

# Vedanta

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424 MARCH - APRIL 2022

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**The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man - 3**

*C.G. Jung*

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**The Release of Philosophy - 1**

*Pramathanath Mukhopadhyaya*

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### When They Are Annoyed

You see, we don't take any collection during the performance at our place. Jadu's mother says to me, "Other sadhus always ask for money, but you do not." Worldly people feel annoyed if they have to spend money.

A theatrical performance was being given at a certain place. A man felt a great desire to take a seat and see it. He peeped in and saw that a collection was being taken from the audience. Quietly he slipped away. Another performance was being given at some other place. He went there and, inquiring, found that no collection would be taken. There was a great rush of people. He elbowed his way through the crowd and reached the centre of the hall.

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## Mantra Japa or Repetition of the Holy Name - 10

In our previous editorial we discussed that 'Om' stands for the Akhanda Sat-Cit-Ananda, the Infinite Brahman of which every Devata is a part or a manifestation. Sri Ramakrishna used to give a beautiful example of the ocean and the ice. The ocean of Sat-Cit-Ananda is infinite, but is condensed here and there due to the cooling influence of the Bhakta's devotion. Under the cooling influence of the Bhakta, God assumes various forms. So there are two aspects of the divine. The infinite and the finite, the *Akhanda* and the *Khanda*. The Akhanda is represented by the 'Om'. The *Khanda* is represented by the *Ishta Devata* or the Deity's name, Krishna. The connecting link between the finite and the infinite is known as *Bija*. The *Bija* stands for the particular creative power, the radiating power of the deity. The *Bija*, which is the special power of a Mantra, can be thought of as the *vibhuti* of a *Devata*, a part of which lies in us also. When the *Bija* is uttered, that which is in us is awakened and the mind becomes receptive to the *Devata*.

The 'Om', the *Bija*, and the name of the deity - these are usually the three parts of a Mantra. There is also a fourth part which indicates the aspirant's attitude towards the Devata, the spirit of surrender. Mantra is also a language and it expresses a relationship between the soul and God. Mantra expresses the experience of the sages who had the actual direct vision. Mantras are symbolic meanings existing in the cosmic mind or Mahat (Hiranyagarbha). In the purified hearts of Rishis these flashed forth during deep contemplation. In great religious traditions or orders, the Mantras discovered by the founding fathers are handed down to generations through a succession of Gurus through a Guruparampara. The power of the presiding deity continues to work in the souls of countless people through the Mantra. Every Mantra is then charged

with the power of the original seer; and the succession of Gurus keeps up this power. The initiates, the disciples, when they repeat the Mantra, feel this power working in them. A Mantra thus keeps the aspirant in dynamic contact with the Presiding Deity or the *Ishta Devata*.

An *Ishta Devata* is expressed by a mystic name (mantra) and a mystic form (*rupa*). Unlike ordinary names and forms, the Mantra and *devata rupa* give us only indirect knowledge. The *Ishta Devata* is not just the sum total of the words of the Mantra nor is it the same as visualisation. There is an unknown element. The *Ishta Devata* is unknown in the initial stages of the aspirants' *upasana* or spiritual practice. The question is: "How does repetition of Mantra lead to direct experience of the unknown *Ishta Devata*?"

The mind must vibrate in tune with the *Ishta Devata's* vibrations. When such a psychic resonance is established between the *Ishta Devata* and our mind, the grace of the *Ishta Devata* flows into the aspirant. In the beginning a devotee practices the mantra mentally (*manasa*) or sometimes when alone, audibly. The devotee sits quietly with great love, because the holy name is a great treasure. Just as when a beloved son or daughter has departed, and the mother remembers the child's name with deep feeling, so God's name has the power to invoke love. The first step of japa or mantra yoga is to repeat the holy name with great faith in its efficacy. As the aspirant repeats the mantra, he or she feels the purification that comes with the holy name, and as result, the mind becomes increasingly peaceful and tranquil. The aspirant should think that the holy name is creating spiritual vibrations in the body-mind prana system. This vibration is not a material energy, such as magnetism, heat, or electricity, but spiritual energy. As love for japa increases, the quality of the mantra's subtle sound or vibration undergoes a change. The mantra then no longer comes from the

tongue or throat, but is felt to be originating from the depths of the heart. Slowly the distinction between the *Ishta Devata's* mantra and the *Ishta Devata's* form melts away.

Sound and form merge and become one with continued practice, the sound of the mantra increasingly assumes subtler forms. Coming from the depths of the heart, the mantra begins to flow through the bloodstream, pervading the entire body. The heartbeat seems to become one with the sound of the mantra. The movement of the mantra goes to other areas, such as breathing, nerve action, and muscular activity. All these activities are expressions of spontaneous japa. Japa begins to be unceasingly repeated in every part of the body, and then japa becomes a total, unifying process which involves the whole physical body. The aspirant must [then] consciously direct the mantra to the different elements of body and mind. Take for instance the prana, functioning in the body as the life energy that sustains the heart, breathing, nervous system and all the processes that keep us alive. The spiritual aspirant does not want the body, mind, and prana to remain as they previously were; if they remain tools of ignorance, they will impede our spiritual progress at every step. At every point our senses are stumbling blocks, because the plan of nature is not to release us from ignorance but to keep us bound...The prana, which generally keeps the body alive just for procreation and enjoyment of the senses, must be purified and made divine. Similarly, we must purify our eyes, ears, hands and all parts of the body, as well as the mind in its various states. Then the body will become a real temple. All desires and passions related to the various senses will cease. This can be achieved by directing the mantra, knowing that the holy name is God's power.

About the need to practice *mantra sadhana* as given by a guru or teacher belonging to an authentic tradition Swami Saradanada says,

“The name of the Lord you receive at the time of initiation is sacred to you. It is your mantra. You must not speak of it to anybody except your guru. The purpose of keeping it secret is not for any occult reason but in order to let it sink into your deeper consciousness and reveal to you the truth, the knowledge of which will make you free. Constant repetition of the mantra is keeping good company. It must be natural, like breathing. The repetition of the divine name will bring into your mind holy associations, the blessed qualities of God, and take away all the blemishes of the heart. The disciple must practice hard, with patience and determination, until he attains the direct vision of God within the sanctuary of his heart.”<sup>1</sup>

Speaking about the power and efficacy of the mantra he continues: “The power of the mantra is tremendous. As a living seed holds the potential of a tree and is able to yield fruits and flowers in season, so the mantra has the power to bring spiritual progress and ultimately liberation from the world of suffering and death. The scriptures say that when the spiritual power is awakened, the mantra is seen in golden letters and sometimes is heard as clearly as a human voice. All these things are matters of experience. They cannot be known through intellectual understanding or mere discussion. One has to practice spiritual discipline for many years. In time, everything will be revealed from within oneself. Then the aspirant realizes God in and through the mantra which appears as the visible form of the Infinite Being, which is formless and nameless.”<sup>2</sup>

#### **References:**

- 1 Glimpses of a Great Soul (A Portrait of Swami Saradananda) by Swami Asheshananda, 1st Edn, Vedanta Press, 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood, CA 90068 pg. 126
- 2 Ibid, pg 127

## The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man - 3

C.G. Jung

### Light from the East

It is indeed more than a mere jest of world-history that just at that time, a Frenchman, Anquetil du Perron, was living in India, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century brought back a translation of the *Oupenk'hat*, a collection of fifty Upanishads, which gave the West its first glimpse into the mysterious spirit of the East. For the historian this is an accident independent of any historical causality nexus. My judgement as a physician, however, can see nothing accidental in it, for it all happened according to the psychological rule that is of unfailing validity in personal life: For every important element that is robbed of its value in the conscious, and is therefore lost, a compensation arises in the unconscious. This occurs according to the law of the conservation of energy, for our psychical processes are also energetic phenomena. No psychical value can disappear without being replaced by its equivalent. This is the heuristic, fundamental principle in daily psychotherapeutic practice, never failing and repeatedly confirmed. The physician in me finds it impossible to look on the psychical life of a people as being outside fundamental psychological rules. To him, the soul of the people is merely a somewhat more complex structure than the soul of the individual. And moreover, looking at it from the other side, does not a poet speak of the 'peoples' of his soul? Quite correctly as it seems to me, because our soul contains something that is not the individual, but the mass, collectivity, humanity in fact. Somewhere or other, we are part of a single great soul, a single great man, to speak in Swedenborg's terms, and just as the dark thing in me an individual

calls out what is light, so too does it happen in the psychological life of the people.

The dark nameless force that streamed together destructively in Notre-Dame commanded the individual also; it struck Anquetil du Perron, in whom it provoked an answer that became part of world history. From him has come the yet incalculable spiritual influence of the East. Let us beware of underestimating this influence! We see little of it on the intellectual surface of Europe—a pair of philosophy professors, some sombre celebrities like Madam Blavatsky and Annie Besant with her Krishnamurthy. These influences seem to be separate little islands rising above the sea of the masses, but in reality they are the peaks of important, undersea mountain-ranges.

