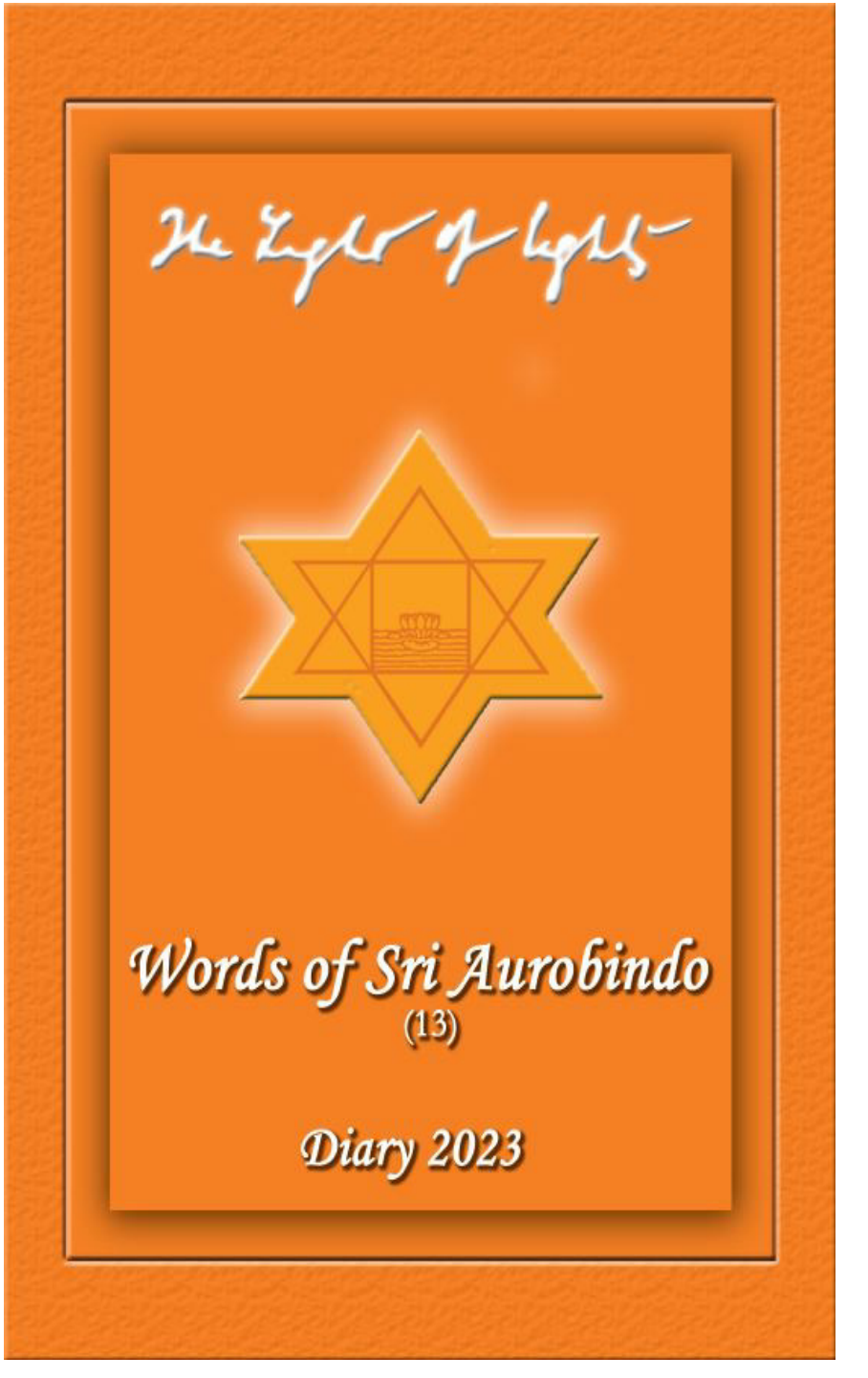

Words of Sri Aurobindo
(13)
Diary 2023

Spirituality Is India's Only Politics

"Spirituality is India's only politics, the fulfilment of the Sanatan Dharma its only Swaraj. I have no doubt we shall have to go through our Parliamentary period in order to get rid of the notion of Western democracy by seeing in practice how helpless it is to make nations blessed."

– Sri Aurobindo

(36: 170)

With Best Compliments From:

The Resurgent India Trust

(A Trust Dedicated to the Resurgence of India)

Mira Ambica Bhawan, Khetan Mohalla

Jhunjhunu - 333001, (Raj.)

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The Inevitability of The Revival of Hindu Intellectual Faith in the Totality of the Spiritual Aspects of Hinduism

"..although intellectually we are accustomed in obedience to Western criticism to base ourselves on the Upanishads & Gita and put aside Purana and Veda as mere mythology & mere ritual, yet in practice we live by the religion of the Puranas & Tantras even more profoundly & intimately than we live by & realise the truths of the Upanishads. In heart & soul we still worship Krishna and Kali and believe in the truth of their existence. Nevertheless this divorce between the heart & the intellect, this illicit compromise between faith & reason cannot be enduring. If Purana & Veda cannot be rehabilitated, it is yet possible that our religion driven out of the soul into the intellect may wither away into the dry intellectuality of European philosophy or the dead formality & lifeless clarity of European Theism. It behoves us therefore to test our faith by a careful examination into the meaning of Purana &Veda and into the foundation of that truth which our intellect seeks to deny [but] our living spiritual experience continues to find in their conceptions. We must discover why it is that while our intellects accept only the truth of Vedanta, our spiritual experiences confirm equally or even more powerfully the truth of Purana. A revival of Hindu intellectual faith in the totality of the spiritual aspects of our religion, whether Vedic, Vedantic, Tantric or Puranic, I believe to be an inevitable movement of the near future."

– Sri Aurobindo
(14: 114)

The Light of lights

Words of Sri Aurobindo
(13)

Diary
2023

Acknowledgement:

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Personal Information

PERSONAL

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Blood Group	
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Bank	A/c No.
Income Tax No.	Tax Due Date
Credit Card No.	Expiry
Credit Card No.	Expiry
ATM Card No.	

Important Dates in the Ashram

The Mother's Birthday (Darshan Day)	*21 February*
Foundation of Auroville	*28 February*
Supramental Day	*29 February*
The Mother's First Arrival in Pondicherry	*29 March*
Sri Aurobindo's Arrival in Pondicherry	*4 April*
The Mother's Final Arrival in Pondicherry (Darshan Day)	*24 April*
Sri Aurobindo's Birthday (Darshan Day)	*15 August*
The Mother's Mahasamadhi	*17 November*
The Mother's Body Laid To Rest	*20 November*
Siddhi Day (Darshan Day)	*24 November*
Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi	*5 December*
Sri Aurobindo's Body Laid To Rest	*9 December*

List of Holidays

Guru Govind Singh Jayanti	*Jan. 05*	*Buddha Poornima*	*May 05*
Lohri	*Jan. 13*	*Id-Ul-Zuha*	*Jun. 29*
Makar Sankranti	*Jan. 14*	*Moharram*	*Jul. 29*
Pongal	*Jan. 15*	*Independence Day*	*Aug. 15*
Republic Day	*Jan. 26*	*Raksha Bandhan*	*Aug. 30*
Basant Panchami	*Jan. 26*	*Janamashtami*	*Sep. 06*
Ravidaas Jayanti	*Feb. 05*	*Ganesh Chaturthi*	*Sep. 19*
Shiv Ratri	*Feb. 18*	*Anant Chaudas*	*Sep. 28*
Holi	*Mar. 07*	*Milad -Ul-Nabi*	*Sep. 28*
Dhulendi	*Mar. 08*	*Gandhi Jayanti*	*Oct. 2*
Ugadi	*Mar. 22*	*Dashahara*	*Oct. 24*
Ram Navami	*Mar. 30*	*Deepawali*	*Nov. 12*
Mahavir Jayanti	*Apr. 04*	*Goverdhan Pooja*	*Nov. 13*
Good Friday	*Apr. 07*	*Bhaiya Dooj*	*Nov. 14*
Baisakhi	*Apr. 14*	*Guru Nanak Jayanti*	*Nov. 27*
Id-Ul-Fitar	*Apr. 22*	*Christmas Day*	*Dec. 25*



Vijnana and the Action of the Four Higher Faculties in Human Mind

"Vijnana, true ideation, called ritam, truth or vedas, knowledge in the Vedas, acts in human mind by four separate functions; revelation, termed drishti, sight; inspiration termed sruti, hearing; and the two faculties of discernment, smriti, memory, which are intuition, termed ketu, and discrimination, termed daksha, division, or viveka, separation. By drishti we see ourselves the truth face to face, in its own form, nature or self-existence; by sruti we hear the name, sound or word by which the truth is expressed & immediately suggested to the knowledge; by ketu we distinguish a truth presented to us behind a veil whether of result or process, as Newton discovered the law of gravitation hidden behind the fall of the apple; by viveka we distinguish between various truths and are able to put them in their right place, order and relation to each other, or, if presented with mingled truth & error, separate the truth from the falsehood. Agni Jatavedas is termed in the Veda vivichi, he who has the viveka, who separates truth from falsehood; but this is only a special action of the fourth ideal faculty & in its wider scope, it is daksha, that which divides & rightly distributes truth in its multiform aspects. The ensemble of the four faculties is Vedas or divine knowledge."

– Sri Aurobindo
(16: 717-18)



"K. M. MUNSHI: I would like to have your guidance as regards the future of Sanatan Dharma. Starting from your Uttarpara Speech, which has been a sort of beacon to me for years, I have been working for the reintegration of Hindu culture . . . But I am neither learned nor a profound thinker. I can contribute only my faith and the little energy which has been vouchsafed to me. I only pray that strength may be given to me to carry forward the message of the Seers of whom, in my opinion, you are the only surviving Apostle. What shall I do now?

My dear Kanubhai

In reply to your letter to him of July 30th 1950 Sri Aurobindo has asked me to write to you the following: – *

"Your feeling that there should be reintegration of Indian Culture under modern conditions is quite right. It is *the* work that has to be done. And as far as Sri Aurobindo can see at present Indian Spiritual Culture has a great and bright future before it. It is the future power that might dominate the world.

So, your efforts in carrying out that work are quite in the right direction and in carrying out that work you would have his full support and blessings. 3 August 1950"

– Sri Aurobindo
(36: 512-13)

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* The paragraphs that follow were dictated by Sri Aurobindo to A. B. Purani and sent to Munshi over Purani's signature. – Ed.

Contents

1. Vedic and Philological Studies

(CWSA* 14).....12-121

2. Hymns to the Mystic Fire

(CWSA 16).....122-264

3. Autobiographical Notes

(CWSA 36).....265-414

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* CWSA – The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo

"The handling of the Vedic hymns by the bold & ingenious scholarship of the Europeans has had at any rate one striking outcome, – it has converted the once admired, august & mysterious sacred books of the Hindus into a mass of incoherent rubbish. An Indian freethinker recently gave it as his opinion that the quickest & most effective way to make an end [to] the Hindu religion would be to translate the Vedas, its foundation, into the vernaculars & distribute them cheaply by the thousand throughout the peninsula. I have no doubt the method would be fairly effective, if not in destroying Hinduism, at least in driving it more exclusively into its stronghold of Vedanta. For, if the translation adopted were based on the work of European scholars, I can well imagine the idea that the mind of the coming generations would form about these ancient writings. I think there would be a general agreement that a more gross, meaningless & confused collection of balderdash had never been composed or penned. If this description should be thought too violent I would only ask the objector to read for himself Max Muller's translation of the hymn by Kanwa son of Ghora to the Maruts, the 39th of the 1st Mandala and ask himself honestly what sense worth having he can make out of it – even leaving aside the language & images, looking beyond them to the thing the poet is trying to say. For my part all I can make out, [is] that some primitive savage named Kanwa with a hopelessly confused brain and chaotic imagination is greatly terrified by some idea, sight or imagination of ghost, fiend or devil and calls upon the storm-gods to get rid of the cause of his fear. The language in which he expresses his appeal, is as barbarous & confused as the thought. In one verse he leaps from one thought to another which has no visible connection with its predecessor. The similes & metaphors are grotesque & inappropriate, eg "you cast forwards your measure like a blast of fire", "Come to us with your favours as lightnings go in quest of rain." Half the verse presents, when sounded, no intelligible sense, but there is a good deal of half-insane sound & fury.

The European scholar will reply that he cannot help it – he deals with the Vedas according to his philology & his ideas of what the text ought to mean, & this is the result given by his scholarship & his philology. He is even well satisfied, for his theory, founded on Western Science, is that men writing so long ago must have been undeveloped semi-savages and their writing very likely to be the stuff of a barbarous imagination which to the modern mind makes neither good sense nor good poetry. The European is not at fault; he translates according to his knowledge.

But the Hindu who knows the depth & sublimity of the Upanishads, who has in his spiritual experience tested, realised & established Vedantic truth by a sure & unfailing experience as surely as the scientist has tested & established his laws of gravitation & the indestructibility of matter, – the Hindu perceiving

many truths of Veda surviving in Purana & Tantra & Itihasa, already present in the deeper passages of the Brahmanas, – will not easily believe that the European scholars' is the last word & that in this modern rubbish of Nature-worship & incoherent semi-savage poetry we have the secret of that Veda from which Vedanta, Purana, Tantra, Itihasa, Yoga & Brahmana spring, that Veda which was so admirable to the greatest minds of antiquity. He will ask whether no other interpretation can arise from the text, – whether the philology of the Europeans is so perfect & infallible as to forbid us to review & question their results." (14: 3-4)

"…It opens with a verse spoken, it would seem, by Indra, one of the most remarkable riks in the whole Veda. "It is not now nor tomorrow; who knoweth that which is utterly wonderful? its movement has for its field the knowledge of another, but when it is approached, it disappears." To this allocution which might have come straight out of the deepest passages of the Upanishads Agastya replies by a complaint, "Why, O Indra, wouldst thou slay us; the Maruts are thy brothers, – with them do thou work for our perfection; smite us not in our struggle." Indra defends himself, justifies the blows he has struck: "Wherefore, O my brother Agastya, dost thou, though our comrade, think beyond us; verily we know of thee how to us thou willest not to give the offering of thy mind. Let them make the altar ready; let them kindle utterly Agni in front; – there is the awakening to immortality; let us two extend thy sacrifice." Agastya yields & consents: "Thou art the master, O lord of substance among the Vasus, thou utterly disposest, O lord of love among the Mitras. Indra, do thou hold talk with the Maruts, taste in the truth the offerings." It seems to me that the sense of this little hymn, so beautiful, simple & profound in its expression & substance, is perfectly straightforward, perfectly lucid & only a preconceived theory or a perverse ingenuity can lead us astray. That which is neither now nor tomorrow, but beyond all Time, the wonderful thing which no man can know, that which reveals itself by its activity in the consciousness of another, in ourselves, in Indra, in the Maruts, in every living being or active force, but if we seek to approach, study & seize it vanishes from our ken, is the Brahman. No other conception of Indian thought fits this profound & subtle description.…

But why does Indra cast this assertion of the unknowability of Brahman at Agastya in their quarrel? His self-justification in the third rik explains the motive. Agastya has been seeking to go beyond Indra in his thought consciousness; he has been seeking to exceed mind & arrive straight at Brahman, to place his mind and its activities not on the altar of the Lord of Mind, but on the altar of the unknown God. Vidma hi te yatha mano asmabhyam na ditsasi. Not so, says Indra, shalt thou attain. Through me, through the mind, through thy mental consciousness, thou shalt aspire to That which is wonderful; for all its actions & movements are not in its pure self-being but in the field of another's consciousness, there it must be sought; approached directly it vanishes. Agastya seeks to pacify Indra. He perceives that through the hostility of Indra his mind refuses to work towards perfection, towards siddhi in the Yoga; in his strenuous struggling upward, samarane, it no longer helps but resists him; there is a divorce between his mental energies presided over by the Maruts & their great presiding and fulfilling devata; confusion, failure of thought, error, backsliding is the result. "Why wouldst thou slay me," he cries, "I am but moving towards my goal; the Maruts are thy brothers, why art thou in

disagreement with them? Rather with them as thy allies & helpers do thy work of thinking in me in a way effective of my perfection (kalpasva sadhuya) and strike me not down in the difficult & arduous struggle of my ascent." The sense of Indra's reply is perfectly clear, "We are brothers, O Agastya, sons of the same Immortal Being; we are friends & comrades, we have fought together the great Aryan battle against the fiends & giants & Titans, the battle of the soul struggling towards immortality; but now you regard us as too little for you & seek to shoot beyond us. We have seen how you are no longer willing to give the offering of your mind & its activities to us as of old, asmabhyam id, you are directing them elsewhere. This cannot be. You must not become the adashush & cease from the sacrifice decreed. Make ready the altar of the body & mind; kindle the fire of the divine force upon it in front of you, let Agni stand as your purohita. This is the way decreed; in the sacrifice to the right devatas & not otherwise the soul of man awakens out of this death into that immortality. Seek not to stand apart from me, take my aid & let us two together extend thy increasing sacrifice to its last fulfilment and culmination. Through mind fulfilled, go beyond mind to Brahman." Agastya, taught by experience, sees his error; he accepts the law of the sacrifice. "Yea," he cries, "I seek widened being, thou among the lords of being art the chief master; thou art master to give or deny; I seek infinite joy & love, thou among the masters of love & joy art its most potent & liberal disposer. Come then into agreement with the Maruts & create the harmony of my thoughts and take thy joy of my activities according to the law of the ideal of Truth of things, exalting mind into supermind." The hymn throws a flood of light on the persistent tales of the Purana & Itihasa in which Indra appears as the enemy of the Yogin, fearing to be overpassed, seeking to keep him by any means from conquering Swar and becoming too mighty for Indra himself. It is the Powers of mind that seek to preserve their activity in the human being, & do not wish him, stilling these activities, to pass into the silent Brahman. In the Vedic ideal Indra does not need to be an enemy, he is the best friend of the seeker, because the ideal of the Vedic Rishi is fulfilment & not cessation; but still a time comes when the average Vedic Yogin seeks to shoot by a short cut beyond, to dispense with tapasya & sacrifice & leap straight to the heights where all things are still. He is in danger of using the wrong means, following the wrong ideal. It is such a moment in his soul experience that Agastya records; the attempt, the resistance of Indra, the strife, the salutary failure, the perception of failure, the reconciliation, submission & recovered harmony." (14: 20-23)

The Yajna – The Sacrifice

"(10) A symbolic system of external sacrifice in which every movement is carefully designed & coordinated to signify the subjective facts of the internal Yajna, aids the spiritual aspirant by moulding his material sheath into harmony with his internal life & by mastering his external surroundings so that there too the conditions & forces may be all favourable to his growth.

(11) The Yajna has two parts, mantra & tantra – subjective & objective; in the outer sacrifice the mantra is the Vedic hymn and the tantra the oblation; in the inner the mantra is the meditation or the sacred formula, the tantra the putting forth of the power generated by mantra to bring about some successful spiritual, intellectual, vital or mental activity of which the gods have their share."

(14: 35)

The Mantra and the Tantra

"(12) The mantra consists of gayatra, brahma and arka, the formulation of thought into rhythmic speech to bring about a spiritual force or result, the filling of the soul (brahma) with the idea & name of the god of the mantra, the use of the mantra for effectuation of the external object or the activity desired.

(13) The tantra is composed of neshtra, savanam, potra & hotra, the intensifying of the vasu or material (internal or external) so as to prepare it for activity, the production of it in a usable form, the purification of it from all defects & the offering of it to the god or for action." (14: 35-36)

The Veda

"(14) The Veda proper is karmakanda, not jnanakanda; its aim is not moksha, but divine fulfilment in this life & the next. Therefore the Vedic Rishis accepted plenty & fullness of physical, vital & mental being, power & joy as the pratistha or foundation of immortality & did not reject it as an obstacle to salvation.*" (14: 36)

* It is supposed that in the Kaliyuga this is no longer possible, or possible only by direct self-surrender to the Supreme Deity. Therefore the complexity of the Vedic system has been removed from the domain of our religious practice and in its place there has been increasingly substituted the worship of the Supreme Deity through Love.

The Great Gods and Man Are He

"(15) The world being one in all its parts every being in it contains the universe in himself. Especially do the great gods contain all the others & their activities in themselves, so that Agni, Varuna, Indra, all of them are in reality one sole-existent deity in many forms. Man too is He, but he has to fulfil himself here as man, yet divine (that being his vrata & dharma) through the puissant means provided for him [by] the Veda." (14: 36)

The Ideal Knowledge (Truth) and Its Reception by Various Faculties of Human Mind

"The vijnana or mahat is superior to reasoning. It sees and knows, hears and knows, remembers & knows by the ideal principles of drishti, sruti and smriti; it does not reason and know. Or withdrawing into the Mahan Atma, it is what it exercises itself upon and therefore knows – as it were, by conscious identity; for that is the nature of the Mahan Atma to be everything separately and collectively & know it as an object of his Knowledge and yet as himself. Always vijnana knows things in the whole & therefore in the part, in the mass & therefore in the particular. But when ideal knowledge, vijnana, looks out on the phenomenal world in its separate details, it then acquires an ambiguous nature. So long as it is not assailed by mind, it is still the pure buddhi and free from liability to errors. The pure buddhi may assign its reasons, but it knows first & reasons afterwards, – to explain, not to justify. Assailed by mind, the ideal buddhi ceases to be pure, ceases to be ideal, becomes sensational, emotional, is obliged to found itself on data, ends not in knowledge but in opinion and is obliged to hold doubt with one hand even while it tries to grasp certainty by the other. For it is the nature of mind to be shackled & frightened by its data. It looks at things as entirely outside itself, separate from itself and it approaches them one by one, groups them & thus arrives at knowledge by synthesis; or if [it] looks at things in the mass, it has to appreciate them vaguely and then take its parts and qualities one by one, arriving at knowledge by a process of analysis. But it cannot be sure that the knowledge it acquires, is pure truth; it can never be safe against mixture of truth & error, against one-sided knowledge which leads to serious misconception, against its own sensations, passions, prejudices and false associations. Such truth as it gets can only be correct even so far as it goes, if all the essential data have been collected and scrupulously weighed without any false weights or any unconscious or semi-conscious interference with the balance. A difficult undertaking! So we can form reliable conclusions, – and then too always with some reserve of doubt, – about the past & the present. Of the future the mind can know nothing except in eternally fixed movements, for it has no data. We try to read the future from the past & present and make the most colossal blunders. The practical man of action who follows there his will, his intuition & his instinct, is far more likely to be correct than the scientific reasoner. Moreover, the mind has to rely for its data on the outer senses or on its own inner sensations & perceptions & it can never be sure that these are informing it correctly or are, even, in their nature anything but lying instruments. Therefore we say we know the objective world on the strength of a perpetual hypothesis. The subjective world we know only as in a dream, sure only of our own inner movements & the little we can learn from them about others, but there too sure only of this objective world & end always in conflict of transitory opinions, a doubt, a perhaps. Yet sure knowledge, indubitable Truth, the Vedic thinkers have held, is not only possible to mankind, but is the goal of our journey."

(14: 42-44)

The Trinity of Satyam Ritam Brihat – The Vedic Expression of the Ideal Knowledge

"The Veda uses to express this pure Truth & ideal knowledge another word, equivalent in meaning to mahat, – the word brihat and couples with it two other significant expressions, satyam & ritam. This trinity of satyam ritam brihat – Sacchidananda objectivised – is the Mahan Atma. Satyam is Truth, the principle of infinite & divine Being, Sat objectivised to Knowledge as the Truth of things self-manifested; Ritam is Law, the motion of things thought out, the principle of divine self-aware energy, Chit-shakti objectivised to knowledge as the Truth of things self-arranged; Brihat is full content & fullness,

satisfaction, Nature, the principle of divine Bliss objectivised to knowledge as the Truth of things contented with its own manifestation in law of being & law of action. For, as the Vedanta tells us, there is no lasting satisfaction in the little, in the unillumined or half-illumined things of mind & sense, satisfaction there is only in the large, the self-true & self-existent. Nalpe sukham asti bhumaiva sukham. Bhuma, brihat, mahat, that is God. It is Ananda therefore that insists on largeness & constitutes the mahat or brihat.… The characteristic

of ideal knowledge is first that it is direct in its approach, secondly, that it is self-evident in its revelation, swayamprakasha, thirdly, that it is unerring fact of being, sat, satyam in its substance. Moreover, it is always perfectly satisfied & divinely pleasurable; it is atmarati & atmastha, confines itself to itself & does not reach out beyond itself to grasp at error or grope within itself to stumble over ignorance. It is, too, perfectly effective whether for knowledge, speech or action, satyakarma, satyapratijna, satyavadi." (14: 45-46)

Maho Arnas

"The man who rising beyond the state of the manu, manishi or thinker which men are now, becomes the kavi or direct seer, containing what he sees, – he who draws the manomaya purusha up into the vijnanamaya, – is in all things "true". Truth is his characteristic, his law of being, the stamp that God has put upon him. But even for the manishi ideal Truth has its bounties. For from thence come the intuitions of the poet, the thinker, the artist, scientist, man of action, merchant, craftsman, labourer each in his sphere, the seed of the great thoughts, discoveries, faiths that help the world and save our human

works & destinies from decay & dissolution. But in utilising these messages from our higher selves for the world, in giving them a form or a practical tendency, we use our intellects, feelings or imaginations and alter to their moulds or colour with their pigments the Truth. That alloy seems to be needed to make this gold from the mines above run current among men. This then is Maho Arnas. The psychological conceptions of our remote forefathers concerning it have so long been alien to our thought & experience that they may be a little difficult to follow & more difficult to accept mentally. But we

must understand & grasp them in their fullness if we have any desire to know the meaning of the Veda. For they are the very centre & keystone of Vedic psychology. Maho Arnas, the Great Ocean, is the stream of our being which at once divides & connects the human in us from the divine, & to cross over from the human to the divine, from this small & divided finite to that one, great & infinite, from this death to that immortality, leaving Diti for Aditi, alpam for bhuma, martyam for amritam is the great preoccupation & final aim of Veda & Vedanta." (14: 46-47)

Maho Arnas and the Action of Saraswati

"Saraswati is able to give impulsion to Truth and awaken to right thinking because she has access to the Maho Arnas, the great ocean. On that level of consciousness, we are usually it must be remembered asleep, sushupta. The chetana or waking consciousness has no access; it lies behind our active consciousness, is, aswemight say, superconscious, for us, asleep. Saraswati brings it forward into active consciousness by means of the ketu or perceptive intelligence, that essential movement of mind which accepts & realises whatever is presented to it. To focus this ketu, this essential perception on the higher truth by drawing it away from the haphazard disorder of sensory data is the

great aim of Yogic meditation. Saraswati by fixing essential perception on the satyam ritam brihat above makes ideal knowledge active and is able to inform it with all those plentiful movements of mind which she, "dhiyavasu, vajebhir vajinivati", has prepared for the service of the Master of the sacrifice. She is able to govern all the movements of understanding without exception in their thousand diverse movements & give them the single impression of truth and right thinking – visva dhiyo vi rajati. A governed & ordered activity of soul and mind, led by the Truth-illuminated intellect, is the aim of the sacrifice which Madhuchchhanda son of Viswamitra is offering to the Gods." (14: 47)

The Aswins

"The master word of the address to the Aswins is the verb chanasyatam, take your delight. The Aswins, as I understand them, are the masters of strength, youth, joy, swiftness, pleasure, rapture, the pride and glory of existence, and may almost be described as the twin gods of youth and joy. All the epithets applied to them here support this view. They are dravatpani subhaspati, the swift-footed masters of weal, of happiness and good fortune; they are purubhuja, much enjoying; their office is to take and give delight, chanasyatam."

(14: 48)

The Mantra

"The extreme importance of the mantra, the inspired & potent word in the old Vedic religion is known nor has it diminished in later Hinduism. The mantra in Yoga is only effective when it has settled into the mind, is *asina*, has taken its seat there and become spontaneous; it is then that divine power enters into, takes possession of it and the mantra itself becomes one with the god of the mantra and does his works in the soul and body. This, as every Yogin knows, is one of the fundamental ideas not only in the Rajayogic practice but in almost all paths of spiritual discipline." (14: 49)

The True Veda

"Madhuchchhandas prepares for himself & the people who do sacrifice to Heaven, devayantah. The Soma-streams he speaks of are evidently no intoxicating vegetable juices; he calls them ayavah, life-forces; & elsewhere amritam, nectar of immortality; somasah, wine-draughts of bliss & internal well being. It is the clear Yogic idea of the amritam, the divine nectar which flows into the system at a certain stage of Yogic practice & gives pure health, pure strength & pure physical joy to the body as a basis for a pure mental & spiritual vigour and activity.

We have therefore as a result of a long and careful examination the clear conviction that certainly in this poem of Madhuchchhanda, probably in others of his hymns, perhaps in all we have an invocation to subjective Nature powers, a symbolic sacrifice, a spiritual, moral & subjective effort & purpose. And if many other suktas in this & other Mandalas confirm the evidence of this third hymn of the Rigveda, shall we not say that here we have the true Veda as the Rishis understood it and that this was the reason why all the ancient thinkers looked on the hymns with so deep-seated a reverence that even after they came to be used merely as ceremonial liturgies at a material sacrifice, even

after the Buddha impatiently flung them aside, the writer of the Gita had to look beyond them & Shankara respectfully put them on the shelf of neglect as useless for spiritual purposes, even after they have ceased to be used and almost to be read, the most spiritual nation on the face of the earth still tenaciously, by a sort of divine instinct, clings to them as its supreme Scriptures & refers back all its spirituality and higher knowledge to the Vedas? Let us proceed and see whether this is not the truest as well as the noblest reading of the riddle – the real root of God's purpose in maintaining this our ancient faith and millennial tradition." (14: 52-53)

Prajnana and Vijnana and Spiritual Protection of Varuna, Mitra and Aryama

"Prajnana is that knowledge which is aware of, knows & works upon the objects placed before it. Vijnana is the knowledge which comprehends & knows thoroughly in itself all objects of knowledge. The one is the highest faculty of mind, the other is in mind the door to and beyond it the nature of the direct supra-intellectual knowledge, the Ritam & Brihat of the Veda. It is because Varuna, Mitra & Aryama protect the human being with the perfect knowledge of that through which he has to pass, his path, his dangers, his foes, that their protégé, however fiercely & by whatever powers assailed, cannot be crushed. At once, it begins to become clear that the protection in that case must, in all probability, be a spiritual protection against spiritual dangers & spiritual foes."

The Veda

"Since our earliest ages the Veda has been, in the invincible tradition of our race, the bedrock of all our creeds; in this our goddess of veiled and ancient speech we have always persisted in seeing the fruitful mother of all our lndian spirituality. For it is nothing but the simple truth, evident whenever we look below the surface & beyond the details, that every creed, sect, school of philosophy which has had any roots in our Indian temperament or any vitality of survival in our Indian surroundings has been in its secret nature, if not in its open features, a child of the eternal Vedic inspiration. All the outbursts of religious life that have helped to maintain or renew through the course of several millenniums the vitality of our race, the eternal richness and fruitfulness of our ancient culture, the fineness and profound sincerity of our undying spiritual attainment and endeavour, were derived, if we trace them to their remote sources, from the word or the substance of the Veda. All our religious innovators, restorers, systematisers, wittingly or unwittingly, of good will or against their grain, have been stirred to their task by some vibration that reached them from those far-off ages. Our Darshana, Tantra and Purana, our Shaivism, Shaktism and Vaishnavism, our orthodoxy, heresy and heterodoxy, even when they have been themost perfect misunderstandings of each other, have always been imperfect understandings of one Vedic truth. Shankara clasped the head of Vedic truth, Ramanuja embraced its heart; but both the great disputants were dazzled by their adoration of the body of one veiled deity. Our greatest modern minds are mere tributaries of the old Rishis. This very Shankara who seems to us a giant, had only a fragment of their knowledge. Buddha wandered away on a bypath of their universal kingdom. In our own day Ramakrishna lived in his being and concretised in his talk, Vivekananda threw out into brilliance of many-sided thought and eloquent speech the essence of ancient Veda. The Veda was the beginning of our spiritual knowledge; the Veda will remain its end. These compositions of an unknown antiquity are as the many breasts of the eternal Mother of knowledge from which our succeeding ages have all been fed.

Yet, of these our mighty origins, how much do we really understand? The four Vedas, written in a language which has ceased to be intelligible to us, couched in a vocabulary which, by its resemblance to classical Sanscrit as much as by its difference, offers an unequalled vantage-ground no less for natural misunderstanding than for the deliberate ingenuities of the scholar, using for their expression of deep religious and psychological truths a scheme of terms and symbols of which the key has long been withdrawn from us, remain to us even now a sacred but a sealed volume. Imperfectly understanding their secret even in our more ancient epochs, we have allowed them, as the current of time carried us farther away from our beginnings, to fall into a sacred neglect and almost into a revered oblivion." (14: 80-81)

The Labours of the European Scholarship on the Veda

"The advent and labours of European scholarship have rescued these divine hymns from a long secrecy and neglect, but have thrown no trustworthy illumination on their secret. Rather, if Indians hardly understand the Vedas at all, the Europeans have systematised a radical misunderstanding of them. Their materialistic interpretation, now dominant in cultivated minds, translated into our modern tongues, taught in our universities, diffused unquestioningly by pen and tongue, has been more fatal to Vedic truth than our reverential ignorance. For, passed through a mentality at once modern and alien, these ancient writings present themselves to us in a strange and disillusioning garb, no longer obscure, indeed, to our fancy, but to our understanding crude, shallow and barbarous. They appear to us as the work, incoherent in utterance, arbitrary in fancy & void of intellectual content, of early savages, – savages with a singularly warped and insincere mind and a gaudy and incompetent imagination. In reality, these strange trappings are a modern masquerade. The scholars of Europe have constructed for themselves by a study from outside of degenerate humanity at the point of lapsing back into the animal, a fanciful psychology of prehistoric humanity; they have read into this psychology the most ingenious Alexandrian conceits possible to the richly stored and rapidly creative modern scholastic imagination, and this compound they have presented to us as the ascertained meaning of the Veda. They base their version on the inchoate sciences, so-styled, but not so admitted by serious scientists, of Comparative Philology, Comparative Mythology and Archaeology, – branches of conjectural learning which may well be the obscure dawn of a great and illuminative knowledge, but, as yet and in themselves, are so inchoate, so imperfect, so devoid of sure fundamental laws that they can be no more authoritative to future enquiry than the early gropings of Paracelsus and his contemporaries to the modern chemical analyst. And if they are not to be authoritative to future enquiry, neither can they be binding on the living seeker after knowledge. Anyone of Indian birth who wishes to occupy his life or his leisure with Vedic enquiry as it is at present conducted, may enjoy the pleasures of an interesting and liberal branch of speculative research, in which he will find ample sport for his imagination and a delightful satisfaction and freedom for the most extravagant gambols of his ingenuity; but more serious results need not be expected from his labour. After the ingenious toils of Roth & Max Muller, as after the erudite diligence of Yaska & Sayana, the Vedic mantras remain for us what they have been for some thousands of years, a darkness of lost light and a sealed mystery." (14: 81-82)

In Modern Times, the Indian Spirituality's Need of Some Ancient Retreat Has Been Fulfilled by the Upanishads Rather than by the Vedas

"Driven from its ancient reverence for the mystic Veda, Indian spirituality under the stress of that modern scientific materialism which takes the savage for its basis and for its culmination the perfectly-equipped human ant or bee, felt the need of some ancient retreat in which it could cherish a profounder knowledge and a more delicate ideal, some anchor by which it could still fix itself, even in this invading flood, to its immemorial past. It found what it sought in the Upanishads. For the Europeans, our modern authorities without whose sanction we cannot trust ourselves to believe anything, know anything

or so much as initiate a fruitful experiment, have admitted the subtlety, depth and sublimity of the Upanishads. Therefore we feel ourselves safe in honouring the Vedanta, even if we have to renounce the Veda. Moreover, we have here the comfort of being able to assert truthfully that Indian & European authorities agree. The Upanishads, accepted by Schopenhauer, have been explained by Shankara; they have shaped the Particularism of Ramanuja and influenced the transcendentalism of Emerson. Great philosophies have been born of them, which, as Europeans have noted with an admiring or patronising wonder and Indians with a sort of obsequious pride, are on a level or almost

on a level with the metaphysical ideas of Kant and Hegel! Apart, even, from these baser concessions of the subjugated Indian mind, it has been with a feeling of sincere relief and consolation that truly spiritual Indians, distressed by the clamorous pressure of Occidental scepticism, have found in the Upanishads a rock of refuge on which they can await securely the inevitable subsidence of these devastating waters. They find here an authority of which even European rationalism has been compelled to speak with some respect and a light which even this wild Western wind has been unable to extinguish."

