

# **THE REALISATION OF THE ABSOLUTE**

*by*

***Swami Krishnananda***

The Divine Life Society  
Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India

*(Internet Edition: For free distribution only)*

**Website: [www.swami-krishnananda.org](http://www.swami-krishnananda.org)**

## **CONTENTS**

Publishers' Note	3
Foreword	4
Preface	5
Chapter One: Introduction	8
Chapter Two: The Nature of the World	14
Chapter Three: The Need for Integral Knowledge	27
Chapter Four: The Nature of Reality	33
Chapter Five: The Process of Truth-Realisation	59
Chapter Six: The Attainment of Liberation	78
Chapter Seven: Conclusion	90
Explanatory Notes	92

## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The primary issues of life are an expression of the pressing need for peace and happiness. When peace is being aspired after, the whole universe comes in there as the factor that goes to form the vital current of this process of aspiration. It is vain to think that lasting peace or happiness can be had through resorting to certain aspects alone, while neglecting or opposing others in the universe. Only a Citizen of the Universe can be an enjoyer of Peace, the Peace that-passeth understanding. It is the aim of this book to throw a powerful light on the art of growing into a Universal Citizen, a *purushottama*, a Being inhabiting the whole cosmos; a Being that, in loving the Universe, loves itself, in knowing itself, knows the All, and exists as the All. It is the Science of Perfection and the Practice of the Method to attain it, *brahmavidya* and *yogasastra*, that forms the core of this teaching of immortal value. The author, a direct disciple of the Great Swami Sivananda, offers to the lovers of Truth, to those who have dedicated their lives to the pursuit of Truth, this precious present, the result of his deep study and experience. This treatise will be found to be of immense value to all aspirants after Self-realisation, especially to those who tread the Path of Knowledge.

It is our earnest prayer that all *mumukshus* may derive the full benefit of imbibing this sacred Knowledge, handed down by the ancient Seers, and of living their lives in consonance with it.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

## FOREWORD

The Upanishads have always been acknowledged and acclaimed as veritable Mines of Transcendental Wisdom. They are fountain-sources and treasure-houses of Divine Knowledge. But they are something more, too. They also harbour within their precious bosom the key to gain access thereunto. In them we have not only the revelation of the radiant realms of the Supreme Brahman-Consciousness, but also the shining pathway that leads one to it - the secrets of Vedanta-Sadhana or Jnana-Yoga.

In "The Realisation of the Absolute" of Swami Krishnananda, we have a forceful and brilliant monograph on this theme which forms the central core of the Upanishadic texts. He has presented us with a well reasoned-out, clear and illuminating analysis of the problem of the appearance of pluralistic consciousness, and simultaneously given a bold and precise picture of the practical method of shattering this illusion and soaring into the empyrean of the Undifferentiated Absolute-Consciousness, the Reality, the nature of which has been explained by him very elaborately. His treatment of the subject of Vedanta is at once direct, inspiring and compelling, for the statements therein are such as have been tested by the author's own practical personal experience. He is one who is himself living the life of strenuous quest after Truth. Though quite young in age, Swami Krishnananda (whom I know very well indeed) is a seeker of high attainments, full of fiery aspiration and a monk of a very high order. Himself an advanced sadhaka, nay, a seer-sage in the making, possessing intense renunciation, deep dispassion and keen aspiration, he has indeed rightly emphasised these factors so indispensable to fit one for the path of Jnana-Yoga-Sadhana.

Expositions on pure philosophy there are a good many. Works touching on the broad aspects of Jnana-yoga, more or less upon the conventional orthodox lines, too, are there. But here you have an erudite consideration of the graduated anatomy of the structure of the practical process through which to realise the FACT about which philosophies but speculate. "The Realisation of the Absolute" is a practical Seeker-Sannyasin's revelation of Jnana and Jnana-Sadhana. It is replete with the sublimest conception of the Vedanta. It is a dazzling, light focussed upon the true essence of Vedanta-Sadhana and meditation and valuable hints and clues that reveal the pathway to Self-Realisation. In producing this profound treatise the one supreme urge in the author appears to be to fire the reader with a thirst for the Transcendent Experience of Reality, Brahma-Sakshatkara. I am glad to say that he has succeeded commendably in this purpose. The work is powerful and rousing. One who studies these pages will definitely find himself or herself transformed both in the attitude to life and in aspiration. The sincere reader cannot but feel with the author that "the quest for the Absolute should be undertaken even sacrificing the dearest object, even courting the greatest pain... It is a mistake to be interested in the different forms of perception... Nothing is worth considering except the realisation of Brahman."

I wish this work the reception, acceptance and approbation it richly deserves.

*Sivananda*  
8th September, 1947.

## PREFACE

It is always with a full preparation to face the contingency of being caught in vicious circles and to come out of them victoriously that one can attempt to explain anything concerning the Absolute or the Infinite. It is an extremely difficult task, and it many times appears idle to engage oneself in trying to understand the nature of eternal verities ranging beyond the intellect. Man is nothing if he is divested of the intellect, and yet this intellect is a very inadequate means of ascertaining Truth. But, however much imperfect, it is the only human faculty of knowledge nearest to Reality. We can either know Reality imperfectly, or not know it at all. Anyhow, fully to know Reality through a process is an impossibility, for Reality is not a process. It is not expected, however, that in these pages will be found statements not open to further consideration and discussion. It is not possible to enunciate anything without being set in opposition to something. To express what is complete is not within the capacity of the knowing process. All knowing is a process, and all process is imperfection. To know the perfect is to be the perfect, and not to express it. Expression involves relations, and nothing that is related is complete in itself. Intuition, however, is said to be complete; but, then, no philosophy is complete, for philosophy is intellectual judgment. Intellect is not a revelation like intuition, though even intellect is an imperfect revelation. By true revelation is meant the integral vision, not a relational understanding. Intellect is never free from subject-object-relationship, and every such relation falls short of Reality. We can never expound a philosophy which can stand before the light of intuition, for all relations are transcended in intuition. The declaration in the Mandukya Upanishad on the nature of Reality strikes terror into the heart of all speculative philosophy, which vainly tries to know Reality through transitory categories. If the philosopher is not prepared to accept that, until Self-Experience, he simply glories in shadows, he cannot at least deny that his statements are not self-sufficient and self-existent truths. Philosophy appears to be an apology for Truth-realisation, and it fulfils itself when it meets the requirements of intuition.

Let us accept that the intellect is imperfect. But without this imperfect instrument, we do not seem to be better than mere instinctive animals. There are some universal standards of intellectual ascertainment of the Reality behind forms. Positive affirmation of and meditation on such universal truths will not go without leading the meditator to what is real in the absolute sense. We can rise above the intellect through the medium of the intellect itself backed up by faith in and devotion to the Ideal. As long as the highest Reality is not experienced, universal ascertainties through philosophical enquiries should not be allowed to battle with one another. It is true that all real philosophy ends in Absolutism, but the intellectual categories do not go without creating forms of Absolutism, which seem apparently to rival with each other. The wise course would be to consider each form as the highest logical, as long as its sphere is the Absolute, and enough to lead man to the Transcendental Being. To mention one instance, Saguna-Brahman and Nirguna-Brahman, the Personal Absolute and the Impersonal Absolute, should not be considered as antagonistic, so long as they are not subjects or objects of anything, for both are Absolute in their own spheres, and do not involve relations, though the reasoning faculty tries to see a difference between the two. If hostile relations are developed between one absolute and another absolute arrived at through forms of intellectual comprehension, life will end in failure and misery. The intellect should not

be stretched beyond itself to the breaking point. Otherwise, there is the danger of self-deceit and knowing nothing. Reason should always be aided by tolerance, and should not forget its own limitations.

How far this work is a success in this direction is for the intelligent seeker after Truth to judge. This is not an attempt to present something new, but to suggest a method to him who is blazing with an aspiration to realise the Highest. The purpose of this work is to provide a leaning staff for those who are determined to plunge themselves in the duty of the struggle for Self-realisation. The pure and the sincere will certainly be benefited by this honest attempt to investigate Truth in the light of the Upanishads. It is impossible for anyone with a penetrative thinking, coupled with a dispassionate heart, to desist from the enterprise of seeking the trans-empirical Reality, whatever worldly loss one may have to incur thereby. Those, however, who do not want it, have to grow wiser and become truer men. The baser nature always finds joy in its aberrations and cannot tolerate what it thinks to be destructive to its dear egoistic relation's.

We can very happily console ourselves by admitting that reason cannot determine the nature of Truth. Then, all philosophy is only child's play. Even the Upanishads are truths expressed through words, and words cannot be understood without the intellect. It cannot, somehow, be denied that, at least to some extent, we can convince ourselves, through a carefully guarded intellect helped by faith, about the nature of Reality. The only condition, however, is that the aspiring intellect should be pure and unattached.

The main problem that arises out of the Upanishadic philosophy is regarding the validity of the rise of thought in the Absolute. The universe is explained as the wish or will of Brahman. If wish cannot be attributed to Brahman, the universe has no reality. If wish is attributed to Brahman, Brahman becomes limited and temporal. Somehow, we see something as the universe. But, if we have to be faithful to ourselves, we cannot be so by denying either our critical intelligence or our practical experience in this world. Our common sensory experiences, anyhow, are more untrustworthy than our deepest intelligence. Our sense-experiences are often meaningless, and even in daily life we can see how unwisely we are led by our mistaken notions which cause experiences. Even death occurs through wrong belief, and even life is saved through mere belief. We cannot ask why, then, we see a world if there cannot be change in Brahman. We have to simply admit that we are, somehow, befooled by the world-appearance like many of our other daily weaknesses, in spite of the intelligence ascertaining something other than what we actually experience. Though the reason itself is, ordinarily influenced by our practical experiences in the world, it reveals a sort of independence when it is purified of the dross of desires, and then it gives reliable guidance. If the One Brahman is the Undifferentiated Reality, there can be no world of differentiations and relativities. If we experience something else, we have to reject it by force of intelligence, without further deepening our ignorance by questioning about the why and how of it. If, however, through the stress of experience, we admit the reality of a spatio-temporal world-manifestation, we have to deny thereby the existence of the Eternal Reality. If we can ascertain nothing, we have to resort to a static inertia, which, however, we are not willing to do, by our very nature.

Experience tells us that it is always movement tending towards the unity of consciousness that shows signs of greater perfection and wider joy. Here reason and

experience coalesce and form one being. This directs us to draw the conclusion that undifferentiatedness and infinitude of experience must be the nature of Reality. Further, this inference agrees with the sacred scriptures, the Upanishads. An idea cannot spring from eternal existence.

And, we are here advised to take the creation-theory as only figurative, meant for the understanding of the less intelligent, and intended for leading their minds upwards through the progressive process of relative reality. This, moreover, is suggested in the Upanishads themselves, though not quite explicitly. Our empirical experience is, somehow, to be taken as a kind of self-entanglement which cannot be easily explained in the realm of appearances. It is explained when the Absolute is realised. In this task, reason should be guided by a dispassionate heart, lest there should be misrepresentation of facts.

While expounding the philosophy of the Upanishads here, portions with a theological and ritualistic bearing have been omitted, as they are not essential to understand the fundamental teachings of the Upanishads, though they may be useful in the practice of certain specific *upasanas*. Such of those seekers as would be interested in these *upasanas*, etc. are requested to study the *upasana-kanda* with a suitable commentary. The various lower *vidyas* or meditations on the lower manifestations, also, are not included in this book, as they are outside its scope.

The translation of the original Sanskrit passages is, for the most part, literal. But where it was thought that a literal rendering would be unintelligible, and it would be better if the spirit of the passage is conveyed in a readable manner, a paraphrase or the main idea is given, either by supplying certain words which are needed for a correct comprehension of the passage, or by omitting what is not required for that purpose.

On account of certain unavoidable uncongenial circumstances, a more detailed exposition of the subject could not be offered. However, some of the points which have been briefly stated in the book are explained further in the Notes appended.

Swami Krishnananda  
1st August, 1947.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **INTEGRALITY AND ASPIRATION**

The Attainment of Perfection is the Conscious Integration of Being. This is the central theme of the Upanishads. The Upanishads are intuitional revelations, and intuition is integral experience. Their declarations cannot fail to include within themselves the absolute scope of the diverse methods of approach to the one Reality, for integrality excludes nothing. No two individuals think alike, for thinking, which is the objective movement of the Spiritual Force, differs in its mode and impetus in different points of stress in integral existence. But, then, in spite of this separation of beings through their modes of mentation, all individuals have to aim at the attainment of a common Goal, the achievement of a common purpose, for, the truth of them all is one, and all their paths must but meet at One Perfection. Perfection or truth cannot be two, and there cannot be two absolutes. Hence, the methods of approach to Reality must all inherit certain fundamental natures or qualities which belong to the eternal nature of pure Existence. It is this undeniable fact that goes to prove the logical consistency that must exist and that exists among the multitudes of the methods employed by the relative individuals to experience Truth as it really is.

The one and the most important point to be remembered in all the processes of reasoning out the nature of Existence is that we cannot, with loyalty to reason, make in it such relative distinctions as subjective and objective, since such differences in nature are based on mere arbitrary conception and perception. We separate in pure Being the subject and the object only with concession to a belief in internality and externality based on immediate empirical experience bereft of intelligibility. The objective world and the subjective body are both in relation to the cognising entity, and existence is a divisionless mass of cognition, which fact is proved by the inexplicability of objective experience without our positing a conscious reality inclusive of both the subject and the object. The reality of the universe, both in its objective and subjective aspects, is in its existence, which cannot be known unless it becomes a content of consciousness. Unless, again, this content itself is non-different from consciousness, it will have no relation to consciousness, and it cannot be known. Existence must be the same as consciousness in order that existence may be known. If it is not known, it itself is not. Existence is really the existence of consciousness. The cognitive organ modifying the basic consciousness follows existence. And, as consciousness is indivisible, such a distinction in existence gets narrowed to identity of nature through inseparability in undifferentiatedness which has neither inside nor outside. Nothing that is related to another is real. Relation always means interdependence and not self-existence. Existence is always absolute; nothing else. Common perception, however, is not the criterion of truth. The sun does not become non-existent even if all men and animals have no eyes to see. Nor does he become an eternal being just because we perceive him. An unconscious unrest felt by every individualised personality in its own state and the impossibility to rest eternally in the separative consciousness points to the Being of the Supreme State of Absolute Perfection. Desire, which, in common parlance, is understood as the force which attracts the individual to relational existence, is only a clear proof of the inability of the

individualised being to pull on with its finitude, and of its demand to have further experiences in the field of consciousness. There is no satisfaction in existing in a relative state of consciousness, however superior in the degree of its extension it may be when compared with the lower states of consciousness. There is a craving inherent in every individual to experience other states of consciousness and to possess other varieties of objects of the universe. This craving finds no rest until infinite states of consciousness are experienced and until infinite objects are possessed. This, however, does not imply multiplicity in Infinity, for that which is Infinite is Divisionless Existence. Even the emperorship of the entire universe cannot give perpetual satisfaction as long as it falls short of the Infinite. The rulership of the heaven and the earth is but a relative existence, though of a high order of merit, but satisfaction does not reach its summit even at absolute individuality. Perfect satisfaction is not to be found even in a dual state of life - even if it be absolute duality - but in infinite *experience* and infinite *being*.

### **THE METHOD OF CONSCIOUS EXPANSION**

This Infinite Being is not experienced by mere metaphysical speculation, but has its meaning in immediate non-relational experience. An integral experience necessitates an integral approach, a transformation of the integral personality. Hence, intellect which is a part of the integral man, cannot reach the Reality which is the Whole. The entire consciousness has to be concentrated upon the Ideal to be attained. Towards this end, it is imperative that the dissipated rays of personal consciousness should be withdrawn to their primal relative source, the root of the individual personality, the purified ego. The purified ego-consciousness thus freed from the divergent attractions of sense-perception is allowed to devote itself completely to the higher purpose of conscious expansion into the subtler and vaster states of consciousness. Each higher state is more extensive, subtler and more inclusive than the lower states, and the power of integration is greater in every succeeding state. Forces which cannot be controlled by a certain state of consciousness come under the easy sway of a further superior state, and the ability of the individual to fulfil a certain purpose is greater in more extensive states. Thus, the innate and the ultimate nature of consciousness should necessarily be all-inclusive, the most extensive and, hence, Infinite. The Consciousness and Power of this climax of Being is illimitable, for, there is nothing second to this essential condition of existence. The conscious establishment of the self in this homogeneous essence is achieved through a sacrifice of the individual separateness to the fullness of Infinitude. The Upanishads are the legacies of those who transcended the finite consciousness of a miserable individuality and hailed supreme in the Wholeness of Experience. The limitedness of diversified life is pointed out by the fact that the individual living such a life is put to the necessity of feeling a want of things and states other than those that are its own. Objective existence itself is a demarcation in the unity of existence's permanent nature, and the presentation of the untruth of relativity in undifferentiated being cannot win final victory. Even against the surface-consciousness there is an urge from within the depth of every being to become the All, whether this is felt perfectly or otherwise. The Upanishads are the ripe fruits of such fine flowers blossomed out in the Light of the Wisdom-Sun. They lead us to the Whole, who are but its psychological parts.

The Upanishads are thoroughly spiritual and, hence, advocate the most catholic doctrine of the Yoga of Truth-realisation. Their teachings are not the product of an intellectual wonder or curiosity, but the effect of an intense and irresistible pressure of a

practical need arising from the evil of attachment to individual existence. The task of the Seers was to remedy this defect in life, which, they realised, was due to the consciousness of separateness of being and the desire to acquire and become what one is not. The remedy lies in acquiring and becoming everything, expressed all too imperfectly by the words "Infinity," "Immortality," and the like. The central problem of every one of us is the overcoming of the illness of individual life and the attainment of the state of perfection, peace and bliss. The Upanishads point out the "End" as well as the "Means" and, since those sages had the Integral Knowledge of Reality, the method of approach to it they point out is also befitting the Ideal, viz., it is integral. The practice of such an ideal "*sadhana*" for deliverance from the thrall of relational life leads one to the shining region of unalloyed happiness.

The differences among the conceptions regarding the efficacies of the various methods of the transformation of personality into the higher consciousness are due to the varying temperaments and grades of experience of those engaged in the task of realising the Divine Existence. Each of the ego-centers is different from the other in consciousness and experience. They require higher touches of experience varying in degree, in proportion to the subtlety of the condition of their present state of consciousness. We may assert that though the fundamental view presented in the declarations of the Upanishads is the one taken by the highest class of the seekers after Truth - a thorough-going intuitional Absolutism - one will not fail to find in them deepest proclamations touching all the aspects of the psychological constitution of the human being in general. The light and the heat of the sun are not useless to any existing entity of the universe - whatever be the way and degree in which it may make use of the sun's presence - and the Upanishadic statements of the integral Truth are not useless to any aspect of man and to no method of approach to Reality; for, "integrality" includes all "aspects".

This Integration of Being can be achieved even in this very life. It is not necessary to take some more rounds of births and deaths for the purpose, provided the integration is effected before the shaking off of the physical sheath, through persistent meditation on Reality and negation of separative consciousness. The quickness of the process of Attainment depends upon the intensity of the power of such meditation, both in its negative and assertive aspects. A dehypnotisation of the consciousness of physicality and individuality is the essential purpose of all methods of spiritual meditation.

### **THE TRANSCENDENT BEING**

The teachings of the Upanishads are expressed in the language of the Self - not of the intellect - and, hence, they do not easily go deeply into every soul, unless it possesses a responsive and burning yearning for Absolute-Experience. The soul, due to its deviation from the Truth and wandering among the shadows, finds it difficult to hear the voice of the Silence. The Upanishads suggest that even the highest achievement in the relative plane- even the creatorship or destroyership of the universe- is, from the ultimate point of view, among the fleeting shadows of phenomenal existence. The delicate tendencies which manifest themselves in the process of the blossoming of individuality into the Infinite try to cover the presence of the Truth in the inmost recesses of our being. Such psychic layers, however brilliant they may be, are, after all, layers of non-being and should not be mistaken for the Real. Even the subtlest layer is but a veil over the Truth, a "golden vessel" that hides the Essence, and must be transcended before the kernel of

Being is reached. The delight of unfettered being is beyond all states of relational joy, however extreme that joy may be. The Bliss of unlimited Consciousness is the zenith of Existence, and everything other than this is condemned as untrue.

The delight of the Self is the delight of Being. It is the Bliss of Consciousness-Absolute. The Being of Consciousness is the Being of Bliss, Eternal. It does not lie in *achievement* but *realisation* and *experience*, not invention but discovery. The Consciousness is more intense when the objective existence is presented near the subject, still more complete when the subjective and the objective beings are more intimately related, and fully perfected and extended to Absoluteness in the identification of the subject and the object. This Pure Consciousness is the same as Pure Bliss, the source of Power and the height of Freedom. This is the supreme Silence of the splendid Plenitude of the Real, where the individual is drowned in the ocean of Being.

### **TRUTH AND ITS QUEST**

The Upanishads do not declare that Truth is a state of dynamic change and action, all which marks limitation and imperfection, but one of perennial calm, limitless joy and permanent satisfaction. Change is *othering*, altering, movement, which is activity, an effort exercised to achieve an unachieved end, which is the characteristic of an unsatisfied imperfect being. This cannot be the Nature of Truth, for Truth is ever-enduring and has no necessity to change itself.

Change is the quality of untruth and the Upanishads assert that Reality is Self-satisfied, Self-existent, Non-dual, Tranquil and utterly Perfect. An appeal to the inwardness of consciousness expanded into limitlessness is the burden of the song of the Upanishads. In this respect the Upanishads are extremely mystic, if mysticism does not carry with it an idea of irrationalism or a madness of spirit. The transcendental mysticism of the Upanishads is not the effect of an emotional outburst, but a calm transcendence of intellect and reason through a development into the integral consciousness.

The Truth, "knowing which everything becomes known" is the subject of enquiry and the object of quest in the Upanishads. The Seers dived into the very depth of Existence and tasted the nature of the Limitless Life. They entered into the Root of the universe and the branches could easily be realised their inner being through an investigation into the essential workings of the Great Root of Life. When the root is watered, the branches are automatically watered; when gold is known, all the ornaments also are known; when Truth is realised, everything is realised; for, Truth is One. Whatever system of philosophy may be derived from the Upanishads, the obvious truth goes without saying that they propound a theory that holds Reality to be indivisible, objectless and transcendent. They assert that belief in diversity is an ignorance of consciousness, and Truth is essentially a boundless Unity. They lead us from the faulty faith in the objective reality of the universe to an internal search of the veritable Self existing as the finest essence of our being. And what is even more striking is their untiring insistence on attaining Self-Perfection. To their immortal honour, they grasped the eternal fact that the knowledge of the Self is the supreme end of life, its only meaning and purpose ever, and that beings exist but for that grand Attainment of Light, Freedom and Immortality! Blessed is he, and he has truly lived a purposeful life, who attains to this height of undying joy in this very life; and he is a great loser and has lived his life in vain, who has failed to realise the Truth here (Vide Kena Upanishad II. 5).

The Upanishads affirm in several ways that there is no meaning in taking the phenomenal diversity as a permanent reality, and that Truth is Infinity. The common impulse to express, unfold and realise one's Self is present in all beings in different degrees or intensity. The whole process of conscious exertion to realise Truth lies in the manifesting of this deepest impulse in man and a flowing with it to expand oneself into the Infinite. As the background of every struggle in life there is this urge to get oneself established in the changeless Consciousness. Even when one struggles blindly in one's attachment to personal life for acquiring external gains, one is indeed moved, though unconsciously and wrongly, by this urge to expand oneself to Completeness.

### **DEGREES IN EMPIRICAL REALITY**

The capability for such an expansion differs by degrees in different beings, according to the extent of the Reality manifested through them. Beings are higher or lower according to the degree of Intelligence that lights up their nature. Entities in the universe are differentiated through their modes of mentation, which are controlled by the intensity of the Truth presented by them. Nature appears to be Spirit distorted in multitudinous ways and expressed in different degrees of revelation. Individuals marked off within themselves, limited by space and time, bear a variegating relation among one another, in proportion to the depth of the Consciousness realised by them. The deeper the Consciousness realised by an individual, the nearer it is to the Eternal. The separative force is the power of individualisation and of the rootedness of the ego-sense. The greater the force with which this separative sense is suppressed to nothingness or expanded to Infinity, the more extensive and deeper is the light and the joy realised and experienced. From this it would be clear that, excepting that great fiery method of attaining Immediate Self-Experience, the process of Self-realisation must be a progressive one, and that none can fly into a higher state of consciousness without fulfilling the conditions of the lower, the lesser and the grosser states. The more limited states of manifestation have to be complied with their demands before one could reach the highest Metaphysical Being. Stricter discrimination may repudiate the view of a progressive process in Reality, but there is process in all relative conditions. and it is valid as long as duality persists. Anyhow, all is well with him whose heart is turned towards acting in accordance with the deathless law of Infinite Life. No disease, physical or mental, can ever assault him.

### **WAY TO BLESSEDNESS**

This important factor is forgotten by the modern man, however much educated he may be. He has refused to walk freely with the workings of the Spiritual Nature and has attempted his best to centre himself in the state of individualised existence. The misery of the present-day world may be attributed to this constrictive tendency in the human being, which is ever trying to block the way of the expansion of the spiritual consciousness. The case of the half-baked material science and psychology may be specially mentioned here as being one of the forces obstructive to the happy process of Truth-realisation. The ills caused by wrong methods of education, the social and political strifes, the individual evils and the world-degeneration are all effected by the one terrible fact that humanity has turned against the law of the Spiritual Reality. So long as this self-destructive tendency of the human mind is not controlled, and man is not shown the correct way of procedure, the unhappy world has to be contented with its

fate. The remedy lies in our being sincere in taking recourse to the direct method of such Realisation here and now. Humanity has to be cent-per-cent spiritual. Those who think that they are doing injustice to the world through their act of Self-realisation have naturally to be regarded as having not gone above the credulity of childhood. For, they have forgotten that the Self which is the Absolute includes the whole universe, and far transcends it. It is the obtaining of everything, and not the losing of anything. The welfare of society rests in its spirituality. Society is a formation of bodies effected through the unconscious spiritual bond existing among beings belonging to the same genus or species. The social bond is stronger among those who think alike and who practise the same conduct. This bond is the strongest among those who are in the same level of the depth of consciousness. All this is a feeble reflection of the essential nature of the indivisibility of Existence which is One. Human beings have to know and act according to this spiritual law, and its acceptance should not be merely for the purpose of academical research, but has to be the foundation of the daily life of everyone in general. Unity in the world necessitates a heart-to-heart feeling of oneness among its inhabitants. This is the need of the hour. This is the task of the political and the religious heads. This is what is going to pave the way of blessedness to the whole universe.

The Upanishads are our guide-lights in this supreme pursuit. Let us understand and follow them with sincerity, faith, calmness, surety and persistence.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NATURE OF THE WORLD

#### THE DISSERTATION ON EXPERIENCE

The world is a presentation of outward variety and seeming contradiction in existence. It is a disintegrated appearance of the Absolute, a limited expression of Infinitude, a degeneration of the majesty of immortal Consciousness, a diffused form of the spiritual Completeness, a dissipated manifestation of changeless Eternity. Each of such separated entities of the world claims for itself an absolutely independent existence and regards all objective individuals as the not-Self. The not-Self is always considered to be in absolute contradiction to or at least absolutely distinguished from the self's own localised being. The exclusion of other limited objective bodies from one's own subjective self involves a relation between the two, and this relation is the force that keeps intact the network of diverse consciousness. Everything hangs on the other thing for its subsistence through contact. A lack of the character of self-sufficiency discloses the deceitful nature of the relative reality of things marked off within themselves. The obvious fact that every demarcated entity expresses within itself an urge to relate itself to other objective beings through internal psychoses and sense-operations points out the inability and impossibility of individualised centres of consciousness to maintain the apparent truth of their professed self-existence. The universe rolls on ceaselessly in the cycle of time, and reveals a newer characteristic of itself every moment. Things do not rest in themselves but ever pass away into something else. Everything in this universe is change. Change is the law of life. Nothing is without changing itself. An inadequacy felt in the attainments of the current state of existence is the forerunner of all enterprises in the life of the individual. Action is impossible unless the self feels in itself a deficiency which can be filled up by an active endeavour to possess the missing part that would contribute to the completion of its nature. A felt necessity for a fuller state of experience is the mother of all attractions and repulsions. The whole cosmos seems to be a restless field where dynamic powers are arrayed in battle as if to extirpate themselves for a nobler cause. Tranquillity can well be said to be non-existent in the history of the space-time world. Struggle is the meaning of phenomenal endurance. The Upanishads solve the riddle of relative strife through the intuitive perception of the Essence. The heroic leap of the individual into the unknown is the expression of the want of a superior joy. The dissatisfaction with limitedness in life directs the soul to catch the fullness of perfection in the truth of its Integrality, with which the individualised condition is not endowed. Hence, universal movement and individual effort, though differing in their altruism of nature, can be understood as a reflection of the tendency to Self-Perfection of Being. The pressure of the truth of the absoluteness of consciousness is the source of the force that compels individuals to transcend their finitude and find their eternal repose in it alone. This permanent Verity is the supreme object of quest through the cosmical endeavour in creation, wherein alone all further impulses for externalisation of forces are put an end to. The desire to become the All terminates in the experience of Infinitude. This aspiration to transcend states and things points to the unreal character of the universe.

*The one Being, the wise diversely speak of.*

- Rig-Veda, I. 164. 46.

*There is nothing diverse here.*

- Katha Upanishad IV. 11.

*Existence is One alone without a second.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad VI. 2.1.

The life of every individual bears connections with the lives of other individuals in varieties of ways, in accordance with the degree of its awareness of Reality. Every thought sets the surface of existence in vibration and touches the psychic life of other individuals with a creative force the capability of action of which is dependent on the intensity of the affirmation of the mind generating that thought. Objects entirely cut off from one another can have no relation among themselves. Sense-perception, cogitation and understanding are messengers of the fact that there exists a fundamental substratum of a uniform and enduring Consciousness. Cognition is impossible without a pre-existent link between the subject and the object. Thought cannot spring from emptiness, for emptiness is itself nothing. Activity is possible because there is creative imagination and imagination is a moving objectified shadow of Consciousness. The denial or assertion of something presupposes the awareness of the thinking subject and the subject cannot stand apart from self-awareness. Self-consciousness is, thus, unavoidable in being. It is an eternal fact. The perception of an object reveals the conscious relation that is between the subject and the object. This relation should be based on a fundamentally changeless being, without which even a relation is not possible. All contacts presuppose an immovable ground which supports all movements.

The world is made up of forms. The forms of things disclose their unreal nature when subjected to a careful examination of their composition and working. A thing is a member of the society of diverse phenomenal centres appearing to divide against itself a basic Noumenon. A thing is an object of thought, an internal form, and an external form is known through thought itself, which is consciousness objectified. A form is differentiated from existence as a whole by a particular mode characterising it. It cannot be said that a thing is defined by a mode or that it has a definite form unless it becomes an object of thought. Thought itself is conditioned by forms, and it is thought, again, that knows external forms and determines their nature. The laws governing the modes of thinking shall have sway over its objects also, for the rules that regulate the process of knowledge and restrict its operations determine all the contents thereof, which, therefore, cannot be known independent of and free from the conditions to which the knowing process is subject. All forms of objective knowledge are, thus, deceptive and give to the knower nothing of reality. The truth of the object of thought can be known only when it is freed from the modes of thought, and the truth of thought itself can be known only when it is not conditioned by the forms which it takes. Neither the mind nor its object, taken independently, can be said to truly exist. That the mind exists cannot be proved unless there is a modification of the modal consciousness, which is called a psychosis or a mental transformation, which, again, is not possible without the mind's taking the form of an object or an objective condition. That objects exist also cannot be proved unless there are minds to cognise and know them. Each is explained only by the

other and not by itself. Nothing in this world, neither the subject nor the object, is independent and self-existent. The test of reality is non-dependence, completeness and imperishability. When things are judged from this standard of truth, the phenomenal subjectivity and objectivity in them are found to break down and reveal their ultimate unreality. The appearance of the subject-object-distinction has to be finally attributed to the creative activity of consciousness itself, though the relation of consciousness and change in the form of any activity is beyond understanding and explanation. As the idea of causality itself is an effect of the want of real knowledge, a question as to the cause of this want has no meaning. But the affirmation of consciousness has to objectify itself in the form in which it is desired to manifest itself, as all forms are contents of consciousness. Whatever an individual affirms must ultimately happen or be materialised into effect, because each centre of consciousness has infinity at its background. Misery or suffering and pleasure or happiness are experiences relative to the understanding of the individual, and are of such a character and degree as is the condition of the individual consciousness in relation to the Absolute Being. There is really one experience which is *absolute*, and it can be styled neither a misery nor a pleasure. That One Experience is diversely felt as variety, and is fictitiously termed as either this or that, and of this nature or of that. The form of the world is found to be a magical appearance when subjected to the test of severe discrimination. The world and the Atman or Brahman neither exclude nor include each other, but are non-related, for relation is possible only between two demarcated objects, and the possibility of duality or any relation is annulled in the being that is "one alone without a second." Pure Experience is attributeless, and all "existence" is "experience". Ethical virtues and immoral vices are the effects of the different mental modes reacting variegatedly to the one changeless consciousness in different ways, leading respectively to the experience of Unity-consciousness and diversity-delusion. All our experiences are relative, and neither the relative experiencer nor the experienced can stand the test of reality. They present an appearance, though the reality in them transcends them and exists as an indivisible unity. This one Reality appears as the knower as well as the known. It is one and the same thing that appears as the earth to certain states of consciousness, as heaven to some, as hell to certain other, as men and creatures to still some other, and as Eternal Consciousness to another that is integrated. The Substance is One and it is felt by different modes of mentation in their own fashion, as good, bad, sweet, bitter, beautiful, ugly and the like. The Substance by itself does not change; only the mode of perception changes. The truth therefore remains that Eternal Existence is without any evolution or involution within itself. From this it follows that the world of space and time is an appearance, a shadow of Reality. Even immortality and death are relative to the individual. In order to have the Experience of Reality we have to discard the forms as mere appearances.

### THE CRITIQUE OF DUALITY

It is contended by some that the world is not such an utter negation of Reality, that the world of names and forms is in the being of Reality, that plurality cannot be a nothing, that diversity which is real is indwelt by the Supreme. It is also held that the individual is not the Absolute until it realises the Absolute, that the process of change and evolution is a perfect truth and not an appearance, and that the quality of the Absolute is not attributable to the individual at any time.

It is not difficult to note that indwelling is possible only when the Indweller is different from the indwelled, that is, when there is a second entity. To assert that God pervades the *diverse* beings and that God impels *all* actions is a trick played by the cunning individuals flowing with the current of instinct to get a license of objective indulgence. The self-expression called the world is not a deliberate objective act of the Absolute, for we cannot say that the Absolute acts. It is an undivided appearance without any ultimate logical reason for its existence or disappearance. Hence we often come to the conclusion that appearance, subsistence, disappearance, bondage, life and liberation are eternal! An undivided change is no change. Eternal transformation is changelessness, and it cannot be considered as any motion at all. Thus, appearance would become eternal like Reality, and two eternals contradict the Absolute. This proves the invalidity of the existence of appearance.

To assert diversity is to deny absoluteness. It does not, however, mean that the Absolute excludes the diverse finitudes, but the finite is eternally dissolved in or is identical with the Absolute, and therefore, it does not claim for itself an individual reality. It is argued that to ignore differences is to reduce the Absolute to a non-entity. The Absolute does not depend upon the reality of egoistic differences. By cancelling the relative we may not affect the Absolute, but we, so long as we are unconscious of the fundamental Being, improve thereby our present state of consciousness. Individuality is in every speck of space and these egos must be so very undivided that diversity becomes an impossible conception and homogeneity persists in every form of true reasoning in our effort to come to a conclusion in regard to the nature of the Absolute. We may blindly assert difference, but it is not possible to establish it through any acceptable reasoning.

To say that we are not yet the Reality, and we have yet to "become" it, may be true with partiality to empirical consciousness, but it is not the highest truth. Perfection or Absoluteness is not something to be got or acquired from somewhere, but is only a "realisation" of what actually and eternally "is", a mere "knowledge" of the fact that "exists". The individuals are in essence the Absolute itself, which is beyond all contradiction. This truth is not to be grasped through dull metaphysics or idle intellectual quibbling, but through realisation and experience. The form of the world can never have a substantial existence as it is not independent of the Absolute. The reality of the forms of the world is based on the working of the ego-sense or the idea of separateness in the individual. Realisation is not an actual "becoming", but an unfolding of consciousness, an experience of Truth, Truth that already is, Truth that is eternal. The essential existence can never change. We cannot become what we actually are not at present. We have no right to claim what we do not really possess. The Self is not really bound by space and time. Compromising philosophers make a false distinction between the individual and the Absolute, between becoming and being, between the finite self and the ultimate Brahman. The words "ultimate" and "relative" have no basis outside simple misapprehension of what is really unchanging and eternal. The Upanishads do not simply mean that duality is not final, but that it has no basis at all in the region of Reality. The Absolute of the Upanishads is the only Reality, and all forms must, therefore, be non-existent from the point of view of its exact nature.

*Truth alone triumphs; not falsehood.*

- Mundaka Upanishad III. 1. 6.

