

# THE REAL AWAKENER



## THE LIGHT OF LIGHTS WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO – 9

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*\* All the selections here have been taken from "Bengali Writings" published in 1991 by Madanlal Himatsingka on behalf of All India Books, Pondicherry - 605002. Page numbers in the source of the selections taken here are given in the parentheses.*

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*Our aim is to spread the eternal religion and, based on that eternal religion, the observance of the religion of the race and the spirit of the age. We Indians, descendants of the Aryan race, have a right to an Aryan education and ethics. This Aryan feeling is our family religion and racial religion. Knowledge, devotion and non-attached activity are the root of an Aryan education; liberality, love, courage, energy, modesty are signs of the Aryan character. To spread the light of knowledge among men, to hold before the race the impeccable ideal of elevated, liberal characters, to protect the weak, to punish the powerful tyrants are the aims of Aryan living; in the pursuit of these aims lies its religious fulfilment.*

– Sri Aurobindo  
(191)

## BENGALI WRITINGS

### I. Translation

#### 1. Sanjaya's Gift of Divine Vision\*

“The Gita was spoken on the eve of the Great Mahabharata War. Therefore we find in the very first verse of the Gita, King Dhritarashtra seeking information about the War from Sanjaya who had received the gift of divine vision.” (117)

“There are hidden within man many such powers as were known to civilised peoples in ancient times and developed by them. But that knowledge has been washed away in the flood of ignorance born of Kali, the Age of Darkness, it has been preserved only in part within a limited circle as a secret lore that should be kept a secret.

There is a power of subtle vision beyond the gross physical sense organ, in a subtle organ through which we can bring within our ken objects and knowledge inaccessible to the gross organs of sense, can have vision of subtle things, can listen to subtle sounds, smell imperceptible smells, touch subtle physical objects, and have taste of subtle foods. The utmost development of subtle sight is what is called divine vision, through its power objects that are at a distance, secret objects or those belonging to another world come within the scope of our knowledge. We see no reason to disbelieve that the great sage Vyasa possessing supreme Yogic powers was capable of imparting this divine vision to Sanjaya. If we are

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\* *The titles marked with an \* are from the original. All the unmarked titles in the text are from the editor.*

not incredulous about the wonderful power of Western hypnosis, why should we be incredulous about the power of the great Vyasa with his incomparable knowledge? In every page of history and in every activity of human life there is available ample evidence that a powerful man can impart his power to another. Heroic men of action like Napoleon and Ito prepared collaborators in their work by imparting their own power to fit recipients. Even a very ordinary Yogin having obtained some special power can impart his power to another for a little while or for a special purpose, what to speak of the great Vyasa who was the world's most accomplished genius and a man of extraordinary Yogic realisation.

In fact, the existence of this divine vision far from being an absurdity must be a scientific truth. We know that the eye does not see, it is not the ear that hears nor the nose that smells, the skin does not experience the sense of touch nor the tongue the feeling of taste; it is the mind that sees, the mind that hears, smells, feels the sense of touch or taste. This truth has been accepted by philosophy and psychology for a long time. In hypnotism it has been proved by practical scientific tests that the function of the organ of sight can be performed by any of the sensory nerves even when the eyes are shut. This goes only to prove that the gross organs of sense like the eye are simply convenient means for the acquisition of knowledge. We have become their slaves bound by a long habit of the gross physical body. But in reality we can convey the knowledge to the mind through any of the channels in the body, as the blind can get by the touch an accurate idea of the nature and shape of things.” (117-119)

“Every day there are growing in number such examples

as seeing mentally from a room in London events taking place at the time in Edinburgh. This is what is called subtle sight.

There is this difference between subtle sight and divine vision that one possessing subtle sight sees the image of things invisible in his mind, whereas in divine vision, instead of seeing the things in our mind, we see them in front of the physical eye, instead of hearing the sounds as a current of thought we hear them with the physical ear. A simple instance of this is the seeing of contemporary events in a crystal or ink. But for a Yogi endowed with divine vision there is no need of such material aids, he can on developing this power become aware of events in another time and space by removing the bondage of space and time without any material aid. We have obtained enough evidence of this removal of the barrier of space; numerous and satisfactory proofs that the barrier of time too can be removed, that man can be a seer of the past, present and future have not yet been presented before the world. But if it is possible to remove the space barrier, it cannot be said that to remove the barrier of time is impossible.” (119-120)

“In our opinion, the Mahabharata is not a metaphorical piece nor are Krishna and Arjuna the creations of poetic fancy, the Gita too is not the speculation of a modern logician or philosopher. Therefore we have to prove that anything said in the Gita is not impossible or against reason. It is for this reason that we have discussed at such length the question of possessing the divine vision.” (120)

## **2. The Cunning of Duryodhana’s Speech\***

“Sanjaya began his description of those initial acts of war. Duryodhana on seeing the battle formations of

the Pandavas presented himself before Dronacharya. Why he went to Drona needs an explanation. Bhishma was the commander-in-chief, it was he who should have been informed of matters concerning the war. But Duryodhana with his crooked mind had no faith in Bhishma. Bhishma had a fondness for the Pandavas, was the leader of the peace-party in Hastinapur. Had it been only a war between the Pandavas and Dhritarashtra's sons, he would never have taken up arms. But on seeing the Kuru kingdom threatened by the Panchala nation the old enemy of the Kurus and their equal in the greed for empire, the most outstanding personality, warrior and statesman of the Kuru nation was determined to preserve till the end the glory and the supremacy of his own people by being appointed their commander-in-chief, even as he had guarded them for long with the strength of his arms. Duryodhana on his part was of an Asuric nature, to him the measure and motive of all acts were the feelings of attraction and repulsion, hence he was incapable of understanding the point of view of the great man and his devotion to duty. He could never believe that this man of hard austerity carried in his heart the strength to kill in the battlefield out of a sense of duty even the Pandavas who were to him as if his own self. One who has the good of his country at heart tries his utmost to make his people desist from injustice and evil by expressing his views in council, but once the injustice and the evil are accepted by the people he defends his nation and subdues its enemies even in unrighteous war without caring for his own personal opinions. Bhishma too had taken this line. But this attitude was beyond Duryodhana's comprehension. Therefore instead of approaching Bhishma he thought of Drona.

Drona personally was a staunch enemy of the Panchala king, prince Dhrishtadyumna of the Panchalas was determined to kill his preceptor Drona. In other words, Duryodhana thought that if reminded of this personal enmity the teacher would give up all leanings towards peace and fight with all enthusiasm. He did not say this in so many words. He only mentioned Dhrishtadyumna by name, then in order to please Bhishma as well, described the latter as the defender of the Kuru kingdom and the hope of their victory.” (120-121)

“Bhishma understood the secret motive behind Duryodhana’s words and the ideas he had in his mind; to remove his doubts he uttered the battle-cry and sounded his conch-shell. This gave rise to joy in the heart of Duryodhana. He thought that his object had been met, Drona and Bhishma would give up their hesitation and fight.” (122)

### **3. The First Hints\***

“The war began. Missiles began to fly from both sides. At this juncture Arjuna said to Sri Krishna, “You please place my chariot at a point between the two armies. I wish to see who are our antagonists, who are they who have come to this war to act according to the pleasure of the misguided Duryodhana, who are those with whom I have to fight.” Arjuna’s idea was that the Pandavas centred their hopes on him alone and it was for him to kill the principal fighters on the opposite side, therefore he must see who these were. So far, Arjuna’s attitude was entirely that of a Kshatriya, there is not a sign of pity or weakness. Many of India’s most heroic men were present in the opposing army; Arjuna was keen on giving to elder brother Yudhisthira undisputed empire by

killing them all. But Sri Krishna knew that Arjuna harboured a weakness in his mind; if this mind were not cleansed now, that weakness might suddenly come up from there and occupy the higher intelligence at any moment and this would cause great harm to the Pandavas, perhaps even lead to their ruin.

For this reason, Sri Krishna placed the chariot in such a place that those dear to Arjuna, like Bhishma and Drona, were just in front and at the same time all the other princes on the side of the Kauravas were within sight. And he said to Arjuna, “See and have a look at the Kuru clan gathered here.” It has to be recalled that Arjuna himself belonged to the Kuru clan, was a pride of the Kuru family; all his relatives, the men dear to him, the companions of his childhood belonged to the same Kuru clan; that will make one realise the profound idea and significance of these few ordinary words from Sri Krishna’s mouth. Arjuna could now see that those whom he has to kill in order to found the undisputed empire of Yudhisthira were none other than his own dear relatives, teachers, friends, the objects of love and devotion. He saw that the Kshatriya families of the whole of India were bound together by ties of affection and yet had come to that terrible field of battle to kill one another.” (123-124)

#### **4. The Root Cause of Dejection\***

“What is the source of Arjuna’s dejection? Many people are full of praise for this dejection of Arjuna and decry Sri Krishna as a supporter of unrighteousness and as showing the wrong path. The peaceful attitude of Christianity, the non-violence of Buddhism and the spirit of love in Vaishnava religion are alone the highest and best laws of right living,

war and the killing of men are sins, the killing of one's brothers and teachers are grievous sins: it is under the spell of ideas such as these that they make this improper statement. But all these modern ideas never even entered the mind of the great Pandava hero of that remote Dwapara epoch; there is in Arjuna's words no inkling of any signs that he even considered whether non-violence was to be preferred to war, or whether one should desist from war because the killing of brothers and teachers or homicide in general were grievous sins. He did indeed say that it would be better to live by begging than to slaughter one's elders, he said indeed that the sin of killing the relatives and friends would fall on them. But he said these words not from a consideration of the nature of these works, but by judging them by the results. That is why in order to break his gloom, Sri Krishna taught him this lesson that one should not look to the fruit of works, one has to decide whether a particular act is right or wrong by looking into its nature.

Arjuna's first thoughts were that these were his relatives, elders, friends, companions of childhood, all were the objects of his affection, love or devotion; to obtain undisputed empire by slaughtering them and the enjoyment of such empire could never be a source of pleasure, on the contrary one would burn with life-long repentance and sorrow, for nobody would care to have dominion over earth bereft of all friends and kin. His second idea was that to kill the dear ones was against the right law of living, to kill in battle those who were the objects of enmity was the law of the Kshatriya. His third point was that to perform such acts to gain one's own ends was against the right law and improper for a Kshatriya;

and the fourth was that this antagonism and slaughter of brothers would lead to the destruction of clans and ruin of nations; to be the occasion for such untoward results was a grievous sin for a Kshatriya hero, the protector of the clan and nation. Apart from these four notions, there was none other behind the despondency of Arjuna. Not to understand this is to miss the purport of Sri Krishna's teaching and his aim. We shall speak later of the conflict or harmony between the Gita's law and that of Christianity, Buddhism and Vaishnavism. Here we shall elucidate Arjuna's attitude of mind by looking into the purport of his words by a careful scrutiny." (124-125)

### **5. Invasion of the Divine Maya\***

"Arjuna first describes the state of his dejection. By the sudden revolt of affection and self-pity, the mighty hero Arjuna is overwhelmed and vanquished. All the strength of his body has dried up in a moment, his limbs have grown weary, he has no power to move about, his strong arm is incapable of holding the Gandiva bow. The sensation of heat produced by grief exhibits the signs of fever. The body feels weak, the skin is burning as if in flames, the mouth has dried up within, the body trembles violently all over, the mind is as if whirling under that attack. On reading the description of this state, we are at first satisfied only by enjoying its poetic beauty and regard it as an inordinate expression of the poet's imaginative power. But on looking at it with close scrutiny, a deeper meaning of this description comes to mind.

Arjuna has fought the Kurus before this, but such ideas have never occurred to him. Now, at Krishna's will, suddenly

there is this inner disturbance. There are lying hidden within Arjuna's heart many of the most powerful instincts of mankind dominated and restrained by his Kshatriya training and high ambition. The heart is not purified by repression, the purification comes through self-control with the help of discrimination and a purified understanding. All the repressed instincts and feelings come up some day from the heart, either in this life or in another, invade the understanding and on winning it over drive all action along paths favourable to their own self-expression. This is the reason why one who in this life is full of kindness becomes cruel in another life, one who in this life is a vicious lustful man becomes pure and saintly in the next. Instead of repression, the impulses have to be rejected with the help of the discrimination and a purified understanding; this is how the heart can be purified. This is what is called self-control. Self-control becomes impossible until the tamasic feelings are discarded through the influence of knowledge. That is why Sri Krishna is wanting to purify the heart by removing the ignorance and awakening the dormant power of discrimination. But if the undesirable movements are not raised up from the heart and presented before the understanding the latter does not get a chance to reject them. Besides, it is only through a struggle that the inner enemies, the Daityas and Rakshasas, are killed and then the discrimination makes the understanding free.

