religious values and power of the Absolute spirit. The complexity of the evolutionary history is such that we can have ever so many views. The decay of lower forms or their abolition may presage the appearance of higher levels of consciousness and ability, more freely to dominate the lower forms and to meet the changing conditions of Nature already modified by prior evolutionary forces. There may also be non-return to the lower. The process of evolution need not be exactly cyclical, for it may really be considered to be spiral, which conception includes the truth of the cyclical and the progressive. The great aim of Indian evolutionary thought is to pass beyond the human level of ignorance, conflict and division to attain the status of harmony and beatitude, and truth and knowledge, a status that is transcendent to the human world. This is the didactic of the *itihasa* and the *purana*.

The purana panchalaksana¹ includes the five-fold concept of the creation (*sarga*), sustention, (*sthiti*) and *samhara* (dissolution), the reigns of rulers and avatars and rishis and the description of society with its dharma and the purusharthas. The transcendent state of mukti is undoubtedly gleaned to be the one increasing purpose behind all creation and process. God or the Universal Spirit, single and utterly transcendent to process is to be realised, for in that lies our peace (*santi*). The Process of History is to reveal the significance of God in creative life. And in the lives of the individuals this godhead plays a significant part by revealing Himself to them as their inner soul and self and truth and the love or Grace in the process. The philosophy of History accordingly is the explanation of the progress – which is the grand sweep of the divine events and not human wars and reigns of heroes even, not merely the ideological battles of haves and have-nots, nor again the vital battles for *lebensraum* and exploitation and colonisation. This spiritual interpretation of the History may be said to be one of progress in the real sense of the term, for ultimately the destiny of time is to reveal itself to be the exhibition of the Timeless Being, in and through the many who are inseparably related to it.

The Pancaratra² gave us the conception of the five-fold nature of the Godhead, as the transcendent, as creator-destroyer-sustainer, as the historical avatars and the inner Ruler Immortal in all, and lastly but not least as the radiant person of worshippability in our temples The Purana

¹ Sarga, Pratisarga, Vamsa, Manvantara, Vamsanucarita.
“Sargasca pratisargasca vamso manvantarani ca,
Vamsanucaritam caiva puranapancalaksanam

² *Idea of God: K. C. Varadachari*

Pancalaksanas give us the conception of history as the correlative archetypal representation of the apprehension and realisation of that Divine in all his five forms, and as the progressive evolution of the soul through the several stages of His Nature and his Society.

We can see thus that the philosophy of History as the growth and fall of civilizations conforms to the concept of the Vyuha of the Purana and Pancaratra.

The philosophy of History as the life and exploits of great men who have helped shape its progress and survival, and who have striven to establish eternal values or dharma, moral and religious and aesthetic, comes close to the vibhava or avatar concept of the puranas and pancaratra; though there is a difference in this that the Divine Descent is for the larger purpose of evolutionary mutation to the higher level than a mere restoration of eternal dharma by means of a revolutionary spirituality. The Philosophy of History as the evolution guided towards the Transcendent realisation by even a negation of it is seen to be the truth about the Para or Timeless concept of the Absolute. The eternal speculum (*sub specie eternitatis*) denies the temporal speculum according to some, but in the concept of Sri Aurobindo this is substituted by the mediating concept of the Supermind to which the double revelation of the eternal and the temporal is luminously interfused and made real and necessary to each other. The temporal would cease to be the manifestation of the Ignorance but become the Platonic 'moving image of eternity'. The process is not merely concerning the individuals but also the collective many because they are truths necessary to each other. The materialistic interpretation of History accordingly gets its sanction in the concept of antaryamin whose realisation in each makes the individual of unique value and significance to the collective reality and the Whole and towards each. History thus becomes the living experience

simultaneously and successively in all its multiple status and includes fully all planes and purposes of highest value.