A faithfulness to diversity must necessarily end in a failure in the practical walk of life. The discord of the material universe is kept up by the belief in actual separateness in life, which has deluded the consciousness of the whole race of beings. Truth is the undivided Absolute. Truth cannot be twofold. It is a perversion of the natural intelligence that is the cause of the devotion of individuals to a truth of diversity. The Absolute and the relative are not two different entities standing like father and son. The two are the presentation by the human intellect of what is in fact Non-Dual. The Absolute does necessarily and obviously cancel the validity of the existence of the fictitious relative and the finite. The form of the world is not simply less real than the Absolute but a distortion of the characteristic nature of the Absolute. Progress and downfall in life are not an actual process but an appearance of the states of the one Consciousness. The form of the process of the world seems to be rigidly determined when looked from the point of view of the corresponding subjective intellects or the individuals in the same grade of reality, but it appears otherwise when we are open to the fact that the perceiving subjects are not made of the same processes of the psychological stuff, that all are not in the same grade of reality, and that cognising subjects are also infinite in number. The form of the world has no authoritative existence and does not bear the test of reason. There is no reasonable evidence for the existence of an eternal plan and purpose underlying the evolutionary scheme of the world-process, except the fact that it serves as the required objective field of training and self-transcendence for individuals whose constitution is in consonance with the constitution of the world in which they find themselves.

Truth being one, it cannot be classed as absolute and relative, except for the sake of human convenience and with reference to subjective changes. It is a sanction of the inability to apprehend Truth, and is not valid with stricter and saner perception. If the one is true, the other must be false. If we cannot experience the Absolute, we have to admit our defeat and ignorance, but we cannot thereby take advantage of our limited consciousness and try to prove that what we experience at present also is real independently. If Brahman has expressed itself as the world, then, the world cannot exist outside Brahman. How can it express itself when there is no space for it to express or expand? Even space is Brahman. Expression or change becomes impossible. When space and time, the subtlest aspects of physical manifestation are nothing but the being of the Brahman itself, it becomes difficult to imagine the expression of Brahman into a world of diversities. There can be no diversity without space. Change demands a spatial emptiness where changing subject is not. It cannot be said that space at present is not Brahman but afterwards it will become Brahman. What is real, now at present, can never be changed subsequently. If we are not Brahman at present, we can never be That at any time in future. A not-Brahman cannot be turned into Brahman. Stone does not become milk or honey. Becoming Brahman is only a consciousness of the state of mere "Be"-ness. And that Consciousness is never absent. When existence is undivided there cannot be a separation of things by space. Creation, manifestation, expression, thought, are all in relation to the ego which has been tied fast to the feeling of separateness. Absolute-Existence does not admit of differentiation of any kind. Name, form, action, change, are cast off as apparitions. Nothing can be said about the Absolute, except that it "is".

Brahman which is the cause and the world which is the effect are basically identical, and

hence change and causation lose their meaning. The phenomenal world is caught up in space, time and causation, which scatter themselves without a past or a future. One thing is in relation to the other, and the world-process seems to be eternal. An eternal multiplicity is an impossibility, and an individual cannot be an enduring being. The world, thus, proves itself to be a naught and gives way to the being that is one and that does not change. Since *samsara* as a whole has neither a beginning nor an end, except with reference to the individuals, the ideas of a real creation and destruction fall to the ground. Absolutism satisfactorily solves all the problems of life.

The form of the world is the projection of the objective force of the Universal Consciousness or the World-Mind. Everything in the world is a network of unintelligible relations. Things are not perceived by all in the same fashion. The perceptions of a chair by many individuals are not of the same category of consciousness. They differ in the contents of their ideas which are the effects of the particular modes of the tendency to objectification potentially existent in the individuals. The forces of distraction which constitute the individual consciousness are not of the same quality in everyone. There is a difference among individuals in their perception and thinking. It is impossible to have a knowledge of anything that does not become a content of one's own consciousness. Everyone is inside the prison of his own experience and knows nothing outside his consciousness. The world is rooted in the belief in its existence. The form of the world changes when the consciousness reaches the different relative planes of the various degrees of reality. When consciousness expands into the truth of Pure Being, the world discloses its eternal nature of Pure Consciousness alone.

It is argued that the artistic poet-souls of the Upanishads lived in the world of diversity and did not fly out of it. This does not mean that the sages were tied to the plurality-consciousness of the temporal world. They transcended earthly consciousness and realised that the earth is Brahman itself illumining. But in such a realisation there is no concession given to the reality of diverse appearances in any case. The conception that the world is God's revelation of himself does not fare better. Revelation again presupposes the operation of the play of space, time and causation, the final validity of which is already repudiated. A God who changes himself is not a permanent being. God's self-revelation requires a change in the total existence itself, which process is logically inadmissible. Divine revelation is in relation to the consciousness of the individual and is not an eternal fact of existence. Existence is itself full and perfect and dissipation within it is not admitted by reason. The denial of multitudinousness does not, as it is sometimes supposed, reduce the rich life of the world to a dream-shadow. It is not known how variety in existence adds to the richness of the Absolute. The richness of the part is not equal to the magnificence of the Whole. The grandeur of the relative world is dependent on the imagination of the individual. To a person who has opened his eye of true consciousness the world does not appear as such. We cannot see any cogency in the argument that it is possible to have worldly enjoyment together with the knowledge of the Absolute.

It is further contended that even if the Atman is the sole reality, the existence of plurality cannot be denied. If the Atman is the sole reality, it is to be accepted that it is without internal or external differentiations. If there is thus no plurality in the Atman, and also if nothing exists but the Atman, there is no meaning in holding that existence is inclusive of plurality. If the Atman or Brahman is non-dual, there can be no plurality,

because other than Brahman anything is not. The view that, because it is said that with the knowledge of Brahman “all” is known, Brahman-realisation does not destroy plurality but merely renders the person immune from objective attraction, and that “all” implies the existence of plurality, is a misunderstanding of this sentence. The word “all” does not refer to the reality of the plurality of things. It is only a symbolical expression of the Upanishads used for want of words to express unlimitedness. When we say “all” is known, and “all” is Brahman, we do not mean that the trees and the mountains, the sky and the ocean are Brahman *differently*. If they are all one, and if Brahman has no heterogeneous qualities, the assertion, “all” is known, does not imply plurality in the natural essence of Brahman. Space and time are swallowed up in the being of the Reality and plurality cannot exist unless there is something second to Brahman, which persists eternally. Eternal duality or plurality is impossible, as can be seen from an examination of the nature of Consciousness, and we are compelled to admit the homogeneous character of Brahman’s essence. If being and becoming are identical, the cause of the appearance of the world must be attributed to some mysterious and inscrutable ignorance and cannot itself be given a place in existence. Duality cannot survive and individuality cannot exist in the Truth of Brahman.

*Where there is duality, as it were, there one sees the other - But where everything is one’s own Self, then, whom would one see?*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 4. 14.

*Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the Infinite.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad VII. 24.

The Upanishads deny the reality of the *form* of the world of plurality and duality. According to them, except the non-dual Brahman, nothing is. The universe is explained by them as the imagination of the Absolute-Individual. We can only understand that this absolute-imagination is merely figurative and it can have meaning only with reference to individuals in the world, and not in itself. The infinite *bhuma* alone hails supreme. It is established on its own Greatness. It is not dependent on anything else, for anything else is not. There cannot be imagination in the Absolute. Imagination may differ in degree or intensity, but even these degrees are but imagination. Even the acceptance of such a difference is ultimately invalid. The experience of external objects depends on the strong belief that they exist. This belief may be individual or universal. But the moment that belief is withdrawn, their reality is negated. Mere belief or ideation does not make a thing really existent. All that glitters is not gold. All that appears to exist need not really exist *as such*. The Goal of human aspiration is the establishment of the self in the eternal Consciousness. It is sometimes believed that we penetrate the “Real” “through” this world, and therefore the world is real. But empirical experiences should not be taken as standards for judging the Real. The modification effected in a thought-process in knowing Reality is identical with what is experienced after the act, i.e., the attainment of Reality. Hence the means becomes identical with the end in the case of knowledge of Reality. The experience of the Eternal is not independent of the effort exercised to attain it. All actions to reach the Real require a self-transformation which is the same as what they aim at through that. Cause and effect are intrinsically non-different. The exercise of the effort towards experiencing the Real, becomes itself the experience of the Real.

Without knowing the Real we cannot move towards the Real, and knowing it is being it. Reaching the Real is not an action. All actions modify the subject of the act. Action is impossible without the differentiation of the subject by a non-being of the subject. It cannot be said that the subject, the Self, is absent at any place. If it is everywhere, no action is possible. If it is not everywhere, it is perishable. Our actions lead us to a vicious circle. We seem to be doing many things, though, actually, we do nothing. The experience of the Eternal and the destruction of the ego are simultaneous events. The diverse world cannot, therefore, be said to be a necessary "means" in the individual's struggle for Self-realisation. If the world is a means, the world is also the end, and we "reach" nothing "through" the world. A perishable means cannot lead to an eternal end. Knowledge, which is not of the world, is eternal, and it is this that is the means, and the end, too.

### **THE WORLD AS COSMIC THOUGHT**

We are led to conclude that the ideas of space and time, form and name are the contents of the cosmic creative Consciousness. There is objectively nothing but luminous Consciousness which appears to be split up into the diversity of a world due to the fluctuations in the knowing process. The process of objective knowledge has the ability to divest the Absolute, as it were, of the revelation of its essential nature, and give a presentation of a multitudinous variety, even as a prism has the property of diffusing the one mass of light into heterogeneous rays. We cannot say whether there is any objective world independent of the knowledge of which it is the object. It cannot even be said whether any world exists when duality is transcended in knowledge. What is the proof for the existence of the world when it is not known? How can we say that there is any world at all beyond the activity of cosmic thought? We cannot see and sense the world and its contents in the same form when the organs of sense and the mind are differently constituted. The world exists because the mind functions on a dualistic basis. There is sound because there is the ear and there is colour because there is the eye. The individual exists as such because it thinks. The one universal vibration is received by the senses in the different forms in which alone they are capable of receiving it on account of their specific constitutions. Substance, quality and relation; name, form and action, endlessly dissipate themselves. All forms are hanging on one another without any basic intelligibility in their relations. No form is self-existent. One form cannot be distinguished from the other except in an artificial and unintelligible way. The connections of causes and effects and forms of existence are based on a temporary faith and not on true understanding. Transcendence of thinking annihilates the individual, which, then, rests as the Absolute, and together with it the vast world is exalted to Pure Being. When water is disturbed, the sun seems to shake; when the consciousness that is objectified fluctuates, the One appears as the many. The dance of ideas is the world of experience. These ideas are the phases of the cosmic creative force. Space is a special mode of particularisation and is within the constructive consciousness. The whole phenomenal world is a particularisation by the apparently active and perceiving universal consciousness.

Since the subject is the correlate of the object, and *vice versa*, neither of them can be said to be more real than the other. And, as they are divided, they are not the Reality which is by nature differenceless. The validity of the double existence of the subject and the object, thus, automatically gets cancelled in being *qua* being. This does not lead to

nihilism. Though no thing exists, it is not true that nothing exists, for consciousness exists. Consciousness cannot cease to be. Even the denial of everything allows the consciousness of existence of the one that denies. Consciousness of existence persists even if we think we are dead. This existence is the unlimited Absolute.

*Modification is merely a name, a distinction of speech.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad VI. 1. 4.

It is asserted that the underlying substance alone is real and various methods are employed to prove the invalidness of the form of the world of diversity (Chhandogya Upanishad VI. 1. 4-6). Being alone exists (Ibid., VI. 2. 1). A thorough-going non-dualism is propounded by Uddalaka, Sanatkumara and Yajnavalkya. The Supreme Brahman is matchless and secondless. Aught else than the Absolute is a mere tinsel show.

*Everything, except That (the Atman), is wretched.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III. 4. 2.

*There is nothing second to it.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 3. 23.

*When one creates a difference, there is fear for him.*

- Taittiriya Upanishad II. 7.

There is no duality. All modification is illusory. Differentiation cannot be established. Where there is no duality there is no death. That which did not exist in the beginning (Aittareya Upanishad I. 1.) and does not exist in the end (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 4. 14., Chhandogya Upanishad VII. 24), cannot exist in the present (Katha Upanishad IV. 11). Since Brahman does not create a world second to it, the world loses its reality. The central tone of the Upanishads reveals everywhere a disbelief in the world of forms ever since the Rig-Veda declared that the sages give many names to that which is essentially One (Rig-Veda, I. 164. 46). This leads further to the conception that plurality is only an idea and that Unity alone is real.

*The One, other than which there is none.*

- Rig-Veda, X. 129. 2.

*The Immortal is concealed by (empirical) reality.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad I. 6. 3.

*'As it were he moves', 'as it were another exists', 'he goes to death after death who perceives here plurality as it were'.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 3. 7; IV. 3. 31; IV. 4. 19.

*With the knowledge of the Atman everything becomes known.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 4. 5

*One should know that Prakriti is illusion.*

- Svetasvatara Upanishad IV. 10.

*The Atman is where the world is effaced out.*

- Mandukya Upanishad 7.

It follows that there can never be a reality outside the Eternal Self. This seems to be the end of philosophical thinking, beyond which there can be no further progress. The Upanishads assert as their main declaration of truth that the Atman or the Brahman is the sole reality, that with its knowledge all becomes known, and that there is no plurality whatsoever. The form of the world of plurality is an illusion, though the ultimate essence of the world is real. Even transmigration is a dream of consciousness. The world is not a creation of or an emanation from Brahman, nor is it pervaded by Brahman as by something which is not itself, but here and now, everything is Brahman.

*Verily, all this is Brahman.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad III. 14. 1.

### THE IDEA OF PROGRESS

The above statements of fact are a declaration of the reality of things as pure existence, irrespective of what mortal man in his helplessness has to say in regard to it. The relative individual does not have such a love for Self-Integration as to dismiss the world of plurality and forms at once as an illusion. A tentative consolation is demanded by the empirical scientific view that the world is a necessary step in the progressive evolution towards Eternal Life. Support is sought from some passages of the Upanishads which declare that the world is a revelation of Brahman, even if a higher vision may repudiate this view.

*All this is indwelt by the Divine Controller.*

- Isavasya Upanishad 1.

Appearance is indwelt by Reality. Truth persists even in the extreme of untruth. Untruth is a lesser truth and evil is a lesser degree of goodness. The whole universe is a progressive concealing of Reality by degrees.

*The Inner Soul of all things, the One Controller, makes his one form manifold.*

- Katha Upanishad V.12.

*Whoever worships one or another of these, knows not (the Truth); for he is incomplete with one or another of these,.... the self is the footprint (trace) of this All, for by it one knows this All.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad I. 4. 7.

The relative intellect tries to find here a support for the concept that the world is a self-limitation of Brahman and that the world is the way to Reality. The individual is the footprint of the Absolute, and it is explained that just as one might find cattle through a footprint, so one finds this All, the Brahman, by its footprint or trace, the limited self. The individual is a copy or miniature of the cosmic. The Svetasvatara Upanishad (IV. 2-4) says that the Real has become all diverse things. The Sandilya-Vidya of the Chhandogya Upanishad (III. 14) declares that Truth is inclusive of everything in the world. The conception of the universe as a stage in the progressive evolution of the

individual towards the Absolute seems to be a preparation for the more severe insight that the form in which we perceive the world is an illusion. The highest religion consists in a repudiation of manifoldness. The empirical reality of the world, however, demands a sanction of the view that progress is from a lesser truth to a higher truth, and not from error to truth, though the prayer is to lead us

*From the unreal to the Real.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 1. 3. 28.

The ultimately illusory nature of the multiple world is what is declared through illumination and insight, and the conception of the progressive evolution of the world towards the Infinite is a scientific necessity. Rationality is based on categories, and integral experience which is relationless cannot be explained by rationality. The world can be explained rationally without detriment to Reality, for insight or intuition is not irrational. But rationality has always a love for justifying the empirical consciousness by making it a necessary appearance of the Absolute, for rationality itself is empirical. It is in the position of the tailless fox advising its friends to have their tails also cut. It argues that the multiplicity of objects is not an illusion but their individual independence is unreal. It is found difficult to account for ethical necessity and self-effort towards Perfection if the entire world is an illusion. Absolutistic metaphysics seems to make life itself difficult, and we are compelled to take recourse to a relative reality of the world and the individual. The scientist follows the method of the intellect.

The intellectual view of the world and Truth is always coloured by relative concepts. According to it, the world is a stage in the progressive and gradual ascending of the self to higher states of consciousness. Man begins from the physical body and ends in the imperishable Soul. He is born in Nature which is his dear and faithful friend and not an opposing enemy whose forces he must combat with. Man exists on this earth not that he may kick it aside as a dreadful ghost which tries to devour him but that he may climb up to the higher states of consciousness through the ladder of earthly consciousness and experience. Birth and death are the processes of the changing of the states of individual consciousness in order to reach superior states. The soul, through many such repeated experiences, exhausts the processes of change in consciousness caused by the momentum of past desires, and reaches the state of Perfection, where is no more change and evolution. The entities of the world are not lures to sin and are not meant to be considered an evil, but are a remedy of Nature provided to man to mould him and help him in desisting from objective attraction and centring himself in the Truth of Infinity, and thus form steps in the ladder of development. Objective contact is meant to effect an escape out of faith in pluralistic independence. The body has to be kept well as long as the individual is in the process of spiritual evolution. If the body which is meant to effect a particular process of evolution in a particular stage of life is destroyed before the fulfilment of its duty, Nature will take a revenge against that individual and will compel the same to hang on in a condition necessary for the manifestation of another suitable body demanded by the need for continuing the previous work left unfulfilled. The systematic Nature does not have discord within itself, and, hence, is not filled with conflicting forces. The forces of life are the different urges for a unification of the self with the all-inclusive Reality. The universe with its inhabitants is transforming itself every moment with an inconceivably tremendous speed in order to exist as the

absolutely conscious and harmonious Being. Hence, the forces that work inside man and outside in the world are always harmonious and brotherly, and never inimical. The senses work and demand their respective objects, the mind thinks of objective existence, life persists with its unceasing breaths, there is love and affection, hatred and battle, all because the Eternal Being is expressing itself in its Indivisible Multiplicity of Nature. Life is a dramatic struggle for Self-realisation and Truth-experience. Every event that occurs is for that purpose. Even apparent contradictions are a sporting of the Absolute within itself. Life is not a mistake of the soul or a delirium of spirit. *samsara* is not a curse but the process of the expansion of the self into Absoluteness. Every act of existence is a turning for the better until the Absolute is realised. The state of Perfection is neither an Indivisibility nor a Multiplicity but an Indivisible Multiplicity. Diverse experiences in life are not contradictions but the multiple form of the one Nature felt diversely by different ego-centres due to their attachment to particular forms of experience. The moment they begin to embrace the entirety of Nature, diversity will be experienced as a Self-revelation of the Absolute. The world is not an illusion but a form of the Absolute. The lower forms are steps to reach higher forms of experience and are not to be rejected as apparitions. All forms, speeches and actions are the expressions of the Infinite Plenum in itself. One has got only to "realise" the meaning of its workings which appear to be conflicting in the unconscious plane but are in fact a harmonious and happy play of the Absolute. Even materialism is a step in the path to Perfection. Diverse experiences stimulate activity to achieve Truth-realisation. Death is the beginning of a better life. Evil is the starting point of a state leading to good. Nothing is independent by itself. All are interrelated and are knit together to form the Eternal Whole. Everything is only a part of the Infinite Completeness.

This is what will appear to the individual situated in a world of relativity, for the relative individual cannot help conceiving the Absolute in relative terms. We cannot know anything except in terms of what we are. Because everything changes, change itself is classed as a separate category of Reality. It is true that, strictly speaking, there can be no such thing as a complete wrong or error, falsehood or evil, or any kind of pure negative of truth, but only a lesser truth or a higher truth, that the negative is not "existence" and so is not, that all is one positive indivisible Truth, though it may appear to have degrees when it is objectively experienced. But, nevertheless, it has to be remembered that to hold that Truth *really* undergoes a change can have no meaning. Evolution is not an absolute category but an experiential interpretation.

The decision of the intellect that Reality is a process is the effect of its trying to compromise with what fundamentally presents itself as a self-contradiction. However reasonable this view may be from the standpoint of man, it cannot be held that the intuitionist Upanishads declare as their essential proposition that the Infinite Whole is a constantly changing process attempting to reach itself, a doctrine which contradicts reason itself. To them the form of the world is in the main an appearance and there is nothing but Brahman. We have already dismissed the possibility of evolution in Eternal Existence as self-contradictory. Evolution is change, and change is becoming, which would mark the transient nature of Existence itself. But Existence is eternal. Nothing that is perfectly real can be said to change or evolve. Brahman, therefore, does not change. If it is something else than Brahman that changes, we have to create a second to the secondless Brahman. In any case, change and evolution are impossible as ultimate

truths. Empirical facts have their place in one's life, but they have to be brushed aside as finally untrue, if one wishes to have a perfect realisation of the essential nature of Being or Brahman. It is easy to trot out the shibboleth that a teaching on the unreality of all phenomena may itself be unreal. True. But the consciousness of its being unreal cannot itself be unreal. After all negation, and the negation of even this negation, consciousness remains, still, the Absolute, not as a bare featureless transparency, but the wondrous Abode of Divine Perfection.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE NEED FOR INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE

#### THE INWARD URGE

The world, as it appears, is found to be lacking in reality, and so, is unreal. Hence the need for the higher Light.

*What is That by knowing which this everything becomes known?*

- Mundaka Upanishad 1. 1.3.

*By which the Unheard becomes heard, the Unthought becomes thought,  
the Ununderstood becomes understood.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad VI. 1. 3.

The knowledge of everything through the knowledge of One Thing implies that everything is made up of that One Thing. That the misconception of things being really made of differing natures has to be set aright is pointed out by the disgust that arises in clinging to the notion of the multiple permanence of beings and a passion for catching completely whatever that must exist. The growth of intelligence tends towards urging the individual to grasp the totality of existence at a stroke. This constructive impulse is inherent and is vigorously active both in the instinctive mind and the scientific intellect. The individual is a consciousness-centre characterised by the imperfections of limitation, birth, growth, change, decay and death. Thought is objectified consciousness. The greater the objectification, the denser is the ignorance and the acuter are the pains suffered.

Truth does not shine as Truth, owing to the inner instruments, the clogging psychological modifications. The crossing the barrier of these limiting adjuncts seems to lead one to a vaster reality, greater freedom and fuller life. There is a common desire-impulse in every being to exist for ever, to know all things, to domineer over everything, and to enjoy the highest happiness. The statement of the Upanishads that the cognition of manifoldness is the path leading to self-destruction is adorned by the supreme exhortation that the perception of Unity to the exalted state of Immortality.

Every form of cogitation in spite of individualistic cravings that may try to obstruct it, flows, being impelled by an imperceptible power that moves towards the recognition of the indivisibility of existence, and a finding of oneself in the centre of its experience. The aspiration of every living being is to find rest in the blissful possession of eternal life, and nothing short of it. The sorrow of phenomenal life is rooted in the clinging to relational living fed by the wrong notion that manifoldness is the truth. The joy of the immensity of everlasting life is partaken of by cutting the root of the tree of individual life with the axe of integrated wisdom. The march of the soul is from the false to the true, from the apparent to the real, from the shadow to the light, from the perishable to the ever-enduring.

*From the unreal lead me to the Real, from darkness lead me to Light,  
from death lead me to Immortality.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 1. 3. 28.

Everyone is marked by the general character of the struggle to become infinitely perfect. This Infinite Being is the highest Truth. This is the Goal of the life of all. The Upanishads stress in a hundred ways upon the need for this integral knowledge of Reality. There is nothing greater than or equal to the knowledge of the Atman. *Atmalabhat na param  
vidyate.*

*This Atman, which is free from evil, undecaying, deathless, sorrowless,  
hungerless, thirstless, whose desire is Truth, whose will is Truth - That  
should be searched after, That should be known. He obtains all worlds  
and all desires who has known and who has realised That Atman.*

Chhandogya Upanishad VIII. 7. 1.

*Know That, the Brahman.*

Taittiriya Upanishad III. 1.

*For the sake of the knowledge of That, he should go, fuel in hand, to a  
spiritual preceptor alone, who is learned in the scriptures and established  
in Brahman.*

Mundaka Upanishad 1. 2. 12.

### THE GOAL OF LIFE

The purpose of life on earth is the realisation of this stupendous depth of the Being of all beings, without which life becomes a failure. "If one would know it here, then there is the true end of all aspirations. If one would not know it here, then great is the loss for such a person. Knowing it in every particular being, the wise, on departing from this world, become immortal" (Kena Upanishad II. 5). There is a severe reproach to those who do not attempt at and succeed in the realisation of Truth.

*Godless are those worlds called, with blind darkness covered over, to  
which, on death, those who are the slayers of the Self go.*

- Isavasya Upanishad 3.

*He, who departs from this world without knowing That Imperishable  
Being, is wretched.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III. 8. 10.

The teacher of the Brahmavidya is praised in glowing terms.

*You, truly, are our father, who take us across to the blessed other shore of  
ignorance.*

- Prashna Upanishad VI. 8.

The love for the Eternal is the essential passion that burns in the heart of all things. Beings know it not, and so they suffer. When we turn our face away from this one Reality, we open the door to self-imprisonment. No achievement, either on earth or in

heaven, no greatness pertaining to the world of name and form, is worth considering. The love of life is based on the love of the Self.

*Not, verily, for the love of the all is the all dear, but for the love of the Self is the all dear.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 4. 5.

All actions are done for the sake of the Self, not for external persons and things. It is not the existence of joy in the object as such that brings pleasure to the individual enjoying it, but the cooling of the fire of craving that is brought about by its contact with a particular object which is specially demanded by that special mode of desire generated in the ego-consciousness. The satiation is caused by a temporary turning back of the mind to the Self. The whole of the happiness of the world is, thus, purely negative, an avoiding of the unpleasant, and not the acquirement of any real, positive joy. This positive bliss is found only in the Self, the root of existence. The bustle of life's activity is a struggle to respond to the cry of the anxious ego which has lost itself in the wilderness of its separation from the Eternal Principle. The grieving self bound by fetters in the prison of life is ransomed by the knowledge of the non-dual nature of Existence.

### THE GREAT ABNEGATION AND SEARCH

Truth is covered by a golden vessel. The individual is cheated by the appearances of the forms of nature. The lifting up of this vessel and uncovering the Truth is the task of the seeker of perfection. The fervour of a Nachiketas is expected in every spiritual aspirant. "Ephemeral things are these that are of the mortal! The vigour of all the senses they wear away. Even a long life is indeed very slight! Thine be the vehicles, thine the dance and the song! .... What there is in the great Beyond - tell me about that; nothing short of this does Nachiketas choose" (Katha Upanishad 1. 26, 29). The glorious aspiration for Truth which the characters of the Upanishads depict before us speaks of the grand perseverance of some of the souls in regaining the lost kingdom, in recovering from the disease of life, in centring themselves in conscious plenitude, the birthless and deathless immeasurable Being. We hear of the admirable patience of the disciples in leading a hard and secluded life of absolute continence for years together for getting themselves initiated into this mysterious Truth of truths. Indra himself remained with Prajapati, as a pupil, for one hundred and one years, after which he got the initiation from his teacher. The nature of a total abnegation of the personal interests, a veritable destruction of oneself as it were, which is the prerequisite for the acquiring of Self-knowledge, reflects to us sufficiently the nature of the completeness of the Goal before us, of the freedom and joy that replaces the limited life of the individual.

Even Devarshi Narada's knowledge is regarded by Sanatkumara as "mere name", mere words. Narada gives a long list of the branches of knowledge in which he has specialised. He implores Sanatkumara to teach him.

*Bhagavan, such a one, merely learned in sacred lore, I know not the Atman. It is already heard by me from people like you, Bhagavan, that he who knows the Atman crosses over sorrow. Such a one, Bhagavan, I am in sorrow. May Bhagavan take me, who am such a (sorrowful) one, across, to the other shore of sorrow.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad VII. 1. 3.

Even the highest intellectual perception belongs only to the realm of relativity. No human being can claim to be omniscient and so he has no occasion to rejoice at his profits or grieve at his losses here. The real is not this; the attainment of That alone can liberate the soul from sorrow. Even death is not a bar in the process of the realisation of Truth. Death is a reshuffling of consciousness to adjust and adapt itself to a different order of life. The love for the knowledge of the Self cares not for such insignificant phenomena as the birth and the destruction of the body. The need for the higher illumination is more serious a matter than the birth and the death of the overcoat, and the quest for the Absolute should be undertaken even sacrificing the dearest object, fearless of even the greatest pain and loss that may have to be encountered in the world. It is a mistake to be interested in the different forms of perception, in the various categories of relative experience. Nothing is worth a moment's notice except the realisation of Brahman. The most pleasant, the sweetest joy derived through contact of the subject and the object is only a womb of pain; it has to be rejected for the sake of the Bliss that is true in the absolute sense.

*The good is one thing and the pleasant is another....Both the good and the pleasant come to a man. Examining the two, the wise man discriminates and chooses the good rather than the pleasant; the dull-witted man chooses the pleasant and falls short of his aim.*

- Katha Upanishad II. 1, 2.

The desire-centres shift themselves from one object to another and the pleasure-seeker is left ever at unrest. The chain of metempsychosis is kept unbroken and is strengthened through additional desires that foolishly hope to bring satisfaction to the self. Living in the midst of ignorance and darkness, conceited, thinking themselves learned, the deserted individuals seek peace in the objects of sense that constantly change their forms and natures. The objective value in an object is an appearance, created by the formative power of the separative will to individuate and multiply itself through external contact. The nature of that which is perceived is strongly influenced by the nature of that which perceives. The moment the form of the desire is changed the object also appears to change itself to suit the requirements of the centre of consciousness that projects forth the desire. Whatever we want that alone we see and obtain. Nothing else can exist in the objective universe corresponding to an individual's experiences than what is demanded by the individual in its present stage of self-evolution in order to effect the necessary transfigurations in itself for the purpose of the realisation of a higher consciousness of existence. A knowledge of this fact of life makes one wake up from his slumber and strive to reach the culmination of experience where further transcendence of states ceases.

#### **UNITY BEHIND DIVERSITY**

Becoming the object seems to be the aim of the subject in its processes of desireful knowledge. The greater the proximity of the object to the subject, that is, the lesser the distance between the subject and the object, the greater is the happiness derived; whereby we are able to deduce that the least distance, nay, the loss of distance itself in a state of identity, a state of infinite oneness, where things lose their separateness, where perception and relatedness are no more, where the subject and the object coalesce and mere "Be"-ness seems to be the reality, should be the abode of supreme bliss. This

consciousness-mass is the one integration of knowledge where it is no more a means of knowing but the essence, the existence and the content in itself. The Upanishads are keen about turning our attention to this truth.

*Arise! Awake! Obtaining men of wisdom, know (it).*

- Katha Upanishad III. 14.

*Those who know this become immortal; but others go only to sorrow.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 4. 14.

Therefore, the imperative “Know Thyself.” The Svetasvatara Upanishad is emphatic that only “when men roll up space, as if it were a piece of leather, will there be an end of sorrow without the knowledge of the Divine Being” (VI. 20). It further affirms that there is nothing more to be known than this essence of the Self, nothing is there higher than this, nothing greater ever existent. There is no other way for going over there - *na anyah pantha vidyate ayanaya-* than to know that *purusha* who shines like the sun beyond the realm of the darkness of ignorance. To know Him is to be saved. Not to. know Him is death.

The ordinary man of the world has his mind and senses turned extrovert. Childish, he runs after external pleasures and walks into the net of death which pervades all created things. The wise, however, knowing the Immortal, seek not that Eternal Being among things fleeting here. Some blessed one turns his gaze inward and beholds the glorious light of the Self. This Self is dearer than the dearest of things, this Self is nearer than the nearest. If one would speak of anything else than the Self as dear, he would certainly lose what he holds as dear. One should adore the Self alone as dear. He who adores the Self alone as dear does not lose what he holds as dear. The Self is Imperishable.

It is further suggested that by going to the source of things we know the essential nature of things, even as by grasping the drum or the beater of the drum we grasp the sound produced by the drum. The turning back from the network of name and form to the original Truth-Consciousness is what is instructed about through various similes and illustrations. “This is the Veda that the Brahmanas know. Thereby I know whatever is to be known” (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad V. 1. 1.). Many of us are mere childish wiseacres who are sunk variously in the manifold nescience and proudly think that we have accomplished our aim (Vide Mundaka Upanishad I. 2. 9.)! The man of the world, busy with the play-toys of his insane dream, forgets to look within into the Antaryamin-Atman which controls all the manifested forms outside. This Atman is the great Unity, and therefore the highest Freedom, for

*Verily, from duality arises fear.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad I. 4. 2.

### THE REALISATION OF ONENESS IN THE SPIRIT

One must go beyond all that causes duality, even the intellect, and take resort in the transcendent silence. “One should not play too much upon words, for it is mere weariness of speech.” “The Brahmana should, knowing Him, renounce learning, and stand childlike and silent.” The intellect is the seat of egoism, and the highest learning is only *apara vidya*, not above the phenomena of nature. The intellect has no light of its

own, independent of the Self, any more than the moon has any light other than that of the sun. Consciousness gets diffused through the distractive intellect and creates the perception of multiplicity. "Dismissing all other words, He alone is to be meditated upon and known, the bridge to Immortality."

Further, it is erroneous on the part of an individual to take seriously the many forms of perception. These forms float in Truth even as bubbles in the ocean. They cannot exist apart from the ocean of Truth. There is a beautiful enunciation in the Chhandogya Upanishad as to how the desire of the perfected soul gives rise to whatever it wants. "Whatever end he is desirous of attaining, whatever desire he desires, merely out of his will it arises. Possessed of it he glories" (VIII. 2. 10). The names and forms of the world are the effects of the piled up desire-impressions of all the manifested and the unmanifested individuals that inhabit it. Since destruction of all desires brings about destruction of all forms in the state of Self-realisation, the forms are unreal, being dependent on the desire-impulses of the collective perceiving consciousness. It is idle to be pleased with the business of life, however charming it may appear to the deluded individual. The misery of humanity is rooted in the ignorance of Truth, and true civilisation, culture or renaissance of any kind meant for the betterment of man cannot lose sight of the fact that no perennial peace is going to reign over the earth as long as the minds of men are caught in the whirlpool of attraction to the multifarious and steeped in the ignorance of the Reality which is common to all. There is no purpose in art or science, in cleverness of intellect or skill in any branch of knowledge, if its dance is only within the prison-house of the physical consciousness. Even the highest psychic achievement is not outside the range of relativity, and psychology is as good as physical science in the face of spiritual knowledge. The mightiest feat falls short of the true, and the pride of human intelligence is humiliated when the Upanishads say that the Absolute eludes all understanding and the mind turns back from it, unable to reach it. The human being has not explored even the mental region, which is so vast that it mocks at the futile efforts of the selfish individual to bring it under his control. The deceived soul fears death of its body, death of what it considers as dear. It loves objects which do not promise real satisfaction. It is true culture which aims at grasping the supreme Truth, no matter how much of the world is to be sacrificed in its pursuit. Every bit of gain in the realm of Truth involves a loss - if at all it is a loss - in the world of experience. The dream-objects have to vanish if waking experience is to be had. The glorious life is to dawn upon earth the moment individuals begin to live in the consciousness of the basic substratum of the Infinite Reality which is not only metaphysical but also metapsychical. The Upanishad declares that for them who depart hence without having realised the Truth, the Atman of all, there is no freedom in all the worlds, they are heteronomous, pitiable, and they wander in perishable lands. Every true civilisation, if it is not meant to deceive itself, has to gird up its loins for Self-realisation. The spiritual aspirants are not, as it is commonly supposed, some queer type of people who have strayed away from the general intelligent humanity. On the other hand, they are the cream of the whole of mankind. The value of a person is nothing if he does not aspire for the realisation of the Eternal Good, the Good not merely of this or that class of men, but of the entire universe. All are here so that they may perfect themselves absolutely, for which men are endowed with intelligence, and without which their intelligence has no substance in it. Perfection is Absolute-Experience, *brahma-anubhava*, the Consciousness of Reality.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE NATURE OF REALITY

#### BRAHMAN AS EXISTENCE OR BEING

Long ago, the Rig Veda has proclaimed: "The One Being the wise diversely speak of." All philosophy proceeds from this, all religion is based on this. We, moreover, hear such declarations as "Truth, Knowledge, Infinity is Brahman," "Consciousness, Bliss, is Brahman," "All this is, verily, Brahman," "This Self is Brahman," "Immortal, Fearless, is Brahman", and the like. And we are further aware of assertions like "That from which these beings are born, That by which, after having been born, they live, That into which they re-enter and with which they become one - know That, the Brahman." Omnipresence omniscience and omnipotence are said to be the characteristics of God. These serve the purpose of defining the twofold nature of Brahman, the Reality - its essential nature (*svarupa-lakshana*) and accidental attribute (*tatastha-lakshana*). The former is the independent and imperishable truth of Brahman, the latter is its superimposed dependent quality which is subject to change in the process of time.

Being is truth in the transcendent sense without reference to anything else. It does not pay heed to the difficulty of man that he cannot transcend the limitations of relativistic consciousness and so naturally takes the value and meaning of the relative order to be the truth. The highest value of truth is equated with pure being, for non-being can have no value.