The Philistine of culture believed till quite lately that he could smile down on astrology as something long since exploded, but now coming up from below, it stands today close to the doors of universities from which it was withdrawn three hundred years ago. The same holds true of the ideas of the East. They gain a foothold in the masses below, and grow gradually up to the top. Whence came the five or six million Swiss Francs for the anthroposophic temple in Domach? Certainly not from an individual. Unfortunately there are no statistics which could show accurately how many confessed and silent theosophists there are today. What is certain only is that the number reaches several millions. To this are to be added several million spiritualists of Christian and theosophical denomination.

### **Renewals from Below**

Great renewals never come from above, but always from below, just as trees never grow down from heaven, but always up from the earth, even if their seeds once did fall from above. The

upheaval of our world and the upheaval of our consciousness are one and the same thing. Everything becomes relative and therefore questionable. While the conscious hesitatingly and doubtfully looks at this dubious world, where there are rumblings about peace-and-friendship-pacts, about Democracy and Dictatorship, Capitalism and Bolshevism, the soul yearns for an answer to the turmoil of doubt and uncertainties. Those who have most given themselves up to the urge of the soul come from the more obscure strata of society. They are the much derided silent people, less infected by academic prejudices than the more brilliant leaders. Looked at from above, the urge is often a disappointing or laughable comedy, but it is significantly simple, simple like those once called blessed. For example, is it not moving to see even the most patent psychical nonsense gathered together in foot-thick archives? The most inadequate stammerings, the silliest actions, the emptiest flights of phantasy have been brought together as Anthropophyteia with scrupulous scientific conscientiousness by Havelock Ellis and the Freudians. They have been collected in serious treatises and accorded all scientific honours, and their reading public spreads over the whole circle of white culture.

Whence this zeal, this almost fanatical honouring of things beyond the pale of good taste? It is because they are psychological, they are soul-substance, and therefore as precious as handwriting-fragments rescued from ancient ruins. Even what is hidden and evil-smelling in the soul is valuable to the modern because it serves him towards a goal—To what goal?

Freud has given in his *Interpretation of Dreams* the motto: *Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo*. If I cannot bend Olympus, I will at least set Acheron in an uproar—to what purpose indeed?

## The Goal

Our gods are the idols and values of our conscious world that have to be dethroned. Nothing so discredited the ancient gods as their scandals. History repeats itself: we dig into the mistrusted background of brilliant virtues and incomparable ideals, with the triumphant cry: These are your gods, a false front made by mortal hand, and defiled by human depravity; a whited sepulchre, full of carrion and filth. A long familiar note is sounded, and there come again to life words one never digested when being prepared for confirmation.

I am of the earnest conviction that these are not accidental analogies. There are too many men to whom Freudian psychology is dearer than the Bible, and to whom Bolshevism means more than civic virtue. And yet all these people are our brothers, and in each of us there is at least one voice that agrees with them, for in the last analysis we are all parts of one soul.

The unexpected result of this spiritual tendency is that an uglier face is put upon the world so that no one can love it any more, nor can we any longer love ourselves, and finally there is nothing more in the outer world to entice us away from our own souls. Taken in the deepest sense this indeed is the result that was aimed at. What else does theosophy mean with its doctrine of Karma and reincarnation except that this world of appearance is nothing but a transitory, moral, health-resort for the immature? True it makes the immanent meaning of the present-day world relative by a different technique, in that it promises other higher worlds without making ugly the world as it is, but the result remains the same.

All these ideas, judged by established rules, are extremely unacademic, but they seize modern consciousness from below. Is it again an accident of analogy that Einstein's relativity theory, and the newest atomic theory, bordering on super-causality and

invisibility, become the possessions of our thought? Even physics flees our material world. It is no wonder, I think, if modern man falls back inevitably upon his psychical reality, and expects from it the security the world denies him.

### **Self-Deception of the West**

But with the soul of the West things are precarious, all the more precarious in that we still prefer the illusion of our inner beauty to the unvarnished truth. The Westerner lives in a veritable cloud of self-deception, which is designed to veil his real face. But what are we to people of a different colour? What do China and India think of us? What does the black man think of us or those whom we have destroyed with brandy, venereal diseases and general land robbery?

I have an Indian friend who is a Pueblo Chief. We were once speaking confidentially about white men, when he said: 'We don't understand the whites; they are always wanting something; they are always restless, always seeking something. What are they hunting for? We don't know. We cannot understand them. They have such sharp noses, such thin cruel lips, such lines on their faces. We think they are all crazy.'

My friend had recognized, without being able to name it, the Aryan bird of prey and his insatiable lust for booty, the thing that takes him all over the world, into countries that concern him not at all. The Indian had moreover noted our insanity which, for instance, flatters itself that Christianity is the only truth, the white Christ the only Redeemer. We even send missionaries to China after we have set the whole East at loggerheads by our science and technique and then forced tribute out of them. The stamping out of polygamy by the missions has developed prostitution in Africa to such an extent that in Uganda alone twenty thousand pounds

yearly are expensed on anti-venereal measures, and furthermore the campaign has had the worst possible moral consequences. The good European pays missionaries for these refreshing results. Shall we mention the really frightful tale of sorrows of the Polynesians and the blessings of the opium trade?

Thus does the European appear outside his moral smoke-screen. It is small wonder that the digging out of our soul is at first almost like undertaking excavations for a canal. Only a great idealist like Freud could devote a whole life-work to this unclean task. In our psychology, then, acquaintance with the real soul begins to all intents and purposes with the most repellent end, namely, with the things we do not wish to see.

### **Light out of Night**

But if our soul consisted only of things evil and useless, a normal man could not by any power in the world be induced to find anything attractive in it. This is why people who can see in theosophy nothing but a lamentable intellectual superficiality, and in Freudianism nothing but lust for sensation, prophesy a rapid and inglorious end to these movements. But they overlook the fact that at the base of these movements is a passion, namely, the fascination of the soul which will hold to these forms of expression until they are surpassed by something better. Superstition and perversity are fundamentally the same. They are transition forms of an embryonic nature out of which new, more mature forms will develop.

The spectacle of the Western subconscious mind is little inviting either from an intellectual, a moral or an aesthetic standpoint. With unrivalled passion we have built up a monumental world about us, but just because it is everywhere so tremendous, all that is great lies outside, and on the other hand, what we find in the depths of

the soul must necessarily be as it is, namely, impoverished and inadequate.

I realize that I have gone beyond collective consciousness in what I say. The insight into these psychological facts has not yet become a common possession. The Western public is only on its way to this point of view, against which one rebels violently for reasons readily understood. We have been impressed by Spengler's pessimism, but the impression is chiefly felt in pleasant, circumscribed academic circles. Psychological insight, on the other hand, touches on what is painfully personal and therefore comes up against personal resistances and denials. I am far from considering these resistances as meaningless. Far from that, they appear to me as a healthy reaction against something destructive.

All relativism when taken as the superior and final principle works destructively. Therefore, if I call attention to the dismal aspect of the subconscious mind, it is not in order to lift a warning finger of pessimism, it is rather that I point to the fact that the unconscious, irrespective of its terrifying aspect, exerts a powerful attraction, and not only on diseased natures, but upon healthy positive spirits. The background of the mind is nature and nature is creative life. It is true that nature tears down what she builds up, but she builds up again. What the modern relativism destroys in values in the visible world will be given us again by the soul. At first we see only the descent into what is dark and ugly, but whoever cannot bear this sight will never create what is brilliant and beautiful. Light is always born out of night, and no sun ever remained standing in heaven because an anxious human longing clung to it. Has not Anquetil du Perron's example shown us how the soul drives away again its own darkness? China certainly does not believe that it will be destroyed by European science and

technic. Why should we believe that the secret spiritual influence of the East should destroy us?

### **The East Likely to Overwhelm the West**

But I forget that apparently we do not yet realize that while we can shake to its foundations the material world of the East with our superior technical ability, the East with its superior spiritual ability can bring confusion to our spiritual world. The idea has never come to us that while we are overwhelming the East from without it, it can seize us within. Such an idea seems almost insane to us because we can only think of causal connections, when we cannot see our way to making a Max Muller, an Oldenberg, a Neumann, a Deussen, or a Wilhelm responsible for the confusion of our spiritual midway position. But what does the example of Imperial Rome teach us? With the conquest of Asia Minor, Rome became Asiatic, Europe in fact became infected by Asia and is still today. Out of Cilicia came the Roman military religion, the Mithra cult, which reached from Egypt to cloudy Britain, and out of Asia came Christianity also.