In the first stages of Yoga, all the evil propensities that have taken root in the heart invade the understanding with great force and overwhelm the unwary seeker with fear and grief. This is what is known in the West as the temptations of the devil, these are the attacks of Mara, the Evil One. But the

fear and the grief are the products of ignorance, the temptation is not of the devil but of God. The World-Teacher dwelling within us calls on those propensities to attack the aspirant, not for doing harm but for his good, for the purification of the heart.” (125-127)

“Arjuna was overwhelmed in a moment by the divine Maya of the Lord with its entire force, hence this acute disturbance. When evil takes on the guise of tender feelings like love and kindness, when ignorance comes masquerading as knowledge, when the thick darkness of the Tamasic mode pretends to a bright and clear purity and says, “I am Sattwic, I am knowledge, I am virtue, I am the cherished messenger of God, I am virtue incarnate, I come to establish the reign of Law”, then it is to be understood that the divine Maya of the Lord has shown itself in the understanding.” (127)

## **6. The Signs of the Divine Maya\***

“The main weapons of this divine Maya are affection and pity. In the human race, love and affection are impure movements; owing to distortions produced by the body and the vital sheath the purity of the love and compassion is tarnished and deformed. The inner movements have their seats in the basic mindstuff (*citta*), the vital being (*prāṇa*) is the field of enjoyment, the body is the instrument of action, the understanding (*buddhi*) is the domain of thought. In a state of purity, all of these have their separate and yet mutually uncontradictory movements. Ideas and feelings arise in the mind, action takes place accordingly through the body, in the understanding there are thoughts in that connection, the vital being takes the pleasure of those feelings, action and thought,

the soul (*jīva*) remains a witness and feels joy in looking on this delightful play of the outer nature (*prakṛti*). In the impure state, the vital becoming eager for physical or mental pleasure makes the body a means of enjoyment, the body becomes attached to enjoyment and clamours again and again for physical pleasures, the mind becomes engrossed with the desire for physical enjoyment and can no longer accept pure ideas and feelings, impure ideas and feelings stained with desire create disturbances in the mind-ocean, the understanding is overwhelmed and perplexed by that clamour of desires and is no longer capable of receiving pure and calm infallible thought, comes under the control of the unquiet mind-stuff and becomes blinded by delusions, confused thinking and the power of falsehood. The soul too forfeits its Knowledge through this failure of the understanding, is deprived of the poise of witness and its sense of pure delight; it accepts its identity with the outer man, and under the mistaken notion that “I am the life-being, I am the *citta*, I am the understanding”, it takes pleasure and feels pain in mental or physical pain and pleasure. It is the unpurified *citta* that lies at the root of this confusion, hence the purification of *citta* is the first step to progress. This state of impurity does not stop with spoiling the tamasic and rajasic movements alone, it pollutes the sattwic movements as well. Such and such a person provides material for my physical and mental enjoyment, he pleases me, I must have him and no other, I feel unhappy in his absence – all this is impure love, it is a distortion of pure love through a pollution of the mind, body and life. As a result of this impurity, the understanding becomes confused: it says, “Such and such is my wife or brother or sister, relative, friend or close companion, they alone should be the objects

of love, that love is sacred, if I act contrary to that love, it is sin, it is cruelty, it is unlawful.” This kind of impure love gives rise to such a strong sense of pity that it seems preferable to throw overboard the law of right living rather than let the dear ones be aggrieved or harmed. In the end, we come to justify our weaknesses by calling the law of right living an injustice because it deals a blow to this sense of pity. The proof of this kind of Divine Maya can be had in every word of Arjuna.” (128-129)

### **7. The Littleness of Divine Maya\***

“The first words of Arjuna are, “These are our ‘own people’, they are our kin and objects of our love, what good of ours will be served by killing them in battle? The pride of the victor, the glory of kingship, the rich man’s joy? I do not wish for all these hollow selfish ends. Why do kingship and enjoyment and life become dear to men? All these pleasures and greatnesses are tempting things because there are the wives and sons and daughters, because these will enable us to maintain in comfort our dear ones and relatives, because we shall be able to share our days with friends in the joy and comfort of wealth. But the very persons for whom we want kingship and enjoyment and pleasure are come as our foes in war. They would much rather kill us in battle than share the kingship and pleasure together with us. Let them kill me, but I can never kill them. Could I obtain possession of the kingdom of the three worlds, by killing them, even then I would not do it; undisputed empire on earth is a mere trifle.”

A superficial observer, enchanted with the words,

*na kāñkṣe vijayaṁ kṛṣṇa na ca rājyaṁ sukhāni ca* (1. 31)

and

*eṭāna hantumicchāmi ghnato'pi madhusūdana* (1. 34)

*api trailokyarājyasya betoḥ kim nu mabīkṛte* (1. 35)

would say, “Oh, how noble and high, how unselfish an attitude on the part of Arjuna, how full of love! To him defeat, death and eternal suffering are more desirable than an enjoyment and pleasure tainted with blood.” But if we examine Arjuna’s state of mind, we come to know that this attitude of his is extremely mean, a sign of weakness, fit only for a coward. To give up one’s personal interests for the benefit of the clan, for the love of dear ones, under the influence of pity or for fear of bloodshed may be a high and noble attitude for one who is not an Aryan man; but for an Aryan, it is not the best attitude, to give up one’s interests for the sake of the right and for the love of God is the highest attitude. On the other hand, to give up the right law of living for the benefit of the clan, for the love of dear ones, under the influence of pity, for fear of bloodshed is the worst attitude. To keep the feelings of affection, pity and fear under control for the sake of the right law and for love of God is the true Aryan way.” (129-130)

“Arjuna had forgotten that he was fighting a righteous war, was engaged by Sri Krishna in the slaughter of Dhritarashtra’s sons not for his own happiness or for the happiness of Yudhishtira; the object of this war was to establish the rule of law, the fulfilment of the Kshatriya’s duties, the founding of a great empire in India based on the law of right living. To achieve these ends by forsaking all happiness, even by undergoing life-long suffering and pain was Arjuna’s duty.” (131)

## **8. The Question of the Ruin of Clans\***

“In ancient times, the nation was frequently based on blood-relationships. A large clan when it expanded grew into a nation. For example, particular clans such as the Kurus and the Bhojas included within the Bharata nation became each a powerful nation. The internal strife and mutual wrong-doing within the clan were what Arjuna described as the animosity of friends. On the one hand, this kind of animosity is a heinous sin from the moral point of view; on the other hand, from the economic point of view, this great evil is the inevitable fruit of the deterioration of clans implied in such animosity.

The proper observance of the old established laws of the clan is the mainstay of its progress and continuity. The clan undergoes a downfall through a departure from the high ideals and a slackening of the disciplines which the ancestors have laid down and maintained with regard to the life of the householder and in the political field. These ideals and disciplines are maintained as long as the clan remains fortunate and strong. When it suffers deterioration and becomes weak, there is a slackening of the great ideals through the spread of tamasic ideas; as a result, evils like immorality and anarchy enter the clan, the women of the clan lose their virtue and the clan loses its purity, the noble clan are born sons of persons of a low character and birth. In consequence of this cutting off of the ancestors from the true line of their progeny, the destroyers of the clan find themselves in hell. And through the spread of unrighteousness, the moral degradation following the admixture of castes, the pervasion of low qualities and because of anarchy and such other evils, the entire clan is ruined and becomes fit for hell. With the ruin of the

clan, both the law of the nation and the law of the clan come to an end; by the law of the nation is meant the old established ideals and disciplines come down through the generations among the great collectivity of the nation formed of all the clans.” (131-132)

## **9. The Knowledge and the Ignorance\***

“In Arjuna’s words about the ruin of clans, we find the trace of a very high and large idea; it is extremely important for the interpreter of the Gita to consider the serious question involved in that idea. On the other hand, if we look only for the spiritual significance of the Gita, if we make a complete break between the law of living propounded by the Gita and our national, domestic and personal, our mundane acts and ideals, we shall be denying the greatness and importance of that idea and that question, it will be to limit the universal application of the Gita’s law.

Shankara and others who have interpreted the Gita were men of knowledge or devotion, other-worldly philosophers intent on spiritual knowledge; they were content with seeking in the Gita and finding therein whatever knowledge or ideas that were important to them. Those who are at once men of knowledge, devotion and works are alone fit for the innermost teaching of the Gita. The speaker of the Gita, Sri Krishna, was a man of knowledge and works, the recipient of the Gita, Arjuna, was a devotee and man of action; it was in order to open his eye of knowledge that Sri Krishna propounded this teaching in Kurukshetra. A mighty political conflict was the occasion for the propagation of the Gita, its object was to induce Arjuna to fight as an agent and instrument for the

carrying out of a great political purpose in this conflict, the battlefield itself was the venue of the teaching. Sri Krishna was a supreme fighter and master of political science, to establish the rule of law was the prime object of his life; Arjuna too was a Kshatriya prince, war and politics were works proper to his nature. How should it be possible to interpret the Gita by ignoring the purpose of the Gita, its speaker, the recipient of the knowledge, the reason for its propagation?

There are always present in human life its five principal supports: the individual, the family, the clan, the nation and the human collectivity. The law of right living is also based on these five supports. The object of that law is to reach God. There are two paths to reach God: to possess the Knowledge and to possess the Ignorance. Both are means to Self-knowledge and God-realisation. The path of the Knowledge is to reject this Creation full of Ignorance though a manifestation of the Supreme, and to realise Sachchidananda or merge in the Supreme Self. The path of the Ignorance is to see the Self and God everywhere and to realise the Supreme Lord who is Knowledge, Power and Good incarnate, as friend and lord, teacher, father and mother, son and daughter, and servant, lover, husband and wife. Peace is the object of the Knowledge, love the object of the Ignorance. But the Divine Nature is made of both the Knowledge and the Ignorance. If we follow the path of the Knowledge alone, we shall realise the Supreme in his form of Knowledge; if we follow only the path of the Ignorance, we shall realise the Supreme in his form of Ignorance. He who can possess both the Knowledge and the Ignorance alone realises Vasudeva in his entirety; he crosses beyond the Knowledge and the Ignorance. Those who have reached the final goal of the Knowledge have possessed the

Knowledge with the help of the Ignorance.

This great truth has been revealed in the Isha Upanishad in very clear terms, as follows:” (132-134)

“Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone.” (134-135)

“The entire human race is progressing towards the Knowledge through its experience of the Ignorance; this is the true evolution. Those who are the best, the aspirant and the yogin, the man of knowledge and devotion, the doer of the Yoga of works, are in the vanguard of this march. They reach the far goal at a quick pace, they come back and make the human race hear the gospel, show it the path, distribute power. The incarnations and emanations of God come and make the path easy to tread, create favourable conditions, destroy the obstacles. To realise the Knowledge in the midst of the Ignorance, renunciation in the midst of enjoyment, the ascetic spirit while living in the world, all beings within the Self, the Self in all beings, – to have this realisation is the true knowledge, this precisely is the path laid down for the human race to march to its destination. The limitations of one’s self-knowledge are the main obstacles to progress; the identification of self with the body and the sense of egoism are root causes of those limitations; hence, to look upon others as one’s own self is the first step to progress. Man’s first preoccupation is with the individual, he is engrossed in his own individual bodily and mental progress, he devotes himself to his own body and mind, to their progress, enjoyment, and the development of their powers. “I am the body, I am the mind and vital being; the aim of life and the

highest condition of progress are to secure the strength and beauty and happiness of the body, swiftness and clarity and delight of the mind, prowess, enjoyment and cheerfulness of the vital being” – this is the first egoistic form of knowledge in man. This too has a utility; it is after achieving the development and fullness of body, mind and life in the first instance that one should use that fully developed power in the service of others. That is why the egoistic development of power is the first stage of human civilisation; the animal, the ogre, the demon and the titan, even the goblin find their play in human mind, action and character, express themselves through these. Afterwards man widens his self-knowledge and begins to see others as his own self, learns to submerge his self-interest in the interests of others. At first, he looks upon his family as his own self, gives up his life for saving the lives of his wife and children, throws away his own happiness to secure the happiness of his wife and children. Thereafter, he comes to regard the clan as his self, gives up his life in order to save the clan, sacrifices himself, his children and his wife, throws away his own happiness and that of his wife and children. Afterwards, he considers the nation as his own self, gives up his life for the safety of his nation, sacrifices himself, his wife and children, his family and clan, even as the Rajput clans of Chitore sacrificed themselves repeatedly of their own accord for the safety of the entire Rajput nation; out of regard for the happiness and glory of the nation he throws away the happiness and glory of his clan, his wife and children and himself.” (135-136)

“In India the sages have mastered both the Knowledge and the Ignorance. They know that apart from the five bases of the Ignorance, there is God who is the foundation of the

Knowledge; unless we know Him, the Ignorance too is not known, cannot be mastered. Therefore, instead of seeing only others as self, they have seen God in others as within themselves, *ātmaivat paradebeṣu*. “I shall better myself, my betterment will lead to the betterment of my family; I shall help improve the family, with the improvement of the family the clan will be improved; I shall help advance the cause of the nation, the advancement of the nation will make for the advancement of the human race”: this knowledge lies at the root of the Aryan social system and the Aryan discipline. Renunciation of personal self is for the Aryan a habit ingrained in his very bones – renunciation for the sake of the family, renunciation in the interests of the clan, the society, the human race, renunciation for God. The deficiencies or faults that are observed in our education are the results of certain historical causes. For instance, we see the nation as a part of society, we are used to submerge the interests of the individual and the family in those of the society, but the development of the political life of the nation was not accepted as a main element included in our law of right living. This teaching had to be imported from the West. Nevertheless, the teaching was there in our country itself, in our ancient education, in the Mahabharata, the Gita, in the history of Rajputana, in Ramdasa’s *Dasabodha*. We could not develop that teaching because of excessive devotion to the Knowledge, for fear of the Ignorance. Because of this fault, we were overcome by *tamas*, we deviated from the right law of national life, fell a prey to abject slavery, suffering and ignorance. We could not master the Ignorance, were on the point of losing the Knowledge as well. *tato bhūya iva te tamo ya u vidyāyām ratāḥ.*” (137-138)

## **10. Sri Krishna's Political Objectives\***

“The clan and the nation become differentiated in course of the gradual development of human society. That differentiation did not become so well-marked in ancient times in India or in other countries. A nation would grow out of the conglomeration of a few large clans. Each of these different clans either claimed descent from a common ancestor, or even though growing out of different families was accepted as born of a single ancestry through the establishment of friendly relations. The whole of India did not become a single big nation, but among the large nations that spread themselves all over the land there prevailed a common civilisation, a common religion, a single language, Sanskrit, and relationships like those of marriage. From ancient times however there had been attempts at unification. Now it was the Kurus, now the Pancalas, sometimes the Kosalan, sometimes the Magadhan nation who held empire over the land as its chief or overlord. But the ancient tradition of the clans and their love of independence would create such powerful obstacles to unity that these attempts could never last for long. In India, this attempt towards unity, the effort at undisputed empire was counted among the acts of piety and the duties of a king. This movement towards unity had become so strong that even a powerful and turbulent Kshatriya like Sishupala the king of the Chedis agreed to take part in the founding of Yudhishtira's empire.