(14: 82-83)

"If the Vedas are dark to us except in their outer ceremonial, the Upanishads are clear to us only in their central ideas and larger suggestions.

But how then can writings so obscure or at any rate so imperfectly understood have exercised over the thought of millenniums the vast and pervasive influence of which we know, so pervasive that all positive Indian thought, even Buddhism, can be described as Vedic in origin and shaping spirit when not Vedic or even when anti-Vedic in its garb and formed character? Thought has other means of survival and reproduction than its ordinary overt and physical instruments. After it has been deprived of propagation by speech and writing, even after it has disappeared out of the conscious mentality, it can return and recover itself not only in the individual, – that is common enough, – but, by a very similar act of memory, in the race. The workings of our psychology are as yet ill understood and we do not know precisely by what means or forces the subconscious operations of mentality are conducted; but some of the processes used by the great Universal in His more secret works are becoming apparent. Physical heredity is certainly one of them. It is true that thought is not inherited; but types of mentality and mental tendencies are, apparently, handed down with the physical plasm, and out of a persistent type of mentality there is always a possibility of the emergence from age to age of a recurrent type of thought. The Vedic mental type was fixed in the Indian race at an early period of its formation and throughout all external variations has never really changed. There is, therefore, in the Indian mind a predisposition to the recovery of the fundamental Vedic ideas; those directions of mentality which are most natural to the Vedic mental type, easily recur and a slight suggestion is all that is needed to set thought spinning in the old grooves.

But the physical inheritance is not sufficient in itself, nor is it even the only subconscious instrument in the persistence of human and national mentality. As psychology progresses, I think it will be more and more clearly recognised that just as men live in one physical atmosphere and are affected in their physical conditions by its state, currents and contents and by the physical condition of others near to them, so also and even to a greater extent we live in one mental atmosphere and are affected in our mental condition and activities by its state, current and contents and by the mental condition and activities of others similarly affected in our near vicinity. The dynamic action of the mental atmosphere is evident enough in the psychology of crowds, in the rapidity of development of great thought-movements & general tendencies of corporate action and in their contemporaneous efflorescence in widely divided countries. These phenomena have given rise to a vague idea of thought-waves resembling the waves of electricity in the physical parts of Nature. But if, instead of confining ourselves to these superficial and striking phenomena, we go deeper

down into the normal and obscurer action, we shall find in addition to the dynamic movements a constant static condition and pressure of the mental atmosphere which varies but seems hardly to change substantially from age to age. For waves and currents presuppose a constant sea out of which they rise and into which they again sink to rest. It is the pressure of this atmospheric sea that more permanently determines the constant mentality of a continent or a nation. Into it, after all revolutions and dynamic activities, humanity tends to sink back with whatever riches it has gained and often long periods are necessary for their absorption and assimilation. The mind-atmosphere has its needs and its conditions; it alters into its own image whatever is new and foreign and assimilates even when it seems to be assimilated; it rejects everything that would too radically disintegrate its enduring composition. It is at once infinitely yielding & plastic and infinitely persistent in its general character. It casts essential Buddhism out of India and replaces it by a huge phantasmagorical complex Hinduised Buddhism; it constantly purges mysticism out of Europe and replaces essential Christianity with its sublimely tender and delicate Oriental psychology by a strenuous, external, dogmatic, materialistic and practical creed. Individual men and even men in the mass are ready enough to change under a comparatively slight impulsion; it is the compelling pressure of the mental atmosphere which prevents them from changing too radically so that when we think we have effected a revolution, we find that we have only effected an external readjustment or new dress of an old reality. The soul of things in us tends to remain the same. For steadfastness in mobility is the sound law of our being & the condition of healthy survival; Nature keeps us to it on peril of prolonged disorder, deterioration or fatal decay. Into this circumambient mental atmosphere in which we live & by which we draw our mental inspiration and respiration, all the old thoughts have entered, are lying obscure, many of them disaggregated, but none entirely lost. Under the proper conditions they may, they even tend to reconstitute themselves, to reappear.

In India such returns upon our past are more common than in any other country, partly from certain external causes, from the persistence of certain external suggestions, but much more because of the constant practice of Yoga by a large number of typical and central souls who act, overtly or silently, upon the general mass of Indian humanity. The discipline of Yoga renders a man much more sensible to the surrounding mental atmosphere, than in his ordinary state. He becomes consciously aware of it, feels intelligently its impacts, stirs more quickly to its deep buried secrets and obscure suggestions. And as he becomes more quick to receive, so also he becomes more powerful to impart. Practising forms of the old Vedantic disciplines, he recovers also forms of the old Vedantic thought and mentality and, modifying them in expression but not in essence by his own present personality, he pours them out on his surroundings. This has been the secret of the persistent Vedism of Indian thought & spirituality from the earliest ages to those modern movements of which we are ourselves the witnesses or the partakers.

Outward aids have powerfully confirmed the effect of these inward processes, – the reign of Vedic philosophies, the dominance of religions rich with the sap of the old Vedic spirit, the traditional teachings of particular Yogic schools, the theory & practice of the Guru-parampara. It would be as great a mistake to exaggerate as to belittle the importance of any of these aids in themselves. Vedic knowledge was rich, many-sided, elastic, flexible; but the metaphysical philosophies are limited by the very law of their logical structure. They are compelled to select and reject, to systematise only what can be harmonised in a single logical formula; and a logical formula, however wide, is always too narrow to contain God's truth which is universal, complex and many-faceted. The dominance of particular metaphysical systems has tended to preserve fragments of the old Vedic truth, but to disfigure and dissolve it as a whole in its comprehensiveness and catholicity. Moreover, a metaphysical system by itself can never lay powerful hold on a people. We of the present age, who are excessively intellectualised, are apt to attach too great an importance and power to the works of the pure intellect. Systems of pure metaphysics which have no connection with the constant psychological experience and practice of men, are apt to become, like the modern philosophies of Europe and unlike the old Greek philosophies, merely noble pastimes for the intellectual few. They influence the generality of men, but by a slight and indirect process, not profoundly, not puissantly, not permanently. The Indian metaphysical systems have influenced the whole mentality of the Indian people profoundly, puissantly, permanently, not because of their logical subtleties, not even so much by the force & loftiness of their general ideas, but by their close dependence on powerful and widely-practised systems of psychological discipline, – systems, as we say in India, of Yoga.

The influence of religion has been yet more dynamical; it is always indeed more dynamical than the influence of philosophy, because religion appeals to the higher, secret, unattainable parts of our nature through the emotions and sensations which are better developed in humanity than the pure intellect. But even the religious emotions & sensations, though strong, swift and tenacious of a satisfaction once given, yet eventually tire and change; for this reason religions tend after a time to decay and perish. But in India the Vedic religions do not decay and perish; they change and are reborn. And they have this good fortune precisely because of the Vedic element in them. Their ritual, forms, worship, ceremonies, high days are not Vedic; even if they enshrine old Vedic ideas, they do it ignorantly and under a disguise; but all these religions have in their recesses some core of constant psychological practice and discipline, in a word, some form of Yoga by which they live; and always it is, in essence, a Vedic practice and a Vedic discipline. Religions think that they live by their dogmas, their sacred books, their ceremonies, but these are all aids and trappings; they live really by the men who practise them, by their clergy and mystics and much more by their mystics than by their clergy. So long as a

religion has in its fold a sufficient number of souls who can retire within themselves and live there with God, so long it cannot help enduring, even though all the rest of the world is against it; once it loses this core of life, no amount of temporal power and prestige, of attractive ceremonial, of passionate belief & stiff dogmatism or even of wise & supple flexibility, savoir-faire & self-adaptation can save it from its inevitable disappearance. The great Vedic religions in India have always had this nucleus of mystics; they have always been rich in men capable of living with God; but they have not left the preservation of the indispensable nucleus to chance, they have attempted to secure it by a traditional practice and discipline, usually of what is known in India as Bhaktiyoga. By this Yoga and the experience of the saints and Sadhus who have practised it, much more than by Puranic legend and outward devotion, – though these also have helped, – our religious systems have done much to preserve the thoughts and experiences of the early Rishis to their distant posterity.

This vitalising core of philosophy, this saving essence of religion, Yoga, has itself an inner reality and an outer body. It has organised and variously summarised its different parts of experience and various methods of experiment in a great number of schools; and it preserves in all its schools a common fund of essential experience which goes back to the ancient Vedic sources. In these days, when the natural ignorance of Europeans about this characteristic Indian discipline has been successfully acquired as a part of their enlightenment by educated Indians, there is a tendency to identify Yoga with the Rajayogic system of Patanjali, because that alone is known to the European scholar. But Yoga cannot be confined to a single school or a single system. Patanjali's Yogashastra is concerned only with Rajayoga and only with one system of Rajayoga; there are a hundred others of which a few have their written rules, practices or aphorisms, but the rest, among them some of the most ancient and august, like the school of Dattatreya, have been handed down from an early era by the long linked generations of its Guru-parampara. This profuse ramification of Yogic systems, like the inexhaustible fertility of religious sects and orders, is a sign and an unfailing accompaniment of the richness, power and freedom of spiritual life in this country. It is not only an accompaniment, but a necessary condition. If, for instance, Yoga had allowed itself to formalise into the strict tenets and stereotyped methods of a single school, even a sound and great school like Patanjali's, it would long ago have perished or become, like much of our religious observance, a soulless body. The Infinite within us demands an infinite freedom, of various experience, of various self-expression, of various self-realisation. It loves order and arrangement, but will not long brook a confined immobility. It is only the material, the inert that depends for its stability on blind obedience to iron and immutable processes, the stability of inner things rests rather on a regulated, but still free and variable activity. Therefore, whatever in the mental world

formalises too rigidly, is preparing its own decadence; the movement towards rigidity too long persisted in, is usually a sign that the infinite Life is about to withdraw from the body it has been informing. India has not been exempt from the immobilising tendency even in that Yoga which has been its hidden wellspring of life and the secret of its perennial vitality; there has been a disposition to formalise into one school or another and repeat from generation to generation its methods & experiences. But the Indian mental atmosphere tends always, by a return upon that which is most vital in it, to bring out great souls who, like Buddha, like Chaitanya, like Nanak, like Ramdas, like Ramakrishna, belong to no school, owe their knowledge to no spiritual preceptor, but go back to the Source of all within themselves and emerge from it with some perfectly realised truth of the eternal and universal Veda. As their source is universal, so too they tend to cast out their gains universally upon mankind, so far at least as their surroundings & times are able to bear the truth and live, – thus they revivify and preserve the spirituality in our mental environment. Great are the Yogins who, faithful to some long-established school of spiritual discipline, renew perfectly in themselves its perfect results and hand down their sacred gains as in a sealed and jealously guarded vase to the most worthy disciple; but those have a greater effect on the world who break the vase before they depart and pour out its content of life-giving sweetness on the world around them. Here too, as in philosophy, as in religion, the outer & systematised forms have done much to preserve the ancient truth, in its parts, if not in its fullness; they have served the purpose of flasks for keeping a little of the Soma wine of the Veda. But it is to those who have gone back most freely to the inner source that is due the perpetual reflooding of the Indian mind with Vedic truth and its immortal permanence and unfailing reappearance in philosophy, in religious teaching and observance and in personal spiritual experience and discipline.

None of these puissant exterior aids to the permanence of the Veda would have been entirely effective without another, yet more characteristic of our Indian organisation, the guruparampara or unbroken succession of the human vessels of divine knowledge. This Indian institution, ill-understood by the mechanical rationalistic temper of our modern times, is founded upon a perfectly correct appreciation of the essential conditions indispensable for the transmission of a difficult knowledge. All human knowledge consists of three necessary elements, the thing itself which is known, the word or form in which it is expressed and the sense of the word or form which is the link between the thing and its expression. The thing itself, existing always, is always and at any given time capable of being known; the word or form can also be constantly preserved and may, then, always and at any given time yield up its secret; but that secret lies in the right sense to be attached to the symbol and needs for its preservation an intermediary, a vessel, a fourth element. The existence of the thing to be known is not sufficient for knowledge; the existence

of the perfect symbol is not sufficient; we need in addition as a receptacle of its sense the competent knower who is termed technically in the language of our philosophy, the aptajana, the expert and adept. The aptajana transmitting his knowledge to a fit disciple is our Indian guru. To take a simple scientific instance, it has always been true and will always remain true that the mixture of oxygen and hydrogen results in water; the chemical formula expressing the truth, may, having been once settled, remain permanently written; but unless there is also the competent knower who understands the sense of the formula, has submitted it to the test of realisation by experience and is able to hand on his knowledge and his method to his successors, the existence of the formula would not save the knowledge from disappearing for a time from the grasp of humanity. The formula would then come to be regarded only as an incomprehensible superstitious jargon & abracadabra, as the mantras of our religious & Yogic schools are now regarded by many modernised Indians. In the things of the spirit this necessity of the human intermediary is a hundred times more keenly felt than in any material process; for the thing itself is more remote from daily experience, the methods which bring it into the range of intelligent realisation are much more difficult and delicate and the formulas in which it is couched, are necessarily elusive and with difficulty intelligible. Therefore India, supremely sensitive to the importance of spiritual knowledge and experience, unequalled in its instinct for the right spiritual method, has organised the institution of the guruparampara as an essential instrument for the survival of Veda. The truth of Brahman is the thing to be known, the Veda and Vedanta are the word-symbol and formal expression of the Brahman, – shabdam Brahma, the guru is the human receptacle of the knowledge who transmits it to his worthiest disciples. Thus the guruparampara forms the succession of spiritual torchbearers, who, as in the ancient Greek festival, hand on the light of truth from generation to generation so that the sacred knowledge received in the morning of our national daytime may last, even though with diminutions and obscurations, not only into its evening but on through whatever night of time is intended, to the dawn of another golden age of spirituality. Who shall say out of what distant twilight of time the Veda was first revealed to mankind? Who shall say to what pre-cataclysmal undreamed consummation of our present humanity it shall endure? But we Hindus believe it to be an eternal message which God will have preserved by his chosen vessels as the secret thing out of which all human activity dumbly emerges and to which it is destined by a conscious fulfilment to return.

It is this wise and necessary institution of our forefathers to which we owe the preservation of Vedic truth in our midst even after the actual words of the written Vedas have ceased to bear to us their original significance. Without its aid the abstruse and difficult generalisations of metaphysics could not have prolonged their vitality nor so powerfully propagated themselves that even the beggar in the streets and the peasant in his fields are permeated

with some portion of their truth; the living truths of religion could not have maintained so persistent and so puissant a vitality; the schools of Yoga could not have transmitted the essence of their knowledge, methods and experiences from early Vedic times onward into the darkness of our own era. But like all external forms the guruparampara is liable to vicissitudes, to formalisation, to loss of its perfect original virtue. The orthodox formalist supposes that by the mere mechanical act of transmission the unimpaired vitality of the truth is automatically secured. But there are many accidents to which that security is liable. The guru may not always find a perfect disciple; he still imparts his knowledge, but the vessel can only hold according to its capacity: then the truth is obscured, if not permanently, then for one or more generations. There are also more general mishaps incidental to the general law of periodicity & decay which governs many parts of Nature. As the mental & vital atmosphere in which we dwell becomes thickened with obscurations, the general capacity of men diminishes and a time comes when the essential office of the guru is only fulfilled in the exceptions and the name becomes ordinarily prostituted to the mercenary priest or the unworthy physical heir of ancient Masters and knowers who either hands on the formula without any knowledge of its sense or is unable even to preserve the formula itself in its purity, – as if the scientific formula for the mixture of oxygen & hydrogen were to be mumbled faithfully from generation to generation without any slightest knowledge or practice of the actual experiment which constitutes its value. Even when this extreme degeneracy does not happen, the transmission is subject to the play of individuality & the varying tendencies of thought from century to century and under that influence this part of the truth may be overstressed, that deprived of its emphasis, much may be sacrificed as no longer useful to the actual practice of the new generations or too high for its attainment and what is preserved may be manipulated, extended, diverted by the enthusiasms of individual thought and experience. What is thus lost or blurred, may not be recovered or restored to its purity for long ages. Nevertheless the institution always preserves something of its value. Much of the body of the truth tends to survive even the worst vicissitudes, and in the body something must always remain of the spirit; even a formula long unintelligently repeated may, by passing into the possession of an alert & curious mind or an ardent & sincere nature, be a suggestion or a starting-point for the recovery of the old lost experience which it keeps as its secret. Here again, as with the other external aids, we come back to the perennial source of the truth, the experience of the strong souls who passing beyond the school, the formula, the belief, the aid, the letter, go back into themselves for the light, respond to those buried suggestions ever lying in ambush for us in the mental atmosphere from which we draw our inner sustenance, and are strong enough to emerge with something of the ancient truth which gave so ineffable a vastness and profundity to the spiritual life of our forefathers. Behind and beyond all human gurus there dwells within

us all the World-Teacher, the universal jagadguru of whom human teachers are only the masks and nominal representatives. He keeps for us the complete book of the Veda written in our secret being, nihitam guháyám; veiled, but accessible, He awaits our reverential approach and our questioning and, sincerely & constantly questioned, lights the fire of Agni in our hearts and makes Surya to rise upon our darkness." (14: 87-97)

The Importance of the Perfect Truth of the Veda and Its Recovery a Practical Necessity for the Future of the Human Race

"From these considerations there arise two apparently conflicting, but really complementary truths, – first, that in spite of powerful external aids, by the inexorable vicissitudes of Time, we have lost the sense of Veda and do not possess the full sense of Vedanta, secondly, that both these capital losses can, though with difficulty, by the methods of Yoga & the revelatory experience of great souls, be repaired. We possess intellectually the general truths of Vedanta, the transcendental unity of things and the universal unity, ekam adwitíyam Brahma and so'ham asmi, the secret of divine renunciation of the Ascetic and the secret of divine joy of the Vaishnava, with much else that is sovereign, vital, a priceless heritage. We possess many symbolic forms of religious application by which we enter into possession of the eternal truth through the emotions, through the intellect or through active experience in our inner life & outward relations. We possess numerous methods & forms of psychological discipline by which we repeat old profound experience and do even actually possess many apparently lost details of Vedic truth preserved in another form and couched in more modern symbols. All this is much; it has kept us alive through the centuries. But it is only in its totality that the Truth can work its utter miracles. Otherwise, if we live on her broken meats we tend either to lose ourselves in the outer formulae or concentrate dogmatically on fragments & sides of the living truth; when great spirits arise to give us their deep & vast experience, we prove ourselves limited and shallow vessels and are unable to receive more of the truth than is in harmony with our confined intellects and narrow natures; and, if powerful floods of materialism invade us, as in the present European era of humanity, we have not the strength to resist, to hold fast to that which is difficult but enduring; we are overborne, lose our footing and are carried away in the vehement but shallow currents.

Perfection of knowledge is the right condition for perfection of nature and efficiency of life. The perfect truth of the Veda is the fundamental knowledge, the right relations with the Truth of things, on which alone according to our ideas, all other knowledge can receive the true orientation needed by humanity. The recovery of the perfect truth of the Veda is therefore not merely a desideratum for our modern intellectual curiosity, but a practical necessity for the future of the human race. For I believe firmly that the secret concealed in the Veda, when entirely discovered, will be found to formulate perfectly that knowledge and practice of a divine life to which the march of humanity, after long wanderings in the satisfaction of the intellect and senses, must inevitably return and is actually at the present dawn, in the impulses of its vanguard, tending more and more, but vaguely and blindly, to return. If we can set our feet on the path, not vaguely and blindly, but in the full light that streamed so brilliantly and grandiosely on the inner sight of our distant forefathers, our speed will be more rapid and our arrival more triumphant."

(14: 97-98)

The Vedas

"The Vedas are the roots of Indian civilisation and the supreme authority in Indian religion. For three thousand years, by the calculation of European scholars, for a great deal more, in all probability, the faith of this nation, certainly one of the most profound, acute and intellectual in the world, has not left its hold on this cardinal point of belief. Its greatest and most rationalistic minds have never swerved from the national faith. Kapila held to it no less than Shankara. The two great revolted intellects, Buddha and Brihaspati, could not dethrone the Veda or destroy India's spiritual allegiance. India by an inevitable law of her being casts out, sooner or later, everything that is not Vedic. The Dhammapada has become a Scripture for foreign peoples. Brihaspati's strictures are only remembered as a curiosity of our intellectual history. Religious movements & revolutions have come & gone or left their mark but after all and through all the Veda remains to us our Rock of the Ages, our eternal foundation.

Yet the most fundamental and important part of this imperishable Scripture, the actual hymns and mantras of the Sanhitas, has long been a sealed book to the Indian mind, learned or unlearned. The other Vedic books are of minor authority or a secondary formation. The Brahmanas are ritual, grammatical & historical treatises on the traditions & ceremonies of Vedic times whose only value – apart from interesting glimpses of ancient life & Vedantic philosophy – lies in their attempt to fix and to interpret symbolically the ritual of Vedic sacrifice. The Upanishads, mighty as they are, only aspire to bring out, arrange philosophically in the language of later thinking and crown with the supreme name of Brahman the eternal knowledge enshrined in the Vedas. Yet for some two thousand years at least no Indian has really understood the Vedas. Or if they have been understood, if Sayana holds for us their secret, the reverence of the Indian mind for them becomes a baseless superstition and the idea that the modern Indian religions are Vedic in their substance is convicted of egregious error. For the Vedas Sayana gives us are the mythology of the Adityas, Rudras, Maruts, Vasus, – but these gods of the Veda have long ceased to be worshipped, – or they are a collection of ritual & sacrificial hymns, but the ritual is dead & the sacrifices are no longer offered.

Are we then to conclude that the reverence for the Vedas & the belief in the continued authority of the Vedas is really no more than an ancient superstition or a tradition which has survived its truth? Those who know the working of the human mind, will be loth to hasten to that conclusion. Great masses of men, great nations, great civilisations have an instinct in these matters which seldom misleads them. In spite of forgetfulness, through every misstatement, surviving all cessation of precise understanding, something in them still remembers their origin and holds fast to the vital truth of their being. According to the Europeans, there is a historical truth

at the basis of the old persistent tradition, but a historical truth only, a truth of origin, not of present actuality. The Vedas are the early roots of Indian religion, of Indian civilisation; but they have for a long time past ceased to be their present foundation or their intellectual substance. It is rather the Upanishads & the Puranas that are the living Scriptures of mediaeval and modern Hinduism. But if, as we contend, the Upanishads & the Puranas only give us in other language, later symbols, altered forms of thought the same religious truths that we find differently stated in the Rigveda, this shifting of the immediate point of derivation will make no real difference. The waters we drink are the same whether drawn at their clear mountain sources or on their banks in the anchorite's forest or from ghats among the faery temples and fantastic domes of some sacred city. The Hindu's belief remains to him unshaken." (14: 111-13)

The Inevitability of the Revival of Hindu Intellectual Faith in the Totality of the Spiritual Aspects of Hinduism

"..although intellectually we are accustomed in obedience to Western criticism to base ourselves on the Upanishads & Gita and put aside Purana and Veda as mere mythology & mere ritual, yet in practice we live by the religion of the Puranas & Tantras even more profoundly & intimately than we live by & realise the truths of the Upanishads. In heart & soul we still worship Krishna and Kali and believe in the truth of their existence. Nevertheless this divorce between the heart & the intellect, this illicit compromise between faith & reason cannot be enduring. If Purana & Veda cannot be rehabilitated, it is yet possible that our religion driven out of the soul into the intellect may wither away into the dry intellectuality of European philosophy or the dead

formality & lifeless clarity of European Theism. It behoves us therefore to test our faith by a careful examination into the meaning of Purana &Veda and into the foundation of that truth which our intellect seeks to deny [but] our living spiritual experience continues to find in their conceptions. We must discover why it is that while our intellects accept only the truth of Vedanta, our spiritual experiences confirm equally or even more powerfully the truth of Purana. A revival of Hindu intellectual faith in the totality of the spiritual aspects of our religion, whether Vedic, Vedantic, Tantric or Puranic, I believe to be an inevitable movement of the near future." (14: 114)

The Work of Swami Dayananda

"Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaj, preached a monotheistic religion founded on a new interpretation of the sacred hymns. But this important attempt, successful & vigorous in the Panjab, is not likely to command acceptance among the more subtle races of the south & east. It was based like the European rendering on a system of philology, – the Nirukta of Yaska used by the scholastic ingenuity & robust faith of Dayananda to justify conclusions far-reaching & even extravagant, to which it is difficult to assent unless we are offered stronger foundations. Moreover, by rejecting the authority of all later Scriptures and scouting even the Upanishads because they transcend the severity of his monotheistic teaching, Dayananda cut asunder the unity of Hindu religion even more fatally than the Europeans & by the

slenderness of vision & the poverty of spiritual contents, the excessive simplicity of doctrine farther weakened the authority of this version for the Indian intellect. He created a sect & a rendering, but failed to rehabilitate to the educated mind in India the authority of the Vedas. Nevertheless, he put his finger on the real clue, the true principle by which Veda can yet be made to render up its long-guarded secret. A Nirukta, based on a wider knowledge of the Aryan tongues than Dayananda possessed, more scientific than the conjectural philology of the Europeans, is the first condition of this great recovery. The second is a sympathy & flexibility of intelligence capable of accepting passively & moulding itself to the mentality of the men of this remote epoch." (14: 114-15)

Sri Aurobindo's View of the Labours of the European Scholars and His Own Approach

"..for my own part I do not hold myself bound by European research & European theories. My scepticism of nineteenth century results goes farther than is possible to any European scepticism. The Science of comparative religion in Europe seems to me to be based on a blunder. The sun & star theory of comparative mythology with its extravagant scholastic fancies & lawless inferences carries no conviction to my reason. I find in the Aryan & Dravidian tongues, the Aryan and Dravidian races not separate & unconnected families but two branches of a single stock. The legend of the Aryan invasion & settlement in the Panjab in Vedic times is, to me, a philological myth. The naturalistic interpretation of the Vedas I accept only as a transference or adhyaropa of European ideas into the Veda foreign to the mentality of the

Vedic Rishis & Max Muller's discovery of Vedic henotheism as a brilliant & ingenious error. Whatever is sound & indisputable in European ideas & discoveries, I am bound to admit & shall use, but these large generalisations & assumptions ought, I think, no longer to pass current as unchallengeable truth or the final knowledge about the Vedas. My method is rather to make a tabula rasa of all previous theories European or Indian & come back to the actual text of the Veda for enlightenment, the fundamental structure & development of the old Sanscrit tongue for a standard of interpretation and the connection of thought in the hymns for a guide to their meaning. I have arrived as a result at a theory of the Vedic religion, of which this book is intended to give some initial indications." (14: 116)

The Essential Characteristic of the Vedic Outlook on Existence

"The Vedic mind, looking out on the great movement of material forces around it, aware of their regularity, law, universality, saw in them symbols and expressions of a diviner life behind. Everywhere they felt the presence of intelligence, of life, of a soul. But they did not make the common distinction between soul and matter. Matter was to them itself a term and expression of the life and soul they had discovered. It was this peculiarity of thought which constituted the essential characteristic of the Vedic outlook and has stood at the root and basis of all Indian thought and religion then & subsequently."

(14: 119)

The History of the Veda – A Paradoxical Phenomena of Human Experience

"The history of the Veda is one of the most remarkable & paradoxical phenomena of human experience. In the belief of the ancient Indians the three Vedas, books believed to be inspired directly from the source of all Truth, books at any rate of an incalculable antiquity and of a time-honoured sanctity, were believed to be the repositories of a divine knowledge. The man who was a Veda knower, Vedavid, had access to the deepest knowledge about God and existence. He knew the one thing that was eternally true, the one thing thoroughly worth knowing. The right possession of the ancient hymns was not supposed to be possible by a superficial reading, not supposed to result directly even from a mastery of the scholastic aids to a right understanding, – grammar, language, prosody, astronomy, ritual, pronunciation, – but depended finally and essentially on explanation by a fit spiritual teacher who understood the inner sense that was couched in the linguistic forms & figures of the Scriptures. The Veda so understood was held to be the fountain, the bedrock, the master-volume of all true Hinduism; that which accepted not the Veda, was and must be instantly departure from the right path, the true truth. Even when the material & ritualistic sense of the Veda had so much dominated & hidden in men's ideas of it its higher parts that to go beyond it seemed imperative, the reverence for this ancient Scripture remained intact. At the time when the Gita in its modern form was composed, we find this double attitude dominant. There is a strong censure of the formalists, the ritualists, who constantly dispute about the Veda and hold it as a creed that there is no other truth and who apply it only for the acquisition of worldly mastery and enjoyments, but at the same time the great store of spiritual truth in the old sacred writings and their high value are never doubted or depreciated. There is in all the Vedas as much utility to the Brahma-knower as to one who would drink there is utility in a well flooded with water on all its sides. Krishna speaking as God Himself declares "I alone am He who is to be known by all the Vedas; I am He who made Vedanta and who know the Veda." The sanctity and spiritual value of the Vedas could not receive a more solemn seal of confirmation. It is evident also from this last passage that the more modern distinction which grew upon the Hindu mind with the fading of Vedic knowledge, the distinction by which the old Rigveda and Sama and Yajur are put aside as ritualistic writings, possessing a value only for ceremonial of sacrifice, and all search for spiritual knowledge is confined to the Vedanta, was unrecognised & even unknown to the writer of the Gita. To him the Vedas are writings full of spiritual truth; the language of the line Vedaish cha sarvair aham eva vedyo, the significance of the double emphasis in the etymological sense of "knowledge" in Vedavid, "the knower of the book of knowledge" as well as in vedair vedyo are unmistakable. Other means of knowledge even

more powerful than study of the Vedas the Gita recognises; but in its epoch the Veda even as apart from the Upanishads still held its place of honour as the repository of the high and divine knowledge; it still bore upon it the triple seal of the Brahmavidya." (14: 166-67)

How the Veda Ceased to Be the Pivot of the Hindu Religion

"When was this traditional honour first lost or at least tarnished and the ancient Scripture relegated to the inferior position it occupies in the thought of Shankaracharya? I presume there can be little doubt that the chief agent in this work of destruction was the power of Buddhism. The preachings of Gautama and his followers worked against Vedic knowledge by a double process. First, by entirely denying the authority of the Veda, laying a violent stress on its ritualistic character and destroying the general practice of formal sacrifice, it brought the study of the Veda into disrepute as a means of attaining the highest good while at the same time it destroyed the necessity of that study for ritualistic purposes which had hitherto kept alive the old Vedic studies; secondly, in a less direct fashion, by substituting for a time at least the vernacular tongues for the old simple Sanscrit as the more common & popular means of religious propaganda and by giving them a literary position and repute, it made a general return to the old generality of the Vedic studies practically impossible. For the Vedas were written in an ancient form of the literary tongue the real secret of which had already been to a great extent lost even to the learned; such knowledge of it as remained, subsisted with difficulty by means of a laborious memorising and a traditional scholarship, conservative indeed but still slowly diminishing and replacing more & more real knowledge by uncertainty, disputed significance and the continuously increasing ingenuities of the ritualist, the grammarian and the sectarian polemical disputant. When after the fall of the Buddhistic Mauryas, feeble successors of the great Asoka, first under Pushyamitra and his son and afterwards under the Guptas, Hinduism revived, a return to the old forms of the creed and the old Vedic scholarship was no longer possible. The old pre-Buddhistic Sanscrit was, to all appearance, a simple, vigorous, living language understood though not spoken by the more intelligent of the common people just as the literary language of Bengal, the language of Bankim Chandra, is understood by every intelligent Bengali, although in speech more contracted forms and a very different vocabulary are in use. But the new Sanscrit of the revival tended to be more & more a learned, scholarly, polished and rhetorical tongue, certainly one of the most smooth, stately & grandiose ever used by human lips, but needing a special & difficult education to understand its grammar, its rhetoric, its rolling compounds and its long flowing sentences. The archaic language of the Vedas ceased to be the common study even of the learned and was only mastered, one is constrained to believe with less & less efficiency, by a small number of scholars. An education in which it took seven years to master the grammar of the language, became inevitably the grave of all true Vedic knowledge. Veda ceased to be the pivot of the Hindu religion, and its place was taken by the only religious compositions which were modern enough in language and simple enough in style to be popular, the Puranas. Moreover, the conception of Veda popularised

by Buddhism, a Scripture of ritual and of animal sacrifice, persisted in the popular mind even after the decline of Buddhism and the revival of great philosophies ostensibly based on Vedic authority. It was under the dominance of this ritualistic conception that Sayana wrote his great commentary which has ever since been to the Indian Pundit the one decisive authority on the sense of Veda. The four Vedas have definitely taken a subordinate place as karmakanda, books of ritual; and to the Upanishads alone, in spite of occasional appeals to the text of the earlier Scriptures, is reserved that aspect of spiritual knowledge & teaching which alone justifies the application to any human composition of the great name of Veda." (14: 167-69)

The Paradox of the Survival of the Traditional Belief in the Sanctity of the Veda

"But in spite of this great downfall the ancient tradition, the ancient sanctity survived. The people knew not what Veda might be; but the old idea remained fixed that Veda is always the fountain of Hinduism, the standard of orthodoxy, the repository of a sacred knowledge; not even the loftiest philosopher or the most ritualistic scholar could divest himself entirely of this deeply ingrained & instinctive conception. To complete the degradation of Veda, to consummate the paradox of its history, a new element had to appear, a new form of intelligence undominated by the ancient tradition & the mediaeval method to take possession of Vedic interpretation. European scholarship which regards human civilisation as a recent progression starting yesterday with the Fiji islander and ending today with Haeckel and Rockefeller, conceiving ancient culture as necessarily primitive culture and primitive culture as necessarily half-savage culture, has turned the light of its Comparative Philology & Comparative Mythology on the Veda. The result we all know. Not only all vestige of sanctity, but all pretension to any kind of spiritual knowledge or experience disappears from the Veda. The old Rishis are revealed to us as a race of ignorant and lusty barbarians who drank & enjoyed and fought, gathered riches & procreated children, sacrificed and praised the Powers of Nature as if they were powerful men & women, and had no higher hope or idea. The only idea they had of religion beyond an occasional sense of sin and a perpetual preoccupation with a ritual barbarously encumbered with a mass of meaningless ceremonial details, was a mythology composed of the phenomena of dawn, night, rain, sunshine and harvest and the facts of astronomy converted into a wildly confused & incoherent mass of allegorical images and personifications. Nor, with the European interpretation, can we be proud of our early forefathers as poets and singers. The versification of the Vedic hymns is indeed noble and melodious, – though the incorrect method of writing them established by the old Indian scholars, often conceals their harmonious construction, – but no other praise can be given. The Nibelungenlied, the Icelandic Sagas, the Kalewala, the Homeric poems, were written in the dawn of civilisation by semi-barbarous races, by poets not superior in culture to the Vedic Rishis; yet though their poetical value varies, the nations that possess them, need not be ashamed of their ancient heritage. The same cannot be said of the Vedic poems presented to us by European scholarship. Never surely was there even among savages such a mass of tawdry, glittering, confused & purposeless imagery; never such an inane & useless burden of epithets; never such slipshod & incompetent writing; never such a strange & almost insane incoherence of thought & style; never such a bald poverty of substance. The attempt of patriotic Indian scholars to make something respectable out of the Veda, is futile. If the modern interpretation

stands, the Vedas are no doubt of high interest & value to the philologist, the anthropologist & the historian; but poetically and spiritually they are null and worthless. Its reputation for spiritual knowledge & deep religious wealth, is the most imposing & baseless hoax that has ever been worked upon the imagination of a whole people throughout many millenniums." (14: 169-70)

"Is this, then, the last word about the Veda? Or, and this is the idea I write to suggest, is it not rather the culmination of a long increasing & ever progressing error? The theory this book is written to enunciate & support is simply this, that our forefathers of early Vedantic times understood the Veda, to which they were after all much nearer than ourselves, far better than Sayana, far better than Roth & Max Muller, that they were, to a great extent, in possession of the real truth about the Veda, that that truth was indeed a deep spiritual truth, karmakanda as well as jnanakanda of the Veda contains an ancient knowledge, a profound, complex & well-ordered psychology & philosophy, strange indeed to our modern conception, expressed indeed in language still stranger & remoter from our modern use of language, but not therefore either untrue or unintelligible, and that this knowledge is the real foundation of our later religious developments, & Veda, not only by historical continuity, but in real truth & substance is the parent & bedrock of all later Hinduism, of Vedanta, Sankhya, Nyaya, Yoga, of Vaishnavism & Shaivism & Shaktism, of Tantra & Purana, even, in a remoter fashion, of Buddhism & the later unorthodox religions. From this quarry all have hewn their materials or from this far-off source drawn unknowingly their waters; from some hidden seed in the Veda they have burgeoned into their wealth of branchings & foliage. The ritualism of Sayana is an error based on a false preconception popularised by the Buddhists & strengthened by the writers of the Darshanas, – on the theory that the karma of the Veda was only an outward ritual & ceremony; the naturalism of the modern scholars is an error based on a false preconception encouraged by the previous misconceptions of Sayana, – on the theory of the Vedas [as] not only an ancient but a primitive document, the production of semi-barbarians. The Vedantic writers of the Upanishads had alone the real key to the secret of the Vedas; not indeed that they possessed the full knowledge of a dialect even then too ancient to be well understood, but they had the knowledge of the Vedic Rishis, possessed their psychology, & many of their general ideas, even many of their particular terms & symbols. That key, less & less available to their successors owing to the difficulty of the knowledge itself & of the language in which it was couched and to the immense growth of outward ritualism, was finally lost to the schools in the great debacle of Vedism induced by the intellectual revolutions of the centuries which immediately preceded the Christian era." (14: 170-71)

"My suggestion is that the gods of the Rigveda were indeed, as the European scholars have seen, masters of the Nature-Powers, but not, as they erroneously theorise, either exclusively or even mainly masters of the visible & physical Nature-Powers. They presided over and in their nature & movement were also & more predominantly mental Nature-Powers, vital Nature-Powers, even supra-mental Nature-Powers. The religion of the Vedic Rishis I suppose on this hypothesis to have been a sort of practical & concrete Brahmavada founded on the three principles of complex existence, isotheism of the gods and parallelism of their functions on all the planes of that complex existence; the secret of their ideas, language & ritual I suppose to rest in an elaborate habit of symbolism & double meaning which tends to phrase & typify all mental phenomena in physical and concrete figures. While the European scholars suppose the Rishis to have been simple-minded barbarians capable only of a gross & obvious personification of forces, only of a confused, barbarous and primitive system of astronomical allegories and animistic metaphors, I suppose them to have been men of daring and observant minds, using a bold and vigorous if sometimes fanciful system of images to express an elaborate practical psychology and self-observation in which what we moderns regard as abstract experiences & ideas were rather perceived with the vividness of physical experiences & images & so expressed in the picturesque terms of a great primitive philosophy. Their outward sacrifice & ritual I suppose to have been partly the symbols & partly the means of material expression for certain psychological processes, the first foundations of our Hindu system of Yoga, by which they believed themselves able to attain inward & outward mastery, knowledge, joy and extended life & being.