We have not yet quite realized that Western theosophy is a dilettante imitation of the East. Astrology, the daily bread of the East, we are just taking up again. Sexual investigation, begun for us in Vienna and England, has excellent Hindu fore-runners. Thousand-year-old texts from there instruct us in philosophical relativity, and the summation of Chinese wisdom is based exclusively on a super-causal standpoint only just divined by us. And even certain complicated new discoveries of our psychology are to be found recognizably described in ancient Chinese texts, as Professor Wilhelm himself has shown me. What we hold to be a specific Western discovery, that is, psycho-analysis and the trends of thought stimulated by it, is only a beginner's effort in

comparison with what in the East is a practised art. It should be mentioned that the book drawing the parallelism between psycho-analysis and Yoga has already been written by Oscar A. H. Schmitz.

The theosophists have an amusing concept of Mahatmas who are sitting somewhere or other in the Himalayas or Tibet and from thence inspire and lead the spirits of the whole world. In fact, so strong is the influence of the Eastern attitude toward magic that mentally normal Europeans have assured me the good part of what I say is inspired by the Mahatmas, without my knowledge, and that my own personality counts for nothing. This mythology, widely spread and firmly believed in the East, is like all mythology, far from being nonsense; but is a very important psychological truth.

The East seems in reality to be active in the cause of our present spiritual transformation. But this East is not any Tibetan Mahatma monastery, it is chiefly within us. It is our own soul that is at work to create new spiritual forms, forms containing spiritual realities which must put a wholesome damper on the Aryan man's limitless lust for gain. There is indicated something of that limitation of life which in the East has developed into a questionable quietism, something perhaps of that stability of existence which necessarily ensues when the demands of the soul become just as pressing as the needs of the external social life. Yet, in this age of Americanism, we are still far removed from anything of the sort, and stand, as it seems to me, only at the beginning of a new culture. I would not like to assume the role of prophet, but one cannot try to sketch the spiritual problem of modern man without mentioning the yearning for rest bred out of the condition of unrest, the longing for security in the midst of insecurity. Out of wants and necessities grow new forms of existence, and not out of ideal demands or mere wishes.

## **A Significant Phenomenon**

In the fascination the soul has for modern consciousness, I find the kernel of the present spiritual problem. Looked at pessimistically, it is a phenomenon of decay; on the other hand, looked at optimistically, it is the hopeful germ of a possibly deep change of the Western spiritual attitude. In any case it is a phenomenon of great significance, all the more worthy of attention in that it is rooted in wide reaches of society, and all the more important since it stirs those irrational and, as history proves, immeasurable, instincts of the mind which transforms the life of peoples and cultures in unforeseen and secret ways. It is these forces, to many people still invisible today, which lie behind the psychological interests of our time. The fascination the soul exerts is fundamentally not an abnormal perversity, but so powerful an attraction that it cannot be frightened even by things offensive to good taste.

Along the great thoroughfares of the world everything seems withered and wasted; therefore the searching instinct leaves the well-trodden ways and turns to the bye-paths, just as the man of antiquity freed himself from his Olympian world of gods, and ferreted out the Asiatic mysteries. Our secret instinct seeks this hidden thing outside, in that it takes up Eastern theosophy and Eastern magics, but it also seeks it within in that it looks reflectively upon the background of the soul. It does this with the same scepticism and the same radicalism with which a Buddha, in order to attain the uniquely convincing primordial experience, put aside his two million gods as irrelevant.

## **An Optical Illusion?**

And now we come to the last question: Is what I have said of modern men really true? Or is it perhaps an optical illusion?

Without a doubt, to the minds of millions of Westerners the facts cited by me are quite unimportant accidents, and for very many highly cultured people they are only lamentable mistakes. What, for instance, did a cultured Roman think of Christianity which spread first among the lower levels of the people? To many, the Western God is personally just as living as is Allah beyond the Mediterranean Sea, and the one believer holds the other for an inferior heretic to be endured sympathetically for lack of any other course of action. A clever European is moreover of the opinion that religion and the like is quite suitable for the people and for the feminine feelings, but is to remain absolutely in the background when compared with immediate economic and political questions.

Thus all along the line I am given the lie, like one who, out of a cloudless sky prophesies a thunderstorm. Perhaps a thunderstorm is below the horizon—perhaps it will never overtake us. But the questions of the soul always lie below the horizon of consciousness, and when we speak of spiritual problems, we are really talking about things on the borderline of visibility, of most intimate and delicate things, of flowers that open only in the night. By day everything is clear and tangible, but the night is as long as the day and we live in the night also. There are people who have bad dreams that even spoil the day for them. And the life of the day is for many people so bad a dream that they long for the night when the soul awakes. It seems to me indeed as though there are especially many people like that today, wherefore I think the modern spiritual problem is conditioned as I have described it.

I must reproach myself with one-sidedness in that I pass by in silence the soul of our temporal world of which most people speak. I do so because it is an open book to all. It expresses itself in inter-or super-national ideals embodied in Leagues of Nations and the like,

as well as in sport and, finally, in a telling way in the cinema and in jazz. These are characteristic symptoms of our time which unmistakably extend the humanitarian ideal to the body. Thus sport means an unusual valuation of the body, which is still more emphasized by the modern dance. The cinema, on the other hand, like the detective novel, makes possible a harmless experiencing of all those excitements, passions and phantasies, which, in a humane decade must of necessity be repressed.

It is not difficult to see how these symptoms hang together with the psychic situation. The fascination of the soul is nothing other than a new self-consciousness, a retrospective view of fundamental human nature. It is no wonder that at the same time the body, which for so long suffered depreciation in contrast to the spirit, has again been discovered. At times one feels almost tempted to speak of the vengeance of the body at the cost of the spirit. When Keyserling in a grotesque way denounces the chauffeur as the culture-hero of our time, he has not by any means shot beside the mark. The body raises its claim to equal recognition, indeed it exerts a fascination like that of the soul. If one is still caught by the old idea of the opposition between mind and matter, this condition means a split, an unbearable contradiction. But if we can reconcile ourselves to the mystery whereby the soul is the inner life of the body, and the body is the outwardly revealed life of the soul, the two being really a unity, then we can also understand how the struggle to transcend the present level of consciousness leads through the unconscious to the body, and, conversely, how the belief in the body can only subscribe to a philosophy which does not deny the body in favour of pure spirit. This prominence of psychical and bodily demands in contrast to a former time when they were not so emphasized, although apparently like a

phenomenon of disintegration, may also mean a rejuvenation, for as Holderlin says:

*Wo Gefahr ist*

*Wachst das Retende auch*

'Where there is danger

The saving thing also grows'

And we actually see how the Western world begins to strike a much more rapid tempo, the opposite of quietism and world-fleeing resignation. In extreme contrast begins to form a tension between outer and inner, or better, between objective and subjective, perhaps a last race between aging Europe and youthful America, perhaps a healthy or dubious effort to flee the power of darker laws of nature, and to conquer a yet greater, yet more heroic victory of awareness over sleep.

**A question which history will answer.**

After all these audacities let me return to my original promise of not wanting to forsake modesty. My voice is only one voice, my experience only a drop in the sea, and my knowledge no greater than the limits of a microscopic field of vision; my spiritual eye is a tiny mirror that reflects one of the smallest corners of the world, and finally my idea—a subjective confession.

(Reprinted from Prabuddha Bharata, August-September 1931)

# **The Release of Philosophy - 1**

Pramathanath Mukhopadhyaya

## **Promise of a Rich Harvest**

Towards the close of the nineteenth century certain signs began to appear in some fields of human enquiry, which indicated, beyond the possibility of doubt, that as a result of man's scientific effort certain seeds had been sown which were destined to yield a new and startling harvest of crops in the near future. And the present century was startled not merely by the novelty of the results but also by the change in outlook and orientation, in methods and hopes, which revealed themselves as soon as a new day broke in clearness settled. We shall not refer to the new discoveries in science, and make particular mention of any of them, though many of them are of an epoch-making nature; we are here concerned with the general tendency of these new facts or rather new appreciations of the old facts.

And we are concerned with the new tendencies in so far as they bear upon and affect what has been of supreme interest to man in all times—an interest that has overshadowed every other—the meaning and reality of man's freedom and happiness. The question that has stirred his inmost depths and the problem that has attracted and perplexed him more than any other relate to this. The universe has been made to yield its secrets. But do we know all the secret that is essential, or at least, such part of the secret as seems relevant to the solution of the most engaging problem of man? Is science in a position to insure the satisfaction of the deepest yearnings of man, in the scheme of the world-order that she has been able to draw up? Does the constitution of the universe not merely safeguard but also afford an unstinted scope for the evolution of the possibilities of man?