To establish such a unity, empire or rule of law was Sri Krishna's political objective. The Magadhan king Jarasandha had already made this attempt, but his power was founded on tyranny and unrighteousness, would therefore be short-

lived. Hence Sri Krishna baffled that attempt by getting him killed at the hands of Bhima. The main obstacle to Sri Krishna's work was the proud and powerful family of the Kurus. The Kuru people had for a long time been among the leading peoples of India. To what is called "hegemony", that is, a position of pre-eminence and leadership among a number of independent peoples of equal status – to that the Kurus had an ancestral right. As long as the pride and power of this people remained intact, unity would never be established in India. Sri Krishna came to realise this. Therefore he was determined to destroy the Kuru people. But the Kuru people had a hereditary right to the empire of India; Sri Krishna did not forget this fact. To deprive one of his rightful due would be an act of unrighteousness, so he chose for appointment to the future position of emperor Yudhishtira who was legally the king and chief of the Kuru people. Sri Krishna was supremely righteous; he did not out of affection attempt to set up his beloved clan of the Yadavas in place of the Kuru people even though capable of doing it; he did not nominate for that position his dearest friend Arjuna by ignoring the eldest born of the Pandavas, Yudhishtira. But there is possibility of harm in considering only the age or previous title. If Yudhishtira had been unrighteous, tyrannical or incapable, Sri Krishna would have been obliged to look for another candidate. Yudhishtira was as well fitted to be emperor by birth, rightful title, and the old established tradition of the land, as he was the proper claimant to that title by virtue of his qualities. There were many great and heroic kings more powerful and talented than him, but strength and talent alone do not give one a title to kingship. The king was to safeguard the rule of law, keep the subjects contented,

protect the land. In the first two of these qualities, Yudhishtira had no peer; he was the son of the Lord of Righteousness, he was kind and just, he spoke the truth, he kept his truth, his acts were based on the truth, he was extremely dear to his subjects. The deficiency he had in the last of the requisite qualities mentioned, his heroic brothers Bhima and Arjuna were capable of making good. Contemporary India did not possess kings as powerful or men as heroic as the five Pandavas. Therefore, once the obstacle was removed by the killing of Jarasandha, King Yudhishtira on the advice of Sri Krishna performed the Rajasuya sacrifice in accordance with the ancient tradition of the land, and became its emperor.” (138-140)

“Sri Krishna was as much a master of political science as he was righteous. He would never draw back from altering a traditional method or rule if it was defective, harmful or unsuitable to the needs of the time. He was the principal revolutionist of the age. King Bhurisravas gave voice to the angry feeling of many contemporary Indians of the old school when he said while taking Sri Krishna to task, “Krishna or the Yadava clan which acts under his guidance never shrinks from acting against the right law or distorting it. Whoever acts on Krishna’s advice will surely fall into sin before long.” For, in the view of a conservative with his attachment to the old ways a novel venture is in itself a sin. Sri Krishna realised on Yudhishtira’s downfall – not realised but knew from the beginning, for he was God – that a custom suited to the Dwapara epoch should never be preserved in the Kali age. Therefore, he made no further attempts on those lines; he followed the line of statecraft proper to Kali, with its emphasis on war and strife and directed his efforts towards

making the future of empire free of obstacles by destroying the power of the insolent and proud Kshatriya race. He incited the Panchala people, ancient and equally powerful rivals of the Kurus, to destroy the latter; all the other peoples who could be attracted out of hatred towards the Kurus, for the love of Yudhishtira or out of desire for unity and the rule of law were attracted to that side, and he got the preliminaries of war made ready. In the attempts that were made towards peace Sri Krishna had no faith. He knew that peace was not possible, even if it were made it could not last. Still, out of regard for the right law and from considerations of policy, he devoted himself to attempts at peace. There is no doubt that the Kurukshetra war was the result of Sri Krishna's policy, and that to destroy the Kurus, to destroy the power of the Kshatriyas, to establish an undisputed imperial authority and the unity of India were his objectives. The war that was fought in order to establish the rule of law was a righteous war. The God-appointed victor in that righteous war was the mighty warrior Arjuna driven by a divine Power. If Arjuna were to give up his arms, Sri Krishna's labours would have come to nought, the unity of India could not be achieved, a great evil would soon have overtaken the future of the land." (141-142)

### **11. Fratricide and the Ruin of Clans\***

“All the arguments of Arjuna were set forth with a view to the interests of the clan, thoughts about the good of the nation had been effaced from his mind by the force of personal affection. He had forgotten about the good of India in considering the good of the Kuru family, he was preparing to throw away the right law for fear of unrighteousness. We all know that to kill one's brothers out of self-interest is a

heinous sin. But it is a greater sin to be a party to bringing about a national calamity, to desist from doing good to one's nation out of love for one's brothers. If Arjuna gave up his arms, it would be a victory for unrighteousness, Duryodhana would become the paramount king of India and the leading man in the whole country, he would by his bad example put a stain on the national character and the code of behaviour of Kshatriya families, the strong and mighty Indian clans would turn to each other's destruction under the impulse of jealousy, self-interest and love of antagonism, there would be no undisputed state power guided by the rule of law to unify, govern and keep the country well defended by a concentration of power. Under such conditions, that foreign invasion, which even at that time was preparing like a sea held by the dykes to come upon India and inundate it, would, arriving before its time, have destroyed the Aryan civilisation and rooted out all hopes of the future good of the world. The political upheaval that began in India two thousand years later on the fall of the empire set up by Sri Krishna and Arjuna would have commenced right then.

They say that the ills for fear of which Arjuna had raised those objections did actually come as a result of the Kurukshetra war. Fratricide, the ruin of clans, even the ruin of the peoples were the fruits of the Kurukshetra war. This war was the occasion for the onset of Kali. It is true, this war led to a terrible fratricide. The question arises: by what other means could the great objectives of Sri Krishna be met? Precisely for this reason did Sri Krishna, knowing well the futility of seeking the peace, make considerable attempts to find a way to peace. Yudhishtira would have desisted from war had he got back even the five villages, if he could secure

even that much space as a foothold, Sri Krishna could have established the rule of law. But Duryodhana was firmly determined not to give an iota of land without war. Where the future of the whole country depended on the results of war, it had been unrighteous to desist from the war because it would lead to fratricide. The good of the family had to be submerged in the good of the nation, the good of the world. Brotherly affection and attachment to family ties could not justify the ruin of millions of people, a sacrifice of the future happiness or the amelioration of suffering of millions of people; that too would lead to perdition of the individual and the clan.

That there was a ruin of the clans in the Kurukshetra war is also a fact. As a result of this war, the family of the Kurus of great might practically disappeared. But if by the disappearance of the Kuru people the whole of India came to be saved, then the destruction of the Kurus meant not a loss but a gain. Just as there is the blind attachment to family ties, so is there a blind attachment to the clan. Not to say anything to our fellow-countrymen, not to oppose them, even though they may cause harm or be intent to kill, even though they cause the country's ruination, they are brothers, objects of affection, they should be borne in silence: this kind of unrighteousness born of the Divine Maya that posing as the right law makes us fall from a true understanding is produced by the delusion of attachment to the clan. It is unrighteous to oppose or quarrel with a fellow-countryman without cause, from self-interest or in the absence of dire need or utility. But to bear in silence the mischiefs of a fellow-countryman who is determined to take the life of the common mother or to do her harm, – to tolerate this matricide or that harmful act

would be a still greater sin. When Sivaji set out to murder his countrymen who were partisans of the Mughals, if someone had said, “Lo! what is this you are doing? They are your own countrymen, bear up with them in silence. If the Mughals occupy the Maharashtra country, let them do it. If Maratha loves Maratha, that will be enough” – would not these words appear entirely ridiculous? When the Americans in order to abolish slavery created dissensions in the land and by starting a civil war took the lives of thousands of fellow-citizens, were they doing wrong? It may so happen that civil strife and the slaughter of fellow-citizens in battle are the only way to the good of the country and the good of the world. If it involves a danger of the ruination of clans, even then we cannot desist from effecting the good of the nation and the good of the world. Of course the problem becomes complicated if the good of the nation demands the preservation of the clan. In the age of the Mahabharata, the nation-unit had not been established in India, everybody regarded the clan itself as the pivot of the human race. It was precisely because of this that men like Bhishma and Drona who were steeped in the old tradition fought against the Pandavas. They were aware that right was on the side of the Pandavas, they realised that to bind the whole of India round a single centre through the establishment of an empire was a necessity. But they also knew that the clan alone was the pivotal point of the nation and in it lay the foundation of the right law; to maintain the law and found a nation by destroying the clan was an impossibility. Arjuna too fell into that error. In this age, the nation is the foundation of the law, the pivot of human society. To preserve the nation is the primary duty of this age, to cause the ruin of the nation the great unforgivable sin. But there can possibly

be the advent of an age when a great society of the nations can be established. At that time perhaps the world's eminent men of knowledge and action would take up arms in defence of the nation, and on the other side Sri Krishna as a maker of revolutions would start a new Kurukshetra war and effect the good of the world.” (142-145)

## **12. The Political Results of Sri Krishana's Work\***

“Under the first impulse of pity, Arjuna had laid most emphasis on the ruin of clans, for on looking at that huge massing of troops thoughts of the clans and peoples automatically came to mind. We have said that concern about the good of the clan was natural to the Indian of that age, even as for the modern race of men thoughts about the good of the nation come naturally. But was it a baseless fear to suppose that the foundations of the nation would be destroyed on the ruin of the clans? There are many who say that what Arjuna had feared actually came to pass, that the Kurukshetra war was the root cause of the downfall of India and her long period of subjection, that great harm has been done to India by the disappearance of the powerful race of Kshatriyas and the weakening of the war-like spirit. A well-known lady of foreign extraction at whose sacred feet many Hindus are at the moment bowing their heads as disciples,\* has not hesitated to say that to make the path easy for the British to found their empire was the real object of God Himself incarnating on earth. We feel that those who speak in such irrelevant terms are finding fault with Sri Krishna's policy

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*\*Translator's Note: The reference here is probably to the late Mrs. Annie Besant and her Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras.*

without going deep into the matter and under the influence of wholly inconsequent political theories. These political theories are the contributions of foreigners and are the results of an un-Aryan way of thinking. The un-Aryan owes his strength to a titanic power, he knows of that power as the only foundation of freedom and national greatness.

National greatness cannot be founded solely on the strength of the Kshatriya, all the fourfold power of the four orders of society is the basis of that greatness. The sattwic power of the Brahmin keeps alive the rajasic Kshatriya power with its sweet elixir of knowledge, humility and thought for the good of others; the Kshatriya power gives protection to the power of the Brahmin. Brahmin power bereft of the strength of the Kshatriya is affected by tamasic attitudes and gives umbrage to the ignoble qualities of the Shudra; hence it is forbidden for a Brahmin to live in a country where there is no Kshatriya. If the race of Kshatriyas comes to an end, to create the Kshatriya anew is the first duty of the Brahmin. Kshatriya power bereft of the Brahmin's strength turns into a violent uncontrollable titanism, turns at first to the destruction of others' good, finally destroys itself. The Roman poet was right when he said that the titans fall from the excess of their own strength and are utterly destroyed. Sattwa should create Rajas, Rajas should protect Sattwa, should engage itself in sattwic works; that makes possible the good of the individual and the nation. If Sattwa engulfs Rajas or if Rajas engulfs Sattwa, the quality thus victorious is itself vanquished by the emergence of Tamas, there is a reign of the Tamasic mode. The Brahmin can never be king; if the Kshatriya is destroyed, the Shudra becomes king; the Brahmin becoming tamasic will distort knowledge out of greed for money and take to the

service of the Shudra; spirituality will encourage inaction, will itself fade away and be the occasion for a fall from the right law. The subjection of a nation without Kshatriyas and run by the Shudra is inevitable. This is what has come to pass in India. While on the other hand it is possible that there is an influx of power and greatness from a temporary excitement under the influence of titanic power, yet the country soon begins to languish from weakness, inertia and the draining of strength, from rajasic indulgence, pride and the increase of selfishness the nation becomes unfit and cannot keep up its greatness, or else as a result of civil strife, immorality and tyranny the country breaks to pieces and becomes an easy prey to the enemy. The history of India and of Europe affords ample illustration of all these eventual results.