This theory, although it starts really from a return to the point of view of the early Vedantic writers, appears at the present day doubly revolutionary, because it denies the two established systems of interpretation which have conquered and still hold the modern mind and determine for it the sense of the Veda. Sayana is for the orthodox Indian the decisive and infallible authority; for the heterodox or educated the opinions and apparent discoveries of European philologists are the one infallible and irrefutable pramána. Is it then really true that either from the point of view of orthodox Hindu faith or on the basis of a rational interpretation based on sound philology and criticism the door is closed to any radically new interpretation and the true sense of Veda has, in the main, been settled for us & to all future generations? If so, if Sayana's authority is unquestionable, or if the system of the Europeans is sound and unimprovable in its essential features, then there is no room for the new theory of which I have briefly indicated the nature. The Veda then remains nothing more than a system of sacrificial ritual & mythology of the most primitive crudeness. I hope to show briefly that there is no such finality; the door is wide open, the field is still free for a better understanding and a deeper knowledge." (14: 171-73)

"The modern world cares little for orthodox Hindu opinion, for the opinion of its Pandits or for the ancient authority of its received guides; putting these things aside as the heavy and now useless baggage of the dead past it moves on free and unhampered to its objective, seeking ever fresh vistas of undiscovered knowledge. But a Hindu writer, still holding the faith of his ancestors, owes a certain debt to the immediate past, not so much as to hamper his free enquiry and outlook upon truth, but enough to demand from him a certain respect for whatever in it is really respectworthy and some attempt to satisfy his coreligionists that in opening out a fresh outlook on ancient knowledge he is not uprooting truths that are essential to their common religion. Nothing in those truths compels us to accept the plenary authority of Sayana or the ritualistic interpretation of the Vedas. The hymns of the Veda are, for us, inspired truth and therefore infallible; it follows that the only interpretative authority on them which can claim also to be infallible is one which itself works by the faculty of divine inspiration. The only works for which the ordinary tradition claims this equal authority are the Brahmanas, Aranyakas & Upanishads. Even among these authorities, if we accept them as all and equally inspired and authoritative, – and on this point Hindus are not in entire agreement, – the Brahmanas which deal with the ceremonial detail of Vedic sacrifice, are authoritative for the ritual only; for the inner sense the Upanishads are the fit authority. Sayana can lay claim to no such sanctity for his opinions. He is no ancient Rishi, nor even an inspired religious teacher, but a grammarian and scholar writing in the twelfth century after Christ several millenniums subsequent to the Rishis to whom Veda was revealed. By his virtues & defects as a scholar his interpretation must be judged. His erudition is vast, his industry colossal; he has so occupied the field that everyone who approaches the Veda must pass to it under his shadow; his commentary is a mine of knowledge about Vedic Sanscrit and full of useful hints for the interpretation of Veda. But there the tale of his merits ends. Other qualities are needed for a successful Vedic commentary which in Sayana are conspicuous by their absence; and his defects as a critic are almost as colossal as his industry and erudition. He is not a disinterested mind seeking impartially the truth of Veda but a professor of the ritualistic school of interpretation intent upon reading the traditional ceremonial sense into the sacred hymns; even so he is totally wanting in consistency, coherence and settled method. Not only is he frequently uncertain of himself, halts and qualifies his interpretation with an alternative or not having the full courage of his ritualistic rendering introduces it as a mere possibility, – these would be meritorious failings, – but he wavers in a much more extraordinary fashion, forcing the ritualistic sense of a word or passage where it cannot possibly hold, abandoning it unaccountably where it can well be sustained. The Vedas are masterpieces of flawless literary style and logical

connection. But Sayana, like many great scholars, is guiltless of literary taste and has not the least sense of what is or is not possible to a good writer. His interpretation of any given term is seldom consistent even in similar passages of different hymns, but he will go yet farther and give two entirely different renderings to the same word though occurring in successive riks & in an obviously connected strain of thought. The rhythm and balance of a sentence is nothing to him, he will destroy it ruthlessly in order to get over a difficulty of interpretation; he will disturb the arrangement of a sentence sometimes in the most impossible manner, connecting absolutely disconnected words, breaking up inseparable connections, inserting a second and alien sentence in between the head & tail of the first, and creating a barbarous complexity & confusion where the symbolic movement of the Rishis, unequalled in its golden ease, lucidity and straightforwardness, demands an equal lucidity & straightforwardness in the commentator. A certain rough coherence of thought he attempts to keep, but his rendering makes oftenest a clumsy sense & not unoften no ascertainable sense at all; while he has no scruple in breaking up the coherence entirely in favour of his ritualism. These are, after all, faults common in a scholastic mentality, but even were they less prominent & persistent in him than I have found them to be, they liberate us from all necessity for an exaggerated deference to his authority as an interpreter. Nor, indeed, were Sayana an ideal commentator, could he possibly be relied upon to give us the true sense of Veda; for the language of these hymns, whatever the exact date of their Rishis, goes back to an immense antiquity and long before Sayana the right sense of many Vedic words and the right clue to many Vedic allusions and symbols were lost to the scholars of India. Much indeed survived in tradition, but more had been lost or disfigured, and the two master clues, intellectual & spiritual, on which we can yet rely for the recovery of these losses, a sound philology and the renewal in ourselves of the experiences which form the subject of the Vedic hymns, were the one entirely wanting, the other grown more & more inaccessible with time not only to the Pandit but to the philosopher." (14: 173-75)

"But the ritualistic interpretation of the Rigveda does not stand on the authority of Sayana alone. It is justified by Shankaracharya's rigid division of karmakanda and jnanakanda and by a long tradition dating back to the propaganda of Buddha which found in the Vedic hymns a great system of ceremonial or effective sacrifice and little or nothing more. Even the Brahmanas in their great mass & minuteness seem to bear unwavering testimony to the pure ritualism of the Veda. But the Brahmanas are in their nature rubrics of directions to the priests for the right performance of the outward Vedic sacrifice, – that system of symbolic & effective offerings to the gods of Soma-wine, clarified butter or consecrated animals in which the complex religion of the Veda embodied itself for material worship, – rubrics accompanied by speculative explanations of old ill-understood details & the popular myths & traditions that had sprung up from obscure allusions in the hymns. Whatever we may think of the Brahmanas, they merely affirm the side of outward ritualism which had grown in a huge & cumbrous mass round the first simple rites of the Vedic Rishis; they do not exclude the existence of deeper meanings & higher purposes in the ancient Scripture. Not only so, but they practically affirm them by including in the Aranyakas compositions of a wholly different spirit & purpose, the Upanishads, compositions professedly intended to bring out the spiritual gist and drift of the earlier Veda. It is clear therefore that to the knowledge or belief of the men of those times the Vedas had a double aspect, an aspect of outward and effective ritual, believed also to be symbolical, – for the Brahmanas are continually striving to find a mystic symbolism in the most obvious details of the sacrifice, – and an aspect of highest & divine truth hidden behind these symbols. The Upanishads themselves have always been known as Vedanta. This word is nowadays often used & spoken of as if it meant the end of Veda, in the sense that here historically the religious development commenced in the Rigveda culminated; but obviously it means the culmination of Veda in a very different sense, the ultimate and highest knowledge & fulfilment towards which the practices & strivings of the Vedic Rishis mounted, extricated from the voluminous mass of the Vedic poems and presented according to the inner realisation of great Rishis like Yajnavalkya & Janaka in a more modern style and language. It is used much in the sense in which Madhuchchhandas, son of Viswamitra, says of Indra, Athá te antamánám vidyáma sumatínáam, "Then may we know something of thy ultimate right thinkings," meaning obviously not the latest, but the supreme truths, the ultimate realisations. Undoubtedly, this was what the authors of the Upanishads themselves saw in their work, statements of supreme truth of Veda, truth therefore contained in the ancient mantras. In this belief they appeal always to Vedic authority and quote the language of Veda either to justify their own statements of thought or to express that thought itself in the old solemn and sacred language. "And with regard to this there are spoken these Riks."" (14: 175-77)

The Veda to the Vedantic Knowers

"From the Brahmanas as well as from the Upanishads it is evident that the Veda came down to the men of those days in a double aspect, as the heart of a great body of effective ritual, but also as the repository of a deep and sacred knowledge, Veda and not merely worship. This idea of a philosophic or theosophic purport in the hymns was not created by the early Hindu mystics, it was inherited by them. Their attitude to the ritual even when it was performed mechanically without the possession of this knowledge was far from hostile; but as ritual, they held it to be inferior in force and value, avaram karma, a lower kind of works and not the highest good; only when performed with possession of the knowledge could it lead to its ultimate results, to Vedanta. "By that," says the Chhandogya Upanishad, "both perform karma, both he

who knows this so and he who knows not. Yet the Ignorance and the Knowledge are different things and only what one does with the knowledge, – with faith, with the Upanishad, – that has the greater potency." And in the closing section of its second chapter, a passage which sounds merely like ritualistic jargon when one has not the secret of Vedic symbolism but when that secret has once been revealed to us becomes full of meaning and interest, the Upanishad starts by saying "The Brahmavadins say, The morning offering to the Vasus, the afternoon offering to the Rudras and the evening offering to the Adityas and all the gods, – where then is the world of the Yajamana? (that is to say, what is the spiritual efficacy beyond this material life of the three different sacrifices & why, to what purpose, is the first offered to the Vasus,

the second to the Rudras, the third to the Adityas?) He who knows this not, how should he perform (effectively), therefore knowing let him perform." There was at any rate the tradition that these things, the sacrifice, the god of the sacrifice, the world or future state of the sacrificer had a deep significance and were not mere ritual arranged superstitiously for material ends. But this deeper significance, this inner Vedic knowledge was difficult and esoteric, not known easily in its profundity and subtlety even by the majority of the Brahmavadins themselves; hence the searching, the mutual questionings, the record of famous discussions that occupy so much space in the Upanishads – discussions which, we shall see, are not intellectual debates but comparisons of illuminated knowledge & spiritual experience." (14: 179-80)

The Failure of the European Scholars to Realise the True Nature of Our Sacred Literature in General and the Upanishads in Particular

"If this tradition – let us call it mystic or esoteric for want of a less abused word – was already formed at the time of the Brahmanas and Upanishads, when and how did it originally arise? Two possibilities present themselves. The tradition may have grown up gradually in the period between the Vedic hymns and the exegetical writings or else the esoteric sense may have already existed in the Veda itself and descended in a stream of tradition to the later mystics, developing, modifying itself, substituting new terms for old – as is the way of traditions. The former is, practically, the European theory. We are told that this spiritual revolution, this movement away from ritual Nature worship to Brahmavada, begun in the seed in the later Vedic hymns, is found in a more developed state in the Upanishads & culminated in Buddha. In these writings and in the Brahmanas some record can be found of the speculations by which the development was managed. If it prove to be so, if these ancient writings are really the result of progressive intellectual speculation departing from crude & imperfect beginnings of philosophic thought, the European theory justifies itself to the reason and can no longer easily be disputed. But is this the true character of the Upanishads? It seems to me that in most of their dealings with our religions and our philosophical literature European scholars have erred by imposing their own familiar ideas and the limits of their own mentality on the history of an alien mentality and an alien development. Nowhere has this error been more evident than in the failure to realise the true nature of the Upanishads. In India we have never developed, but only affirmed thought by philosophical speculation, because we have never attached to the mere intellectual idea the amazingly exaggerated value which Europe has attached to it, but regarded it only as a test of the logical value to be attached to particular intellectual statements of truth. That is not truth to us which is merely well & justly thought out & can be justified by ratiocinative argument; only that is truth which has been lived & seen in the inner experience. We meditate not to get ideas, but in order to experience, to realise. When we speak of the Jnani, the knower, we do not mean a competent and logical thinker full of wise or of brilliant ideas, but a soul which has seen and lived & spoken in himself with the living truth. Ratiocination is freely used by the later philosophers, but only for the justification against opponents of the ideas already formed by their own meditation or the meditation of others, Rishis, gurus, ancient Vedantins; it is not itself a sufficient means towards the discovery of truth, but at best a help. The ideas of our great thinkers are not mere intellectual statements or even happy or great intuitions; they are based upon spiritual experiences formalised by the intellect into a philosophy. Shankara's passionate advocacy of the idea of Maya as an explanation of life was not merely the ardour of a great metaphysician enamoured of a beautiful

idea or a perfect theory of life, but the passion of a man with a deep & vast spiritual experience which he believed to be the sole means of human salvation. Therefore philosophy in India, instead of tending as in Europe to ignore or combat religion, has always been itself deeply religious. In Europe Buddha and Shankara would have become the heads of metaphysical schools & ranked with Kant or Hegel or Nietzsche* as strong intellectual influences; in India they became, inevitably, the founders of great religious sects, immense moral & spiritual forces; – inevitably because Europe has made thought its highest & noblest aim, while India seeks not after thought but soul-vision and inner experience and even in the realm of ideas believes that they can & ought to be seen & lived inwardly rather than merely thought and allowed indirectly to influence outward action. This has been the mentality of our race for ages. Was the mentality of our Vedic forefathers entirely different from our own? Was it, as Western scholars seem to insist, a European mentality, the mentality of incursive Western savages, (it is Sergi's estimate of the Aryans), changed afterwards by the contact with the cultured & reflective Dravidians into something new and strange, rationality changing to mysticism, materialism to a metaphysical spirituality? If so, the change had already been effected when the Upanishads were written. We speak of the discussions in the Upanishads; but in all truth the twelve Upanishads contain not a single genuine discussion. Only once in that not inconsiderable mass of literature, is there something of the nature of logical argument brought to the support of a philosophical truth. The nature of debate or logical reasoning is absent from the mentality of the Upanishadic thinkers. The grand question they always asked each other was not "What hast thou thought out in this matter?" or "What are thy reasonings & conclusions?" but "What dost thou know? What hast thou seen in thyself?" The Vedantic like the Vedic Rishi is a drashta & srota, not a manota, a kavi, not a manishi. There is question, there is answer; but solely for the comparison of inner knowledge & experience; never for ratiocinative argument, for disputation, for the battles of the logician. Always, knowledge, spiritual vision, experience are what is demanded; and often a questioner is turned back because he is not yet prepared in soul to realise the knowledge of the master. For all knowledge is within us and needs only to be awakened by the fit touch which opens the eyes of the soul or by the powerful revealing word. We find throughout the Vedic era always the same method, always the same theory of knowledge; they persist indeed in India to the present day and later habits of metaphysical debate unknown to the Vedic Brahmavadins have never been able to dethrone them from their primaeval supremacy. Let a man present never so finely reasoned a system of metaphysical philosophy, few will turn to

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* Nietzsche stands perhaps on a different plane because he had something of the concrete visualisation & passion for his ideas & experiences which mark off the religious from the merely philosophical mind.

hear, none leave his labour to receive, but let a man say as in the old Vedantic times "I have experienced, my soul has seen", & hundreds in India will yet leave all to share in this new light of the eternal Truth.

The distinction is of the greatest importance; for not only does it show that the substance of our religious mentality and discipline goes back to the prehistoric antiquity of the Upanishads, but it justifies the hypothesis that the Vedantins of the Upanishads themselves held it as an inheritance from their Vedic forefathers." (14: 180-83)

The Phenomenon of an Unquestioning Deference to the Opinions of Western Scholars in India

"The triumphant & rapid march of the physical sciences in Europe has so mastered our intellects and dazzled our eyes, that we are apt to extend the unquestioned finality which we are accustomed to attach to the discoveries & theories of modern Science, to all the results of European research & intellectual activity. Even in Europe itself, we should remember, there is no such implicit acceptance. The theories of today are there continually being combated and overthrown by the theories of tomorrow. Outside the range of the physical sciences & even in some portions of that splendid domain the whole of European knowledge is felt more & more to be a mass of uncertain results ephemeral in their superstructure, shifting in their very foundations. For the Europeans have that valuable gift of intellectual restlessness which, while it often stands in the way of man's holding on to abiding truth, helps him to emerge swiftly out of momentarily triumphant error. In India on the

other hand we have fallen during the last few centuries into a fixed habit of unquestioning deference to authority. We used to hold it, & some still hold it almost an impiety to question Shankara's interpretation of the Upanishads, or Sayana's interpretation of the Veda, and now that we are being torn out of this bondage, we fall into yet more absurd error by according, if not an equal reverence, yet an almost equal sense of finality to the opinions of Roth & Max Muller. We are ready to accept all European theories, the theory of an "Aryan" colonisation of a Dravidian India, the theory of the Nature-worship and henotheism of the Vedic Rishis, the theory of the Upanishads as a speculative revolt against Vedic materialism & ritualism, as if these hazardous speculations were on a par in authority & certainty with the law of gravitation and the theory of evolution. We are most of us unaware that in Europe it is

disputed and very reasonably disputed whether, for instance, any such entity as an Aryan race ever existed. The travail of dispute & uncertainty in which the questions of Vedic scholarship & ethnology are enveloped is hidden from us; only the over-confident statement of doubtful discoveries and ephemeral theories reaches our knowledge.

We should realise that these so-called Sciences of Comparative Philology and Comparative Mythology on which the European interpretation of Veda is founded are not true Sciences at all. They are, rather, if Sciences at all, then pseudo-Sciences. All the European mental sciences, not excluding Psychology, though that is now proceeding within certain narrow limits by a sounder method, belong to a doubtful class of branches of research which have absorbed the outward method of Science, without its inward spirit." (14: 186-87)

The Falsity of the Western Scholars' Findings on Aryan Invasion and Aryan Culture

"We find the philological discovery of the Aryan invasion supported by the conclusions of ethnologists like Sir Herbert Risley, who make an ethnological map of India coloured in with all shades of mixed raciality, Dravidian, Scytho-Dravidian, Mongolo-Dravidian, Scytho-Aryan. More modern schools of ethnology assert positively on the strength of [the] same laws & the same tests that there is but one homogeneous Indo-Afghan race inhabiting the whole peninsula from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. What are we to think of a science of which the tests are so pliant and the primary results so irreconcilable? Or how, if the more modern theory is correct, if a distinct homogeneous race inhabits India, can we fail to doubt strongly as a

philological myth the whole story of the Aryan invasion & colonisation of Northern India, which has been so long one of the most successful & loudly proclaimed results of the new philology? As a result perhaps of these later conclusions we find a tendency even in philological scholarship towards the rise of new theories which dispute the whole legend of an Aryan invasion, assert an indigenous or even a southern origin for the peoples of the Vedic times and suppose Aryanism to have been a cult and not a racial distinction. These new theories destroy all fixed confidence in the old without themselves revealing any surer foundations for their own guesses; both start from conjectural philology & end in an imaginatively conjectural nation-building or

culture-building. It is exceedingly doubtful whether the Vedic terms Aryan & un Aryan at all refer to racial or cultural differences; they may have an entirely different and wholly religious & spiritual significance & refer to the good and evil powers & mortals influenced by them. If this prove to be the truth, and the close contiguity & probable historical connection between the Vedic Indians & the Zoroastrian Persians gives it a great likelihood, then the whole elaborate edifice built up by the scholars of an Aryan invasion and an Aryan culture begins to totter & seek the ground, there to lie in the dust amid the wrecks of other once confident beliefs and triumphant errors." (14: 188-89)

The Fanciful and Baseless European Science of Comparative Mythology

"The substance of modern philological discovery about the Vedas consists, first, in the picture of an Aryan civilisation introduced by northern invaders and, secondly, in the interpretation of the Vedic religion as a worship of Nature-powers & Vedic myths as allegorical legends of sun & moon & star & the visible phenomena of Nature. The latter generalisation rests partly on new philological renderings of Vedic words, partly on the Science of Comparative Mythology. The method of this "Science" can be judged from one or two examples. The Greek story of the demigod Heracles is supposed to be an evident sun myth. The two scientific proofs offered for this discovery are first that Hercules performed twelve labours and the solar year is divided

into twelve months and, secondly, that Hercules burnt himself on a pyre on Mount Oeta and the sun also sets in a glory of flame behind the mountains. Such proofs seem hardly substantial enough for so strong a conclusion. By the same reasoning one could prove the emperor Napoleon a sun myth, because he was beaten & shorn of his glory by the forces of winter and because his brilliant career set in the western ocean and he passed there a long night of captivity. With the same light confidence the siege of Troy is turned by the scholars into a sun myth because the name of the Greek Helena, sister of the two Greek Aswins, Castor & Pollux, is philologically identical with the Vedic Sarama and that of her abductor Paris is not so very different from the Vedic

Pani. It may be noted that in the Vedic story Sarama is not the sister of the Aswins and is not abducted by the Panis and that there is no other resemblance between the Vedic legend & the Greek tradition. So by more recent speculation even Yudhishthira and his brothers and the famous dog of the Mahabharat are raised into the skies & vanish in a starry apotheosis, – one knows not well upon what grounds except that sometimes the Dog Star rages in heaven. It is evident that these combinations are merely an ingenious play of fancy & prove absolutely nothing. Hercules may be the Sun but it is not proved. Helen & Paris may be Sarama & one of the Panis, but it is not proved. Yudhishthira & his brothers may be an astronomical myth, but it is not proved." (14: 189-90)

The Utter Falsity of the Western Theories on the North-South Racial Division in India

"My contention is that anarya, dasa and dasyu do not for a moment refer to the Dravidian races, – I am, indeed, disposed to doubt whether there was ever any such entity in India as a separate Aryan or a separate Dravidian race, – but always to Vritra, Vala & the Panis and other, primarily non-human, opponents of the gods and their worshippers. The new interpretations given to Vedic words & riks seem to me sometimes right & well grounded, often arbitrary & unfounded, but always conjectural. The whole European theory & European interpretation of the Vedas may be [not] unjustly described as a huge conjectural & uncertain generalisation built on an inadequate & shifting mass of conjectural particulars." (14: 191)

The Science of Speech and the Other Western Sciences

"In that pregnant period of European knowledge when physical Science, turned suddenly towards its full strength, was preparing to open for itself the new views, new paths and new instruments of discovery which have led to the astonishing results of the nineteenth century, an opportunity was offered to the European mind for a similar mastery of sciences other than physical. The Sanscrit language was discovered. It was at first imagined & expected that this discovery would lead to results as important as those which flowed from the discovery of Greek literature by Western Europe after the fall of Constantinople. But these expectations have remained unfulfilled. European knowledge has followed other paths and the seed of the nineteenth century has been Newton's apple and not Sir William Jones' Shakuntala or the first edition of the Vedas. The discovery of

Sanscrit has, it is true, had a considerable effect on the so-called Sciences of Comparative Philology, Comparative Mythology, Science of Religion, ethnology and sociology; but these branches of knowledge are not sciences, they are systematised speculations. Their particular conclusions often change from generation to generation and none of them, not even the most certain, have the same cast of certainty as a scientific generalisation in the domain of physical inquiry. The law of gravitation is a permanent truth of science; the law that all myths start from the sun, the law of Solarisation, if I may so call it, is an ingenious error which survives at all only because it pleases the poetic imagination. So great has been the failure that the possibility, even, of a Science of speech has

been too readily scouted. But this is an excessive deduction, the reaction of disappointed expectation has exaggerated the meaning of the failure. To say that there can be no Science of speech is to say that the movements of the mind are not governed by intelligible processes, but rather by an incalculable caprice – a supposition that cannot be admitted. Intelligible processes there are for all natural action, and therefore also for mind & its instrument speech; the difficulty is to discover their precise lines of action. We need sufficient material and the right material; we need also the right way of approaching the material. Once that is discovered, the processes also will be discovered & the Science of speech founded." (14: 523-24)

The Uniqueness of Sanskrit for a Satisfactory Approach to the Problem of the Origins of Human Speech

"Sanscrit, I hold, is the key to the problem. In most other languages, we have a secondary or tertiary speech formation; we have to go beyond the actual form before us & reconstruct its parent tongue, to find again perhaps that the parent tongue has to be subjected to a similar reconstructive process. We have not sufficient materials for such a task; no instruments we possess can go deep enough. But Sanscrit, by a peculiar fidelity to its origins, presents us with a true primary form of speech, in which the vocabulary indeed is late,

– a new structure of word flesh & tissue, – but the base of the structure is primitive, reveals the roots of its being and betrays the principles of its formation. The failure of the comparative philologists to make use of their opportunity has been signal; it has even obscured the issue by creating a false system; but it is no more fatal or final than the failure of Aristotle to discover the law of gravitation, although he must have seen many fruits falling from many boughs. Sanscrit still stands there offering to us its secret." (14: 524)

The First Mistake of the Philologists and the Basis and the Scope of Sri Aurobindo's Approach

"The fundamental mistake of the philologists is contained in their famous original formula, *pitā*, *patēr*, *pater*, *Vater*, *father*, and the hasty conclusions they have drawn from it which have prevented a deeper scrutiny of the roots of language. An identity of words between various languages can never in itself lead to any fundamental discovery. It does not even prove that the languages thus agreeing are of a single stock. In many of the most common domestic terms Tamil and Sanscrit agree, but they are still held to be of different families. All therefore that is proved is not the identity of these tongues but their contact – so close a contact of one with the rest that a number of the commonest ideas & relations came in all to be expressed by terms borrowed from one. Nothing more is proved; we have not advanced a single step towards a science

of languages. Even the classification of tongues as Aryan, Dravidian, Semitic cannot be called scientific; it is empirical and depends upon identities which may not be fundamental. We must go deeper. European philology has started from word-identities and identities of final word-meaning. I propose to start from root-identities and identities of original & derivative root-meaning and even from sound-identities and identities of fundamental and applicatory sound meaning. It is, I believe, possible in this way to establish the unity of the Aryan tongues and some at least of the laws governing the birth & development of Aryan speech. My inquiry does not carry me farther. I do not pretend as yet to inquire into the laws of speech itself, but only to establish from data, some facts of Aryan speech which may eventually help in solving the wider problem." (14: 524-25)

The Second Mistake of the Philologists

"In another respect, also, the philologists seem to me to have misunderstood the conditions of their inquiry. They have been not rigid enough and yet too rigid. They have been too rigid in not allowing for the flexibility of mind movements. They have sought for the same invariable sequence which we observe in the physical world and admitted a law only where such sequence seemed to occur. The laws of physical formation follow a fixed line and their variations even are after a fixed fashion. But with the growth of life in matter there comes a growing element of freedom, of a more elusive principle & a more elastic variation; for this reason Science has found life more difficult to fathom & analyse than matter and her triumphs here have been far less notable than in the pure physical domain. Mind brings with [it] a still freer play, a still

more elusive principle and flexible application. A general law always obtains, but the application, the particular processes vary more subtly and are more numerous. Science, not taking into account this law of increasing freedom, has in the domain of mind accomplished little or nothing. When we deal with the laws of speech, we must remember this flexibility of all mind-processes. We must ourselves keep a flexible mind to follow it and an open eye for all variations. It is for regularity in irregularity that we must always be on the watch, not for a fixed, a cast-iron regularity. On the other hand the few laws which Philology has admitted, have been, by a sort of false compensation for their original narrowness, used with too free and even lax a play of fancy. Often indeed instead of working as a law, the philological principle presents itself as an ingenious means for inventing word-identities." (14: 525-26)

The Error of the Rigid Philological Divorce of the Dravidian and Aryan Languages

"I have disregarded as another error of imperfect inquiry the rigid philological divorce of the Dravidian & Aryan languages. Whether there be a separate Dravidian stock or no, it is to me a certainty that Tamil owes not only many of its most common terms, but whole families of words to the original Aryan speech. Its evidences cannot be neglected in such an inquiry as I have undertaken, for they are of the greatest importance. Indeed the theory worked out by me, took its rise originally not from any analysis of the Sanscrit word-system, but from an observation of the relations of Tamil in its non-concretised element to the Greek, Latin & Northern Indian languages. At the same time it is on an analysis of the Sanscrit word-system that I have chiefly relied. I have omitted from that system most of its Vedic elements. The meanings of Vedic words are often extremely disputable & it would be unsafe to rely whether on

the significances fixed by the European scholars or on those fixed centuries ago by Sayana or even by Yaska. It is better, & quite sufficient for the immediate purpose, to rely upon the classical tongue with its undoubted & well-ascertained meanings.

These are the lines upon which I have conducted my enquiry. The full proof of the results arrived at depends upon a larger labour of minute classification both of root families and word families in all the greater Aryan tongues, – a labour which is already in process, but not yet complete. What I have written in this book, will, I hope, be judged sufficient for a secure foundation. If it does no more, it may possibly lead to a deeper & freer approach to the problem of the origin of speech, which, once undertaken in the right spirit and with an eye for the more subtle clues, cannot fail to lead to a discovery of the first importance to human thought & knowledge." (14: 526)

Difficulties and Uncertainties in Proceeding on the Basis of Surface Similarities of the Words and the Unsuitability of any Modern Language for Proceeding Deeper

"In an ordinary language which has not preserved the evidence of its origins, we are compelled to start with the full-formed word as our first & earliest document. We then find words existing in very small, unconnected families, little individualistic groups which seem to have started life on their own account without any observable growth from a common stock with other words that have, physically, a race-resemblance to them. We can all see that *doceo*, *doctrina*, *doctor*, *docilis*, *documen*, *doctus*, *docte* are one family. They acknowledge their kinship openly. From this acknowledged kinship we can draw certain important conclusions; especially the law of development from a common root & certain fixed forms by the accretion of which to the root this

development was effected. It is a beginning, but it does not carry us beyond the surface-strata of our subject of enquiry. For when we look farther, we are confronted with a serious difficulty. We find a certain number of words which, in their formation, would seem to be connected like the family we have glanced at above though not so strictly connected: – *doleo*, I grieve, *dolenter*, painfully, *dolor*, grief are obviously so interconnected; *dolus*, fraud, *dolosus*, deceitful, *dolose*, deceitfully, are so interconnected; *dolo*, I hew, cut or break, *dolabra*, an axe, are so interconnected. But between these three families we have in Latin itself no proof of any connection. In languages which have so far worn away their original phonetic moulds that entirely unconnected words wear the same or a

similar dress, this want of connection would not lead to any farther conclusion beyond our mere inability to establish a connection. But Latin is a language which has preserved its phonetic moulds to a considerable extent. If then these three little families are entirely unconnected, then any hope of establishing an effective Science of Speech-Origins or even a Science of Aryan Speech-Origins must be abandoned. For by the supposition to which we would then be inevitably led, there must have been three original roots, *dol*, to grieve, *dol*, to cut or split, and *dol*, to deceive, unconnected with each other in origin. How then did their significances come to be attached to them? By chance? by caprice? by arbitrary choice? by some obscure psychological law we cannot trace? We can no longer hope to decide." (14: 527-28)

Sri Aurobindo's Hypothesis and Sanskrit as the Only Language Suitable for Applying It for Testing

"The hypothesis I shall start from, – and every attempt to connect the superficially unconnected without which there can be no science, must start with hypotheses, – is that there can be no such want of connection, that *dol*, to grieve, *dol*, to split and *dol*, to deceive must have been & are one root and not three and the three different significances now attached to them, have been developed not by caprice, chance or arbitrary selection, but have a natural connection and were developed in intellect by an intelligible psychological movement behind intellect from an original common meaning or mind-impression created in the Aryan mind by the sound *dol*. For I hold it to be obvious that speech must have started from what we in India would call the guna of sound, some natural property of particular sounds to create under given conditions a particular kind of impression on the mind which, constantly

associated with that sound, became the basis of a number of special intellectual significances, called by us the meaning of words, much more variable, much less fixed than the basic mind-significance. Afterwards the intellect playing consciously with the sound, by association, by analogy, by figure, by metaphor & simile, by transference, by a number of means, may carry the intellectual significance far outside the bounds of the original mental impression. Still, if we have some evidence, clues may be found & then the vagrant word may be traced back to its parent mind-impression. For this reason we have to catch a primitive language when it is young or else find one which even in its maturity is more faithful than others to its primitive mould and preserves on its face much of its ancient history. Such a language is Sanscrit; it is, in fact, almost the only language which at all answers to our need." (14: 528)

"But a sound like *dol* is not & cannot be a pure, primary & isolated sound. It has congeners, at least in form, brothers, cousins, more distant relatives. Does this kinship in form involve an original kinship in mind-impression and therefore in history of significance? If the theory of guna is correct, there must be some such kinship. Turning from Latin to the more fruitful field, themore copious evidence of Sanscrit, we find this root *dol* in the form *dal* (*a* sounded like the English *u* in *dull* and represented both in Greek & Latin by either *a*, *u* or *o*) meaning also to split, burst, & then to bloom, open. We find *dala*, a fragment; a blade, petal or leaf; we find *dalapa*, a weapon, that which splits, just as we have *dolabra*, an axe, from *dolo*; *dalmi*, Indra's thunderbolt, also the god Shiva; *dalika*, a piece of wood, that which is split. We find also *dalbha*, meaning fraud, dishonesty, sin, and we have this established that in Sanscrit also, the root *dal* meant to deceive as well as to split. We find also the reason why *dal* came to mean to deceive; for the word *dala* means not only the blade of a weapon, but the sheath of a weapon. In other words, *dal* must have borne the significance, to cover or to contain. We find from other Sanscrit instances that the idea of covering or hiding led naturally in the Aryan mind to the idea of fraud or deceit, as in *chad*, to cover, *chadma*, a disguise, pretext, fraud, dishonesty, trick. But how are the two significances, cover & split, connected? That they are connected, is established as a strong probability at least by the word, *cha*, cutting, dividing, a fragment or part, which in its feminine form *chā* means covering, concealing and the neuter *cham*, a house, that which covers. If they are connected, the idea of cutting must have led to that of cutting off, separating, screening and thence to the significance we find in *chadman*, covering, disguise, fraud. There is no distinct significance of pain attached to the root *dal* either in Sanscrit or Greek; but we do find that the word *dalita* in Sanscritmeant crushed, oppressed, trampled, and, more curiously & significantly, we find *dālanam* in the sense of toothache. It is easy to see how the idea of cutting, tearing, rending must have led easily to the sense first of a special kind of pain and then by detrition of force to that of pain generally. But we find more. We find not only *dal*, we find other roots kindred in sound, having something of the same history. For instance, *dambh* means to kill, destroy, strike down; but *dambha*, the noun proper to this verb, means deceit, fraud, trickery, sin, ostentation, pride (we see how starting from the idea of fraudulent intention or hypocrisy we come to the very different idea of ostentation without fraud or pride, – again by detrition of special force); we find *dambha* & *dambholi* meaning like *dalmi* Indra's thunderbolt, and *dambha* means also, like *dalmi*, the god Shiva. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that to the Aryan mind *dambha* & *dalmi* were words so closely akin that they carried easily the same impressions to the mind and the same significance to the intellect. But what is then common to these two roots? It is the sound *da*, which must, therefore, by my theory have had a guna or mind-impression which naturally adhered in common to the two roots *dal* and *dambh*." (14: 528-30)

The Second Step in Sri Aurobindo's Hypothesis and Its Support in the Sanscrit Language

"It is the second step of my theory, therefore, that not only must the three *dal* families be one family, not only must one root-sound have had originally one root-meaning, but that all kindred root-sounds must also be of one family and have proceeded from the simple sound, consisting of consonant & vowel, which is common to all of them, and the guna or natural mind-impression belonging to that simple sound must have been the basis not only of the intellectual significances common to its progeny, but of those even which vary most from each other. *Da* is the simple root-sound, – the primary root; *dal*, *dambh*, *dabh*, *daś*, *dah*, *dakṣ*, *daṁś*, *das*, *daṁs*, *dagh*, *daṅgh*, *daṇḍ*, *dad*, *dadh*, *dan*, *dam*, *day*, roots which we find or can trace in Sanscrit, are its derivative,

secondary or tertiary root-sounds. The simple sound contains in itself the seed significance which it imparts to its descendants, whether sons, grandsons or remote progeny. We have thus immensely widened our basis and approached much nearer to a scientific consideration of language.