*Existence (Being) alone was this in the beginning, one alone without a second.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad VI. 2. 1.

Brahman is that which is permanent in things that change. It is without name and form, which two are the characteristic natures of the world of appearance, and is essentially existence-absolute. Existence can never change, never perish, though things in which also it is, perish. Hence existence is the nature of Reality and is different from the things of form and name. Existence is secondless and has no external relations or internal differentiations. It is unlimited by space, time and individuality. It is related to nothing, for there is nothing second to it. It has nothing similar to it, nothing dissimilar, for *That alone is*. The whole universe is a spiritual unity and is one with the essential Brahman. It has no difference within or without. Brahman is alike throughout its structure, and hence the knowledge of the essence of any part of it is the knowledge of the Whole. The knowledge of the Self is the knowledge of Brahman. Everything that is, is the one Brahman, the Real of real, *satyasya satyam*. By knowing it, everything becomes known. "Just as by the knowledge of a lump of earth, everything that is made of earth comes to be known, all this modification being merely a name, a play of speech, the ultimate substratum of it all being the earth, similarly, when Brahman is known, all is known." "Where there is an apparent duality, there is subject-object-relation; but where the Atman alone is, how can there be any relation or interaction of anything with anything else?" "There is knowledge, and yet, there is no perception or cognition, for that knowledge is indestructible, it is unrelated consciousness-mass" (Vide Brhadaranyaka Upanishad). It is the eternal objectless Knower, and everything besides it is a naught, an

appearance, a falsity.

Brahman is Existence which is infinite Consciousness of the nature of Bliss.

*Brahman is Existence, Consciousness, Infinitude.*

- Taittiriya Upanishad II. 1.

*Brahman is Consciousness, Bliss.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III. 9. 28.

*That which is Infinitude is Bliss and Immortality.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad VII. 23, 24

These sentences give the best definition of the highest Reality. Brahman is Consciousness - *prajnanam brahma*. It is the ultimate Knower. It is imperceptible, for no one can know the knower, no one can know That by which everything else is known. "There is no seer but That, no hearer but That, no thinker but That, no knower but That." It is the eternal Subject of knowledge, no one knows it as the object of knowledge. This limitless Self-Consciousness is the only Reality. The content of this Consciousness is itself. This is the fullness of perfection and infinitude. "Brahman is Infinite, the universe is Infinite, from the Infinite proceeds the Infinite, and after deducting the Infinite from the Infinite, what remains is but the Infinite." This sentence of the Upanishad seems to pile up infinities over infinities and arrive at the bewildering conclusion that after subtracting the Whole from the Whole, the Whole alone remains. The implied meaning here is the changeless and indivisible character of the Infinite Reality, in spite of forms appearing to be created within it. The Infinite is non-dual and there can be no dealings with it.

We read of Sanatkumara leading the thought of Narada from inadequate conceptions of Truth to more adequate conceptions, until at last he asserts the supremacy of the *bhuma*, the "absolutely great", the "unlimited", beyond which there is nothing, which comprehends all, fills all space, and is identical with the Self in us. This *bhuma* is the Essential Brahman where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else. It is Bliss and Immortality, the plenum of felicity. This is the Complete Being.

Now, the conception of Reality as constituting being gives rise simultaneously to the idea of non-being. The Rig Veda (X. 129. 1) says that in the beginning there was neither non-being nor being (*na asad asit, no sad asit*). Being was not, because there was no non-being. Non-being was not, for there was no being. Truth is a super-intellectual transcendence of the ideas of being and non-being, of whatever is concerned with the temporal relations of thought, for in what is Real there is no psychosis of any kind. According to the Rig Veda, even "immortality and death are its shadows". Whatever truly exists is the Real. It is

*The being and the beyond, the expressed and the unexpressed, the founded and the unfounded, consciousness and unconsciousness, reality and unreality, the real, and whatever that is.*

- Taittiriya Upanishad II. 6.

The Brihadaranyaka (II. 3. 1) says that Brahman has two forms, “the formed and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the existent and the moving, the real and the beyond.” There is a contrast between Brahman and the name-and-form world, the former being the beyond, the inexpressible, the foundationless, the unconscious, the unreal in relation to the latter which is empirically experienced as the being, expressible, founded, conscious, real. Logically, attribute or quality itself becomes an unsound concept when it is extended to the Absolute. A thing has an attribute only in relation to another thing. There is no meaning in saying that a substance has an attribute when that substance alone is said to exist. The nature of a self-existent absolute principle is indeterminable. Every attribute limits it and creates a difference in non-difference. Brahman cannot be said to have any intelligible attribute, for Brahman is the entire existence and has nothing second to relate itself to *sat* (being) is an idea in relation to *asat* (non-being), *chit* (consciousness) in relation to *jada* (inertness), *ananda* (bliss) in relation to *duhkha* (pain), *ananta* (infinity) in relation to *alpa* (limitedness), *prakasha* (light) in relation to *tamas* (darkness). Every qualitative concept involves relations, and every thought creates a duality. To think Brahman is to reduce Brahman to the world of experience. Thought is possible only in an individualised state, but Brahman is not an individual, and is unapproachable by an individual. Brahman cannot even be conceived of as light, for it has nothing to shine upon. Not even is it consciousness, for it is conscious of nothing. Consciousness or light in the absolute condition cannot be called as consciousness or light, for such conceptions are dualistic categories. Being as it is in itself is nothing to the individual. It is not an object of knowledge. Truth is independent, unrelated, self-existent; but there is no such thing as an independent, unrelated, self-existent quality. The only recourse to be taken is to admit the failure of the intellect in determining the nature of Reality and resort to negative propositions.

*The Atman is not this, not this.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 5. 15.

*The Atman is not that which is inwardly conscious, not outwardly conscious, not bothwise conscious, not a consciousness-mass, not conscious, not unconscious; it is unseen, unrelated, ungraspable, indefinable, unthinkable, indeterminable, the essence of the consciousness of the One Self, the negation of the universe, peaceful, blissful, non-dual.*

- Mandukya Upanishad 7.

*It is unknown to those who know it. It is known to those who do not know it.*

- Kena Upanishad II. 3.

These references depict the absolutely transcendent nature of Reality. “It is not obtainable by many even to hear of, and even when heard of it remains unknown to many. Wonderful is the declarer of it! Blessed is the obtainer of it!” The awe-inspiring Absolute is described as “soundless, touchless, formless, imperishable, tasteless, constant, odourless, beginningless, endless, higher than the high, eternal, by knowing which one is liberated from the mouth of death.” It exists in such a homogeneous and differenceless condition that “whatever is here, is there also; whatever is there, is here,”

and hence the spatial nature of existence with its concomitant differentiations of time and individuality is overcome in the indivisible constitutive essence of Brahman. It, therefore, is and *is-not*.

But, if anything is at all to be said about the Ideal and Goal of life of an individual, we cannot get on with such a perplexing conception of Reality. To us Reality is what can be the highest in the strict logical sense. Though Reality transcends logic and reason, philosophy cannot do so, for nothing in this world is possible without the functioning of thought in some way or the other. We are thinking beings, and to us all that is real must be intelligible. If anything is unintelligible, we can have no relations with it. The Real is, therefore, Being, rather than non-being, Consciousness, rather than unconsciousness, Bliss, rather than pain. There is no sense in non-being, for non-being also must at least "be" Consciousness itself is being, and unless even non-being and unconsciousness are objects of consciousness, there can be no meaning in them.

*How can being be produced from non-being?*

- Chhandogya Upanishad VI. 2. 1.

*The sacred teaching is that It is Being of being.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 1. 20.

It is Being that gives existence even to non-being. Being covers non-being from both sides. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (V. 5. 1), the word "satyam" is explained as constituting the three syllables 'sa', 'ti' and 'yam', the first and the last syllables being truth and the middle one untruth, thus, truth covering untruth from both sides, and the unreal world acquires the semblance of truth by being within the Truth which is incorruptible Being. And, further, Truth alone is said to triumph, not untruth (Mundaka Upanishad III 1. 6), thus giving a distinct reality to what "is" as contrasted from what "is not". That which changes is untrue and that which is constant is true. Non-being vanishes into Being which comprehends in itself the highest possible values which are the aim of the general aspirations of all individuals. No one wants not-to-be, everyone wishes to exist in some form or the other. The truth of Being as the highest principle is ingrained in the consciousness that underlies all cogitating beings. The Maitrayani Upanishad says that Brahman is "One and limitless, limitless to the east, limitless to the south, limitless to the west, limitless to the north, and above and below, limitless in every direction; for it directions like east exist not, no across, no below, no above; this Paramatman is incomprehensible, infinite, unborn, not to be reasoned about" (VI. 17). Such a one cannot be a non-being. It is existence in its greatest completeness. Extreme and intense existence appears as non-existence. The extreme of positivity of the Real appears as a negation of everything. It is dark due to the excess of Light. It is imperceptible, for it alone is the perceiver. It is unknowable, for it alone is the knower. It appears to be nowhere, because it alone is everywhere. It appears to be nothing, for it alone is everything.

Brahman is established "on its own Greatness, or, rather, not on greatness at all" (Chhandogya Upanishad VII. 24). It is the divisionless, partless, mass of plenitude - on what can it establish itself? The Self-existent Brahman is supported by nothing, for everything is supported by it. It is childish to say that it *has* established fame, though its Name *is* "Great Fame" (Svetasvatara Upanishad IV. 19). "Here, on earth, people call

cows and horses, elephants and gold, servants and wives, fields and houses as constituting greatness"; but Brahman is not of the greatness of this type, because here greatness is dependent on an external object. The greatness of Brahman lies in its own Being, and not on anything second.

*Brahman alone, the Greatest, is this whole universe.*

- Mundaka Upanishad II. 2. 11.

"Verily, that Great, unborn Self, undecaying, undying, immortal, fearless, is Brahman." The whole of Reality is not exhausted in this world-process. "Encompassing the whole universe He extends beyond it to infinity. Whatever is here is this *purusha* alone, whatever was and whatever will be. He is the Lord of immortality. Such is His greatness yet the *purusha* is greater still. All beings are one-fourth of Him, His three-fourths hail as the immortal beyond the dust of the earth" (Rig Veda, X. 90). "Unmoving, it is swifter than the mind", for the I Real which is the Self is presupposed by all forms of thought. "The senses fall back in trying to reach it." "Ahead of others running, it goes standing." "It moves, and it moves not", it is other than what is static and kinetic. "It is far, and it is near; it is within all this, and it is outside all this." It is the Self, the being of all. "Sitting, it goes far. Lying, it moves everywhere." "It is manifest and hidden." Such metaphorical definitions of Reality point to the central meaning of its absoluteness of character. That which does everything does nothing in particular. All speculations about the nature of the Ultimate Principle finally lend themselves to the unanimous conclusion that it is eternal, infinite, unconditioned, non-dual, absolute, existence. "It is without an earlier and without a later, without an inside and without an outside, the Being of the Self of all, the Experiencer of everything." Yajnavalkya describes the Supreme Being thus: "An Ocean, the One, the Seer, without duality it is. This is the State of Brahman. This is the supreme goal. This is the supreme prosperity. This is the supreme abode. This is the supreme bliss. On a part of this bliss other creatures are living." "It does not become greater by good action, nor inferior by bad action." In the words of the famous Nasadiya Sukta of the Rig Veda, the original condition of existence was a total absence of the world, the sky and all manifestation. There was neither death nor immortality, for both of these are correlates which have no valid recognition in Reality. There was neither night nor day, but That One, the source of light existed without motion and change. It existed as identical with its Power, there was no difference between temporality and eternity. Other than it there was nothing. Even the gods cannot say how this creation was caused, for even they were born after creation. That Source from which the universe sprang, That alone can sustain it, none else. That One alone knows the truth of its creation, or else, who can know it? The Real alone knows the Real. None else can know it. To know the Real is to be the Real. We cannot stand apart from it and at the same time know it. The moment we undertake the task of seeking the Real, we simultaneously start digging the grave for our separate individual existence. The glorious consciousness of the supreme Truth is the complete transcendence of the niggardly clinging to forms which appear to be other than one's own Self, and to one's own apparently individual localised life. To live in the Absolute which is real is to die to the individual which is unreal.

*He becomes non-existent, who knows that Brahman is non-existent. Who knows that Brahman exists, is said to exist truly.*

- Taittiriya Upanishad II. 6.

Not to know the Whole is to be limited to the part-consciousness which is not truly existent, which is mortal, and hence, equal to non-being in the absolute sense. To truly live is to be conscious of the Real Existence which is without the disease of transformation and death. "All creatures have Existence as their root, Existence as their abode, Existence as their sole support." All forms are shadows of Pure Existence which alone endures in past, present and future, while the shadows perish like bubbles in the ocean. In the Real existence and content are identical. Hence, everything is mere existence, which alone is real. "As birds resort to a tree for a resting place, even so it is to this Supreme Being that all here resort for their existence." "Not by speech, not by mind, not by sight can it be grasped. How can it be known except by admitting that it simply 'is'?" (Katha Upanishad VI. 12). It is the hard Reality, "the great Terror, the raised-up Thunderbolt, through fear of which the fire burns, the sun gives heat, the wind blows, Indra showers, Death does its duty!" "The Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas serve as its meal, and death itself is its condiment." "At the command of that Imperishable, the sun and the moon, the earth and the sky are held in their respective positions. At the command of that Imperishable, the moments, the instants, the days, the nights, the fortnights, the months, the seasons, the years, stand differentiated in their own places. At the command of that Imperishable, some rivers flow from the snowy mountains to the east, some to the west, in whatever direction each may flow. Whatever great actions one does in this world, even for thousands of years, without the knowledge of this Imperishable, is finite. Whoever dies without the knowledge of this Imperishable, is miserable" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad). "This Imperishable is Satyam, True Being." "'sat' is the immortal and 'ti' is the mortal. 'Yam' is that which holds the two together" (Chhandogya Upanishad VIII. 3. 5). It rises above the mortal and the immortal, both of which are relative conceptions. The highest is *ritam* and *brihat*, real and great.

Thus, Being alone is the unavoidable basic experience, which is the fundamental concept in philosophy. We can think away everything, but we cannot think away that we are. Being is the very nature even of one who denies it. All constituents of our thinking, all forms of existence, all modes of knowledge, presuppose being. Being cannot lead us to non-being, for, the moment non-being is known, it becomes being itself. But being is not an object of our immediate empirical experience, for it is always a particular mode of being or, rather, becoming that is the object of our relative experience. To us, individuals, there can be no such thing as experience of existence-in-general. But eternal being is general or absolute existence which cannot be confused or identified with becoming which is a process. Brahman is not a process or a collection of many particulars, not a multitude of many finites. No amount of accumulation of relatives, however vast that may be, can make up the Absolute. An aggregate of finites can give us a huge mass of finites, but not the Infinite - spatial immensity or vastness is not infinitude. The Absolute transcends all finites, but includes everyone of them. It does not become. It is. Becoming is not completeness of existence, whereas perfect Being implies Fullness. The Absolute does not grow or evolve. It is not a process stretching beyond itself. If it were so, the Absolute would be involved in space, time and causation, and would cease to be the Absolute. The Absolute is perfect Oneness and not a system of

plural beings co-existing as reals with action and reaction among themselves. It is not a complex mass of relations. If the Absolute is considered as a system, then its parts must be either identical with it or different from it. If they are identical, their individualities are lost; if different, the relation between them becomes unintelligible. The Absolute can only be Being free from all kinds of differences. It must be Partless, Eternal, Homogeneous Existence, "One only without a second." Existence is the most universal concept which leaves nothing whatsoever outside it.

Existence is what is invariably present in all the processes of knowing. Everything is known to exist, though the existence of a thing may be qualified by the limiting factors which constitute the individuality of that thing. There can be no idea or knowledge, no action and no value, not even life itself, without existence. In the objective universe of names and forms there is the permanent principle of existence underlying all names and forms. Even if everything dies and is lost, the existence which supported that condition which is no more, cannot die or be lost. Since existence cannot change, there can be no death or birth for existence. Existence is eternal. The physical form of an external object is subject to transformation, and this transformation is called the process of birth and death. There is birth and death of forms, states, conditions, modes, but not of existence. Existence is what enables us to know that there is birth and death, that there is change and modification, etc. If existence itself is not, nothing can be. Everything *is* in some state or the other. Though everything is destroyed, the existence therein is not destroyed. Since existence is the general reality of everything, it must be infinite. Existence can have no limitations, boundaries or divisions either within itself or outside itself. Existence is indivisible and is its own explanation. Existence cannot be defined since it has no specific characteristics, and since it never becomes an object of knowledge. It is the reality of the object as well as of the subject. The body, the vital energy, the senses, the mind, the intellect and even the very condition of all these objective manifestations have as their reality this supreme Existence. The realm of the knower and the known, i.e., the entire universe in all its aspects and states, is ultimately found to be based on Existence which is imperishable. The universe is a condition, a mode of experience, and this mode can have meaning only when it is rooted in Existence which is at once eternal and infinite. Existence, pure and perfect, is the Absolute, the supreme Brahman proclaimed in the Upanishads.

#### **BRAHMAN AS CONSCIOUSNESS OR INTELLIGENCE**

What is, then, the nature of this Absolute Existence? The inmost being in us, our own existence itself, shall solve the problem. We find that we cannot make a distinction between our being and our consciousness. To think of being as the real, and yet as different from consciousness, seems to be impossible. Just as we cannot deny being, so also we cannot deny consciousness. We can deny the objects and states of consciousness, but we can never deny consciousness itself. In every one of our attempts to do so, it asserts its existence before we even begin to think properly. Consciousness is the most positive of facts, the datum of all experience. It transcends all limits of space, time and causality. Consciousness is never limited, for the very consciousness of the fact of limitation is proof of its transcendental unlimitedness.

This Universal Consciousness is not to be confused with the individual's ego-consciousness. Rather, it is Pure Awareness. Ego-consciousness necessitates a

modification in a certain fashion, and hence it is only a mode of becoming and not being in its fullness. Consciousness in the sense of Reality does not imply that outside it something must exist as its object. It is only in empirical cognition that consciousness needs an object. In the highest condition, the existence and the content of consciousness are one and the same. The Absolute knows itself without any process of knowing. Consciousness is absolute Intelligence, unlimited Self-luminosity. Even in all the states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, swooning, etc., the Self ever remains as the indispensable and indisputable immediacy of Consciousness, a witness of all states. Unaffected and unaltered, it remains in its purity, as the eternal principle in all states of experience. Ultimate Existence is identical with Infinite Consciousness and not individual consciousness. The Real is Impersonal, and the individual is personal.

*Brahman is Consciousness.*

- Aittareya. Upanishad III. 3.

*This purusha is Self-luminous.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 3. 9, 14.

*The Self alone is its light.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 3. 6.

*Through what can one be conscious of Him by whom alone one is conscious of this everything? Through what can one know the Knower?*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 4. 14.

Knowledge is not the attribute but the very stuff of Reality. It is the Essence of Existence. Hence, this Reality is unknowable as an object of knowledge. It manifests itself as the first principle in all thought and action. "He who breathes in with your *prana*, is the Self of yours, which is in all things. He who breathes out with your *apana*, breathes about with your *vyana*, breathes up with your *udana*, is the Self of yours, which is in all things." Yajnavalkya declares with the certainty of a seer of the Truth, "You cannot see the Seer of seeing. You cannot hear the Hearer of hearing. You cannot think the Thinker of thinking. You cannot understand the Understander of understanding. He is your Self, which is in all things." The knowing subject is the essence of the being of the Self, and hence, it is not an object of knowledge. Consciousness cannot be conscious of Consciousness, even as one cannot climb on one's own shoulders. Eternal consciousness is Being itself.

"In truth, O Gargi, this Imperishable One alone sees, but is not seen; hears, but not heard; thinks, but is not thought; understands, but is not understood. There is no other Seer but That, no other Hearer but That, no other Thinker but That, no other Understander but That. In this Imperishable One, O Gargi, space is woven, warp and woof" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III. 8. 11). It is further explained that as the ocean is the centre of all waters, the Atman as eye is the centre of all forms, as ear of all sounds, as nose of all smells, etc. The one central operation of this Self-consciousness is manifoldly termed in relation to the cognitive differences as eye, ear, etc. When the eye is directed on space, it is the Consciousness of the Real in the eye that shines, the eye is only a secondary insentient instrument. Similarly, it is so in the case of the other sense-functions. Even thinking and understanding are mere names for the reflection of the

Truth-Consciousness in the insentient psychological organs. Speech and mind return baffled, unable to reach it. It is the Atman that shines through the mind and perceives these joys and delights therein. The intensity of the Consciousness is felt in proportion to the reflective capacity of the internal cognitive instruments. All knowledge is a reflection of the Self-existent Reality-Consciousness, a shadow of Brahman-Intelligence. Even a master-genius in all possible branches of learning and arts ever known can have only a semblance of the absolute Wisdom-Mass reflected through his intellect which is only a feeble apology for true knowledge. Even the best inspiration of the greatest poet is only a reflection of Brahman-Knowledge. There is no intelligence, either on earth or in heaven, which can be equal to the Intelligence of the Absolute, because all differentiated beings have only partial intelligence and can never experience Brahman-Consciousness as long as they remain as individuals separated from the Whole. The mind, the intellect and the senses are, therefore, not intelligent; it is Brahman that is Intelligence and Light of lights, *jyotisham jyotih*.

This knowing Subject is unseizable, indestructible, unattached, unbound, changeless, unaffected. It stands opposed to everything that is objective, as light is set against darkness. It eludes the grasp of him who is engaged in objective consciousness. The whole world is objectively busy, and therefore, Brahman is unknown to the world. We are always conscious of something other than the Self, both in the waking and the dreaming consciousness. It is only in deep sleep that we practically become one with the Absolute. But the presence of ignorance, the store of the potential objective forces existing in an unmanifested state, prevents us from having the experience of Brahman. The unmanifest inert condition is not Reality. Reality is dynamic Consciousness; yet, it is the highest tranquillity. It is the unimaginable fourth state, which includes and transcends the other three states. The Real *sees* not and *knows* not anything; It is *seeing* and *knowing* itself; "It, the Seer and the Knower, has no interruption of seeing and knowing, because it is Indestructible - there is nothing second to and distinct from it, for it to see and know." "Even as a lump of salt has no distinguishable in or out, and consists through and through entirely of the essence of savour, so in truth this Self has no in and out, and consists through and through entirely of the mass of Consciousness" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 5. 13). "As a lump of salt thrown into water would dissolve in the water itself, and there would be nothing of it to be picked up, but wherever one may take it, it tastes salt alone, so indeed is this Great Being, Infinite, Endless, only a mass of Consciousness" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 4. 12). That is the Ocean of Wisdom and Light in One. "There no sun shines, no moon, no stars, no lightning, no fire; from it, which alone shines, all else borrows light; the whole world is illumined at its splendid shining" (Katha Upanishad V. 15). He who has the Consciousness of this lives in eternal sunshine, it is always day for him. For him the sun does not set. The Atman is compared to a bridge that connects worlds together. "Upon crossing that bridge, if one is blind, he becomes no longer blind; if one is wounded, he becomes no longer wounded; if one is diseased, he becomes no longer diseased. Upon crossing that bridge, even night appears as the bright day, for the State of Brahman is eternally illumined" (Chhandogya Upanishad VIII. 4. 2).

In the Maitrayani Upanishad we have the statement that having pierced through darkness, one reaches That which effulges like a wheel of fire, the Brahman which is like the resplendent sun, almighty, That which shines in the sun and the moon, in fire and

lightning, and by seeing it, one becomes Immortal (VI. 24). This Real is the absolute knowing Subject, and hence, "It cannot be an object of worship" (Kena Upanishad I. 4). The internal mechanism of knowledge, together with the senses, is itself an inert object lighted up by the subject which is Brahman-Consciousness. "Everything that this heart and mind are, consciousness, lordship, discrimination, intelligence, wisdom, perception, steadfastness, thought, control over thought, despondency, memory, will, determination, life, desire, attachment - all these are mere appellations of Pure Consciousness. All this is guided by Consciousness, is grounded in Consciousness; the world has Consciousness as its guide. Consciousness is the Basis. Consciousness is Brahman" (Aittareya Upanishad III. 2., 3). "Whoever knows 'I am the Absolute' becomes this All" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad I. 4. 10). It is the infinitude of the intensest knowledge. It knows itself as Self-Identical. "There is none who knows it. It is the Great Primeval Being" (Svetasvatara Upanishad III. 19). It is supramental Awareness which constitutes the essence of Existence. It is Consciousness without thought. It is "*param vijnanat*," "superior to relational knowledge".

The Self is Pure Consciousness, as it is presupposed by all modes of consciousness, which function in the form of consciousness of external conditions or objects. Human consciousness is characterised by objectiveness. It is more a cognition or a perception than simple unadulterated consciousness. The cognitions and perceptions are the processes of knowing through the mind and the senses. In the waking state of ordinary consciousness, the different senses receive different forms of knowledge, and the function and the knowledge of one sense is quite different from and unconnected with that of another. For instance, the eye alone can perceive forms and the ear alone can hear sounds. Knowledges differ with regard to the different senses. But, even if these sense-knowledges are entirely cut off from one another, the person experiencing these sense-knowledges is one and the same. The person is the synthesiser of sense-perceptions which by themselves, do not have relations among themselves. The same person experiences forms, sounds, touches, tastes, smells, etc., and feels: "I am the seer, the hearer," etc., but does not feel that the seer is different from the hearer. The ultimate knower must, therefore, be an absolutely indivisible whole of consciousness. Even if there be the slightest distinction within the constitutive essence of the knower, i.e., if the knower is made up of parts, complete synthesised knowledge would never have been possible. If there is a division within the knower, what is the relation between one part and another therein? If one part is different from the other, what is that which exists between one part and another? The question cannot be answered, as knowledge does not admit of space within itself, as knowledge is presupposed by the idea of space and the notion of time and causality. If the parts which are said to constitute the consciousness or the knower are not differentiated by anything other than the knower, then, the knower does not become a composite of parts, but exists as an undivided consciousness which is absolutely identical with itself. The nature of the knower must be knowledge itself. If not, what is the nature of the knower? The most fundamental experience is consciousness or awareness, pure and simple, free from the self-contradictory divisions and fluctuations of thought. None can experience anything greater than or equal to consciousness as the ultimate basis of all experiences in life.

The knower of sense-perceptions cannot be the mind, too, though the mind is able to know without the help of the senses and is able to coordinate, arrange, and

systematically synthesise sense-perceptions. Thoughts differ in different places, times and conditions. Hence, there must be some other synthesising agent of even mental cognitions. Otherwise a person cannot know that he is the same individual experiencing different kinds of thought. Even memory would be impossible but for a non-relative consciousness transcending thoughts. Mental cognitions and sensuous perceptions are heterogeneous in their nature. Therefore the possibility and experience of a unified completeness of self-identical, absolutely immediate and direct consciousness shows that the true Self is Pure Consciousness in its essence, which is not affected by the revolting activities of the mind and the senses. The essential nature of the Knower or the Self must be transcendental consciousness, because, in the state of deep sleep it is seen that when the body, the vital currents, the senses, the mind, the intellect, the ego, the subconscious and everything that goes to make the individual get suspended and denied their validity as existence, the person still exists, as is testified by the following experience which, with great certainty, identifies the person who has woken up with the person who slept previously. The existence of the essential person, the Self, in the condition of deep sleep, was one of awareness of nothing, an awareness together with nothingness, which means mere awareness, as nothingness has no value. Further, the existence of the experience of the Self is corroborated by the subsequent remembrance of the existence of oneself in deep sleep. As remembrance is not possible without previous experience, and as experience is never possible without consciousness, we have to conclude that the Self does exist in deep sleep as mere Consciousness. This Consciousness exists in the waking state as the unchanging basis of the changing mind and the senses. In the dreaming state it exists as the synthesiser of mental functions. The objects in the waking and the dreaming states differ from one another, but the consciousness of objects is one and the same; it does not differ in relation to objects. The only difference between the waking and the dreaming states is that in the former experience is the effect of the function of the mind taking the help of the senses, while in the latter experience is the effect of the function of the mind alone. But, nevertheless, the consciousness is the same, both in the waking and the dreaming states. As this Consciousness is proved to exist in the deep sleep state also, it is evident that this one Consciousness endures without even the least change in itself in all states of experience, without a past or a future for its existence. It does not differ from another consciousness, nor does it differ from itself now and then, here and there, in this or that state, as objects and mental states do. Consciousness is always one and is ever secondless. We cannot conceive of two consciousnesses, though mental states may be two or more. Consciousness is, therefore, eternal. Metaphysically, anything that is eternal must be infinite, without restrictions. Since limitation, too, is what is known by the Consciousness, Consciousness transcends limitation. The Self is Absolute Consciousness, Brahman or the Bhuma. The ignorance that is generally experienced in deep sleep cannot be a real existence, for, if it did really exist, it would be an eternal antagonist of consciousness, and consciousness would thereby be limited and become perishable. The illogicality and the impossibility of the existence of ignorance cancels its value and establishes the existence of the Absolute as Consciousness alone, which is not a bare, featureless transparency, but comprehensive of the whole universe of objects. Everyone experiences consciousness and not ignorance as his basic being or Self. The Self is therefore different from ignorance in the sense that consciousness is not ignorance, but it does not mean that the Self is a witness of an objective ignorance,

which, too, is existence.

The Self neither dies, nor is born, nor has it any modification. If it has these changes, they have to be experienced by some other consciousness, which argument would lead to an infinite regress. The ultimate experiencing Consciousness is the Self. This Absolute Self is self-luminosity, non-duality, independence, Consciousness, the sole Being.

### **BRAHMAN AS BLISS OR HAPPINESS**

Absolute Being is the highest perfection. Perfection is Bliss. The Self is the seat of Absolute Love, Love without an object outside it. It is Bliss without objectification, for Brahman-Bliss is not derived through contact of subject and object. Here, Love and Bliss are Existence itself. That which is, is Bliss of Consciousness which is Being. The highest aim of all endeavour is deliverance from the present condition of limited life and the reaching of "the *bhuma* which is Bliss". "The great Infinite alone is Bliss, there is no bliss in the small finite. Where there is neither seeing nor hearing nor knowing of anything else which is a second entity - that is the Infinite" (Chhandogya Upanishad VII. 23, 24). Absolute Existence which is Absolute Knowledge is also Absolute Bliss. The Consciousness of Bliss experienced is in proportion to the growth and expansion that we feel in the conscious being of ourselves. *sat-chit-Ananda* does not imply a threefold existence, but is Absolute Self-Identity. The world appears to be real, intelligent and blissful, because it projects itself on the background of something which is essentially Reality-Intelligence-Bliss. "That, verily, is the essence. Only on getting this essence, does one become blissful. Else, who would breathe and who would live - if there were no bliss in existence (space)! Truly, this essence is the source of bliss" (Taittiriya Upanishad II. 7). This Essence is impartite bliss and is fearlessness, but, "if one would create even the least difference in this, there is fear for him".

*This Being (of Brahman) is the supreme Bliss.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 3. 32.

The Mundaka Upanishad calls Reality as the "Blissful Immortal". According to the Taittiriya Upanishad, it is the Reality "whose Self is Truth, which is the delight of life, the joy of mind, the fullness of peace, the immortal." The repeated declarations of sage Yajnavalkya, "whatever is other than That, is wretched," "he who departs hence without knowing this Imperishable is miserable," suggest the absolute supremacy of the Bliss of Brahman, when compared to which even the highest heaven, even the abode of the creator, is just darkness and sorrow. The natural phenomena of hunger and thirst, pain and illusion, old age and death are said to be overstepped by That most Exalted Being which is beyond all evil and sin. Brahman is not "blissful" but "Bliss", not "conscious" but "Consciousness", not "existent" but "Existence". It neither decreases nor increases; it is the Ocean of Plenitude, without an ebb or a flow, filled up to the brim of being, allowing in nothing, giving out nothing. That is the real nature of the Self in which one rises from the consciousness of something to the consciousness of being everything, where the knower and the known, the enjoyer and the enjoyed are one, in which one is lifted above all desires and sees nothing outside. It is said that the Self, when in fast embrace with the Being whose essence is Knowledge, knows nothing, either external or internal, for that is the True One in which all desires are quenched, in which the Self alone is the desire, in which all wants and sorrows are dissolved. This is the zenith of

Bliss and Wisdom, by a small fraction of which the whole universe is sustained. "One who is conscious of the Bliss of Brahman fears not from anything." "When one finds his rest in That which is invisible, incorporeal, inexpressible, unfathomable, then he has attained to Fearlessness." For, this Atman is Silence and Peace, "*shantoyamatma*."

The apparently triple nature of Reality is asserted to be one in Truth. "That which is Joy is the same as Being which is Life" (Chhandogya Upanishad IV. 10. 5). Non-existence is the existence of the absence of existence. Existence is the substratum of all positive and negative entities. Existence is a value which is always judged by a conscious being. Though existence *in itself* is not a value, it is so in its 'perceived' objective phases. The absence of consciousness nullifies all value, including existence. Perception and the other ways of knowing are possible because of the Intelligence underlying the apparatus of ordinary consciousness. Intelligence or Consciousness is non-objective, and objectivity is a self-limitation of it through a mode. Hence Consciousness must be limitless or infinite. "The Infinite is Delight." All beings are "delighted", because they "know" that they "exist".

The Being of Reality consists in Experience, uncontradicted by transcendence and untrammelled by modification. In this One Whole all appearances get fused, and they vanish into it. This Reality-Experiencne is one and attributeless, true to itself which is Alone, above thought, and above every partial aspect of being, but including all, none of which can be complete without getting itself merged in the fully real, which is the Absolute. This Being can only be One, because experience is always a Whole, and because dissatisfaction is the effect of a. faith in all independent pluralities and external relations which endlessly contradict themselves. The Absolute is experienced as the same *Illimitable* Immensity, even if it is approached in millions of ways. The Absolute does not act, as action is impossible without ego-consciousness which will be a discrepancy in the perfection of the Absolute. Thought and speech are equally illogical conceptions in an absolute condition. There is no comparison, no illustration, no form of reasoning that can determine the nature of the Absolute. The Real is supra-rational. It is *experienced* and not *understood*. It is the most intensely positive Fact, nothing is truer than the Absolute. Everything other than That is a cipher. It is spaceless and timeless, indivisible and undecaying. It is, as it were, something in which the whole existence seems to be lost, but it is That in which everything is found in the hardest form of reality. If the Absolute can be called Life, everything else is but death. It is beyond even the highest of the intellect - God. It is not God, it is the essence of God, the highest of intuition. It is the General Impersonal beyond distinction. It is the Great Immobility whereby all is moved. "All things exist for the sake of this Infinite Self." "If we do not regard them as such, they would vanish for us." We love all things because we love the Infinite which we ourselves are. In every act of mental love, the Infinite is calling unto the Infinite, which is in and for itself. We do not love anything for its own sake; we love everything for the sake of the Self. This Self is not anything that we know. It is not even consciousness as we understand it, for consciousness in the ordinary sense is a fleeting phenomenon due to the entry of Reality in the elements which produce forms. All that exists is the divisionless Reality. "Such, indeed, is Immortality", said Yajnavalkya.

That the Self is of the nature of absolute Bliss is proved from the fact of its being the eternal Consciousness which is self-luminous in nature. There can be no imperfection in Consciousness. It is clear that it is free from all wants, because it is absolute and

includes everything in itself. Pain is the effect of not having what is wanted or having what is not wanted. Both these cannot be the case with the Absolute Consciousness, as it is secondless. Therefore, pain is impossible in the Absolute. As there can be neither heat, cold, hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, ignorance, passion, disease, decay nor death in the Absolute, no pain can be conceived of in it. The absence of relations with objective existence, the characters of *asangata* and *kevalata*, show that the Absolute is completely free from pain and grief. The psychological, the physical and the heavenly troubles cannot find a place in the Absolute because of the want of differentiation, external or internal. Pain is the condition of a particular experience of an object or a state by an individual under certain given circumstances. The Absolute, however, is neither one among the conditions, nor one among many planes, nor any individual. The Absolute does not experience circumstances or environments. Its Experience is non-relational. There is no such thing as a non-relational pain, as pain is an objective experience and hence relational. Contact is the mother of pain. The Absolute can have no contacts, and therefore no pain.

Further, common experience shows that happiness is a fact of life. It is the supreme value of life. There can be no other meaning in life's activities than the attempt at the acquisition of happiness in some way or the other, whatever be the quantity or the quality of the happiness derived. In fact, happiness has no differences, and, if at all any degree is felt in its experience, it is because of the degrees and differences present in the means made use of for the purpose of obtaining it, and not due to differences existent in happiness itself. The light and heat of fire differ due to the differences among the media through which it burns. Happiness is generally, though not always, experienced in this world as the result of the contact of the mind or the senses with certain pleasant objects or states. No object or state can, in fact, be pleasant in itself. If so, the same thing should rouse the same kind of love in every being. This, however, is not a fact. The same thing can stimulate love or hatred in different beings. A man may be a friend of one person and at the same time the enemy of another. Worms are seen to revel even in pungent and poisonous fruits. The same object can appear as having different natures even to the same person in different conditions. The view that anything is pleasant by itself is incorrect. Then what is happiness, where is happiness?