The Puranas however must be said to have left behind the integral view though they seem to have felt the need for it. At least this inference follows from the *present* structure of the puranas. A full and complete history must contain the psychological as well as the metaphysical and the biological and the axiological evolutions, both in the collective and the individual. This would be a complete conception of history. It would then be known as the integral philosophy of History, which would give meaning to the temporal process and significance to the theories of evolution, of facts of transmutation and rebirth.

If a philosophy of History must truly be integral, it must be capable of giving meaning to the facts of evolution and mutation, emergence of different levels of life, vitality, mind and overmind and spiritual realisations which at once releasing the higher subsume the lower under the laws of the higher. Reason has come to stay with man, but in the collective history of the peoples of the world Reason is only just now coming to play an important part, through the conceptions of one world, cooperative activity rather than competitive conflicts even when each individual or group or nation is imbued with selfish motives. But the one spiritual reality needs must fulfil itself in History. Our philosophy of History whilst being objective should not miss the important subjective psychological and supramental factors urging the world and its members to spiritual fulfilment of Saccidananda at all levels.

Thus our ancients attempted to present all the trends which have been in one sense or other redacted by the moderns in the West. But it must be said that Sri Aurobindo in his '*Human Cycle*' presents a next step as the consequence of

the study of the tendencies of Philosophies of History canvassed by both the ancient past and the immediate present. An organic conception which includes the dynamical unfolding of the Spirit inherent in the eternal and the temporal, individual and the collective, personal and the impersonal, is the result.

19. THE QUEST FOR UNITY - AN **ORGANISTIC APPROACH**^{*}

All the world over thoughtful persons are concerned about the future. It is one of the darkest periods in the history of the human mind. But hope shines brightest in the darkest moments of one's life. As with the individual so is it with the race itself. The Eternal is the hope of the world in which structures and systems of organisation are transient. While men are clamouring for unity, they are unable to attain it. Not merely are they unable to attain it, they seem to be positively preparing for disunity and disruption, for conflict and competition. With increasing fear man is watching the progress of the disintegrating forces of materialism, economicism and socialism, which are throwing up for his consumption all the helpful, labour saving devices as well as the diabolical inventions of science. The atom and hydrogen bombs have come, casting the shadow of terror on the face of the earth. But these too have a fascination for man, an elemental fascination, destructive and terrifying. The dread of the morrow which the sciences had promised to remove, has deepened. Now it is not only the dread of want of work, starvation and insecurity, but it has also become also the dread of non-being, annihilation, for the human race and life itself, and all that have grown with it. Man has begun to see himself not as an innocent sufferer under the wheel of Nature, not as a triumphant master of Nature either, nor as a paragon of virtue or reason, but indeed as a terrible figure of his own destruction. Science, the product of his reason investigating

* Paper submitted to the Indian Philosophical Congress, Silver Jubilee Session, Calcutta, 1950

Nature, has shown up this possibility: his creation has revealed the seeds of his own terror. The joy of creation is tinged with the dread of its action.

There is in man a self-force or soul force. Of this he had remained oblivious, uninterested. Now that the terror is both individual and collective, and something that cannot be escaped from, the individual has to turn inward and face the dread from within.

The result is revulsion from oneself because of dread from oneself. What is the means to overcome this dread of oneself? The first tendency is to escape from oneself. This of course can happen in many ways. External loyalties could be cultivated to persons or ideals which promise to secure the individual freedom from the contemplation of the dread. Easier ways are the narcotics which drown the discriminating thought. All sets of escape are acts of cowardice which take the shape of courage and loyalty to external persons or individuals or ideals. Such loyalties can engender forgetfulness of the problem of dread, indeed fear of the dread is sought to be overcome by the fearlessness of death for a great ideal or person or community, but the problem of death is different from the dread, for death would be an escape from oneself and the problem itself. Suicide itself is an act of escape from the dread of life. Dread of life is what has to be overcome and death is no solution, nor any other act of heroism or courage which culminates in death. The difference is only one of approach to the problem of dread but the solution is not a solution at all.