Let us see whether the hypothesis finds any farther support in the facts of the Sanscrit language. We take the senses to split, burst open, cut, tear, crush, destroy, cheat, belonging to *dal*; we find the same senses or kindred senses such as hurting, as in *dolor* and *doleo*, not only in *dambh*, but in *dabh*, to injure, hurt, deceive, cheat and its Vedic derivatives *dabdhi*, hurt, & *dabha*, fraud, – if these be the right senses; & in *dabhra*, little, small, from the sense evidently of cutting, a

slice, or small part. We find them in *dam*, to crush, afflict, & so to subdue, overpower, tame, conquer, restrain and its derivatives, *dama*, *damaka*, *damathu*, *damana*, *damin*, *damya*, *dānta*; the last containing a lengthening of the vowel, to which we shall have occasion to return. We also find in *dama*, *damathu*, *damana*, *damya* the kindred sense of punishment, & we find in the Vedic sense of *dama*, the significance house, as in Latin *domus*, Greek δόμος, δῶμα (again we notice the lengthening of the vowel), from which at once we return to the idea of covering we had to infer in *dal*. All these are evidently kindred roots belonging to the labial variety of the *da* family, formed that is to say by accretion of the sounds *p*, *ph*, *b*, *bh*, *m* (labio-nasal) or any combination of which they are the base to the simple sound." (14: 530-31)

The Third Step in Sri Aurobindo's Hypothesis

"But we have not yet finished with this sound *da*. For just as the derived sound *dal* had its congeners, sounds kindred to it in form, so has the simple sound *da* other simple sounds by its side which are kindred to it in form and ought therefore to be congeners. These sounds are *dā*, *di*, *dī*, *du*, *dū*, *dṛ* & *dṝ*□The vowel sounds *e* and *o*, *ai* and *au* are in Sanscrit merely modifications of *i* and *u*, so that these seven roots with the lost root *da* form the whole original family of simple sounds depending on and having for their common base & element, the consonant sound *d*. If these roots are found to be one

original family, we have gained another step and come yet nearer to the foundations of speech. My third step in the hypothesis is to accept this supposition and to lay down the rule that all simple roots formed in sound by the accretion of a vowel to the consonant sound *d* are one family having the guna of that sound as their seed of meaning, just as they themselves are separately the seed of meaning to their own descendants. We get therefore a seed-sound in addition to the primitive root-sound and their descendants the secondary & tertiary root-sounds." (14: 533-34)

An Inevitable Conclusion from the Evidence Presented by Sri Aurobindo

"We have completed our survey of this great *D* clan of Aryan words, so far as the Sanscrit language holds them & introduces them to us in its classical form. No one, I think, can regard this evidence without being driven inevitably to the conclusion that here we have no chance aggregation of words, no language formed by chance or arbitrarily, but a physico-mental growth as organic, as clearly related in its members, species, families, subfamilies as any particular species of physical fauna & flora. The words claim each other for

kinsmen at every step. Not a single family, not one small group fails to bring forwards its claim, its documents, its oral evidence. All stand together, shoulder to shoulder, as closely as any Highland clan or savage tribe. The most opposite meanings meet in a single word, but always there is the evidence borne by the rest of the family to their common origin not only in body but in spirit, not only in physical sound form, but in mental sense origin & development. The proof is complete." (14: 541)

An Additional Hypothesis

"I, therefore, add an additional hypothesis to those I have already formulated, viz that the original guna or mind-impression created naturally & automatically by the seed sound (in this case the consonantal sound *d*) was applied primarily to the simple categories of sense observation, contact, sound, light, motion & action, including speech, sensation, and perhaps taste & form. It is no more than a hypothesis at present; for other sound families will have to be examined before this hypothesis can be either established or dismissed as untenable. I put it forward here for the sake of completeness. It is not necessary to suppose that this perception of mental or sensational sound values, of the particular impression on mind-sensation of a particular inarticulate sound defining & separating itself on the human tongue or even

its systematic application to the categories of sense observation was willed, conscious or intellectually reasoned out in the men who first framed their utterance into the vocables of Aryan speech. Nature, whatsoever Nature may be, guides the unconscious tree & flower, the unreasoning insect & animal to self-expression, to self-organisation, to self-evolution, & the result exceeds the best efforts of the deliberate human intellect. Why should she not have done the same for human speech? Instead of saying that men applied the guna of the particular sound to the sensations they wished to express, let us say that as in plant & tree & animal the sound itself, by the force of Nature, by the law of its own activity, *svadhām anu*, *ṛtūn anu*, "according to its own self-arrangement, in the straight line of the truth of things inherent in it," and helped by the half conscious responsive awakening mind, applied itself in the

service of mind to the various classes of sense observation which his awakening mentality demanded. I do not say this is the final & complete truth of the matter. But it is the only part or aspect of the truth of it at all consonant with our present way of approaching Nature as a blind force working in matter out of unconscious through half conscious into fully conscious action. It is the only theory which, provided it can establish itself, deserves, as it seems to me, to be called in the modern sense, rational & scientific; for it takes its stand on the two natural movements which constitute speech, the physical movements of articulation & the mental movement, partly sensational, partly discriminatory which attends the physical movements. And it seeks to establish itself by reducing the relation between these two motions to classified order & ascertained rule." (542-43)

The Last Step in the Hypothesis

"We have not, however, approached even yet the last step of our theory. For as there are families of words, families [of] root sounds, families of simple sounds, so also are there families of seed-sounds. These families are known to all grammarians & in Sanscrit they have been distinguished with a faithful & peculiar care & related to those parts of the organ of speech which play the decisive part in their articulation; but their relations to meaning seem never to have been studied. The seed sound *D* belongs to the group called dentals, which consists in Sanscrit of the hard *t*, the soft *d*, the aspirates *th* & *dh* & the dento-nasal *n* – for every consonant group except the liquids, the sibilants and the isolated aspirate *h* is composed of these five members, the hard consonant

leading, the soft following, each attended by its corresponding aspirate and a nasal bringing up the rear. Sanscrit has three sibilants & even these it attributes to the complete groups; *s* to the dental, *ś* to the palatal and *ṣ* to the cerebral family. The question then arises, are these groups only related in sound? or are they related also in guna and therefore in signification tendency? If there is any soundness in the theory I have been advancing, then as we have found the word-families united in a single root family with a single paternal root (as, *dal*, *dah*, *dabh* etc), these root families united through the paternal roots in a single primitive root family, phratria or brotherhood (as, the *da* family) with one paternal simple root, & these primitive brotherhoods united through their

paternal root (*da*, *di*, *du*, *dṛ*) in a single clan with one paternal seed sound (*d*), so also we ought to find kindred clans united through their rulingsound into a single tribe based on the kinship of the paternal seed sounds. The sound *d* being closely related to the sound *dh*, must hold a similar guna and therefore carry with it similar intellectual significances, and, though they may coincide in a less degree, *t*, *th* and even perhaps *n*, though this is more doubtful, ought to be not far in guna & sense from the *d* & *dh* word-clans. We must now proceed to examine the facts & perceive how the theory fares in this last & final test."

(14: 543-44)

"Among all the many promising beginnings of which the nineteenth century was the witness, none perhaps was hailed with greater eagerness by the world of culture and science than the triumphant debut of Comparative Philology. None perhaps has been more disappointing in its results. The philologists indeed place a high value on their line of study, – nor is that to be wondered at, in spite of all its defects, – and persist in giving it the name of Science; but the scientists are of a very different opinion. In Germany, in the very metropolis both of Science and of philology, the word Philologe has become a term of disparagement; nor are the philologists in a position to retort. Physical Science has proceeded by the soundest and most scrupulous methods and produced a mass of indisputable results which, by their magnitude and far-reaching consequences, have revolutionised the world and justly entitled the age of their development to the title of the wonderful century. Comparative Philology has hardly moved a step beyond its origins; all the rest has been a mass of conjectural and ingenious learning of which the brilliance is only equalled by the uncertainty and unsoundness. Even so great a philologist as Renan was obliged in the later part of his career, begun with such unlimited hopes, to a deprecating apology for the "little conjectural sciences" to which he had devoted his life's energies. At the beginning of the century's philological researches, when the Sanscrit tongue had been discovered, when Max Muller was exulting in his fatal formula, "*patēr*, *pater*, *pitā*, *Vater*, *father*", the Science of Language seemed to be on the point of self-revelation; as the result of the century's toil it can be asserted by thinkers of repute that the very idea of a Science of Language is a chimera! No doubt, the case against Comparative Philology has been overstated. If it has not discovered the Science of Language, it has at least swept out of existence the fantastic, arbitrary & almost lawless etymology of our forefathers. It has given us juster notions about the relations and history of extant languages and the processes by which old tongues have degenerated into that detritus out of which a new form of speech fashions itself. Above all, it has given us the firmly established notion that our investigations into language must be a search for rules & laws and not free & untrammelled gambollings among individual derivations. The way has been prepared; many difficulties have been cleared out of our way. Still scientific philology is non-existent; much less has there been any real approach to the discovery of the Science of Language.

…The first error committed by the philologists after their momentous discovery of the Sanscrit tongue, was to exaggerate the importance of their first superficial discoveries. The first glance is apt to be superficial; the perceptions drawn from an initial survey stand always in need of correction. If then we are so dazzled & led away by them as to make them the very key of our future knowledge, its central plank, its basic platform we prepare for ourselves grievous disappointments. Comparative Philology, guilty of this error,

has seized on a minor clue and mistaken it for a major or chief clue. When Max Muller trumpeted forth to the world in his attractive studies the great rapprochement, *pitā*, *patēr*, *pater*, *Vater*, *father*, he was preparing the bankruptcy of the new Science; he was leading it away from the truer clues, the wider vistas that lay behind. The most extraordinary & imposingly unsubstantial structures were reared on the narrow basis of that unfortunate formula. First, there was the elaborate division of civilised humanity into the Aryan, Semitic, Dravidian & Turanian races, based upon the philological classification of the ancient and modern languages. More sensible & careful reflection has shown us that community of language is no proof of community of blood or ethnological identity; the French are not a Latin race because they speak a corrupt & nasalised Latin, nor are the Bulgars Slavs in blood because the Ugrofinnish race has been wholly Slavonicised in civilisation and language. Scientific researches of another kind have confirmed this useful and timely negation. The philologists have, for instance, split up, on the strength of linguistic differences, the Indian nationality into the northern Aryan race & the southern Dravidian, but sound observation shows a single physical type with minor variations pervading the whole of India from Cape Comorin to Afghanistan. Language is therefore discredited as an ethnological factor. The races of India may be all pure Dravidians, if indeed such an entity as a Dravidian race exists or ever existed, or they may be pure Aryans, if indeed such an entity as an Aryan race exists or ever existed, or they may be a mixed race with one predominant strain, but, in any case, the linguistic division of the tongues of India into the Sanscritic & the Tamilic counts for nothing in that problem. Yet so great is the force of attractive generalisations & widely popularised errors that all the world goes on perpetuating the blunder, talking of the Indo-European races, claiming or disclaiming Aryan kinship & building on that basis of falsehood the most far-reaching political, social or pseudo-scientific conclusions.

They may be true & last; they may be partly true, yet have to be seriously modified; they may be entirely false & no trace of them be left in the ultimate conclusions of human knowledge on the subject: we have no means of determining between these three possibilities. The now settled rendering of Veda which reigns hitherto because it has never been critically & inimically examined, is sure, before long, to be powerfully attacked & questioned, & one thing may be confidently expected that even if India was ever invaded, colonised or civilised by northern worshippers of Sun & Fire, yet the picture of that invasion richly painted by philological scholarship from the Rigveda will prove to be a modern legend & not ancient history, & even if a half-savage Aryan civilisation existed in India in early times, the astonishingly elaborate modern descriptions of Vedic India will turn out a philological mirage & phantasmagoria. The wider question of an early Aryan civilisation must equally be postponed till we have sounder materials.…

The present theory is wholly illusory; for it assumes that common terms imply a common civilisation, an assumption which sins both by excess and by defect. It sins by excess; it cannot be argued, for instance, that because the Romans & Indians have a common term for a particular utensil, therefore that utensil was possessed by their ancestors in common previous to their separation. We must know first the history of the contact between the ancestors of the two races; we must be sure that the extant Roman word did not replace an original Latin term not possessed by the Indians; we must be sure that the Romans did not receive the term by transmission from Greek or Celt without ever having had any identity, connection or contact with our Aryan forefathers; we must be assured against many other possible solutions about which Philology can give us no guarantee either negative or affirmative. The Indian *suraṅga*, a tunnel, is supposed to be the Greek *surinx*. We cannot therefore argue that the Greeks & Indians possessed the common art of tunnel-making before their dispersion or even that the Indians who borrowed the word from Greece, never knew what an underground excavation might be till they learned it from Macedonian engineers. The Bengali term for telescope is *dūrbīn*, a word not of European origin. We cannot conclude that the Bengalis had invented the telescope independently before their contact with the Europeans. Yet on the principles by which the philologists seem to be guided in their conjectural restorations of vanished cultures, these are precisely the conclusions at which we should arrive. Here we have a knowledge of the historical facts to correct our speculations; but the prehistoric ages are not similarly defended. Historical data are entirely wanting & we are left at themercy of words and their misleading indications. But a little reflection on the vicissitudes of languages and especially some study of the peculiar linguistic phenomena created in India by the impact of the English tongue on our literary vernaculars, the first rush with which English words attempted to oust, in conversation & letter-writing, even common indigenous terms in their own favour and the reaction by which the vernaculars are now finding new Sanscritic terms to express the novel concepts introduced by the Europeans, will be sufficient to convince any thoughtful mind how rash are the premises of these philological culture-restorers & how excessive and precarious their conclusions. Nor do they sin by excess alone, but by defect also. They consistently ignore the patent fact that in prehistoric & preliterary times the vocabularies of primitive languages must have varied from century to century to an extent of which we with our ideas of language drawn from the classical & modern literary tongues can form little conception. It is, I believe, an established fact of anthropology that many savage tongues change their vocabulary almost from generation to generation. It is, therefore, perfectly possible that implements of civilisation and culture ideas for which no two Aryan tongues have a common term may yet have been common property before their dispersion; since each of them may have rejected after that dispersion the original common term for a neologism of its own

manufacture. It is the preservation of common terms and not their disappearance that is the miracle of language.

I exclude, therefore, and exclude rigidly from the domain of philology as I conceive it all ethnological conclusions, all inferences from words to the culture & civilisation of the men or races who used them, however alluring may be these speculations, however attractive, interesting and probable may be the inferences which we are tempted to draw in the course of our study. The philologist has nothing to do with ethnology. The philologist has nothing to do with sociology, anthropology and archaeology. His sole business is or ought to be with the history of words and of the association of ideas with the sound-forms which they represent. By strictly confining himself to this province, by the self-denial with which he eschews all irrelevant distractions & delights on his somewhat dry and dusty road, he will increase his concentration on his own proper work and avoid lures which may draw him away from the great discoveries awaiting mankind in this badly-explored tract of knowledge.

But the affinities of languages to each other are, at least, a proper field for the labours of philology. Nevertheless even here I am compelled to hold that the scholarship of Europe has fallen into an error in giving this subject of study the first standing among the objects of philology. Are we really quite sure that we know what constitutes community or diversity of origin between two different languages – so different for instance as Latin and Sanscrit, Sanscrit & Tamil, Tamil and Latin? Latin, Greek & Sanscrit are supposed to be sister Aryan tongues, Tamil is set apart as of other & Dravidian origin. If we enquire on what foundation this distinct & contrary treatment rests, we shall find that community of origin is supposed on two main grounds, a common body of ordinary and familiar terms and a considerable community of grammatical forms and uses. We come back to the initial formula, *pitā*, *patēr*, *pater*, *Vater*, *father*. What other test, it may be asked, can be found for determining linguistic kinship? Possibly none, but a little dispassionate consideration will give us, it seems to me, ground to pause and reflect very long & seriously before we classify languages too confidently upon this slender basis. The mere possession of a large body of common terms is, it is recognised, insufficient to establish kinship; it may establish nothing more than contact or cohabitation. Tamil has a very large body of Sanscrit words in its rich vocabulary, but it is not therefore a Sanscritic language. The common terms must be those which express ordinary & familiar ideas & objects, such as domestic relations, numerals, pronouns, the heavenly bodies, the ideas of being, having etc, – those terms that are most commonly in the mouths of men, especially of primitive men, and are therefore, shall we say, least liable to variation? Sanscrit says, addressing the father, *pitar*, Greek *pater*, Latin *pater*, but Tamil says *appā*; Sanscrit says addressing the mother *mātar*, Greek *mēter*, Latin *māter*, but Tamil *ammā*; for the numeral seven Sanscrit says *saptan* or *sapta*, Greek *hepta*, Latin *septem*, but Tamil *ēḷu*; for the first person Sanscrit says *aham*, Greek *egō* or *egōn*, Latin *ego*, but Tamil

nān; for the sun, Sanscrit says *sūra* or *sūrya*, Greek *hēlios*, Latin *sol*, but Tamil *ñāyiru*; for the idea of being Sanscrit has *as*, *asmi*, Greek has *einai* (*esnai*) and *eimi*, Latin *esse* and *sum*, but Tamil *iru*. The basis of the differentiation, then, appears with a striking clearness. There is no doubt about it, Sanscrit, Greek & Latin belong to one linguistic family which we may call conveniently the Aryan or Indo-European, Tamil to another for which we can get no more convenient term than Dravidian.

So far, good. We seem to be standing on a firm foundation, to be in possession of a rule which can be applied with something like scientific accuracy. But when we go a little farther, the fair prospect clouds a little, mists of doubt begin to creep into our field of vision. Mother & father we have; but there are other domestic relations. Over the daughter of the house, the primaeval milkmaid, the Aryan sisters show the slight beginnings of a spirit of disagreement. The Sanscrit father addresses her in the orthodox fashion *duhitar*, O milkmaid; Greek, as well as German & English parents follow suitwith *thugater*, *Tochter*, and *daughter*, but Latin has abandoned its pastoral ideas, knows nothing of *duhitā* and uses a word *filia* which has no conceivable connection with the milk-pail & is not connected with any variant for daughter in the kindred tongues. Was Latin then a mixed tongue, drawing from a non-Aryan stock for its conception of daughterhood? But this is only a single & negligible variation. We go farther and find, when we come to the word for son, these Aryan languages seem to differ hopelessly and give up all appearance of unity. Sanscrit says *putra*, Greek *huios*, Latin *filius*, the three languages use three words void of all mutual connection. We cannot indeed arrive at the conclusion that these languages were Aryan in their conception of fatherhood & motherhood, but sonhood is a Dravidian conception – like architecture, monism & most other civilised conceptions, according to some modern authorities, – for Sanscrit has a literary term for child or son, *sūnuḥ*, with which we can connect the German *Sohn*, English *son* & more remotely the Greek *huios*. We explain the difference then by supposing that these languages did possess an original common term for son, possibly *sūnu*, which was dropped by many of them at least as a colloquial expression, Sanscrit relegated it to the language of high literature, Greek adopted another form from the same root, Latin lost it altogether & substituted for it *filius* as it had substituted *filia* for *duhitā*. This sort of fluidity in the commonest terms seems to have been common – Greek has lost its original word for brother, *phrātēr*, which its sisters retain, & substituted *adelphos*, for which they have no correspondents; Sanscrit has abandoned the common word for the numeral one, *unus*, *ein*, *one* and substituted a word, *eka*, unknown to any other Aryan tongue; all differ over the third personal pronoun; for moon Greek has *selēnē*, Latin *luna*, Sanscrit *candra*. But when we admit these facts, a very important part of our scientific basis is sapped & the edifice begins to totter. For we come back to this fatal fact that even in the commonest terms the ancient languages tended to lose their original

vocabulary & diverge from each other, so that if the process had not been arrested by an early literature all obvious proof of relationship might well have disappeared. It is only the accident of an early & continuous Sanscrit literature that enables us to establish the original unity of the Aryan tongues. If it were not for the old Sanscrit writings, if only the ordinary Sanscrit colloquial vocables had survived who could be certain of these connections? or who could confidently affiliate colloquial Bengali with its ordinary domestic terms to Latin any more certainly than Telugu or Tamil? How then are we to be sure that the dissonance of Tamil itself with the Aryan tongues is not due to an early separation and an extensive change of its vocabulary during its preliterary ages? I shall be able, at a later stage of this inquiry, to afford some ground for supposing the Tamil numerals to be early Aryan vocables abandoned by Sanscrit but still traceable in the Veda or scattered & imbedded in the various Aryan tongues & the Tamil pronouns similarly the primitive Aryan denominatives of which traces still remain in the ancient tongues. I shall be able to show also that large families of words supposed to be pure Tamil are identical in the mass though not in their units with the Aryan families. But then we are logically driven towards this conclusion that absence of a common vocabulary for common ideas & objects is not necessarily a proof of diverse origin. Diversity of grammatical forms? But are we certain that the Tamil forms are not equally old Aryan forms, corrupted but preserved by the early deliquescence of the Tamilic dialect? Some of them are common to the modern Aryan vernaculars, but unknown to Sanscrit, & it has even been thence concluded by some that the Aryan vernaculars were originally non-Aryan tongues linguistically overpowered by the foreign invader. But if so into what quagmires of uncertainty do we not descend? Our shadow of a scientific basis, our fixed classification of language families have disappeared into shifting vestibules of nothingness.

Nor is this all the havoc that more mature consideration works in the established theory of the philologists. We have found a wide divergence between the Tamil common terms and those shared in common by the "Aryan" dialects; but let us look a little more closely into these divergences. The Tamil for father is *appā*, not *pitā*; there is no corresponding word in Sanscrit, but we have what one might call a reverse of the word in *apatyam*, son, in *aptyam*, offspring and *apna*, offspring. These three words point decisively to a Sanscrit root *ap*, to produce or create, for which other evidence in abundance can be found. What is there to prevent us from supposing *appā*, father, to be the Tamil form for an old Aryan active derivative from this root corresponding to the passive derivative *apatyam*? Mother in Tamil is *ammā* not *mātā*; there is no Sanscrit word *ammā*, but there is the well-known Sanscrit vocable *ambā*, mother. What is to prevent us from understanding the Tamil *ammā* as an Aryan form equivalent to *ambā*, derived from the root *amb*, to produce, which gives us *amba* & *ambaka*, father, *ambā*, *ambikā* and *ambi*, mother and *ambarīṣa*, the colt of a

horse or young of an animal. *Sodara*, a high Sanscrit word, is the common colloquial term in Tamil for brother and replaces the northern vernacular *bhāī* & classical *bhrātā*. *Akkā*, a Sanscrit word with many variants, is the colloquial term in Tamil for elder sister. In all these cases an obsolete or high literary term in Sanscrit is the ordinary colloquial term in Tamil, – just as we see the high literary Sanscrit *sūnuḥ* appearing in the colloquial German *Sohn* & English *son*, the obsolete & certainly high literary Aryan *adalbha*, undivided, appearing in the colloquial Greek *adelphos*, brother. What are we to conclude from these and a host of other instances which will appear in a later volume of this work? That Tamil is an Aryan dialect, like Greek, like German? Surely not; – the evidence is not sufficient; – but that it is possible for a non-Aryan tongue to substitute largely & freely Aryan vocables for its most common & familiar terms & lose its own native expressions. But then we are again driven by inexorable logic to this conclusion that just as the absence of a common vocabulary for common and domestic terms is not a sure proof of diverse origin, so also the possession of an almost identical vocabulary for these terms is not a sure proof of common origin. These things prove at the most intimate contact or separate development; they do not prove and in themselves cannot prove anything more. But on what basis then are we to distinguish & classify various language families? How can we positively say that Tamil is a non-Aryan or Greek, Latin & German Aryan tongues? From the indication of grammatical forms & uses, from the general impression created by the divergence or identity [of the] bulk of the vocables inherited by the languages we are comparing? But the first is too scanty & inconclusive, the second too empirical, uncertain & treacherous a test; both are the reverse of scientific, both, as reflection will show, might lead us into the largest & most radical errors. Rather than to form a conclusion by such a principle it is better to abstain from all conclusions and turn to a more thorough and profitable initial labour.

I conclude that it is too early in the history of philological research, we have made as yet too crude and slender a foundation to rear upon it the superstructure of scientific laws and scientific classifications. We cannot yet arrive at a sound & certain classification of human tongues still extant in speech, record or literature. We must recognise that our divisions are popular, not scientific, based upon superficial identities, not upon the one sound foundation for a science, the study of various species in their development from the embryo to the finished form or, failing the necessary material, a reverse study tracing back the finished forms to the embryonic and digging down into the hidden original facts of language. The reproach of the real scientist against the petty conjectural pseudo-science of philology is just; it must be removed by the adoption of a sounder method & greater self-restraint, the renunciation of brilliant superficialities and a more scrupulous, sceptical & patient system of research." (14: 547-58)

The Substance of the Veda and the Early Mysticism in Greece, Persia, Egypt and Chaldea

"IN ANCIENT times the Veda was revered as a sacred book of wisdom, a great mass of inspired poetry, the work of Rishis, seers and sages, who received in their illumined minds rather than mentally constructed a great universal, eternal and impersonal Truth which they embodied in Mantras, revealed verses of power, not of an ordinary but of a divine inspiration and source. The name given to these sages was Kavi, which afterwards came to mean any poet, but at the time had the sense of a seer of truth, – the Veda itself describes them as *kavayaḥ satyaśrutaḥ*, "seers who are hearers of the Truth" and the Veda itself was called *śruti*, a word which came to mean "revealed Scripture". The seers of the Upanishad had the same idea about the Veda and frequently appealed to its authority for the truths they themselves announced and these too afterwards came to be regarded as Sruti, revealed Scripture, and were included in the sacred Canon.

This tradition persevered in the Brahmanas and continued to maintain itself in spite of the efforts of the ritualistic commentators, Yajnikas, to explain everything as myth and rite and the division made by the Pandits distinguishing the section of works, Karmakanda, and the section of Knowledge, Jnanakanda, identifying the former with the hymns and the latter with the Upanishads. This drowning of the parts of Knowledge by the parts of ceremonial works was strongly criticised in one of the Upanishads and in the Gita, but both look on the Veda as a Book of Knowledge. Even, the Sruti including both Veda and Upanishad was regarded as the supreme authority for spiritual knowledge and infallible.

Is this all legend and moonshine, or a groundless and even nonsensical tradition? Or is it the fact that there is only a scanty element of higher ideas in some later hymns which started this theory? Did the writers of the Upanishads foist upon the Riks a meaning which was not there but read into it by their imagination or a fanciful interpretation? Modern European scholarship insists on having it so. And it has persuaded the mind of modern India. In favour of this view is the fact that the Rishis of the Veda were not only seers but singers and priests of sacrifice, that their chants were written to be sung at public sacrifices and refer constantly to the customary ritual and seem to call for the outward objects of these ceremonies, wealth, prosperity, victory over enemies. Sayana, the great commentator, gives us a ritualistic and where necessary a tentatively mythical or historical sense to the Riks, very rarely does he put forward any higher meaning though sometimes he lets a higher sense come through or puts it as an alternative as if in despair of finding out some ritualistic or mythical interpretation. But still he does not reject the spiritual authority of the Veda or deny that there is a higher truth contained in the Riks. This last development was left to our own times and popularised by occidental scholars.

The European scholars took up the ritualistic tradition, but for the rest they dropped Sayana overboard and went on to make their own etymological explanation of the words, or build up their own conjectural meanings of the Vedic verses and give a new presentation often arbitrary and imaginative. What they sought for in the Veda was the early history of India, its society, institutions, customs, a civilisation-picture of the times. They invented the theory based on the difference of languages of an Aryan invasion from the north, an invasion of a Dravidian India of which the Indians themselves had no memory or tradition and of which there is no record in their epic or classical literature. The Vedic religion was in this account only a worship of Nature- Gods full of solar myths and consecrated by sacrifices and a sacrificial liturgy primitive enough in its ideas and contents, and it is these barbaric prayers that are the much vaunted, haloed and apotheosized Veda.

There can be no doubt that in the beginning there was a worship of the Powers of the physical world, the Sun, Moon, Heaven and Earth, Wind, Rain and Storm etc., the Sacred Rivers and a number of Gods who presided over the workings of Nature. That was the general aspect of the ancient worship in Greece, Rome, India and among other ancient peoples. But in all these countries these gods began to assume a higher, a psychological function; Pallas Athene who may have been originally a Dawn- Goddess springing in flames from the head of Zeus, the Sky-God, Dyaus of the Veda, has in classical Greece a higher function and was identified by the Romans with their Minerva, the Goddess of learning and wisdom; similarly, Saraswati, a river Goddess, becomes in India the goddess of wisdom, learning and the arts and crafts: all the Greek deities have undergone a change in this direction – Apollo, the Sun-God, has become a god of poetry and prophecy, Hephaestus the Fire-God a divine smith, god of labour. In India the process was arrested half-way, and the Vedic Gods developed their psychological functions but retained more fixedly their external character and for higher purposes gave place to a new pantheon. They had to give precedence to Puranic deities who developed out of the early company but assumed larger cosmic functions, Vishnu, Rudra, Brahma – developing from the Vedic Brihaspati, or Brahmanaspati, – Shiva, Lakshmi, Durga. Thus in India the change in the gods was less complete, the earlier deities became the inferior divinities of the Puranic pantheon and this was largely due to the survival of the Rig Veda in which their psychological and their external functions co-existed and are both given a powerful emphasis; there was no such early literary record to maintain the original features of the Gods of Greece and Rome.

This change was evidently due to a cultural development in these early peoples who became progressively more mentalised and less engrossed in the physical life as they advanced in civilisation and needed to read into their religion and their deities finer and subtler aspects which would support their more highly mentalised concepts and interests and find for them a true spiritual

being or some celestial figure as their support and sanction. But the largest part in determining and deepening this inward turn must be attributed to the Mystics who had an enormous influence on these early civilisations; there was indeed almost everywhere an age of the Mysteries in which men of a deeper knowledge and self-knowledge established their practices, significant rites, symbols, secret lore within or on the border of the more primitive exterior religions. This took different forms in different countries; in Greece there were the Orphic and Eleusinian Mysteries, in Egypt and Chaldea the priests and their occult lore and magic, in Persia the Magi, in India the Rishis. The preoccupation of the Mystics was with self-knowledge and a profounder world-knowledge; they found out that in man there was a deeper self and inner being

behind the surface of the outward physical man, which it was his highest business to discover and know. "Know thyself" was their great precept, just as in India to know the Self, the Atman became the great spiritual need, the highest thing for the human being. They found also a Truth, a Reality behind the outward aspects of the universe and to discover, follow, realise this Truth was their great aspiration. They discovered secrets and powers of Nature which were not those of the physical world but which could bring occult mastery over the physical world and physical things and to systematise this occult knowledge and power was also one of their strong preoccupations. But all this could only be safely done by a difficult and careful training, discipline, purification of the nature; it could not be done by the ordinary man. If men

entered into these things without a severe test and training it would be dangerous to themselves and others; this knowledge, these powers could be misused, misinterpreted, turned from truth to falsehood, from good to evil. A strict secrecy was therefore maintained, the knowledge handed down behind a veil from master to disciple. A veil of symbols was created behind which these mysteries could shelter, formulas of speech also which could be understood by the initiated but were either not known by others or were taken by them in an outward sense which carefully covered their true meaning and secret. This was the substance of Mysticism everywhere." (16: 3-6)

The Rishis of India and the Tradition of a Secret Meaning and a Mystic Wisdom Couched in the Riks of the Veda

"It has been the tradition in India from the earliest times that the Rishis, the poet-seers of the Veda, were men of this type, men with a great spiritual and occult knowledge not shared by ordinary human beings, men who handed down this knowledge and their powers by a secret initiation to their descendants and chosen disciples. It is a gratuitous assumption to suppose that this tradition was wholly unfounded, a superstition that arose suddenly or slowly formed in a void, with nothing whatever to support it; some foundation there must have been however small or however swelled by legend and the accretions of centuries. But if it is true, then inevitably the poet-seers must have expressed something of their secret knowledge, their mystic lore in their writings and such an element must be present, however well-concealed by an occult language or behind a technique of symbols, and if it is there it must be to some extent discoverable. It is true that an antique language, obsolete words, – Yaska counts more than four hundred of which he did not know the meaning, – and often a difficult and out-of-date diction helped to obscure their meaning; the loss of the sense of their symbols, the glossary of which they kept to themselves, made them unintelligible to later generations; even in the time of the Upanishads the spiritual seekers of the age had to resort to initiation and meditation to penetrate into their secret knowledge, while the scholars afterwards were at sea and had to resort to conjecture and to concentrate on a mental interpretation or to explain by myths, by the legends of the Brahmanas themselves often symbolic and obscure. But still to make this discovery will be the sole way of getting at the true sense and the true value of the Veda. We must take seriously the hint of Yaska, accept the Rishi's description of the Veda's contents as "seer-wisdoms, secret words", and look for whatever clue we can find to this ancient wisdom. Otherwise the Veda must remain for ever a sealed book; grammarians, etymologists, scholastic conjectures will not open to us the sealed chamber.

For it is a fact that the tradition of a secret meaning and a mystic wisdom couched in the Riks of the ancient Veda was as old as the Veda itself. The Vedic Rishis believed that their Mantras were inspired from higher hidden planes of consciousness and contained this secret knowledge. The words of the Veda could only be known in their true meaning by one who was himself a seer or mystic; from others the verses withheld their hidden knowledge. In one of Vamadeva's hymns in the fourth Mandala (IV.3.16) the Rishi describes himself as one illumined expressing through his thought and speech words of guidance, "secret words" – *niṇyā vacāṁsi* – "seer-wisdoms that utter their inner meaning to the seer" – *kāvyāni kavaye nivacanā*. The Rishi Dirghatamas speaks of the Riks, the Mantras of the Veda, as existing "in a supreme ether, imperishable and immutable in which all the gods are seated", and he adds

"one who knows not That what shall he do with the Rik?" (I.164.39) He further alludes to four planes from which the speech issues, three of them hidden in the secrecy while the fourth is human, and from there comes the ordinary word; but the word and thought of the Veda belongs to the higher planes (I.164.45). Elsewhere in the Riks the Vedic Word is described (X.71) as that which is supreme and the topmost height of speech, the best and the most faultless. It is something that is hidden in secrecy and from there comes out and is manifested. It has entered into the truth-seers, the Rishis, and it is found by following the track of their speech. But all cannot enter into its

secret meaning. Those who do not know the inner sense are as men who seeing see not, hearing hear not, only to one here and there the Word desiring him like a beautifully robed wife to a husband lays open her body. Others unable to drink steadily of the milk of the Word, the Vedic cow, move with it as with one that gives no milk, to him the Word is a tree without flowers or fruits. This is quite clear and precise; it results from it beyond doubt that even then while the Rig Veda was being written the Riks were regarded as having a secret sense which was not open to all. There was an occult and spiritual knowledge in the sacred hymns and by this knowledge alone, it is said, one can

know the truth and rise to a higher existence. This belief was not a later tradition but held, probably, by all and evidently by some of the greatest Rishis such as Dirghatamas and Vamadeva.