If happiness is commonly experienced through the contact of the subject with the object, and, if happiness cannot be the nature of the object in itself, it must be the nature of either the subject or the process of contact. The process of contact is not self-existent, but is a mode of thought expressed by the subject of knowledge itself. Hence, happiness must belong to the subject alone. But, then, why is contact necessary for rousing the happiness present in the subject? The truth is that when a subject imagines or is looking at an object of love and comes in contact with it, it is really imagining, looking at or experiencing the form taken by the expression of its own want or desire which has pervaded that object of cognition or perception. It is the desire of the subject that shines and is attractive in the object. Beauty is in the beholder. When the subject contacts the desirable object, it only rejoices over its own desires, identifies itself with these desires, and consequently, for a while, the desires cease to function, they being in union with the subject due to the feeling of satisfaction on account of the notion that the desired object has been possessed. As there is consciousness already in the subject, it has then a temporary consciousness of the absence of desires, of the identity of the objective

process of thought knowing the object, with itself. When thought rests in the subjective consciousness, the subject is simply conscious of itself, to the exclusion of everything, even the desires. But this is a very quick process, a momentary experience of an extremely short duration, because, here, the desires are not destroyed but only withheld. When an object of desire is enjoyed, there is a lightning-like feeling of independence or freedom from externals, since the pain of the feeling of dependence on the object desired for is removed through obtaining it. When a person looks at any object, he does not really look at the *object*, but at the *conception* or the *notion* which he has of that object. As far as a person is concerned, an object is not truly an object, but a mode which the cognising consciousness has taken in its indivisible nature; and because this mode is inseparable from the consciousness of the subject, it is best loved, loved as the Self, when the form of the object stands to it as a correct correlative fulfilling its wants, or hated when its form is the opposite. This is why certain objects appear very dear. Like a dog that barks at its own reflection seen in a mirror, a person develops a particular attitude towards something in accordance with the idea which he has of that thing. One cannot think of anything except in terms of his wishes and notions. If there is no desire for something, there can be no happiness derived from that thing. When desires are withdrawn, objects stand as they are. But as long as one has even a single desire, it is not possible for him to know what an object is really in itself. The mind with a desire is like a coloured glass through which we can look at an object as having only that colour and nothing else. The happiness experienced by us is, therefore, the experience of the cessation of desire, though it may be temporary. But contacts with objects only increase pain, as, thereby, the foolish belief that objects bring pleasure is again strengthened, and as each contact creates a further desire to repeat the effort for more such contacts. Happiness is the nature of the Self without desires, and every desire increases pain by a degree of intensity equal to, if not more than, that of itself.

Moreover, the love of the Self is the basis of all other loves. One loves another, because one loves the Self the most. The ultimate purpose of all loves is to rest in the satisfaction of one's own Self. Perception and contact act as agencies in lifting up the veil of subjective desire covering the external objects. Hence, the motive behind conceptual and perceptual contacts is not so much to obtain anything from the object as such, as to make it an instrument in lifting up the veil in the mind, a purely selfish process which the individual subject tries to get effected thereby. Conception or perception is, in a way, an effort to exhaust a desire, though, because of the glaring error therein, it may give rise to another desire. Contact is, therefore, not a method of *acquiring* happiness, but a means of *getting freed* from the pain of desiring, and thus making the Self experience itself indirectly. But even this temporary experience of happiness due to contact should not be mistaken for even a jot of true Self-Bliss, for in contact the desires are not destroyed, and this happiness experienced through contact is only a reflection of Self-Bliss through the material quality of Sattva. Contact is only a stimulus to Sattva-Guna, which alone can reflect happiness. Sense-contact is a crude method of fulfilling desire born of deluded perception, and it can never bring to the experiencer the real bliss which he is hankering after.

None really loves anything for its own sake, for nothing. In the universe has a true objective value that is valid for all times. All values proceed from the Self, and subsist in the Self. The Self alone is the ultimate and infinite value in all things. Careful analysis

will reveal that all contacts have their meaning in Self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction in its individual signification is only an apparent pleasure and is a delusion caused by the functions of the modes of thought. Even mental satisfaction brought about through the avenues of the senses is not the end aimed at through the mind and the senses. No one is permanently satisfied through an objective process. The self of man hungers for eternal satisfaction but it gets a cup of poison which it finds in darkness and then drinks, being deprived of the proper vision with which to behold the true nature of things. No one would consciously drink poison even when one is hungry. It is not the intention of the Self to be satisfied with deceitful mirages, but it suffers on account of lack of knowledge. It is easily misled by the tantalizing appearances of life. In fact the self loves only the highest Essential Existence, which it wants to realise as one with itself, but it cannot discover this Existence amidst the clamour of the senses, the caprices of the mind, and the colour and the noise of objects of the world. The love of the Self is unsurpassed. Even suicide that is committed only goes to prove the supreme love that is evinced in regard to the Self, for it is due to disgust for some conditions of life, and not on account of hatred for the Self, that such an act is perpetrated. Suicide is the effect of some tormenting type of objective contact, a corroding attachment to a certain phenomenon, an unfulfilled objective, or an unattained relative end. Even disgust for one's life is only a dissatisfaction with a particular state of life, an unpleasant experience in life, and not with life itself. None feels from his heart that he should absolutely cease to exist. Everyone wishes to enjoy an eternal life of perennial bliss. A painful life is detested and a pleasant one is coveted. The love of the immortal bliss to be experienced as identical with the Self is unconditioned. It can have no match.

Even when no objects exist, this Self-love does not suffer any diminution. In deep sleep, when no objects are experienced, the happiness of the Self remains the same. One would reject even the dearest object for the sake of the happiness of deep sleep. Even a vast kingdom is nothing when sleep supervenes. The happiness of deep sleep where there is no contact is greater than the pleasure derived through sense-contact. There are occasions when one feels that one is fed up with everything, and gets disgusted even with the dearest of possessions. The freedom and joy experienced at that time is greater than the semblance of satisfaction felt during attachment to and love for objects. All this suggests that the centre of happiness is, in the end, the Absolute Self. What joy one obtains in ordinary life is only a distorted reflection of Self-Bliss through the mind, and hence it is inconstant and never satisfying. No doubt, the happiness of deep sleep is not reflected through any psychosis allowing intelligence therein, but it is because of the absence of consciousness in deep sleep that its value is not realised. The mind, in its unmanifested condition, exists in deep sleep and obstructs the manifestation of bliss illumined by consciousness. The annihilation of the stuff of the thinking process, both in its developed and undeveloped stages, is what is necessary for the realisation of Eternal Bliss. This Bliss is experienced in the Self itself, and not anywhere else. As the Self is absolute in its nature, the Bliss of the Self, also, is absolute. Bliss is not an attribute but the very essence of the Self. The Self is Brahman, and Self-Bliss is Brahman-Bliss.

#### **SPACE, TIME AND CAUSATION**

The Imperishable Being is declared as That in which space is woven breadthwise and lengthwise, in which is everything that is above the heaven, beneath the earth, between the heaven and the earth, that which is past, present and future, as woven within and

throughout through space. "This Brahman has neither front nor behind, neither inner nor outer." It is the spaceless infinitude "which is beneath and above, to the west and the east, to the south and the north; it alone is this whole existence" (Chhandogya Upanishad VII. 25). "It is infinite on all sides." Spatiality is the admission of difference which is detrimental to the rigorous non-duality of Brahman. Space is a lapse from pure perfection, for it allows in temporality in existence. "This Self is smaller than a grain of rice; this Self is greater than the whole universe" (Chhandogya Upanishad III. 14. 3). "This Self is a part of the hundredth part of the point of a hair subdivided again a hundredfold; and this rises to Infinitude" (Svetasvatara Upanishad V. 9). Indivisibility implies independence over space, for all that is in space is divisible. Omnipresence is spacelessness. Brahman is there, and that which is there is here (Vide Katha Upanishad II. 1. 10). "As a Unity alone is this to be known, this immeasurable eternal being;" "he goes to death after death who perceives duality here" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 4. 20, 19). Thus, space is transcended in Brahman.

Time, too, is denied in Brahman. "That which is past, present and future, and that which transcends this threefold distinction of time, is the indestructible Om, the All, which is Brahman" (Mandukya Upanishad 1, 2). Brahman is *anadi* and *ananta*, i.e., of infinite duration, which is timelessness. "Over that bridge (which is the Atman), neither day, nor night, nor old age, nor death can cross" (Chhandogya Upanishad VIII. 4. 1). The instantaneous duration of the flash of consciousness, its absolute immediacy of experience, its independence over limit, its non-objective nature, marks out its timeless being.

Causation is motion, and that which is perfectly real cannot be said to move. Movement is transitoriness of nature, but Brahman is eternal. There is no world-process in the essential Reality, for all process is change. Changelessness is causationlessness. The Imperishable, the *akshara*, is without even the least tinge of action. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (IV. 4. 20) the Absolute is described as "the Great Oneness, unborn, unchanging, eternal, immeasurable, unblemished, exalted above space." Uddalaka says that all modification is only a name, a mere matter of words, not true. It is depicted as different from coming into being and different from not coming into being, beyond death and deathlessness. It is the One which the wise speak of diversely, and hence it excludes all plurality, and therefore all relations in space, succession in time, becoming cause of an effect or effect of a cause, and all opposition of subject and object.

The objective world of space, time and cause represents merely a condition of experience. Space, time and causation are interdependent and none of them seems to have the character of reality. Without the one the other cannot be explained, and the argument leads to a vicious circle. Since reason itself is bound by these concepts, they cannot be reasoned about. They constitute the way of thinking itself, the very stuff of all methods of knowing, and therefore human knowledge is only another name for the conscious manifestation of these relations Objectively nothing is known except these relations Space, time and causality represent, ultimately, only ideas and nothing more. These are the self-projections of the process of thought, in the form of an external world, in order to make possible and give value to the act of thinking. The law of Nature is always in relation to an individual or a group of individuals, and never an eternally existent fact, except, of course, in the sense of the eternally changeless indivisible Nature

of Brahman. Space, time and cause are certain manners of the perception of external conditions or objects, and thus form relations and not anything truly existent. The perceiving mind always wishes to work in terms of system and order, and not in a chaotic manner. For this purpose these universally accepted relations called space, time and cause are formulated by the perceiving consciousness which is individualised and externalised. The whole universe is summed up in the three ideas of spatiality, temporality and causality. These are the very condition of all knowledge and experience in an individual, and hence these concepts refuse to become objects of knowledge in any way. Either we know everything in terms of space, time and cause or we know nothing at all. Individuality is subject to these categories of relative experience, and so all knowledge in the universe is relative, phenomenal, a make-shift, and not ultimately valid. As space, time and cause are the ideal necessary constructions of all empirical experience, all the objects of experience, too, are mere conditions, becomings, relative to the reality of the experiencers, and do not have independent existence. The object of perception lasts only as long as the particular mental states of the individuals cognising the object last. There is no permanent reality if the form of an object independent of the psychoses of the perceivers. Objects in their isolated nature have no reality, though the essence of the world and the individuals is absolutely real - for this essential existence belongs to what is incorruptible and unlimited. The world of objects in its presented state is false, being dependent on relative perceptions; its *form* is unreal because form is an imaginary construction of the objectified centres of consciousness in the universe driven by potent desire-impulses. The Cosmic Mind acts as the ultimate subject whose consciousness is the creator of all norms, in all the degrees of manifestation. The worldness in what is manifested, or, in other words, the very act or process of manifestation itself, is to be construed in the sense of what is illusory, though the world-essence or the ultimate substance of the world is eternal. It is the *form* and not the *essence* that is unreal. The nature of every object is said to be fivefold - existence, consciousness, joy, name, form. Of these, existence-consciousness-joy constitutes the self-identical immediate reality of everything, and hence it can never cease to be. This ceaseless Self-Perfection is the Absolute. The name and the form of the world, together with its contents, are only an apparition in the Real. If the Absolute is the sole Reality, space, time and causation can only be meaningless terms.

*All this is what this Self is.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 4. 6.

*This is the Self, this is the Immortal, this is the Absolute, this is all Existence.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 5. 1.

The failure of all arguments in determining the exact nature of Reality and its relation to appearance points to the unknowable character of Reality. Hence it is defined as "not this, not this." But in the admission of our limited knowledge and our inability to know Reality is implied our claim to know it. It is known through relative means, but it is realised in immediate experience which is above relative knowledge.

### **BRAHMAN AS GOD OR ISHVARA**

The indeterminable Brahman is only a subject of speculation for the individual which is

bound by the limitations of the intellect caught up in the process of space, time and causation, which are the hard undeniable facts of life. To the man who is confined to the world, the Essential Reality will appear to be outside the ken of knowledge. His highest is only the highest of his thinking. The human mind cannot be said to comprehend Reality from its own standpoint. We cannot see through the Real and say, "thus is the Real," for the Real as Real is known only in self-identical, non-objective experience. The Absolute Truth cannot be expressed, or even thought; else, thereby, it would lose its Truth-hood and become untruth. *Our* Absolute is the *conceptual* Absolute, and this highest conceptual is "God" or "*Ishvara*", the determinate Real, the object of pious meditation and of the highest form of devotion, *para-bhakti*, while Brahman is the eternal subject of pure indeterminate knowledge. The relative intellect seeks to find a solution for the difficulties that are presented by the notion of the independence of the world and the individual's experiences therein. The causal argument leads it to find support in a conceptual reality which would explain the world without abandoning the idea of causality. The intellect, being inextricably bound by the causal chain, cannot comprehend that Reality which is beyond causation and its concomitants. The pure Indivisible Being cannot be the object of the understanding working through the phenomenal categories. The general tendency among human beings is to feel the necessity for a Supreme Ruler who would dispense justice and apportion the fruits of their thoughts and actions. The feeling demands a merciful and loving God who will respond to its expressions and liberate it from sorrow. The religious mind protests that the world requires a God who cannot be dispensed with as a mere logical error. It pays little heed to the laws of reason and subjects the same to the laws of the feelings of man. To it, knowledge which knows itself alone and not anything else cannot satisfy the aspirations of the individual. The constitution within is extended to the universe, and the result is the natural feeling that if manyness and oneness, death and immortality, are both shadows of Reality and form its complementary conceptual aspects, such a Reality shall ever remain unmanageable and unknowable to the individual existing in the universe of experience. To take a whole view of the Real is to attempt what is beyond the finite intellect, and to take a partial view is to accept a defeat in knowing the Real. This is how the limited human mind fares in solving the deepest problems of life and beyond.

The relative individual can read only relative facts even in the highest Truth, however magnified and grand its conceptions be. For the individual man, God is a magnified Man, the Cosmic Person who has all knowledge and all power. He is the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the universe, who, in His unexcelable majesty, lords over the earth and the heaven, who fashions the sun, the moon and the stars, who extends far beyond the limitless space. He is the highest perfection and magnitude of the complete opposite of what the limited individual is. God is unlimited in every sense. He is the Supreme *purusha*, the Father of the entire creation. He excludes none, all are within His superhuman body. He is the *Virat*, the universal King, the absolute unifying form in which all beings are strung together like beads in a thread; He is *Hiranyagarbha*, the inner animating life-principle of everything; He is *Ishvara*, the universal consciousness that sustains all manifestation. There is none besides Him. He triumphs and glories in His own Greatness. He is the ocean of all that is best at any place or time. He is the immediate presupposition and presence of whatever can ever be.

He is the *antaryamin*, the Inner Controller; the *avyakrita*, the Unmanifest, beyond sense-perception; the Sutratma or the Thread-Soul that connects all selves; the *mahaprana*, the Cosmic Vital Energy. He hails as the supreme object of all adoration and worship.

*Ishvara* is the manifested Form of Reality. He is the Saguna-Brahman, the Absolute endowed with all glorious attributes. This qualified Reality, though the highest open to any of us, is not the highest in itself. But, as long as the Real in itself is of no practical utility in our processes of thought, life and action, it is immaterial, so far as life is concerned, whether the highest Reality is qualified or not. As long as we live within the boundaries of the rational intellect, the Highest in itself cannot be taken as a part of life's considerations, and we are bound to be satisfied with what is highest from our own standpoint.

The Cosmic Person, though not an independent existence from the standpoint of the Brahman of intuition, is much more real than the universe and its individual contents. Though below Brahman, God is above the world, and controls the world as its perfect master. So long as our personality is real, God also is real, and, if the personal God is to be rejected as unreal, we ourselves have no right to live as individuals. The personal *Ishvara* is not opposed to the impersonal Brahman, but is Brahman only as we understand it. But we, as individuals, are relative, and our relative views are bound to be sublated and transcended in a higher experience. The precision of the discriminative faculty is compelled to adopt an extreme of spiritual unworldliness, whether or not it is pleasing to our weaker human side. Our inability to embrace the strictest Truth makes us demand a God who is relative to the empirical world. Saner perception, however, does not condescend to accept the permanent reality of a cosmic objective God, as the form of objective existence is not independent of the processes of the subjective consciousness. If all appearances are unintelligible, *Ishvara* who can only be an appearance of the Real, is equally unintelligible. It is not Brahman that changes itself into God and the world, but the knowing subject that takes Brahman as such. When thought is no more, the individual is annulled, and together with it *Ishvara* and the world sink into Pure Being. It is not possible to rest contented that a personal God is the ultimate Reality, however displeasing this may be to those who do not want to dispense with thinking in terms of the categories of the world. The philosopher-aspirant who is possessed of a flaming passion for integrating himself in Existence does not have the dull patience to linger on with the slow process of progressive self-transcendence through the channels of the different degrees of reality. The highest scientific mind always tries to cling to the Whole, and not to even the biggest part, for, according to it, partiteness in existence is illogical and an ignorant conception. Truth, dependent on its own Self, transcends even the ideas of omniscience and omnipotence, for these involve relations which are a limitation on the Absolute. And, yet, we find the Vedas and the Upanishads giving intimations of a Personal *purusha*, the Purushottama, the Source, Being and End of the universe, which gives us an idea of the impartial attitude which the ancient seers had towards the different conceptions of Reality, and of that magnificent vision of the One in the many which they possessed and articulated in sublime states of the Consciousness of the totality of creation.

The first visualisation of the Cosmic *purusha* is expressed in the celebrated hymn of the Rig Veda, called the Purusha-Sukta.

*Thousand-headed was the purusha, thousand-eyed and thousand-legged. He, covering the earth on all sides, stretched Himself beyond it by ten fingers' length. All this is the purusha alone, whatever was and whatever shall be .... One-fourth of Him all beings are, (but) three-fourths of Him is immortal in the (highest) heaven.*

- Rig Veda, X. 90.

Here the word 'thousand' is to be taken to mean 'numberless' or 'infinite' and not to denote any fixed number. The description is to give an idea of the all-encompassing nature of the supreme *purusha*. He does not completely manifest Himself in the form of the universe; only a small aspect of Him is expressed as relativity - the larger aspect of Him exists unmanifested and remains as the shining Immutable. This does not suggest that God can be divided into aspects or cut into parts, but only means figuratively that God is not in any way limited but is above manifestation, though He is also the Self of all that is manifested. God is both immanent and transcendent, for He is present in every speck of the universe, and yet transcends it to an inconceivable extent. Truth is neither a pantheism nor a deism which consider God as either wholly exhausted in the world or existing wholly beyond the world. The universe is one organic unity sustained by the single being of God, of whom everything is a part, and who is the inner and outer reality of everything. Absolutism is the highest point, the culmination of all true philosophy, according to which the Absolute Spirit or the Absolute God is the only Reality.

The accidental attributes, the *tatastha-lakshanas* of the Absolute, make it appear as *Ishvara*, whose existence is in relation to the manifested universe. "The sun rises in Him and sets again in Him." "The shining region of the heavens is His head, the sun and the moon are His eyes, the quarters of space are His ears, the Vedas full of knowledge are His speech, the air is His vital energy, the universe is His heart, the earth is His feet - This is the inmost Self of all beings" (Mundaka Upanishad II. 1. 4). All reality known to us is limited to this Self. We love and possess things, we speak, act and think, because we are the Self of that which is loved, possessed, spoken, done and thought. The world subsists in our Consciousness which is the Great Self of all. Aught else than our Self is nothing; the Self is the "vaishvanara", God of all, and all are, because He is. Our Self and His Self are one; whatever is outside us, is also inside us:

*In reality, great as this external space is, so great is this space within the heart; in it are contained both the heaven and the earth, both fire and air, both sun and moon, lightning and stars, whatever is here, and whatever is not here - everything thereof is contained within it.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad VIII. 1. 3.

A declaration is made in this, which strikes terror into the man of the world; the individual and the cosmos, the soul and God are one! "That thou art, O Svetaketu!" This may not be easy to accept, but only this can be the truth. This alone removes all contradictions in life, this truth alone stands unsublated. "The *purusha* is what is and what is not." "He who dwells in all beings, and is other than all beings, whom all beings do not know, whose body are all beings, who controls all beings from within- This is thy Self, the Inner Ruler, the Immortal" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III. 7. 15). "In the space within the heart lies the Ruler of all, the Lord of all, the King Of all.... He is the Overlord

of all beings, the King of all beings, the Protector of all beings" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 4. 22). "Etad vai tat - This, verily, is That."

The Supreme Lord is the Power of powers. "Agni cannot burn even a piece of straw; Vayu cannot blow even a piece of straw, apart from the Will of the Supreme" (Kena Upanishad III). All beings, even the gods, even the greatest powers, execute their functions properly due to their dread for this Supreme. The Great Lord can do or undo or otherwise do the whole universe in the quick flash of the fraction of a single moment! He is also the boundless ocean of Knowledge. Even the gods cannot see Him. He cannot be known even through penance and sacrifice. This Atman is not to be comprehended through mere discourse, intellectuality or extensive hearing; He is obtained only by him (to) whom He chooses (to reveal His Nature)" (Katha Upanishad I. 2. 23). This does not mean that God is an autocratic despot acting as He likes, regardless of the feelings and grievances of others. This would be a very poor interpretation of the sentence. God chooses all and excludes none who looks up to Him; He helps even those who do not know Him! Even a villain and an outcaste reaches Him through His grace. God is the ocean of compassion. He is the justest Ruler, the most beloved Parent of all. The condition "whom He chooses" exalts the supreme factor of self-sacrifice and self-abnegation and a flowing of oneself with the Divine Force, as against the egoistic undertakings of the individual, viz., scholarship, etc., which lead to self-conceit and inordinate pride. The passage also means that it is to be obtained only by that which one seeks to obtain, i.e., the Seeker is himself the Supreme Object which is the Sought. The subject and the object are one in Truth. No separate independence should be asserted with good as its effect. We are also cautioned to have the consciousness of the sole existence of the One *purusha*, even when we offer sacrifices to different deities. The multiple gods of the Vedas are not the childish imaginations of undeveloped panegyrists who knew but to flatter superhuman powers, but they are the seers' visions, in the overflow of their ecstatic joy, of the Great *purusha* who excels in the blissful revelation of Himself in His universal form. To the Vedic seers the world appeared as the beatific flooding of the abundance of the richness of God. This Supreme One is the Object of spiritual love. All beings have an innate longing, a love to attain it. "It is called Great Longing - Love - it is to be adored as such, and him who knows this, all beings love and long for" (Kena Upanishad IV. 6). At the mere transcendental wish of this Great Being, the whole universe is issued forth systematically, protected justly and destroyed root and branch. *Ishvara* is the Absolute Brahman working through the universe.

This is the Nature of Reality as appearing to put on all names, all forms and all actions, though these three aspects are the one being, the Self (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad I. 6). The Upanishads do not make much practical difference between *Ishvara* and Brahman, and hold that "Brahman is both the Formed and the Formless" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 3. 1). They voice both the phenomenal and the absolute points of view.

The proofs for the existence of *Ishvara* really turn to be proofs for the existence of Brahman. In fact there cannot be any strictly logical proof for the existence of an *Ishvara* who is different from Brahman. The moment we admit something which distinguishes *Ishvara* from Brahman, we bring forward a reality which is neither *Ishvara* nor Brahman. The Absolute which is ever consistent with itself does not allow in any extraneous principle which would limit Pure Existence. *Ishvara* is Brahman defined by the creative will. Brahman appears as the supreme Person (*purusha-vidha*),

and in becoming this it would appear to cease to be what it is, at least temporarily. Such a conception of Brahman would go against the very grain of the reality of Brahman. That Brahman *becomes Ishvara* in any way is not a fact, and if it is a fact, the whole of philosophy which posits the existence of the Absolute Reality would become a self-contradiction and absurdity. To make Brahman pass into another form is to deny Brahman. The theory, which holds that *Ishvara's* creation of individuals which are responsible for the nature of the world manifested is determined by the potentialities of the previous world-cycle, makes *Ishvara* a creature of time, divests him of omnipotence and freedom and creates an eternal duality of *Ishvara* and the material stuff called potentiality of creation in addition to a real multiplicity of individuals. Such an artificial view of *Ishvara* shows how it is valid only as a practical device for the explanation of the difficulties of the individual, and how it is not Possible to conceive of an *Ishvara* real in *himself*. This view of creation is a regrettable echo of the Sankhya which so audaciously asserts a plurality of realities that it is blind to all the difficulties presented by such an assertion. An eternal plurality or duality contradicts the absoluteness of Reality, which is equal to denying Reality altogether. If it is said that *Ishvara* is not directly connected with creation but only helps in the manifestation of the world which is necessitated by the dormant potencies of the unliberated individuals, the question arises, Who created the individuals? It is said that the individuals are only the forms which *Ishvara* has imagined *himself* to be. If *Ishvara* is omnipotent, he can at any time cease from imagining thus. If he is to cause creation every time, after every world-cycle, and work like a clock, *Ishvara* can only be a machine and does not seem to have freedom of thought and action. Moreover, He seems to be working in strict consonance with the rules which He himself has framed! If the state of dissolution of the universe at the end of a cycle is forced upon *Ishvara's* experience, He is no more an *Ishvara*, a Lord. If, on the other hand, He does it voluntarily, there is no reason why he should go on creating, cycle after cycle, as though it is his bounden duty. Freedom and the sense of duty are opposites. If *Ishvara* has nothing to do with creation and only the individuals are somehow causing their bondage and liberation through some kind of relation which they have with the Absolute, there is no need for positing an *Ishvara* who is different from Brahman.

Further, the view that the freed souls should wait in the state of *Ishvara* until the dissolution of *Ishvara* himself after the universal cycle, would only show that *Ishvara* himself is controlled by the process of the creation, preservation and destruction of the universe, and that he has no freedom to stop it though it is his own will. If the world-process is only a sport of *Ishvara*, it cannot become a rigid routine, as a rule of duty cannot be a sport. We cannot say that *Ishvara* should abide by the process of the system of world-manifestation, etc., since manifestation and all that is connected with it is in time, and *Ishvara* is regarded as being the condition of even time. The theory that the creation of *Ishvara* is independent of that of the individuals, where the latter is the cause of bondage, a superimposition of relative values on universally existent attributeless independent objects, is not convincing. This theory seems to hold that the mind can think or know something even when it is purged of all desires and their impressions. Thinking is an active process, which is the same as the movement of a wish or will, the absence of which alone can be the state of pure equilibrium and harmony which is beyond the movements of the cognitive process. Every form of knowledge in an individual is a process, and pure equilibrium cannot be a process, it being free from all

movements which alone can give process a value. What is called the creation of the individual is only external relationship. It is not possible for the individual to exist or know anything external, the moment it puts an end to its creation, viz., external relationship through the mind. The individual is nothing but what it does through its functional organs, and when it does not do anything, i.e., its creation ceases, it itself is no more, for the individual is only a mass of relativities or unintelligible relations even as everything that is created also is. The functional organs, too, cannot be said to be independent of their functions themselves, the relations in which they are inextricably involved, and when these functions cease, the instruments also cease. The individual is not an independently existing something. It is only a name given to a bundle of relationships. When the relationships are withdrawn, the individual is dissolved in pure Being. *Ishvara*'s creation cannot be explained in terms of the different individuals of the universe, as the existence of the individuals, itself, cannot be proved logically. *Ishvara* is what he is because of the universe and its contents, and if the latter are not proved, *Ishvara*, too, is not proved, unless a purely untenable arbitrary argument is brought forward that *Ishvara* can conceive of pure objectivity or nothingness and imagine that he exists as an absolute individual even if no object second to him is known by him. It is a wonder how *Ishvara* can be omnipresent and at the same time be different from Brahman. If a differentiating principle exists in Brahman, neither Brahman nor *Ishvara* can be omnipresent. If there is nothing to separate the one from the other, there is only Brahman and not another Person like *Ishvara*. *Ishvara* is an appellation for Brahman viewed from the standpoint of the relative universe.

It is also said that *Ishvara* divided himself and became the many Jivas. How did *Ishvara* do this without losing his innate characteristics? How did *Ishvara* conceive of the many individuals without knowing that one individual is different from the other? How can there be awareness of multiplicity without distinguishing one from the other? If *Ishvara* has no idea of distinctions, how does it follow that he created the multifarious world? If the idea of distinction belongs only to the relative individual and not to *Ishvara*, and if creation is not possible without the idea of distinction, it means that *Ishvara* has not created anything, and that therefore there is no creation at all.

These difficulties in proving the existence of *Ishvara*, as a reality somehow different from Brahman, appear, because the individual tries to shift its own values to the universal truth of things. As long as the individual exists, an *Ishvara* has to be postulated as its necessary counterpart. There can be no meaning in holding that individuals exist or the world exists, but *Ishvara* does not exist. If there is an effect, there must be a cause, also. The cause can be denied only when the effect is denied. *Ishvara* is the necessary objective presentation of the implications of the experiences of the individuals. In the admission of the world and the individuals the existence of a Supreme Creator is implied. If there is no God, there can be no world, too. The limited intelligence of the individual cannot comprehend the meaning of the universe except on the basis of an *Ishvara* governing it. *Ishvara* and the *jiva* are the two sides of the same coin. The two have a reciprocal relationship. When the one is denied, the other, too, is automatically denied. When the one is affirmed, the other, too, is affirmed. *Ishvara* is the cosmic side of the individual's acceptance of the reality of its own experiences. The transcendence of individuality, temporality or relativity is at once the transcendence of the state of *Ishvara*, also. Both the *jiva* and *Ishvara* are negated in the supremacy of

Brahman. As long as the world is experienced as a reality, the reality of *Ishvara* is not abrogated. The degrees of reality and experience, which are facts of the individual's life, cannot be accounted for except by admitting an *Ishvara* as the Cause of the world. The distinction in quality between waking and dreaming can have meaning only when the existence of *Ishvara* is accepted as a fact. Truth and falsehood are known to be different from each other because there is a universe outside human fancy. *Ishvara*, therefore, has a relative reality. He is, in this sense, more an explanation of the universe of experience than true existence. And, wherever *Ishvara* is identified with the Supreme Self, we have to understand that it is the Essential Reality of *Ishvara* and not his relative form that is thus identified.

### THE POWER OF BRAHMAN

If Brahman appears as *Ishvara*, this act of appearance is caused by its Power of appearance. We must, indeed, very much hesitate to say anything about "Power" in the Absolute, for thereby we betray the forgetfulness of our bold conclusions regarding the Indivisible, Non-dual nature of Brahman. If Brahman is considered to appear as *Ishvara*, and as a corollary, the world, we have to answer the question, How does the One become the two and the many? We cannot say that Brahman creates *Ishvara* and the world out of a substance which is other than itself, for it is secondless. Then, we have to take that it creates them out of itself, in which case its changeless, eternal nature is marred and it becomes a phenomenal being. Moreover, there cannot be space, time and causality in Brahman, which are necessary for creation. Hence, creation becomes a self-contradiction. The Brahmanhood of Brahman, i.e., its essential perfection, vanishes, the moment we take it to be the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer. Further if there is actual creation, how do the Upanishads reconcile this with their position that on the realisation of the Absolute there is disappearance of objectivity? A real thing can never be negated its existence. Only a false notion can be removed by knowledge. The creative act cannot be called even an Idea or a Thought of the Absolute, for in it thought and reality are one. If creation is different from the Absolute, it cannot exist. If it is identical with it, the Absolute alone is, and not anything produced. Hence, from the highest standpoint, creation must be false, a mere myth. This mysterious juggle, which, though not real, appears to screen the Absolute Consciousness and project an objective consciousness, is the so-called Power of Brahman, and its appearance is suggested in the Upanishads. Indra is said to appear in many forms through his juggling powers (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 5.19). The Svetasvatara Upanishad says that the Supreme Being is the juggler and the universe of creation is His jugglery (IV. 10).

This Power is only an objectifying force, as it were, which prevents Self-Experience through veiling and pulling the Consciousness away from itself by making it, for all appearance, self-deluded. But this Power is identical with Brahman even as heat and fire are one; then, how can Brahman delude itself, and where comes the existence of Power in Divisionless Being? And, further, how can there be objective force in the Infinite Mass of Consciousness? This is the inexplicable magic, which somehow must be, and somehow cannot be, which somehow deludes that which is eternally undeluded. Inexplicability is not an excuse if philosophy is to justify its purpose. No speculation has ever been able to give out the meaning of an undivided creation which is from eternity to eternity, and which is, therefore, no creation at all. We cannot say how and why we seem to be caught up in ignorance. This secret is super-logical. Our greatest intelligence lies in

admitting that we cannot understand anything, finally. *Anirvachaniyatva* or inscrutability is our last resort; and this, after all, is the result which the proud philosophical reason has achieved after countless years of thinking. But, some bolder geniuses had the marvellous courage to mercilessly disregard all facts of relative experience without paying any heed to their contradictions and staring hard realities, all which are valid only to the realm of the individual, and to resolutely assert with wisdom that there is nothing but the One Brahman, the Absolute. Dispassionately judging, they alone seem to be the greatest heroes in human history. Nothing can be a better course than what they took. The Upanishad declares:

*Sarvam khalu idam brahma - All this, indeed, is Brahman.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad III. 14. 1.

Ultimately, there can be no illusion, unreality, *maya*, error or any objective concept or knowable principle but only Consciousness-Absolute. Nothing else than Consciousness can ever be. This is the Truth. Since even degrees in Reality would mean objectivity and duality therein, they would reduce it to a phenomenal appearance. Reality, as it is in itself, can only be *the Absolute* free from all dividing elements, including the so-called degrees. The Absolute is ever Itself, never an object, never a subject, and so eternally indivisible.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PROCESS OF TRUTH-REALISATION

#### THE METHOD OF PURE KNOWLEDGE

Philosophical investigation and the heart's innate longing are unanimous in ascertaining that the One Absolute Brahman alone is the Reality. If Brahman is the Truth, all outward forms of experience can only be an appearance. Brahman is not an object to be attained as something which is in space, because it is the Self of all, and not an external entity second to the Self. It is not even the object of knowing, for it alone is the eternal Subject of Knowledge, and the process of knowing is a psychosis which is a phenomenon. There is no such thing as *knowing Brahman*, because the knower of Brahman cannot separate himself from it. It is not an object of meditation, for meditation is thought, which involves a dualistic functioning, and a dualistic being is not Brahman. Brahman is not reached by thinking of any kind. Brahman is not an object of love, devotion or worship, for all these presuppose relational categories belonging to the changing world, which cannot be the essential Brahman. The Real can never be a matter for dealing in any way. It cannot be seen, heard, understood or known even through millions of years of hard objective effort in the space-time-world. The Absolute transcends every function, becoming and process. It is beyond thought, emotion, will, feeling, sensation, ascertainment, name, form and action. An individual as an individual can never know what is not an individual. We cannot know what we are not in our core. All that we know and experience is not beyond what we are ourselves potentially or manifestly. Every being is locked up within its own experience and it cannot know anything other than itself. Knowing and being are one and the same, and hence, we cannot know a thing without being that thing. All that is external to us is a reflection of our consciousness and there is nothing existent which our consciousness is not, ultimately. Whatever we are, that alone everything is. This extension of the subject to its objects of perception is, however, in the world of the consciousness of relative individuality, psychological, and from the standpoint of Consciousness itself, metaphysical. While the form in which an object is known to a relative subject is peculiar to the modes of its own cognitive organs, the reality that underlies this form is not governed by the categories through which the cognitive organs of the subject operate in knowing that form. The existence of the person who is perceived is not contained in and ruled by the conditions of the objectified consciousness of the person who perceives by being subject to these conditions. The world is not the creation of any particular individual's thinking process, though all the particulars given of the known object to a knowing subject are what are cast in the moulds of the internal organs of the knowing subject. Though there is an objective reality which is known as having a form by the subject through a psychological modification, it has to be accepted that, as far as the subject is concerned, its experience is its truth, whether or not external objects exist as realities in themselves. When viewing from the level on which a relative subject stands, what becomes clear is that the experiences of that subject which are inseparable from its objective consciousness are its private conditions, and yet, from its viewpoint external objects exist, without admitting which even its own experiences cannot be accounted for. If there is no real object, there cannot be a real subject, too. The degree of reality

which is revealed by the subject and which proves its existence is present in its object also, though this relative reality of the object may be sublated when that condition in which the subject perceives this object is sublated through a higher knowledge of a deeper essence of itself. This is the individualistic significance of the dependence of the object on the subject.