In the age of the Mahabharata the earth was groaning under the load of titanic power. Neither before nor after, was there in India such an outbreak of strong and powerful and violent Kshatriya power, but there was little chance of that terrible power being turned to good purpose. Those who were the vehicles of this power were all of them of an asuric nature, vanity and pride, selfishness and self-will were in their very bones. If Sri Krishna had not established the rule of law by destroying this power, then one or the other of the three types of results described above would certainly have happened. India would have fallen prematurely into the hands of the barbarian. It should be remembered, that the Kurukshetra war took place five thousand years ago,\* it was after two thousand five hundred years had elapsed that the

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*\*Translator's Note: This was the view traditionally held in India before it was disputed by recent scholarship.*

first successful invasion of barbarians could reach up to the other side of the Indus. The rule of law founded by Arjuna was therefore able to protect the country under the influence of a Kshatriya power inspired by that of the Brahmin. Even at that time there was in the country such an accumulation of Kshatriya power that a fraction of itself has kept the country alive for two thousand years. On the strength of that Kshatriya power great men like Chandragupta, Pushyamitra, Samudragupta, Vikrama, Sangramasingha, Pratap, Rajasingha, Pratapaditya and Sivaji fought against the country's misfortunes. Only the other day in the battle of Gujarat and on the funeral pyre of Lakshmibai was the last spark of that power extinguished; with that ended the good fruit and the virtue of Sri Krishna's political work, there came necessity of another full Incarnation for the saving of India and the world. That Incarnation has rekindled the vanished power of the Brahmin, that power will create the Kshatriya power. Sri Krishna did not extinguish the Kshatriya power of India in the blood-bath of Kurukshetra; on the contrary by destroying the titanic power he saved both the power of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya. It is true that by the slaughter of Kshatriya families drunk with the strength of the titan, he reduced to tatters the violence of rajasic strength. Such mighty revolutions, putting this kind of check on internecine strife by effacing it through acute suffering, the slaughter of violent Kshatriya clans is not always harmful."(146-149)

“That India has undergone a downfall in the Kali age no one can deny. But God never descended on earth to bring about a downfall. The Incarnation is for saving the Law, the world and men. Particularly in the Kali age does God incarnate Himself in full. The reason is that in Kali there is the greatest

danger of man's downfall, there is a natural increase of unrighteousness. Therefore, in order to save mankind, destroy unrighteousness and establish the Right by barring the way of Kali, there are incarnations again and again in this age. When Sri Krishna incarnated, it was already time for the beginning of Kali's reign. It was through fear of His advent that Kali could not set his feet on his own kingdom. It was through His grace that Parikshit could hold up the exercise of Kali's sovereignty in his own age, by granting him five villages. From the beginning to the end of this Kali age, a fierce battle has been raging and will continue to rage between man and Kali. As helpers or leaders in that battle, the emanations and incarnations of God come down frequently during this period. God took on a human form at the opening of Kali in order to maintain the power of the Brahmin, the knowledge, devotion and desireless works, and teach these things that they might be of use in that battle. On the safety of India rest the hope and foundation of man's well-being. God saved India in Kurukshetra. In that ocean of blood, the Great Being in the form of Time the Destroyer began to take his delight in the sporting Lotus of a new world."(149-150)

## II. The Gita – Translation

### 1. Sri Krishna's Answer\*

“Sri Krishna saw that Arjuna had been seized with pity, dejection had overcome him. To chase away this tamasic state, He who was aware of the innermost feelings gave His dear friend a rebuke befitting a Kshatriya, that it might awaken the rajasic sentiments and drive away Tamas. He said in effect, “Look, this is a time of crisis for those who are on your side. If you give up your arms now, there is every possibility of danger and destruction for them. The idea of renouncing your cause in the field of battle should not occur to one like you who is best among Kshatriyas. Whence this sudden perversion of mind? Your attitude is full of weakness, it is sinful. Un-Aryan men can laud such an attitude, may subject themselves to it. But it is unworthy of an Aryan. It means an end to fame and glory in this world, it stands in the way of heaven in the next.” Thereafter, he administered a still more severe rebuke: “This is an attitude fit for a coward. You are the foremost among courageous men, you are a conqueror, you are the son of Kunti. Such words can come from your mouth? Give up this weakness of the vital being, get up. Give yourself to the work to be done.” (152)

### 2. Pity and Compassion\*

“Pity and compassion are different kinds of feeling, pity can be a feeling even contrary to compassion. Moved by compassion we do good to the world, remove the sufferings of men, of the nation, of others. If I shrink from doing that good from inability to bear my own sufferings or those of

any particular individuals, then I have no compassion, I have only been seized by pity. I take upon myself the task of removing the sufferings of my country or of the entire human race: that is the attitude of compassion. From fear of bloodshed, from fear of doing violence to living beings, I desist from that sacred task, acquiesce in the permanence of the nation's sorrows: this is the attitude of pity. The strong impulse to remove the sufferings of men out of sorrow for their sufferings is called compassion. To feel a sense of helpless weakness at the sight or thought of others' sufferings is known as pity. Weak helplessness is not compassion, it is pity. Compassion is the way of the strong, pity the manner of the weak. Moved by compassion the Lord Buddha left his wife and child, parents and friends and relatives to pine for him in sorrow with everything taken away, and set out to remove the sufferings of the world. Maddened by intense compassion, Kali went about the worlds killing the titans and flooded the earth with their blood in order to free all from sorrow. Arjuna had renounced arms under the influence of pity.

This is an attitude lauded by the un-Aryan, the un-Aryan acts accordingly. The Aryan teaching has nobility, it is fit for heroes, it is a divine teaching. The un-Aryan falls into a delusion, he describes ignoble sentiments as the right law and forsakes the noble path. The un-Aryan moved by rajasic feelings considers the good of himself, his dear ones, his family or clan, does not see the larger good. He turns his face away from the right law out of pity, boasts of himself as a man of piety, calls the Aryan of austere vows a cruel and impious man. Losing his senses under a tamasic delusion, the un-Aryan describes inaction as disinterestedness in works, assigns to the interested pursuit of virtue the highest position among

the rules of right living. Compassion is an Aryan attitude, pity an un-Aryan sentiment.

Moved by compassion, man engages heroically in battle with evil in order to destroy the evils and sufferings of others. Moved by compassion, woman pours all her heart and energies into the service of loving care and in the attempt to do good to others and lighten their sorrows. One, who under the influence of pity gives up his arms, turns away from the right path, starts weeping and thinks he is doing his duty and is virtuous, such a one is an impotent coward. This is a mean sentiment, it is an attitude of weakness. Despondency can never be the right law. He who gives umbrage to despair gives umbrage to sin. To reject this clouding of the mind, this impure and weak attitude, to join in the fray and carry out one's duty, to save thereby the world, to protect the Law, to lighten the burden of earth, this is the better way." (152-154)

### **3. Arjuna's Prayer to be Taught\***

"Arjuna understood the purpose behind Sri Krishna's words. He refrained from raising the objection on political grounds, but on receiving no answer to his other objections, he took refuge with Sri Krishna for being instructed. He said, "I admit I am a Kshatriya, to desist from this great work under the influence of pity is for me an act of cowardice, an infamy, against the Law. But neither the mind nor my heart would admit it. The mind says, "The killing of elders is a heinous sin, to kill them for the sake of one's own happiness would be to fall into impiety, it would be to lose everything, virtue and release from bondage and the other worlds. The desires would be satisfied, the hankering after wealth would be met, but for

how long? Enjoyments obtained through unrighteous means can last only until death, after that there is indescribable suffering. And when in the course of enjoyments you taste the blood of your elders in them, what is the peace or happiness you will get?' The heart says, 'These are my dear ones. If they are killed, I shall not be able to enjoy happiness in this life, nor would I want to live. If you give me the enjoyment of empire over the whole earth or give me the pleasure of Indra's riches by the conquest of heaven, even then I will not listen. The grief that will be overtaking me will overcome and weaken all the organs of action and knowledge and make them slack and incapable in their respective work. What will then be your enjoyment?' I am faced with a great unwillingness of mind, the nobility of my Kshatriya nature has been drowned in that unwillingness. I take refuge with thee. Give me knowledge, strength and faith, show me the path to the good, save me."

To see in God one's entire refuge is the way of the Gita's yoga. This is called the surrender or offering of one's self. One who accepts God as the teacher, lord, friend and guide and is prepared to throw away all other rules of living, one who hands over to Sri Krishna all responsibility for one's knowledge, work and the spiritual endeavour without caring for sin and virtue, what is to be done or not to be done, all right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good or evil, he alone is fit for the Gita's yoga. Arjuna said to Sri Krishna, "If you ask me to kill even my preceptors, if you make me understand that this is the right and the thing to be done, I shall act accordingly." On the strength of this intense faith, Arjuna was accepted as the best recipient of the Gita's teaching, having overpassed all the great men who were his contemporaries." (155-157)

#### **4. The Unreality of Death\***

“On hearing Arjuna’s words, Sri Krishna’s face betrayed signs of a smile, a smile that was amused yet happy. The Knower of the hearts of men recognised in Arjuna’s delusion the old delusion of mankind, so He smiled. That delusion is born of Sri Krishna’s own Maya; He has made man subject to this Maya in order to end the evils, the sorrows and weaknesses in the world through their experience and control. The attachments of the heart, the fear of death, the subjection to happiness and sorrow, the feeling of likes and dislikes, – ignorant movements such as these have found expression in Arjuna’s words. It is precisely these movements that have to be removed from the minds of men and the world made free of evil. To create favourable conditions for that auspicious work has Sri Krishna come and is going to reveal the Gita. But first the delusion that has been born in Arjuna’s mind has to be destroyed through an experience of it. Arjuna is Sri Krishna’s friend, the representative of humanity; to him will the Gita be revealed, he is the best recipient. But humanity has not yet become fit to grasp the meaning of the Gita, even Arjuna could not grasp the full meaning. The grief, sorrow and weakness that came to his mind have been experienced in full by men in the Kali age. Christianity has brought love, Buddhism has brought compassion, Islam has brought power; they have come in order to mitigate that experience of suffering. Now will begin the first phase of the Satya sub-period of Kali. The Lord is once again imparting the Gita to India, to the descendants of the Kuru race. If we prove ourselves capable of receiving it and holding to it, then the good of India, the good of the world will be its inevitable fruit.

Sri Krishna said, “Arjuna, you are counting virtue and sin like a pedant, you are talking about principles of life and death, trying to expound what will cause the nation good or harm; but your words do not bear evidence of any real knowledge, on the contrary, every word of yours is full of the deepest ignorance. Why not say frankly your heart is weak and overcome by grief, your mind turns away from what is to be done? There is no reason why you should argue like an ignoramus in the language of a man of knowledge in order to justify your weakness. Grief comes to the heart of every man, everyone regards death and separation as extremely frightful, life as of great value, grief as unbearable, duty as hard, achievement of self-interest as sweet; these make everyone feel happy or lament, laugh or weep, but no one can call these movements as sprung from knowledge. You are grieving for those for whom it is wrong to grieve. The wise man does not grieve for anyone, not for the dead nor for the living. He is aware of these facts: there is no death, no separation, no sorrow, we are immortal, eternally the same, we are the children of delight, children of immortality; we have come to this earth to play at hide and seek with life and death, with joy and sorrow, we are enacting a drama of laughter and weeping in the huge play-house of Nature, are tasting the delight of war and peace, love and dispute in our guise of friend and foe. This short period for which we live, not knowing where we shall go tomorrow or the day after on leaving the body, is but a moment in our eternal play, a short game, the sentiment of a few moments. We have been, we are, we shall be, eternally, for ever indestructible. We are the lords of Nature, masters of life and death, portions of God, inheritors of the past, present and future. Just as the body has

its childhood, youth and old age, so is the getting of a new body. Death is only a name, we get afraid on hearing the name, feel sorrow; did we know the thing in itself, we would neither be afraid nor feel sorrow. If we wept over a boy on his becoming a youth as if he were dead, and cried. ‘Alas, where has he gone, that dear boy of ours, this young man is not that boy, where is my darling gone’, our behaviours would be described by everybody as ludicrous and caused by rank ignorance, because this change of condition is a law of Nature, one and the same conscious being remains unmoved within the body of the boy and the youth beyond all outer change. The man of knowledge on seeing the common man’s fear of death and sorrow at death considers his behaviour as equally ludicrous and caused by dark ignorance, because the change to another body is a law of Nature, in the gross and the subtle body one and the same conscious being remains unmoved beyond all external change. Children of immortality are we; who is to die, who can kill? Death cannot touch us, death is an empty report, death is a delusion, death is not.” (162-164)