The tradition, then, was there and it was prolonged after the Vedic times. Yaska speaks of several schools of interpretation of the Veda. There was a sacrificial or ritualistic interpretation, the historical or rather mythological explanation, an explanation by the grammarians and etymologists, by the logicians, a spiritual interpretation. Yaska himself declares that there is a triple knowledge and therefore a triple meaning of the Vedic hymns, a sacrificial or ritualistic knowledge, a knowledge of the gods and finally a spiritual knowledge;

but the last is the true sense and when one gets it the others drop or are cut away. It is this spiritual sense that saves and the rest is outward and subordinate. He says further that "the Rishis saw the truth, the true law of things, directly by an inner vision"; afterwards the knowledge and the inner sense of the Veda were almost lost and the Rishis who still knew had to save it by handing it down through initiation to disciples and at a last stage outward and mental means had to be used for finding the sense such as Nirukta and other Vedangas. But even then, he says, "the true sense of the Veda can be recovered directly by meditation and tapasya", those who can use these means need no outward aids for this knowledge. This also is sufficiently clear and positive." (16: 6-9)

The Tradition of a Mystic Element in the Veda as a Source of Indian Civilisation and Culture

"The tradition of a mystic element in the Veda as a source of Indian civilisation, its religion, its philosophy, its culture is more in consonance with historical fact than the European scouting of this idea. The nineteenth-century European scholarship writing in a period of materialistic rationalism regarded the history of the race as a development out of primitive barbarism or semi-barbarism, a crude social life and religion and a mass of superstitions, by the growth of outward civilised institutions, manners and habits through the development of intellect and reason, art, philosophy and science and a clearer and sounder, more matter-of-fact intelligence. The ancient idea about the Veda

could not fit into this picture; it was regarded as rather a part of ancient superstitious ideas and a primitive error. But we can now form a more accurate idea of the development of the race. The ancient more primitive civilisations held in themselves the elements of the later growth but their early wise men were not scientists and philosophers or men of high intellectual reason but mystics and even mystery-men, occultists, religious seekers; they were seekers after a veiled truth behind things and not of an outward knowledge. The scientists and philosophers came afterwards; they were preceded by the mystics and often like Pythagoras and Plato were to some extent mystics themselves

or drew many of their ideas from the mystics. In India philosophy grew out of the seeking of the mystics and retained and developed their spiritual aims and kept something of their methods in later Indian spiritual discipline and Yoga. The Vedic tradition, the fact of a mystical element in the Veda fits in perfectly with this historical truth and takes its place in the history of Indian culture. The tradition of the Veda as the bed-rock of Indian civilisation – not merely a barbaric sacrificial liturgy – is more than a tradition, it is an actual fact of history." (16: 9-10)

The Rig Veda – A Great Scripture With a Hidden Mystic Meaning Behind

"We are in the presence of a great scripture of the mystics with a double significance, one exoteric, the other esoteric; the symbols themselves have a meaning which makes them a part of the esoteric significance, an element in the secret teaching and knowledge. The whole of the Rig Veda, a small number of hymns perhaps excepted, becomes in its inner sense such a Scripture. At the same time the exoteric sense need not be merely a mask; the Riks may have been regarded by their authors as words of power, powerful not only for internal but for external things. A purely spiritual scripture would concern itself with only spiritual significances, but the ancient mystics were also what we would call occultists, men who believed that by inner means outer as well as inner results could be produced, that thought and words could be so used as to bring about realisations of every kind, – in the phrase common in the Veda itself, – both the human and the divine.

But where is this body of esoteric meaning in the Veda? It is only discoverable if we give a constant and straightforward meaning to the words and formulas employed by the Rishis, especially to the key-words which bear as keystones the whole structure of their doctrine. One such word is the great word, Ritam, Truth; Truth was the central object of the seeking of the mystics, a spiritual or inner Truth, a truth of ourselves, a truth of things, a truth of the world and of the gods, a truth behind all we are and all that things are. In the ritualistic interpretation this master word of the Vedic knowledge has been interpreted in all kinds of senses according to the convenience or fancy of the interpreter, "truth", "sacrifice", "water", "one who has gone", even "food", not to speak of a number of other meanings; if we do that, there can be no certitude in our dealings with the Veda. But let us consistently give it the same master sense and a strange but clear result emerges. If we apply the same treatment to other standing terms of the Veda, if we give them their ordinary, natural and straightforward meaning and give it constantly and consistently, not monkeying about with their sense or turning them into purely ritualistic expressions, if we allow to certain important words, such as *śravas*, *ḳratu*, the psychological meaning of which they are capable and which they undoubtedly bear in certain passages as when the Veda describes Agni as *ḳratur ḥṛdi*, then this result becomes all the more clear, extended, pervasive. If in addition we follow the indications which abound, sometimes the explicit statement of the Rishis about the inner sense of their symbols, interpret in the same sense the significant legends and figures on which they constantly return, the conquest over Vritra and the battle with the Vritras, his powers, the recovery of the Sun, the Waters, the Cows, from the Panis or other Dasyus, the whole Rig Veda reveals itself as a body of doctrine and practice, esoteric, occult, spiritual, such as might have been given by the mystics in any ancient country but which

actually survives for us only in the Veda. It is there deliberately hidden by a veil, but the veil is not so thick as we first imagine; we have only to use our eyes and the veil vanishes; the body of the Word, the Truth stands out before us.

Many of the lines, many whole hymns even of the Veda bear on their face a mystic meaning; they are evidently an occult form of speech, have an inner meaning. When the seer speaks of Agni as "the luminous guardian of the Truth shining out in his own home", or of Mitra and Varuna or other gods as "in touch with the Truth and making the Truth grow" or as "born in the Truth", these are words of a mystic poet, who is thinking of that inner Truth behind things of which the early sages were the seekers. He is not thinking of the Nature-Power presiding over the outer element of fire or of the fire of the ceremonial sacrifice. Or he speaks of Saraswati as one who impels the words of Truth and awakes to right thinkings or as one opulent with the thought: Saraswati awakes to consciousness or makes us conscious of the "Great Ocean and illumines all our thoughts." It is surely not the River Goddess whom he is thus hymning but the Power, the River if you will, of inspiration, the word of the Truth, bringing its light into our thoughts, building up in us that Truth, an inner knowledge. The Gods constantly stand out in their psychological functions; the sacrifice is the outer symbol of an inner work, an inner interchange between the gods and men, – man giving what he has, the gods giving in return the horses of power, the herds of light, the heroes of Strength to be his retinue, winning for him victory in his battle with the hosts of Darkness, Vritras, Dasyus, Panis. When the Rishi says, "Let us become conscious whether by the War-Horse or by the Word of a Strength beyond men", his words have either a mystic significance or they have no coherent meaning at all. In the portions translated in this book we have many mystic verses and whole hymns which, however mystic, tear the veil off the outer sacrificial images covering the real sense of the Veda. "Thought", says the Rishi, "has nourished for us human things in the Immortals, in the Great Heavens; it is the milch-cow which milks of itself the wealth of many forms" – the many kinds of wealth, cows, horses and the rest for which the sacrificer prays; evidently this is no material wealth, it is something which Thought, the Thought embodied in the Mantra, can give and it is the result of the same Thought that nourishes our human things in the Immortals, in the Great Heavens. A process of divinisation, and of a bringing down of great and luminous riches, treasures won from the Gods by the inner work of sacrifice, is hinted at in terms necessarily covert but still for one who knows how to read these secret words, *niṇyā vacāṁsi*, sufficiently expressive, *kavaye nivacanā*. Again, Night and Dawn the eternal sisters are like "joyful weaving women weaving the weft of our perfected works into the form of a sacrifice." Again, words with a mystic form and meaning, but there could hardly be a more positive statement of the psychological character of the Sacrifice, the real meaning of the Cow, of the riches sought for, the plenitudes of the Great Treasure." (16: 10-13)

The Fixed Double Meanings of the Words in the Veda

"Under pressure of the necessity to mask their meaning with symbols and symbolic words – for secrecy must be observed – the Rishis resorted to fixed double meanings, a device easily manageable in the Sanskrit language where one word often bears several different meanings, but not easy to render in an English translation and very often impossible. Thus the word for cow, *go*, meant also light or a ray of light; this appears in the names of some of the Rishis, Gotama, most radiant, Gavishthira, steadfast in the Light. The cows of the Veda were the Herds of the Sun, familiar in Greek myth and mystery, the rays of the Sun of Truth and Light and Knowledge; this meaning which comes out in some passages can be consistently applied everywhere yielding a coherent sense. The word *ghṛta* means ghee or clarified butter and this was one of the chief elements of the sacrificial rite; but *ghṛta* could also mean light, from the root *ghṛ* to shine, and it is used in this sense in many passages. Thus the horses of Indra, the Lord of Heaven, are described as dripping with light, *ghṛta-snu*,* – it certainly does not mean that ghee dripped from them as they ran, although that seems to be the sense of the same epithet as applied to the grain of which Indra's horses are invited to partake when they come to the sacrifice. Evidently this sense of light doubles with that of clarified butter in the symbolism of the sacrifice. The thought or the word expressing the thought is compared to pure clarified butter, expressions like *dhiyaṁ ghṛtācīm*, the luminous thought or understanding occur. There is a curious passage in one of the hymns translated in this book calling on Fire as priest of the sacrifice to flood the offering with a mind pouring ghrita, *ghṛtapruṣā manasā* and so manifest the Seats ("places", or "planes"), the three heavens each of them and manifest the Gods.** But what is a ghee-pouring mind, and how by pouring ghee can a priest manifest the Gods and the triple heavens? But admit the mystical and esoteric meaning and the sense becomes clear. What the Rishi means is a "mind pouring the light", a labour of the clarity of an enlightened or illumined mind; it is not a human priest or a sacrificial fire, but the inner Flame, the mystic seer-will, *kavi-kratu*, and that can certainly manifest by this process the Gods and the worlds and all planes of the being. The Rishis, it must be remembered, were seers as well as sages, they were men of vision who saw things in their meditation in images, often symbolic images which might precede or accompany an experience and put it in a concrete form, might predict or give an occult body to it: so it would be quite possible for him to see at once the inner experience and in image its symbolic happening, the flow of clarifying

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* Sayana, though in several passages he takes *ghṛta* in the sense of light, renders it here by "water"; he seems to think that the divine horses were very tired and perspiring profusely! A Naturalistic interpreter might as well argue that as Indra is a God of the sky, the primitive poet might well believe that rain was the perspiration of Indra's horses.

** This is Sayana's rendering of the passage and rises directly from the words.

light and the priest god pouring the clarified butter on the inner self-offering which brought the experience. This might seem strange to a Western mind, but to an Indian mind accustomed to the Indian tradition or capable of meditation and occult vision it would be perfectly intelligible. The mystics were and normally are symbolists, they can even see all physical things and happenings as symbols of inner truths and realities, even their outer selves, the outer happenings of their life and all around them. That would make their identification or else an association of the thing and its symbol easy, its habit possible.

Other standing words and symbols of the Veda invite a similar interpretation of their sense. As the Vedic "cow" is the symbol of light, so the Vedic "horse" is a symbol of power, spiritual strength, force of tapasya. When the Rishi asks Agni for a "horse-form cow-in-front gift" he is not asking really for a number of horses forming a body of the gift with some cows walking in front, he is asking for a great body of spiritual power led by the light or, as we may translate it, "with the Ray-Cow walking in its front".* As one hymn describes the recovery from the Panis of the mass of the rays (the cows, – the shining herds, *gavyam*), so another hymn asks Agni for amass or abundance or power of the horse – *aśvyam*. So too the Rishi asks sometimes for the heroes or fighting men as his retinue, sometimes in more abstract language and without symbol for a complete hero-force – *suvīryam*; sometimes he combines the symbol and the thing. So too the Rishis ask for a son or sons or offspring – *apatyam* – as an element of the wealth for which they pray to the Gods, but here too an esoteric sense can be seen, for in certain passages the son born to us is clearly an image of some inner birth: Agni himself is our son, the child of our works, the child who as the Universal Fire is the father of his fathers, and it is by setting the steps on things that have fair offspring that we create or discover a path to the higher world of Truth. Again, "water" in the Veda is used as a symbol. It speaks of the inconscient ocean, *salilam apraketam*, in which the Godhead is involved and out of which he is born by his greatness; it speaks also of the great ocean – *maho arṇas*, the upper waters which, as one hymn says, Saraswati makes conscious for us or of which she makes us conscious by the ray of intuition – *pra cetayati ketunā*. The seven rivers seem to be the rivers of Northern India but the Veda speaks of the seven Mighty Ones of Heaven who flow down from Heaven; they are waters that know, knowers of the Truth – *ṛtajña* – and when they are released they discover for us the road to the great Heavens. So too Parashara speaks of Knowledge and universal Life, "in the house of the waters". Indra releases the rain by slaying Vritra, but this rain too is the rain of Heaven and sets the rivers flowing. Thus the legend of the release of the waters which takes so large a place in the Veda

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* Compare the expression which describes the Aryan, the noble people as led by the light – *jyotir-agrāḥ*.

puts on the aspect of a symbolic myth. Along with it comes the other symbolic legend of the discovery and rescue, from the dark cave in the mountain, of the Sun, the cows or herds of the Sun, or the Sun-world – *svar* – by the Gods and the Angiras Rishis. The symbol of the Sun is constantly associated with the higher Light and the Truth: it is in the Truth concealed by an inferior Truth that are unyoked the horses of the Sun, it is the Sun in its highest light that is called upon in the great Gayatri Mantra to impel our thoughts. So too the enemies in the Veda are spoken of as robbers, *dasyus*, who steal the cows, or Vritras and are taken literally as human enemies in the ordinary interpretation, but Vritra is a demon who covers and holds back the Light and the waters and the Vritras are his forces fulfilling that function. The Dasyus, robbers or destroyers, are the powers of darkness, adversaries of the seekers of Light and the Truth. Always there are indications that lead us from the outward and exoteric to an inner and esoteric sense.

In connection with the symbol of the Sun a notable and most significant verse in a hymn of the fifth Mandala may here be mentioned; for it shows not only the profound mystic symbolism of the Vedic poets, but also how the writers of the Upanishads understood the Rig Veda and justifies their belief in the inspired knowledge of their forerunners. "There is a Truth covered by a Truth," runs the Vedic passage, "where they unyoke the horses of the Sun; the ten hundreds stood together, there was That One;* I saw the greatest (best, most glorious) of the embodied gods."** Then mark how the seer of the Upanishad translates this thought or this mystic experience into his own later style, keeping the central symbol of the Sun but without any secrecy in the sense. Thus runs the passage in the Upanishad, "The face of the Truth is covered with a golden lid. O Pushan, that remove for the vision of the law of the Truth.*** O Pushan (fosterer), sole seer, O Yama, O Sun, O Child of the Father of beings, marshal and gather together thy rays; I see the Light which is that fairest (most auspicious) form of thee; he who is this Purusha, He am I." The golden lid is meant to be the same as the inferior covering truth, *ṛtam*, spoken of in the Vedic verse; the "best of the bodies of the Gods" is equivalent to the "fairest form of the Sun", it is the supreme Light which is other and greater than all outer light; the great formula of the Upanishad, "He am I", corresponds to That One, *tad ekam*, of the Rig Vedic verse; the "standing together of the ten hundreds" (the rays of the Sun, says Sayana, and that is evidently the meaning) is reproduced in the prayer to the Sun "to marshal and mass his rays" so that the supreme form may be seen. The Sun in both the passages, as constantly in the Veda and frequently in the Upanishad, is the Godhead of the supreme Truth and Knowledge and his rays are the light

* Or, That (the supreme Truth) was one;

** Or it means, "I saw the greatest (best) of the bodies of the gods."

*** Or, for the law of the Truth, for vision.

emanating from that supreme Truth and Knowledge. It is clear from this instance – and there are others – that the seer of the Upanishad had a truer sense of the meaning of the ancient Veda than the mediaeval ritualistic commentator with his gigantic learning, much truer than the modern and very different mind of the European scholars.

There are certain psychological terms which have to be taken consistently in their true sense if we are to find the inner or . esoteric meaning. Apart from the Truth, Ritam, we have to take always in the sense of "thought" the word *dhī* which constantly recurs in the hymns. This is the natural meaning of *dhī* which corresponds to the later word Buddhi; it means thought, understanding, intelligence and in the plural "thoughts", *dhiyah*. . It is given in the ordinary interpretation all kinds of meanings; "water", "work", "sacrifice", "food" etc. as well as thought. But in our search we have to take it consistently in its ordinary and natural significance and see what is the result. The word *ketu* means very ordinarily "ray" but it also bears the meaning of intellect, judgment or an intellectual perception. If we compare the passages in the Veda in which it occurs we can come to the conclusion that it meant a ray of perception or intuition, as for instance, it is by the ray of intuition, *ketunā*, that Saraswati makes us conscious of the great waters; that too probably is the meaning of the rays which come from the Supreme foundation above and are directed downwards; these are the intuitions of knowledge as the rays of the Sun of Truth and Light. The word *kratu* means ordinarily work or sacrifice but it also means intelligence, power or resolution and especially the power of the intelligence that determines the work, the will. It is in this latter sense that we can interpret it in the esoteric rendering of the Veda. Agni is a seer-will, *kavi-kratu*, he is the "will in the heart", *kratu hṛdi*. Finally the word *śravas* which is constantly in use in the Veda means fame, it is also taken by the commentators in the sense of food, but these significances cannot be fitted in everywhere and very ordinarily lack all point and apposite force. But *śravas* comes from the root *śru* to hear and is used in the sense of ear itself or of hymn or prayer – a sense which Sayana accepts – and from this we can infer that it means the "thing heard" or its result, knowledge that comes to us through hearing. The Rishis speak of themselves as hearers of the Truth, *satyaśrutaḥ*, and the knowledge received by this hearing as Sruti. It is in this sense of inspiration or inspired knowledge that we can take it in the esoteric meaning of the Veda and we find that it fits in with a perfect appositeness; thus when the Rishi speaks of *śravāṁsi* as being brought through upward and brought through downward, this cannot be applied to food or fame but is perfectly apposite and significant if he is speaking of inspirations which rise up to the Truth above or bring down the Truth to us. This is the method we can apply everywhere, but we cannot pursue the subject any further here. In the brief limits of this foreword these slight indications must suffice; they are meant only to give the reader an initial insight into the esoteric method of interpretation of the Veda." (16: 13-19)

The Secret Meaning – The Esoteric Sense of the Veda

"But what then is the secret meaning, the esoteric sense, which emerges by this way of understanding the Veda? It is what we would expect from the nature of the seeking of the mystics everywhere. It is also, as we should expect from the actual course of the development of Indian culture, an early form of the spiritual truth which found its culmination in the Upanishads; the secret knowledge of the Veda is the seed which is evolved later on into the Vedanta. The thought around which all is centred is the seeking after Truth, Light, Immortality. There is a Truth deeper and higher than the truth of outward existence, a Light greater and higher than the light of human understanding which comes by revelation and inspiration, an immortality towards which the soul has to rise. We have to find our way to that, to get into touch with this Truth and Immortality, *sapanta ṛtam amṛtam*, to be born into the Truth, to

grow in it, to ascend in spirit into the world of Truth and to live in it. To do so is to unite ourselves with the Godhead and to pass from mortality into immortality. This is the first and the central teaching of the Vedic mystics. The Platonists, developing their doctrine from the early mystics, held that we live in relation to two worlds, – a world of higher truth which might be called the spiritual world and that in which we live, the world of the embodied soul which is derived from the higher but also degraded from it into an inferior truth and inferior consciousness. The Vedic mystics held this doctrine in a more concrete and pragmatic form, for they had the experience of these two worlds. There is the inferior truth here of this world mixed as it is with much falsehood and error, *anṛtasya bhūreḥ*, and there is a world or home of Truth, *sadanam ṛtasya*, the Truth, the Right, the Vast, *satyam ṛtaṁ bṛhat*, where all is

Truth-conscious, *ṛtacit*. There are many worlds between up to the triple heavens and their lights but this is the world of the highest Light – the world of the Sun of Truth, *svar*, or the Great Heaven. We have to find the path to this Great Heaven, the path of Truth, *ṛtasya panthāḥ*, or as it is sometimes called the way of the gods. This is the second mystic doctrine. The third is that our life is a battle between the powers of Light and Truth, the Gods who are the Immortals and the powers of Darkness. These are spoken of under various names as Vritra and Vritras, Vala and the Panis, the Dasyus and their kings. We have to call in the aid of the Gods to destroy the opposition of these powers of Darkness who conceal the Light from us or rob us of it, who obstruct the flowing of the streams of Truth, *ṛtasya dhārāḥ*, the streams of Heaven and obstruct in every way the soul's ascent. We have to invoke the Gods by the

inner sacrifice, and by the Word call them into us, – that is the specific power of the Mantra, – to offer to them the gifts of the sacrifice and by that giving secure their gifts, so that by this process we may build the way of our ascent to the goal. The elements of the outer sacrifice in the Veda are used as symbols of the inner sacrifice and self-offering; we give what we are and what we have in order that the riches of the divine Truth and Light may descend into our life and become the elements of our inner birth into the Truth, – a right thinking, a right understanding, a right action must develop in us which is the thinking, impulsion and action of that higher Truth, *ṛtasya preṣā*, *ṛtasya dhīti*, and by this we must build up ourselves in that Truth. Our sacrifice is a journey, a pilgrimage and a battle, – a travel towards the Gods and we also make that journey with Agni, the inner Flame, as our path-finder and leader. Our human

things are raised up by the mystic Fire into the immortal being, into the Great Heaven, and the things divine come down into us. As the doctrine of the Rig Veda is the seed of the teaching of the Vedanta, so is its inner practice and discipline a seed of the later practice and discipline of Yoga. Finally, as the summit of the teaching of the Vedic mystics comes the secret of the one Reality, *ekaṁ sat*, or *tad ekam*, which became the central word of the Upanishads. The Gods, the powers of Light and Truth are powers and names of the One, each God is himself all the Gods or carries them in him: there is the one Truth, *tat satyam*, and one bliss to which we must rise. But in the Veda this looks out still mostly from behind the veil. There is much else but this is the kernel of the doctrine." (16: 19-21)

The Earlier Work of Sri Aurobindo on the Veda and the Present Translations

"The interpretation I have put forward was set out at length in a series of articles with the title "The Secret of the Veda" in the monthly philosophical magazine, *Arya*, some thirty years ago; written in serial form while still developing the theory and not quite complete in its scope or composed on a preconceived and well-ordered plan it was not published in book-form and is therefore not yet available to the reading public.* It was accompanied by a number of renderings of the hymns of the Rig Veda which were rather interpretations than translations and to these there was an introduction explanatory of the "Doctrine of the Mystics". Subsequently there was planned a complete translation of all the hymns to Agni in the ten Mandalas which kept close to the text; the renderings of those hymns in the second and sixth Mandalas are now published in this book for the first time as well as a few from the first Mandala.** But to establish on a scholastic basis the conclusions of the hypothesis it would have been necessary to prepare an edition of the Rig Veda or of a large part of it with a word by word construing in Sanskrit and English, notes explanatory of important points in the text and justifying the interpretation both of separate words and of whole verses and also elaborate appendices to fix firmly the rendering of key-words like *ṛtam*, *śravas*, *kratu*, *ketu*, etc. essential to the esoteric interpretation. This also was planned, but meanwhile greater preoccupations of a permanent nature intervened and no time was left to proceed with such a considerable undertaking. For the benefit of the reader of these translations who might otherwise be at a loss, this foreword has been written and some passages from the unpublished "Doctrine of the Mystics" have been included. The text of the Veda has been given for use by those who can read the original Sanskrit. These translations however are not intended to be a scholastic work meant to justify a hypothesis; the object of this publication is only to present them in a permanent form for disciples and those who are inclined to see more in the Vedas than a superficial liturgy and would be interested in knowing what might be the esoteric sense of this ancient Scripture.

This is a literary and not a strictly literal translation. But a fidelity to the meaning, the sense of the words and the structure of the thought, has been preserved: in fact the method has been to start with a bare and scrupulously exact rendering of the actual language and adhere to that as the basis of the interpretation; for it is only so that we can find out the actual thoughts of

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* *The writings on and translations of the Veda that Sri Aurobindo published in the* Arya *are now published in* The Secret of the Veda with Selected Hymns, *volume 15 of* THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO. – *Ed.*

** *The 1946 edition of* Hymns to the Mystic Fire, *containing the translations referred to here, is reproduced in Part One of the present volume. – Ed.*

these ancient mystics. But any rendering of such great poetry as the hymns of the Rig Veda, magnificent in their colouring and images, noble and beautiful in rhythm, perfect in their diction, must, if it is not to be merely dead scholastic work, bring at least a faint echo of their poetic force, – more cannot be done in a prose translation and in so different a language. The turn of phrase and the syntax of English and Vedic Sanskrit are poles asunder; to achieve some sense of style and natural writing one has constantly to turn the concentrated speech of the Veda into a looser, more diluted English form. Another stumbling-block for the translator is the ubiquitous *double entendre* marking in one word the symbol and the thing symbolised, Ray and Cow, clear light of the mind and clarified butter, horses and spiritual power; one has to invent phrases like the "herds of the light" or "the shining herds" or to use devices such as writing the word horse with a capital H to indicate that it is a symbolic horse that is meant and not the common physical animal; but very often the

symbol has to be dropped, or else the symbol has to be kept and the inner meaning left to be understood;* I have not always used the same phrase though always keeping the same sense, but varied the translation according to the needs of the passage. Often I have been unable to find an adequate English word which will convey the full connotation or colour of the original text; I have used two words instead of one or a phrase or resorted to some other device to give the exact and complete meaning. Besides, there is often a use of antique words or turns of language of which the sense is not really known and can only be conjectured or else different renderings are equally possible. In many passages I have had to leave a provisional rendering; it was intended to keep the final decision on the point until the time when a more considerable body of the hymns had been translated and were ready for publication; but this time has not yet come." (16: 21-23)

* The Rishis sometimes seem to combine two different meanings in the same word; I have occasionally tried to render this double sense.

The Yajna

"This word is of the utmost importance in the Veda. Its subsequent meaning of sacrifice has over clouded the sense of the Scriptures ever since the later half of the Dwapara Yuga; but originally and in the age of Madhuchchhanda it had no shade of this meaning. It is the root यज् with the suffix n adjectival, as explained under अग्नि. यज् is a primary derivative from the initial root य which had a sense of control, restraint, persistence, preservation. This we find in its derivatives यम to order, control, regulate; यत् to use force upon, strive, practise; यक्ष् the habituative, to keep carefully from which यक्ष the guardians of wealth, the *ganas*, hosts of Kuvera; यछ् to importune, entreat, supplicate; यच् to control, to regulate, distribute, give. यज् means to regulate, rule, order, govern. यज्ञ is He who does these things, the Lord, Governor,

Master, Provider, Giver, and in the Veda it is applied to the Supreme Being, Parameshwara, who governs the universe as the Master of Nature, the Disposer of its Laws, the Almighty Providence, the Master of the Dharma. It has a similar sense to the word यमः applied to the single god of Dharma, Yama. There is an echo of this use in the Vishnu Purana when it is said that Vishnu is born in the Satya Yuga as Yajna, in the Treta as the Chakravarti Raja, in the Dwapara as Vyasa. In the Satya Yuga mankind is governed by its own pure, perfect and inborn nature spontaneously fulfilling the *dharma* under the direct inspiration of God within as Yajna, the Lord of the Dharma. In the Treta the Dharma is maintained by the sceptre and the sword guarding the unwritten law. In the Dwapara the Dharma is supported by codes, Shastras, a regulated and written system." (16: 467-68)

The Devas

"The Devas are strictly speaking the sattwic and rajasic powers of the sukshma worlds, Swar and Bhuvar, who govern or assist the operations of intelligence and energy in man; but it came to be applied to all beings of the other worlds without distinction, even to the tamasic forces, beings and powers who hurt and oppose these very operations. It is in this latter sense that the Persians used it after the teachings of Jarad-drashta (Zaruthrusta, Jaratkaru) had accustomed them to apply other terms to the beneficent and helpful powers." (16: 468)

The Seven Principles of the Vedic Psychology

"Man, according to Vedic psychology, consists of seven principles, in which the Atman cases itself, – annam, gross matter; prana, vital energy; manas, intelligent mind; vijnanam, ideal mind; ananda, pure or essential bliss; chit, pure or essential awareness; sat, pure or essential being. In the present stage of our evolution ordinary humanity has developed annam, prana and manas for habitual use; and well-developed men are able to use with power the vijnanam acting not in its own habitation, स्वे दमे, nor in its own rupa, vijnanam, but in the mind and as reasoning faculty, buddhi; extraordinary men are able to aid the action of manas and buddhi proper by the vijnanam acting in the intelligent mind indeed and so out of its proper sphere, but in its own form as ideal consciousness – the combination of manasic and vijnani action making

what is called genius, pratibhanam, a reflection or luminous response in the mind to higher ideation; the Yogin goes beyond to the vijnanam itself or, if he is one of the greatest Rishis, like Yajnavalkya, to the ananda. None in ordinary times go beyond the ananda in the waking state, for the chit and sat are only attainable in sushupti, because only the first five sheaths or panchakosha are yet sufficiently developed to be visible except to the men of the Satya Yuga and even by them the two others are not perfectly seen. From the vijnanam to the annam is the aparardha or lower part of existence where Vidya is dominated by Avidya; from the ananda to the sat is the parardha or higher half in which Avidya is dominated by Vidya and there is no ignorance, pain or limitation."

(16: 469-70)

The Fundamental Knowledge Underlying the Veda

"In man as he is at present developed, the intelligent mind is the most important psychological faculty and it is with a view to the development of the intelligent mind to its highest purity and capacity that the hymns of the Veda are written. In this mind there are successively the following principles: sukshma annam, the refinement of the gross annam out of which the physical part of the manahkosha or sukshma deha is made; sukshma prana, the vital energy in the mind which acts in the nadis or nervous system of the sukshma deha and which is the agent of desire; chitta or receptive consciousness, which receives all impressions from without and within by tamasic reaction, but, being tamasic, does not make them evident to the sattwic consciousness or intelligent awareness which we call knowledge, so that we remember with the

chitta everything noticed or unnoticed, but that knowledge is useless for our life owing to its lying enveloped in tamas; hrit or the rajasic reaction to impressions which we call feeling or emotion, or, when it is habitual, character; manas or active definite sensational consciousness rendering impressions of all kinds into percept or concept by a sattwic reaction called intelligence or thought which men share with the animals; buddhi or rational, imaginative and intellectually mnemonic faculty, observing, retaining, comparing, reasoning, comprehending, combining and creating, the amalgam of which functions we call intellect; manasa ananda or the pure bliss of existence manifesting through the impure mind, body and prana impurely, ie mixed with pain of various kinds, but in itself pure, because disinterested, ahaituka; manasa tapas or the

pure will-power acting towards knowledge, feeling and deed, impurely through the impure mind, body and prana, ie mixed with weakness, dull inertia and ignorance or error; but in itself pure because ahaituka, disinterested, without any ulterior purpose or preference that can interfere with truth of thought, act and emotion; ahaituka sat or pure realisation of existence, operating through the impure organs as ahankara and bheda, egoism and limitation, but in itself pure and aware of unity in difference, because disinterested, not attached to any particular form or name in manifestation; and, finally, Atman or Self seated in mind. This Atman is Sat and Asat, positive and negative, Sad Brahma and Sunyam Brahma; both positive and negative are contained in the Sa or Vasudeva and Tat or Parabrahman, and Sa and Tat are both the same." (16: 470-71)

The Three Divisions of the Buddhi – the Sixth Principle of the Intelligent Mind

"The Buddhi again is divided into understanding (medha), which merely uses the knowledge given by sensation and like manas, chitta, hrit and prana is adhina, anisha, subject to sensation; reason or buddhi proper, (smriti or dhi, also called prajna), which is superior to sensation and contradicts it in the derived light of a higher knowledge; and direct jnanam, satyam or sattwam which is itself that light of higher knowledge. All these faculties have their own devatas, one or many, each with his ganas or subordinate ministers. The

jiva or spirit using these faculties is called the hansa, he who flies or evolves upward; when he leaves the lower and rises to the sacchidananda in the mind, using Sat, chit and ananda only, and reposing in the Sad Atma or in Vasudeva, then he is called the Paramhansa, one who has gone or evolved to the highest in that stage of evolution. This is the fundamental knowledge underlying the Veda, the loss of which, aided by the corruption of nirukta, has led to the present confusion and degradation of its meaning." (16: 471)

Vedic Devatas and Daityas or Dasyus and Their Respective Roles in the Evolution of Human Consciousness

"Chandra is the devata of the smriti or prajna; Surya of the satyam; Indra of the understanding and manas; Vayu of the sukshma prana; Mitra, Varuna, Aryama and Bhaga are the four masters of the emotional mind or character; Brihaspati of the sahaituka chit or tapas of knowledge; Brahma of the sahaituka sat; Agni of the sahaituka tapas etc. This is only an indication. The various characteristics and energies of the gods are best developed by an examination of the Veda itself. The gods strive to function perfectly for the Lord or Yajna, the Isha, Master of the adhara or sevenfold medium of manifestation; the Titans or Daityas, equally divine, try to upset

this perfect functioning. Their office is to disturb that which is established in order to push man below or give him an opportunity of rising higher by breaking that which was good and harmonious in itself but imperfect, and in any case to render him dissatisfied with anything short of perfection and drive him continually to the Infinite, either by the uttama gati to Vasudeva or, if he will not have that, by the adhama gati to Prakriti. The Vedic Aryans sought to overcome the Daityas or Dasyus by the aid of the gods; afterwards the gods had themselves to be overcome in order that man might reach his goal." (16: 471-72)

"Agni in the sphere of material energies is the master of tejas, the third and central material principle in the five known to Vedic science. Tejas itself is of seven kinds, chhaya or negative luminosity which is the principle of the annakosha; twilight or dosha, the basis of the pranakosha being tejas modified by chhaya; tejas proper or simple clarity and effulgence, dry light, which is the basis of the manahkosha; jyoti or solar light, brilliance which is the basis of the vijnanakosha; agni or fiery light, which is the basis of the chitkosha; vidyut or electrical illumination, which is the basis of the anandakosha; and prakasha which is the basis of the satkosha. Each of the seven has its own appropriate energy; for the energy is the essential reality and the light only a characteristic accompaniment of the energy. Of all these Agni is the greatest in this world, greater even than Vidyut – although the God of the vaidyuta energy is Vishnu himself who is the Lord of the ananda, the vaidyuto manavah, electrical Man, of the Upanishads. In the vijnana, Surya as well as Vishnu is greater than Agni, but here he and Vishnu both work under the dominant energy of Agni and for the satisfaction of Indra, – Vishnu in the Upanishads being younger than Indra, – Upendra. Translated into the language of physics, this means that Agni, commanding as he does heat and cold, is the fundamental active energy behind all phenomena of light and heat; the Sun is merely a reservoir of light and heat, the peculiar luminous blaze of the sun being only one form of tejas and what we call sunlight is composed of the static energy of prakasha or essential light which is the basis of the satkosha, the electrical energy or vaidyutam, and the tejas of agni modified by the nature of Surya and determining all other forms of light. The prakasha and vaidyutam can only become active when they enter into Agni and work under the conditions of his being and Agni himself is the supplier of Surya; he creates jyoti, he creates tejas, he creates, negatively, chhaya. Right or wrong, this is the physics of the Veda. Translated into the language of psychology, it means that in the intelligent mind, which now predominates, neither jnanam nor ananda can be fully developed, though essentially superior to mind; not even Soma, the rational buddhi, can really govern; but it is Indra full of Soma, the understanding based on the senses and strengthened by the buddhi, who is supreme and for whose satisfaction Soma, Surya, Agni and even the supreme Vishnu work. The reason on which man prides himself, is merely a link in the evolution from the manas to the vijnanam and must serve either the senses or the ideal cognition; if it tries to work for itself it only leads to universal agnosticism, philosophic doubt and the arrest of all knowledge. It must not be thought that the Veda uses these names merely as personifications of psychological and physical forces; it regards these gods as realities standing behind the psychological and physical operations, since no energy can conduct itself, but all need some conscious centre or centres from or through which they proceed."