But in Consciousness as such, the whole objective nature of the world gets negated, without even the least trace of the ignorance in the form of the notion of the reality of a second to Consciousness. In Consciousness the universe is transfigured and realised as itself. Whatever is known is Consciousness and not another. Consciousness is the Absolute and therefore no objective reality can be posited in regard to it. Though an objective world equal in reality to the relative subject is known to exist from the standpoint of the subject, whatever be the degree of reality manifested by it, notwithstanding the categories in which it is bound up and of which alone it has the experience, no such external world can exist to Pure Consciousness, for it does not cognise or perceive through the mind or the intellect and the senses, and its experience is immediate, non-relative. It is Self-Knowledge and not knowledge of an object or a state of existence. In the Absolute there is no external consciousness, no objective psychological process, no dualistic reality. In the state of the individual, however, there is subjective experience of an objective reality which has the twofold nature of being the subject's knowledge or experience of its conditions and the conditions of the external world, and the external world itself independent of the subject's experiences. This external world is valid to the individual but not to the Absolute.

Thus, the *conception* of the nature of Reality is a modification of the internal organ which acts within the boundaries of space, time and causation. The moment thought crosses these categories, it is no more thought and there is no cognitive functioning. As long as we feel that we are not Brahman, Brahman to us is only what we think it to be. Hence, all these *processes* that are meant to lead us to Truth-realisation are limited, and not perfect in themselves. "The Eternal is not reached through the non-eternal" (Katha Upanishad II. 10). "Just as those who do not know the spot walk over a hidden treasure of gold again and again, but do not find it, even so all these beings go day by day to that Abode of Brahman, but do not find it; for, truly, they are carried astray by what is false" (Chhandogya Upanishad VIII. 3. 2). Those who live in the region of thought cannot fathom the depths of the being of Reality.

Since bondage consists in mere ignorance of an existent Fact, liberation consists in Pure Knowledge of Truth. This knowledge is not the *apara-vidya* or the lower knowledge which is concerned with the thinking process, but *para-vidya*, the higher knowledge "by which That Imperishable One is attained", which is the direct immediacy of Self-Identical Consciousness. Pure Knowledge is not a *vritti* of the *manas*, but the *svarupa* of the Atman. It is not so much knowing as being; it is not becoming. One cannot remove wrong knowledge by adoring or loving wrong knowledge, not even by meditating on wrong knowledge. The misconception of the rope as a snake cannot be sublated by meditating on the snake or worshipping the snake. It is knowledge that removes ignorance, fear and pain. Objectless knowledge, free from activity of all kind, is what is meant by that knowledge which brings instantaneous liberation, *sadyo-mukti*. Brahman is unknowable through means which serve an end. Pure Knowledge is not a means to an end but the end itself. It is not "knowing something", but simply

“Knowledge”. The moment Pure Knowledge dawns, there is a simultaneous and sudden illumination of Existence and the disappearance of nescience and bondage. “By knowing Him alone, one reaches the Immortal; there is no other way to go over there” (Svetasvatara Upanishad. III. 8). Knowledge alone is *moksha*.

*He who knows that Supreme Brahman becomes Brahman itself.*

- Mundaka Upanishad III. 2. 9.

If a person wants to reach himself, there is no process of walking to himself or approaching himself through any relational functioning. To reach himself is to know himself. Here knowing is not a means to reach himself but knowing itself is reaching. It is like a sleeping man waking up and knowing himself, which is also at once being himself. Means and end are identical in the case of the knowledge of something which is the very being of him who tries to know it. This knowledge is not dependent on the capricious knowing subject, but the nature of the Object, Brahman, which is eternally real. No action which involves an objective modification can sublate the primal ignorance, for such action is not antagonistic to ignorance. Ignorance cannot remove ignorance, even as darkness cannot remove darkness. The method of Pure Knowledge is the absolute way of realising the Absolute. Here the way and the destination are the same. Consciousness, even when it is in the state of apparent limitation, is controlled by the absolute law of its higher real nature which is not within the sphere of an individual necessity. All thought is perforce based on the principle of the Conscious Integration of Existence. Pain is the effect of directing thought against the Absolute Necessity which requires, according to the rule of perfection of existence, each state of the individual consciousness to attune itself to it. Pure Knowledge simply illuminates us, but does not require us to do something after that illumination. Pure Knowledge is not an act, for it is not independent of that which is to be known. Even *shravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana* are not actions in the true sense, for they presuppose the knowledge of that which is their aim. Ascertainment of the nature of Reality is itself the beginning of the process of Truth-realisation. Intellect and intuition are not antagonistic but differ only in the degree and the nature of their comprehension of Truth. The direct knowledge of Reality is the zenith of the experience which has its starting point in the shining of the higher purified intellect. It does not, however, mean that intellectual appreciation of Reality is the goal of philosophy, for the search after Truth does not end here. But it cannot be denied that our perception of Reality has, somehow, a direct bearing on how far we succeed in shaking ourselves free from the conviction that the world of appearance is real. Intellect is lifted up and not nullified in intuition. *Viveka* is not the intuitional Truth but an intellectual discrimination, and yet, it is this clarified perception that paves the way to the highest experience in intuition. *Viveka* gets merged in *jnana*. The intellectual knowledge of Reality is the fundamental requisite for the dissolution of thought in the intuitional wisdom of Truth. Even the mere decisive intelligent grasping of the nature of Truth changes the spirit of man’s life, and his feelings grow deeper, wider and subtler every moment. Intellect is the gateway to intuition. Reason is necessary to justify faith in Truth. Metaphysical acumen is the foundation on which is built the edifice of transcendental Experience of the Absolute. The true philosopher is not a creature of his intellect, but a sage in the making. His method may be classified under three heads in the order of succession, the fourth state being the ultimate realisation itself:

1. Integral Understanding of the Nature of Reality;
2. Repeated assertion of the Integral Understanding;
3. Progressive dissolution of the Integral Thought in Integral Consciousness;
4. Absolute Experience which transcends all relations.

These stages correspond to *shravana*, *manana*, *nididhyasana* and *sakshatkara* in the terminology of the Vedanta. Each succeeding stage here is the effect of the deepening and the expanding of the preceding stage. Even the integral thought or the infinite psychosis (*brahmakara-vritti*) of the third stage is only a 'stage', a 'step' which destroys all ignorance and finally destroys itself, too, in That which is beyond being and non-being, beyond knowledge and ignorance, beyond joy and sorrow, beyond substance, quality and relation, beyond space, time, cause, effect; beyond everything.

*He, who has become the Pure Light by the Pace of Knowledge attained through the affirmation of the Attributeless Being, beholds it.*

- Mundaka Upanishad III. 1. 8.

Knowledge of Brahman is not an act, and Brahman is not a result of an action or an effect produced through a change in the being of the one who knows it. The rope that is perceived on the sublation of the ignorance conjuring up the false snake is not the production of any act but is merely the unaffected existence which was such even prior to the negation of the ignorance which appeared in relation to it. The knowledge of Brahman is independent of human endeavour, and so, it cannot be connected with any act which is by nature relative and is always what is *known*, an external to knowledge, and is never the same as or related to Consciousness which is by nature trans-empirical and unmodifiable. Nor is Brahman related to an act as the object of the act of knowledge, for knowledge is not an action. Knowledge is being. If knowledge is to become an act, then, who is to know this act of knowledge? The attempt to know such a knower would only land one in an infinite regress from which extrication is not possible. Knowledge of Brahman is being Brahman, and this is *moksha* or Liberation. *moksha* is not what is produced, for it is eternal. The realisation of Brahman is the realisation of the Atman or the Inner Self, and since no action can be a help in knowing oneself, *moksha* or Self-realisation is not the result of any action. Action or movement has a meaning when what is to be reached or effected is outside in space, but is ineffective when what is to be reached is the reacher himself, who is not something which is situated in space or changing in time, i.e., when Consciousness is what is reached and also the reacher. The knower cannot be known through an act of knowledge, and there is no such thing as a knower of a knower or a knower of knowledge. Individualistic knowledge is a mental act, but the Absolute-Knowledge which is Being itself cannot be an act. In knowing an external thing knowledge appears as a mental or an intellectual process, but Brahman is not anything external, and so it cannot be known through any process or act. Knowledge which knows Brahman is Brahman itself; the knower, the knowledge and the known are one in Brahman.

All activity is a manifestation of the defective nature of the imperfect individual. Action which is a means to achieving an unachieved end is incompatible with Perfection which is Supreme Fulfilment. Action is not the essential nature of a thing; it is the agitation of the illusory vestures in which things are shrouded that is called action. It is possible to

change the course of an action, but Self-Knowledge is ever unchanging. Action is relative; Knowledge is absolute. Action is dependent on the individual doer; Knowledge is independent of the individual and rests solely on the unchanging object, Brahman, with which it is identical. Knowledge is not subject to the process of producing, obtaining, purifying or modifying as action is and as the results of action are. After an act there is something to be known or attained other than the act; but after attaining Knowledge there is nothing to be done and nothing else to be attained. Action is of the nature of prompting or inciting one to something else outside but Knowledge is Illumination itself which is at once the breaking of the bond of *samsara* and the experience of the Perfection of the Absolute. The Jnana-Marga or the Path of Knowledge, because it aims at a fusion of the means and the end in one, is, for those who are not endowed with the necessary equipments, extremely hard to tread, and the difficulty is well pointed out in such references to it as "the razor's edge", "the pathless path", and the like, which show that Knowledge has a unique track of its own which is not what is known to the mind and the intellect working with the material supplied by the senses. "The path of the Knowers is untraceable like the track of birds in the sky and of aquatic beings in water." As the great Acharya, Sankara, has said, "The intelligent and learned person who is an expert in arguing in favour of Truth and refuting what is false and goes counter to it, who is endowed with the qualities mentioned above, is the one fit for the reception of Self-Knowledge. Only he is said to have the fitness to enquire into and know Brahman, who has the discrimination between the Real and the unreal, whose consciousness is directed away from the unreal, who is possessed of inward composure and the other virtues, and who is yearning for Liberation" (Vivekachudamani, 16, 17). Only those who have a penetrating insight and are perfectly dispassionate can walk the Path of Knowledge.

### THE DENIAL AND THE AFFIRMATION

The above threefold process of Truth-realisation is carried on through the methods of *denial* and *affirmation*. The denial is the forced negation of the microcosmic and the macrocosmic objectivity, a transcendence of the superficial phenomenal vestures; of the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual and the nescious planes of existence, which, both individually and cosmically, constitute the gross, the subtle and the causal manifestations differing in the degree of the intensity of their objectifying power. All these are denied as

"not this, not this,"

for, That which is the Real is not this which is seen and which appears to create a difference in existence. Even the worship of God outside oneself is not ultimately correct, for here God becomes an object set against a subject. Everything that is an object of knowledge is ultimately unreal, a 'not-That', and "he who worships a divinity second to his own self, thinking 'I am one; he is another', knows not (the Truth); he is like a sacrificial animal" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad I. 4. 10). "One should adore the Self alone as dear" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad I. 4. 8). Even an objective God is a self-limitation of the Absolute, and so a being existing as the subjective knower of an objective existence and the objective ideal of the subjective devotee. God is the cosmic integration of the physical, the subtle and the causal universe, whereas man is an individual disintegration into the physical, the subtle and the causal body. Hence, both

the individual and *Ishvara* are phenomenal beings, though *Ishvara* is to a very large extent more real than the individual. Anyway, all objective beings, whether individual or cosmic, are to be denied through the force of the integrating thought which moves towards the Unity of Existence. The Taittiriya Upanishad (II. 8; II. 2-6) explains this method of self-transcendence, where the five objective layers of consciousness are crossed over to the experience of the Absolute. Each internal layer is subtler and more extensive than the external ones and pervades them as their self or very being. Hence, when, through this method of negative assertion aided by faith and reason, all the external consciousness-sheaths are stepped over, the innermost real Self, the Brahman, which includes and transcends all these as their sole Being, is realised. Here, the body and the world are simultaneously negated in all their degrees of manifestation, and thus Reality is experienced in its Essence.

The affirmative method is a direct attempt to identify oneself with the Absolute. It starts with the attunement of oneself with every being of the universe, and then proceeds with the ideas of Eternity, Infinity, Immortality, Immutability, Completeness, Independence and Absoluteness. This is a much bolder method than the negative one, because positivity is always a harder reality than negativity, more difficult to grapple with, and hence a greater amount of courage, perseverance, patience, firmness and severity of will are needed here.

*“I am the Absolute”, and “All this is the Absolute”,*

are the two forms of the positive assertion of Reality. These are the two stages of Experience-Whole, the latter succeeding the former. The former is in relation to oneself, the individual, and the latter is the conclusive certainty. The former arises in relation to the subjective body, while the latter arises with reference to the whole universe. At first there is the experience “I am the Reality”, and subsequently the greater experience “All is the Reality, I am the All, the Reality alone is.” “*Aham brahma asmi*” and “*sarvam khalu idam brahma*” constitute the great affirmative processes of Self-Integration, in which even the infinite psychosis (*brahmakaravritti*) generated through the first experience is dissolved in the Pure Existence-Consciousness attained through the second experience. This is a sort of attempt at drowning oneself in the Absolute-Consciousness at once by stopping all foreign dualistic thought (*vijatiyavrittinirodha*) and allowing the essential unifying consciousness to assert itself fully (*sajatiyavrittipravaha*). Thought gets buried in conscious absoluteness by brushing aside the idea of all multitudinousness and duality. The individual effort ceases at the experience of the infinite psychosis, for this is the beginning of the dissolution of the individual consciousness of separateness in the Consciousness of the Infinite Completeness. Beyond this stage of infinite cognition, it can only be the functioning of the Force of the Truth of Absolute Unity that causes the change of experience; otherwise, such an effortless transformation cannot be explained. Effort is exercised so long as objective integration or the integration of the perceptible universe is effected, but the Absolute-Integration in which the personality or the individual itself is swallowed up into Infinite Being cannot be the effect of any effort on the part of the individual. This is a super-rational mystery, and so not a subject for philosophical discussion.

The ideas of the Absolute Ocean of Light, Power, Wisdom, Bliss, Peace, Unconditioned

Plenitude and Unlimited Satisfaction are the ways of positive affirmation. There are numerous sentences in the Upanishads that suggest this process of Truth-realisation. Thought materialises itself into effect through intense affirmation, and a superior and more expanded state of consciousness thus experienced through the affirmation of the super-individualistic Truth helps in unfolding the state immediately beyond it, and thus Absolute Perfection is attained and realised in the end. This is the method of *brahmabhyasa* or *brahmabhavana* which brings immediate liberation, here and now. "Here (itself) he experiences Brahman" (Katha Upanishad VI. 14). "His vital energies do not depart; they merge right here itself" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 4. 6; III. 2. 11). The Knower of Brahman does not pass through different planes or regions; He *is*.

### **THE BRAHMAKARA-VRITTI**

The *brahmakara-vritti* is the highest expansion of the mind into the Infinite Nature of the Absolute, where the mind is withdrawn from the perception of plurality and duality and is fixed in the perception of the Infinite. It is the supreme state of the mind, the stoppage of all its modifications, where it takes the form of unlimited existence, spaceless and timeless, where nothing exists besides the limitless expanse of Consciousness. It is not a mere feeling of a state of Infinity but a positive immediateness where the thinking subject expands into the Infinite. There is a vanishing of individuality altogether, and there is the cognition of the Essence. It is the spiritual eye, the intuition vision, obtained through the repeated practice of Absolute-Affirmation. It is the last *vritti* or psychosis, whose object is its own infinite form, which is not supported by anything else, which has nothing external, which rests solely on the power of its potential and actual contents. Even this experience is to be transcended by the Absolute-Experience which is the Goal of even the *brahmakara-vritti*, where the *vritti* destroys itself by itself on account of the exhaustion of its contents through experience, and exists in Identity with the Absolute. *Brahmasamstho-amritatvameti*:

*He, who is established in Brahman, attains Immortality.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad II. 23. 1.

### **THE FACTOR OF DEVOUT MEDITATION**

The empirical rationality cannot think too much of its own independence. It is not always that the analytical intellect is guided by right experience, and when not thus guided it often passes along the very edge of a huge fall into self-deceit and delusion. Only a carefully guarded intellect can hold the torch of correct discrimination to help in proceeding rightly along the path to the higher consciousness. Faith seems to transcend the unaided reason. Faith can directly hold on to the truth declared in the *srutis*, while the theoretical reason cannot do so without passing through the lower phenomena, a scientific explanation of which is always demanded by the intellect. It wants to understand even delusion and phantasm. The formalistic intellect is a naughty child which will not listen to the words of the elders. It always wishes to be self-dependent. But this autonomous attitude is not always successful, especially when dealing with matters concerned with supersensuous and trans-empirical regions. Reason which goes against the accepted tradition of the intuition revelations of the *srutis* has to be rejected, however just such a reason may appear to be. Reason is meant to strengthen the faith which we have in the Vedic and Upanishadic declarations. If philosophical

enquiry arrives at a conclusion different from these, it may well be considered to have been led astray by false shadows. Even in the so-called rationality - except, of course, that rare higher pure reason which is independent of causality and the categories - with which man in the world is ordinarily acquainted, there is, as a matter of fact, hidden behind an element of faith in and devotion and surrender to one's own convictions and persuasions which are brought about by the *relations* causing experiences in an individual. It is not the pure independent reason, but instinctive experience, controlling even the lower logical reason which is inseparable from the causal chain and the categories, that forms the ground of the life of an individual. Rationality proceeds from experiences which themselves cannot be accounted for rationally. Sensuous perception forms the basis of the *relative* reason and the logic which argues in terms of the cause-and-effect-relation. The validity of this perception itself cannot be established by reason. Truly, our sense-experiences befool us every moment and we take pride in running after the mirage. Our yesterday's reasoned-out facts and beliefs are contradicted by today's, and today's by tomorrow's. Then, is the certainty that what we intellectually ascertain and instinctively believe in is not a mistake of the confused mind? The intellectual sifting of empirical categories with great intensity of sincerity and realistic fervour is itself clear proof of how the intellect and the instinct deceive us by making us love and take deep interest in what is to be completely contradicted and negated in a higher and truer eternal experience. Faith in the Ideal as ascertained by intuitive cognition, the *srutis*, seems to be the only solace to the individual who cannot directly see the higher light. Upon him shall descend the Grace of the Supreme Being:

*One who is free from the personal will beholds Him and becomes freed from sorrow - through the grace of the Creator (he beholds) the majesty of the Self.*

- Katha Upanishad II. 20.

The innate nature of all discrete beings is to love an external being. An individual cannot live without loving something or some condition which he is not himself. Love for external things is an involuntary internal urge to become unified with everything by filling the gap in one's being, and, thus, reach Truth-Experience. But this is a vain attempt, for the One Truth is not to be experienced through objective contact of any kind. Man is punished with an objective tendency. "The Creator inflicted the senses with outward activity" (Katha Upanishad IV. 1) and this cosmic drive is felt in all individuals, in spite of themselves. The mind alone is the true sense of all perceptions, and its pleasure, therefore, lies in objective willing.

Our folly lies in that we allow the mind to run in all directions. The dissipated rays of the mind take interest in countless objects of the universe, both seen and heard. The essential power of the mind manifests itself only when it is centred in infinity as its object. It is the concentrated ray of the sun passing through a lens that burns things focussed through it, not so much the rays that are scattered in all directions. The mind should be concentrated on the One Substance, not localised in space, but filling all existence. This One Substance is the Supreme Being, God, the object of devout meditation. Love for the objects of *samsara* has a selfish origin and so is a fetter to bind the self to birth, life and death in transmigratory existence. The love for God is a veritable sacrifice of the self to the universal, and is, therefore, redemptive of

phenomenal consciousness. The love for the Universal Being is the zenith of love. The ego cannot assert itself, for God is everywhere. The mind cannot modify itself into various psychoses, for, to it, there is no object but God. Wherever it moves, it feels the presence of the One Being. The whole world is clothed with the glory of God. He who is supremely powerful and supremely wise pervades the earth and the heaven at one stretch. The mind, not being fed by sensual food, dies of itself, and the self reaches God, the consummation of all desires and aspirations.

*This is the final Goal; from this they do not return; thus, this is the check (of samsara).*

- Prashna Upanishad I. 10.

This is drowning oneself in Truth-Consciousness. This is plunging into the ocean of bliss. This is taking a bath in the sea of ambrosia. This is drinking deep the immortal essence.

Meditation on the Eternal Being is the supreme form of love. A belief in the degrees of truth and reality is necessitated by the fact that the universe appears to be a gradual materialisation of the Spirit. A completely transcendent being unconnected with the meditator is impossible to be meditated upon, for a negation of duality in the beginning itself brings about a statis of the faculty of thinking, an inert condition which frustrates the meditative process. Meditation starts with duality and ends in Unity, from an adoration of God to the being of God.

The Purusha-Sukta of the Rig Veda describes one of the grandest visions of the Supreme Being (Rig Veda, X. 90). This is the highest object of spiritual meditation with form. The Vishnu-Sukta says:

*Just as the eye spread in space (sees the expanse), the wise always behold That Vishnu's Supreme State. The wise Brahmanas who are always spiritually awake, sing of in diverse ways and illuminate this, that Supreme State of Vishnu.*

- Rig Veda, I. 22. 20, 21.

A later Upanishad (Skanda), mentioning these Rig-verses, says that "this is the teaching of Vedas for the attainment of Salvation, and this is the secret doctrine." Many other minor Upanishads quote these verses as the substance of their teaching in the end, and this is used also as the colophon of many Vedic hymns. This and the famous hymn of the *purusha*, with the Nasadiya-Sukta, are, as it were, the sum and substance of the Vedic vision of the Supreme Being as endowed with the best conceptual qualities carried to the degree of perfection. One of the ways in which meditation on the Supreme Being is practised is through the process of the recession of all effects into the Highest Cause. Earth is dissolved by water, water is dried up by fire, fire is extinguished by air, air is absorbed by space, space is lost in the *Virat-purusha* or the God of the universe. Even this *purusha* is an expression of the Cosmic Subtle Energy which, again, is an expression of the Cosmic Mind. The Cosmic Mind merges in the Cosmic Intelligence and the Cosmic Intelligence is merged in the Unmanifest, the Indescribable Primordial Nature, *Mula-Prakriti*, the Undifferentiated Transcendental Power of Objectivity. The overstepping of this final causal state unfolds the Consciousness of Being which is the Absolute, Brahman. This meditation is practised through a progressive transcendence of

the lower states with the help of ceaseless and severe persistence in trying to dwell in a deeper and a wider consciousness every moment. Every human being has the power to do this, but it depends upon how far he is successful in satisfying himself that this alone is his sole duty in life.

It would not be out of place to paraphrase here in a nutshell the essence of what Patanjali has said about yoga:

*yoga is the inhibition of the modifications of the mind-stuff. This leads to the resting of the Self in its essential nature. The control of the mental modifications is effected through practice and dispassion. Of these, practice is the effort to secure steadiness in meditation. It becomes established when practised for a long time, without any break, and with perfect devotion. Dispassion is the consciousness of mastery arrived at through desirelessness for objects both seen and heard. Higher than that is the desirelessness even for the primal modes of existence, reached through the consciousness of the Self. Success is quick to those whose practice is intense with dispassion. Then comes the attainment of the Inner Consciousness, and also the absence of all obstacles. Practice of Affirmation should be done of the One Reality. Then, the consciousness is filled with Truth. Thus, with the restraint of all mental modifications and impressions, is attained the seedless Super-Consciousness.*

- yoga-Sutras: Samadhi-Pada.

For those who cannot meditate on the highest Divinity, *Ishvara*, Patanjali prescribes meditation on "Dispassioned Ones," i.e., persons who have realised the Supreme Being. We see in the Upanishads, too, how it was not always that the seekers used to devote themselves to the Pure Absolute, but there were many who contented themselves with relative realisations of cosmic powers, though they were intended to lead them on to the Absolute. Some mystics practise meditation through a twofold process: (1) considering the whole universe as being the One Mass of the Body of the Cosmic Deity which they adore, and (2) perceiving the universe as filled with infinite number of identical forms of the Deity of adoration. Here, the factor which aids Absolute Integration, after attaining objective integration, is the Grace of the Universal Being. Divine Grace is the Consciousness-Pull or the attraction of the part towards the Whole which is more powerful and more real than the part, and the natural spiritual impetus which drives the soul to know itself in essence, when it surrenders its part-consciousness to the Whole-consciousness, i.e., when it crosses the gravitational region of disintegrating and diversifying nature and enters the region of the integrating drive, which, the Power of Truth-Consciousness, has its spiritual gravitational force running towards the absolutely Real Being. The meditator attains progressive salvation, passing through the different planes of the higher consciousness.

### THE SYNTHESIS

The methods of the Affirmation of the Absolute and the meditation on the Universal Divine Being are not actually much different in their essence. The extreme of rational thinking proclaims that since change and duality are unreal, the factors of objective meditation and divine grace lose their validity. It says that the conscious affirmation of

Pure Knowledge is not like meditation on an external God, for the former is non-different from the object of knowledge, while the latter is independent of the object of meditation. In the first case Knowledge is dependent on the essential nature of the object (*vastu-tantra*), and hence self-existent and eternal, whereas, in the second case, meditation is dependent on the idea of the subject (*purusha-tantra*), and hence capricious and phenomenal. The object of Pure Knowledge has its nature connected with it in a relation of simultaneous and immediate identity, while the nature of the object of meditation is connected with the meditator's thought in a subject-object-relationship and changes according to the desire of the meditator. Hence, meditation becomes only an apology for Pure Knowledge.

The seekers of Truth through the method of Pure Knowledge cannot be many on earth, since such a rigorous ascertainment and assertion requires the brightest intelligence and the purest heart, free from the desire to have any dealing with anything external to the Self. The majority of seekers are suited only to the method of devout meditation on God as conceived of by them. Moreover, the grace of God is a fact of divine revelation due to the force of Truth-Consciousness experienced through the total surrender of the personal will. This practically amounts to what the philosopher-seeker does through Pure Knowledge and absolute disdain for all relational concepts. We do not find, even in the Upanishads, many people, except a few like Sanatkumara and Yajnavalkya, taking recourse to such a strict method of Pure Knowledge in its highest logical sense. The majority of the *vidyas* of the Upanishads in general abounds in qualitative meditations on the Absolute, and it is very difficult to find such *vidyas* there as devote themselves to the method of realisation of Truth through self-identical Knowledge. Only the Pure Absolutism of Yajnavalkya suggests this method. This shows how rare seekers are who are prepared to remorselessly cut the chain of qualities and relations through the ruthless axe of Pure Knowledge. This immediate Knowledge is with precise reference to the indeterminate absolute Reality, whereas, the meditative process is in relation to the determinate cosmic Reality. As far as practical religion is concerned, the two do not seem to pull man from two opposite sides, but act as the Higher Wisdom and the lower knowledge of the Absolute.

### **SELF-PURIFICATION AND DISCIPLINE**

Knowledge and meditation, however, are not possible for one who is worldly, sensual, deluded proud, egoistic and selfish. It is the clean mirror that reflects the shining sun and not the wall built of mud and stone. Love for the Infinite means detachment from all particulars and renunciation of objective indulgence. Renunciation is the denial of the validity of plural and dual consciousness in the light of the truth that 'Existence is One.' The discriminative grasping of the nature of the essential existence implies the negation of the state of appearance which is in contradiction to the nature of Reality. An aspiration for higher purposes in life necessitates a transformation and transcendence of lower conditions of limited life. The mortal and the Immortal are set in opposition to each other. The instinctive assertions of the individual ego can never be consistent with the nature of the Absolute. So long as there is faith in the objective nature of the world, there is a loss of the highest purpose in life. There cannot be perfect satisfaction and Divine Life except in the realisation of the Transcendent Presence. It requires a rejection of the form of the world, together with its contents. Likes and dislikes, attractions and repulsions, are distractions which hinder the soul's progress towards Eternity. The knots

of the heart which tie the individual to the earth must be broken before the central court of Reality is stepped into. A complete surrender of selfishness and egoity to the cause of Spiritual Perfection is the condition demanded by the process of Truth-realisation. Truth does not pay heed to lame excuses and twisting of ultimate facts for one's material good. A refusal to feed the selfish individuality and an expansion of consciousness with an absolute end are what pave the way to one's Final Liberation.

In the Upanishads we find a scientific and psychological presentation of what is the greatest obstacle to Self-realisation. They classify this under three distinct heads:

*Desire for progeny; Desire for wealth; Desire for world.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III. 5.

The first is one of the two vital urges of life, the other being the instinct of self-preservation. It is the expression of the creative impulse said to have been set at work ever since the original creative will of the Universal Being was let loose. Variety is the meaning of manifestation. Every individual force is a copy of the cosmic creative force in a state of riotous degeneration and uncontrollable activity. It is not easy to direct this self-multiplying nature (*avidya*) unless one starts to work against it with the help of the higher self-integrating Nature (*vidya*). The seeker of Truth goes to the very root of this self-reproductive energy and compels it to diffuse itself in the Ground-Noumenon. One who lets go the flow of the creative force gets entangled in the endless process of diversifying and multiplying existence and ever remains away from the Consciousness of the Absolute.

Those who have known the spiritual reality refrain from the delusive instinct of creation and hold fast to the Consciousness of Truth.

*Brahmanas, having known that Self, rise above the desire for progeny, desire for wealth, desire for world, and live the life of mendicants.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III. 5.

The seekers who austereley transform the objectifying energy into the Conscious Power that causes the blossoming of the self-sense into the objectless Consciousness are the integrated aspirants of the Absolute, whose power is used to carry on profound spiritual meditation. The Chhandogya Upanishad says that, when purity and light are increased, there is a generation of steady consciousness which shatters open the knots of the self. Such glorious aspirants glow with a lustrous spiritual strength which handles with ease even the most formidable forces of nature. They are the heroes who have girt up their loins with the vow of leaping over phenomenon into the Heart of Existence. Love that wants an object is not perfect. True love is never expressed. It simply melts in experience. It is transient affection and defective faith that pour themselves out on objects of sense. Love is spilt on ashes and not ennobled when it is directed to fleeting appearances. True love is self-integrating and not the medium of the interaction of the subject and the object. All energy is creative, but we have to direct it away from diversifying creativity to the unifying one. *avidya* and *vidya* are both the creative powers of the Absolute; only the one is a descent to ignorance and separation, while the other is an ascent to knowledge and unity.

Desire for wealth is the desire for possessions the greed for material gain, which is the

effect of the instinctive love for life, the self-preserved impulse of the individual nature. As being is more real than becoming, the desire for self-preservation is a more powerful instinct than self-reproduction. The two are intimately connected with each other. They function mainly through the senses having the water-principle as their source of energy, which are the working channels of the desire for phenomenal existence and formative action. The whole business of ordinary gross life is essentially the one play of the twofold individual nature of protecting and increasing individuality. These positively harmful impulses have their negative phase in indolence and sleep, which is a temporary winding up and an adjournment of the preservative and the creative action, when the senses at work are tired, or when they are denied their objective demands from the external nature. Talkativeness and physical activity are two others of the dynamic forms of the vital creative impulse which takes recourse to violent methods of self-expression when it is not allowed to do its normal function of creation. The stubborn and unsubdued lower creative nature flows out impetuously in a thousand channels and tethers the individual to the social life through creating innumerable relations between the individual and the other contents of the world. The desire to live *as an individual* and *in diversity* with relative connections with one another is the whole scene of the worldly life kept up by this mighty process of the disintegrating nature. When such a process is forcedly stopped, there is a general negative reaction of the active forces in the form of bringing forgetfulness of everything by inducing deep sleep in the individual. Sometimes they react with a bursting activity. The task of the aspirant lies, therefore, in a double guarding of himself against positive action and negative inertia.

Desire for world is the desire for one's own name, fame, power, lordship and enjoyment in this world or in a heavenly world. The first two are born of the high estimation of the greatness of one's individual being, whereby the hankering for advertising and proclaiming oneself to other individuals and for receiving high praise, honour and exaltation from other individuals is strengthened. This reception of worship of one's ego is given a further elevated push by the desire to domineer over other individuals and stand above them all, distinctly recognised as great in knowledge and power. This process of egoistic relation with external beings which is used to harden the sense of individual reality is the outcome of the great conceit born of the double misfortune of forgetting the Real and catching the unreal. The height of selfish nature is reached in the craving for great name, wide fame and enormous power, which block the ego-consciousness away from expanding itself into Infinite Consciousness. The original universal momentum of creation and preservation somehow gets perverted and spoilt when it begins to work in the individual which falls too short of the Real. The perversion of Truth actually starts, in one sense, with *Ishvara* himself, though he remains unfettered through his immense proximity to the Absolute, and especially because of his having no being second to himself, which he may relate himself to. The shedding of tears, however, starts when duality and multiplicity begin to play havoc, and through an extreme of passion and darkness the individual is rendered incapable of knowing what actually is Truth and what its relation is to the world and its contents. The omnipotence of the Absolute Nature degrades itself in the individual in the craving for self-exaltation and supremacy over others, which is the effect of the misapprehension of the true relation existing among individuals. The universal natures of omnipresence and omniscience are cast down into the states of clinging to individual life and individual

conceit respectively. Infatuated love is the unconscious blind movement along the wrong path of the one bond of integral love that connects beings of the universe into a one whole being of Self-Bliss. The Self-Love of the Universal Being gets degenerated into relational attachments among its individual parts. Selfishness and egoism are the crude rotten forms of the instinct of Eternal Self-Existence misrepresented by the action of the concealing and the distracting power of Reality. The whole drama of phenomenal life is a blind struggle of the disintegrated consciousness to find itself in the truth of the absolute nature of Reality. Life's struggle cannot cease as long as Absolute Consciousness is not realised, for the eternal nature of Reality will not cease to assert itself in the individual even for a single moment. But the absolute urge appears to be incapable of being answered in the individual so long as it is unable to know the true meaning of the involuntary calls and the higher demands of life given rise to by the phenomenal nature and the Truth-Impetus. The individual's ignorance of the facts of experience is due to the presence of forces of intense clouding and self-dividing of consciousness, respectively known as *avidya* or *tamas* and *kama* or *rajas*. The absence of the knowledge of one's relation to the Absolute Self-Identity of all individuals is the cause of life's distresses. There is a foolishness in every individual which makes it believe in the manifoldness of the individuals, and thus reap the bitter fruit of transmigratory existence with its dreadful concomitant laws of action and reaction, cause and effect, etc., which turn ceaselessly the endless cycle of the birth and the death of individual states of consciousness. The breaking of this dissipated relation of world-endurance can be affected only through the higher knowledge which soars above the relations of space, time, cause and effect. Without transcending the sway of these phenomenal relations one cannot hope to achieve success in acquiring Pure Knowledge or practising meditation on God. Truly, there is no other relation among individuals than the fullness of the being of a conscious identity of itself. There should be no attitude of an individual towards other individuals except of the awareness of the Self-Identity of Complete Being. There is no ignorance and sorrow as long as the individual is at least an absolute individual, *Ishvara*, where there is no subject-object-opposition, but misery shows its head the moment duality-consciousness dawns, and multiplicity-consciousness makes matters worse. The evils that are bred by individual thought-relations act as the *mala* or the dirt that covers the pure consciousness of the Self. The relations themselves are the *vikshepa* or the tossing force, and the delusion that causes relations is the *avarana* or the befooling root-ignorance. This dirt, this tossing and this veiling, which are the causes of bondage, have to be removed through the intense practice of meditation and Knowledge.

## ETHICS

The Upanishads lay down that an aspirant after the Absolute should be endowed with

*Tranquillity of mind, self-control, cessation from activity, fortitude, faith and concentration of thought.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 4. 23.

Self-purification, self-discipline and austere penances consist in the negation of individual relations through total self-abnegation and refusal to indulge in subject-object-relationship. The difficulty of this achievement is well warned-about:

*A sharpened edge of a razor, hard to tread, a difficult path is this": and therefore we are advised: "Arise! Awake! Obtaining men of wisdom, know (it).*

- Katha Upanishad III. 14.

And further,

*To them belongs that unblemished Abode of Brahman, in whom there is no crookedness and falsehood, nor tricks.*

- Prashna Upanishad I. 16.

*He dries up even to the very roots, who speaks untruth.*

- Prashna Upanishad VI. 1.

*This Atman is attainable through truth, austerity, perfect knowledge, self-restraint, unremittingly (practised).*

- Mundaka Upanishad III. 1. 5.

The Upanishads are never tired of emphasising that truth (Satya) and self-restraint (*brahmacharya*) are the most important of the accessories to Purity and Knowledge. We find them almost everywhere suggesting that Brahman is reached through *brahmacharya*. Prajapati's instructions to gods, men and demons, who, by nature, have an excess of passion, greed and anger in them respectively, lay down "self-restraint (continence), charity and compassion" as the remedies for these three propensities (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad V. 2). Complete world-renunciation also is suggested in the statements: "Brahmanas who know the Self wander as mendicants," and "practise penance in forests, living on alms." The scholar is asked to "become disgusted with learning and desire to live as a child", and then to "get disgusted even with the childlike state" and "become a sage", and then, again, to "transcend the states of both sagehood and non-sage-hood" and "become a Brahmana (Knower of Brahman)." "Everything is dear for the love of the Self," and hence, towards all that is seen and heard a total indifference should be developed. In the Infinite, nothing else is seen, nothing else is heard, nothing else is known. When the self is emptied, the Absolute shall fill it with itself. "All the desires that are lodged in the heart should be plucked out" and "the five senses of knowledge should cease together with the mind, and the intellect should not function." "Not he who has not ceased from bad conduct, not he who is not tranquil, not he who is not composed in mind, can attain Him through intelligence."