### **5. The Objects of Sense Perception\***

“The conscious being is immobile, Nature is in movement. The immovable conscious being is seated within the movements of Nature. What the conscious being seated within Nature sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches with the five organs of sense, – he depends on Nature to take the delight of all that. We see forms, hear sounds, smell odours, taste the flavour, feel the touch. Sound, touch, form, flavour, smell, these are the five objects of sense enjoyment. The particular field of the sixth sense, the mind, is the impression of things. The field of the intelligence is thought. The mutual delight

and eternal play of conscious being and nature are for having the experience and enjoyment of the five objects of sense, the impressions of mind and the thoughts. This enjoyment is of two kinds, pure and impure. In pure enjoyment there is no pleasure or pain, there is simply the delight that is the eternal principle of conscious being, is natural to it. In impure enjoyment pain and pleasure are there, dualities like heat and cold, hunger and thirst, grief and joy move and harass the impure enjoyer. Desire is the cause of impurity. Whoever has desire is impure, he is pure who has no desires. Desire creates likes and dislikes, under the influence of likes and dislikes, conscious being gets attached to objects of sense, the fruit of attachment is to become bound. Due to the bad habit of attachment the conscious being, when moved and harassed, even when grieved or suffering pain, is unable to renounce the cause of his pain, grief or harassment.” (164-165)

## **6. The State of Equality\***

“Sri Krishna first made reference to the eternity of the Spirit, then he showed the way to loosen the bonds of ignorance. The various touches of the objects of sense are the cause of dualities like pain and pleasure. These touches are impermanent, they have both a beginning and an end, their attachment has to be renounced because of the impermanence. If we become attached to impermanent things, we feel pleased at their coming, their absence or loss gives us pain and sorrow. This is called the state of ignorance. There is a clouding of the eternal poise and ever-present delight of the undying Spirit, we remain engrossed in transient states and objects, drown ourselves in a sea of grief while pining at their loss. He who instead of being thus overcome can bear

the touches of the objects of sense, that is, he who, while experiencing the dualities does not feel joy or sorrow, that man is freed from like and dislikes, by breaking the bonds of ignorance becomes capable of realising the eternal state and its delight, *amṛtatvāya kalpate.*” (165-166)

### **7. The Value of Equality\***

“This equality is the first teaching of the Gita. Equality is the very basis of the spiritual discipline of the Gita. The school of the Stoics in Greece received this teaching from India and propagated the doctrine of equality in Europe. The Greek philosopher Epicurus caught another side of Sri Krishna’s teaching, propounded the doctrine of Epicureanism which teaches calm enjoyment. These two doctrines, of equality and enjoyment, were known as the highest moral doctrines of ancient Europe, and have given rise to the endless quarrel between Puritanism and Paganism in modern Europe. But in the Gita’s discipline, the doctrines of equality and calm or pure enjoyment come to the same thing. Equality is the cause, pure enjoyment is the result. Equality destroys attachment, calms down likes and dislikes; with the destruction of attachment and the calming down of likes and dislikes, purity is born. The enjoyment of the pure conscious being is free of desires and attachment, is therefore pure. Herein lies the virtue of equality that attachments and likes and dislikes cannot remain in the same person along with equality. Equality is the seed of purity.” (166)

### **8. The Conquest of Sorrow\***

“The Stoic school of Greece made this mistake that they were unable to grasp the true means of conquering sorrow.

They tried to conquer sorrow by suppressing it, pressing it down, treading it under the feet. But in the Gita it has been said elsewhere, *prakṛtiṃ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kim kariṣyati\**, all beings follow their natures, what will suppression do? By the suppression of sorrow, human heart becomes dry, hard and loveless. “I shall not shed tears in sorrow, not acknowledge the feeling of pain, say, ‘this is nothing’ and bear it in silence, will look on the sorrows of wife, children, friends, the sorrows of the nation with an unmoved heart”, – this is an attitude of asuric austereness proud of its strength. It has a greatness, also an utility in helping towards man’s progress, but this is not the right means to conquer sorrow, not the last or supreme teaching. The true way to conquer sorrow is knowledge, peace, equality. To receive both joy and sorrow calmly is the right path, not to stop the coming of joy and sorrow into the heart but to keep unmoved the understanding. When there is equality in the understanding the mind and heart automatically have equality, at the same time natural movements like love do not get dried up, man does not become like a stone, dull and insensitive. *prakṛtiṃ yānti bhūtāni* – movements like love are the eternal movements of Nature, the only way to escape from them is to get merged in the Supreme Reality. To get rid of Nature while living within Nature is an impossibility. If we reject softness of heart, hardness will overcome it, if we forbid the vibrations of sorrow outside, sorrow will remain stored up within and will imperceptibly dry up the heart. There is no possibility of progress in an austerity of this kind. Austerity will no doubt bring power, but what is held down in this life will break all barriers and gush forth with redoubled force in the next.” (166-167)

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\*The Gita 3. 33

### III. Dharma\*

#### 1. The Chariot of Jagannath\*

“The ideal society is the vehicle of the indwelling Godhead of a human aggregate, the chariot for the journey of Jagannath. Unity, Freedom, Knowledge and Power constitute the four wheels of this chariot.

The society, created by human intellect or by the play of the impure life-impulses of Nature, belongs to a different order: here it is not the chariot of God who directs the destiny of the collectivity, but a masquerading deity who deforms the divine intuition by covering up the God within; it is rather the vehicle of the collective ego. It wanders aimlessly along the path heaped with numerous pleasures, pulled by the immature and incomplete resolutions of the intellect, and the old and new dull urges of the lower nature. As long as ego is the master, it is not possible to find the goal – even when the goal is seen it is not possible to drive the chariot straight in that direction. The truth that the ego is an obstacle to the divine fulness applies not only to the individual but holds equally good in the case of the collectivity.

Three main divisions of the ordinary human society are noticeable. The first is the well-built chariot, polished, shining, clean and comfortable, fashioned by skilled artisans; drawn by strong well-trained horses, it goes forward cautiously at an easy pace without any haste along a good road. The Sattwic ego is its owner-passenger. This chariot goes round the temple of God situated on a high region above it. Unable to go very close to the high ground, it circles it at a distance. If any one wants to go up, the rule is to get down from the chariot and

climb on foot. The ancient Aryan society which came after the Vedic age can be called a chariot of this type.

The second is the motor-car of the luxury-loving efficient worker. It rushes forward restless and tireless, at a breakneckspeed, roaring through the storm of dust and shattering the street beneath it. Ears are deafened by the noise of its horn; it relentlessly pursues its way knocking down and crushing anybody that happens to be in its path. Danger to the life of the passengers is great; accidents are frequent; the car is often smashed and repaired with difficulty, yet proudly it continues. There is no fixed goal but whenever a new vista is seen not too far away, immediately the owner of the car, the rajasic ego, drives in that direction shouting, 'This is the goal, this is the goal.' One derives much pleasure and enjoyment in riding this car; yet peril is unavoidable, and to reach the Divine impossible. Modern society of the West is a car of this nature.

The third is the dirty, old, dilapidated bullock cart, slow as a tortoise, drawn by emaciated, starving and half-dead bullocks, and going on the narrow country roads; inside the car is sitting a lazy, blind, pot-bellied, decrepit man in shabby clothes; smoking with great pleasure his mud-stained *bukkab* and listening to the harsh creaking of the cart, he is lost in the profusion of the lazy and distorted memories of bygone days.

The name of the owner is tamasic ego and that of the cartman book-knowledge. He consults an almanac to fix the time and direction of his departure. His lips repeat the slogan, 'All that is or has been is good and any attempt to introduce something new is bad.' By this chariot there is a bright and early prospect of reaching, though not the Divine, at least the Void of Brahman.

The bullock-cart of tamasic ego is safe as long as it rolls on the dusty unpaved village roads. We shudder to think what might happen to it if one day it got on to the broad streets of the world where fleets of rapid automobiles rush about. The danger lies in the fact that it is beyond the knowledge and capacity of the tamasic ego to recognise or admit the time for changing the vehicle. It has no inclination to do so, for, then its business and ownership would be undone. When a difficulty arises, a few among the passengers say: 'No, let it alone. It is good because it is ours.' These are orthodox or sentimental patriots. Some say: 'Why don't you repair it here and there?' – as if by this simple expedient, the bullock-cart could be immediately transformed into a perfect and priceless limousine. Such patriots are known as reformers. Others say: 'Let us have once more our beautiful chariot of yore.' At times, they even try to find ways and means of accomplishing this impossibility. There is no particular indication anywhere to warrant that their hopes would ever be fulfilled.

If we must choose one of these three vehicles, giving up still higher endeavours, then it is logical to construct a new chariot of the Sattwic ego. But so long as the chariot of Jagannath is not built, the ideal society will also not take shape. That is the ideal and ultimate image, the manifestation of the highest and profoundest truth. Impelled by the Universal Godhead, the human race is striving to create it, but owing to the ignorance of Prakriti it only succeeds in creating a different image either deformed, crude and ugly or, if tolerably fair, incomplete in spite of its beauty. Instead of creating Shiva, it fashions either a dwarf or a demon or an inferior deity of the intermediate worlds.

Nobody knows the true form or design of the chariot

of Jagannath, no artist of life is capable of drawing it. Hidden under many layers, this picture shines in the heart of the Universal Godhead. To manifest it, gradually through the effort of many divine Vibhutis, seers and creators, and establish it in the material world is God's intention.

The real name of the chariot of Jagannath is not society but commune. Not a loose human association with diverse tendencies or merely a crowd but an unfettered indivisible organisation, the gnostic community created by delight and the unifying power of self-knowledge and divine knowledge.

Society (*samāj*) is the name given to the organisation, that device which allows a human collectivity to work together. By understanding the root of the word, we can also seize its meaning. The suffix *sama* means united, the root *aj* signifies to go, to run, to fight. Thousands of people come together for the sake of work and to satisfy their desires. They pursue numerous aims in the same field – who can come first? Who can get to the top? – and because of this there is struggle and competition, quarrel and fighting not only among themselves but with other societies as well. To bring about order into this chaos, obtain help and satisfy mental tendencies, various relations and ideals are established; the result is something temporary, incomplete and achieved with difficulty. This is the image of society, of the lower existence.

The inferior society is based upon division. A partial, uncertain and short-lived unity is constructed upon that division. The structure of the ideal society is entirely the opposite. Unity is the foundation; there is a play of differentiation, for the sake of multiform delight, not for division. In the society we find a hint of physical and mentally

conceived unity arising from work; but unity based on the self is the soul of the spiritual commune.

There have been a number of partial and unsuccessful attempts to establish a commune in a limited field, whether inspired by the intellectual ideas of the West or in order to follow unhindered the discipline of inaction leading to Nirvana as among the Buddhists or because of the intensity of spiritual feeling like the early Christian communities. But before long all the defects, imperfections and normal tendencies of society infiltrated into the spiritual commune and brought it down to ordinary society. The idea of a restless intellect cannot endure; it is washed away by the irresistible current of old and new life-impulses. An intensity of emotion cannot bring about success in this endeavour; emotion is worn out by its own impetus. One ought to seek Nirvana all alone; to form a commune for the love of Nirvana is a contradictory action. A spiritual commune is by its very nature a field for the play of work and mutuality.

The day the Self-born unity will come into being by the harmony and integration of knowledge, devotion and work, as impelled by the Will of the Virat Purusha, the Universal Person, on that day the chariot of Jagannath will come out on the avenues of the world, radiating its light in all directions. Satya Yuga, the Age of Truth will descend upon earth; the world of mortal man will become the field for the play of the Divine, the temple-city of God, the metropolis of Ananda.” (171-175)

## **2. Three Stages of Human Society\***

“Human knowledge and power manifest in many ways

in the course of evolution. Three stages of it can be noticed – a natural state dominated by the body and controlled by the life-force, an intermediate and more advanced state preeminently rational, and the last and highest state in which the soul is predominant.

Man, when he is dominated by the body and driven by the life-force, is a slave of desire and interests. He knows only inherent selfishness, ordinary instinct and impulse. And he prefers whatever social arrangement seems to be convenient and is brought about by the chain of events resulting from the clash of desires and interests; he calls the collection of a few or many such regulations his dharma or way of life. Customs that run in the tradition or family or in society are the Dharma or Law of this lower natural state. The natural man has no idea of liberation, he does not know about the soul. The place where he can indulge without restraint his physical and vital impulses is an imaginary Paradise. To attain such a heaven after physical death is his salvation.

The man who is primarily intellectual always tries to regulate his desires and interests by reason. Where lies the fulfilment of desires, which particular interest among many different ones should have precedence, what is the nature of the ideal life, how and which discipline, as determined by reason to be followed so that nature may be cleansed and the ideal realised – he is ever engaged in thinking about these matters. He is willing to establish as his dharma a certain regulated cultivation of that nature and ideal principle. Such a sense of dharma is indeed the regulator of an advanced society enlightened by rational knowledge.