Nor can death be got rid of by unity with the community, on the basis of the old proverb that unity is strength and that it can grant security against dread. Though one belongs to the community and is a member thereof, a common dread, that is to say, the dread that each and every

individual feels, cannot be abolished by the sharing of the dread in common. A community of individuals in which each is seized with panic will only represent a hysterical solution. But it is possible that this common dread could force that community to struggle towards warding off the danger of devising ways and means. Unity thus got may well prove to be a necessity for all contingent situations and help the individual to a sense of security. But the unity could last only as long as the positive dread is present. The unity of community can however be valuable as a powerful instrument for overcoming threats and dreads from outside. What about the internal dread of oneself; the twofold nature of man, one hankering after security and comforts and the other aware of the terrible catastrophe to which the former leads, and possibly knowing the higher possibilities available to it. It is only when the individual gains the inner peace which is the unity of his internal being, the dread of any outer threat or death ceases to have meaning. It is this inner realisation of the unity within oneself that makes the outer peace possible or stable or even acceptable. Lacking this, the outer peace must be based on enforced virtues of conduct that is preservative of the unity of the whole. External unity must be based on certain virtues, which are socially valuable for the unity.

It would be an inversion in the reading of the psychological situation if it is held that outer unity is the condition of inner peace or growth of unity. Outer dread can be overcome by the unity of the community, and it must always depend upon this consciousness of fear and peril for its continuance. It is a precarious association and can never guarantee inner peace in each individual. Virtues of social life, such as conformity with the best or happiness of the greatest number are so very superficial in respect of this unity of individuals in a community that they demand force for their maintenance and a penal code. Though some important thinkers hold that outer peace is necessary for inner progress

or conquest of dread within, we have known that opulence and comfort and peace in the outer lead to degeneration. An active combat with the forces of disruption seems to be better than degeneration. For the only peace that mankind is now seeking is the opulent peace of comfort and material security. The environment can modify the conduct of an individual and even abolish certain ways of reaction or response to it, but that it can ever solve the inner conflict of the soul is questionable. The inner lives of great men argue for the necessity of inner knowledge and inner peace and integration between the two poles of existence, namely the physico-vital and psychical vital.

The problem of the individual is how to bring the two apparently conflicting natures in oneself, one glowering over the other, into unity.

The individual is an organic being. The two parts of his Being are related to each other. The principle of unity between the two cannot be discovered by any abstract objective conception of the nature of matter and the spirit, extension and thought. Useful though that approach is, it is based on the acceptance of their opposition to each other. The process of action is to be explained on the basis of so called parallelism or interactionism, But the problem of knowledge becomes more difficult for explanation. How does the mind know the body, and is the body known in the mind or independent of it, entirely or partially? We arrive at a very difficult stage in our enquiry when we affirm that the body is but an idea in the mind, and what we know is the mind alone and its ideas. This approach therefore does not help us at all. If we make the metaphysical approach we tend to reduce the two items of the organism (or more?) to one. The identity of substance does not explain the bipolarity of the organism or their contradiction. The problem is one of integration of the two rather than the discovery of the original unity or identity.

Some scientists seek to discover the unity of facts in the law. A law unifies facts and thus for a mind confers unity of the diverse facts of experience. Whether we are materialists or idealists we strive to discover the most general law. Materialists discover the law in matter and motion; vitalists seek law in the biological activities of life; idealists in consciousness or law; and mystics seek the law in the Spirit Universal or the Absolute Personality. Multiplicity is the problem of all science, and monism alone is the principle that can overcome the pluralism.

But the consciousness of the individual refuses to get reconciled to these materialist and idealist solutions of the problem of immediate concern to itself. The general law is an objective law. To have reduced both the material and vital parts of one's being on the one hand and the psychical and spiritual parts on the other to the level of Nature and Mind and law or System conceived in general sense leaves no room for one's reality at all. The glamour of the system or the General Law can only be short-lived even like the pleasures of the vital and material. 'The dialectic of opposition' which Hegel discovered and formulated as the apparatus of growth is partial truth. Idealistically interpreted it has some quality but materialistically exploited (even like the applications of the discoveries of pure science to grant comfort and efficiency to life and its needs by applied science) it tended to create a dualism that performs the work not of growth but destruction of all growth, for it weakens the will. To live in the dualism of conflict, perpetual and ever renewing, may be a dynamic task, but it makes qualities of the dialectic or rather its function. A survival is not available even in the synthesis which again is a precarious one. On the other hand if we see along with that luminous Italian Philosopher Benedetto Croce that there is a deeper form and pattern of the dialectic, the dialectic of distincts, which integrates the lower into the higher by rendering meaning and form to the lower by utilising it for the