The realisation of the worthlessness of having any connection with the objects of the universe is a single fatal stroke on all evil conduct. An action or a thing cannot be judged through its objective worth. Material prosperity does not become the criterion of truth and justice. "There is no hope of Immortality through wealth." The true worth of a person or a thing does not depend upon what he or it appears to others. Nothing achieved by a person, however praiseworthy and grand it may seem, is worth a farthing, if he has no knowledge of Truth. "If one is to perform sacrifices and worship and undergo penance in this world even for many thousands of years, without knowing that Imperishable Being, transient indeed is what he has done." The seeker should not be cheated by the joyous beauty and the dignified life of the sense-world. Where there is no cat, rat is the king. As long as the oceanic flood of the Consciousness of Brahman does

not uproot the tree of *samsara*, the world seems to be an adamantine truth. A thoughtful person should discriminate that his ability, his greatness, his power, his different desires and ambitions are to be spread out in the realm of the indestructible Reality and not in this world of mortals, not even in the heaven of the gods. Such separative temptations should be checked and transformed to constitute a force that reveals the Inner Essence of life. This dispassion is cultivated through the discernment of the non-different nature of the subject and the object. The indifference to the perceptible variety should always be born of an intelligent conviction of truth and not of mere failure in life. True renunciation is inseparable from an intense love for the Real. Dispassion for relative life means a passion for what is absolutely true. The distaste for phenomenal life is the desire for self-integration and mystic introversion.

It is not possible to transcend finite life unless the seeker rejects all changing forms and boycotts the natural flow of the current of manifestation. The more complete the work of the manifesting nature, the more is the Truth hidden from view. The secret of triumphing over the overwhelming expressional habit of life lies in the firm holding back of the objective current. The rule of self-control does not spare the expression of even the highest intellect. Even a brilliant exposition of the nature of the Metaphysical Reality is not without the taint of some lack of restraint on the part of the philosopher. Truth is mercilessly just and exact and is not favourably disposed to even the least lapse from itself. *Brahmacharya* is a "categorical imperative", which, in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* (VIII. 5), is stated to be not merely the generally understood student-period of continence and study of the *Vedas* under a preceptor, but the entire course of life of the Brahmana, regarded as the way to the realisation of the Self. The *Anu-Gita* says that a *brahmachari* is one who has effected complete self-control, who rests in Brahman, and who moves about in the world as a form of Brahman. He is a votary of perfect non-injury and love. Compassion is the process of the Self-fulfilment of the essential Spirit through a spontaneous outflow of itself towards egoless conscious beings. The man of self-control is circumspect about the evil one who often comes even in the garb of holiness and piety. His spiritual eye is always open.

The seeker may, if necessary, know the different methods of approaching the Absolute, to clear his doubts regarding ultimate facts. But it is not always without the danger of confusing the aspirant about fundamental matters. No philosopher has ever been able to standardise the way to the realisation of Brahman. There are always what are called "ultimate doubts" which no human being can clear. Even if there are millions of methods differing from one another, they become one when extended to their own absolutes. The Absolute is one, whatever be its nature. It is best, therefore, for every seeker to take to one method and go on with it until its own absolute is reached. It will be realised that the absolute of one is the Absolute of all. "As water rained upon narrow passages runs here and there along mountains, so he who perceives many *dharma*s separately runs with them alone" (*Katha Upanishad* IV. 14). It is the nature of the Infinite Reality to appear to be accessible through infinite ways, each being true when it proceeds to the Infinite, and "as pure water poured into pure (water) becomes like that (pure water) itself, so becomes the self of the seer who has knowledge" (*Katha Upanishad* IV. 15). Clearsightedness, passionlessness, serenity, self-restraint, indifference to the world, fortitude, faith, collectedness of mind and yearning for liberation from bondage are the prerequisites of spiritual meditation.

## THE PRECEPTOR AND THE DISCIPLE

However intelligent the seeker may be, it is not possible, except in the very rare cases of the perfected unworldly beings, for him to grasp the exact technique of meditation on the Ideal of Attainment. Spiritual knowledge is imparted with the best result, not so much through the precision of reason and logic, as by image, art and beauty. It is the change of the feelings of the heart and not merely of the understandings of the intellect that touches the being of the inner man. *Adhyatma-Vidya* is the science of the innermost essence of the universe, and it does not come under the intellectual categories of objective discernment. The teachings of the sages have all had the conspicuous characteristic of appealing to the whole nature of a person, not merely to an aspect of him. The highest teachings are accomplished in the language of the heart of man. The troubles of life are not alleviated through flowery expressions and subtle hair-splitting. The cause of sorrow is rooted in the very make-up of the individual and not only in his superficial coatings. The inner disease is not cured by washing simply the outer shirt. The root of illness has to be dug out.

The best performance always becomes possible when both the subject and the object effect a conscious interaction, not so much when the effort is exercised by the subject alone. Mind is objectified universal consciousness. The conscious subject and the conscious object are both consciousness-stresses differing only in the degree of the subtlety and the expansiveness of their condition. Each higher, subtler and more expansive state is more potent and inclusive than the lower. No action or event is completely subjective or completely objective in the lower limited sense of their individuality. The truth is midway between the two. Action and reaction are the subjective and the objective forces simultaneously working, each being intimately connected with the other. The external and the internal are the two complementary phases of the one whole being. There is no purpose served when there is eye to see but no light, or, when there is light but no eye to see. The contact of both effects perception. If entire individual subjectivity were the truth, the individual would have been the absolute lord of the universe, and, if entire objectivity were the truth, no individual could attain liberation, and freedom would be a chimera. The subject and the object have, therefore, equal shares in determining the effect of their interaction. The internal and the external forms of the one power of being blend together to produce an effect.

This fact well explains the wonderful process of the teacher's imparting of knowledge to the disciple. The transformation of the consciousness of the disciple is the joint action of the receptive capacity and the conscious exertion of the disciple and the consciousness-force of the teacher sending it forth. The teacher should be

*A shrotriya and a brahmanishtha.*

- Mundaka Upanishad I. 2. 12.

The more potent spiritual energy of the teacher is infused into the less purified mental state of the disciple which results in the dispelling of the darkness and the enlightening of the mind of the latter. The consciousness of the teacher enters the dark corner in the disciple who bears it with the strength of truth and purity and receives it to the extent his mind is purged of *rajas* and *tamas*.

We hear of earnest seekers going to a teacher and imploring, "*adhihi bhagavo*

*brahma,”*

“O great sire, teach me Brahman.” Bhrigu learnt Brahma-Vidya from his teacher, Varuna, Nachiketas from Yama, Sukesha and others from Pippalada, Shaunaka from Angiras, Svetaketu from Uddalaka, Narada from Sanatkumara, Indra from Prajapati, Maitreyi from Yajnavalkya. The disciples are generally asked to observe silence and continence in sequestration for many years before being initiated into the sacred truth. They had a great joy in leading a natural life in isolated places, practising spiritual penance. The transcendental mystery is not easy to be contemplated upon amidst the distracting bustle of social life. The distant forests, thick and green, away from the touch of the air of the business of worldly life, have ever since ages managed to attract lovers of silence and peace. The forests breathe a new life, unknown to the common man, and speak in the language of eternity. They seem to be happily unaware of the revolting forces and the brute conflicts in nature which man so much complains of. In these forests, the seekers spend their time in silent meditation, entirely devoted to the Supreme Reality. “Faith, continence, austerity and knowledge” (Prashna Upanishad I. 10) are the watchwords of these blessed ones who practise Self-integration with iron-determination. The sincere votaries of Truth, equipped with all the spiritually ethical qualifications,

*“realising that the Not-Done can never be reached through what is done, getting disgust for the action-bound world,”*

went humbly and reverentially to the Preceptor for receiving from him that knowledge which reveals the Imperishable. And to them the glorious Teacher speaks the Knowledge of Brahman. The disciples were “those high-souled ones who had the highest devotion to the Supreme Being, and for their preceptor as much as for the Supreme Being.” To them alone, it is declared, the truth becomes illumined. Uddalaka, illustrating his proposition that only “he who has got a preceptor can know” the Truth, compares the one who is without a spiritual guide to a blindfolded man who may miss his way and reach some other undesirable destination due to his lack of sight. The Mundaka-Upanishad says that he who is desirous of real prosperity should worship the knower of the Self. No sophistry of intellect is allowed to hamper the growth of the divine relation that exists between the Guru and the *sishya*.

*Even the gods had doubt as to this, for truly, it is not easy to be known; very subtle is this matter.*

- Katha Upanishad I. 21.

*He is not easy to be known when told by an inferior person, though (He may be) expounded about manifoldly; unless declared by another (who is supremely wise), there is no way (of attaining Him); for He is inconceivably subtler than what is very subtle, and unarguable.*

- Katha Upanishad II. 8.

Even the proud Indra and the great Narada became humble before their teachers. This speaks of the majestic transcendentness of the Absolute, not knowable through easy means. How innocent and simple was that Satyakama who said to his teacher, when asked about his parentage,

*“Sire, I do not know this, of what family I am; I asked my mother. She told me in reply: ‘I begot you in my youth, when I was much busy in service, and I, being such, do not know this, of what family you are.’”*

Then, the teacher inferred that Satyakama must be a Brahmana, telling him that “a Non-Brahmana will not be able to speak thus (the truth)” and accepted him as disciple. Narada bows down and says, “O Lord, I am in sorrow; may the Lord take me across sorrow.”

*Not by reasoning is this knowledge to be attained; instructed about by another, it is easy to be known.*

- Katha Upanishad II. 9.

These make it clear that Self-knowledge cannot be attained by an individual striving for himself in his ignorance independently without a teacher. None can reach it by his own personal effort, without a proper guide; very mysterious and subtle is it. Book-learning is dead knowledge; the knowledge which directly comes from the teacher is a dynamic consciousness-power. With regard to this it is said:

*The father should speak the knowledge of Brahman to the eldest son or a worthy pupil not to anyone else; even if one should offer him this sea-girt (earth) filled with its treasures, verily, (he should consider that) this (knowledge) is greater than that; verily, this is greater than that.*

- Chhandogya Upanishad III. 11. 5.

The initiation is only a matriculation of the pupil in the spiritual current, but the actual effort to soar high into the Absolute is to be exercised by him with the grace of the preceptor through protracted

*meditation which is the firm restraining of the senses, with vigilance and non-pride, for the meditative condition comes and goes.*

- Katha Upanishad VI. 11.

There is no greater error than spiritual pride. Even the state of high meditation is transitory, it passes away quickly. Let there be no pride, no conceit, even if one may feel that he is about to be finally liberated. The light of discrimination should always be kept bright. When the process of practice is perfect, there quickly comes the highest experience of Reality.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE ATTAINMENT OF LIBERATION

#### THE NATURE OF SADYO-MOKSHA

All endeavours aim at the common ideal of the perpetual abolition of sorrow and the experience of unending bliss. Bliss is only in the Infinite and sorrow is only in the finite. There is no bliss in the finite, and no sorrow in the Infinite. Therefore, the attainment of the Infinite Life is the supreme purpose of finite life. Knowledge and meditation have both their dear aim in the realisation of the Absolute. *Moksha* is the highest exaltation of the self in its pristine nature of supreme perfection. Emancipation is the Consciousness of the Reality not becoming something which previously did not exist not travelling to another world of greater joy. It is the knowledge of eternal existence, the awareness of the essential nature of Pure Being. It is the Freedom attained by knowing that we are always free. Knowledge is not merely the cause for freedom' it is itself freedom. *Moksha* consists in *jnana* (Knowledge) and is not the effect or product of *jnana*. *Jnana* is Existence itself, and hence it cannot be a means to attain *jnana* of Existence, which is *moksha*, as a thing does not attain itself. *chit* is the same as *sat*. To be what is, is *moksha*. It is to realise one's Self, to be *Oneself*, and to be *Oneself* is to be the All.

"There is no consciousness after death (of individuality)," says Yajnavalkya. Since Consciousness alone is the entirety of being, there is no consciousness of anything objective in the highest state. It is the Fullness of Perfect Existence. It is, but is not anything; it sees, but sees not anything; it hears, but hears not anything; it knows, but knows not anything. It does not go to where it was not, it does not get what it did not have. Even the expression "It knew only itself" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad I. 4. 10) is an understatement of Truth, for it implies self-consciousness which is the characteristic of *Ishvara* and not Brahman. Brahman does not know, for it is knowledge; It does not enjoy, for it is enjoyment; It is not "existent" but "existence". It is non-material, has no contact with any objective being. "It eats nothing; no one eats it". It is the supreme "incorporeal which pain and pleasure do not touch." The realisation of the Self is in a way like the shining of the sun when the clouds no more cover him. It is the regaining of originality in the absolute sense. It is "quenching the fire of death with the water of knowledge" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III. 2. 11)). It is deathless impersonality of conscious nature, not merely living as an eternal person. A person, even the absolute person (*Ishvara*), is non-eternal. No real change takes place in the realisation of Truth, but it appears to be all change! "Though the Full may be taken out from the Full, the Full alone remains without change". Even the utter extinction of personality does not involve the least transformation in true existence. It is the simple knowing, the great knowing, so mysterious and complicated, the ever unsolved problem, the only problem of the whole universe. And yet, it is the only Truth to the Knower The curious riddle, somehow, makes one feel that. truly, nothing *happens* in Infinity, though worlds may seem to roll in it. That which is so simply said as "Existence-Consciousness" and which is so easy to understand, is, after all, a hard nut to crack - never understood, never known, never realised by any individual, the supreme identity of the greatest positivity and the greatest negation in one. The Absolute is really supra-relative, supra-mental, supra-

rational. Whatever is spoken or thought is not Truth as it is. Truth is the union of the cosmic thinker and the cosmic thinking. There is no separate object of this thinking, nothing that is thought of here, for thinking itself is the object of thinking, thought thinks itself, all objects are mere processes of cosmic thinking, nothing real in themselves. Thought and its object, knowledge and the known, seeing and the seen, relation and the object related to, mind and the universe, are identical with the Universal Essence. The conscious transcending of the successive double relation in the cosmos, of the thinker who is identical with the thinking, and of the thinking which is identical with that which is thought of, is Liberation. The universe has no reality independent of its Universal Knower. The original delusion of the difference between the thinker and the thinking is greater than and is the cause of the secondary delusion of the difference between the thinking and the thought of. There is the thinking because there is the thinker; there is the thought-of because there is the thinking. The thinking is the object of the thinker; the thought-of is the object of the thinking. Egoism or duality-consciousness and the world or multiplicity-consciousness are the respective effects of the mistake that the object is independent of and different from the subject in both these cases. *Samsara* is the knower-knowledge-known-relationship. But it must however be remembered here that the distinction between the thinker and the thinking and that between the thinking and the thought-of is not valid to the Cosmic Consciousness of *Ishvara*. This distinction is superimposed by the individual on *Ishvara* when it perceives, as an individual knower, its own distinctness and the variety of world-manifestation. Relations are meaningful to the individual alone and not to the Universal Being. These distinctions are present even in the superhuman individuals, even in those who have reached *brahma-loka* or the subtlest possible state which is within the jurisdiction of individualistic consciousness. That which is above all distinctions and relations is Brahman, the knowledge of which is neither thinking nor sleeping. This is that which is asserted through endless denials, impossible to describe, impossible to imagine, nothing, everything! The only definition of the nature of Reality is perhaps "That which is not anything, but not nothing, that which is everything, and knows nothing but itself". That is Brahman! Therefore, bondage and liberation are only a matter of forgetfulness and awareness of fact, respectively, and not a change in being. The complete transcendence of one's individuality is at once the realisation of the Absolute. The moment the *jiva* is negated, the cosmic play is explained, and the cosmos and *Ishvara* sink into Brahman.

*Moksha* is neither a mass of consciousness nor self-consciousness. It is the very life and order of the universe, ever present, unchanging. It transcends even the sense of immortality which, also, is conceptual. The Light of the Absolute puts an end to all relative existence, and the world does not exist even as a remembrance. There is no such thing as inert, inanimate, dead matter or blind force. It is all Supreme Force, Knowledge and Bliss without motion of mind. There are no planes of existence, no states of-consciousness, no degrees of reality. This is the most blessed and supreme state of absolute freedom and conscious eternal life, not merely a conviction but actual being. It is the awful grandeur of the utter negation of limitation and experience of Infinitude, not mere continued personal life. It is the complete dissolution of thought in simple existence, which is the mightiest nothing! It is an immediate *here* and *now* of spacelessness and timelessness, the inexpressible, beyond joy and sorrow, beyond knowledge and ignorance, beyond life and death, beyond all that is beyond! It is the

fullest Reality, the completest Consciousness, the immensest Power, the intensest Bliss. Truth, knowledge, power, happiness and immortality are its shadows. Unseen, transcendent, uninferable, unthinkable, ununderstandable, indescribable, imperishable, the loftiest, the deepest, the Truth, the Great - That is the Absolute. The light of limitless number of suns is darkness in its presence. It oversteps the boundaries of being, and nullifies all ideas of existence. It is the Giant-Spirit which swallows up the mind and the ego and wipes out the individual consciousness to the very extreme. It is the Thunder that breaks the heart of the universe, the Lightning that fuses all senses of empirical reality. The bubble bursts into the ocean and the river enters the sea! The soul merges into the extremely Real.

The Grandeur of the Absolute is grander than all other grandeur. It is the crowning edifice of truth and glory. Nothing is beyond That. It is neither form, nor content, nor existent. The soul sinks into It by an experience of all-fullness - neither essence, nor kingdom, nor wisdom, neither equal nor unequal, neither static nor moving, neither sitting nor resting, neither one nor two, neither true nor false, neither this-ness nor that-ness, nothing known to us, nothing known to any existent being. It has no name, there is no definition of It! It is *That which is*. It is not love, not grace, not world, not soul, not god, not freedom, not light, for all these are relative conceptions. It is not *sadchidananda*, which is only an ideal 'other' of what we here experience. *sadchidananda* is only the logical highest, a mere intellectual prop. Reality is beyond *sadchidananda*, also. It is Itself, the eternal sun that shines in the infinite sky of the absolute world! It transcends cosmic consciousness. It is the supra-essential essence. Eternity and Infinity embrace one another to form Its Centre of Experience. It is an Ocean that sweeps away the earth and the heaven and the netherland. Sun, moon and stars are dissolved in It. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva vanish into It. It is the Life of life, Wisdom of wisdom, Joy of joy, Power of power, Real of real, Essence of essence. Birthlessness and deathlessness float in It like ripples. It is the supreme Death of all, and yet the highest peak of real Life. The totality of all the joys of the universe is merely a distorted fragment of That Supreme. It puts an end to the vicious circle of transmigratory life.

The Upanishads have left no stone unturned in attempting to give the best expression to the majestic Absolute-Experience:

*The knower of the Self crosses beyond sorrow." "He who knows that Supreme Brahman becomes Brahman Itself." "The knower of Brahman attains the Highest." "One who is established in Brahman reaches Immortality." "He returns not again, he returns not again.*

"By knowing Him alone one goes to That which is beyond death. By knowing the Supreme Being, the wise one casts off both joy and sorrow. They who see Him, the Self-Existent - they, and no others, have eternal peace. Of him, whose desires are completely satisfied, who is totally perfected, all desires dissolve themselves here itself. The liberated one becomes onefold, threefold, fivefold, sevenfold, ninefold, elevenfold, hundred-and-elevenfold, twentythousandfold! He goes to the other shore of darkness. That state is ever illumined, it is always day there. Time, age and death, sorrow, merit and demerit do not go there. Fearless is the state of the Bliss of Brahman. Even the gods fear him, even Indra and Prajapati cannot obstruct him - he becomes the Self-Emperor.

The knot of the heart is broken, all doubts are rent asunder, and all actions perish, when That is seen, which is the Highest and the Deepest. His vital-spirits do not depart, they are gathered up, here itself. Being Brahman already, he becomes Brahman Itself. He is the maker of everything, he is the creator of all, the universe is his, he himself is the universe. This is the supreme treasure. The freed souls enter into the All, they enter into Brahman, they are liberated beyond mortal nature. The whole constitution of individuality becomes unified in the Supreme Imperishable. As rivers enter the ocean, leaving name and form, so the wise one, liberated from name and form, reaches the Transcendental Divine Being. Thus is Immortality."

This is Immediate Liberation (*sadyo-mukti*), the instantaneous experience of the Absolute through the sudden destruction of the fabric of personality built by *avidya*, *kama* and *karma*. *Karma* is the child of *kama* which is never fulfilled until its source, *avidya*, is destroyed through the realisation of Brahman which is unsurpassed Perfection. How can, by knowing one thing, another thing be attained? The attainment and the knowledge here are the same, self-identical. The Supreme Brahman is the All.

Sadyomukti is the processless immediate experience of Brahman, spaceless and timeless, on account of one's habituation to the non-dual knowledge of the Self. It is given to a very few to realise Brahman in this way, for most of the aspirants cannot proceed with their meditations without some kind of objective content in their consciousness. The quick and sudden illumination, which *sadyo-mukti* is, is a very unique experience, and it puts an end to the relative notions of *Ishvara*, *jiva* and *jagat*. In this, there is neither the experience of the degrees of phenomena nor resting in the region of *Ishvara* or *brahma-loka* after being freed. It is at once being Brahman.

### PROGRESSIVE SALVATION

There are in the Upanishads intimations of *krama-mukti* or the progressive process of the liberation of the soul. The soul reaches the *karya-brahman* or *parameshwara* who transcends even the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. This Great Lord of the universe is also called *parama-purusha*, *uttama-purusha* or *purushottama*. He is the Absolute Individual, the Supreme Brahman manifested as the Cause of the origin, the sustenance and the dissolution of the universe. The Upanishads are emphatic in their statements that one who reaches through unselfish meditation and knowledge this Supreme Cause does not return to the mortal coil, but proceeds further to the Absolute Reality. The Mundaka Upanishad says that the sages in the world of Brahma are liberated beyond death in the end of time. Those who attain the world of the *karya-brahman* remain there until the end of the universe, enjoying the effects of their *satyakamas* and *satyasankalpas*, the fruits of their desires and willings based on Truth. Whatever they wish arises then and there instantaneously, for they are in harmony with the Universal Being. They enjoy the highest approximation to the bliss of the Lord of the universe. Their desires are not like those of the mortals of the *samsara*, for, the latter's desires are flames of morbid passions based on untruth and arising out of intense selfishness and egoism mostly set in opposition to the other individuals of the universe, whereas the former's desires are absolute truth-willings which are attuned to the law of the God of the universe, in spite of the individualities maintained by them there. Practically the desire of the liberated soul is no desire at all in the general sense, for it is not the effect of *avidya* (mixture of deluded passion and darkness) but of *maya* (light of truth and

knowledge). The desire of one liberated soul cannot be against that of another, for they all are co-existent with the one God; but the desires of one man are mostly against those of others, for they all are dissipated and cut off one from another by the separative egos rooted in the darkness of *avidya*. The liberated souls think and work through the higher thought of the spiritual nature, not through the mind and sense-organs of the lower nature. They breathe the universal life and exist as partakers of the joy of the Master of the universe. They have the unceasing immediacy of the consciousness of everything, an awareness of the inmost objective essences of the complete universe. Their experiences are, no doubt, objective, they being not identical with the Absolute, but they can have an entire knowledge of the universe through self-identification with anything, at any time, though this is different from the simultaneous Cosmic Consciousness of God or *Ishvara*. But they are not opposed to the being of God, they work as God works, live as God lives, will as God wills, though all this happens spontaneously there. They are the sportive forms of the Absolute in itself. They want nothing; they are satisfied with themselves. They do not crave for an entity second to themselves, they desire only themselves, and even when they enjoy the objects of the universe, they do so with an all-engulfing unity-consciousness. They are like several circles with a common centre and radii of the same length, but comprehended within the Great Circle of the Infinite. The differences among these souls are not detrimental to the Infinite, since they are attuned to it. However, even truth-willings and enjoyments with consciousness of identity of things cannot be taken as the highest Liberation, which is *brahmanubhava*.

It is said that these souls enjoy all powers except those of universal creation, preservation and destruction, which belong to God alone, and that conflict of actions may arise if all are endowed with the same power. This statement can be intelligible only when the relation between God and the liberated souls is not one of identity but of difference. If Liberation means the highest Knowledge of God, then, to live in the same world as God's, to live near to God, and to have a form similar to God's, and yet to be different from God, can only be lesser than Liberation, because God is not one of many individuals, not a *samsari*, but the only existing Absolute Individual, and to have any relation with Him is to know Him, and to know Him is to be one with Him, and to be one with Him is not to perceive duality. The knowledge of God or *Ishvara*, which these souls in *brahma-loka* on the path of *krama-mukti* have, is only an approximation to *Ishvara*-Consciousness, but is not the same as that. Hence these souls are neither omnipotent nor omniscient, though they have full freedom as far as their enjoyments within their circles are concerned. There does not arise the question of the conflict that may crop up among the liberated souls endowed with the power of creation, preservation and destruction, if all souls are one with *Ishvara*. To be endowed with the same power and knowledge as God is to be non-different beings forming a One-Whole which is God. And, since no two individuals can have identical knowledge without themselves destroying their different forms and becoming one being, we are led to suppose a difference in experience among these souls. Further, when it is said that the liberated souls attain Absolute-Experience only at the end of the universe, it is implied that they cannot experience Absoluteness as long as *Ishvara* exists as a Self-conscious being, which means that they have still an objective experience and are not identical with *Ishvara*. Otherwise, there is no reason why they should retain their individualities until the end of the universe. The correct view, however, seems to be that all those who meditate on the Absolute Individual (God) through positive qualitative conceptions, rest

in Him, who, in the end of time, winding up the space-time-universe which is His own body, dissolves Himself in the Conscious Power of the Absolute, which is itself non-different from the Absolute. These relatively liberated ones have their individualities not destroyed here but exist in the world of *Ishvara*, i.e., *Ishvara* is experienced by them not directly but as an *objective conscious* universe, of which they are integral aspects. This Self-Dissolution of God is, in some respects, similar to the deep sleep of the worldly individual, who also, in the end of the day, ending his body-consciousness, dissolves himself in the unconscious power based on the Atman, which is superimposed on the Atman. But the difference between the two dissolutions is that in the case of God, there is no further forced coming back to universe-consciousness, no subsequent dreaming and waking state, and there is Absolute-Experience; whereas, in the case of the worldly individual, there is forced coming back to body-consciousness, there is subsequent dreaming and waking state, and there is no Self-Experience. There are *kama* and *karma* in the individual because of *avidya* in him, but in God there is *vidya*, Universal Consciousness or Absolute Self-Consciousness alone, and hence, there are no concomitant *kama* and *karma* which are the causes of objective multiplicity-consciousness and the activity therefor. Desire and action in the individual are the outcome of the darkness of ignorance, but they do not exist in *vidya* which is the light of knowledge. The souls who are in the World of *Ishvara*, or the Absolute-Individual, experience it as an Intelligence-World of *shuddha-sattva* corresponding to their own personalities made of the same substance. The soul is said to reach God through the passage of the sun (Mundaka Upanishad I. 2. 11), and, thus, pass on to the Absolute. Anywise, the imaginary problem of the possibility of the multiple lordship of the liberated souls does not arise, any more than the possibility of the existence of many Absolutes and Eternities. When there is individuality there is no omniscience or omnipotence, and when there are these there is no individuality. If we are to be alive to the sentences which declare that the liberated soul "goes around laughing, sporting, enjoying with women and chariots and friends, not remembering the appendage of the body" (Chhandogya Upanishad VIII. 12. 3), we can be so only by convincing ourselves that this state cannot be that of the Consciousness of the Absolute, or that this may be the condition of the *jivanmukta* who does mysterious and ununderstandable actions, and who, though he has no consciousness of his body, is yet made to animate his body through a slight trace of the existent pure egoism unconnected with spiritual consciousness. This is the remainder of that part of his *prarabdha-karma* which is unobstructive to Knowledge. The state of *jivanmukti* has no connection with the physical body; it is a state of consciousness; so it can be experienced even when the physical body is dropped, i.e., even in *brahma-loka*. The *jivanmukta* of this physical world, with his physical body, too, is really in *brahma-loka* in his consciousness, though the body is in this world. Those who have not attained *jivanmukti* here and are not ready for *sadyo-mukti* immediately after the *prana* stops functioning in the present physical body, attain this through *krama-mukti* after the death of the physical body. This shows that a *videhamukta* is not one who exists in *brahma-loka* but who has merged in the Absolute. Or, we have to make a theoretical distinction between two definitions of a *videhamukta* - he who has an individuality either in a lower superhuman experience, or in *brahma-loka*, and is on the verge of Absolute-Experience on the exhaustion of his *prarabdha* which is the cause of his superhuman experience and his experience in *brahma-loka* (the arising from which is called the waking up of Brahma or

*Hiranyagarbha*), and he who has actually merged in Brahman. In *brahma-loka* the soul is like a perfect *jivanmukta* of this world, and all its actions are spontaneous promptings of the pure *satsankalpas*, and not conscious willings born of a deliberately egoistic personality. If we are to be consistent with the demands of *jivanmukti*, we have to hold that even the *satyakamas* and *satyasankalpas* or desires and willings based on Truth in the liberated soul of the *brahma-loka* are really not conscious actions but spontaneous outpourings of the remaining momentum of actions done prior to the rise of Self-Knowledge, which were non-obstructive to the rise of Knowledge. If we are to think that the acts of the soul in *brahma-loka* are deliberately directed conscious ones, it would follow that they are not as evolved as *jivanmuktas* who have no consciousness of individuality. The *prarabdha* in the *jivanmukta* is not experienced by his consciousness; it is not a content of the Absolute-Consciousness; it is existent only to the other ignorant Jivas who perceive the existence or the movements of his body.

There is also a passage (Chhandogya Upanishad VIII. 14) which speaks about the soul's entering into Prajapati's abode and assembly hall. The joy which the soul experiences in the consciousness of God is expressed in glowing terms. The Taittiriya Upanishad (II. 1) says that the knower of Brahman simultaneously enjoys with Brahman-Consciousness all that he desires for. The difficulty that often hampers our understanding of the exact nature of the different stages in the process of progressive salvation is increased by the fact that the Upanishads are rarely explicit about them, and find joy in giving intimations of immortality even in regard to a state which we must very much hesitate to take as the highest, if we are to use any reason in our understandings and judgments. Many a time, one is at a loss to know whether the Upanishads are giving a metaphorical exclamation of the Experience of the Absolute, or a real description of the state of one in *brahma-loka* on the way to *krama-mukti*. The instantaneous enjoyment of everything with the Absolute-Consciousness has to be construed as an intimation of *Ishvara* Himself, for the one in *brahma-loka* cannot have a simultaneous experience of the entire existence; or it has to be taken to indicate a joyous outburst of *brahmanubhava*.

However, one thing is certain, that the criterion of salvation lies in that

*By knowing God, there is a falling off of all fetters, distresses are destroyed, there is cessation of birth and death, there is breaking up of individuality (or bodily nature), there accrues universal lordship, one becomes absolute, and all desires are satisfied.*

- Svetasvatara Upanishad I. 11.

We cannot, with our intellects, understand how there can be wish and enjoyment when all desires are satisfied. It is said that "it is simple Lila" or sport of the Divine, which is not an explanation of the mystery, but an admission that man cannot know God's ways. For us, even the least wish or action, howevermuch universal it may be, means a state below the Supreme Being. It is clear that all the various statements regarding the different experiences which the liberated soul is said to have must refer to an objective experience introduced in one or the other of the three stages of *Virat*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Ishvara*, or to the realisation of Brahman itself. The Upanishads, however, use the word "Brahman" to mean any of the four, and it is this that does not allow us to have an adequate knowledge of what they actually hold to be the definite stages of Truth-realisation. To us it somehow appears that the main stages must be only four:

Attainment of (1) universal objective multiplicity-consciousness, (2) universal subjective multiplicity-consciousness, (3) universal Self-consciousness, (4) Transcendental Experience. The Mandukya Upanishad testifies to the existence of these four states. But the first three experiences are relative and seem to be existent only so long as one remains an experiencer with a touch of the spatial concept in the Universal. There cannot be any logical proof for the existence of these three objective states beyond an individualistic demand. As a later Vedantin has said, "Those dull-witted persons who are unable to realise the unconditioned Supreme Brahman are shown compassion by a description of the Qualified Brahman. When their mind is controlled through meditation on the Qualified Brahman, the One Being, free from all limitations reveals itself."

### **JIVANMUKTI**

It is very difficult, from the statements of the Upanishads, to distinguish between which actually is the state of liberation while living in body and which is that of Absoluteness attained after the transcendence of the body. Often, they give the same description with reference to both. This only shows that the distinction between Jivanmukti and *videhamukti* is relative and does not have much meaning in itself. The *mukta* has no difference of any kind in himself. Jivanmukti is the highest spiritual experience by the individual when the mortal body is still hanging on due to the remainder of a little of *sattvika-ahamkara* or *prarabdha*. In this condition the usual empirical functions of the mind cease, even this remainder of *prarabdha* is not felt, and the mind takes the form of *shuddha-sattva*, the original nature of universal knowledge freed from the relations of space, time and cause. The *jivanmukta* experiences his being the lord of all, the knower of all, the enjoyer of everything. The whole existence belongs to him; the entire universe is his body. He neither commands anybody, nor is he commanded by anybody. He is the absolute witness of his own glory, without terms to express it. He seems to simultaneously sink deep into and float on the ocean of the essence of being, with the feeling 'I alone am', or 'I am all'. He breaks the boundaries of consciousness and steps into the bosom of Infinity. At times he seems to have a consciousness of relativity as a faint remembrance brought about by unfinished individualistic experience. He exclaims in joyous words:

*O, wonderful! O, wonderful! O, wonderful! I am food! I am food! I am food! I am a food-eater! I am a food-eater! I am a food-eater!....I am the first-born!.... Earlier than gods, I am the root of immortality!....I, who am food, eat the eater of food! I have overcome the whole universe!*

- Taittiriya Upanishad III. 10. 6.

"He is the (real) Brahmana, who, having known this Imperishable, leaves this world" (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad III. 8. 10). "He enjoys as the Lord of the universe." He is the "Seer who sees no death, nor sickness, nor any distress, the Seer who sees only the All, and obtains the All entirely" (Chhandogya Upanishad VII. 26. 2). His enjoyment is in the Self, he sports with the Self, he has company of the Self, he has bliss in the Self, he is autonomous, he has limitless freedom in all the worlds. Everything proceeds for him from the Self. He has crossed the ocean of darkness.

*As the slough of a snake lies dead and cast off on an ant-hill, even so lies*

*this body (of a jivanmukta). But this incorporeal, immortal Life-Principle is Brahman alone, the Light alone.*

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV.4.7.

“He does not desire, he has no desire, he is freed from desire, his desire is satisfied, his desire is the Self” (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV.4.6). “He is the greatest among the knowers of Brahman” (Mundaka Upanishad II.1.4). “Him these two do not overpower—neither the thought ‘therefore I did wrong’, nor the thought ‘therefore I did right’. He overcomes them both. Neither what he has done, nor what he has not done does affect him.” “This eternal greatness of the Brahmana is not increased or decreased by actions.” “He sees the Self in the Self and sees everything as the Self. Evil does not overcome him; on the other hand he overcomes all evil. Evil does not burn him; on the other hand he burns all evil” (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV. 4. 22, 23).

The wise sage is silent and indifferent towards the play of life. No force on earth or in heaven can touch him. Even the gods can do nothing to him, for he is the Self of even the gods. He is the supreme master, the overlord of all. If he breathes, others shall breathe; if he stops breathing, others shall die. By his mere wish mountains shall be shattered, and oceans dry up. He is the God, none is superior to him. His wish is God’s wish and his being is God’s being.

*He who sees all beings in his very Self, and the Self in all beings - he is not averse to any thing. In whom, the wise one, all beings are just the Self, then what delusion, what sorrow is there for him, who sees Oneness (everywhere)?*

- Isavasya Upanishad 6, 7.

The *jivanmukta* is in the extreme condition of *jnana*, the state of Self-absorption, non-related and Self-Identical. There is practically no difference between the highest *jivanmukti* and *videhamukti*, though in the former state the body is unconsciously made to linger on for a short time on account of the last failing momentum of the desires arisen in him before the time of Self-Experience. For all matters concerning life we need not make any distinction between the two conditions. The highest *jivanmukta* does not feel that he has any body. Hence he is not in any way inferior to, or lower than, the *videhamukta*. The distinction is made, not by the *mukta*, but by the other ignorant people, who perceive the appearance or the disappearance of his body.