(16: 472-73)

The Present Working of Vishnu

"A doubt will naturally arise, how Vishnu, the supreme Lord, can be the Upendra of the Vedas. The answer is that, whatever energy is of supreme importance at a particular stage of the evolution, is taken up by Vishnu-Virat as his especial care. We have seen that the Ananda is now highest in the developed evolution. Vishnu is therefore now preeminently the Lord of the Ananda and when he comes down into the material world he stands in the

Sun as the supreme electrical force involved in Agni and evolving out of him, which is the physical counterpart of Ananda and without which no action in the world can proceed. He is not inferior, he only subordinates himself, pretending to serve, while really by service he commands. But Upendratwa is not the highest plane of Vishnu's manifestation, the param dhama; rather it is a special function here in the lowest dhama. Upendratwa is not Vishnutwa, but only one of its workings." (16: 473-74)

The Supreme Importance of Agni

"Agni, therefore, is master of tejas, especially fiery tejas, and the agent of the sahaituka tapas in the mind. In the language of modern psychology, this sahaituka tapas is Will in action, – not desire, but Will embracing desire and exceeding it. It is not even choice, wish or intention. Will, in the Vedic idea, is essentially knowledge taking the form of force. Agni, therefore, is purely mental force, necessary to all concentration. Once we perceive this Vedic conception, we realise the immense importance of Agni and are in a position to understand the hymn we are studying." (16: 474)

The Supreme Importance of the Word Yajna in the Veda

"The word यज्ञ is of supreme importance in the Veda. In the ceremonial interpretation यज्ञ is always understood as sacrifice and no other conception admitted. The Veda cannot be understood as the source of all Indian spirituality and divine knowledge, if this materialistic interpretation is accepted. In reality यज्ञ is the name of the Supreme Lord Vishnu himself; it also means धर्म or योग, and by a later preference of meaning it came to signify sacrifice, because sacrifice in the later Dwapara Yuga became the one dharma and yoga which dominated and more and more tended to replace all others. It is necessary to recover the proper meaning of this important word by Nirukta, and, in order to [do] so, to lay down briefly the principle of Nirukta." (16: 475)

The Principle of Nirukta and the Pure Sanskrit of the Satyayuga

"The Sanscrit language is the devabhasha or original language spoken by men in Uttara Meru at the beginning of the Manwantara; but in its purity it is not the Sanscrit of the Dwapara or the Kali, it is the language of the Satyayuga based on the true and perfect relation of vak and artha. Every one of its vowels and consonants has a particular and inalienable force which exists by the nature of things and not by development or human choice; these are the fundamental sounds which lie at the basis of the Tantric bijamantras and constitute the efficacy of the mantra itself. Every vowel and every consonant in the original language had certain primary meanings which arose out of this

essential shakti or force and were the basis of other derivative meanings. By combination with the vowels, the consonants, and, without any combination, the vowels themselves formed a number of primary roots, out of which secondary roots were developed by the addition of other consonants. All words were formed from these roots, simple words by the addition again of pure or mixed vowel and consonant terminations with or without modification of the root and more complex words by the principle of composition. This language increasingly corrupted in sense and sound becomes the later Sanscrit of the Treta, Dwapara and Kali Yuga, being sometimes partly purified and again

corrupted and again partly purified so that it never loses all apparent relation to its original form and structure. Every other language, however remote, is a corruption formed by detrition and perversion of the original language into a Prakrit or the Prakrit of a Prakrit and so on to increasing stages of impurity. The superior purity of the Indian language is the reason of its being called the Sanscrit and not given any local name, its basis being universal and eternal; and it is always a rediscovery of the Sanscrit tongue as the primary language that prepares first for a true understanding of human language and, secondly, for a fresh purification of Sanscrit itself." (16: 475-76)

The Four Yugas

"The Vishnu Purana tells us that Vishnu in the Satya Yuga incarnates as Yajna, in the Treta as the conqueror and king, in the Dwapara as Vyasa, the compiler, codifier and lawgiver. It is not meant that He incarnates as sacrifice. The Satya Yuga is the age of human perfection when a harmonious order is established, the perfect or chatuspad dharma, whose maintenance depends on the full and universal possession of Yoga or direct relation to God and that again on the continual presence of incarnate Vishnu as the Adored, the Master and centre of dharma and yoga. The chatuspad dharma is the perfect harmony of the four dharmas, Brahmanyam, Kshatram, Vaishyam and Shaudram; for this reason separate castes do not exist in the Satya Yuga. In the Treta the

Brahmanyam begins to fail, but remains as a subordinate force to help the Kshatram which then governs humanity. Mankind is maintained no longer by viryam or tapas easily sustained by inherent Brahmajnanam, but by viryam or tapas sustaining the Brahmajnanam with some difficulty and preventing its collapse. Vishnu incarnates as the Kshatriya, the incarnate centre of viryam and tapas. In the Dwapara, the Brahmanyam farther fails and turns into mere knowledge or intellectuality, the Kshatram becomes a subordinate force supporting the Vaishyam which has its turn of supremacy. The main qualities of the Vaishya are kaushalam, order and method, and therefore the Dwapara is the age of codification, ritual, Shastra, external appliances to maintain the

failing internal spirituality; danam, and therefore hospitality, liberality, the sacrifice and the dakshina begin to swallow up other dharmas – it is the yuga yajniya, – the age of sacrifice; bhoga, and therefore the Veda is used for procuring enjoyment in this world and the next, bhogaishwaryagatim prati. Vishnu incarnates as the lawgiver, ritualist and Shastrakara to preserve the knowledge and practice of the dharma by the aid of the intellect and abhyasa, customary practice based on intellectual knowledge. In the Kali all breaks down except love and service, the dharma of the Shudra by which humanity is maintained and from time to time purified; for the jnanam breaks down and is replaced by worldly, practical reason, the viryam breaks down and is replaced

by lazy mechanical appliances for getting things done lifelessly with the least trouble, dana, yajna and shastra break down and are replaced by calculated liberality, empty ritual and tamasic social forms and etiquette. Love is brought in by the Avataras to break down these dead forms in order that the world may be rejuvenated and a new order and a new Satya Yuga emerge, when the Lord will again incarnate as Yajna, the supreme Vishnu in the full manifestation of the chatuspad dharma, knowledge, power, enjoyment and love.

It has been said that Vishnu in our present stage of evolution is preeminently the Lord of the Ananda, but he is also the Sanmay Brahman and the Tapomay. It is as the Sanmay that He is Yajna – the Sat containing in it the

Chit or Tapas and the Ananda. It must be remembered that while in the Aparardha we envisage Brahman through thought, feeling, action etc, in the Parardha we envisage Him through essential realisation superior to thought, feeling and action. In the Ananda we realise essential delight; in the Chit, essential energy, intelligence and will; in the Sat, essential truth or be-ness. The Sat is therefore called the Mahasatyam and Mahakaranam, the highest truth in the manifestation, out of which everything proceeds. It is by this Mahasatyam – distinguished from the ordinary satyam or karanam called objectivelymahat and subjectively vijnanam, the fourth of the seven bhumis, – that Vishnu as Yajna supports the dharma and yoga in the Satya Yuga. He is the Sad Brahma in manifestation." (16: 478-79)

One of the Most Fundamental Ideas of the Veda, Purana and Tantra

"It must be remembered that the Yoga was to the old Aryans a battle between the Devas and Daityas, the gods being the warriors who fought the Daityas for man and were made strong and victorious by the क्रियाs or effective practices of Yoga, the Daityas being the Dasyus or enemies of Yajna and Yoga. This will become clearer and clearer as we proceed. This view of life as well as Yoga, which is only the sublimation of life, as a struggle between the Devas & Daityas is one of the most fundamental ideas of Veda, Purana, Tantra and every practical system in Hinduism. Agni is par excellence the warrior whom the Daityas most dread, because he is full of the ahaituka tapas, against

which, if properly used and supported by the Yajamana, the Yogin, no evil force can prevail. The Ahaituka Tapas destroys them all. It is the mighty effective and fighting force which once called in prepares perfect siddhi and an almost omnipotent control over our nature and our surroundings. Even when ashuddha, impure, tapas fights the enemy tamas; when shuddha, when the very action of Agni, it brings viryam, it brings jnanam, it brings Ananda, it brings mukti. Hotaram means therefore the warrior, the destroyer of the Daityas, Agni jatavedas; havis and hava mean battle or strength in violent action; hu to fight." (16: 483)

Vedanda – the Great Fundamental Body of Truth

"In order to look into the words of the inspired writing and comprehend, so far as mere intellectual exposition can help us to comprehend, their profound meaning, we must begin with the Vedanta, the great fundamental body of truth which all Veda assumes; for it is by the passing into oblivion of this fundamental knowledge that we have lost the key to the meaning of the Vedas, and it is only by a return to the knowledge that we can recover it. There are two states of being in consciousness, the divine Brahmi sthiti of blissful unity, from which we descend, and the divided state of the Jivatman into which we have descended. Parabrahman reveals himself first as Yajna, the Supreme Soul and Master of Things, Atman and Iswara; He is utterly one as Atman, He is

both One and Many as Iswara, but always without losing His unity, always one without a second, ekam evadwitiyam, because the Many, both in their individuality and totality, are nothing but the One. Nothing is but God; we too are God, each one of us is He, and that which we dwell in is God. The fundamental sayings, So Aham; Tattwamasi, Swetaketo; sarvam khalu idam Brahma, are the sum of all Veda and Vedanta. All is merely the manifestation of Him for the sake of various delight; for Ananda the worlds are, from Ananda they proceeded, by Ananda they abide, to Ananda they return. Anandaddhyeva khalvimani bhutani jayante, anandena jatani jivanti, anandam prayantyabhisanvishantiti. In this manifestation He as the Universal God

pervades, governs, surpasses all. He is the master of the play, – यजति, He controls, rules and arranges it. This is Yajna. He again as the manifold individual God, ourselves, attaches Himself to every created thing (sarvabhuteshu) and limits not Himself but His manifestation in each adhara, arranging and perpetually developing in each a particular nature or law of life, a swabhava, a dharma. So 'rthan yathatathyato vyadadhacchaśwatibhyah samabhyah. When we identify ourselves with the play of this various Nature reflected upon our consciousness and lose sight of our godhead, then we resort too utterly to the principle of Avidya, God's power of not knowing Himself, we become its servants, we are subject to Apara Maya, we stumble about buffeted by grief and error and all

sorts of vikaras and viparita vrittis, we know ourselves as the Jivatman and other than the Paramatman, we make division where there is no division; we turn play into bitter earnest and love and joy into hatred and weeping and gnashing of teeth. Nevertheless, this forgetfulness is allowed in order that our secret souls in the Parardha and Brahman in them may enjoy the viparita ananda, the contrary or perverse delight, of the dualities. When we forget the play of Nature on our consciousness, shut our consciousness to it, refuse to reflect it, then we resort too utterly to the principle of Vidya, God's power of knowing His essential unity, we become subject to the Maya of Knowledge, we seem to baffle and bring to nought for ourselves the joy of the Lila, and disappear into

some principle of Oneness, Prakriti, Asad Brahman, Sad Brahman, Nirvana or Sacchidananda. It is, or seems, an unnecessary movement; for the world remains just as before so long as God chooses that it shall remain and we cannot end it by our precipitation, and for ourselves we always were Brahman, we always will be Brahman and we are not any the more Brahman by our flight into the Absolute. Nevertheless, this withdrawal too is allowed in order that certain select spirits may help the joy of the manifest world from behind the veil by their immanent blessedness. For we have no need of laya and no need of lila, no need of freedom and no need of bondage, but all things are for delight and not from necessity. But when we remember always and continually

our oneness with the Supreme, our eternal and indefeasible Godhead, and at the same time allow Nature to reflect its movements on our souls as on a magical canvas according to His eternal purpose, then we have inalienable joy, then we bring heaven upon earth, then we fulfil the highest purpose of existence. We are then free even when we seem to be bound, and even if we are born again, we are janmasiddha and janmashuddha, nityamukta, and wear the temporary limitations of Nature as children allow themselves to be bound in a game with bonds which the Yajna, Master of the Revels looses Himself when we have given Him and ourselves the intended and perfect satisfaction."

(16: 511-13)

Steps or Ladders in the Manifestation of the Unknowable

"The Isha Upanishad is the Upanishad of the Rigveda and it is there that its spiritual foundations are revealed. To make of Avidya a bridge to immortality and of Vidya the means of keeping our grasp on immortality, is the common aim of the Rigvedic Rishis. This is the keynote, this is the one great tone swelling through its thousand undertones. And as our fingers fall on string after string of this mighty and many-stringed harp of God, they return always one cry, the cry of joyous battle, of war between Deva and Daitya, between mortality and immortality, between man's temporary imperfection and his eternal perfectibility.

In this holy war the Gods are our chief helpers. There are seven planes of cosmic consciousness on which the soul of man plays with the love and

wisdom and power of God. When first the unknowable Parabrahman turns towards knowableness in this partial manifestation, – for utterly That allows itself not to be known, – the Absolute first becomes – to the possibility of knowledge, not to its actuality – the Eternal Being or Paratpara Purusha, paro 'vyaktad avyaktah sanatanah, who beyond the uttermost darkness of the Asat, Sunyam Brahma or eternal nothingness which is the ultimate negation of this manifest existence shines ever with the light unknown of which seven rays are sufficient to illuminate all these universal systems. He is that perceivable but unknowable glory seated for ever beyond the darkness that swallows up the worlds, tamasah parastat. Out of Him the Asad Brahma appears, the general negation, through which this mighty manifestation in the seven universes passes

back into the unknowableness of Parabrahman; and out of the Asad, the Sat, the general affirmation which we know as pure Atman, Self of itself, not yet of things, where nothing is yet differentiated and even Chit and Ananda are involved inmere featureless existence. Asad va idam agra asit, tatah sad ajayata. Atman is featureless, unconnected, inactive, alakshanam avyavaharyam akriyam. It must be featureless in order to contain all possible feature; it must be unconnected with the play of the worlds in order that Chit may play upon Sat with perfect freedom and put forth into the worlds without limitation whatever name, form or being the Lord commands Her to put forth; it must be inactive in order that there may be illimitable possibilities for Her action. For Atman is the foundation and continent of our worlds and if Atman had any definite

feature or any bondage of connection or any law of activity, the world play which it supports and contains would be limited by that feature, by that connection or by that activity and God in His manifestation would be bound and not free. Therefore it is that as the featureless, free, inactive Sad Atman the Eternal first manifests Himself on this side of the darkness of Asat. Next, in Atman, He appears to His self-knowledge as the Nirgun Brahma, the Being without quality of the Parabrahman, manifesting an impersonal self-existence, an impersonal self-awareness and an impersonal self-delight, Sat, Chit, Ananda. This too is Tat or That, but being unlike Parabrahman Tat in manifestation can be described, defined, cognised, not as anything else but as Atman and as Sacchidanandam. Tat in manifestation can be aware or unaware of the worlds

and It can be both aware and unaware, but its cognition is without relation. It has no connection with the worlds in which it cognises and perceives activity merely as the play of a dream on the surface of its imperturbable quiet. On the calm of the Nirgunam God next imposes Himself (adhyaropayati) as the Personality of the Eternal, the Paratpara Purusha manifest in relation to the world. Here first we get relation, quality, activity. At first, the Personality merely contains and informs the activity which plays in it not as unrealised dream, but as realised though not binding actuality and truth, as an infinite active blissfulness of the Chit in the Sacchidananda in place of an infinite passive blissfulness." (16: 513-15)

The Reality of Impersonal and Personal,
Nirguna and Saguna and the True Wisdom

"The indifference of the Impersonal to the play of the Personal does not make the play an unreality or an immense cosmic falsehood with which Brahman amuses Himself or distresses Himself for a season, any more than the featurelessness of the Sad Atman makes feature a lie and an impossibility. On the contrary just as that featurelessness is the necessary condition for features to manifest truly, infinitely, divinely – for Truth, infinity and Deity are one, – so the detachment of the Impersonal is simply the condition for the security of the soul when it plunges into the myriad-billowed ocean of manifest existence. The Impersonal is detachment from guna and it is as detached from guna that God possesses and enjoys guna, otherwise He would be bound by and could not rightly enjoy it. It is because the tranquillity and indifference of

the Nirguna is concealed within us that our souls can with impunity play at being bound, at being ignorant and at being sorrowful without being really bound by our bonds or darkened by our ignorance or destroyed by our sorrow. For being omnipotent God within us can always go back to the tranquillity within Him and look upon these things as a dream that falls away from Him the moment He cares to wake. It was a dream, but not a dream, just as when we are aware of sights and sounds without attending to them or remember the past and it is to us dreamlike, swapnamaya. The world has a reality, but the Impersonal does not interest Itself in that reality, not attending to it; it does not properly recognise it except as a thing that is and yet is not, the Maya of Shankara. This also is not a lie but truth, not a foolish, blissful dream, but a

perfect reality. Because it was avyakta in the Nirguna, it is not therefore false when it becomes vyakta any more than an apple hidden is an apple non-existent. The world is not utter reality because it is thing in manifestation, not thing in itself. Yet it is real because it is a manifestation of God in Himself and God who is satyam conceives nothing that is not satyam, nothing that is not Himself. He is not a seer of falsehoods. Anritam is merely a vikara or perversion of satyam. All ignorance is really partial or misplaced knowledge, all bondage a concealment of freedom, all evil good in the making, all sorrow a veiled delight. This the Saguna Brahman perceives and knows and as Vasudeva, or tranquil Personality, He utterly enjoys without any distinction of pleasure and grief, good and evil, the infinite play of the world within Himself. The Saguna is

Sacchidananda envisaging cosmic activity. On the tranquillity [of] Vasudeva God by a new adhyaropa manifests Himself to Himself as the Sarvam Brahman in all things; He becomes the Lilamaya, the eternal Child frolicking in the Universe, the Playmate, Lover, Master, Teacher and Friend of all His creations; He is Hari, He is Srikrishna, He is the Personal God whom we love and adore and whom we pursue and seize through the Ages. Then, descending a step farther, avataran, He is known to Himself not only as the universal Lord of the Lila, but as the individual, Narayana concealed in Nara, playing through him, different from him, one with him. Many Adwaitins of the Kaliyuga insist that God is a myth and only the Sad Atman is a reality, just as many Buddhists deny the Sad Atman as well and say that only the Asad is a reality, but if we

know only the Sad Atman or only the Asad, if we follow after only the Nirguna or only the Saguna, if we only embrace Vasudeva-Krishna-Narayan, then we know not the Eternal except in an aspect and we fall under the censure of the Upanishad, dabhram evapi twam vettha Brahmano rupam. We must shut our eyes upon nothing, renounce nothing as absolutely false or illusive if we would know the All and be perfectly liberated. Only when we gaze we must gaze aright and see God in all things, not things as aught but God. Our fathers did not commit the error of sectarianism or a partial philosophy. They were mighty as Gods or Titans, not like the men of the Kali Yuga who shout and quarrel over their imperfect philosophies and little bounded religions; their souls were spacious enough to take in all truth for their portion." (16: 515-17)

Materialists and Evolution

"Brahman at first becomes involved in gross matter, – he becomes or seems to become Annam, the conscious principle of Bhu. In pure Annam consciousness is involved, implicit, latent; from annam it has to develop or manifest the other six principles and this development or manifestation is the evolution of the modern Jadavadins. It develops them here, under the law of the universal harmony, in annam and the Jadavadins perceiving this principle of evolution, imagine not unnaturally that it is annam which is evolving and suppose the other six, even Mind, to be mere changes and movements of annam. At first prana or vitality which is latent in the metal, manifests in the tree; then mind which is latent in the tree manifests in the animal, first as chitta

or mere receptive consciousness, then as manas or sensational consciousness without any self-conscious centre of individuality, then as the discriminatory faculty or buddhi with its companion Ahankara, egoism, the self-conscious principle. In the animals reason is awake, but elementary and has to be largely replaced by vijnanam, intuitive faculty manifesting not in intellect but in sensational & vital consciousness. Then in man discriminative reason takes the lead, for discriminative reason is the shadow of the vijnanam, the link between the animal and the god and it is not till a fit body is formed for the works of reason that the spiritual evolution begins and the development of the higher states of consciousness is possible. Man is that fit body, sukritam

eva, well indeed and beautifully made as a habitation for the gods. His business is to raise the animal in him and develop beyond manomaya being, transcending & subordinating even its crown and glory which he considers his peculiar privilege, the discriminative and imaginative reason. For he has to develop vijnanam or ideal thought on which all Veda is based, he has to develop Ananda, Chit and Sat, the higher hemisphere of cosmic consciousness. In the present stage of his evolution he can only develop consciously as far as Ananda with Sat & Chit implicit in Ananda; to Chit & Sat proper he cannot arrive in his waking state, but only in the deep trance of Sushupta Samadhi, concentration of consciousness in a state of illuminated Sleep. He began his task as the

supreme animal, Pashu, Vanara, Nrisingha, developing all these potentialities purely in the annamaya kosha or physical sheath of his being in Annam & Prana; he went on as the mixed animal, first the Pishacha or scientific, curious animal, then the Pramatha or aesthetic, curious animal; and from these levels climbed to the condition of the Rakshasa or animal-god who satisfies egoism through his sensational and emotional impulses; he is now the Asura, Titan or demi-god satisfying in the heart & buddhi his emotional and intellectual egoism. He has eventually to become the whole god; he must learn to satisfy himself without egoism through ideal knowledge and blissful spirituality. But always being in the annamaya world, in Bhu, resting always on the Anna Atma, he is

compelled to base himself on the body even when rising above the body. The individual may leave the body, but the race has to keep it; it has not to leave the animal in humanity behind in its progress but to raise the animal until it is divine. It is his first business therefore to be conscious not only in the physical sheaths of the Annakosha and Pranakosha, – this he normally is, – but in the mental sheath or manahkosha, and there in his normal condition he is only partially active. Once awake in the mental body, he has to extend his waking consciousness, – whoever can so far develop, – into the Vijnana and Anandakoshas." (16: 517-19)

The Arrangement of the Created Worlds

"The Vedantins of old recognised that divine consciousness on whatever level always creates for itself through Prakriti or Chit, its active creative knowledge, a world to live in & a body for its habitation in the world, and in that world and in that body manifests as a part of the Atman reflecting their conditions. If therefore there are seven distinct states of consciousness, there must equally be seven conditions of the Atman, seven distinct worlds with their denizens and seven kinds of bodies. These seven states are Annam, Prana, Manas, Vijnanam, Ananda, Chit and Sat; these seven worlds are Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka and Satyaloka; these seven conditions of the Atman are the Visva Atma, Prana Atma, Buddha

Atma, Mahan Atma, Mahajana Atma, Chaitanya Atma and Satya Atma; these seven bodies are the Annakosha, Pranakosha, Manahkosha, Vijnanakosha, Anandakosha, Chitkosha and Satkosha. In each world the denizens, although living predominatingly in the body proper to their own element of conscious existence, also live latently or consciously in the other six, and all have therefore seven bodies, each in communication with its proper plane or world & containing its proper principle of consciousness. Man, living here in the Bhu, has, he too, his seven bodies. He has for instance the Manahkosha containing his pure mental consciousness and, although mind can & does play in the other sheaths, it can only be by becoming awake & living in his mental body as well as his physical that he can realise the utmost potentialities of pure mental

activity. It is because he has these other bodies, that he can, if he will, communicate with the other worlds and have relations with the Gods.

This then is the arrangement of the created universe, and the world we live in is its base, not only earth but all these sidereal systems, Bhuloka, the material universe, our present inheritance. Being the lowest of the Aparardha worlds, it is according to a common action of God's love and wisdom, at once the least and the most privileged, the least privileged because here alone grief and pain are utterly felt, here alone is the whole pain and struggle of evolution, – the most privileged because here alone is the evolution eventually complete in all the potentiality of its parts and heaven perfectly realised in a sevenfold blissfulness. Above us are the six other worlds, homes of the gods who change

not ever, except by entering human bodies. First, there is Bhuvar, the Pranamaya world, where Prana is at its height, vitality is stupendous, grief and pain are felt but enjoyed, sensuous enjoyment is perfect and prolonged. Then there is Swar, lower & higher, Swarga and Chandraloka, where Indra and the greater gods reside, manas is at its height, sensation, emotion, aesthetic pleasure and intellectual joy are of a mighty intensity, grief and pain are not felt except as another kind of pleasure and rapture, mental enjoyment is perfect and prolonged. Above there is Mahas or Suryaloka where vijnanam is at its height, intuitive ideal perception, inspiration & revelation are the normal processes of knowledge and the joys of ideal and direct knowledge unmixed with falsehood and error are perfect and prolonged. It is this state of consciousness which is so often called in the Veda, satyam, ritam, brihat and technically termed

Bhuma, Mahas or Mahat, the abundant, full or mighty. These are the worlds of the lower hemisphere and of these states of consciousness we can have some conception, we can imagine and even realise or almost realise the condition of the beings who reside in these worlds, to the very highest. But what of the three supreme states of consciousness? what of the three worlds of the higher hemisphere? It is more difficult to conceive of them or to realise what man himself will be or is when he develops them – is, for even now by Yoga he can develop the Ananda. Still, because, debarred though we are from the actual tread of these infinite heavens, we can experience them indirectly and as conditioned by our existence on these lower levels, therefore some idea of them, not altogether inadequate, may be formed by those of us who have a touch of the ideal faculty." (16: 519-21)

Divine Manifestation through a Purified and Liberated Mentality

"The divine force pervading this mortal kingdom with its bright limbs goes all about the sevenfold conscious being manifested in the heaven of pure mind, it fills our whole purified & liberated mentality with itself. Then these activities in us of mentalised infinite being, mentalised infinite force, mentalised infinite beatitude, mentalised ideality, mind pure in itself, mentalised life-energy, mentalised material being work perfectly & without harm to us or deficiency in themselves; they do not devour & break up the life & body by their unharmonised intensities, neither are they dominated by the lower energies

(adabdhah); they are not revealed in their sheer nakedness of self-being, for all of them are rendered in the mental values proper to this existence of mind in material life, neither are they covered & concealed by the obscurations of the lower & false values given by our present tainted & muddied perceptions. The truth of them shines through the thin mental veil they wear. Here, in this lower kingdom, the seven in their eternal youth & vigour, children of one universal mother Prakriti, are as seven women with a common child; all of them, that is to say, enjoy the possession of this divine force, Agni, which they

formerly kept concealed in their workings, but now hold manifested as if a child born to them in the world of human life. The imagery of Veda only seems to us confused & unintelligibly mystic so long as we have not the clue; once the clue is in our hands there is an admirable force, clearness & sublimity in every word & image of the sacred writings. The idea is that of the existence of the mental being man in this world made absolutely full in all its parts & harmonious by the completest power, range & complexity possible to our beings; this is the great result of the waking & working of divine Tapas in the human soul." (16: 618-19)

The Action of Divine Tapas in a Mental Being

"Viswamitra pursues his free but consistent strain of ancient symbolic imagery. As the divine Tapas grows, as it pervades the harmonised consciousness of the purified nature, it begins to gather its masses of force into definite forms, into all the forms of life & thought and action and these spread themselves in the mind which becomes a womb of rich faculty, a flowing river of sweetness & delight; with this richness and delight the seven streams of our being, force, bliss, ideality, mind, life, body are all fattened & nourished; they stand here अत्र in this lower kingdom, receiving these life-giving nectars. Mental being & bodily being become harmonised in us, each answering to the calls of each other, not at discord, their mutual vibrations equalised, not harmful by one unevenly dominating, the other suffering; they are now मही, wide & vast, partaking of the infinity of the higher realms. They are the two mothers of Agni, like the rivers, because in them & out of them the force manifests."

(16: 620)

The Riddle of the Interpretation of the Veda

"The interpretation of the Rigveda is perhaps the most difficult and disputed question with which the scholarship of today has to deal. This difficulty and dispute are not the creation of present-day criticism; it has existed in different forms since very early times. To what is this incertitude due? Partly, no doubt, it arises from the archaic character of a language in which many of the words were obsolete when ancient Indian scholars tried to systematise the traditional learning about the Veda, and especially the great number of different meanings of which the old Sanskrit words are capable. But there is another and more vital difficulty and problem. The Vedic hymns are full of figures and symbols, – of that there can be no least doubt, – and the question is what do these symbols represent, what is their religious or other significance? Are they simply mythological figures with no depth of meaning behind them? Are they

the poetic images of an old Nature-worship, mythological, astronomical, naturalistic, symbols of the action of physical phenomena represented as the action of the gods? Or have they another and more mystic significance? If this question could be solved with an indubitable certitude, the difficulty of language would be no great obstacle; certain hymns and verses might remain obscure, but the general sense, drift, purport of the ancient hymns could be made clear. But the singular feature of the Veda is that none of these solutions, at least as they have been hitherto applied, gives a firm and satisfactory outcome. The hymns remain confused, bizarre, incoherent, and the scholars are obliged to take refuge in the gratuitous assumption that this incoherence is a native character of the text and does not arise from their own ignorance of its central meaning. But so long as we can get no farther than this point, the doubt, the debate must continue." (16: 676-77)

"A few years ago I wrote a series of articles in which I suggested an explanation of the ambiguous character of the Veda. My suggestion hinged on this central idea that these hymns were written in a stage of religious culture which answered to a similar period in Greece and other ancient countries, – I do not suggest that they were contemporary or identical in cult and idea, – a stage in which there was a double face to the current religion, an outer for the people, *profanum vulgus*, an inner for the initiates, the early period of the Mysteries. The Vedic Rishis were mystics who reserved their inner knowledge for the initiates; they shielded it from the vulgar by the use of an alphabet of symbols which could not readily be understood without the initiation, but were perfectly clear and systematic when the signs were once known. These symbols centred around the idea and forms of the sacrifice; for the sacrifice was the universal and central institution of the prevailing cult. The hymns were written round this institution and were understood by the vulgar as ritual chants in praise of the Nature-gods, Indra, Agni, Surya Savitri, Varuna, Mitra and Bhaga, the Aswins, Ribhus, Maruts, Rudra, Vishnu, Saraswati, with the object of provoking by the sacrifice the gifts of the gods, – cows, horses, gold and other forms of wealth of a pastoral people, victory over enemies, safety in travel, sons, servants, prosperity, every kind of material good fortune. But behind this mask of primitive and materialistic naturalism, lay another and esoteric cult which would reveal itself if we once penetrated the meaning of the Vedic symbols. That once caught and rightly read, the whole Rigveda would become clear, consequent, a finely woven, yet straightforward tissue.

According to my theory the outer sacrifice represented in these esoteric terms an inner sacrifice of self-giving and communion with the gods. These gods are powers outwardly of physical, inwardly of psychical nature. Thus Agni outwardly is the physical principle of fire, but inwardly the god of the psychic godward flame, force, will, Tapas; Surya outwardly the solar light, inwardly the god of the illuminating revelatory knowledge; Soma outwardly the moon and the Soma-wine or nectarous moon plant, inwardly the god of the spiritual ecstasy, Ananda. The principal psychical conception of this inner Vedic cult was the idea of the Satyam Ritam Brihat, the Truth, the Law, the Vast. Earth, Air and Heaven symbolised the physical, vital and mental being, but this Truth was situated in the greater heaven, base of a triple Infinity actually and explicitly mentioned in the Vedic riks, and it meant therefore a state of spiritual and supramental illumination. To get beyond earth and sky to Swar, the Sunworld, seat of this illumination, home of the gods, foundation and seat of the Truth, was the achievement of the early Fathers, *pûrve pitarah*, and of the seven Angiras Rishis who founded the Vedic religion. The solar gods, children of Infinity, Adityah, were born in the Truth and the Truth was their home, but they descended into the lower planes and had in each plane

their appropriate functions, their mental, vital and physical cosmic motions. They were the guardians and increasers of the Truth in man and by the Truth, *ritasya pathâ*, led him to felicity and immortality. They had to be called into the human being and increased in their functioning, formed in him, brought in or born, *devavîti*, extended, *devatâti*, united in their universality, *vaisvadevya*.

The sacrifice was represented at once as a giving and worship, a battle and a journey. It was the centre of a battle between the Gods aided by Aryan men on one side and the Titans or destroyers on the opposite faction, Dasyus, Vritras, Panis, Rakshasas, later called Daityas and Asuras, between the powers of the Truth or Light and the powers of falsehood, division, darkness. It was a journey, because the sacrifice travelled from earth to the gods in their heaven,

but also because it made ready the path by which man himself travelled to the home of the Truth. This journey opposed by the Dasyus, thieves, robbers, tearers, besiegers (vritras), was itself a battle. The giving was an inner giving. All the offerings of the outer sacrifice, the cow and its yield, the horse, the Soma were symbols of the dedication of inner powers and experiences to the Lords of Truth. The divine gifts, result of the outer sacrifice, were also symbols of inner divine gifts, the cows of the divine light symbolised by the herds of the Sun, the horse of strength and power, the son of the inner godhead or divine man created by the sacrifice, and so through the whole list. This symbolic

duplication was facilitated by the double meaning of the Vedic words. *Go*, for instance, means both cow and ray; the cows of the dawn and the sun, Homer's *boes Eelioio*, are the rays of the Sungod, Lord of Revelation, even as in Greek mythology Apollo the Sungod is also the Master of poetry and of prophecy. *Ghrita* means clarified butter, but also the bright thing; *soma* means the wine of the moon plant, but also delight, honey, sweetness, *madhu*. This is the conception, all other features are subsidiary to this central idea. The suggestion seems to me a perfectly simple one, neither out of the way and recondite, nor unnatural to the mentality of the early human peoples." (16: 677-79)

A Priori Objections to Sri Aurobindo's Approach and Their Resolution

"There are certain *a priori* objections which can be brought against this theory. One may be urged against it from the side of Western scholarship. It may be objected that there is no need for all this mystification, that there is no sign of it in the Veda unless we choose to read it into the primitive mythology, that it is not justified by the history of religion or of the Vedic religion, that it was a refinement impossible to an ancient and barbaric mind. None of these objections can really stand. The Mysteries in Egypt and Greece and elsewhere were of a very ancient standing and they proceeded precisely on this symbolic principle, by which outward myth and ceremony and cult objects stood for secrets of an inward life or knowledge. It cannot therefore be argued that this mentality was non-existent, impossible in antique times or any more impossible or improbable in India, the country of the Upanishads, than in Egypt and Greece. The history of ancient religion does show a transmutation of physical Nature-gods into representatives of psychical powers or rather an addition of psychical to physical functions; but the latter in some instances gave place to the less external significance. I have given the example of Helios replaced in later times by Apollo. Just so in the Vedic religion Surya undoubtedly becomes a god of inner light, the famous Gayatri verse and its esoteric interpretation are there to prove it as well as the constant appeal of the Upanishads to Vedic riks or Vedic symbols taken in a psychological and spiritual sense, eg, the four closing verses of the Isha Upanishad. Hermes, Athena represent in classical mythology psychical functions, but were originally Nature gods, Athena probably a dawn goddess. I contend that Usha in the Veda shows us this transmutation in its commencement. Dionysus the wine-god was intimately connected with the Mysteries; I assign a similar role to Soma, the wine-god of the Vedas.

But the question is whether there is anything to show that there was actually such a doubling of functions in the Veda. Now in the first place, how was the transition effected from the alleged purely materialistic Nature-worship of the Vedas to the extraordinary psychological and spiritual knowledge of the Upanishads unsurpassed in their subtlety and sublimity in ancient times? There are three possible explanations. First, this sudden spirituality may have been brought in from outside; it is hardily suggested by some scholars that it was taken from an alleged highly spiritual non-Aryan southern culture; but this is an assumption, a baseless hypothesis for which no proof has been advanced; it rests as a surmise in the air without foundation. Secondly, it may have developed from within by some such transmutation as I have suggested, but subsequent to the composition of all but the latest Vedic hymns. Still even then it was effected on the basis of the Vedic hymns; the Upanishads claim to be a development from the Vedic knowledge, Vedanta repeatedly appeals to

Vedic texts, regards Veda as a book of knowledge. The men who gave the Vedantic knowledge are everywhere represented as teachers of the Veda. Why then should we rigidly assume that this development took place subsequent to the composition of the bulk of the Vedic mantras? For the third possibility is that the whole ground had already been prepared consciently by the Vedic mystics. I do not say that the inner Vedic knowledge was identical with the Brahmavada. Its terms were different, its substance was greatly developed, much lost or rejected, much added, old ideas shed, new interpretations made, the symbolic element reduced to a minimum and replaced by clear and open philosophic phrases and conceptions. Certainly, the Vedic mantras had already become obscure and ill-understood at the time of the Brahmanas. And still the groundwork may have been there from the beginning. It is, of course, in the end a question of fact; but my present contention is only that there is no *a priori* impossibility, but rather a considerable probability or at least strong possibility in favour of my suggestion. I will put my argument in this way. The later hymns undoubtedly contain a beginning of the Brahmavada; how did it begin, had it no root origins in the earlier mantras? It is certain that some of the gods, Varuna, Saraswati, had a psychological as well as a physical function. I go farther and say that this double function can everywhere be traced in the Veda with regard to other gods, as for instance, Agni and even the Maruts. Why not then pursue the inquiry on these lines and see how far it will go? There is at least a *prima facie* ground for consideration, and to begin with, I demand no more. An examination of the actual text of the hymns can alone show how far the inquiry will be justified or produce results of a high importance.