higher purposes, even as in organic evolution, or the evolution and integration of values such as feeling and thought, the practical and the good testified to by History, then the difficulties of cosmic disruption and individual disintegration would be rendered impossible.

Nature provides the pattern of unity in the organism. The tragedy of the genius of Hegel lay in his schematising his conception of progress and History in mechanical-logical terms. The organic was reduced to the level of the mechanical. Croce intuitively recognized the fact that though the dialectic of opposites is patent truth on the level of the mechanical-logical interpretation and may yet be available as the truth of the conflict between the individual and his environment, its truth is limited. A higher form of the dialectic is in the distincts, both in the organic and the ethical realms. The dialectic of opposition is a less general law under the more general formulation of the dialectic of distincts. Hegel missed this truth and Marxism was the result, Unity has been made impossible both theoretically and practically.

The individual then is the focus of reality. To reduce him to a term of the whole or Universal or even theistically of God or substance is to escape from the problem of struggle and dread. Unity sought through law or the universal or the Collective or whole would only give rise to revulsion against such a solution. Idealism and realism then can be no solutions. A Logic of the conceptual or the abstract universal may be true as a consistent and coherent account of the nature of the reality considered conceptually, but is untrue both to the individual who conceptualises or systematises and to the whole which is the goal of the individual towards which he is struggling and cannot help doing so.

Psychology perhaps can solve or help the individual. More correctly perhaps the study of the evolution of the

individual can yield better results. Man is a unity of many organic systems, such as the bonal, muscular, circulatory, alimentary, glandular and neural structures. The unity of the organism is an established fact when functionality is considered. A mechanical aggregation is radically different from an organic unity. There is an old doctrine which says that whole is different from the sum of its parts, the *avayavi* is more than the *avayavas* taken singly or even collectively because it is a connection of many *avayavas* and this connection or interrelated-ness is the new factor giving rise to the new function or characteristic of the parts. A living organism is even more so. Growth is the visible sign of a living tissue, and growth includes assimilation and absorption and utilisation of the material received for the organs and organism as whole. The unity of an organism is superior to the unity of units of matter or aggregates held together by the laws of gravitation as in the case of the solar system or inter-atomic structures. A living organism responds to the environment and at a higher stage of its formulation, it develops an inner response to itself and shapes the need for itself, which are known as the sense of values emerging to the levels of consciousness.

A physical unity, a physiological unity, a psycho-physiological unity and finally a spiritual psycho-physiological unity seem to be the steps in the evolution of the ultimate unity of the individual. The Holistic theory of the late F.M.Smuts is a statement of the gradual supercession and maintenance of the less wholes or unities by the higher ones. Holism cannot be organistic because it is evolutionistic.

But there is a point of great importance to be canvassed at this stage. Growth of life seems to be not content with this process regarding the organisation of the unity of the individual, his emergence as a spiritual-psycho-physiological entity. There is seen also the mergence of social units or