The dominantly spiritual man is aware of the secret soul beyond the intellect, the mind, the life, and the body and bases

his life movement on self-knowledge. He directs all his activities towards liberation, self-realisation and the attainment of God, knowing these to be the culmination of life. And he regards as his dharma that way of life and the cultivation of that ideal which are conducive to self-realisation and which leads the movement of evolution towards that goal. The highest type of society is led by such ideal and such dharma.

From dominance by life to reason, from reason to the suprarational love, these are the steps of man's ascent to the peaks of God.

There is not just one line of evolution in a particular society. All these three types of men exist in almost all societies and the community consisting of such a collection of people is a mixed one.

There are also in a natural society people ruled by reason as there are others ruled by the spirit. If these are few in number, disorganised or imperfect, then they make very little impact on society. Still some progress they are able to effect, have a hold on the society; however their influence becomes strong only if they can organise the many. But the natural men are far greater in number; the Law of the rational or spiritual man often becomes distorted, that of reason degenerates into mere convention, that of the spiritual man under the pressure of personal fancy and external custom oppressed, overwhelmed, made lifeless and diverted from its goal. Such is the end, we always observe.

We see that when reason is dominant, it assumes the leadership of society and tries to found a dharma enlightened by intellectual knowledge after changing or even destroying irrational taste and structure.

The enlightenment of the West – equality, liberty, fraternity – is only a form of this attempt. Success is impossible. Even the rational man, owing to want of spiritual knowledge, himself distorts his own ideal under the pressure of the impulses of mind, life and body. This stage is intermediate and there cannot be stability here – either there is a fall or an ascent towards the heights. Reason vacillates between these two pulls.” (176-178)

### 3. Ahankara\*

“The meaning of the word, *ahankāra*, has become so distorted in our language that often a confusion arises when we try to explain the main principles of the Aryan Dharma. Pride is only a particular effect of the rajasic ego, yet this is the meaning generally attributed to the word *ahankāra*; any talk of giving up *ahankāra* brings to the mind the idea of giving up pride or the rajasic ego. In fact, any awareness of ‘I’ is *ahankāra*. The awareness of ‘I’ is created in the higher knowledge Self and in the play of the three principles of Nature, its three modes are revealed: the sattwic ego, the rajasic ego and the tamasic ego. The sattwic ego brings knowledge and happiness. ‘I am receiving knowledge, I am full of delight’ – these feelings are actions of the sattwic ego. The ego of the sadhak, the devotee, the man of knowledge, the disinterested worker is the sattwic ego which brings knowledge and delight. The rajasic ego stands for action. ‘I am doing the work, I am winning, I am losing, I am making effort, the success in work is mine, the failure is mine, I am strong, I am fortunate, I am happy, I am unhappy’ – all these feelings are predominantly rajasic, dynamic and generate desire. The tamasic ego is full of ignorance and inertia. ‘I am

wretched, I am helpless, I am lazy, incapable and good for nothing, I have no hope, I am sinking into the lower nature, my only salvation is to sink into the lower nature' – all these feelings are predominantly tamasic and produce inertia and obscurity. Those afflicted with the tamasic ego have no pride though they have the ego in full measure but that ego has a downward movement and leads to death and extinction in the void of the Brahman. Just as pride has ego, in the same way humility also has ego; just as strength has ego, in the same way weakness also has ego. Those who have no pride because of their tamasic nature are mean, feeble and servile out of fear and despair. Tamasic humility, tamasic forgiveness, tamasic endurance have no value whatsoever and do not produce any good result. Blessed indeed is he who perceiving Narayana everywhere is humble, tolerant and full of forgiveness. Delivered from all these impulsions coming from the ego, one who has gone beyond the spell of the three modes of Nature has neither pride nor humility. Satisfied with whatever feeling is given to his instrumental being of life and mind by the universal Shakti of the Divine and free from all attachment, he enjoys invariable peace and felicity. The tamasic ego must be avoided in every way. To destroy it completely by awakening the rajasic ego with the help of knowledge coming from 'sattwa' is the first step towards progress. Growth of knowledge, faith and devotion are the means of liberating oneself from the grip of the rajasic ego. A person predominantly sattwic does not say, 'I am happy'; he says, 'Happiness is flowing in my heart'; he does not say, 'I am wise' he says 'Knowledge is growing in me.' He knows that this happiness and this knowledge do not belong to him but to the Mother of the Universe. Yet when in all kinds of

feelings there is bondage to the enjoyment of delight, then the feeling of the man of knowledge or the devotee is still proceeding from the ego. Simply by saying ‘It is happening in me’ one cannot abolish the ego-sense. Only the person who has gone beyond the modes of Nature has completely triumphed over the ego. He knows that the ‘Jiva’, the embodied being, is the witness and enjoyer, the Supreme is the giver of sanction, and that Nature is the doer of works, and that there is no ‘I’, all being a play in knowledge and ignorance of the Shakti of the sole Brahman without a second. The sense of ego is only a feeling born of illusion in the nature established in the ‘Jiva’, the embodied being. In the final stage this feeling of egolessness merges into Sachchidananda, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. But having gone beyond the modes of Nature one who still stays in the divine play by the will of the Lord respects the separate existence of the Lord and the ‘Jiva’, the embodied being, and, considering himself a portion of the Divine in Nature, he accomplishes his work in the Lila, the divine play. This feeling cannot be called the ego. Even the Supreme has this feeling. There is no ignorance or attachment in Him, but His state of beatitude instead of being self-absorbed is turned towards the world. One who possesses this consciousness is indeed a soul liberated in life. Liberation by dissolution can be gained only after the fall of the body. The state of liberation in life can be realised in the body itself.” (179-181)

#### **4. Integrality\***

“You have stepped on to the path of integral Yoga. Try to fathom the meaning and the aim of the integral Yoga before

you advance. He who has the noble aspiration of attaining the high summit of realisation should know thoroughly these two things; the aim and the path. Of the path I shall speak later on. First it is necessary to draw before your eyes, in bold outline, the complete picture of the aim.

What is the meaning of integrality? Integrality is the image of the Divine being, the dharma of the Divine nature. Man is incomplete, striving after and evolving towards the fullness and moving in the flow of gradual manifestation of the Self. Integrality is his destination; man is only a half-disclosed form of the Divine, that is why he is travelling towards the Divine integrality. In this human bud hides the fullness of the Divine lotus, and it is the endeavour of Nature to bring it into blossom gradually and slowly. In the practice of the Yoga, the Yoga-shakti begins to open it at a great speed, with a lightning rapidity. That which people call full manhood – mental progress, ethical purity, beautiful development of the faculties of mind, strength of character, vital force, physical health – is not the Divine integrality. It is only the fullness of a partial dharma of Nature. The real indivisible integrality can only come from the integrality of the Self, from the integrality of the Supramental Force beyond the mind, because the indivisible Self is the real Purusha, and the Purusha in mind, life or body is only a partial outward and debased play of the Supermind. The real integrality can only come when the mind is transformed into the Supermind. By the Supramental Force, the Self has created the universe and regulated it; by the Supramental Force, it raises the part to the Whole. The Self in man is concealed behind the veil of mind. It can be seen when this veil is removed. The power of the Self can feel in the mind the half-revealed, half-hidden,

diminished form and play. Only when the Supramental Force unfolds itself, can the Self fully emerge.” (182-183)

## **5. Hymns and Prayers\***

“The seeker, the seeking and the sought are the three limbs that go to the making of the Quaternary – the Four Norms or Objects of life – the Right Law, Interest, Desire and Liberation (Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha). Seekers have different natures; therefore different ways of seeking have been prescribed, and the goal sought is also different for each. But even if the outer view sees many goals, the inner vision understands that the goal sought is one and the same for all seekers: it is self-fulfilment. In the Upanishad Yajnavalkya explains to his wife that all is for the self. The wife is for the self, wealth is for the self, love is for the self, happiness is for the self, suffering is for the self, life is for the self, and death too is for the self. Therefore the importance and necessity of this question as to what the self is.

Many wise and learned people ask what is the use of worrying over the problem of self-knowledge. To waste one’s time in such abstruse discussion is madness, better to engage oneself in the more important subjects of worldly life and try to do good to the world. But the problem as to what are the things important in worldly life and in what way good will come to humanity, needs for its solution a knowledge of the self. As is one’s knowledge so is one’s goal. If one considers one’s body as the self, then one will sacrifice all other reasonings and considerations for its sole satisfaction and thus become a selfish demon in human form. If one considers one’s wife as the self, loves her as one’s self then one becomes a

slave to her, ready to die to please her, inflict pain upon others for the sake of her happiness, do harm to others in order to satisfy her desire. And if one considers one's country as the self then he may become a mighty patriot, perhaps leave behind an immortal name and fame in history, but then one may reject all other ideas and ideals, injure and rob and enslave other countries. Again, if you consider God as your self and love Him as your self, then too it would be the same thing. For love means supreme vision: if I am a yogi, full of love for the Divine, if I am a man of action acting desirelessly, then I shall be able to possess a power, a knowledge or joy beyond the reach of the common man. And finally if I consider the indefinable Supreme Reality (Brahman) as the self then I may attain the sovereign peace and dissolution. As is one's faith, so one becomes – *yo yat śraddha sa eva saḥ*. Mankind has all along been pursuing a development: it started with a small objective in view, then through comparatively greater ones it realised the highest transcendent reality. Finally it is now entering its goal, the supreme status of the Divine. There was an age when mankind was solely preoccupied with the body; the cultivation of the body was the law of the age. That was the way to Good in that age even if it meant depreciating all other laws. Otherwise the body, as it is the means and the foundation for the fulfilment of the law of the being (dharma), would not achieve the required development. Similarly there was another age in which the family and yet another in which the clan become the object of development as in modern times it is the nation that is the objective. However, the highest, the transcendent objective is the Supreme Lord or the Divine. The Divine is the real, the supreme self of all, therefore the real, the supreme objective. So the Gita says, “abandon all

laws, remember me alone”. All laws are harmonised in God. If you follow Him, He takes charge of you, makes you His instrument and works for the sovereign welfare and happiness of your family, your clan, your nation and the whole of humanity.

Even if the objective be the same, different seekers having different natures, the way also differs in each case. One important way for realising the Divine is through prayers and hymns. But this is not suitable for everybody. One who follows the path of knowledge takes to meditation and concentration. For the worker, dedication of works is the best way. Prayers and hymns form a limb of devotion; even then it is not the highest limb; for unqualified love is the highest perfection of devotion. That love can realise God’s true self through hymns and prayers and then, transcending their necessity, merges itself in God’s self-enjoyment. And yet there is hardly a man of devotion who can do without hymns and prayers. When there is no need of the process and practice (sadhana) even then the heart wells out in hymns and prayers. Only one has to remember that the way is not the objective and my way may not be another’s. Many men of devotion have this notion that one who does not take to hymns and prayers, who does not take delight in them, is not a spiritual man (one following the true law). This is a sign of error and narrowness. Buddha did not indulge in hymns and prayers but who would declare that Buddha is unspiritual? Hymns and prayers have developed for the practice of devotion.

Men of devotion are also of many kinds and hymns and prayers are used in different ways. A man becoming a devotee because of distress takes to hymns and prayers in order to

cry out to God, to pray for His help in the hope of getting relief. One who is a devotee with a purpose takes to hymns and prayers in the hope of the fulfilment of his purpose, with the intention of securing wealth, fame, happiness, prosperity, victory, welfare, enjoyment, liberation, etc. Devotees of this category at times even try to tempt God and propitiate Him; some failing to achieve their objective get terribly indignant with God and abuse Him calling Him names such as that He is cruel, He is a cheat, declaring they would never more worship God, never see His face, never accept Him. Many again in despair turn atheists and arrive at the conclusion that this world is a domain of suffering, a kingdom of torture, that there is no God. These two categories of devotion are an ignorant devotion; even so it is not to be despised; for from the lesser one rises to the greater. The discipline of ignorance is the first step to the discipline of knowledge. The child is ignorant; but there is a charm in the ignorance of a child. The child too comes weeping to its mother, demands redress from suffering, rushes to her for the sake of some satisfaction and self-interest, laments, pleads and when refused gets enraged, creates trouble. Even so, the Mother of the worlds bears with a smiling face all the claims and clamours of the ignorant devotees.