## Science of the Nineteenth Century

So long as science was confined to her hard shell of nineteenth-century dogmatism, and philosophy was groaning under her yoke of narrow sensationalism, a reassuring answer was not given, and was not thought possible. A nineteenth century man of science was apt to regard his chart of the universe a self-complacently neat and rounded whole—a scheme which left its windows open indeed for the admission of new facts, but its doors barred against the challenge of any revolutionary principles. A constitution of the universe had been drawn up for all time, and all facts old and new were expected to submit to its governance. That a challenge might come from new facts, or that a revolt might arise from a demand for a more adequate explanation of those already known was not deemed possible. We had been permitted to look into Nature's own order-sheet for the rule of natural phenomena, and it was a comfortable assurance of the man of science not only that unruly events do not occur, which even now might be thought a permissible hypothesis, but that the order-sheet in so far as shown to him was sacrosanct and inviolable, and admitted of no question and revision, which is, in any case, a dogmatic position. There are always more things and more truths—relating to facts as well as to principles—than are dreamt of in philosophy.

Science might have to plead guilty to a milder impeachment if she had been content to play the part of Providence in her own house—the so-called physical universe; but not unoften she was also caught poaching upon provinces which are not her own preserves—the realms of life and consciousness. Physics was allowed to overshadow, if not dominate, the study of both life and mind. She favoured, if not actually required, a mechanistic or deterministic outlook upon these things. Astronomers now tell us of island universes beyond our galactic system; but no one perhaps

will seriously contend that these island universes enjoy a domestic monopoly of a new set of mechanical laws and principles. It is not thought that the laws of motion, for example, will not hold good in those outlying regions of space, or that spectroscopy will fail to be an index to the chemical constitution of the stuff of those worlds. Similar perhaps was the attitude of the man of science with regard to the island universes of vital and mental phenomena. They were simply tolerated as an outlying region of phenomena which were suffered to exist, but their right to exist as independent phenomena or facts *sui generis* was viewed with suspicion, if not flatly denied.

Under the official review certain aspects of these phenomena passed muster, and in the Comity of Sciences the sciences of Biology and Psychology were admitted more as a matter of grace than as a matter of right, and they were shown to back seats. The front row was to be occupied by the strictly mathematical and experimental sciences. Biology and Psychology were given domicile, but outside the courtesy and formality of 'law', they scarcely got admitted to the orthodox clubs, and were politely nodded away as aliens as soon as they ventured to trespass into the sanctuary of the exclusive clubs. A correct costume and correct manners were insisted upon in the case of an occasional visitor, but inflexibly stringent were the rules of admission to membership. Biology and Psychology long waited in the ante-chambers hat in hand, but their credentials have, perhaps, not yet come up to the requirements.

The nineteenth century colossus of scientific achievement was not however without its feet of clay. Its forte was also its foible. It had plunged its piers not into the rock of truth, but into the sand of unwarranted assumption. Its first principles were not axioms but postulates, and its postulates were 'convenient fictions'. Its absolute space and time and mass, its conservation of matter and

force, its universal causation and uniformity of Nature were convenient fictions, and were so recognized by some of their first-rank professors. Outside these fundamentals, Science was frankly expected to do her job only by what is called 'limitation of the data'. A real, concrete, live thing is never its subject of study. It presents a problem of unmanageable complexity. The mutual attraction of the three bodies instead of two was a problem for mathematical geniuses to grapple with. But what is this problem by the side of the infinitely complex problem of universal attraction? Science has always to simplify her case by scraping the irrelevant details. But it is well to remember that what are irrelevant in a given frame of reference may not be so in a different frame of reference.

The universe of Science is therefore a universe of convention. Its space and time, its ether and force, its mass and motion are all conceptual models or moulds into which live real facts cannot be pressed whole and entire, and out of which they issue as mangled approximations and dead abstractions. By reason of Science possessing this character, she has been the foster-mother of sensationalism in Philosophy. Things are nothing but clusters of sensations, actual and possible—it was said. Space, time, mass and motion are the causal factors: the universe of perception is an ideal growth out of these causal roots. But are not the roots themselves conceptual? So Science has been believed to lead inevitably to the grave of realism. Its logical outcome in philosophy has been supposed to be either agnosticism or sensationalism.

It is true that fresh attempts are being made to save realism by showing that our knowledge of the external world both implies and requires a substratum of reals that are not altogether falsely presented in experience, and are being, with increasing fullness and correctness, represented by the facts and principles of science.

For my part, this vindication of lay experience and Science has always appeared to be of real value. It is a reassuring gesture that allays our natural misgivings as to the world in which we live, move and have our being, not revolving upon any real and substantial hinges. A world of cobweb has ever failed to bring its appeal home to us. It has lacked points of appeal. It has interested us as a mirage from which escape is sought, and not as abode and habitation where the satisfaction of our vital needs may be attained, and the hopes and yearnings of our advance and betterment are insured.

So long as experience is a phantasm, and Science was supposed to lend a weird and unknown background to this infinitely diversified illusive projection, only a philosophy of transcendence pointing to a way of escape out of the far-flung spell of this film-house was the sort of philosophy that mattered.

### **A Philosophy of Despair**

But such escape has not always been thought possible. A frankly sceptic attitude has often been taken. The question—Is metaphysics possible?—has sometimes been answered in the negative. A religion of Nature or a religion of Hero-worship, together with an utilitarian ethics and social scheme, have been supposed to have met the spiritual requirements of many. But it is idle to pretend that a philosophy or a negation of philosophy which denied the more fundamental values of human existence—man's essential freedom, bliss and survival after death—can meet the central needs and requirements of the human spirit. A sceptical philosophy, whatever redeeming features it may sometimes have presented in its altruistic social sanctions, is a philosophy of despair. It is born out of a disappointment that our logic has failed to justify our deepest and most essential beliefs.

A philosophy which merely plays to the gallery is not helpful, and may in fact be worse than useless. It is not the proper function of philosophy to frame conventions of thought and behaviour, but to find, or try to find, the ultimate sanctions for all conventions, to examine the foundations of all essential beliefs. Even Science may offer us a house of convention to live in; and ethics and politics may keep our private or public house according to an economy of common sense and common prudence only. The ulterior question whether that house is or is not a rightful or permanent lodging, and whether that economy is or is not of assured worth, remains unresolved. Whether the bricks of that house are facts or fictions, whether the mortar used is objective nexuses or only subjective norms and conventions, is a point which Science itself has perpetually raised and presented, but never has met.

An enquiry has always been thought necessary as to the nature and limits of our knowledge of the external world and also of our minds. And the interest has been not merely theoretical. All the vital issues of life hang on this enquiry. Is the constitution of the universe such as to give us a fair field for an exercise of what is best in us, and for the satisfaction of what is deepest in us? Is it a field indifferent in relation to the moral, aesthetic and religious values, or is it hostile or helpful? Does our experience of the Self, again, possess a background of assurance that it is essentially imperishable, free and blissful? A verdict of an ignoramus has not proved less unsatisfying than a verdict of flat denial or negation. Philosophy has not been happy or even easy by debarring the possibility of knowledge. A Critique of Pure Reason has never laid the matters of vital moment to rest. A Critique of Practical Reason and a Critique of Judgment have been required to meet an insistent demand that cannot be satisfied.

## **Imprisonment of Philosophy**

Philosophy had been in shackles not of her own making. She had abdicated her rightful authority to the sciences, and shut herself in a prison the key of which she had delivered to the gaoler. She had to take her orders from others. She must abide by the findings and decisions of the special sciences. She must not trust intuition and *a priori* ideas, but must depend upon the observations and experiments and inductions of the special sciences. Of these, objective findings were deemed more trustworthy than the subjective. Science is measurement, and whatever phenomena readily lend themselves to measurement are taken as more dependable than those which do not appear to be so pliable. Economics became a science to the extent that the methods of calculus could not be applied to it. So also in the cases of biology and psychology.

There is no doubt an aspect of our universe of experience which is amenable to measurement, and this embraces not only the so-called objective half, but also the subjective half of that universe. But there is also another which is beyond or above measurement, and of which Science as such is not competent to take cognisance. This immeasurable and alogical always eludes the grip of the calculator, and always exceeds the span of the foot-rule and the compass. Philosophy has her justification in the making of an endeavour to satisfy herself that such an ultra-scientific realm actually exists; and if it does, to locate it and survey it, if and so far as that is possible. She is also to correlate it to the realm of Science proper. The task of settling the 'scientific' frontiers of Science is hers, and this burden she can neither lay aside nor shift it to other shoulders. That would be like shifting the judge's office to the plaintiff of his witnesses.

But the key has now turned in her prison door, and her gaoler will presently be in her cell and present her own release order to be signed by herself. If the new discoveries in the scientific realm, not only as regards facts but also as regards methods and principles, bear any deeper implication, it is this that Science is without any rightful warrant to erect any prison house for Philosophy to be shut up in, to lay down any limits to the possibility of knowledge and will to be and become. The new conceptions of space and time, of energy and atomic constitution, as also many new advances in the knowledge of physical, chemical, biological and psychological facts and laws, have all conspired and plotted to blow up any such prison house. The present tendency is decidedly against any dogmatic assertion of the supremacy of matter and force, the absolutism of mechanistic determinism, the universal uniformity of natural occurrence and governance, the impossibility of the transcendental and improbability of the so-called mysterious and miraculous.