unities. Simultaneous movements of many units in relation to each other is the phenomenon of group life. Every mob in fact seems to fall into patterns of unity and splits up into individual groups or communities or societies on the basis of some common interest. Even individual in a community is either at unity with another or in opposition to him and in either case there is integrative action in progress. The whole problem of unity then is whether the social unity is to be considered to be Organistic, that is to say, something to be realised on the pattern of the individual evolution of the organism, which is a unity in multiplicity, based on subsumption and assimilation while yet maintaining the general functions of each of the multiplicity, or the goal of the organic unity is the free unity of the Social Order, which is none too perfect at this stage. There can be however another solution possible. The individual organism is not too perfect. The social organisation (the word is of course organistic) is in a terrible condition of strain, unable to decide upon the autonomy of members or their equality and liberty and fraternity, since every order involves precisely a distinct hierarchical arrangement, autonomy within limits but overrulable under extraordinary conditions, and fraternity is to be realised again subject to the common aspiration of the whole society. The individual and the social organisation must develop a new level of Spiritual consciousness, wherein the individual wills the welfare of the whole and every other, and the Whole will exert itself for the fulfilment of the Will of the individual willing the welfare of the Whole and each other. The emergence of a universal consciousness in each individual, a cosmic supermentality, so to speak, is the condition of the emergence of a New Society.

Taking the first alternative, we know that evolutionistic thinkers like Herbert Spencer conceived the society to be an organism, and on the basis of analogy deduced that the several functions of the Society correspond to the several limbs of the

organism. This is but the restatement of the ancient view that the world is the Body of the Lord or God conceived as having the same likeness as the human being (Man is but the image of God), and the several members or rather groups of members were identified with the head, hands, limbs and trunk of the Divine Person. The harmony of the members or rather their unity should be a co-operative unity through division of functions. Accordingly, Herbert Spencer found that the diversity of the organs and their structural evolutions really proceeded on the basis of an implicit unity of the whole organism underlying their integrative function. A rational society must be based on this inner integrative action of the diverse functions. The heterogeneous oneness moves towards the realisation of the homogeneous manyness, because the homogeneous one diversified itself into heterogeneity. The two pronged movement in respect of the individual evolution of manifold organs organising their unity and even functional oneness, and the social evolution leading up to the organisation of the society and the State which is the Oneness of the many individuals is the real revelation of the Unity. But we are forced to accept the criticism that all this is based on the similarity of structure emerging at the infra-individual level and at the infra-social level of free individuals. Homology need not be analogy and is a fallacy. Identical structures are capable of being products of diverse functions.

But there is a possibility of realising the unity organistically if we could move away from the problem of similarity of structure in respect of the body-mind, which has ended in a *cul de sac*, and accept a more functional explanation of the relationship. Criticising the view that body cannot be defined in a functional manner so as to be capable of embracing all types of Ultimate inseparable relationships, Sri Ramanuja defined the body as *taht* conscious or unconscious entity which a conscient self is capable of

sustaining, supporting, utilising and enjoying for its own purposes.

This definition of Sri Ramanuja is capable of being extended to things and persons as it is not limited to the body conceived in a mechanical or biological manner. A *sarira* is not only that which is capable of disintegration after the soul has departed. Nor is it a thing which is merely an aggregate of muscle, bone and nerves. Nor is it merely a collection of organs in a particular form or pattern. Nor is it necessary that a body should be inconscient or comprise inconscient parts or organs. These definitions are either narrow or too wide. Sri Ramanuja's definition is a functional definition, and as such it permits inconscients as well as conscients being parts or bodies of the conscient Self. It can include every individual as a body of the Social Self, if there is such a social self available or the State. More truly the social self is but an apotheosised expression of the person who can exercise absolute control over the society. Sri Ramanuja points out that the Divine Person alone can be a real Self of all at the same time and no human person or even partial god can be the Self of all.

There is undoubtedly thus gained the concept of Reality as an Organism. The Divine Person is the Self of all both collectively and severally. The Society is as much a body of the Lord as the individual can be. Unity is had in the Divine and through the Divine Lord. The Mystic Vision of Alvars and Rishis, and Swedenborg gets a clarification through this definition of the body (*sarira*). Peace and liberation are but the attainment of the conscious integration of oneself in the life and being or the All Lord. Even Holism gets a clarification of its series of subsumptions in higher wholes which enrich and intensify the functions of the lesser wholes by this concept. A spiritual organistic doctrine such as that of Sri Ramanuja as an existential proposition survives the criticisms levelled against homologous organism and

analogous organism as well as the mathematical physical organism of A.N.Whitehead.