Another *a priori* objection comes from the side of orthodox tradition. What it amounts to is an objection to go behind the authority of Sayana, who belongs to an age at least two or three thousand years later than the Veda, and of Yaska, the ancient lexicographer. Besides, the Veda is currently regarded as *karmakânda*, a book of ritual works, the Vedanta only as *jnânakânda*, a book of knowledge. In an extreme orthodox standpoint it is objected that reason, the critical faculty, the historical argument have nothing to do with the question; the Vedas are beyond such tests, in form and substance eternal, in interpretation only to be explained by traditional authority. That attitude is one with which I am not concerned; I am seeking for the truth of this matter and I cannot be stopped by a denial of my right to seek for any truth contrary to tradition. But if in a more moderate form the argument be that when there is an unbroken and consistent ancient tradition, there is no justification in going behind it, then the obvious reply is that there is no such thing. Sayana moves amidst a constant uncertainty, gives various possibilities, fluctuates in his interpretations. Not only so, but though usually faithful to the ritualistic and external sense he distinguishes and quotes occasionally various ancient schools of interpretation, one of which is spiritual and philosophic and finds the sense of the Upanishads

in the Veda. Even he feels himself obliged sometimes, though very rarely, to follow its suggestions. And if we go back to the earliest times we see that the Brahmanas give a mystically ritualistic interpretation of the Veda, the Upanishads treat the Riks as a book not of ritual, but of spiritual knowledge. There is therefore nothing fantastically new or revolutionary in an attempt to fix the psychological and spiritual purport of the Rig Veda.

A last objection remains that the interpretation of the Veda has been a field for the exercise of the most extraordinary ingenuity, each attempt arriving at widely different results, and mine is only one ingenuity the more. If it were so, then I stand in good company. The interpretations of Sayana are packed with the most strained and far-fetched ingenuities, which not unoften light-heartedly do violence to grammar, syntax, order, connection, on the idea that the Rishis were in no way restrained by these things. Yaska

is full of etymological and other ingenuities, some of them of a most astonishing kind. The scholarship of Europe has built up by a system of ingenious guesses and deductions a new version and evolved the history, true or imaginative, of an Aryan invasion and a struggle between Aryan and Dravidian which was never before suspected in the long history of Vedic interpretation. The same charge has been brought against Swami Dayananda's commentary. Nevertheless, the universality of the method does not make it valid, nor have I any need to take refuge in this excuse, which is not a justification. If my or any interpretation is got by a straining of the text, a licentious or fantastic rendering or a foreign importation, then it can have no real value. The present volume, which I hope to make the first of a series, is intended to show my method actually at work and dispel this objection by showing the grounds and justification." (16: 679-83)

The Three Necessary Processes for a Valid Interpretation of the Veda

"I hold that three processes are necessary for a valid interpretation of the Veda. First, there must be a straightforward rendering word by word of the text which shall stick to a plain and simple sense at once suggested by the actual words no matter what the result may be. Then, this result has to be taken and it has to be seen what is its actual purport and significance. That meaning must be consistent, coherent with itself; it must show each hymn as a whole in itself proceeding from idea to idea, linked together in sequence, as any literary creation of the human mind must be linked, which has not been written by lunatics or is not merely a string of disconnected cries. It is impossible

to suppose that these Rishis, competent metrists, possessed of a style of great power and nobility, composed without the sequence of ideas which is the mark of all adequate literary creation. And if we suppose them to be divinely inspired, mouthpieces of Brahman or the Eternal, there is no ground for supposing that the divine wisdom is more incoherent in its Word than the human mind; it should rather be more luminous and satisfying in its totality. Finally, if a symbolic interpretation is put on any part of the text, it must arise directly and clearly from suggestions and language of the Veda itself and must not be brought in from outside." (16: 683)

Incorporation of the above Three Processes by Sri Aurobindo in His Approach to the Veda

"A few words may be useful on each of these points. The first rule I follow is to try to get at the simplest and straightforward sense to which the Rik is open, not to strain, twist and involve. The Vedic style is terse, but natural, it has its strong brevities and some ellipses, but all the same it is essentially simple and goes straight to its object. Where it seems obscure, it is because we do not know the meaning of the words or miss the clue to the idea. Even if at one or two places, it seems to be tortured, that is no reason why we should put the whole Veda on the rack or even in these places torture it still worse in the effort to get at a sense. Where the meaning of a word has to be fixed, this difficulty comes either because we have no clue to the true meaning or because it is capable in the language of several meanings. In the latter case I follow certain fixed canons. First, if the word is one of the standing terms of the Veda intimately bound up with its religious system, then I must first find one single meaning which attaches to it wherever it occurs; I am not at liberty to vary its sense from the beginning according to my pleasure or fancy or sense of immediate fitness. If I interpret a book of obscure Christian theology, I am not at liberty to interpret freely the constantly recurring word grace sometimes as the influx of the divine favour, sometimes as one of the three Graces, sometimes as charm of beauty, sometimes as grace marks in an examination, sometimes as the name of a girl. If in one it evidently bears this or that sense and can have no other, if it has no reference to the ordinary meaning, then indeed it is different; but I must not put in one of these other meanings where the normal sense fits the context. In other cases I may have greater freedom, but this freedom must not degenerate into licence. Thus the word *ritam* may signify, we are told, truth, sacrifice, water, motion and a number of other things. Sayana interprets freely and without obvious rule or reason according to any of them and sometimes gives us two alternatives; not only does he interpret it variously in different hymns, but in three different senses [in] the same hymn or even in the same line. I hold this to be quite illegitimate. *Ritam* is a standing term of the Veda and I must take it consistently. If I find truth to be its sense in that standing significance, I must so interpret it always, unless in any given passage it evidently means water or sacrifice or the man who has gone and cannot mean truth. To translate so striking a phrase as *ritasya panthâh* in one passage as "the path of truth", in another "the path of sacrifice", in another "the path of water", in another "the path of the one who has gone" is a sheer licence, and if we follow such a method, there can be no sense for the Veda except the sense of our own individual caprice. Then again we have the word Deva, which undoubtedly means in ninety-nine places out of a hundred, one of the shining ones, a god. Even though this is not so vital a term as *ritam*, still I must not take it in the sense of a priest or intelligent man or any other significance, where the word god gives a good and sufficient

meaning unless it can be shown that it is undoubtedly capable of another sense in the mouth of the Rishis. On the other hand a word like *ari* means sometimes a fighter, one's own champion, sometimes a hostile fighter, assailant, enemy, sometimes it is an adjective and seems almost equivalent to *arya* or even *ârya*. But mark that these are all well-connected senses. Dayananda insists on a greater freedom of interpretation to suit the context. *Saindhava* he says means a horse or rocksalt; where it is a question of eating we must interpret as salt, where it is a question of riding, as horse. That is quite obvious; but the whole question in the Veda is what is the bearing of the context, what are its connections? If we interpret according to our individual sense of what the context ought to mean, we are building on the quicksands. The only safe rule is to fix the sense usually current in the Veda and admit variations only where they are evident from the context. Where the ordinary sense makes a good meaning, I ought to accept it; it does not at all matter that that is not the meaning I should like it to have or the one suitable to my theory of the Veda. But how to fix the meaning? We can evidently do it only on the totality or balance of the evidence of all the passages in which the word occurs and, after that, on its suitability to the general sense of the Veda. If I show that *ritam* in all passages can mean truth, in a great number of passages but not by any means all sacrifice, in only a few water, and in hardly any, motion, and this sense, truth, fits in with the general sense of the Veda, then I consider I have made out an unanswerable case for taking it in that significance. In the cases of many words this can be done; in others we have to strike a balance. There remain the words of which frankly we do not know the meaning. Here we have to use the clue of etymology and then to test the meaning or possible meanings we arrive at by application to the passages in which the word occurs, taking into consideration where necessary not only the isolated riks, but the context around, and even the general sense of Veda. In a few cases the word is so rare and obscure that only a quite conjectural meaning can be attached to it.

When we have got the rendering of the text, we have to [see] to what it amounts. Here what we have to do is to see the connection of the ideas in the verse itself, next its connection with the ideas in the verses that precede and follow and with the general sense of the hymn; next parallel passages and ideas and hymns and finally the place of the whole in the scheme of ideas of the Veda. Thus in IV.7 we have the line अग्ने कदा त आनुषग् भुवद् देवस्य चेतनं, and I render it, "O Flame, when may there be in uninterrupted sequence the awakening (to knowledge or consciousness) of thee the god (the shining or luminous One)?" But the question I have to put is this, "Does this mean the constant burning of the physical fire on the altar and the ordered sequence of the physical sacrifice, or does it mean the awakening to constant developing knowledge or ordered conscious action of knowledge of the divine Flame in man?" I note that in the next rik (3) Agni is described as the possessor of

truth (or of sacrifice?), the entirely wise, ऋतावानं विचेतसं, in 4 as the vision or knowledge perception shining for each creature, केतुं भृगवाणं विशे विशे, in 5 as the Priest who knows, होतारं चिकित्वांसं, in 6 as the bright one in the secrecy who has perfect knowledge, चित्रं गुहा हितं सुवेदं, in 7 as coming possessed of the truth for the sacrifice when the gods rejoice in the seat of the Truth, [in 8] as the messenger विद्वान् संचिकित्वान् विदुष्टरः. All this is ample warrant for taking Agni not merely as a physical flame on the altar, [but] as a flame of divine knowledge guiding the sacrifice and mediating between man and the gods. The balance is also, though not indisputably, in favour of taking it as a reference to the inner sacrifice under the cover of the outer symbols; for why should there be so much stress on divine knowledge if the question were only of a physical sacrifice for physical fruits? I note that he is the priest, sage, messenger, eater, swift traveller and warrior. How are these ideas, both successive and interwoven in the Veda, connected together? Is it the physical sacred flame that is all these things or the inner sacred flame? There is sufficient to warrant me in provisionally taking it for the inner flame; but to be sure I cannot rely on this one rik. I have to note the evolution of the same ideas in other hymns, to study all the hymns dedicated to Agni or in which he is mentioned, to see whether there are passages in which he is indubitably the inner flame and what light they shed on his whole physiognomy. Only then shall I be in a position to judge certainly the significance of the Vedic Fire.

This example will show the method I follow in regard to the third question, the interpretation of the Vedic symbols. That there are a mass of figures and symbols in the hymns, there can be no doubt. The instances in this 7th hymn of the Fourth Mandala are sufficient by themselves to show how large a part they play. In the absence of any contemporary evidence of the sense which the Rishis attached to them, we have to seek for their meaning in the Veda itself. Obviously, where we do not know we cannot do without a hypothesis, and my hypothesis is that of the outer ritual form as a significant symbol of an inner spiritual meaning. But this or any hypothesis can have no real value if it is brought in from outside, if it is not suggested by the words and indications of the Veda itself. The Brahmanas are too full of ingenuities; they read too much and too much at random into the text. The Upanishads give a better light and we may get hints from later work and even from Sayana and Yaska, but it would be dangerous at once to read back literally the ideas of a later mentality into this exceedingly ancient Scripture. We must start from and rely on the Veda to interpret the Veda. We have to see, first, whether there are any plain and evident psychological and spiritual conceptions, what they are, what clue they give us, secondly, whether there are any indications of psychological meanings for physical symbols and how the outer physical is related to the inner psychological side. Why for instance is the Flame Agni called the seer and knower? why are the rivers called the waters that have knowledge? why are they said to ascend or get into the mind? and a host of

other similar questions. The answer again must be found by a minute comparative study of the Vedic hymns themselves. In this volume I proceed by development. I take each hymn, get at its first meaning; I see whether there are any psychological indications and what is their force and what their interweaving and relation to the other surrounding ideas. I proceed thus from hymn to hymn linking them together by their identical or similar ideas, figures, expressions. In this way it may be possible to arrive at a clear and connected interpretation of the Veda.

This method supposes that the hymns of the Rigveda are one whole composed by different Rishis, but on the basis of a substantially identical and always similar knowledge and one system of figures and symbols. This, I think, is evident on the very surface of the Veda. The only apparent exceptions are certain hymns, mostly in the tenth Mandala, which seem to belong to a later development, some almost purely ritualistic, others more complex and developed in symbol than the body of the Riks, others clearly enouncing philosophical ideas with a modicum of symbol, the first voices which announce the coming of the Upanishads. Some hymns are highly archaic, others of a more clear and relatively modern type. But for the most part throughout we find the same substance, the same images, ideas, standing terms, the same phrases and expressions. Otherwise the problem would be insoluble; as it is, the Veda itself gives a key to the Veda." (16: 684-88)

The Real Character of the Vedic Agni

"The Vedic Agni has two characteristics, knowledge and a blazing power, light and fiery force. This suggests that he is the force of the universal Godhead, a conscious force or Will instinct with knowledge, – that is the nature of Tapas, – which pervades the world and is behind all its workings. Agni then in the psychical and spiritual sense of his functions would be the fire of a Will doing the works of its own inherent and innate knowledge. He is the seer, कविः, the supreme mover of thought, प्रथमो मनोता, the mover too of speech and the Word, उपवक्ता जनानां, the power in the heart that works, हृदिस्पृशं क्रतुं, the impeller of action and movement, the divine guide of man in the act of sacrifice. He is the priest of the sacrifice, Hotri, he who calls and brings the gods and gives to them the offering, the Ritwik, who sacrifices in right order and right season, the purifying priest, Potri, the Purohita, he who stands in front as the representative of the sacrificer, the conductor of the sacrifice, Adhwaryu; he combines all the sacred offices. It is evident that these functions all belong to the divine will or conscient power in man which awakes in the inner sacrifice. This Fire has built all the worlds; this creative Power, Agni Jatavedas, knows all the births, all that is in the worlds; he is the messenger who knows earth, knows how to ascend the difficult slope of heaven, आरोधनं दिव, knows the way to the home of the Truth, – he mediates between God and man. These things apply only with difficulty to the god of physical fire; they are of a striking appropriateness if we take a larger view of the divine nature and functions of the god Agni. He is a god of the earth, a force of material being, अवमः; but he seems too [to] be a vital (Pranic) force of will in desire, devouring, burning through his own smoke; and again he is a mental power. Men see him द्यामिव स्तृभिः, heaven and the midworld and earth are his portion. But again he is a god of Swar, one of the solar deities; he manifests himself as Surya; he is born in the Truth, a master of Truth, a guardian of Truth and Immortality, a getter and keeper of the shining herds, the eternal Youth, and he renews the youth of these mystic cattle. He is triply extended in the Infinite. All these functions cannot be predicated of the god of physical fire; but they are all just attributes of the conscient divine Will in man and the universe. He is the horse of battle and the horse of swiftness and again he gives the white horse; he is the Son and he creates for man the Son. He is the Warrior and he brings to man the heroes of his battle. He destroys by his flame the Dasyu and the Rakshasa; he is a Vritra-slayer. Are we to see here the slayer only of mortal Dravidians or of the demons who oppose the sacrifice? He is born in a hundred ways: from the plants, from the tinder, from the waters. His parents are the two Aranis, but again his parents are Earth and Heaven, and there is a word which seems to combine both meanings. Are not the two Aranis then a symbol of earth and heaven, Agni born for mortals from the action of the diviner mental on the material being? The ten sisters are his mothers, – the ten fingers, says the

scholiast; yes, but the Veda describes them as the ten thoughts or thought-powers, दश धियः. The seven rivers, the mighty ones of heaven, the waters that have knowledge, the waters of Swar are also his mothers. What is the significance of this symbolism, and can we really interpret it as only and solely a figurative account of natural phenomena, of the physical principle or works of Fire? There is at least here, to put the thing in its lowest terms, a strong possibility of a deeper psychological functioning of Agni." (16: 689-90)

Bhrigus and Apnavana

"The Bhrigus in the Veda (भृज् to burn) are evidently burning powers of the Sun, the Lord of Knowledge, just as the Angiras Rishis are very evidently the seven lustres of Agni, सप्त धामानि – S. says the live coals of the fire, but that is a mere etymological ingenuity – the hints are everywhere in the Veda, but it is made quite clear in the tenth Mandala. The whole idea, then, comes out with a convincing luminosity. It is the powers of the revelatory knowledge, the powers of the seer-wisdom, represented by the Bhrigus, who make this great discovery of the spiritual will-force and make it available to every human creature. Apnavana means he who acts or he who attains and acquires. It is the seer-wisdom that scales and attains in the light of the revelation which leads the Bhrigus to the discovery." (16: 694-95)

The Portion of Each Great God in the Yajna

"It is for divine action in man that God's force awakes in us. It is the divine priest of the offering who stands up in the dawn of the illumination to offer to the gods, to each great god his portion, to Indra a pure & deified mentality, to Vayu a pure & divine vital joy & action, to the four great Vasus, Varuna, Mitra, Bhaga & Aryamá the greatnesses, felicities, enjoyments & strengths of perfected being, to the Aswins the youth of the soul & its raptures & swiftnesses, to Daksha & Saraswati, Ila, Sarama & Mahi the activities of the Truth & Right, to the Rudras, Maruts & Adityas, the play of physical, vital, mental & ideative activities. Agni has stood up in the dawning illumination

high uplifted in the pure mentality, úrdhwa, with a perfected mind, sumanáh. He purifies in his rising the temperament and fixes on it the seal of peace & joy; he purifies the intellectuality & makes it fit to receive the activity of the illuminating Truth & Infinite Rightness which is beyond intellect. Great is the god who has been released out of the darkness of this Avidya, out of this our blind bodily matter, out of this our smoke-enveloped vital energy, out of this our confused luminous murk of mortal mind and sense-enslaved intelligence. Mahán devas tamaso niramochi. For now that he has been perfectly kindled, it is no longer God's occasional flamings that visit our nature, but His collected and perfect force, pájah, is seen reddening in our heavens." (16: 704-05)

The Action of the Divine Force in Our Being

"…when the divine force has so far purified us, our activities & enjoyments are not darkened and troubled with striving & clouded vital desires which strain dimly towards a goal but, not being ritajna, know not what they should seek, how they should seek it, in what force & by what method and stages; our action becomes a pure illumination, our enjoyment a pure illumination; by the divine illuminations, as their motive force, essence & instrument, our actions & enjoyments are effected." (16: 706)

A Comparison of the Workings of the Normal Human and the Purified Mentality

"When we are mortals content with our humanity, then we are confused in our functions; the manas or sense-mind attempts to do the work of the mahas or idea-mind, to effect original knowledge, to move in Surya, in the powerful concrete image of the Veda. The idea also confuses itself with sense and moves in the sense-forces, the indriyas, instead of occupying itself in all purity with its own function. Hence the confusions of our intellect and the stumblings of our mental activity in its grappling with the contacts of the outer world. But when we rise from our mortal nature to the nature of godhead, devayantah, amritam sapantah, then the first change is the passage from mortal impurity to immortal purity, and the very nature of purity is a clear brightness and rightness, in which all our members work perfectly in God & the gods, each doing its own function & preserving its right relation with its superior

and inferior fellows. Therefore in those who are attaining this nature of godhead, devayatám, their sense-minds strain towards Agni, the divine force of Right Being & Right Action, satyam ritam, – they tend that is to say to have the right state, bháva or temperament, out of which the right action of the indriyas spontaneously proceeds; the seeings of the Yogin who attains, move in Surya, the god of the ideal powers, all that he perceives, creates, distinguishes, is worked out by the pure ideal mentality, which then uses its four powers of self-revelation, self-inspiration, self-intuition, self-discernment without suffering obscuration by the clouds of vital desire & impulse or deflection by the sense-impacts & sense-reactions. The sensational mind confines itself then to its proper work of receiving passively the impacts of the vital, material &

mental outer world & the illuminations of Surya and of pouring out on the world in its reaction to the impacts, not its own hasty & distorted responses, but the pure force & action of Agni which works on the world, pure, right & unerring & seizes on it to possess & enjoy it for God in the human being. This is the goal towards which Dakshina is striving in her upward self-extension which ends by her taking her place as viveka or right discernment in the kingdom of Surya, and this she begins already in her new activities by discerning the proper action of the mind from the proper action of idea in the mind. The purified intellect liberates itself from the obscurations of desire, the slavery to vital impulse, and the false reports and false values of the matter-besieged sense-powers." (16: 707-09)

The Essential Nature of Agni's Manifestation

"Night & Dawn are the two unlike mothers who jointly give birth to Agni, Night, the avyakta unmanifest state of knowledge & being, the power of Avidyá, Dawn, the vyakta manifest state of knowledge & being, the power of Vidyá. They are the two dawns, the two agencies which prepare the manifestation of God in us, Night fostering Agni in secret in the activities of Avidyá, the activities of unillumined mind, life & body, by which the god in us grows out of matter towards spirit, out of earth up to heaven, Dawn manifesting him again, more & more, until he is ready here for his continuous, pure & perfect activity. When this point of our journey towards perfection is reached he is born, śweto vájí, in the van of the days. We have here one of

those great Vedic figures with a double sense in which the Rishis at once revealed & concealed their high knowledge, revealed it to the Aryan mind, concealed it from the unAryan. Agni is the white horse which appears galloping in front of the days, – the same image is used with a similar Vedantic sense in the opening of the Brihad Aranyak Upanishad; but the horse here is not, as in the Upanishad, Aśwa, the horse of vital & material being in the state of life-force, but vájí, the horse of Being generally, Being manifested in substance whether of mind, life, body or idea or the three higher streams proper to our spiritual being. Agni therefore manifests as the fullness, the infinity, the brihat of all this sevenfold substantial being that is the world we are, but white, the

colour of illumined purity. He manifests therefore at this stage primarily as that mighty wideness, purity & illumination of our being which is the true basis of the complete & unassailable siddhi in the Yoga, the only basis on which right knowledge, right thinking, right living, right enjoyment can be firmly, vastly & perpetually seated. He appears therefore in the van of the days, the great increasing states of illuminated force & being, – for that is the image of ahan, – which are the eternal future of the mortal when he has attained immortality." (16: 709)

The Action of the Divine Force and the Law of Our Perfection

"This divine force is born victorious by its very purity & infinity over all the hostile forces that prevent, obstruct, limit or strive to destroy our accomplished freedoms, powers, illuminations & widenesses; by his victory he ushers in the wide days of the siddha, for which these nights & dawns of our human life are the preparatory movements. He is effective & helpful in the effective powers that work out for our good the movements [of] this lower life towards immortal strength & power, he is active & joyous, arusho, in those that take the delight of these movements and so prepare us for the immortal bliss & ecstasy of the

divine nature. Manifesting progressively that Ananda the force of God establishes and maintains in each house of our habitation, in each of our five bodies, in each of our seven levels of conscious existence, the seven essential forms of Ananda, the bliss of body, the bliss of life, the bliss of mind & the senses, the bliss of ideal illumination, the bliss of pure divine universal ecstasy, the bliss of cosmic Force, the bliss of cosmic being. For although we tend upwards immediately to the pure Idea, yet not that but Ananda is the goal of our journey; the manifestation in our lower members of the divine bliss reposing on the divine force & being is the law of our perfection." (16: 710)

The Middle Worlds

"…the middle world, the Bhuvah, including all those states of existence in which the mind and the life are interblended as the double medium through which the Purusha acts and connects Heaven & Earth, is the proper centre of all human action. Mind blended with the vital energies is our seat even here in the material world. The bhuvah or middle regions are worlds of rapture & ecstasy because life-energy & the joy of life fulfil themselves there free from the restrictions of the material world in which it is an exile or invader seeking to dominate & use the rebellious earthly material for its own purposes." (16: 711)

Knowledge and Action – Human and Divine

"But how can Action be said to transform itself into Knowledge, kriyáshakti into jnánashakti? We can see dimly this transmutation in our ordinary psychological experience; for we know that each time we act, bodily or mentally, the action is automatically registered in us as an experience and by the accumulation of experiences transforms itself into state of knowledge. But in mortal knowledge & mortal nature the act & the knowledge are separated from each other and can be joined or disjoined; in divine knowledge & divine nature the two go always together and are one entity. When God acts, each act is a play of effective self-knowledge. When He creates Light, He conceives of Himself as a Light & Light becomes. The action of creation is really a play of self-conception. He knows at the same time the whole conception of Light,

its nature, properties, possibilities, functionings; when therefore He acts or creates, the process of action is a process of conception, the result of action is a result of conception. For this reason when a tree grows out of a seed, the evolution of the right tree out of the right seed is as inevitable as Fate, although the tree has no knowledge and control of its own growth; but the evolution & the form of the tree evolved are merely manifestations of the divine conception. The Cosmic Self-Consciousness knows itself in the form of a Tree & that *vijnána* or typal idea is manifested by the sure action of the nature or swabhava attached to the conception. This sureness of self-fulfilment based on a secret self-knowledge is the kratu or action of Agni, the divine Power in things. It is a secret Will in things fulfilling itself in motion of activity & in form. But

though Agni in the tree knows, the tree knows nothing. When man comes in with his mind, he still does not know but only seeks to know, – for he feels that attached to every object is a right knowledge of that object & in every action is a right knowledge of that action. This knowledge he seeks to bring out, to make conscious in his mind. But mortal knowledge is sense knowledge, a deduction from forms of things; divine knowledge is self-existent knowledge, spontaneously manifested by the identity in consciousness of the knower with the thing known. Mortal knowledge is derived in nature, deferred in time, indirect in means; divine knowledge is spontaneous, direct and self-manifesting. Mortal knowledge is like hearing of a man from others & inferring many things about him which may & must, indeed, be largely or wholly incorrect; divine knowledge is the seeing & hearing of the man himself & knowledge of

him by personal experience. Mortal knowledge is crooked, hvára or vrijina; divine knowledge is straight, riju. Mortal knowledge proceeds from & by limitation, by getting hold of & adding up details, dwayena, by duality; divine knowledge is comprehensive & unifying, containing subordinates in the principal, details in the whole, attributes in the thing itself. Mortal knowledge advances step by step over uneven ground in a jungle where it does not know the way; divine knowledge advances over straight & open levels, vítáni prishtháni, where it sees the whole prospect before it, its starting-point, its way & its goal. Mortal knowledge bases itself on martya or mánasa ketu, sense perception or intelligence; divine knowledge bases itself upon daivya ketu, self-perception. Mortal knowledge is manas, divine knowledge is vijnána, self-true ideation or soul-knowledge." (16: 715-16)

Vijnana and the Action of the Four Higher Faculties in Human Mind

"Vijnana, true ideation, called ritam, truth or vedas, knowledge in the Vedas, acts in human mind by four separate functions; revelation, termed drishti, sight; inspiration termed sruti, hearing; and the two faculties of discernment, smriti, memory, which are intuition, termed ketu, and discrimination, termed daksha, division, or viveka, separation. By drishti we see ourselves the truth face to face, in its own form, nature or self-existence; by sruti we hear the name, sound or word by which the truth is expressed & immediately suggested to the knowledge; by ketu we distinguish a truth presented to us behind a veil

whether of result or process, as Newton discovered the law of gravitation hidden behind the fall of the apple; by viveka we distinguish between various truths and are able to put them in their right place, order and relation to each other, or, if presented with mingled truth & error, separate the truth from the falsehood. Agni Jatavedas is termed in the Veda vivichi, he who has the viveka, who separates truth from falsehood; but this is only a special action of the fourth ideal faculty & in its wider scope, it is daksha, that which divides & rightly distributes truth in its multiform aspects. The ensemble of the four faculties is Vedas or divine knowledge." (16: 717-18)

How the Four Faculties in Vijnana Gets Translated in Human Mind and the Supreme Importance of Viveka in Human Evolution

"When man is rising out of the limited & error-besieged mental principle, the faculty most useful to him, most indispensable is daksha or viveka. Drishti of Vijnana transmuted into terms of mind has become observation, sruti appears as imagination, intuition as intelligent perception, viveka as reasoning & intellectual judgment and all of these are liable to the constant touch of error. Human buddhi, intellect, is a distorted shadow of the true ideative faculties. As we return from these shadows to their ideal substance viveka or daksha must be our constant companion; for viveka alone can get rid of the habit of mental error, prevent observation being replaced by false illumination,

imagination by false inspiration, intelligence by false intuition, judgment & reason by false discernment. The first sign of human advance out of the anritam of mind to the ritam of the ideal faculty is the growing action of a luminous right discernment which fixes instantly on the truth, feels instantly the presence of error. The fullness, the manhaná of this viveka is the foundation & safeguard of Ritam or Vedas. The first great movement of Agni Jatavedas is to transform by the divine will in mental activity his lower smoke-covered activity into the bright clearness & fullness of the ideal discernment. Agne adbhuta kratwá dakshasya manhaná." (16: 718)

The Indian Ladder of Jacob

"This, then, is the path. It is the development by divine Tapas in the mind of Ritam or Vedas, the supra-intellectual knowledge or unveiled face of Truth, Ritasya panthá – the path of Truth is always in Veda the road which the Ancestors, the Pitris, the great forefathers, the Ancients, pratnásah, purátanáh, have trodden before us & their descendants, the new seers, have to follow after them. What then is the goal? It is Asuryam, the might of the divine Nature. In thee, says Gaya, the doer, – kráṇá, the sádhaka, the seeker after perfection, who conducts or for whom Agni conducts the inner sacrifice, – ascends to the divine Might as Mitra of the sacrifice. Asuryam is the principle of divine Power, Chit-Shakti or Tapas in which divine Being or Sat formulates itself for cosmic activity; Mitra is the Lord of Love who with Bhaga, the Lord of Enjoyment, most intimately represents in human temperament the principle of Ananda, which is the base of the divine Being & divine Power in world-

manifestation. Sat, Chit, Ananda (for Chit & Tapas are one) are the Vedic formula of divine Existence. By the action of Agni, kratwá, the soul achieving Truth merges itself in the divine principle of Love poured out into the offering to God of human life, Mitro na yajniyah, and with it in that principle, realising throughout our consciousness the divine Beatitude, rises into the free play of the infinite Tapas of the divine Existence. In that Tapas the sacrificial activity of Agni in man, the kratu, becoming Godward will finds its manhaná, its absolute fullness & fulfilment. Sat, Tapas, Ananda, Vijnana, Manas – this is the Indian ladder of Jacob by which one descends & ascends again to heaven. Man the Doer, the Manu, the Krana, perfecting himself by works, is lifted by the divine will to Vijnana, to the ideal self of true knowledge & right action & emotion, attains by Truth to Divine Love & Bliss, Mayas, the dháma or seat of Mitra, and thus ascends to the Tapas where Agni is [.....].” (16: 718-19)

The Sense of the Name Gaya

""O Agni," cries the Rishi, "increase in us the attainment of light & the full plenty of these active gods of the solar illumination." Gayam pushtim cha. The word gaya, Sayana tells us, means that which is reached or attained; it is dhanam, wealth. But gaya, as is usually the case with these early Sanscrit vocables, is capable of several shades of significance. It may mean the act or process of attaining; it may mean the thing reached or attained, whether material wealth or spiritual attainment, & especially it signifies knowledge, just as ritam from the word ri to go signifies truth or rishi, similarly derived, signifies the seer or knower; or it may signify the knower himself, the Rishi. It certainly bears the latter sense in the name Gaya which is borne by the Rishi of this

súkta; the habits of style of the Vedic seers justify us even in seeing a covert introduction of his own name by the Seer in the choice of this word Gaya. In any case Gaya here can no more mean material wealth than pushti can mean corporeal fatness; it implies spiritual gain or attainment &, occurring in close connection with the súrayo narah and recalling the name of the Rishi, may be taken in this passage as specially signifying Knowledge. Agni has already established the fullness of the viveka. He has now to increase in Gaya & his fellow worshippers the light of knowledge & the full growth of all the powers of the vijnána; he has to help in man the gods of revelation, inspiration & intuition as well as of viveka. How is this to be done? By the mantras of the hymn of praise, stomebhih." (16: 720)

The Supreme Importance of the Word in the Vedic Idea of Creation and the Process of Creation

"The importance & effectiveness, psychological, spiritual, even physical, of the Word, Vachas, Gih, Uktha, may almost be described as the fundamental thought of the Vedic seers, and this initial psychic perception of our forefathers has dominated Indian religious thought & discipline ever since. The name of God, the mantra, is still the keystone of all Indian yoga. We shall not realise the full bearing & rationale of this great Vedic conception unless we first impress on our minds the Vedic idea of existence & creation, for Vak, the Word, is in that idea the effective agent of creation. All created existence is in the Vedic philosophy a formation by force of consciousness, Chit-shakti, not, as modern thought supposes it to be, a formation by Force of unconscious inanimate Being. Creation itself is only a manifestation, phenomenon or appearing in form, vayas, vayunam, víti, [of] that which is already existent as consciousness, but latent as form in universal Being. It is srishti, a loosing forth, vachas, vyachas or shasti, an expressing or bringing out, not a creation in the modern sense, not a new manufacture of that which never before had any sort of existence. Sat or Being in the universe contains all forms as things in themselves in its Chit or self-consciousness, but for all cosmic purposes avyakta, unexpressed, undefined. To define it is first necessary that the general undifferentiated self-consciousness should dwell by particular concentration of consciousness, by Tapas or Force of self-knowledge, on the thing in itself latent in undifferentiated Cosmic Being. This self-dwelling of Tapas is, first, an act of seeing, íkshanam, drishti. "The Being saw, Let me bring forth worlds", as the Aitareya Upanishad expresses the original Will to create. But a second agent is also needed, Ananda or delight of creation & in the thing created, for without this creative Delight in conscious things nothing could come into existence or once being created remain in existence. "Who could exist or live" asks the Taittiriya Upanishad "if there were not this all-pervading & all-supporting ethereal atmosphere of the divine Bliss around it?" – yad eshaákásha ánando na syát. Therefore as Tapas or Will is theworking principle of cosmic Consciousness, (therefore the divine world in which infinite Consciousness is the basic factor is called by the Puranic writers, Tapoloka), so Jana, Birth or Joy of Procreation is the working principle of cosmic Bliss, (therefore the divine world in which infinite Bliss is the basic factor is called by the Puranic writers, Janaloka). But even so the agents are not sufficient; for Being, Consciousness, Bliss are universal & infinite in nature, indivisible & undividing realities. [There] is a particular faculty of Consciousness, Vijnana, which brings in the element of differentiation. Vijnana, pure Idea, is that which perceives the thing itself as thing in itself, as a whole & in its parts. It introduces the element of Nama, name. The Vedic word Nama connotes definition, distribution & law, (cf from *nam*, Greek nomos, law, nemo, to distribute, Latin

numerus, number) & is, in its nature, defining idea. The Nama, the name of a thing, the defining idea about it, is both its nomen & numen, & carries in itself the swabhava of the thing, its nature or self-being and prakriti or natural working; as soon as thing in itself gets its náma, it gets also its swáhá & swadhá – swáhá, self-luminous self-existence manifested in self-force & swadhá, self-fixity in that self-being; & these two, the self-force & the self-fixity, produce naturally & inevitably all the workings of the thing-in-itself, its vratáni, by the guna or gana, quality or number (ratio) of the nature, the swadhá. The Nature works out by three processes, Manas, the measuring or limiting of thing in itself in consciousness by the number or ratio, the gana, Prana (Ashwa, the Horse) the energy of the swáhá, movement of consciousness accommodating itself to the limitations of the Idea & confining itself to an action appropriate to the single form of the Idea which has been separated by distributing Manas & numbering Ratio, and Annam, existence in form of substance created by the limiting Mind & the self-confining energy of the Prana. This form of substance presents itself to the human mind as Matter; cosmic energy of being working in form of substance presents itself to us most strikingly in the phenomenon of animate Life but is also present in what we see as inanimate forms; Manas working through the nervous Life-energies & their organs, the senses, presents itself to us as human & animal Mind, but is a constant force by other workings & other instruments even in lifeless forms which have not organised nervous energies. These seven principles constitute the world, & are known in Veda as the ápas or sapta sindhavah, the waters of creative being, the seven elements of one ocean, the sapta dhenavah or sapta gávah, the seven fostering forms of divine consciousness and each of them forms for itself a separate world in which it predominates & is the governing principle of consciousness & existence but to which it necessarily admits its six sisters. These seven worlds are the sapta dhámáni or padáni, seven established places or seats of being, the seven footholds or goals of existence, with the sapta ratnáni, the seven forms of [delight]; five of them give entrance to the human soul in its present workings and are the pancha janáh or pancha kshitayah, five births or five inhabitable worlds & their peoples.