The tiny modern atom has proved powerful enough to upset many of the 'invulnerable' positions of nineteenth-century scientific dogmatism. The atom has shown that the seemingly smallest thing is only seemingly so—that it is great in its energy and great in the appointments of that energy, and yet that all this greatness has not made it something ultimate and indestructible, but only a bubble, with a longer lease of life than perhaps the suns and the stars, blown up into being, we know not how, and blown out of being, we know not also how, on the bosom of a Being which may be Ether, or Space-Time Continuum, or any other imperfectly understood thing, but certainly is not matter in the ordinary physical acceptance of the word.

The Quantum Theory of Energy, again, has profoundly affected the older ideas of the continuity of the dynamic entity, and also,

as we shall presently see, of the causal operation. Our new space-time concept has proved a powerful solvent so far as the absolute character of the ordinary relations of space and time are concerned. Physics has been emerging out of the mouldering heaps of old physical conceptions, and building itself on the gravestone of swaggering nineteenth-century materialism, empiricism and mechanistic determinism.

And yet there has never been a compelling reason for Philosophy having consented to sell her birthright for a mess of scientific pottage. It is true Science had persuaded herself, upon insufficient data as it subsequently appeared, that any condition of the universe as a whole is determined by the given antecedent assemblage of conditions which, as many orthodox physicists thought, are reducible to a given configuration of matter and a given distribution of motion; and that the realms of life and matter are either included in the universe of matter and motion as constituent and dependent parts—a more likely hypothesis—or island universes having commerce with the main continent but enjoying the status of *a* sovereign state—an unlikely hypothesis.

On a recent occasion, a scientist who has the authority to speak in the name of science thus contrasted the spirit of new science with that of the old:

When we oldsters were boys, Science meant knowledge. Science means no such thing now, because there is no such thing as knowledge: there is only a partial emergence from ignorance. Formerly, Science was bold and dogmatic and announced eternal truth. Now, Science is timid and apologetic and propounds momentary hypothesis....Formerly Science purported to observe facts and to explain them. The facts were positive and the explanations were final. Today, we have neither facts nor explanations, but only appearances and theories. Thus we no

longer speak (scientifically) of matter and its properties as the sole reality; nor should we be grossly unscientific if we venture to speak of matter as the sole illusion. This may seem to carry us back towards the ancient Hindu idea of Maya (or mirage); but what then?...And as with matter, so with the properties of matter. The substantiality of a substance, the solidity of a solid, the fluidity of a fluid, the ponderability of a weight, the mobility of a moving body, all these are now seen to be mere mental pictures that may loosen thought, not finalities to enchain thought.

He further adds that, while Old Science rated only its latest results as true and all previous results which did not tally with these as false, New Science has now a more generous outlook inasmuch as it considers all results, earlier or later, as being only relatively true.

(To be continued)

## Spirituality and Activity

Swami Yatiswarananda

**F**or the speedy attainment of the summum bonum of our life, it is absolutely necessary for us not only to form a clear conception of the ultimate goal, but also to know definitely what particular course of action is calculated to lead us to its realization. An ideal becomes no better than a wild fancy unless we follow the proper path that is sure to help us to realize it sooner or later. Again, when we lose sight of the goal, our activities cannot but become aimless and even misdirected, and make us wander farther and farther from our life's destination. This is what is happening every day in our individual and communal life. Practice does not conform to the ideal. This is the root-cause of most of our troubles both in the East and in the West.

In spite of her terrible sufferings and trials, India is still the home of religion and spirituality. She is still the mother of prophets. Rightly does Mr. William Digby observe in his remarkable book, *Prosperous British India*:

Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ramakrishna, Bengalis to a man, to mention spiritual workers only who have passed away, are known everywhere and.... are honoured, as amongst humanity's noblest spiritual teachers....During the last century the first fruit of British intellectual eminence was, probably, to be found in Robert Browning and John Ruskin. Yet they are mere gropers in the dark compared with the uncultured and illiterate Ramakrishna of Bengal, who knowing naught of what we term 'learning', spoke as no other man of his age spoke, and revealed God to weary mortals.

All this is true. But it is in India again that in the name of religion millions of people are living a life of apathy and laziness. While aiming to live a life of other-worldliness, they are following the

path of morbid inactivity, and are sinking lower and lower into appalling inertness and ignorance. This is far worse than a life of worldliness, which at least entails a certain amount of activity, and this sometimes of a strenuous nature.

When we turn our eyes, to the Occident—the land of 'activity and progress'—there, too, we do not find a very encouraging state of affairs. The achieving West has no doubt produced many men of science and inventive genius, and their lifelong labours have tended to mitigate human sufferings, and have brought education, sanitation, health and comfort to the doors of millions. But it is also true at the same time that in the mad rush 'to squeeze the orange of the world dry in the shortest possible time', the Westerners are losing, and as a matter of fact have already lost, much of their life's leisureliness and peacefulness. And not only this. On the plea of spreading the light of civilization and culture and thereby making the world better, they have developed a form of militarism which threatens not only to destroy the peace of the non-European races, but also to exterminate the white nations themselves. Their religion has in most cases become only a pretence for gaining territorial expansion and material prosperity. In India the spiritual mood seems to lapse into indolence, weakness and slavishness. In the West the active temperament tends to lead to restlessness, militarism and aggression. The result is that the true spirit of religion—the one thing needful—seems to slip away in the midst of both the extremes—apathy and restlessness. What then is the remedy?

The morbid desire to reach the highest ideal all at once, whether one has got the necessary capacity and qualification or not, is responsible to no small extent for many of our troubles in the various spheres of life. It is true that we must never lose sight of the ideal. But we must know at the same time that we are to pass through a number of preparatory stages, through periods of

strenuous physical and mental training and discipline before we can hope to live the highest ideal of inward stillness and meditation. Many of the so-called religious men mar their career and also bring discredit to the noble name of religion simply because they unwisely violate this first law of spiritual life. The Hindu scriptures are quite explicit on the point. Says the *Gita*:

For the man of meditation wishing to attain purification of heart leading to concentration, work is said to be the means. For him when he has attained such concentration, *inaction* is said to be the way. He whose intellect is unattached everywhere—he who has subdued his heart—he whose desires have fled, attains to the supreme perfection, consisting of freedom of action by renunciation.

The authors of the ancient Hindu social system never lost sight of this ideal, and that is why they inculcated the Ashrama Dharma—the duties and responsibilities to be fulfilled in the different stages of life. Owing to the changed circumstances, it may now be necessary to change the non-essentials to some extent, but the old principles hold good in our present condition as strongly as ever.

Activity is inborn in every being. Swayed by his tendencies, or drawn by the siren voices of the world, as some would like to put it, man is engaging himself in various kinds of work, good, bad or indifferent. He wants to live what he thinks to be a brighter and fuller life, to enjoy to his heart's content the gifts of Providence. And in doing this he does not hesitate to tyrannize over the weaker and less fortunate of his fellow-men. In the scrambling for power and enjoyment that ensues, mutual hatred and jealousy, aggression and exploitation, horrible machines for the destruction of human life and property come to play their ignoble part. Wars and massacres, starvation and famine, and other forms of horror follow as a matter of course. This is the picture we find in most of the Western

countries, and in other parts of the world dominated by the Western nations. Christianity is the religion of the members of the White race, but these people with some individual exceptions are little influenced in their life and thought by its tenets. Most of them have made, in the words of a Western writer, 'the pretence of the profession of ideals an acquittal to act even remotely in accordance with them.' 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you'—says Christ. But his followers are mad after founding their kingdoms and empires in the material world, and this even by means of bloodshed and slaughter of the innocent. 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'—declares Jesus. But the Christian nations are scrambling for world-hegemony, even at the risk of suffering the loss of their soul. 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth'—is one of the precepts of the Prophet of Nazareth. But the so-called Christian powers never care to practise it even in their dealings with one another, far less with the Oriental nations. They have proved by their action that to be meek and remain meek is the surest step to the 'disinheritance' of the earth!

The person who is absorbed in Samadhi, and has merged his individuality in the Absolute, may alone be said to have reached the true actionless and perfect state. Of others, 'verily none can rest even for an instant without performing action, for all are made to act helplessly, indeed, by the Gunas, born of Prakriti.' Activity, when understood in its comprehensive sense, is both physical and mental. There are thousands in India who have given up the active life of the world, and are sincerely living the life of strenuous spiritual practice. Against these inwardly active people none should have anything to say. For they are making the best possible use of their time, and are holding aloft before mankind the highest ideal of life—the realization of the Divine. There are others, again, who

living in the world are leading a life of intense activity, both external and internal, and are attempting to do the greatest good to others as well as to themselves in various spheres of life. Both the above mentioned types of men, whether they follow the path of meditation or work or both are the salt of the earth, and are really helping to make the world better than what it is now. They are following paths which will ultimately lead them to the state where 'all knots of the heart are cut asunder, all doubts are solved, and all Karmas cease to exist.'