### THE UNIVERSE AND THE LIBERATED SELF

Much has been said and written by speculative geniuses on the relation between the perfectly liberated soul and the universe. If liberation means the experience of the Infinite, the question of the liberated soul’s relation to the universe is a puerile one. It is like speculating over the relation of the sky to the sky. It is stated by some that the liberated condition need not annihilate the perception of plurality. If we say that the Absolute can perceive plurality, we go against all sense and reason. Or, can we hold that the liberated soul retains individuality? In that case, the liberated soul would become non-eternal, for all that is individual is a part of the process of the universe. Further, what do we mean by plurality? Plurality is the intervention of non-being or space between things. Then we have to say that the Absolute has internal differentiations and external relations, which would mar the indivisibility and the secondlessness of the

Absolute. No perception is possible without the intervention of non-being in undifferentiatedness. If the Self is the All, there cannot be non-Self in Self, and as long as there is perception of the non-Self, it cannot be the liberated state. Nor can we understand the argument that there can be any duty for the liberated soul. It is erroneous to believe that as long as all individuals are not liberated, no individual can have liberation. There is no intrinsic relation between the *karma* of one individual and of another, except in the sense that there is a mutually determining cosmic relationship of all individuals so long as they live in particularised states of consciousness. When there is destruction of thought, there is annihilation of all forms. Forms cannot exist when there is no differentiation among them, and the differentiation of forms is the work of the cognizing consciousness. There cannot be objective cognition in the Absolute. It cannot be said that, because forms exist for others even though one individual may attain freedom, the freed soul can have objective dealings. There is no cogency in the statement that the liberated being can have any relation with any thing, for it transcends the cosmic relationship of created entities which flow into one another as reciprocally determining forces. As long as there is relation, there is some thing external to the Self, and as long as there is experience of something other than the self, there is no Absolute-Experience. The Absolute is not bound by the rules and regulations of the worlds and the thoughts of other individuals in any way. The fact that many others remain unliberated even when one soul is freed, does not compel the liberated one to have relations with others, for the simple reason that the liberated one is no other than the trans-cosmic Absolute. And, moreover, when the thinking process expires in the Absolute, there cannot be perception of other unredeemed individuals. We have no grounds to say that the form of the world exists after Self-realisation, for forms can exist only when existence is divided within itself. But this has no validity for the Absolute, which is *Existence* itself. Division creates individuality which is phenomenal.

So long as there is consciousness of the reality of an objective universe and the individuals, one cannot be said to be a liberated one, for he is, then, only another individual, however much superior he may be to others in the state of his consciousness. Liberation is experience of the highest Reality. He who perceives that there are others and they are unliberated, cannot be a liberated soul himself, for the liberated is one with the Absolute which is extra-relational. A liberated one does not *think*. He merely *is*. There can be no compromise with self-limitation in liberation, however slight it may be.

The liberated soul becomes the All. Experience of Pure Being is the criterion of liberation. The liberated soul itself becomes the One Self of all; how, then, can it have the consciousness of limitation or of the act of redeeming the unliberated? And, how, again, can an unredeemed soul redeem another unredeemed soul? The human mind is always obsessed by the delusion of the social bond that connects different individuals. It cannot think except in terms of society, family, relations, etc., connected with the separatist ego. He who is concerned with the world is only a magnified family man and is not free from the sense of separateness characterising mortal nature. Even several cultured thinkers have been limited by a humanitarian view of life. Their philosophies are consequently tainted by humanistic and social considerations. They are not dispassionate in their trying to understand the deeper truths, and are deceived by an inordinate love for the human being. The infection has led them even up to the dangerous point of attempting to argue that none can be liberated until social salvation

is effected! This view is the outcome of the interference of materialism with spiritual absolutism. Man's vision is so narrow that he is concerned merely with things that he sees. He fails to take an integral view of the essence of existence as a whole, because of his experience and reason being limited to empirical reality. To the Absolute, the world is not a historical process, but *being*. To the ignorant individual *samsara* appears to be from eternity to eternity, an undivided super-rational appearance, though in the Absolute there is cessation of *samsara*. Since different individuals are in different stages of evolution, and as also there can be nothing to prevent the entering of the soul into the Absolute on the rise of Knowledge, there cannot be any such thing as social salvation or ending of the historical process of the universe.

If the Absolute does not have any external or internal relation to itself, the liberated one cannot have any such relation to the universe, because the distinction of the individual and the universe is negated in the Absolute. It is illogical to say, at the same time, that "Liberation means Absolute-Experience" and that "the liberated soul is concerned with the work of redeeming others, and even on getting liberated, retains its individuality." Relative activity and Absolute Being are not consistent with each other. If it is argued that both these are compatible, it is done at the expense of consistency. The Absolute has nothing second to it, and hence no desire and no action. Anything that falls short of the Absolute cannot be regarded as the state of Liberation. The *jiva* remains a centre of universal activity in the states of *Virat*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Ishvara*, but not in Brahman. If what the Sruti says- "He does not return"- is true, there can be no reverting to individuality after Absolute-Experience. There cannot be action without consciousness of plurality, and plurality-consciousness is not the nature of the Absolute. All attempts to reconcile Reality with appearance, taking them as two realities, are based on a faith in the ultimate validity of empirical experience. We want to know the beyond without stepping over to the beyond from binding phenomena. We wish to plant our two legs in two ships moving in opposite directions, and then cross the ocean. We desire to know something absolutely without ourselves being that thing, an impossibility! The tendency of some of the modern thinkers to struggle to give a reality to objective experience and multiplicity-consciousness even in the highest Reality is the effect of a failure to discriminate between the Real and the apparent and is due to an unwise attachment to phenomenal diversity. As long as philosophers are content to be mere dogmatic theorizers, they can never succeed in determining the nature of Reality, or of bondage and liberation. It is but intellectual perversion that causes some to twist even the metaphysical truths to answer to the empirical demands of man. The fact that we see things is not the proof for their existence.

It is said that, because the individual is inseparable from its environment, the liberated soul has to work for the redemption of the other unliberated souls, if its own salvation is to be complete. This argument is, again, limited to the souls that are still in the cosmos, that move in the realms of *Virat*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Ishvara*, but is irrelevant to *brahmanubhava*. It is wrong to think that the liberated soul has any external environment with which it may have relations. It is Infinitude itself. Further, each individual is restricted by its own *antahkarana*, the mode of objectified thinking, and hence, its world of experience cannot be identical with the worlds of others. Man is cheated by the notion that each individual has the same psychological background and constitution as the other, and that the environment of one individual includes those of

all other individuals, also. The environment of one is different from that of the other, and, therefore, the liberation of one individual does not have any relation to the states of other individuals. If everyone is to think alike, there would be no diversity of living beings and there would be a wholesale salvation of the universe. If individuals think differently, one cannot have an intrinsic relation to the other. No doubt, everything is comprehended in the Absolute, and so each individual, as long as it exists as such, influences the universe by its existence and active individualistic consciousness, and vice versa, since there is a real Unity behind all individuals. But this mutual interaction is secondary, and does not affect the primary factor of liberation. Moreover, we have no right to give independent realities to the subject and the object, for all plurality is like a dream in the Universal Consciousness, and to it there can be no question of the existence of unredeemed souls or an objective reality. Bondage is in each individual separately and not in the universal unity. In any case, the problem of the redemption of the unredeemed souls by the liberated one does not arise. There is no wrong to be set aright, no error to be converted, no ugliness to be banished from life, except with reference to one's own self. When the self is purified, the Absolute Truth is revealed in it, and in its infinite knowledge it can set right the universe by its very existence, or consciousness of perfection. There is no ultimate relation amongst the imaginary environments of different individuals, even if they interpenetrate one another. They have a transcendental oneness, and an empirical phenomenality.

There is also an attempt made by some to argue that unworldliness is not the essence of any true philosophy, and that the Upanishads do not teach unworldliness. This view is the outcome of the failure of the arbitrary reason unaided by experience to determine the nature of Reality. There is a desire in the human being to maintain the same worldly relationship even in the state of final Liberation. Whatever we experience empirically seems to be a hard fact, the reality of which we do not want to deny. The individual's attachment to the body and society is so intense that to break away from it does not seem to be desirable. If unworldliness means repudiation of the separative forms of experience and individual relationship, liberation is really unworldly. The Absolute is unworldly in the sense that it has not, as the world has, distinctions of space, time and individuality, or name, form and action. Liberation is the possession and experience of unlimited, undivided consciousness of the *bhuma*, or the plenitude of existence.

There cannot also be any question in regard to the position of power, rulership, and the like, in the state of the highest liberation. These are all relative notions of individuals. The Ultimate Reality is the Absolute, which is non-dual and, therefore, there is no scope for the operation of an objective power in it. The Absolute itself is Power, not merely an exerciser of power. Power is a separative factor, a means to create duality, which is nullified in the Absolute. The truly liberated one does not feel that he is the lord of anyone else, which notion involves distinction in existence, but he has the Eternal Experience of the Essence of Infinity.

Absolute Liberation is Transcendent Experience, beyond conception and expression, free from the differentiations of knower, knowledge and known. It is the Conscious Experience of absolute "Be"-ness, which is the Great Reality.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

A study of the Ultimate Reality of things reveals to us that their truth being one, their forms must be false. That which is one can appear as two or many only through imagination. Both the individual that perceives and the world that is perceived can only be projections of a powerful Universal Thought, while, in truth, there is only the undifferentiated Pure Being. The main points discussed in these pages, are: (1) Brahman or the Absolute is the only Reality. (2) It is Undifferentiated, Non-Relational, Supra-Mental, Transcendental, Consciousness, without the distinctions of knower, knowledge and known. (3) It is immaterial, so far as practical empirical life is concerned, whether Brahman is Impersonal or Personal, Nirguna or Saguna, so long as there is nothing second to Brahman, so long as there is no objective reality and no externalised knowing. In the process of philosophical meditation, however, the Absolute is envisaged in its pure perfection, free from superimposed attributes, as an 'other' of every form of thought, as the supra-cosmic, eternal consciousness. (4) The universe is an appearance of the Absolute, and, being of a presented or objective character, it is relative, transitory, unintelligible, and a perversion of Reality. (5) There is, in fact, neither the individual nor the cosmos, neither the subject nor the object because these are merely experiential standpoints of viewing the one undivided existence. (6) If God is taken to mean something different from the universe and its contents, that is, if God is a subject or an object of something - then, such a God would be as transitory as any mortal being. (7) The only purpose of the life of every individual is the realisation of the Absolute. (8) Knowledge and meditation are the two main ways to attain Perfection. Knowledge is *jnana* or *anubhava* of the Nirguna Brahman, and meditation is *dhyana* or *upasana* on Saguna Brahman.

The whole theme of the Upanishads is centred in two fundamental conceptions of Reality - Brahman and Atman. Both words are often used to mean the same thing. "This Atman is Brahman" (Mandukya Upanishad 2.). The further implications of this statement are the different theories of spiritual philosophy. The philosophy of the main declarations of the Upanishads, however, consists essentially of the eight conclusions drawn above. This is the Ultimate Truth, transcending empiricability, extending beyond the egoism of human nature. The whole process of the realisation of Truth is, therefore, a sacrifice of the ego, and is a great pain. Suffering in the process of the experiencing of Infinitude cannot be abolished for the individual so long as the individual itself is inconsistent with the Infinite. Hence, the attempt towards the attainment of the perfectly Real is generally looked upon with a sense of fear, disgust and even hatred. The human being is always attached to the immediate concerns of life. He has no eye to look to the beyond. He is grieved about the past, doubtful about the future and worried about the present. He is ever diseased in his spirit due to his violation of the eternal law. He is caught in the whirl of ignorance, passion and sin, and is constantly dashed by the huge waves of uncontrollable sorrow. Every moment he finds himself in a fix. He ceaselessly dies to himself in time, and seems to recover new sense just then and there. His whole life is a flux of states - now destroyed, now renewed. He has no idea of anything besides himself, anything that is vaster and truer. He is imprisoned within his fragile body,

within his whimsical mind, within his childish intellect, within his conceited individuality. A shower of superphysical knowledge upon him seems to be music played before the deaf. He thinks too highly about himself and, with canine avidity, licks the pricking bone even with his torn tongue. The Upanishads are not unaware of the futile attempts of man to grasp the Limitless Being, and they warn him that it is not to be comprehended through logic, but to be heard from the wise one (Katha Upanishad II. 8, 9). Reason is meant to strengthen belief in what is heard from reliable sources, and not to walk unaided. It is an empty pride to think that one can depend totally on oneself and reach the Eternal. Reason and faith should go hand in hand if the desired fruit is to be reaped. That which is agreeable at present does not remain so the next moment, nor does the disagreeable appear so for ever. The immutable Reality is unperceived and unfelt, and the apparition seems to give us life, light and joy. The sole purpose of the Upanishad teaching is to disentangle man from the chain of *samsara*, to show him the way to the Glorious Light that shines within himself. Man is not a sinful mortal creature in truth: the Upanishad calls him "son of the Immortal" - *amritasya putra* (Svetasvatara Upanishad II. 5). But he can know himself only through sacrificing himself. The highest sacrifice is the offering of the self to the Absolute. The greatest yoga is the sinking of the self into unity with the Absolute, by denying the separate, and asserting the One.

Such an act which refuses to feed the individual self-sense with its diverse requirements, compels the relative self-interest to dissolve itself in the Absolute-Interest, which soars high above the limitations of Space and Time, and engages itself in its establishment in the perfect satisfaction and uncontradicted experience of completeness and utter Reality. The awareness of the state of the Pure Self unimpeded by phenomenal laws or separative restrictions, and the infinite rejoicing in the free flow of the law of the Spirit, is the life of the exalted Self-realised one. He exists as the Divine Being, which is the supreme condition of the fullest freedom of Eternity. Without such a knowledge of the fundamental nature of existence, life becomes intense with conflict and war between the opposing forces. It is impossible for the individual to blossom into Infinity in the midst of such a heated strife among disturbant powers of Nature, without reconciling and pacifying them in a more expansive consciousness and a higher order of reality where they disclose their inner truths and melt into the bosom of Being with a fraternal embrace. The difficulties in coming to any settled opinion of things as they are the miseries of everyday experience, the quandaries in determining the essential truth and falsehood of life, the concomitant selfish desires, the failures, the kicks, the blows, the burning anxieties, the vain beliefs, the mocking expectations and hopes that confront the human being in his struggle for existence, give him opportunities to discriminate the Eternal, and direct him on the way that leads to the realisation of the Absolute.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### THE FIRST STEP OF THE ASPIRANT

Vedanta is the Science of Reality. Reality is uncontradicted experience, the experience that is not transcended or sublated by any other experience. Naturally, Reality must be imperishable, for perishability marks a state or a thing as unreal. Imperishability means, at the same time, unlimitedness, for limit is non-independence and non-absoluteness, which means changefulness. Changelessness is the nature of Truth. The world which we live in is characterised by change and destruction. The world includes the individual, also. The body of an individual is a part of the world as a whole. The changing character of the world is kept up by changing events, changing actions, changing thoughts and feelings. Hence, the quest for Reality must necessarily be of a nature quite different from the natural ways of the world. The seeker after the Real has to be specially equipped with the power of separating Truth from falsehood; Reality from the unreal, transient universe.

The change required of an aspirant after the Real is not an ordinary external one, but a total transfiguration of life itself. This extraordinary change in life is hard to be had; the seeker after Perfection is asked to get himself ready for this great change for good.

The immediate reality which presents itself before us is the physical body situated in the physical world. Hence the first discipline required is of bodily actions or *karma*. *Karma* has a special significance in religion and philosophy. In addition to service devoid of individualistic motive or desire, *karma* means the selfless performance of one's own prescribed duty without reluctance or failure. Every person is expected to be either a *brahmachari*, a *grihastha*, a *vanaprastha* or a *sannyasi*. One should not live, as far as it is within one's capacity, in a stage which is not one of these four. And also, a person can belong to only one *ashrama* at a time, not to more than one. Performance of one's own duty means the observance of the *ashrama-dharma*. *Nitya* and *naimittika karmas* pertaining to an *ashrama* constitute *svadharma* or one's own duty, as far as the Vedanta philosophy is concerned with it. *Kamya-karmas* are excluded from *svadharma*.

The rigid observance of *svadharma* renders the mind pure (*shuddha*), freeing it from *mala*, the gross *tamas* and *rajas* which are the deluding and the distracting factors in it. The Vedanta prescribes Upasana or the worship of and meditation on the personal God (Saguna Brahman) to those who have thus already purified their nature or attained *chitta-shuddhi* through *nishkama-karma*. Upasana removes *vikshepa* and brings *chitta-ekagrata* or one-pointedness of mind. It is this prepared aspirant who is qualified with *shuddhi* and *ekagrata* of *chitta* that is required to possess the Sadhana-Chatushtaya, the ethical requisites which are directly connected with the entrance to the main court of Vedanta-Sadhana.

Sadhana-Chatushtaya means the fourfold equipment, the necessary means to *brahma-vidya*, which removes *avarana* or the veil of ignorance. The discussion about the *adhikari* is one of the main subjects in the Vedanta. The first of these *sadhanas* is *viveka* or clear discrimination between the Eternal Principle and the perishable universe of names and forms. *viveka* generally comes through *purva-punya* or the effect of past

meritorious deeds accelerated by the perception of pain and death here. *Satsanga* is another factor which generates *viveka*. Perhaps *satsanga* is the greatest of all the means that transforms a person from worldliness to divine life. *Satsanga* leads to *viveka* and *vichara*, consciousness of the inadequacy of the phenomenal world and enquiry into the nature of Truth.

*Viveka* creates an indifference to the world and its contents. This supreme indifference born of *viveka* is the second of the four means, *vairagya*. True *vairagya* is the effect of correct discrimination and not of mere failure in life. Real dispassion is the consequence of the perception of the impermanence of things, the falsity of the existence of happiness in objects, the knowledge of the distinction between Reality and appearance. This *vairagya* reaches even up to *brahma-loka*, the highest phenomenal manifestation and discards it as defective. Thus, *vairagya* is distaste for everything that is objective (including one's own body). It is not possible to love the Eternal as long as there is faith in the impermanent. Immortality and mortality are set against each other. Passion for the world and its objects is opposed to devotion to the Supreme Being, even as darkness is against light. Where the latter is, the former is not. *Vairagya* is the gateway to the knowledge of what truly is.

The third of the requisites is *shatsampat* or the sixfold wealth of internal discipline and virtues. (1) Tranquillity of mind (*shama*) which is the result of *viveka* and *vairagya*, (2) Self-restraint (*dama*) or control of the senses which is the effect of the knowledge of the ultimate worthlessness of the forms of external objects, (3) Cessation from distracting activity connected with the world (*uparati*), (4) Fortitude (*titiksha*) or the power to endure the ravages of Nature, like heat and cold, hunger and thirst, censure and praise, insult and injury, etc., (5) Faith (*shraddha*) in God, Preceptor, Scripture and the Voice of one's own purified Conscience, and (6) One-pointedness of mind (*samadhana*), i.e., resting of the mind in the spiritual Ideal alone to the exclusion of everything else, are the six spiritual qualities which together make up the *shatsampat*. All these virtues are to be developed on the basis of correct understanding or clarified intelligence and not by mere force. The greater and more purified tile understanding, the more precious and diviner is the virtue.

The last of the four means is *mumukshutva* or an ardent yearning for freeing oneself from the ignorance of finite life. These are the important conditions that are to be fulfilled by every aspirant after the Absolute Truth, before he actually starts *sadhana* in its strict sense. It is to be, however, pointed out again, that none of these *Sadhanas* is to be practised with brute force without proper purification and a brilliant discrimination.

### PRACTICE OF DISCIPLINE

There are certain general principles which every aspirant has to observe before starting spiritual discipline. Otherwise, there is the danger of perverted notions and wrong practice. The purpose of spiritual *sadhana* is to realise the Supreme Reality and not to attain some psychic Siddhis, as the common aspirant-world would seem to think. For this purpose, it is necessary, in the beginning itself, to know what the purpose of *sadhana* is, what is meant by God, and what is life.

Life as it is lived here, is a perpetual struggle to acquire happiness, physical and egoistic, through possession of objects, desirable conditions, name, fame, power, worship,

exaltation, etc. Every action, speech or thought, whatever be its form, is, consciously or unconsciously, directed towards the attainment of a supreme, unlimited, indivisible form of happiness. This is the final meaning of all desire and love. The aspiration is, no doubt, genuine; but the method through which man tries to win this happiness is foolish, defective and incapable of achieving what it wants to achieve. He is deluded by the desire and love he cherishes for external things. No amount of addition to one's possessions, no amount of fame, respect or power is going to bring the happiness, of which one is really in need. It is everybody's personal experience that what seemed desirable in the past does not appear to be so at present, and every thinking person would be able to infer from this, as to what the nature would be of such experiences as are at present thought to be conducive to the happiness of one's self. It should always be remembered that only those conditions which are suited to the happy well-being of a particular form of a temporary transformation of the functions of the mind are considered desirable, only at that lightning-like rapid duration of time when that particular mental transformation occurs. Another variety of mental modification would require another kind of experience suited to itself, which must necessarily be of a nature different from that of its predecessor. These modifications of the mind are numberless and inscrutable, wherefore there is no end for desires and the objects longed for. The mind takes as many forms, and demands as many varieties of experience, as there are potential desires and impressions of previous experiences piled up in its subconscious substratum. And there can be no end for these potential residual impressions, as every fresh experience adds on a fresh impression to the old stock, and as, also, every impression stimulates another new experience, and thus *ad infinitum*. This would mean the never-ending misery of the mortal individual, because, thus, he will be endlessly required to cast off old bodies and put on new ones in order to be able to fulfil the conditions of these endless desire-impressions, through struggle, love for the perishable body and consequent pain. This process is called the cycle of *samsara*. This endless movement born of endless dissatisfaction shows that unbroken happiness is not to be found in contact with external forms of existence.

Aspirants are to be warned against hankering after *siddhis*, for these very reasons. A *Siddhi* is a power, and a power is useful only in fulfilling one's desires and ambitions. A desire is always a desire for external possessions, objects, states or conditions. These, however, will quickly be realised to be worthless and incapable of bringing permanent satisfaction to the Self, since what the Self really needs is not an object or an external environment, but pure happiness. If this happiness is in external forms, how can it be transferred to the Self? What is the relation between the Self and the externals? Certainly, this cannot be either an identity or a difference. If it is identity, the object loses its objectness; if difference, the object ever remains unconnected with the Self. This proves the impossibility of acquiring happiness from truly external beings. This also demonstrates the unworthy character of *siddhis*. The *siddhis* are not only incapable of bringing happiness, but they positively obstruct the process of Self-Perfection, by inducing the aspirant to the mistaken idea that there is objectively something real.

Hence, the practical urge for perfection seen in life is to be fulfilled through a method of self-integrating completeness, which must include every possible aspect of existence in one's own Being. The contact of the self with externality is not the way to bliss, it is the womb of sorrow. The only recourse to be taken, therefore, is to discard objectivating

desires, disregard the appearance of the external form of the universe and become the whole Existence oneself. This must be a self-existent, self-evident, ever-existing, self-conscious, unquestionable, truth; otherwise, the practical urge for absolute perfection in individuals cannot be accounted for. It must, therefore, be a *realisation*, and not an *acquisition* of something existent as the very Self of everyone. The Self cannot be obtained, or acquired, or possessed, for it is not an object; it can only be realised. One can only "know" one's Self and not "possess" oneself. It is only this realisation that is the purpose of life, the goal of activity, the culmination of desires, the cessation of misery, the attainment of perennial joy.

The above analysis of life will give an adequate idea of the purpose of *sadhana* and the nature of Reality, world and soul. The purpose of *sadhana* is the realisation of unending, perfect bliss. This bliss is found only in the Absolute and nowhere else. This is logically proved and also corroborated by intuitional declarations. The Absolute is the Self of all, and therefore the realisation of the Self is the same as the realisation of the Absolute. The *world* and the *individual* cannot have any intelligent meaning except words indicating different conceptions of One Truth.

It will be quite clear from this that the realisation of Brahman is the zenith or the most exalted form of selflessness; nay, it is the very dissolution of the self in God-Being. Hence, evidently, *sadhana* for this realisation should begin with righteousness, morality and virtue. That which is "indivisible" and "absolute" can be realised only on the condition of impartial and undivided universal love, sense-restraint, perfect selflessness of feeling and utter truth. Enmity, falsehood, sensuality, greed, anger, pride, jealousy, domination, conceit, egoism, self-adoration and attachment contradict the truth that God is the Absolute Being, and hence, turn the individual away from the path to Perfection. This is the reason why moral and ethical discipline should form the first step of all forms of *sadhana*. Also, this discipline of the self should be practised with a proper understanding of the purpose and technique of *sadhana*, the nature of the Goal to be realised, the probable obstructions thereto, and the means of conquering obstacles.

### THE TECHNIQUE OF SADHANA

The *sadhana chatushtaya* and the other virtues should be practised for the reasons explained, that they act as a powerful help in withdrawing oneself from taking interest in the perishable body and the world, and directing the consciousness to the Great Destination. If it is well understood at the very outset, how, actually, these disciplines are going to lead one to the way of Liberation, the process of practice will be intelligently and undeludedly undergone, the practice itself would be easy, and also get accentuated by a sense of freedom. Without proper knowledge of the exact anatomy, history and constitution of *sadhana*, one's attempts are likely to be blind, and may not yield much good. Also, many a time, such thoughtless routines lead the aspirant to great calamity, instead of elevating him. A *sadhaka* is not expected to be idiotic or foolish, though he is required to have implicit devotion to his practices, to his teacher and to his deity. A *sadhaka* should have a clear presence of mind, common-sense and rightly discriminating intellect, so that he may not be led astray by his emotions and the other sides of his weaker nature.

In order to become a well-fitted aspirant, one must purify oneself, by transforming the brutal and human instincts into spiritual energy. The natural expression of these

undivine instincts is to be withheld and properly directed through various intelligent means. The most important of these self-transfiguring methods are:

1. Opposition
2. Substitution
3. Transformation and sublimation

Opposition is acting in a manner directly contrary to a particular instinct, through thought, word and deed. Substitution is curbing the instinct through a replacement of it by another, more virtuous one. Transformation and sublimation is the melting and evaporating of the instinct into spiritual devotion, yogic energy and divine knowledge.

The subhuman qualities and the evil phases of human nature are rooted in the desire for the greedy satisfaction of one's egoistic self, even if it may drown other individuals in sorrow. The grief forced upon other sentient beings, being the effect of a breach of the law of universal harmony, must necessarily rebel against and redound upon its cause, so that the disturbed balance may be restored again. It is not absolutely necessary to hold the theory that some extra-cosmic transcendental Father or Creator will afterwards inflict punishment on the sinner. It is obvious that, even without such a religious belief, it is quite intelligible that, sin being a violation of the truth of the inseparable unity of existence through an obstinate selfishness, clinging to the body and yielding to the dictates of the ego, the reinstallation of this truth, which ever refuses to be suppressed, should logically be by a defeat of the inimical force, which means the flow of the current of events against the individualistic propensity. But the propensity, too, demands fulfilment and craves for victory, and its victory over Truth being impossible, the ceaseless battle between the untruth of individual nature and the truth of absoluteness ends in the painful succession of the deaths and births of the individual trying to maintain its egoism. Every thought that is directed against the undividedness of existence is a venomous spear darted against the sender of that thought. It is a fetter to bind oneself with, a prison to throw oneself in. Evil is the perpetration of an action, physical, verbal or psychological, which presupposes a mental consciousness that directly or indirectly denies the indivisible character of the Absolute. This is sin, and this is real crime. This is the error that breeds the miseries of mortal life.

It is, therefore, not easy to detect the evil inside, as, very often, the perpetrator gets identified with the evil nature, as consciousness gets unified with the ambitious, non-discriminating ego. In the majority of cases, discrimination fails, and even if it shows its head, it is, generally, after the commission of wrong. The purpose of *sadhana* is to prevent the mind from taking recourse to its dangerous aberrations and from getting for the individual the bitter fruit of metempsychosis. Only after a very searching investigation would it be possible for one to have a correct knowledge of the workings of the inner powers, and to direct the consciousness to the apperception of its essential reality. The method of opposing the instincts of life with contradicting powers, or even the way of substitution, will not ultimately be able to achieve the required success. The *Sadhana-Chatushtaya* is a means of transforming and sublimating relativity in Absoluteness. *Viveka*, the foundation of all *sadhana*, is an extremely powerful overhauling, enlivening and illuminating spiritual agent. It helps one to understand, to *know*. Without intelligence, no act has value, no *sadhana* is worth its name. The

moment there arises the light of pure intelligence, there is also at once the transformation of the individual from the lower nature to the higher essence. All the items of the Sadhana-Chatushtaya aim at the complete destruction of characters that are contrary to, or different from, the truly enduring Truth-Consciousness, and not merely at suspension of their activities through opposition in war or replacement of them by some other powers. As long as the lower obstacle shows even a slight trace of life, the higher region cannot be said to be really occupied fully.

The love for the individual, limited, selfish life is many times wrongly justified by the ravaging desires for name, fame, power, wealth and sex; by the tyrannizing demands of the body; by lust for honour, worship, exaltation, praise and lordship; by ambitions connected with the objective world, whatever be the nicety and the refined garb or the polished appearance of these ambitions. Even craving for too much erudition or scholarship is an impediment to the spiritual seeker. These hosts of obstacles have to be stepped over; all desires, ambitions and curiosities have to be nipped in their bud. The more careful and circumspect a sadhaka is, the more should he try to sharpen and deepen his intelligence. There is no limit to the need for one's vigilance and active consciousness. Even at the entrance to heaven, a passage may be there leading to hell. The boat may sink even near the opposite shore. The life of the *sadhaka* should be one of unfailing *viveka* and *vichara* crowned with the penetrating light of purified consciousness, so that he may search out and reach the knowledge and experience of the innermost recess of his heart, the bottom of the truth of his own being. All thoughts, words and actions which do not contribute to the realisation of this Being should be dispensed with, by the practice of the Sadhana-Chatushtaya, and then, the aspirant becomes fit to sit at the feet of the *shrotriya* and the *brahmanishtha*, to hear the nature of the Great Truth.

#### NOTES

*P. 9 Even the creatorship or destroyership of the universe,....etc.*- The State of *Ishvara* is not an eternal one, for it is related to the universe which is perishable. *Ishvara* merges in Brahman when the consciousness of the universe is transcended.

*Pp. 13- 14. Degrees in empirical reality.*- The degrees of Reality are only the degrees of the perception of Reality. There can be no degrees or planes in Reality as such, for it is non-objective and undivided. Progress, downfall, degrees, and change of every kind are not parts of the Absolute, but form the varying phases of the objectified consciousness which is associated with the means or the instruments of changeful knowledge in the universe. However, these steps or stages of relative consciousness are experienced as true in their own realms, and have to be passed through by all those who have an individuality separating them from pure being; for, these objective stages or degrees are as real as the subjects experiencing them in the cloaks of phenomenality.

*P. 13. That great fiery method of attaining immediate Self-Experience, .... etc.*- The Method of Pure Knowledge (Vide P. 115.)

*Pp. 16- 42. The world of experience.*- The philosophy of the Vedanta is not solipsism or the lower mentalism. Nor does it affirm the absolute reality of the world. The method of approach of the Vedanta is integral. It does not say that the subjective idea alone is real or that the objective world alone is real. Nor does it hold that there is nothing real at all.

It does not say that the Real is transcendent alone or immanent alone. It does not also say that between the subject and the object one is superior to the other. The two are correlative to each other. The Vedanta does not lean towards any dogmatic notion, to any one side or aspect, but takes into its view the whole of true being. The Upanishads, the ground of the Vedanta philosophy, do not make a mere subjective or individualistic approach to Truth and do not land themselves in individualistic subjectivism. They know that the individual is imperfect. Nor do they commit the blunder of taking a view of a mere objective side of existence and landing in materialism. In fact nothing objective can be proved to be real, for no object is really known independent of the categories of knowing, which limit knowledge to their own sphere of comprehension. The nature of the world existing outside the knower cannot be determined for want of the necessary means of knowledge. Objective observation of things, however acute it may be, cannot give us absolutely correct knowledge of them, for in every form of observation there is left unbridged a gulf between the knower and the known. The wider one extends his power of observation the wider still seems the range of existence. There is no hope of fathoming the infinite by using the sense-powers or even the mental faculty, which are all engaged in the knowledge of fleeting forms. The Spirit appears objective and material and in a transient mode the moment it is beheld through the mind and the senses. The Sankhya philosophy used the method of objective observation and consequently fell into the deep chasm of *purusha* and *Prakriti*, which it was obliged to hold as two eternal realities. The existence of two realities is obviously unwarranted, and contradicts the very urge for philosophising, which is the experience of unchallenged existence. The yoga philosophy, basing itself on the Sankhya, brought forth an *Ishvara* who hangs loosely in the scheme of existence, and there is actually no way at all of finding any meaning in its *Ishvara* who is neither the creator of the universe nor the goal of the aspiration of anyone. This is hardly better than to say that there is no *Ishvara* at all. The Nyaya and the Vaisesika philosophies, too, followed the erroneous method of objective perception in their search for true knowledge and posited several absurdities like ultimately independent substances, and a transcendental Fashioner of the universe, who has really no hand to reach the universe that is fashioned. The Mimamsa, also, because of its objective outlook, is made to admit the reality of the outward forms of the world, the deities, the heavenly region, etc. All these objective philosophies have also tried to view existence from the subjective side and have come to the conclusion that there is a plurality of Atmans or souls; some of these schools went even to the extent of saying that the essential nature of the Atman is not pure consciousness. In all these philosophies the dualism that is posited between the experiencer and the experienced is a great bar to the realisation of absolute freedom, for that which is limited by an object cannot be absolute. A purely objective approach is blind and would lead to the perception of even the Spirit as mere material phenomena, while a purely subjective approach is narrow and leads to agnosticism, scepticism, etc. Only a complete view of life can give us a sound philosophy and a satisfactory religion.

The Vedanta is the celebrated science of the Absolute, which is Divinity and Perfection. The Upanishads are called the Vedanta because they are the concluding and crowning parts of the Vedas, and give the highest essence of the teachings of the Vedas. The Upanishads view existence as *adhyatma*, *adhibhuta* and *adhidaiva*, as the individual, the world and *Ishvara* or God, and they declare the existence of Brahman which comprehends all these in its transcendent Being. They do not say that the *adhyatma*

alone is real; that would be subjectivism. They do not also say that the *adhibhuta* alone is real; that would be materialism. To them the *adhyatma*, the *adhibhuta* and the *adhidaiva* are phases of Brahman or Paramatman; the three are a triadic appearance of the really indivisible Brahman. These three - *jiva*, *jagat* and *Ishvara* - with the Ground, Brahman, exhaust the possible principles of all experience. This, in fact, is the entirety of experience. In several ways the Upanishads give expression to the oneness of life, the unity of the individual and the cosmic. "He who is in the individual here is the same as He who is in the sun there" says the Taittiriya Upanishad. The Chhandogya Upanishad identifies the ether in the heart within with the cosmic ether outside. The microcosm and the macrocosm are one. Uddalaka gives to Svetaketu an objective description of the Reality, as the *ekam sat*, the One Real, the source and basis of all beings, and then with artistic dexterity identifies this One Real with the Self of Svetaketu. There is a wonderful dramatic beauty in the way in which the Upanishads portray the Reality of the life of the universe. The sages of the Upanishads were absolutely practical persons who were concerned with living and being, and not with mere fantastic day-dreaming. They directly realised the Absolute Truth and knew that distinctions, even of the individual, world and God, are relative, and anything has a meaning only because it is a phase of the Supreme Being.

When reason is based on the *srutis* it gives us strength to love Truth. It unveils Truth by disclosing the errors of empirical life. The material world of experience is not real. Matter, energy (life), mind, intellect, etc. are not substances, things or essences having absolute reality, but are modes or categories of knowing. Matter is Reality discerned by the senses and the mind. Consciousness objectified appears as matter. Energy, mind and intellect, too, are Reality itself known by degrees. Space, time, causation and objectness, which are the categories of the knowing process, are solely responsible for the perception of Reality as manifoldly divided into intellect, mind, energy, matter, and the like. Apart from these objective categories there is no universe. What is real in space, time, causation and substance or individuality is Brahman or the Consciousness-Absolute. It is the Absolute that appears as the universe on account of these categories or relations which the inscrutable knowing process has projected into experience. The universe freed from these categories is Brahman. These categories, again, are not objective facts subsisting in the universe as a reality in itself, but conditions, ways, modes, devices, for knowing Reality in terms of an individual knower. The knowledge of the universe is based on the fundamental hideous error of the notion of the reality of the separateness of the knower from the known and from the connecting process of knowledge. This knowledge which is bound by the belief in causality cannot be real knowledge. As a resume of all examination what becomes clear is that there is no world except categories of knowing superimposed upon Reality, which the individual vainly tries to objectify, and that the value and the reality perceived or known to be present in the world is but Brahman. Matter-ness is a fiction; similarly, the distinctive natures of energy, life, mind and intellect are fictions. But the truth about matter, the substantiality of matter, is the Absolute itself. The truth of energy, life, mind and intellect is, in the same manner, the very same Absolute. When the word 'Brahman' or 'the Absolute' is uttered, everything is said. Attributes are only limiting adjuncts and do not add to the perfection of the Absolute.