Now, a devotee in quest of knowledge does not take to hymns and prayers for the sake of securing a desired object or for pleasing God. For him, hymns and prayers are only a way to realising God's self-being and developing his own consciousness. But for the devotee who has already the knowledge, that necessity too disappears; because he has realised his self-being, his consciousness has become firm and well established: hymns and prayers are needed only for the

outpouring of the fullness of the heart. The Gita says, these four categories of devotees are all large-hearted, none negligible, all are dear to God, but of them the devotee who has the knowledge ranks highest; for one who has the knowledge and God are the same in being. For a devotee God is the objective, that is to say, he is to be known and realised as the self; the devotee who has the knowledge, and God are related to each other as the self and the Supreme Self. The self and the Supreme Self are united together through this triple bond, knowledge and love and work. Work is there but the work is given by God, there is no necessity of it, no self-interest in it, there is nothing to desire here. There is love, but that love is free from conflicts and quarrels; it is selfless, stainless, pure. Knowledge is there but that knowledge is not something dry and devoid of feeling, it is full of a deep and intense joy and love. The objective may be the same, but the way differs according to the aspirant. For different aspirants even the same way admits of different applications.” (184-188)

## 6. Our Religion\*

“Our religion is the eternal religion, *sanātana dharma*. It has three forms, ways, and activities of its own. Our religion has three forms. God is in the spirit within, in the mental and the physical worlds – in these three worlds, created by Nature, governed by the Supreme Consciousness-Force (*Mahāśakti*). He has expressed Himself as the universe. The attempt to unite with Him in these three worlds comprises the three forms of the eternal religion. Our religion has its three ways, *mārgas*. Knowledge, devotion, action, – these three, in their separate or combined working, such a state of union is within man’s reach. The yearning to be united with God by a purification

of the soul through these triple ways constitutes the Triple Way of the eternal religion. Our religion is involved in three activities. Among the major human tendencies three tend upward, and give the strength that brings Brahman-realisation – truth, love and energy. The evolution of the human race is being fulfilled through the gradual expression of these three tendencies. To advance on the Triple Way through truth, love and energy forms the triple action of the eternal religion.

There are many secondary religions hidden or implied in the eternal religion; depending on the eternal men busy themselves with changing, great and small religions, choose their own line of activity. All activities and religions are born of one's own nature. The eternal religion is supported by the eternal nature of the world, these many religions are the result of the inner nature of the various instruments. There are many kinds of religion – individual, racial, hierarchical, of the spirit of the age, etc. They are not to be neglected or rejected because they are impermanent, rather it is through the transient, changing religions that the eternal religion develops and establishes itself. The giving up of the religion of one's individual nature, of the race, the hierarchy, and the spirit of the age, instead of strengthening the eternal religion, develops what is irreligion, and what the Gita calls mongrelisation, *sankara*; that is because of violating the eternal way and because of the downward momentum opposed to progress, the world suffers from sin and tyranny. When because of the excesses of such sin and tyranny the titanic (*āsuri*) powers that oppose man's progress and trample religion swell and grow in strength, selfishness, cruelty and egotism spread everywhere, and the godless pretend to be God, then to remedy the sufferings of a panic-ridden world the Lord,

manifesting in a human form as either *avatāra* or *vibhūti*, again clears the way of the true religion.

For the adequate preservation of the eternal religion the religion of the individual, race, the hierarchy and the spirit of the age are always to be recommended. But among these many religions there are the two forms: noble and small. It is better to observe the ‘small’ religion in keeping with and by correcting it in terms of the nobler religion. If the religion of the individual is not made to conform with the religion of the race, that race goes to seed, and when the religion of the race is lost the field and opportunity of individual religion are destroyed. This too is a confusion in the life of religion, because of which both the race and the agents of confusion fall into the deepest hell. The race has to be saved first, only then can the individual’s spiritual, ethical and economic progress be safeguarded. And if the hierarchy in the social order cannot be recast in the form demanded by the spirit of the age, because of the contrary force of the mighty spirit of the age the religion based on the hierarchical order is broken and destroyed, and the same consequences overtake the society itself. The small is always a part or support of the great; in a contrary state of this relationship a great harm, due to religious confusion, is perpetrated. In the case of a conflict between the great and the small religion it is better to give up the small and follow the great.

Our aim is to spread the eternal religion and, based on that eternal religion, the observance of the religion of the race and the spirit of the age. We Indians, descendants of the Aryan race, have a right to an Aryan education and ethics. This Aryan feeling is our family religion and racial religion. Knowledge,

devotion and non-attached activity are the root of an Aryan education; liberality, love, courage, energy, modesty are signs of the Aryan character. To spread the light of knowledge among men, to hold before the race the impeccable ideal of elevated, liberal characters, to protect the weak, to punish the powerful tyrants are the aims of Aryan living; in the pursuit of these aims lies its religious fulfilment. We have fallen from the ways of our religion, moved away from our goals; victim to religious confusion and the gross illusions full of error we are without the Aryan education and its regulative ethics. In spite of belonging to the Aryan race we, dominated by the mighty and victims of misery and suffering, have accepted the law of inferiority and the servitude that follows from it. Hence if we want to survive, if we have the slightest desire to be free from an eternal hell, our first duty is to serve the nation. The way to do that is to rebuild the Aryan character. So that the future children of the motherland may become men of wisdom, truth-abiding, lovers of mankind, inspired by feelings of brotherhood, courageous, humble, it should be our first aim to give the entire nation, especially the youth of the country, an adequate education, high ideals and a way of activity that will arouse these Aryan ideals. Till we succeed in doing that the spread of the eternal religion will be like sowing seeds in a barren field.

The performance of the racial religion will make it easier to serve the spirit of the age. This is an age of energy, *śakti*, and love. At the beginning of the Age of Iron (*Kali*), the human tendencies try to fulfil themselves by subordinating knowledge and action to devotion, and with the support of love, truth and energy try and succeed in spreading the message of love. The friendliness and charity of Buddhism, the teaching of love in Christianity, the equality and

brotherhood of Islam, the devotion and sentiment of love in the Puranic religion is a result of these attempts. In the Age of Iron the eternal religion, helped by the spirit of friendliness, action, devotion, love, equality and brotherhood, does good to humanity. Entering into and manifesting in the Aryan religion, composed of knowledge, devotion and non-attached action, these same powers are seeking for expansion and self-fulfilment. The signs of that energy of expression are severe austerity, high ideals, and noble action. When this race becomes once more a seeker after austere perfection, full of high ideals and undertaker of noble efforts, it should be understood that the world's progress is under way and the withdrawal of anti-religious titanic forces and the rise of divine forces is inevitable once again. Hence this type of education too is needed at the present time.

When the religion of the race and of the time-spirit are fulfilled, the eternal religion will spread and establish itself throughout the world, without let or hindrance. All that the Lord has ordained from before, about which there are prophecies in the ancient canons, *śāstras*, those too will be felt and realised in action. The entire world will come to the Knower of Brahman, who will arise in the Aryan land, as learners in the ways of wisdom and religion, and accepting Bharat as a place of pilgrimage they will accept her superiority with bowed heads. It is to bring that day nearer that the Indians are rising, that is why this fresh awakening of Aryan ideas.” (189-193)

## **7. Maya\***

“Our ancient philosophers in their search for the fundamentals of the universe came to discover the existence

of an eternal and all-pervading principle at the base of the phenomenal world. The present-day Western scientists have on their part, at the end of long researches, become convinced of the existence of an abiding universal unity even in the physical world. They have concluded that *ākāśa* or ether is the essential principle of physical phenomena. The ancient philosophers of India too came to this very conclusion thousands of years ago that *ākāśa* is the basis of the world of physical phenomena and that all other physical states emerge from it through the process of natural transformation. But they did not stop short with this conclusion which to them was not the ultimate one. They entered the subtle world through yoga-power and thus came to know that behind the gross physical world of appearances there exists a subtle world and that a subtle *ākāśa* or ether is the substratum of this phenomenal world. Even this *ākāśa* does not represent the ultimate stuff; they named the ultimate stuff as *pradhāna*. Prakriti or the cosmic Executrix after having created this *pradhāna* in the rhythm of her universal movement, fashions out of it millions and millions of *aṅṅus* or infinitesimals, and the subtle physical gets built up with these *aṅṅus*. Prakriti or the dynamic force does nothing for herself; the creation and then the varied motion of this world of phenomena is solely for the pleasure of Him of whom she is the Power. The Self or Purusha is the overseer and witness in this play of Prakriti. The Self or Purusha is the overseer and witness in the play of Prakriti. The ineffable supreme Brahman of whom Purusha and Prakriti are the self-being and the dynamic action is the unique and eternal essential truth of the universe. The principal Upanishads affirm these doctrines of Brahman and of Purusha and Prakriti which form the core of the truths the Aryan Rishis

discovered in their quest for the fundamentals. Out of these basic truths the philosophers erected different systems of thought-structures through debate and discussion. The protagonists of the doctrine of Brahman started the Vedanta philosophy: the partisans of the doctrine of Prakriti propounded the Sankhya philosophy. Apart from these, many others followed a different path stating that the *paramāṇus* or the infinitesimals represent the primordial principle of the world of physical phenomena. After these different approaches were chalked out, Sri Krishna established in the Gita a harmonising synthesis of all the various systems of thought and restated the truths of the Upanishads through the mouth of Vasudeva. The authors of the Puranas on their part accepted as the source-book the Purana composed by Vyasa and introduced to the general public the same truths in the garb of anecdotes and allegories. This could not of course arrest the polemics of the scholars; they went on stating their own individual views and sought to ratify the conclusions of various branches of philosophy by means of elaborate reasoning. The actual state of our six systems of philosophy has grown out of this later speculation. At last Shankaracharya formed a unique and abiding organisation for the propagation of Vedanta throughout the length and breadth of the land and thus established the sway of Vedanta in the minds of the general public.” (194-196)

“If we would like to spread the universal Aryan dharma suited to all men, we would have to found it on genuine Aryan lore. Philosophy has ever been partial and incomplete. Any attempt to constrict the entire world through logical argument to fit into the tenets of a narrow view-point might perhaps lead to the adequate explanation of one side of the Truth but

only to the detriment of all others. The doctrine of Maya or illusionism as propounded by the Monists is a case in point. Brahman is real and the world is an illusion: this is the keynote of the doctrine of Maya. The nation that accepts this formula as the cornerstone of its thought grows in the yearning for knowledge, the spirit of detachment and the love for renunciation; but the power of *rajas* gets annulled while *sattva* and *tamas* predominate so that while on the one hand the enlightened sannyasins, the peace-loving vairagis, and the lovers and devotees of God full of distaste for the world, increase in numbers, on the other, a miserable destiny befalls the common run of men who become tamasic, ignorant, besotted with passivity and absolutely useless. This is what has happened in India due to the spread of the doctrine of Maya. If the world happens to be an illusion, then all other enterprises excepting the thirst for knowledge must be deemed otiose and pernicious. But apart from this thirst after knowledge many other powerful and beneficial urges are at play in the life of man; no nation can survive the neglect of these. In order to avoid this possible catastrophe Shankaracharya distinguished two sides of knowledge, spiritual and pragmatic, and prescribed either knowledge or works for different individuals according to the nature of each. But the result has been quite the contrary because of his vehement denunciation of the then ceremonial Path of Works. That Path of Works became almost extinct and the Vedic ceremonies vanished, thanks to the influence of Shankara; but notions such as these: 'the world is created by the power of Illusion', 'works arise out of ignorance and hinder liberation', 'fate is the dispenser of our joys and sorrows' and other kindred notions conducive to the growth of *tamas* got so

much settled in the minds of people that it became impossible for the power of rajas to manifest again. To save the Aryan race the Divine brought about resistance to the doctrine of Maya through the propagation of the teachings of the Puranas and the Tantras. Various aspects of the Aryan culture originating in the Upanishads were somewhat preserved in the Puranas, while the Tantras impelled men to action for the attainment of the dual fruits of *mukti* and *bhakti*, liberation and enjoyment, through the worship of the Shakti. Almost all those who fought to maintain the integrity of the nation, such as Pratap Singh, Shivaji, Pratapaditya, Chand Rai, etc., were either worshippers of the Shakti or disciples of Tantric yogis. To prevent the harm emanating from tamas, Sri Krishna preached against the renunciation of works in the Gita.

The doctrine of Maya is indeed founded upon truth. The Upanishads too have declared that the Lord (*īśvara*) is the great Magician (*Parama Māyāvī*) who has brought forth this tangible world through His Maya-Power. Sri Krishna also has said in the Gita that Maya manifesting her triple *gūṇas* or modes pervades the whole of the universe. The one and unique ineffable Brahman is the essential Truth of the Universe; all the phenomenal world is nothing but His self-manifestation, itself being mutable and impermanent. But if Brahman happens to be the sole reality, questions necessarily arise: Wherefrom and how do the division and multiplicity arise? and wherein are they established? To these questions the Upanishads reply: If Brahman is the sole Reality, division and multiplicity must have arisen from Brahman alone, they must be established in Brahman Himself and must have been occasioned by some inscrutable power of Brahman. That Power has been variously designated as the Maya of the

Magician, Prakriti governed by Purusha, or the Will-Power of the Ishwara – a Power both of Knowledge and Ignorance. The logician's mind could not be satisfied with such statements; it could not find there explanations as to how the One becomes the Many or how division appears in the Indivisible. At last it hit upon an easy solution: The One can never become Many, division can never appear in the eternal Unity, multiplicity is an untruth, division is false, they are but *māyā* or illusions floating as dreams in the eternal Self who is One without a second. But confusion does not cease even with this; for the questions arise: What is after all Maya? whence and how does it originate? and wherein is it established? Shankara replied: one cannot say what Maya is, for it is ineffable; Maya does not originate, Maya ever is and yet is not. Thus the confusion could not be cleared and no satisfactory solution was forthcoming. Only, as a result of this debate a second eternal and ineffable principle secured its place in the one and the unique Brahman; unity could thus not be maintained.