But those who are trying to avoid work as the source of all evil, and 'restraining the organs of action sit, revolving in the mind thoughts regarding the objects of the senses,' are only forging fresh fetters for their soul. Such is also the case with those who are allowing their activities to be swayed by their passions, and are madly following the path of worldly enjoyment, regardless of the sufferings and miseries of others. To them the *Gita* preaches the Karma Yoga in the following terms—'Without performing work none reaches worklessness; by merely giving up action no one attains to perfection. Do thou always perform actions which are obligatory, without attachment; by performing action unattached one attains to the highest.' Action by itself is not evil. It becomes so when it is not performed in the right spirit, and is made a means to self-aggrandizement and sense-gratification. But when it is brought under the regulative influence of higher ideals as furnished by religion, it becomes a potent instrument for freeing man from the shackles of ignorance, and thereby bringing to him undying peace and blessedness.

The whole secret of Karma Yoga lies in the word 'non-attachment'. This Yoga aims to bring freedom to man through work done without any thought of self. According to it, the path to perfection lies through intense activity. But this activity must be

selfless. Then only can it purify the mind, and when this is done the glory of the Atman shines forth in all its splendour. And the person who is blessed with the glorious vision realizes his true Self and reaches perfect freedom even in this very life. Therefore does the *Gita* declare—'Being steadfast in Yoga, perform actions, abandoning attachment, remaining unconcerned as regards success and failure. This evenness of mind (in regard to success and failure) is known as Yoga.'

Whether in the East or in the West, the crying need of the times is to combine spirituality with activity, and so direct all human strivings that they may ultimately lead man to the destined goal. To bring about this much desired state of affairs, thus did Swami Vivekananda suggest:

In India, the quality of Rajas is almost absent; the same is the case with Sattva in the West. It is certain, therefore, that the real life of the Western world depends upon the influx, from India, of the current of Sattva or transcendentalism; and it is also certain that unless we overpower and submerge our Tamas by the opposite tide of Rajas, we shall never gain any worldly good or welfare in this life; and it is also equally certain that we shall meet many formidable obstacles in the path of realization of those noble aspirations and ideals connected with our after-life.

Only a few thoughtful men and women of different countries are now able to recognize the union and intermingling of the two forces of spirituality and activity. But the sooner the bulk of mankind come to realize this urgent need the better for the world and the human race.

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# Advaita Vedanta: According to Scripture and According to Reason

Dr. Harold Barry Phillips

## The Scriptural Basis of Advaita Vedanta

The essence of Advaita Vedanta can be summed up in the following statements: (1) Brahman alone exists, (2) but due to ignorance, (3) each of us thinks he is a separate individual soul, and (4) sees Brahman as the external world; (5) could one but realize the Truth, (6) one would know oneself as identical with Brahman, and (7) the external world would be seen to be unreal.

## Brahman Alone Exists

In the account of creation, we read: 'In the beginning, dear boy, this was Being alone, one only, without a second (*advitiya*)' (*Chandogya*, VI.2.1.). From this last word, *advitiya*, comes the related form *advaita* (non-dual). To the same effect is *Aitareya*, 1.1: 'In the beginning, verily, all this was Atman alone. There was nothing else existing as a rival.' The reality behind the universe is called Brahman; the reality behind the individual is called Atman; it is the thesis of Vedanta that Brahman and Atman are the same. Hence the words are often used interchangeably, as here. Or, if it be objected that it is the present with which we are concerned, not the state of affairs some 6,000 million years ago, then we cite *Katha*, IV.10: 'Whatever is here, that is there; what is there, the same is here. He who sees here as different meets with death again and again.' That is, the Real is one without a second, but those who are in the world see difference, which brings us to the next point.

## Ignorance Is the Cause of the World

Why does one see manifoldness, as stated above? Because of ignorance, *avidya*. Because it is rooted in ignorance, the world as perceived is often termed illusion, *maya*. Thus, 'Know then that nature is *maya*, and that the great God is the Lord of *maya*' (*Svetasvatara*, IV.10). Again, 'On account of false notions (*mayabhih*), the supreme Being is perceived as manifold' (*Bṛhadaranyaka*, II.5.19). These Upanishads are the only ones using the term '*maya*' in this sense; but we have the analogous use of *avidya* in the following places: 'Fools, dwelling in the very midst of ignorance, yet vainly fancying themselves to be wise and learned, go round and round' (*Katha* II.5); 'He who knows this supreme immortal Being, as seated in the cavity of the heart, rends asunder the knot of ignorance even here in this life' (*Mundaka*, II.1.10). But the same idea is conveyed by the use of metaphors, thus: 'Like a lid, Thy shining orb covers the entrance to the Truth in Thee' (*Isa*, 15); 'Take me from darkness to light' (*Bṛhadaranyaka*, 1.3.28).

The notion of Brahman being falsely perceived as the manifold world also occurs in these passages: 'Just as, though people who do not know the field walk again and again over the treasure of gold hidden underground, but do not find it, even so all the creatures here, though they go daily into the Brahman world, yet do not find it, for they are carried away by the untrue' (*Chandogya*, VIII.3.2); again, 'For when there is duality, as it were, then one sees another' (*Bṛhadaranyaka*, II.4.14); and finally, 'The self-existent God has rendered the senses so defective that they go outward, and hence man sees the external and not the internal self.' (*Katha*, IV.1). From these references, Shankara worked out the doctrine of superimposition (*adhyasa*): that what we see is not the Real, but is an illusory appearance which the mind superimposes on the Real: 'Just as blueness in the sky, water in the mirage, and a human figure

in the post are but illusory, so is the universe in Atman' (*Aparoksanubhuti*, 61).

### **The Jiva**

If there is really nothing but Brahman, but in the state of ignorance we see a world, by the same token, 'we' are Brahman in the state of ignorance, having thereby become manifold. Hence there is a lot of evidence in the scriptures for the difference between Brahman and the individual soul or *jiva*, or more properly, between the real Self (Atman) and the *jiva*. So *Brhadaranyaka*, II.4.5: 'The Self, my dear Maitreyi, should verily be realized; should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon.' If the Self is to be realized, then the realizer or *jiva* must be different from the realized or Atman. Again, 'Two birds, bound to one another in close friendship, perch on the selfsame tree' (*Mundaka*, III.1.1-2). Here the two birds represent the *jiva* and the Atman. Further, 'When this self that is associated with the intellect is thus asleep, it...lies in the supreme Self that is within the heart' (*Brhadaranyaka*, II.1.17), and to the same effect is *Chandogya*, VI.8.1: 'When a man is said to be sleeping, then, dear boy, he has become united with being.' Here the *jiva* must be different and separate from the Atman, if in sleep it becomes united therewith. Indeed, in *Svetasvatara*, IV.10, we have the explicit statement that the *jiva* is a part of Brahman: 'The whole world is filled with beings who form His parts.'

### **Jagat**

In *Katha*, IV.10, quoted above, we saw a reference to Brahman as both here and there, that is, as both in the subject and in the object, in the seer and in the seen. The same notion lies behind these famous lines from *Brhadaranyaka*, V.5.1: 'That Brahman is

infinite, this universe too is infinite. The infinite universe emanates from the infinite Brahman. Assimilating the infinitude of the infinite universe, the infinite Brahman alone is left', which signifies that in meditation one should strive to realize the universe (*jagat*) as an embodiment of Brahman, as is stated in *Isa*, I: 'Whatever there is changeable in this ephemeral world, all that should be seen as pervaded by the Lord.' Hence, there is an external world, which is, in fact, Brahman, but to our senses it appears as manifold—it is but the appearance of Brahman. Or rather, it is one of several different appearances, as is enigmatically stated in *Katha*, VI.5: 'Brahman is seen in the self as one sees oneself in the mirror; in the world of manes, as one perceives oneself in dream; in the world of *gandharvas*, as one's reflection is seen in the water; in the world of Brahma, as light and shade.'