*P. 32. If the world is a means, the world is also the end, etc.* - The forms are not in the

Real, but the Real is in the forms. The individual has the potentiality to realise the Absolute, not because there is any relation between the Absolute and the form of the individual or the factors which constitute the individuality independent of the Real, but because the Real is present in the individual as its essence or being. That the individual takes the help of its lower individualistic experiences in attaining the Absolute is not an argument that can favour the view that the world is real in itself. The lower experiences have a value because of the consciousness which is their reality, and this consciousness is not in any way a part or a content of the world of forms. Consciousness is never identical with any form or condition. But still it is consciousness that gives reality to any value that is in any form or condition. It is true that in this world we take one thing as the end and another thing as the means thereto. The world is a long chain of causes and effects which have neither a beginning nor an end. This vicious circle is called *samsara*. But nothing in this wheel can ever touch the taintless Brahman or Pure Consciousness, and the individual, as long as it is revolving in this world-cycle, cannot have a comprehension of Brahman. What is reached through the world is the world itself, and not anything different from it. The Absolute is beyond the relation between causes and effects, means and ends. That anything of this world can be of use in the Absolute or is a means to the knowledge of the Absolute is not true. "Verily, that Eternal is not to be attained through the non-eternal" says the Katha Upanishad. "That which is Not-Created is not (to be reached) through what is created" says the Mundaka Upanishad. We cannot jump from one realm to another unless there is something which is commonly real for both. The individual in the world reaches the Absolute because the Absolute is the reality of both the individual and the world. The individuality or the worldly character in the individual does not reach the Absolute and is never a means to it, but the reality of the individual, which is eternal, is what realises the Absolute, and is the real means to it. In the case of such realisation, the means should not be different from the end in any way. Even a broken needle or a piece of straw from this world cannot be taken to the Absolute. The world of forms is not a means to Knowledge, for form and Knowledge are contrary to each other.

But, then, does it mean that the world is completely estranged from Brahman? Definitely not. If there is no relation of the world to Brahman, there would be no such thing as the individual's attainment of Immortality. The truth of Brahman is present in every form of the world, and the world exists because of the existence of Brahman. It is the reality in the world and not the form of the world that is the link between the world and the Absolute. We reach Brahman through the reality of Brahman present in us and in the world, and not through the constitution of our individuality which is a group of forms, or through the world which is also a huge mass of forms. It was already observed that when the world is denied as unreal, it is its form, and not its essence or fundamental being, that is thus denied. The essence of the world is Brahman.

*Pp. 32- 36. The world as cosmic thought-* The categories of space, time, causation and individuality are in relation to all the beings of the cosmos and are not the figments of any particular discrete being. The Cosmic Mind which comprehends within itself all the individual minds is the generator of the whole universe independent of superimposed values. The likes and dislikes, the pleasures and pains, the passion, the greed and the evil which each one experiences in himself are, however, attributable to the particular experiencer alone. The values that are found to be present in the objects of the universe

are the experiencing psychological reactions to these objects. But the existence of a thing in its unrelated form is not the creation of any other thing different from it. (That the nature of a thing unrelated to anything else can only be consciousness has been explained elsewhere in this book.) Each one brings forth his own form of individuality through his special potentialities of experience, these being divided into the three primary modes of existence, viz., *sattvika* (pure and conscious), *rajasika* (passionate and active) and *tamasika* (dark and inert). As long as one experiences himself as a localised being, he will perforce be made to perceive the external universe and the other individuals therein as existing independent of himself and to feel the need for and the presence of a cosmic *Ishvara* or Creator-consciousness; but when the individual transcends its individuality, it is at once freed from the bond of the causal chain of the universe, and exists as the Supreme Truth, to which there is neither the universe that is created nor any separate creator involved in it.

*Pp. 36- 42 The Idea of progress.*- It is true that Brahman is not partial or limited in any way. But it does not mean that it contains within itself divisions or clefts which alone constitute the world. When there is division there is no Brahman, and when there is no division there is no world. All, except the reality of duality and plurality, that the logical or the scientific mind declares, is true, but its passion for individual, social, national and humanistic considerations and its utilitarian motives make it cling on to a universe of divided beings who are known as objects. Progress, downfall, change and the various degrees of experience are true only in relative life and not in the Absolute. Reality is not a process. Birth, life in a world and death, no doubt, appear as processes of change upward or downward, but these are merely changes in the relative conditions of the individualities of the world, and do not refer to anything beyond the appearance of dualistic experience. Change, whether as progress or downfall, and the presence of an external world, are both corollaries of *jivabhava* or the notion of one's being an individual knower, and therefore these cannot exist in the super-individual Absolute-Being.

Yet, the Vedanta does not say, that any experience in the universe is unreal in itself, but that it is relative and subject to transcendence, and so unreal in a higher experience. Anything that is liable to be transcended at some time or the other is not ultimately real. Every objective experience is a degree of positive truth, but subject to transcendence, and unreal only to a higher condition. The entire existence is revealed to the individual in different degrees, but no experience can be an utter falsehood, as there is an element of consciousness in all experiences. But, all truths, except the last, are shadows, *relatively* real, and *absolutely* unreal. The world is unreal because no experience in it is unsublated. And its practical efficiency or relative worth cannot, however, hold water in the state of Self-Knowledge.

*P. 38. The ultimately illusory nature of the multiple world...etc.*- The dualistic or objective and material nature of the world is an illusion, a naught, in the light of Brahman. But the existence of the world is real, it is the same as Brahman.

*P. 38. The conception of the progressive evolution of the world..etc.*- To make the Absolute a process or a system of conditions or states would be to destroy its Absoluteness and reduce it to a temporal becoming, which can convey no meaning without a changeless being underlying it. Progress, downfall and change are necessary

empirical concepts based on the practical experience of the individual; these have a relative purpose and meaning as far as the individual goes; but they cannot be consistent with the Absolute which is ever itself and is never any change or what changes.

*P. 56. Svarupalakshana and tatasthalakshana.* The *svarupalakshana* of a thing is the definition given of it in terms of the characteristics or *svabhavas* which constitute it as long as it exists, and which are not different from its *svarupa* or essential nature. The qualities which give the *svarupalakshana* of a thing are identical with the essential existence of a thing itself. *Svabhava* and *svarupa* mean the same thing, and are not two things related to each other through some kind of contact. A house, for example, may be defined through its essential characteristics which last as long as the house itself endures. Such a definition would be its *svarupalakshana*. In the case of Brahman, its *svarupalakshana* should comprise only those characteristics which are eternal, as Brahman itself is, and not those which appear for the time being in relation to the *jiva*. Existence or *sat* is eternal. There can be no destruction of Existence. And there can be no Existence without Consciousness of Existence. Hence Consciousness or *chit*, too, is eternal. Since Existence is unfettered, being undivided, secondless and infinite in every respect, it is also supreme Freedom or Bliss. Therefore, Bliss or *ananda* is eternal like Existence or Consciousness. Existence-Consciousness-Bliss or *sadchidananda* is not tripartite but the One Eternal Reality. This is the Svarupalakshana or the definition of the Essential Nature of Brahman. Though, in reality, Sat-Chit-Ananda are one, they are differently manifested through the *tamasika*, the *rajasika* and the *sattvika-vrittis* of the *manas*, where the *tamasika-vritti* manifests Existence alone, the *rajasika-vritti* Existence-Consciousness alone, and the *sattvika-vritti* the whole Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. Sat-Chit-Ananda are not parts or properties of Brahman but Brahman's very essence or being itself.

The *tatasthalakshana* of a thing is the definition given of it in terms of certain characteristics which are accidental to it and do not exist at all times. These characteristics are extraneous to the thing defined and thus do not constitute its essential nature. They are different from its *svarupa* or *svabhava*, i.e. different from the thing defined. There is an external relation between these characteristics and the thing they define. A house, for example, may be defined as a building on whose roof a crow is perching. It cannot, however, mean that a crow is always perching on the roof of every house. This is only a temporary definition of the house in relation to an object external to it, where the relation with that object is merely accidental to it. This definition will not obtain for all time. It is, rather, an imperfect definition of a house. Such, however, would be the *tatasthalakshana* of a house. In the case of Brahman, its *tatasthalakshana* is the definition given of it in terms of the apparent and accidental universe of individualistic experience. Creatorship, preservership and destroyership of the universe, omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence, are all characteristics of Brahman in relation to something external to it. This definition will hold good only so long as the universe is experienced. This is a dependent and artificial definition which has no real relation to what is sought to be defined. The causality of Brahman is not a fact as such, but an empirical notion of the *jivas*.

*P. 60. Taittiriya Upanishad, II. 6.-* Sri Sankaracharya gives the meaning of the later portion of this *mantra* as follows: "It, the Absolute Reality, became the formed and the

formless, the defined and the undefined, the support and the non-support, the intelligent and the non-intelligent, practical (relative) reality and what is not practical (relative) reality, whatever that is here; that they call 'the Real'."

*Pp. 96-111. Free-will and Necessity.*—The relation between *jiva* and *Ishvara* raises the further question of the part played by Free-will and Necessity in evolution. How does right knowledge arise in the *jiva*? It will be clear that the cause of the rise of knowledge is ultimately not a real but an unreal thing. Since ignorance or bondage of consciousness is an appearance, its destruction also should be an appearance in the same way. The fact is that Consciousness is ever free. If it appears to be bound or confined, this must be false. And a false confinement is removed by a false cause of freedom, and no absolutely real thing is necessary for this purpose. Dream-experiences are unreal (from the standpoint of waking), and the cause of the awakening from dream, also, may be some unreal thing like the painful experience of being chased by a tiger, a fall from a tree or a mountain, a drowning in waters, being assaulted by some persons, or some happy experiences like feasting or merriment of any kind, etc. Similarly the destruction of ignorance is caused not by an absolute principle but by a relative appearance like the exhaustion of *prarabdha*, the efficacy of *purushartha*, or the Will of *Ishvara* acting as Necessity. All these, including the Will of *Ishvara*, are only appearances and not Reality, and they have only an empirical value, i.e., they have an existence which is necessitated by the appearance of individualistic consciousness. *Ishvara* has to be accepted as a fact as long as all knowledge is expressed in terms of individuality and world-consciousness. But when the individual self is transcended, *Ishvara* and the world are both transcended. *Ishvara* has a regulative use in explaining the events of the empirical universe. He is Brahman, the Absolute, conceived of as related to the experiences of the individual. Thus, if bondage is true, and if the *event* of Self-realisation is a fact, it follows that the cause of bondage and of the *event* of liberation also must be true. In the acceptance of the reality of bondage, the reality of the world of experience is implied. Now, bondage is equal to absence of infinitude in consciousness or limitation of consciousness. This plight cannot be caused by the *jiva*, for the *jiva* itself is the effect of ignorance. It cannot be caused by the world, for by the world we mean either a collection of individuals or mere inert matter. It cannot, again, be caused by Brahman, for it is secondless. An *Ishvara* who combines in himself the consciousness of Brahman and of the universe becomes necessary, if bondage is to be explained. If he is the cause of bondage, He alone can be the cause of liberation, also. But the scriptures are definite that *Ishvara* can never be the cause of evil or suffering in the world. *Ishvara* does not cause bondage, for He is the very embodiment of perfection. Hence it is wrong logic which establishes *Ishvara* as the cause of the bondage of the *jiva*. No doubt, bondage is cosmic in the sense that it is experienced by all the *jivas* in the cosmos, but we cannot impute to *Ishvara* agency in the origination of bondage. The fact is that the cause of bondage is not any one factor alone - there is a reciprocal action of the subject and the object in bringing about the experience of bondage. This is why it is said that bondage is relative.

Anyhow, in the consciousness of the bondage of the *jiva* the notion of the existence of a cosmic *Ishvara* is comprehended. *Ishvara*'s existence is postulated, not to attribute to Him the cause of bondage, but to find a meaning in and an explanation for the experience of the world of bondage. But this explanation is relative; bondage, its cause

and everything related to it is relative; *Ishvara* and the universe also turn to be relative. All these have an empirical reality, and a transcendental unreality. It is the consciousness of the reality of an ultimately false bondage that requires the admission of the consciousness of its ultimately unreal correlatives, viz., the world and *Ishvara*.

Now, regarding Free-will and Necessity, it has to be said that since the normal *jiva* has a consciousness of the imperfection of its knowledge and happiness, it has also the consciousness of the effort directed to ridding itself of this imperfection. This is intelligible because consciousness is present in the *jiva*. But, what is it that causes the rise of right discrimination and power of reasoning in the *jiva*? It cannot be said that it is effort that causes this, for effort is impossible without such a discriminative knowledge. It cannot, again, be said that all Jivas have this knowledge, for it is not seen in all. Animals have not got such a discrimination. Who brings them up to a higher level of consciousness? Can we say that originally all *jivas* were endowed with discrimination and all the animals, plants and inanimate things are only fallen *jivas*? This cannot be, for one who has discrimination cannot fall. Then, how did non-discriminating Jivas and stones, etc. come into existence? These difficulties can be solved only when an all-powerful and all-knowing *Ishvara* or Absolute-Necessity or the Law of the Absolute is accepted as existing in relation to the universe.

So, then, has *Ishvara*- or the Absolute-Necessity or the Law of the Absolute, as we would prefer to call Him, in order to be free from an anthropomorphic conception of Reality-full power over the *jiva*, or has the *jiva*, too, a little freedom of its own? There is no use in trying to explain the difficulty caused by the idea of a distinction of *Ishvara* and the *jiva* through the standard of the oneness of the two. That would be a wrong procedure, altogether. There cannot be a real solution to a false difficulty. Of it even the solution has to be unreal ultimately, and it is perfectly logical to regard it as such. As is the effect, so has the cause also to be. Thus, then, those Jivas who have no discriminative power or reason have no independence or freedom of their own, and have no responsibility of any kind. It is the Absolute-Necessity alone that works in their case. Up to the stage of the reasoning human being, there is no moral responsibility and no freedom to act independent of Necessity or constraint of instinct over which the *jiva* has no control. The divine element in the subhuman beings is covered over. The case with the reasoning human being is, however, different. The *jiva*, at the stage of man, begins to grow in the image of Truth, the divine spark begins to twinkle in it here, and so it shares a certain amount of freedom and responsibility. Since, however, the divinity is not completely manifest here, this freedom is not full but limited. The dreaming subject has freedom to act in the dream-world, and there is also a dream-world-reason or dream-world-discrimination. Here it must be remembered that the reason in dream is a faint memory of the waking reason, and the waking reason is a limited reflection of the *Ishvara*-Consciousness. There is experience of progress, downfall and pleasure and pain in dream. But these experiences of the dreaming individual are not known by the waking individual then - and as a matter of fact there is no waking individual at that time, separate from the dreaming one - it is engaged in dreaming. And yet the law of the waking individual governs the dreaming one. But this analogy has to be used with reserve in the case of *Ishvara*, for He is neither exhausted nor involved in the world-dream of the Jivas. That, as long as the *jiva* is having world-perception and does not know *Ishvara* it cannot receive direct response from Him (i.e., Brahman in relation to

the *jiva*), is, however, a fact. Hence *Ishvara* cannot be held responsible for the particular experiences of the *jiva* in its condition of the dream of world-perception, though *Ishvara's* universal law governs, in general, every *jiva*.

Thus, there is, in man alone, a reciprocal action of Free-will and Necessity, and both take a part of their own in the waking up of the dreaming or the bound individual. This position has to be accepted as long as our explanation is bound to be merely empirical. Here, the waking up from dreaming has to be taken not merely in the sense of waking to the Absolute Self, but also waking to every higher degree of empirical state or experience.

The differences among the discriminative powers of different men are explained by the priority or the posteriority of some among them in the scale of development, whether they have arisen from an animal state or fallen from a celestial *status quo*. No two individuals rise up from the animal state or fall from the divine state at the same time; else, there would be identity of these individuals. So no two minds can ever coincide. In the pure self-attuned state of individuality there cannot be the question of Free-will or *kriyamana-karma*, for there is only Necessity or *Ishvara's* Law of Being. But once the ego begins to function, the individual exercises its Free-will and subsequently may show signs of pain and suffering, if its efforts were not rightly directed to a non-selfish end, to the extent possible for it then. In the egoless state there can be no painful experience, as such a birth is directly caused by the Law of Necessity and not by individual Free-will. Man is a mixture of the divine consciousness and brute instinct, and so in the former aspect he has a little freedom of choice, but in the latter aspect he is under subjection to Necessity. In the case of men fallen to lower births, through their own actions, however, what functions is neither fresh Free-will nor *Ishvara's* Law, but the result of the previous Free-will which has caused that fall. When we say 'man', we have to include therein all individuals like the *gandharvas*, the *devas*, etc. also, who may be not merely men risen-up due to good *karmas* and who therefore will certainly fall on the exhaustion of the force of their virtues, but also those who have been manifested directly by *Ishvara's* original Will. Even the latter have egoism in them and so are subject to further descent, though they need not fall if they use their discrimination. Free-will is a function of the higher consciousness, but it is always connected with an ego, for it is absent in subhuman and super-individualistic beings who have neither egoism nor, consequently, a separate Free-will other than the Will of *Ishvara* or the Universal Law. In subhuman beings it is complete subjection to and ignorance of Law, and in super-individualistic beings it is knowledge of Truth and complete freedom that causes the absence of egoism and a separate Free-will. As long as this egoism persists there is a joint operation of Free-will and Necessity, midway between complete subjection and complete freedom. The freedom or Free-will that one has is inversely proportional to the sense of individuality that one has of oneself, and the Will of *Ishvara* or the Cosmic Force or Necessity that constrains one is directly proportional to it. Free-will is a symptom of desirelessness and expansion of consciousness to the extent indicated by it, and Necessity is the symptom of the opposite thereof. Absolute freedom is the consciousness of one's being identical with the Absolute Necessity or Law, and it appears to constrain the individual as long as the individual is devoid of the consciousness of Unity and is attached to dualistic consciousness. Truly speaking, even the little freedom of choice which the human being seems to possess is a limited

reflection of this Absolute Law in a particular degree.

The question of Free-will and necessity can be answered only by understanding the relation of the *jiva* to *jagat* and *Ishvara*. There is always a very intimate connection of the one with the other. None is prior to the other or posterior to the other. The three rise simultaneously in the consciousness and also subside simultaneously. There is no cause-and effect-relationship among these necessary categories of experience. *Ishvara* is the name given to the Supreme Absolute appearing to operate in the universe of dualistic experience and giving a value to all conceptions and perceptions within it.

*P. 106. Brahman appears as the supreme Person....etc.* - If there is no cessation of the essential nature of Brahman, and if Brahman appears as *Ishvara* even as a rope appears as a snake, *Ishvara* can have no reality as distinct from Brahman.

*P. 107. If it is said that...Who created the individuals?* - Even the view that *Ishvara* merely acts through his very existence itself as a cause of the manifestation of the potentialities of the previous world-cycle does not warrant the position of an *Ishvara* who can be completely isolated from Brahman. This could as well be effected by Brahman itself, for *Ishvara's* part is only causing activity through his mere *existence*. If it is said that there is possible activity on the part of *Ishvara*, which cannot be attributed to the immutable Brahman, the question, What prompts *Ishvara* to act, is still left unanswered. Even the theory that *Ishvara* imagined Himself to be many is open to the same objection. Compassion, necessity and sport (*lila*) cannot give a satisfactory answer, for Brahman cannot have compassion for itself, is not compelled by any necessity to act, and being supreme perfection does not feel the need for diversion or play. Without the perception of duality there can be no showing of compassion, feeling any necessity or desiring to sport. These views are inconsistent with the Non-Duality of Brahman.

*P. 107. Further, the view that the freed souls should wait....etc.* - There can be no waiting of the liberated souls in *Ishvara* until the end of the world-cycle unless the world-cycle is an objective fact even to the Absolute. There is, however, no reliable proof for the existence of an objectively eternal process, except with reference to the Jivas or the individuals of the universe. Is the world eternal or non-eternal? If it is eternal, what happens to it when the *jiva* attains Self-realisation? If it still persists, the Absolute Self would be a subject knowing an external world, which would mean that there is something second to the Self. If the world is non-eternity should have an end, and *Ishvara* would be only another name for Brahman and not a separate reality, since the world which is the defining form of *Ishvara* becomes non-existent. Such being the case, there can be no waiting of *jivas* in *Ishvara* till the end of the world-cycle, provided the individuality is completely transcended. This immediate self-transcendence is *sadyo-mukti*. But, if there is something of the individual left in the *jiva*, which prevents it from experiencing immediate *kaivalya*, still, it cannot be that it has to wait till the end of the *kalpa* of another person, for, to it, the end of *kalpa* is the end of its own individuality, after which nothing can prevent it from experiencing the Absolute. Hence, there can be no such thing as *sarva-mukti* or universal salvation except as the liberation of all the *jivas* independently and at different times. This does not, however, conflict with the theory of *krama-mukti*, for the latter only means the *jiva's* temporary assuming of the form of a subtle and pervasive mental being until the potentialities of such an objective experience are exhausted through experience itself. *Ishvara* is real as long as the *jiva* is

real, and when the latter realises Pure Consciousness there can be none holding it back from that realisation. But, until that state is reached, it has to be accepted that *Ishvara*, the Law of the Absolute, will definitely control the *jiva*. If, on the other hand, we are to assert that even the freed soul is barred in the state of *Ishvara* from attaining complete Perfection, it would mean the introduction of a tyrant independent of the liberated souls, who can act as he likes, even against the liberated ones who have become one with Truth, which theory would also indirectly give rise to the possibilities of partiality on the part of *Ishvara*, eternal damnation of souls, and such untenable positions. Such an *Ishvara* may hold these souls in himself eternally and there is no reason why he should release them even at the end of the *kalpa*. If it is said that they are held in on account of the existence of an objective *Ishvara* till the end of the *kalpa*, the question again arises, What makes *Ishvara* stay till the end of the *kalpa*? Further, that there can be an object in relation to the freed Self is without meaning. The whole of such a theory lends itself to absurdity when pressed on to its logical limits.

*P. 109. Ishvara's creation cannot be explained in terms of the different individuals....etc.*- The individuals are objects of perception and their reality is not established as long as they are not contained in a real conscious cause or perceiver. This cause is certainly not anything that is directly perceived through the senses or the mind. It has only to be inferred on the basis of Scripture and empirical necessity. The effect is proved to be real through a cause which is postulated as real, and the cause is proved to exist through the perception of the effect. The reasoning ends in a vicious circle and no objective reality is established to be true, for nothing objective can be a constituent of consciousness.

*P. 109. It is also said that Ishvara divided himself .... etc.*- If *Ishvara* has not really become the many, but merely appears as the manifold world, the causality of *Ishvara* can only be an appearance, and there remains no real thing second to Brahman.

*P. 110. These difficulties in proving the existence of Ishvara .... etc.*- *Ishvara* is nothing more than the object of a logical understanding of Reality underlying the universe. He is to be posited because the universe is perceived. The presence of an *Ishvara* forces itself, by way of necessity, upon the experience of the universe. This *Ishvara* is dissolved in Pure Consciousness when there is Self-realisation.

*P. 111. And, wherever Ishvara is identified With the Supreme Self....etc.*- *Ishvara* is many times referred to in the Upanishads as Brahman itself, for they consider every degree of reality - *anna*, *prana*, *manas*, *vijnana*, etc.- as manifesting Brahman in a lesser or a greater degree. Sometimes they even consider these as the entire Brahman. They would never see anything but Brahman in everything. Many a time they do not make any distinction between form and essence; to them, all is the essence, even the form is nothing but the essence. This is a very highly developed view. But when *Ishvara* is made a real link in the chain of causation we are constrained to make a distinction between this empirical conception we have of Brahman and Brahman as it is in itself. If the causal notion is discarded, there is no objection to identifying *Ishvara* with Brahman. Sometimes *Ishvara* is called the Self of all beings, the Supreme Lord, the Reality of the universe, and the like. Here it is the Consciousness in *Ishvara* and not his causal nature that is thus identified. In spiritual perception *Ishvara* and Brahman are one. In empirical judgment *Ishvara* appears as a category involved in the universe.

*Pp. 125-129. The Method of the 'Denial' of objectivity.*- The aspirant should practise profound meditation on the Non-Dual Consciousness by negating the objective consciousness which is inconsistent with the eternity of the Real. The meditating consciousness should ground itself firmly in its own Source by understanding clearly that duality cannot be real, and the distinctions among *jiva*, *jagat* and *Ishvara* are not true, since (1) everything is relative, one depending on the other for its empirical existence, and nothing in its isolation can be independent or genuinely existent, (2) everything has a presented or objective character, it being involved in space, time and causation, and is not really connected with the eternal experiencing Consciousness, and also nothing is certain or free from dubitableness except the deepest Consciousness of one's own existence, (3) the waking-experiences have all the characteristics of dream-experiences, and vice versa, notwithstanding a higher degree of reality manifest in the waking-world, (4) no empirical experience persists for all time, but everyone is contradicted by another that takes its place, (5) causation is merely a belief based on practical relative experience and is not logically warranted or established by any valid proof, and (6) in Self-realisation the whole dualistic universe is negated.

*P. 129. The brahmakara-vritti.*- The *brahmakara-vritti* is the subtlest, the purest and the most expansive state of the higher mind which reflects within it the Consciousness of Brahman. Even this *vritti*, though the highest of psychical functions, is ultimately relative, for it is meant to destroy the primal ignorance which is also relative. There can be no relation between the destroyer and the destroyed except when both these occupy the same locus, i.e., when the two are relative. An absolute principle cannot be destroyed; nor can what is absolute and unrelated be the destroyer of anything. Ignorance is not absolute but relative, and it can be destroyed only by a knowledge which is also relative. It is *vrittijnana* or psychic intelligence, which has an object, and not *svarupajnana* or the Essential Consciousness which has nothing second to it, that becomes the destroyer of ignorance. When its work of sublating ignorance is completed, the *brahmakara-vritti* subsides by itself for want of an object, and there is then the Absolute-Experience.

*Pp. 130-137. The Factor of Devout Meditation.*- meditation should be practised by one sitting in one *asana*, preferably *padmasana*, with fingers showing *chinmudra* and arms stretched straight to touch the knees or with arms bent and with palms opened upward and kept one over the other midway between the two heels (in *padmasana*). Though there is no restriction regarding posture in the practice of Jnana-Yoga, it is helpful for one to start meditation or *manana* and *nididhyasana* being seated in *padmasana*. Meditation should be continued till death, or till the rise of Self-Knowledge.

In the beginning, it is advisable to select a suitable place and time for meditation, conducive to the psychological factors that are likely to promote it. When, however, the sadhaka is well established in meditation, it can be practised at any place or time, by merely withdrawing the mind from awareness of externals.

*P. 132. Katha Upanishad, II. 20.*- Sri Sankaracharya explains the latter part of the Mantra thus: "Who is desireless, i.e., whose intellect has ceased from experiencing the external objects, seen as well as not seen, in whom, when he is in this state, the *dhatus* or the organs like the mind, etc. which sustain the body become pacified - he, on account of the peace attained by these *dhatus*, beholds the majesty of the Self which is free from

increase and decrease that are caused by *karmas* (actions), knows directly 'I am That'. and is freed from sorrow."

*P. 160. Truth is the union of the cosmic thinker and the cosmic thinking.*- The admission of a cosmic thinker or *Ishvara* is, no doubt, necessary to offer an explanation of the universe of experience and to account for the consistency that is in it. The existence of *Ishvara* cannot be considered to be an imagination of the *jiva* or the empirical individual, for it is implied in the very existence of the *jiva*. The argument establishing the existence of *Ishvara* may be succinctly stated as follows:

There is the world of experience. Who is the cause of this world? Is it the individual experiencer? This cannot be, for the individual has no power over the other individuals constituting the greater part of the world, and the individual perceiver is influenced to a great extent by the external world of perception. There is something outside; where is it? - this the individual does not know. If there can be no effect without a cause, and if the world is perceived to be an effect because of its changeable nature, the world should have a cause which has full knowledge of and power over the world. That this cause should be intelligent and not inert is beyond doubt; else, the world, the effect, would be blind and there would not have been even an awareness of the appearance of the world. This cause which is necessarily demanded by the presence of the world is termed *Ishvara* or God who has all-knowledge and all-power, and who is the supreme lord of everything created. The very sense of finitude of knowledge regarding the world shows that there should be an infinite knower of the world, who is the same as infinite knowledge of the world, omniscience or cosmic consciousness. If I exist as an individual, *Ishvara* should exist as the universal knower. The fact that I am, proves that God is, as the correlate of the consciousness of my existence. If God or *Ishvara* is not, I cannot be, nor can the world be. Neither my existence nor the world's existence and the mutual interaction between us two can be meaningful if *Ishvara* is not. My existence as a subject proves that the world exists as an object and that *Ishvara* exists as the unifying consciousness underlying my being and the world's being. If an ultimate causeless cause of everything does not exist, nothing that is effected can exist or appear to the consciousness.

But it will be clear that the whole argument is based on the fact of the consciousness of the individual 'I' and the objective world. The objective world appears to me because I am a conscious being. So if I can know my consciousness, I can know why and how the world appears to me and how *Ishvara* who is found so very necessary is related to me and the world. Only if I am an individual knower can the world appear to me or *Ishvara* can have any relation with us both. So the question ultimately lands itself in "What am I?" Because the 'I' is ordinarily, in the state of non-discrimination, taken to be an individual, the enigmatic world and *Ishvara* obtrude themselves into its experience. But through analysis it is found that the 'I' is not an individual but the absolute consciousness. Hence, the world and *Ishvara* can only be empirical necessities and not absolute realities.

The view that *Ishvara* is a real reflection of Brahman and not a mere experiential demand of the *jiva* makes the *jiva* go to *Ishvara* after the transcendence of individuality and thus denies the possibility of *sadyo-mukti*. For this reason the view that *Ishvara* is an independent reflection of Brahman in the cosmos cannot be accepted. But we are

obliged to offer some explanation of the character of *Ishvara*. The fact, however, seems to be this: That the *jiva* is, that the world is, and that *Ishvara* should be as the necessary cause of the world, is the basis or the hypothesis with which all thinking or speculation starts. There is no occasion for the rise of the question as to who created the world, for, that the world should have a cause which shall comprehend the *jivas* is the primal postulate of all philosophy and religion. The ideas of *jiva*, *jagat* and *Ishvara* are the order and meaning of the universe of experience, the way in which our consciousness works, the three categories in terms of which alone can even the very first thought be possible. These three categories have no transcendental meaning, for they are practical contrivances which make experience possible and which are the very life-breath and stuff of our processes of knowing. Logic does not explain these three categories but is founded on and is itself born out of these, the primary notions or modes of knowledge here. Logic cannot give us metempirical knowledge. Logic is the name given to the system of thought and the order of the universe of possible experience by any individual.

Thus, *Ishvara* is a cosmic reality posited not because he is known to be existent as an independent cause of the world but because he is one of the categories of experience, a most necessary universal value which alone can explain the values and existences in the entire manifestation, and account for the harmony and unity that is found in it. Without an *Ishvara* there can be no religion, and so He acts as a step in the realisation of Non-Duality. There is no wonder that man, a centre of finite consciousness as he is, takes the Eternal Brahman as an object of worship by making it the projector of the universe.

*P. 166. The soul reaches the Karya-Brahman or Parameshvara .... etc.*- According to the Brahma Sutras, only those who do not use any symbol or *pratika* in their meditation on the Qualified Brahman are led by the superhuman being to *brahma-loka* (*Vide* also the Chhandogya and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishads). Those who meditate on symbols have their knowledge limited to the symbol, and as the rule is that as is the meditation so is the experience, the meditators on a symbol cannot reach *brahma-loka*. The adorers of the *panchagnis* or the five fires (*Vide* the Chhandogya Upanishad), however, reach *brahma-loka*, but they have to return from there, and cannot reach the Supreme Brahman thereby. Different symbols used in meditation give rise to different experiences corresponding to each. But the meditator on the Qualified Brahman reaches the Saguna Brahman and thence proceeds to the Supreme Brahman.

When the Shruti says that the freed souls in *brahma-loka* wait there till the end of the cycle, and together with Brahma, at the end of time, reach the Supreme Brahman, this can only be taken to mean that the experience of *brahma-loka* being only a stage in the exhaustion of the results of previous wishes or qualitative meditations, or the continuance of life from a previous state of existence, on the exhaustion of the effects of such wishes or meditations, or relative experiences, which are the causes of the experience of *brahma-loka*, there is nothing to bind the soul to relative experience, and so it transcends *brahma-loka* and realises the Absolute. It does not, however, mean that the soul has to wait for another person's waking up in spite of its having attained Self-Knowledge. The moment this Knowledge arises, the soul experiences the Absolute, and none, not even the whole universe, can prevent it from having this experience then.

The Brahma Sutras hold that the released soul in *brahma-loka* attains its purpose, whatever it be, by mere will, and without any other instrument or operative aid. This

freed soul has no other master (though it is not omnipotent in the sense of *Ishvara*); it is master of itself as far as its possible experiences go. This soul can exist with or without a body, according to its liking. Even the body that it assumes by its will is only the mind taking that form, and it has really neither body nor sense-organs by itself, except the mind that it may assume for specific purposes, at different times. The freed soul can assume or animate, at the same time, many bodies, and work or enjoy through them simultaneously, if it so wills; it can influence, work or enjoy in any being, in any world, and in any way it likes, for it is all-powerful and all-knowing, next, of course, only to *Ishvara*. There is cognition of diversity and enjoyment in *brahma-loka* for those who have not reached the seventh *bhumika* or degree of knowledge. The knowledge and power of a liberated soul in *brahma-loka* is, in the state other than the seventh *bhumika*, limited and not absolute, for there is then the consciousness of personality or individuality. The meditation on the Qualified Brahman is based on a knowledge of the relative appearance of the Supreme Brahman and so it leads to limited experience and not immediately to the seventh *bhumika* or the Absolute-Experience.

The possibility of the return of the *videhamukta* to an embodied existence in order to fulfil the functions of an office in a relative state of consciousness can be understood only if the Videhamukta is taken in the sense of one who has left his physical body but exists still in a relative state of consciousness either in *brahma-loka* or in some other lower superphysical region - in the fourth, fifth or sixth *bhumika* of knowledge - and not one who has merged in the Supreme Brahman. In the case of one who has realised the Supreme Brahman a return to embodiment of any kind is without meaning. It is possible for one in the fourth, fifth or sixth *bhumika* of knowledge, if it so happens that he had wished prior to the rise of knowledge to exist in some body, to continue, after leaving the physical body, either in the state of Shuddha-Sattva or a state below it but above the material world. This possibility of embodied experience by the *videha* (one who has left the physical body) can be compared in a way to the *prarabdha* of the *jivanmukta* who is still living with a body. But the embodied experience of the *videha* is different from *prarabdha* as it is ordinarily understood, since it is experienced after leaving the physical body, though it resembles *prarabdha* in that it is the result of a potentiality of a subtle mental experience, as in the case of the involuntary functioning of the *prarabdha* in a *jivanmukta*. Sri Sankaracharya suggests that this office of the Videha is to be considered as self-chosen inasmuch as it must have reference to the desires given rise to before the rise of knowledge. This *videha* is free to have the experience of the Supreme Brahman the moment this desired function is over and the seventh *bhumika* of knowledge is reached. This experience of an office comes after the shedding of the physical body, and so it is called *videha*, though the next embodiment may or may not be in a physical frame, but it is not one of omniscience or omnipotence, unless, of course, the soul, by that time, has reached the seventh *bhumika* of knowledge and is not aware of the persisting body.

That the freed soul in *brahma-loka* is possessed of an individualistic consciousness can be explained only by admitting that there may be *jivanmuktas* of the fourth, fifth or sixth *bhumikas* of knowledge living in their mental bodies there. And, the Chhandogya Upanishad explicitly says that the freed soul may enjoy the objects of the universe, but this enjoyment is free from awareness of the body. Hence we are led to conclude that these experiences are of the soul in the seventh state of knowledge in which the body

appears to take part in action and enjoyment only from the standpoint of the onlookers, outside that body, though the *mukta* himself does not feel the body, and all his actions and enjoyments are the automatic self-exhaustion of the remaining momentum of past wishes and actions which are at present unconnected with consciousness. This momentum does not now require the aid of consciousness, as the impressions left of the aid given by consciousness while the *jiva* was in bondage suffice for keeping it working. Those knowers who have left their bodies before reaching the seventh *jnana-bhumika* are no doubt *videhas*, but they have not reached the highest *videhamukti* which can be had only after reaching the consummation of knowledge. It is these persons who are not in the seventh *bhumika* that may, on account of the possibilities of further experience in the universe, take the corresponding forms or offices and work until their exhaustion by way of experience. Nevertheless, these souls do not lose their identity of personality or their attunement with Brahman, even when they pass from one body to another, for they remain undeluded even during the processes of excarnation and incarnation, as a result of the Knowledge which they have attained. Their experiences are based on Truth-consciousness and are only the last traces of objectivity which are about to be merged in Brahman.

*P. 175. The jivanmukta experiences his being the lord of all....etc.*- In fact, the one in the seventh *bhumika* does not know anything second to him and there is no question of the consciousness of lordship or power in that state. But the one who is in the fourth, fifth or sixth state can exercise conscious power; he has consciousness of an all-knowing and all-powerful personality; he can do anything and enjoy anything; he can also renounce everything and remain contented with himself. He is a *mahakarta*, a *mahabhokta* and a *mahatyagi*. The same distinction of the degrees of knowledge applies to the soul in *brahma-loka*, also.

*P. 177. Evil does not overcome him,....etc.*- The moment there is the rise of Knowledge all the demerits and merits of the individual self come to a nought. There is no experience of the effect of any action, whatsoever, after the attainment of Self-Knowledge. Neither the past actions nor future ones can cling to the *jivanmukta*. What is done and what is not done by him - both these lose their power and have no effect upon him. By realising the Self, he realises that he never was, is or will be a doer of anything. The Brahma Sutra says that the results of acts performed without selfish desire, which do not produce any specific effect, but help to acquire Knowledge, are not destroyed, for they are accessories to Knowledge and have already fructified, in the case of the *jivanmukta*, in the form of Knowledge.