The one criticism that might be levelled against this philosophy of Society is that it is theistic and scholastically worded. But the concept of the individual in his manifold nature as part, as an attribute, as a *sarira*, as a *sesa* or *dasa*, as an ornament, as a power and as a perfect integrated being in all his parts, given by Sri Ramanuja removes the usual criticism of its chief point. I have made this clear in my articles in the *Vedanta Kesari* on Ramanuja's *Philosophy of Society* and in the Bimal Charan Law Commemoration volume on the *Evolution of the Concept of Sesa in Sri Ramanuja's Philosophy*. The multiple relationships between the individuals and Nature are variable whereas the relationship governing each of the modes of the soul in relation to the infinite above mentioned has the general characteristic of invariability and inseparability. Even a fall in the status of the individual through disobedience and unrighteousness does not annul this functional unity with the All Spirit or Brahman. Thus the general Unity of the whole in the Personality of the Brahman is the possibility before the individual.

I have already shown that the second alternative that the pattern of the individual should be loose contractual or corporation of individuals or a college of Souls or soul-bodies canvassed by the idealistic writers like Hegel cannot lead to a fundamental unity, because of the eternal friction of the dialectic of opposites. A mechanical rational dialectic can never be an answer to the real organic dialectic of assimilation and autonomy and transformation of the status of each individual and level of being. The dialectic of opposition appears simple to the mechanical rational mind, and lucid to the materialistic mind. The socialised mind of the individual will be a disrupted unity of the individual, and if Psycho-

analysis is successful at the present day it is in its able analysis of the disruption of the individual or rather disintegration, thanks to the Social unity of commandments and laws and regulations, taboos and other practices, ancient or modern.

An integral approach is possible as was affirmed. The evolution of a universal consciousness in the life of each individual would facilitate the emergence of a world unity. The emergence of a real cosmic consciousness willing a unity not only in the individual members of the human organism through a transformation of their nature itself but also in the institutions of the individual is a radical necessity. Thus the universal problem of unity is an individual problem. The individual must transcend his mentality and his mechanical rationality and his vital rationality. At the stage of the human evolution the mind dominated the lower physical and vital, and the physical and vital are geared upto its demands and thus each human individual has a mental soul so to speak. But thanks to the preoccupations of its energies with the environment it had become restricted and is in fact ignorant. The social organisations of these individuals are at the same level. The mental life of the individual is on one side a practical mind with restricted aims of survival in the body and of the body, and an abstract mind which seeks to know the general order and structure of the environment and act on it on the basis of laws discovered by it through observation. Practically the universals of its discovery are partial truths and pragmatically valuable. The organism of the individual must undergo a further evolution, A new force of being must be made active in the human individual, not the abstract universal or general will of the human society based on sentiment and gregarious feeling or vital love, but on a real Cosmic Intelligence, discovery of the Cosmic Self or Supermind and its action within each individual would transform the organic vital and psychical unity into a spiritual

or supramental-psychical, vital and physical unity. The Yoga of the Supermind, or the Purushottama Yoga of the Gita intimates this transcendence and transformation of the individual into an instrument of action and enjoyment and knowledge of the Supracosmic Divine Personality. Sri Aurobindo reveals this possibility of the Yoga which is the process of integration of the supracosmic supramental Force of the Divine. Within the organism Supramental evolution is no less organic evolution. It is clear then that the Universe becomes more fully and integrally organic with the Divine existentially and not conceptually. This becomes the fulfilment of the Yoga. The Yoga which an individual is called upon to undertake is the Yoga Union with the All, the Brahman or the Purushottama and results in the realisation of the integral participation in the life of the Universe collectively as well as severally. There is the realisation that all Yoga is *yaga* or *yajna* also, and is the means to the realisation of True Society and the True Good.

Thus from the study of the tendencies appearing both in the East and West, and from the interpretation of mystic scholastic thought both ancient and modern, we come to the conclusion that the Organistic Theory does serve as the starting point and as the basis of Unity.