### **Knowledge or Samadhi**

In the last two quotations, it is implicit that in the state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*) we realize the universe as Brahman; by the same token, in that state we realize our true Self as Brahman. This is evidenced by many references, especially the following: 'The self-existent God has rendered the senses so defective that they go outward...Only perchance some wise man, desirous of immortality, turns his eyes in, and beholds the inner Atman' (*Katha*, IV. 1), where the process of attaining *samadhi* is referred to. So also, 'Being covered by *maya*, which is mere sound, it does not through darkness know the *akasa* (i.e. Brahman). When ignorance is rent asunder, it being then itself only sees the unity' (*Amrtabindu-Upanisad*, 15). Here knowledge (rending ignorance asunder) is described as seeing through or transcending *maya*. Next, we have *Svetasvatara*, 1.10: 'By meditating on Him, by uniting with Him, and by becoming one with Him, there is a cessation of all illusion

(*maya*) in the end.' Finally, *Katha*, III.14, is worth quoting because of the famous metaphor therein mentioned: 'Arise, awake, O man! Realize that Atman, having approached the excellent teachers. Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path, difficult to cross and hard to tread—so say the wise'; cf. *Mundaka*, III.2.4. (Only very exceptional aspirants are able to attain the superconscious state by their own unaided efforts. A *guru* is needed.)

The philosophical basis of this state is the *turiya*, the superconsciousness that lies as the witness beyond the three states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping. The *locus classicus* for this is the *Mandukya-Upanisad*, but a shorter reference is the *Sarva-Upanisad*, 2: 'When the essence of consciousness, which manifests itself as the three states, is a witness of the states, but is itself devoid of states, positive or negative, and remains in the state of non-separation and oneness, then it is spoken of as the *turiya* or the fourth.' That is, the Atman, when it enjoys the states of waking, sleeping and dreaming, is the *jiva*, but it is to be realized in its true nature by transcending these three states, by getting behind them, so to speak. Just as we waken from sleep, so we must waken from the waking world, as it were, and enter into the world of Brahman.

### **Tat-tvam-asi**

It is in this superconscious state that the *jiva* becomes identical with the Atman, as in the *Amrtabindu-Upanisad*, 8: 'Realizing "I am that Brahman", one becomes the immutable Brahman.' To the same effect is *Brhadaranyaka*, IV.4.25: 'He who knows the Self as above indeed becomes the fearless Brahman'; also *Mundaka*, III.2.9: 'Whoever knows the supreme Brahman becomes that very Brahman', where it is clear that the *jiva* is not Brahman in its normal (waking) condition, but only when it realizes Brahman, or attains the state of *samadhi*. It might be mentioned here that this identity

is expounded by means of four aphorisms: (i) 'That thou art' (*Tat-tvam-asi*) (*Chandogya*, VI.10.3); (ii) 'This Atman is Brahman' (*Mandukya*, 2); (iii) 'Consciousness is Brahman' (*Aitareya*, V.3); and (iv) 'I am Brahman' (*Brhadaranyaka*, I.4.20).

### **The Unreality of the External World**

In the state of *nirvikalpa samadhi*, the distinction between the subject and the object vanishes; there is no longer any external world, no personal body even. So says *Brhadaranyaka*, IV.5.15: 'For when there is duality, as it were, then one sees another...But when all has become the very Self of the knower of Brahman, then what should one see and through what?' This clearly describes the real nature of the universe; it is a mode of that Consciousness which is Brahman. In the state of waking, the external universe is there; in the state of *samadhi*, it vanishes. The fact that Brahman is actually Consciousness, pure Intelligence, is witnessed by *Aitareya*, III.1: 'The whole world is founded on Consciousness (*prajna*), and therefore Consciousness (*prajnana*) is Brahman.' Compare *Svetasvatara*, VI.2; 'Him who is the master of the *gunas* and the maker of time, who is omniscient, who is pure Consciousness itself (*jna*); also *Taittiriya*, II.1: 'Brahman is Existence, Intelligence (*jnana*), Infinitude.' Also *Kaivalya*, 18 and 21: 'I, the witness, the pure Consciousness (*cinmatra*), the eternal Good' and 'I am always the Intelligence (*cit*)'.

Again, it is stated that the universe was created by this pure Intelligence by an act of 'thought', as in *Mundaka*, I.1.8: 'From brooding thought (*tapasya*). Brahman swells with the joy of creation', and *Chandogya*, VI.2.3: 'That Being willed (*aiksata*), "May I become many, may I grow forth."' Similarly, there are numerous other passages where Brahman or the *turiya* is said to be the reality behind the states of sleep, dream, and waking, as in *Kaivalya*, 17:

'That which manifests the phenomena, such as the states of wakefulness, dream, and profound sleep, I am that Brahma.' And, again: 'The Purusa who remains awake shaping all sorts of objects of desires even while we sleep—verily that is the pure, the Brahman' (*Katha*, V.8).

Hence the scriptures testify that Brahman is Consciousness, which has various states, in at least one of which (*avidya*) there is plurality of souls (*jivas*) and a manifold world (*jagat*); and in another (*samadhi*), these vanish, and Brahman alone exists. Such is the conclusion of reason also, as will now be shown.

## **Advaita Vedanta According to Reason**

### **Maya**

The table which I see is oval, shining, and four-legged; the table which you see is round, dull, and three-legged; the table which perhaps a third party sees has a flat top, and is two-legged. All this can be verified from experience. Thus we say that each person perceives a different world; that each person has his own private world. In philosophy, we term such private world 'the object'. Now the basic fact about such private worlds is that they are primarily constituted by colours of various shapes, patterns, and sizes; and as it is difficult to conceive how any colour can exist *as that colour* apart from an eye and a brain, we say that the brain constructs these colours, and therefore constructs the object entirely. That part of the brain concerned with this construction is termed the sensorium (*manas*, in Sanskrit), so that the object, the world as revealed to the senses, has no existence apart from the sensorium.

One of the strongest arguments for this position is the nature of dreams and hallucinations. The essence of a dream or a hallucination is that the external object seems to be there, but there is no external stimulus. The stimulus, we say, comes from the

sense-impressions buried in the *manas* itself. Now, if the external world appears as it does when the sensorium is stimulated from outside, and the dream or hallucination appears when it is stimulated from inside, it is surely obvious that the appearance is of the same nature in both the cases: it is the creation or construct of the sensorium. (We shall deal with the nature of the external stimulus below).

Or, take the case of the rising moon, especially the full moon. As it rises, the moon appears to be of a certain size; when it is up, it appears much smaller. But reason assures us that the size of the moon is constant. Thus, its differing size is evidence that the moon, as seen, is the construction of our minds.

If we saw objects directly, then when we look in a mirror at something behind us, we should see it behind us. But we see it in front of us, nay, as inside the mirror. But the mirror has no inside! That is where the sensorium constructs it, because it reacts in the same way irrespective of the provenance of the stimulus.

Finally, we know that when we see a rainbow, there is, in actual fact, nothing there of that kind at all, but only water vapour, with the sunlight playing on it. But we see a rainbow there. Such is the nature of the sensorium. It creates its own world of colour (and of sound, smell, taste, and feeling as well), and indeed perceives by reason of that very projection of the object. As reason must be based on perception, we are therefore imprisoned within our own minds: we can know nothing that is not the creation of our own minds, this is the doctrine of *maya*: the world is my idea, and I can know only my own ideas. So thought Shankara also: 'In dreams, when there is no actual contact with the external world, the mind (*manas*) alone creates the whole universe consisting of the experiencer, etc. Similarly, in the waking state also; there is no

difference. Therefore, all this phenomenal universe is the projection of the mind' (*Vivekachudamani*, 170).

### **Avidya**

It is this projection of the world of appearance that is meant by ignorance: 'Hence, sages who have fathomed its secret have designated the mind as *avidya* or ignorance, by which alone the universe is moved to and fro, like masses of clouds by the wind' (ibid. 180). And, again, in *Vivekachudamani*, 252: 'As the objects...called up in dream are all unreal, so is also the world experienced here in the waking state, for it is all an effect of one's own ignorance.' Thus, by ignorance is meant that state of consciousness in which we are aware of the existence of the 'rainbow' world of colour, etc., and this is normally the waking state. This world vanishes in the states of sleep and *samadhi*, which latter is termed knowledge (*jnana*); and *only because it thus vanishes* is the world termed unreal: 'If the universe be true, let it then be perceived in the state of deep sleep also. As it is not at all perceived, it must be unreal and false, like dreams' (ibid. 234).

### **Jiva**

We have reached this point that the object is a construct. Now, 'object' entails a 'subject'; and the problem now is, who or what is the subject of which the object is a construct? The object is not *my* construct, for I cannot create the object by a mere act of will. Indeed, I cannot even will a hallucination to appear before me—otherwise, it would not be a hallucination at all! But such hallucinations can be made to appear in the state of hypnotic trance. And this is the key to the nature of the subject. For when we talk about 'I', we mean the self-conscious, thinking principle (*buddhi*), which is termed 'ego' in philosophy. The hypnotic trance depends

essentially on just this fact that the ego is suppressed. So it is not the ego, the 'I', that projects the object, that is responsible for hallucinations, that dreams, but it is that principle in man which is present both in the waking and in the dream or trance state. This persistent mind is termed 'transcendental Self', or simply, the Self, Atman. Therefore, we conclude that dreams, hallucinations, and the object itself are the creations or constructs of the Self. They seem to be given to the ego independent of its own activity, and hence they are termed real—real at least as long as they last. In a word, in the dream state, we are living in one world; in the waking state, we are living in a different world; indeed, in each case, it is a different 'we'. This 'I' or ego is, in Sanskrit, the *jiva*, and as we refer to it as 'I', we can state that, just as the object is the creation of the Self, so the ego, too, is the creation of that Self; and 'I-making', in Sanskrit, is *ahankara*.