The explanation offered by the Upanishads is far better than that of Shankara. The Divine's own Nature is the creatrix of the world; that Nature is Shakti, the Chit-Shakti or the blissful Consciousness-Force of Sachchidananda (or the triune Unity of Existence absolute, Consciousness absolute and Bliss absolute). The Divine is the Super-self for the individual Self, so is Parameshwara for the world. The Will of the Parameshwara is imbued with creative potency; it is through that Will that the Many come out of the One and division appears in the Indivisible. Looked at from the point of view of the supernal, Brahman is real and the world is an

appearance brought forth by the divine Maya (*Parāmāyā*)\*, for it issues forth from Brahman and disappears into Brahman. The phenomenal universe exists in Time and Space, it does not exist in the transcendent status of the Brahman. Brahman is the continent of the phenomenal Time and Space; He cannot be circumscribed by Space and Time. The world has come out of Brahman and exists in Brahman; the cosmos with a beginning and an end is established in the eternal inscrutable Brahman, it exists there after being created by the Power of *vidyā* and *avidyā* (the knowledge and the ignorance of Oneness) of Brahman. Just as man possesses in himself the power to conceive unreal objects through the exercise of imagination apart from the power to realise the actual truth, so in Brahman exist the powers of knowledge and ignorance (*vidyā* and *avidyā*), as also the real and the unreal appearances (*rta* and *anṛta*). But the appearances are the creations of Time and Space. Just as the imaginations of man get translated into reality in course of time and space, so too what we term as unreal is not altogether unreal, for it represents but the as yet unrealised aspect of the Truth. As a matter of fact, all without exception is real; the world is unreal in the transcendent status, but we who are not beyond Time and Space have no right to call the world false. In the bosom of Time and Space the world is by no means unreal, it is a reality. When the time will come and we will acquire the necessary strength to transcend Time and

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\*Cf. “It is by Maya that static truth of essential being becomes ordered truth of active being, – or, to put it in more metaphysical language, out of the supreme being in which all is all without barrier of separative consciousness emerges the phenomenal being in which all is in each and each is in all for the play of existence with existence, consciousness with consciousness, force with force, delight with delight.” (CWSA 21: 123-24).

Space and merge in the Brahman, then and then alone we will be entitled to call the world an unreality; but if it comes from the mouth of one who has not got the right to say so it means a falsehood and a reversal of the course of dharma. Instead of declaring that Brahman is real and the world an illusion it would be better for us to state that Brahman is the Reality and the world too is Brahman. Such is the teaching of the Upanishads; the Aryan dharma is founded upon the truth: *sarvam khalvidam brahma*, ‘everything is indeed Brahman.’” (196-200)

### **8. Nivritti\***

“The wise in our country never accepted any narrow interpretation of *dharmā*, the right law of Life, the Divine Law, opposed to the great activities of life. The great and profound axiom that all life is the field for dharma lay at the bottom of the Hindus’ lore and learning. Tainted by the teachings of the West our knowledge and education have degenerated into a twisted and anomalous state. We often succumb to this false notion that nothing but renunciation, devotion or sattwic attitude can ever form part of dharma. Men in the West study religion with such a cramped notion. The Hindus used to divide all the activities of life into the two categories of *dharmā* and *adharma* (‘what is not dharma’); in the Western world they have made three divisions such as religion, irreligion and the cultivation of most of the pursuits and functionings of life outside the purview of religion and irreligion. To praise the Divine, to say prayers and to chant hymns, and listen to the sermons of the priest at the church and such other allied activities go by the name of religion. Morality forms no part

of religion, that makes a separate category by itself; but many accept both religion and morality as auxiliary limbs of piety. Not to attend the church, to entertain the spirit of atheism or agnosticism, to disparage religion or even to show indifference towards it are called acts of irreligion and immorality. According to the aforesaid view, these too make up impiety. But otherwise most of the pursuits and functionings fall outside of religion and irreligion. Religion and life, *dharmā* and *karmā* are separate categories – many amongst us interpret *dharmā* in this distorted way. They style *dharmā* all that pertains to saints and sannyasins, to God or to gods and goddesses and the renunciation of the world; but if you happen to raise any other topic, they will demur, “This concerns the world and not religion”. The occidental idea of religion has taken root in their mind; to hear the word ‘*dharmā*’ makes them at once think of ‘religion’ and they unwittingly employ the word in the same sense. But if we impute such foreign connotations to our native terms, we are sure to lapse from the catholic and eternal Aryan notions and teachings. All life is the field of *dharmā*, so is the life in the world. Only the culture of spiritual knowledge or the urge of devotion do not constitute *dharmā*, action too is *dharmā*. This great teaching pervades from ages past the whole of our literature – *eṣa dharmah sanātanaḥ*.

*Many think that although works form part of dharmā, not so all types of work; only those that are governed by sattva and conducive to nirṛti, abstention or withdrawal deserve this title. This too is a fallacious notion. Just as the sattwic actions are dharmā, so are the rajasic ones. Just as showing compassion to creatures is dharmā, so is destroying the enemy of the land in the field*

of a righteous battle. To sacrifice one's own happiness and wealth or even life, for the good of others, is dharma, even so is it dharma to maintain in a fit condition the body that is the instrument of dharma. Politics too is dharma, to write poetry, to paint pictures – that too is dharma, to gladden the hearts of others through sweet songs is also dharma. Dharma is whatever is not tainted by self-interest, be that work great or small. It is we who reckon a thing great or small, there is nothing great or small before the Divine; He looks only at the attitude in which a person does the works befitting his nature or brought by unforeseen circumstances. The highest and greatest dharma is this: whatever work we do, to consecrate that to the feet of the Divine, to perform it as *yajña* or holy sacrifice and to accept it with an equal heart as something done by His own Nature:

*īśā vāsyamidam sarvaṃ yat kiñca jagatyām jagat,  
tena tyaktena bhunñīthā mā grdhah kasya sviddhanam.  
kurvanneveha karmāṇi jīviṣecchatam samāh,\**

That is to say, the greatest way is to see in Him all that we see or do or think and to cover all that with his thought as if with a piece of raiment; neither sin nor irreligion can ever penetrate this covering. Without hankering for anything and giving up in our heart desire and attachment with regard to all works, to enjoy all that we receive in the flux of actions, to perform all types of works, to preserve the body: such is the conduct pleasing to God and this indeed is the greatest

\*Isha Upanishads 1, 2. Sri Aurobindo's own translation into English:

*"All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion. By that renounced thou shouldst enjoy; lust not after any man's possession. Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years."*

dharmā. This is what constitutes true abstention. The *buddhi*\* or the intelligent will is the seat of *nirṛti* or abstention, the vital and the senses are the field of *pravṛti* or dynamic impulse. *Buddhi* should maintain the poise of a detached witness and act as the prophet or spokesman of God and, being free from desire, communicate to the life and the senses the inspiration sanctioned by Him; life and the senses will then act accordingly. The renunciation of actions is no great achievement, the renunciation of desire is the true renunciation. The physical withdrawal is no withdrawal, the non-involvement in consciousness is the true withdrawal.” (202-204)

## 9. Prakamya\*

“When people speak of the eight-fold acquisitions (*siddhi*), they think of a few extraordinary powers gained through a supranatural yoga. Although it is true that a full play of the eight acquisitions can happen only in a yogi, still all these powers are not outside the common laws of nature; rather what we call natural laws are a disposition of these eight-fold powers.

The names of these eight powers are ‘Mahima’ (greatness), ‘Laghima’ (lightness), ‘Anima’ (smallness), ‘Prakamya’ (penetration or projection), ‘Vyapti’ (extension), ‘Aisvaryā’ (splendour), ‘Vasita’ (control), ‘Isecta’ (mastery);

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\*Cf. “*Buddhi* is... the intelligence with its power of knowledge and will. *Buddhi* takes up and deals with all the rest of the action of the mind and life and body.... From the point of view of Yogic knowledge we may say that it is that instrument of the soul, of the inner conscious being in nature, of the Purusha, by which it comes into some kind of conscious and ordered possession both of itself and its surroundings.” (CWSA 24: 651, 665)

all these are known as the eight powers inherent in the nature of the Supreme. Take, for example, 'prakamya'; 'prakamya' means the full expression and free working of all the senses. In fact, all the working of the five senses, instruments of sense-knowledge and mind are included in prakamya. It is through the power of prakamya that the eyes see, the ears hear, the nose smells, the skin feels touch, the tongue tastes and the mind receives all outside contacts. Normally people think that it is the physical senses that are the powers that hold knowledge; but the wise know that the eye does not see, it is the mind that sees, the ear hears not, it is the mind that hears, the nose smells not, it is the mind that smells. Men of still greater knowledge know that even the mind sees not, hears not, smells not, it is the being that sees, hears, smells. The Being is the knower, the being is God, part of the Supreme. The eight powers of the Supreme Divine are also the eight powers of the being.

An eternal portion of the Divine, in the world of souls, becomes a soul, then meets the mind and the five senses in Nature, and draws them towards itself, uses in its own service and possesses for its own enjoyment. When God as a soul takes up a body or goes out of the body, then, as the wind takes away the perfumes from flowers, even so it takes away all the senses from the body. The Supreme Divine arches over the ears and eyes, the touch and taste and smell and the mind and enjoys their objects. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking (meantalising) are all functions of prakamya. The soul, an eternal portion of the Divine adopts all this working of Nature and in the course of Nature's transfiguration puts out the five senses and the mind in the subtle body. And as it takes up the physical body it enters

there with all the six senses and at the time of death it departs taking with it the six senses. However, whether in the subtle body or in the physical body it is he who inhabits these six senses as their master and enjoys all their objects. In the causal body prakamya is there in its fulness. That power manifests itself first in the subtle body and then in the physical body. It does not from the very outset express itself wholly in the physical. The senses evolve gradually with the gradual evolution of the world. In the end they attain in some of the animals the degree of expression and intensity helpful for the human evolution. But in man himself the senses get somewhat dulled because we spend more energy for the development of the mind and intelligence. But this imperfect manifestation of prakamya is not its final stage. By the force of yoga all the powers of prakamya that have developed in the subtle body can be expressed in the physical body. This is the realisation of prakamya gained through yoga.

## II

Infinite and invincible is the might of the Supreme Divine. And the power that is inherent in his nature has an infinite field and unhindered working. The soul is God, a portion of the Divine bounded in the subtle body and in the material body. He slowly unveils his divine powers. The senses of the physical body are particularly limited; and so long as man is limited by the powers of the physical body, he is superior to the animal only because of the development of his intelligence. Otherwise in the matter of the intensity of the senses and the faultless working of the mind – in one word in the realisation of prakamya, power of projection – the animal is superior to man. What the scientists call instinct is this prakamya. In the

animal, the intelligence has developed to a very small extent and yet if one is to live in this world then one has need of a faculty that will show the way in all things as to what is to be done and what is to be rejected. The mind of the animal does this. Man's mind decides nothing, it is his intelligence that decides, it is his intelligence that settles, his mind is only an instrument, for registering impressions. Whatever we see, hear, feel turn into impressions in the mind. The intelligence accepts these impressions or rejects them or builds thoughts with them. The animal intelligence is incapable of taking decision in this way. Not by the intelligence but by the mind the animal understands and thinks. The mind has a curious capacity, it can understand in a moment what is happening in another mind. It does not argue but comprehends just what is happening in another mind. It does not argue but comprehends just what is necessary and chooses the right way for the work. We may not have seen anybody entering the room, still we may know somebody is hiding there. There is no cause for fear, still we are full of anxiety, as though there is some secret reason for fear somewhere. Our friend has not uttered a word, still before he opens his mouth we guess what he is going to say. Many instances of this kind may be given. All these are powers of the mind, the natural unfettered working of the eleventh sense. But we have been so accustomed to act through our intelligence that we have almost lost the other power, the power of prakamya. If the animal did not possess prakamya, he would die out in a day or two. What is eatable, what is not, who is friend, who is foe, where is danger, where safety, all this knowledge, it is prakamya that gives to the animal. It is through prakamya that the dog without even understanding the language of the master can

understand the meaning of his words or the idea in his mind. It is through prakamya that the horse always recognises the road on which it has gone once before. All these powers of prakamya belong to the mind. But even with regard to the power of the five senses the animal beats the man hollow. Which man is able like the dog to follow a scent through a hundred miles, and rejecting all other ways to pursue unfailingly one particular animal? Or which man can see like the animal in the dark, or can discover through hearing only the sound made by some one from a secret place? An English newspaper while speaking of telepathy, that is, receiving thought from a distance, says it is a function of the mind. The animal has this capacity, man has not, therefore through the development of telepathy man will go down and not go up, an argument that befits very well a thick-headed Briton. True, in order to develop his intelligence man neglected the full development of the senses, but it was for his good, otherwise his intelligence would not have developed so quickly, if there had been no need of it. But once the intelligence has developed fully and faultlessly, it is now man's duty to develop again the eleventh sense. By this the knowledge ascertainable by the intellect will be widened and a full culture of the mind and intelligence will develop them into fit instruments, for the manifestation of the inner Divine. The development of any power whatsoever can never be a cause of decline, decline is possible only when the power is applied in the wrong way, when it is used in a false manner, when it is tainted with disharmony. Many are the visible signs that are seen today which make us understand that the day is come for the eleventh sense to manifest again, for the power of prakamya to begin to grow and increase.” (205-209)

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