### **The External World**

We said that what distinguishes the object from the dream or hallucination is that, in the former case, the sensorium projects the object in response to an external stimulus. But we can never directly know this external thing, for our idea, the object, always comes in between. We can know it indirectly by means of reason. Clothes hung near the seashore grow moist; hung in the sun, they become dry. A ring on the finger is worn thin; a ploughshare cutting through the soil wears away; dripping water hollows out a stone; wheels wear grooves through the cobble-stones of a street; and the hands of bronze statues are worn away by the kisses of devotees. Such are the arguments that led the ancients to the conclusion that the unknown and unknowable thing of the external world is made up of atoms.

We cannot suppose that the object is some sort of illusion, like the snake which may be seen when we are really looking at a rope, because we cannot then explain why we always see two eyes above a mouth, and not, say, three eyes, or two eyes below a mouth, or no eyes at all. Or, to keep to the Vedantist example, why we do not see sometimes a worm, sometimes a dragon, or even a stick. The answer to the former set of questions must surely be that we see two eyes above a mouth because there are analogues of two eyes and a mouth in the thing-in-itself. The object parallels the thing; that is, the laws of thought (which determine the object) parallel the laws of nature (which determine the thing). For this to be the case, there must be a pre-established harmony between the ideal world and the real or physical world. That is, the same activity, which is productive with consciousness in perception, is productive *without* consciousness in the formation of the world. In other words, we have the following choice (reason can go no further than this): either we must accept, as did the atomists, an ultimate pluralism of an infinite number of basic corpuscles and explain, as best we can, how mind can emerge from inanimate matter; or we must follow Plato : 'Can we be persuaded that the Completely Real does not share in motion and life and soul and thought, neither lives nor thinks, but remains motionless and without mind, solemn and holy?' Let us then seek for this Mind, the workings of whose laws run parallel to the workings of our own minds.

### **Atman**

First, let us digress a moment. The simplest forms of life (germ-cells and amoeba) reproduce by total division. At one moment, there is one such cell; at the next moment, there are two; then four; and so on. Since consciousness is not a 'thing' that can

be cut with a knife, we may say that, at the germ-cell level, there is continuity of consciousness. Now, biology teaches us that any particular human being arises in the first place from a germ-cell. There is a continuity of consciousness from Adam to myself—but only at the germ-cell level! Before 'I' attain to individuality, that germcell must divide and subdivide; and while there is one consciousness embracing the millions of cells that constitute 'me', this consciousness has become different from the consciousness that constitutes 'you'. We can see this individual consciousness at work in the lower forms of life. Pull off a crab's leg, and he grows another. Cut a worm in half; the one half will grow a head, and the other half will grow a tail. Is it any marvel then that, in the Ratib, the subject can plunge a sword into his abdomen, or a skewer into his chest, and suffer no harm? This is because, at that level of consciousness, the body ceases to be real in the same way that it is real in the waking state; and this is the level of the Atman. But if one goes beyond this level, death ensues, because the Atman has returned to its source, or has betaken itself to heaven or some other place—it makes no difference.

### **Brahman**

Let us, in conclusion, return to that Mind which works along the same lines as ours, but with infinitely greater power. A simple idea exists ideally in my mind, but it exists factually in the infinite Mind. A feeling in my mind is just a feeling, but a feeling in the infinite Mind is a living soul.

Now, if I visualize such an infinite Mind existing by itself alone, with no mental content at all, I could say that, at such a point of 'time' the infinite Mind exists and there is no second thing. This is Nirguna Brahman. This is the first level of consciousness. But a mind must 'think', and when this Brahman has simple thoughts,

we have a mind with a mental content, which can be figured as Brahman with a subtle body—Saguna Brahman. Modern science believes that this state, this second level, is symbolized as the state of the universe before creation (in *pralaya?*), when existence was confined to a whirling mass of protons, electrons, etc., prior to the formation of any molecules. The nearest approach to such a state might be visualized as the sun, our sole source of energy. An electron is the embodiment of a law of repulsion, and a proton is the embodiment of a law of attraction. Hence, science could, were it so inclined, regard this state of affairs as centres of energy existing as 'ideas' in an infinite Mind.

The third level is when these ultimate particles are combined by the infinite Mind into molecules, as complex ideas. (The ancients misconceived these as indivisible atoms.) This is the gross body of Brahman, the world as it must have existed before there was any life on it, or as conditions are on the moon. But into certain aggregations of molecules, termed cells, the infinite Mind infuses a 'feeling', and these cells normally develop into individual organisms, such that each is a 'finite mind'. This 'finite mind' corresponds roughly to the Purusa of the Sankhya Yoga system and to the Atman of Vedanta. At the lowest level (plant life), these 'finite minds' are chiefly concerned with bodily organization and the so-called vegetative functions in men and animals. At this level (the fourth), one enjoys deep sleep, or perhaps, we would say, the trance level of lethargy or suspended animation. However that may be, this 'finite mind' may develop, so that it can project the object (level five). This is the level of the animal part of our nature, and it characterizes the dream state, or, we should rather say, the state of medium hypnotic trance. It is due to the presence of this level of consciousness in us that we are bound by *maya*, which is normally beyond our control, at any rate of our direct control,

because the 'I' is at a still higher level of consciousness (the sixth). For the 'finite mind' may eject a feeling of personality, and this is the ego, the *jiva*. At this level, we enjoy self-consciousness and reason; this is the waking state, the state of 'I-ness' or *ahankara*.

At the levels of Saguna and Nirguna Brahman, there is an identity of subject and object, but subject and object separate out, the one from the other, in the state of so-called deep sleep (the unconscious) in the vegetable state of life and in inanimate matter, respectively. This distinction between subject and object is maintained at the next higher level, where the sensorium acts as subject with the 'rainbow' world as object, characteristic of the subconscious. And, again, at the level of self-conscious thought or waking state, the ego is the subject, which contemplates percepts and concepts as its object. But there is a higher (seventh) level, at which subject and object again unite; this is the superconscious experience of *samadhi*, when the *jiva* becomes united with the Atman. Now, observe, at the level of the continuity of consciousness in the germ-cell, the individual is a *part* of Brahman; it is only at the other end of the scale, in *samadhi*, that the individual becomes *identical* with Brahman. So, 'It is the identity of the implied, not the literal, meaning which is sought to be inculcated...The wise man must give up the contradictory elements on both sides' (*Vivekacudamani*, 242, 248-49).

Thus the whole universe and all its contents are but 'thoughts' and 'feelings', as it were, of the infinite Mind or Brahman. But owing to the separation of subject from object, the 'finite minds' have an individuality of their own, which is ignorance. The aim of life, as conceived by *yoga*, is to reunite subject and object in mystical communion with God.

(Reprinted from Prabuddha Bharata, November 1960)

There he picked out a nice seat for himself, twirled his moustaches, and sat through the performance.

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All the different kinds of love which we see in the world, and with which we are more or less playing merely, have God as the one goal; but unfortunately, man does not know the infinite ocean into which this mighty river of love is constantly flowing, and so, foolishly, he often tries to direct it to little dolls of human beings. The tremendous love for the child that is in human nature is not for the little doll of a child; if you bestow it blindly and exclusively on the child, you will suffer in consequence. But through such suffering will come the awakening by which you are sure to find out that the love which is in you, if it is given to any human being, will sooner or later bring pain and sorrow as the result. Our love must, therefore, be given to the Highest One who never dies and never changes, to Him in the ocean of whose love there is neither ebb nor flow.

Swami Vivekananda

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Bondage and liberty, light and shadow, good and evil must be there, but the very fact of the bondage shows also this freedom hidden there. If one is a fact, the other is equally a fact. There must be this idea of freedom. While now we cannot see that this idea of bondage, in uncultivated man, is his struggle for freedom, yet the idea of freedom is there. The bondage of sin and impurity in the uncultivated savage is to his consciousness very small, for his nature is only a little higher than the animal's. What he struggles against is the bondage of physical nature, the lack of physical gratification, but out of this lower consciousness grows and broadens the higher conception of a mental or moral bondage and a longing for spiritual freedom. Here we see the divine dimly shining through the veil of ignorance. The veil is very dense at first and the light may be almost obscured, but it is there, ever pure and undimmed — the radiant fire of freedom and perfection. Man personifies this as the Ruler of the Universe, the One Free Being. He does not yet know that the universe is all one, that the difference is only in degree, in the concept.

Swami Vivekananda