Consciousness is the base of all world existence, but consciousness develops itself in two forms, manifestion & non-manifestation, Dawn & Night, or from our point of view, Knowledge & Ignorance, Chittam & Achittam, Vidya & Avidya, consciousness illumined in the form it has taken as in the seer, consciousness dark & involved in the form it has taken as in the clod & less rigidly in the tree. For it is evident that in the highest principles of Sat, Chit, Ananda, there is universal knowledge, unlimited, inherent in the self-luminous unity of the Cosmic Being; even in Vijnana the element of limitation or bheda has not really entered, for differentiation by Vijnana exists in the cosmic sense of oneness as a play of oneness & is not a real difference; the

knowledge of the many is illumined always by the knowledge of the one. The Gods of Sat, Tapas & Jana know themselves as one, Agni there is Varuna & Varuna is Agni; even in Mahas or Brihat, the uru loka, the wide & vast world, the world of Vijnana, the devas know themselves as one even in their multitude. There, however, the first possibility of limitation in consciousness is adumbrated. But it is not till Manas gets full play that limitation sets in, but so long as Manas is pure rishimedhá, not separated from Vijnana, [the] movement from [.....] Therefore in Swar, the world of pure Mind [.....] the stress is not yet a bondage. There is a limited working of being, knowledge & power, which may ignore

for the time being the wider being, knowledge & action & thus generate ignorance, but is not fatally ignorant of it & is not therefore bound by its self-chosen ignorance. The gods know themselves as one, as Purushas of the universal Deva even when they act as if they were entirely different personalities. In this world, therefore, there is no real birth & death, no real day & night, but only the taking & putting off [of] forms, the bringing forward & the putting back of Light from the frontal outward action of the consciousness. In Bhuvar, the worlds of Prana, the conscious energy put out seems to be really absorbed in her outward workings only, in the energy itself, in the form of her own works & to forget her own more universal

reality; a veil falls between manas & vijnána, the veil of Achitti or ignorance. In Bhu, the world of Matter, this movement is complete. Consciousness is involved in its forms & has to be rescued out of it by beings who bring conscious life & mind into the mechanism of its formal energies & the inertia of its substantial forms. Man is the nodus, the agent & instrument of the gods for the full recovery of Consciousness in material Energy, universal being in particular Form. Man, the mental being in Bhu, shares with the Gods the appellation, Nri, the Purusha; he too is a guiding Soul of consciousness & not the mere gana, formal executive energy & mechanical ratio of things which is the outward aspect of Nature." (16: 720-24)

"Man is able to bring out, to express the divine consciousness & nature in the prison of matter or, as the Vedic hymns express it, to manifest the gods – he is devavyacháh, effects by the yajna the devavíti, god-manifestation, in himself, because he is able to use fully the principle of Mind with its powers of mental realisation and verbal expression, manma & vachas, mati & gíh. In the lower forms of life this is not possible. Mind there is dumb or only partly vocal; it is therefore unable to bring into expression, into shansa, the secret name of things, their guhyam náma; he first is able to define them in mind by speech & to arrive from this mental definition to the divine idea in them and from the divine idea to the one truth of which all ideas are expressions. By vachas in mati one arrives at Nama in vijnánam. For all sound has a creative & expressive power; each activity of sound in existence creates its corresponding physical & mental forms; all activity of forms in their turn creates a corresponding vibration of sound. But human speech informed with mind is the highest creative & expressive power of sound. It tends to bring about in life & being that which it expresses in thought. We can see this easily enough in psychological phenomena. By dwelling on an idea, by tapas on it, we can create not only the image of that idea in our minds, but its form in emotion, its truth in quality of character, its experience in terms of inner being. By dwelling with the will on the idea of courage or virtue it has been found that we can create courage or virtue in ourselves where they were formerly wanting. By brooding on an object with the will in mind in a state of masterful concentration it has been found that we can command the knowledge we need about the object. But the Indian theory of concentration goes farther & asserts that even events, things, objects can be controlled by this inner Tapas & brought about or reduced to subjection without any ostensible material means. This concentration in mind is the manma of the Vedic rishis. The concentration may be on the object or idea itself or on the name of the object or on some form of words which expresses the idea. But even when the concentration is on idea or object & not on name or word, there is still, in all mental concentration, a silent or half-expressed word or vák by which the idea or object is brought before mind. The vák may be repeated aloud and then it becomes the hymn, súkta or rik of the Vedic Rishi, or the námakírtana of the modern devotee; or it may be repeated only by subtle sound in the subtle matter of mind, then it is the mantra of the silent Yogin; or it may be involved and silent at the back of the image, object or unexpressed idea in the mind. The Vedic manma or mantra is of the first variety, – although we need not assume that the Rishis were ignorant of the more silent forms of meditation. Nevertheless, they attached a preeminent importance to the vák, the expressed mental realisation.

The process of the Vedic mantra involves three movements,

corresponding to three psychological activities necessary to the act of meditation or realisation, a movement from soul into mind, a movement from mind into speech, & the movement of speech itself reacting on mind and soul. In all forms there is the soul or [.....] partially expressed in the two primary constituents [.....] & temperament sometimes called manyu or more widely mati, and [an] intellectual part, usually termed dhí or maníshá. The maníshá first brought out the Nama out of the soul in which all things are latent into the heart where the general bh´ava (character, temperament, sense & feeling) of the Nama manifested itself to the sensationally perceiving mind & then raised it by distinct concept into the thinking mind. The mind by dwelling on the vák brings out the thing defined by Nama into being in the experience of the thinker & there establishes it as a living & acting presence. The mantra then, when it is thought of as operating to bring out the ukthyam, the thing desired & to be expressed, out of the soul into the mind state, mati, is called brahma or ´ang ´usham brahma or, briefly, ángúsham; when it is thought of as mentalising the ukthyam, it is called manma or mantra, when it is thought of as expressing by speech the ukthyam in the thinker's practical experience it is called vachas or gir. Moreover, the vachasmay be either of the nature of prayer or praise; as prayer, it is called uktha; as praise it has two functions, the expression in the sádhaka of the divine activity, when it is termed shansa, and the confirmation or firm establishment of the activity once expressed, when it is termed stoma. All these expressions, brahma, manma, vachas, shansa, stoma, stava or stavas, can be and are often used to express the effect of the mantra no less than the mantra itself, – brahma then means the soul-movement or soul-state expressed in the heart or temperament, manma the mental realisation, vachas the expression of the god or his divine activities in the mortal nature, shansa the expression of the man's higher being which is brought about by the mantra, stoma the firm established condition of the manifest god in the man. Nor are these the only terms which are applied to the mantra in the Vedic súktas. It is also called rik, gáyatram, gátha or sáma. It is the rik when it is considered as the mantra of realisation & the word arka is used to express the act of divine realisation by the mantra; gáyatram when it is considered as the means of attainment to the power, felicity or wideness of the divine being or nature through the path of the Truth or Ritam manifested by the mantra; sáma when it brings about the harmony or equality of the different constituents of our nature, body, life-energy, mind, pure ideation in one divine ánandamaya consciousness. By the mantra the god, entering into the speech and the thought, the soul-state, takes possession of his seat in man & makes manifest there his activities.

The Lords of Light, the Solar Purushas, are already active in the mind purified by the activities of Agni. They have there already not only their rare illuminations, but their established working and their increasing strength, gayam

pushtim cha. The expression by vachas, by the girah has been attained. It is their fullnesses, maghâni that the Rishi now covets, for the word magha in Veda means a full & copious state or satisfying and abundant possession as opposed to rare & exceptional visitations or enjoyments and to small & limited seeings. These fullnesses the Solar Purushas enjoy by means of the stomas, the mantras of praise which help to confirm the gods in possession of their manifested activities. The wide illuminations of the Ritam, the supra-intellectual revelatory, inspirational, intuitional truth come to man first by rare visitations

as the purified mind meditates on the godhead above our mortal minds, above even the pure levels of Swar. These visitations increase in frequency and intensity and leave behind a store of ideal knowledge, of vision & inspiration, & an increasing power of the ideal faculties. By these increasing & repeated confirmations they arrive at an assured and abundant fullness of the divine faculty & its results in the human mind. Ye stomebhih pra súrayo naro magháni ánaśuh." (16: 724-27)

The Evolution of Knowledge in Man from the Mental or Sensational to the Ideal Type

"The Rishi proceeds to dwell more fully on the whole process by which the knowledge in man is changed & elevated from the mental or sensational to the ideal type. It is done by a process of natural awakening out of the joy & strength of the divine Tapas generated by the inner sacrifice. The joy of Agni by his self-expression in thought & verbal form of thought is the first necessary condition. Agne chandra te girah. When we feel the divine, the immortal force working in us & lifting us beyond mortality, the divine joy comes with it, – the joy that wakes in the poet, the artist, the saint, the seer, the hero, in all who have any sort of communion with the divine Nature & draw from it their force of vision or their force of being or their force of action. They are the girah of Agni, his self-expressions through the word into which human [.....] form themselves or from which our actions draw their force and inspiration. The second requisite is the joy of our nervous & vital parts in this divine activity. The Narah, the Purushas, must be aśwarádhasah. Aśwa, the Horse, the Steed, is the Vedic figure for the Prana, for the Life-Energy pouring itself through nature & through man's nervous activities, the strong impetuous swift galloper of the worlds that bears gods & men on the journey of life, up the ascent of spiritual evolution, through the battles of the great war which is the Cosmos. Without a strong & joyous vital energy to support it, human mind cannot bear the tremendous shocks of the divine activity, the divine knowledge, the divine [?vision]. The mortal system would break down under the intense touch of the immortal powers, [?sink] back into disintegration, darkness & suffering more intense than the ordinary [?conditions] of mortality. But with a strong & rapturous vital energy & activity supporting the play of a joyous divine energy in the mind, the Solar Purushas become strong with the strengths, mental & vital, which the expressions of Agni Chandra generate and are able to feel an unmixed sense of pleasure & well-being in all Agni's self-expressions in man, – this, I think, is the meaning of śumbhanti in this passage. Or, if it has an active sense, it must mean, as Sayana suggests, that they make those expressions entirely auspicious & pleasurable, śobhanáh kurvanti; free from the touch of pain & suffering or the ill-results which may come from a premature activity of the higher elements in an ill-prepared & unfit receptacle. Ye Agne chandra te girah śumbhanti aśwarádhasah. Śushmebhih śushmiṇo naro.

When there is this strong & blissful action, blissful in the vital energy supporting it, blissful in the divine force working in the mind, blissful in the easy & auspicious self-expressions of that force, then the perfection of the illuminative Powers awakes of itself or by the force of the Self in the pure mentality. This spontaneous self-action of the power, the knowledge, the being, the bliss of the Godhead in man, no longer secured or assured by struggle, no

longer needing to be protected against legions of spiritual enemies who seek to perpetuate the reign of darkness, suffering, limitation & mortality, but assured & established, but easily, swiftly & mightily developing & reaching its glorious self-perfection, sukírtih, is the last stage of the Vedic Yoga and the desired state of the Vedic sádhaka. This natural awakening in the human consciousness of the perfected divine knowledge in the comprehensive wideness, brihat, natural to the Mahas, the vijnána, takes place divaś chid, even in the heaven of pure mind, even without man rising in himself to the plane of consciousness above pure mind, brihad div, mahas, vijnána. For if man were once on that plane, then there could be no question of struggle. There intellect & its hosts are quiescent, or have left their mortal parts and been transfigured back into the divine elements from which they came. Imagination is at rest or has been transfigured into inspiration, sense observation or insight of intelligence at rest or transfigured into revelation & luminous vision, judgment, reasoning & intelligent divination at rest or transfigured into sure intuition & illuminated discrimination. The Solar Purushas are there swe dame in their own home; the self-awakening of their perfect activity, sukírti, is there natural & inevitable. The necessity of struggle for man comes from this that he lives on the lower plane of mind and has to idealise & illumine his mental activities. The Purushas have to enter a foreign territory & conquer & hold it against its established inhabitants & natural possessors. But even in mind, not the sense mind, not Bhuvar in man, but in the purified mind, the pure self-intelligence this easy, natural & victorious awakening is possible under the conditions of a joyous & illuminated vitality, a joyous & illuminated action of Agni in the mind & the assured sense of ease & well-being brought into his activities in us by the delightful consciousness of a higher knowledge & illumination. Divaś chid yeshám brihat sukírtir bodhati tmaná.

The final movement of the Solar Purushas is then described by the Rishi, the movement which takes place when there is the awakening by self-action of its vast vijnánamaya perfection in the pure intelligence. These Solar Purushas, these bright illuminations of Vijnana, are the bright-burning flames of the divine Tapas. Agni, the Divine Being in His aspect of Force, is masked in our nervous energies as the Aśwa, in the mind takes the forms of the mental gods, in the activities of Surya, he is the divine Power expressed in Surya himself and these luminous hosts of the Sun-god are his own brilliant liberated energies. Free from the smoke of the lower regions, free from the excitement and distress of his lower emotional & sensational movements, the thoughts of the Rishi, joyous & liberated, move freely in [the] whole heaven of mind boldly [.....]" (16: 727-30)

Agni in the Esoteric Sense of the Veda

"For the esoteric sense of the Veda, we start with the premiss that Agni is the Flame or Force, base of all action, formation, creation, not only, as he very evidently is in the surface exoteric sense, in the material universe, but in all being, in spirit and mind and life as well as in matter. But how do we arrive at or justify this premiss? At first sight it seems not at all obvious, but rather a very considerable assumption. It appears from the very first expression in this first hymn of Bharadwaja. "O Flame (Agni), thou art the supreme or first thinker." Material fire or its god cannot be so described; the phrase at once gives Agni a psychological function – a flame or fire-god cannot be called thus significantly the supreme or first thinker unless we suppose that in the fiery principle which pervades the universe there is a consciousness which thinks out all the works attributed to it by the Vedic Rishis, such as the creation of the worlds, the guardianship of Truth and Immortality. Sayana's interpretation, "the first in whom the mind of the gods is inwoven", imposes the same idea. We see too that Agni is everywhere designated the Seer, *kavi*. Not only so, but for Vamadeva (IV.3.16) he is the seer to whom the secret words of seer-wisdom (निण्या वचांसि काव्यानि) are spoken and to whom their hidden sense expresses its meaning, निवचना. This would have no sufficient sense, if it were spoken only of a godhead of cosmic physical flame. It is quite evident from the most literal sense of the Veda that Agni is a godhead characterised by a supreme power of divine knowledge. This can be nothing else than the conscious Force of divine Knowledge which creates (निर्ममे) the worlds. We shall find from other passages that he is the divine Flame also in the thoughts and in the heart of man, amto अमृतो मर्तेषु, the immortal in mortal beings.

This godhead of divine active Force is the supreme thinker or the first mentaliser of things. He is then an immortal flame of Power that makes for knowledge. As this thinker, this active Puissance, दस्म, he has become the Hotri of this thought, अस्या धियो होता. The thought may be the thought expressed in the hymn = अस्य सूक्तस्य; even if we take धियः = कर्मणः, still it is as the supreme thinker that he works in the sacrifice, and the sense therefore is that it is by his power of thought that he conducts the sacrifice, brings into it the other gods and gives its fruit, – unless we take the two *padas* as unconnected in sense. The Hotri is the priest of invocation and also the priest who gives the offering. This divine Power of the sacrificial thought and action brings in the powers of the other gods into the sacrifice and conducts the sacrificial action. Is this spoken of the inner or only of the outer ritual sacrifice?

And the Flame is a flame not of effective thought, but of invincible and inviolable Power. It is the Vrishan, the Bull, the Leader of the Herds, the Strong and Mighty One. In the abundance of its strength [it] makes all around it and us and the sacrifice a force which is hard to pierce or whose defences none can pass, and this invulnerable force is not only defensive but aggressive;

it overpowers every force. This may mean that the force of this flame of the divine Will in the sacrificial thought and action overcomes every other hostile force or, more simply and generally, it dominates all surrounding powers and makes the sacrifice master of a movement which nothing can resist, degrade or violate.

…It is when he has made around him an invulnerable force to secure the sacrifice and its progress that the divine Flame takes up, as now, his seat as the priest of the invocation and offering and in that fulfilled strength he is very mighty for the works of sacrifice. He sits in the seat of knowledge as the supreme thinker – the Seer Will, may we not say, in the plane of revelatory

thought and seeing, इळस्पदे, from there he gives the impulsion to the works and the journey of the sacrifice. This is the desirable Godhead, the Flame that men pray for which by its power of knowledge lifts them to immortality. And the Rishi takes up the suggestion of the word "impelling", इषयन, and indicates the nature of the great journey on whose paths the Flame of the divine Force marches himself and impels the human being. It is the great march which was undertaken by the strong semi-divine men of old. They found this supreme Thinker within, awakened by him to knowledge and growing constantly in knowledge they followed after him to divinise themselves in the planes of immortal being, their objective a felicity of vast riches, an immense wealth of

spiritual being. This sense is inevitable, if we accept the psychological indications in मनोता, देवयंतः, चितयंतः and all that immediately follows this verse. How, in any case, can this insistence on the god-seeking, on knowledge, [on the] thought-aspect of the Flame God, on the wakeful following of the seer Agni on his march and on the reaching of the देवस्य पदं mean only a following after Agni for food and material wealth? This is not only wilfully to degrade and materialize the lofty language of the poetry, but to make the whole sense and expression clumsy, blundering and incoherent, where in the original it is admirably developed, straightforward and as natural and flowing as a limpid stream." (16: 734-740)

"Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta on August 15, 1872. In 1879, at the age of seven, he was taken with his two elder brothers to England for education and lived there for fourteen years. Brought up at first in an English family at Manchester, he joined St. Paul's School in London in [1884] and in 1890 went from it with a senior classical scholarship to King's College, Cambridge, where he studied for two years. In 1890 he passed also the open competition for the Indian Civil Service, but at the end of two years of probation failed to present himself at the riding examination and was disqualified for the Service. At this time the Gaekwar of Baroda was in London. Aurobindo saw him, obtained an appointment in the Baroda Service and left England in [January], 1893.

Sri Aurobindo passed thirteen years, from 1893 to 1906, in the Baroda Service, first in the Revenue Department and in secretariat work for the Maharaja, afterwards as Professor of English and, finally, Vice-Principal in the Baroda College. These were years of self-culture, of literary activity – for much of the poetry afterwards published from Pondicherry was written at this time – and of preparation for his future work. In England he had received, according to his father's express instructions, an entirely occidental education without any contact with the culture of India and the East. At Baroda he made up the deficiency, learned Sanskrit and several modern Indian languages, assimilated the spirit of Indian civilisation and its forms past and present. A great part of the last years of this period was spent on leave in silent political activity, for he was debarred from public action by his position at Baroda. The outbreak of the agitation against the partition of Bengal in 1905 gave him the opportunity to give up the Baroda Service and join openly in the political movement. He left Baroda in 1906 and went to Calcutta as Principal of the newly-founded Bengal National College.

The political action of Sri Aurobindo covered eight years, from 1902 to 1910. During the first half of this period he worked behind the scenes, preparing with other co-workers the beginnings of the Swadeshi (Indian Sinn Fein) movement, till the agitation in Bengal furnished an opening for the public initiation of a more forward and direct political action than the moderate reformism which had till then been the creed of the Indian National Congress. In 1906 Sri Aurobindo came to Bengal with this purpose and joined the New Party, an advanced section small in numbers and not yet strong in influence, which had been recently formed in the Congress. The political theory of this party was a rather vague gospel of Non-cooperation; in action it had not yet gone farther than some ineffective clashes with the Moderate leaders at the annual Congress assembly behind the veil of secrecy of the "Subjects Committee". Sri Aurobindo persuaded its chiefs in Bengal to come forward publicly as an All-India party with a definite and challenging programme, putting forward Tilak, the popular Maratha leader at its head, and to attack the then

dominant Moderate (Reformist or Liberal) oligarchy of veteran politicians and capture from them the Congress and the country. This was the origin of the historic struggle between the Moderates and the Nationalists (called by their opponents Extremists) which in two years changed altogether the face of Indian politics.

The new-born Nationalist party put forward Swaraj (independence) as its goal as against the far-off Moderate hope of colonial self-government to be realised at a distant date of a century or two by a slow progress of reform; it proposed as its means of execution a programme which resembled in spirit, though not in its details, the policy of Sinn Fein developed some years later and carried to a successful issue in Ireland. The principle of this new policy was self-help; it aimed on one side at an effective organisation of the forces of the nation and on the other professed a complete non-cooperation with the Government. Boycott of British and foreign goods and the fostering of Swadeshi industries to replace them, boycott of British law courts and the foundation of a system of Arbitration courts in their stead, boycott of Government universities and colleges and the creation of a network of National colleges and schools, the formation of societies of young men which would do the work of police and defence and, wherever necessary, a policy of passive resistance were among the immediate items of the programme. Sri Aurobindo hoped to capture the Congress and make it the directing centre of an organised national action, an informal State within the State, which would carry on the struggle for freedom till it was won. He persuaded the party to take up and finance as its recognised organ the newly-founded daily paper, *Bande Mataram*, of which he was at the time acting editor. The *Bande Mataram*, whose policy from the beginning of 1907 till its abrupt winding up in 1908 when Aurobindo was in prison was wholly directed by him, circulated almost immediately all over India. During its brief but momentous existence it changed the political thought of India which has ever since preserved fundamentally, even amidst its later developments, the stamp then imparted to it. But the struggle initiated on these lines, though vehement and eventful and full of importance for the future, did not last long at the time; for the country was still unripe for so bold a programme.

Sri Aurobindo was prosecuted for sedition in 1907 and acquitted. Up till now an organiser and writer, he was obliged by this event and by the imprisonment or disappearance of other leaders to come forward as the acknowledged head of the party in Bengal and to appear on the platform for the first time as a speaker. He presided over the Nationalist Conference at Surat in 1907 where in the forceful clash of two equal parties the Congress was broken to pieces. In May, 1908, he was arrested in the Alipur Conspiracy Case as implicated in the doings of the revolutionary group led by his brother Barindra; but no evidence of any value could be established against him and in this case too he was acquitted. After a detention of one year as undertrial

prisoner in the Alipur Jail, he came out in May, 1909, to find the party organisation broken, its leaders scattered by imprisonment, deportation or self-imposed exile and the party itself still existent but dumb and dispirited and incapable of any strenuous action. For almost a year he strove single-handed as the sole remaining leader of the Nationalists in India to revive the movement. He published at this time to aid his effort a weekly English paper, the *Karmayogin*, and a Bengali weekly, the *Dharma*. But at last he was compelled to recognise that the nation was not yet sufficiently trained to carry out his policy and programme. For a time he thought that the necessary training must first be given through a less advanced Home Rule movement or an agitation of passive resistance of the kind created by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa. But he saw that the hour of these movements had not come and that he himself was not their destined leader. Moreover, since his twelve months' detention in the Alipur Jail, which had been spent entirely in the practice of Yoga, his inner spiritual life was pressing upon him for an exclusive concentration. He resolved therefore to withdraw from the political field, at least for a time.

In February, 1910, he withdrew to a secret retirement at Chandernagore and in the beginning of April sailed for Pondicherry in French India. A third prosecution was launched against him at this moment for a signed article in the *Karmayogin*; in his absence it was pressed against the printer of the paper who was convicted, but the conviction was quashed on appeal in the High Court of Calcutta. For the third time a prosecution against him had failed. Sri Aurobindo had left Bengal with some intention of returning to the political field under more favourable circumstances; but very soon the magnitude of the spiritual work he had taken up appeared to him and he saw that it would need the exclusive concentration of all his energies. Eventually he cut off connection with politics, refused repeatedly to accept the Presidentship of the National Congress and went into a complete retirement. During all his stay at Pondicherry from 1910 to the present moment he has remained more and more exclusively devoted to his spiritual work and his sâdhanâ.

In 1914 after four years of silent Yoga he began the publication of a philosophical monthly, the *Arya*. Most of his more important works, those published since in book form, the Isha Upanishad, the Essays on the Gita, and others not yet published, the Life Divine, the Synthesis of Yoga, appeared serially in the *Arya*. These works embodied much of the inner knowledge that had come to him in his practice of Yoga. Others were concerned with the spirit and significance of Indian civilisation and culture, the true meaning of the Vedas, the progress of human society, the nature and evolution of poetry, the possibility of the unification of the human race. At this time also he began to publish his poems, both those written in England and at Baroda and those, fewer in number, added during his period of political activity and in the first

years of his residence at Pondicherry. The *Arya* ceased publication in 1921 after six years and a half of uninterrupted appearance.

Sri Aurobindo lived at first in retirement at Pondicherry with four or five disciples. Afterwards more and yet more began to come to him to follow his spiritual path and the number became so large that a community of sâdhaks had to be formed for the maintenance and collective guidance of those who had left everything behind for the sake of a higher life. This was the foundation of the Sri Aurobindo Asram which has less been created than grown around him as its centre.

Sri Aurobindo began his practice of Yoga in 1905. At first gathering into it the essential elements of spiritual experience that are gained by the paths of divine communion and spiritual realisation followed till now in India, he passed on in search of a more complete experience uniting and harmonising the two ends of existence, Spirit and Matter. Most ways of Yoga are paths to the Beyond leading to the Spirit and, in the end, away from life; Sri Aurobindo's rises to the Spirit to redescend with its gains bringing the light and power and bliss of the Spirit into life to transform it. Man's present existence in the material world is in this view or vision of things a life in the Ignorance with the Inconscient at its base, but even in its darkness and nescience there are involved the presence and possibilities of the Divine. The created world is not a mistake or a vanity and illusion to be cast aside by the soul returning to heaven or Nirvâna, but the scene of a spiritual evolution by which out of this material Inconscience is to be manifested progressively the Divine Consciousness in things. Mind is the highest term yet reached in the evolution, but it is not the highest of which it is capable. There is above it a Supermind or eternal Truth-consciousness which is in its nature the self-aware and self-determining light and power of a Divine Knowledge. Mind is an ignorance seeking after Truth, but this is a self-existent Knowledge harmoniously manifesting the play of its forms and forces. It is only by the descent of this supermind that the perfection dreamed of by all that is highest in humanity can come. It is possible by opening to a greater divine consciousness to rise to this power of light and bliss, discover one's true self, remain in constant union with the Divine and bring down the supramental Force for the transformation of mind and life and body. To realise this possibility has been the dynamic aim of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga." (36: 5-10)

The Value of a Man

"In my view, a man's value does not depend on what he learns or his position or fame or what he does, but on what he is and inwardly becomes, and of that I have said nothing." (36: 12)

Political Interests and Activities of Sri Aurobindo at an Early Age

"[In England at an early age, Aurobindo took a firm decision to liberate his own nation.]

Not quite that; at this age Sri Aurobindo began first to be interested in Indian politics of which previously he knew nothing. His father began sending the newspaper The Bengalee with passages marked relating cases of maltreatment of Indians by Englishmen and he wrote in his letters denouncing the British Government in India as a heartless Government. At the age of eleven Sri Aurobindo had already received strongly the impression that a period of general upheaval and great revolutionary changes was coming

in the world and he himself was destined to play a part in it. His attention was now drawn to India and this feeling was soon canalised into the idea of the liberation of his own country. But the "firm decision" took full shape only towards the end of another four years. It had already been made when he went to Cambridge and as a member and for some time secretary of the Indian Majlis at Cambridge he delivered many revolutionary speeches which, as he afterwards learnt, had their part in determining the authorities to exclude him from the Indian Civil Service; the failure in the riding test was only the occasion, for in some other cases an opportunity was given for remedying this defect in India itself." (36: 31-32)

"There were three sides to Sri Aurobindo's political ideas and activities. First, there was the action with which he started, a secret revolutionary propaganda and organisation of which the central object was the preparation of an armed insurrection. Secondly, there was a public propaganda intended to convert the whole nation to the ideal of independence which was regarded, when he entered into politics, by the vast majority of Indians as unpractical and impossible, an almost insane chimera. It was thought that the British Empire was too powerful and India too weak, effectively disarmed and impotent even to dream of the success of such an endeavour. Thirdly, there was the organisation of the people to carry on a public and united opposition and undermining of the foreign rule through an increasing non-cooperation and passive resistance.

At that time the military organisation of the great empires and their means of military action were not so overwhelming and apparently irresistible as they now are: the rifle was still the decisive weapon, air power had not developed and the force of artillery was not so devastating as it afterwards became. India was disarmed, but Sri Aurobindo thought that with proper organisation and help from outside this difficulty might be overcome and in so vast a country as India and with the smallness of the regular British armies, even a guerrilla warfare accompanied by general resistance and revolt might be effective. There was also the possibility of a great revolt in the Indian army. At the same time he had studied the temperament and characteristics of the British people and the turn of their political instincts, and he believed that although they would resist any attempt at self-liberation by the Indian people and would at the most only concede very slowly such reforms as would not weaken their imperial control, still they were not of the kind which would be ruthlessly adamantine to the end: if they found resistance and revolt becoming general and persistent they would in the end try to arrive at an accommodation to save what they could of their empire or in an extremity prefer to grant independence rather than have it forcefully wrested from their hands.

In some quarters there is the idea that Sri Aurobindo's political standpoint was entirely pacifist, that he was opposed in principle and in practice to all violence and that he denounced terrorism, insurrection etc. as entirely forbidden by the spirit and letter of the Hindu religion. It is even suggested that he was a forerunner of the gospel of Ahimsa. This is quite incorrect. Sri Aurobindo is neither an impotent moralist nor a weak pacifist.

The rule of confining political action to passive resistance was adopted as the best policy for the National Movement at that stage and not as a part of a gospel of Non-violence or pacific idealism. Peace is a part of the highest ideal, but it must be spiritual or at the very least psychological in its basis;

without a change in human nature it cannot come with any finality. If it is attempted on any other basis (moral principle or gospel of Ahimsa or any other) it will fail, and even may leave things worse than before. He is in favour of an attempt to put down war by international agreement and international force, what is now contemplated in the "New Order", if that proves possible, but that would not be Ahimsa, it would be a putting down of anarchic force by legal force, and even then one cannot be sure that it would be permanent. Within nations this sort of peace has been secured, but it does not prevent occasional civil wars and revolutions and political outbreaks and repressions, sometimes of a sanguinary character. The same might happen to a similar world-peace. Sri Aurobindo has never concealed his opinion that a nation is entitled to attain its freedom by violence, if it can do so or if there is no other way; whether it should do so or not, depends on what is the best policy, not on ethical considerations. Sri Aurobindo's position and practice in this matter was the same as Tilak's and that of other Nationalist leaders who were by no means Pacifists or worshippers of Ahimsa.

For the first few years in India, Sri Aurobindo abstained from any political activity (except the writing of the articles in the *Indu Prakash)* and studied the conditions in the country so that he might be able to judge more maturely what could be done. Then he made his first move when he sent a young Bengali soldier of the Baroda army, Jatin Banerji, as his lieutenant to Bengal with a programme of preparation and action which he thought might occupy a period of 30 years before fruition could become possible. As a matter of fact it has taken 50 years for the movement of liberation to arrive at fruition and the beginning of complete success. The idea was to establish secretly or, as far as visible action could be taken, under various pretexts and covers, revolutionary propaganda and recruiting throughout Bengal. This was to be done among the youth of the country while sympathy and support and financial and other assistance were to be obtained from the older men who had advanced views or could be won over to them. Centres were to be established in every town and eventually in every village. Societies of young men were to be established with various ostensible objects, cultural, intellectual or moral and those already existing were to be won over for revolutionary use. Young men were to be trained in activities which might be helpful for ultimate military action, such as riding, physical training, athletics of various kinds, drill and organised movement. As soon as the idea was sown it attained a rapid prosperity; already existing small groups and associations of young men who had not yet the clear idea or any settled programme of revolution began to turn in this direction and a few who had already the revolutionary aim were contacted and soon developed activity on organised lines; the few rapidly became many. Meanwhile Sri Aurobindo had met a member of the Secret Society in Western

India, and taken the oath of the Society and had been introduced to the Council in Bombay. His future action was not pursued under any directions by this Council, but he took up on his own responsibility the task of generalising support for its objects in Bengal where as yet it had no membership or following. He spoke of the Society and its aim to P. Mitter and other leading men of the revolutionary group in Bengal and they took the oath of the Society and agreed to carry out its objects on the lines suggested by Sri Aurobindo. The special cover used by Mitter's group was association for lathi play which had already been popularised to some extent by Sarala Ghoshal in Bengal among the young men; but other groups used other ostensible covers. Sri Aurobindo's attempt at a close organisation of the whole movement did not succeed, but the movement itself did not suffer by that, for the general idea was taken up and activity of many separate groups led to a greater and more widespread diffusion of the revolutionary drive and its action. Afterwards there came the partition of Bengal and a general outburst of revolt which favoured the rise of the extremist party and the great nationalist movement. Sri Aurobindo's activities were then turned more and more in this direction and the secret action became a secondary and subordinate element. He took advantage, however, of the Swadeshi movement to popularise the idea of violent revolt in the future. At Barin's suggestion he agreed to the starting of a paper, *Yugantar*, which was to preach open revolt and the absolute denial of the British rule and include such items as a series of articles containing instructions for guerrilla warfare. Sri Aurobindo himself wrote some of the opening articles in the early numbers and he always exercised a general control; when a member of the sub-editorial staff, Swami Vivekananda's brother, presented himself on his own motion to the police in a search as the editor of the paper and was prosecuted, the *Yugantar* under Sri Aurobindo's orders adopted the policy of refusing to defend itself in a British Court on the ground that it did not recognise the foreign Government and this immensely increased the prestige and influence of the paper. It had as its chief writers and directors three of the ablest younger writers in Bengal, and it at once acquired an immense influence throughout Bengal. It may be noted that the Secret Society did not include terrorism in its programme but this element grew up in Bengal as a result of the strong repression and the reaction to it in that province.

The public activity of Sri Aurobindo began with the writing of the articles in the *Indu Prakash*. These [nine] articles written at the instance of K. G. Deshpande, editor of the paper and Sri Aurobindo's Cambridge friend, under the caption "New Lamps for Old" vehemently denounced the then congress policy of pray, petition and protest and called for a dynamic leadership based upon self-help and fearlessness. But this outspoken and irrefutable criticism was checked by the action of a Moderate leader who frightened the editor and

thus prevented any full development of his ideas in the paper; he had to turn aside to generalities such as the necessity of extending the activities of the Congress beyond the circle of the bourgeois or middle class and calling into it the masses. Finally, Sri Aurobindo suspended all public activity of this kind and worked only in secret till 1905, but he contacted Tilak whom he regarded as the one possible leader for a revolutionary party and met him at the Ahmedabad Congress; there Tilak took him out of the pandal and talked to him for an hour in the grounds expressing his contempt for the Reformist movement and explaining his own line of action in Maharashtra.

Sri Aurobindo included in the scope of his revolutionary work one kind of activity which afterwards became an important item in the public programme of the Nationalist party. He encouraged the young men in the centres of work to propagate the Swadeshi idea which at that time was only in its infancy and hardly more than a fad of the few. One of the ablest men in these revolutionary groups was a Mahratta named Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar who was an able writer in Bengali (his family had been long domiciled in Bengal) and who had written a popular life of Shivaji in Bengali in which he first brought in the name of Swaraj, afterwards adopted by the Nationalists as their word for independence, – Swaraj became one item of the fourfold Nationalist programme. He published a book entitled *Desher Katha* describing in exhaustive detail the British commercial and industrial exploitation of India. This book had an immense repercussion in Bengal, captured the mind of young Bengal and assisted more than anything else in the preparation of the Swadeshi movement. Sri Aurobindo himself had always considered the shaking off of this economic yoke and the development of Indian trade and industry as a necessary concomitant of the revolutionary endeavour.

As long as he was in the Baroda service, Sri Aurobindo could not take part publicly in politics. Apart from that, he preferred to remain and act and even to lead from behind the scenes without his name being known in public; it was the Government's action in prosecuting him as editor of the *Bande Mataram* that forced him into public view. And from that time forward he became openly, what he had been for sometime already, a prominent leader of the Nationalist party, its principal leader in action in Bengal and the organiser there of its policy and strategy. He had decided in his mind the lines on which he wanted the country's action to run: what he planned was very much the same as was developed afterwards in Ireland as the Sinn Fein movement; but Sri Aurobindo did not derive his ideas, as some have represented, from Ireland, for the Irish movement became prominent later and he knew nothing of it till after he had withdrawn to Pondicherry. There was moreover a capital difference between India and Ireland which made his work much more difficult; for all its past history had accustomed the Irish people to rebellion against British

rule and this history might be even described as a constant struggle for independence intermittent in its action but permanently there in principle; there was nothing of this kind in India. Sri Aurobindo had to establish and generalise the idea of independence in the mind of the Indian people and at the same time to push first a party and then the whole nation into an intense and organised political activity which would lead to the accomplishment of that ideal. His idea was to capture the Congress and to make it an instrument for revolutionary action instead of a centre of a timid constitutional agitation which would only talk and pass resolutions and recommendations to the foreign Government; if the Congress could not be captured, then a central revolutionary body would have to be created which could do this work. It was to be a sort of State within the State giving its directions to the people and creating organised bodies and institutions which would be its means of action; there must be an increasing non-cooperation and passive resistance which would render the administration of the country by a foreign Government difficult or finally impossible, a universal unrest which would wear down repression and finally, if need be, an open revolt all over the country. This plan included a boycott of British trade, the substitution of national schools for the Government institutions, the creation of arbitration courts to which the people could resort instead of depending on the ordinary courts of law, the creation of volunteer forces which would be the nucleus of an army of open revolt, and all other action that could make the programme complete. The part Sri Aurobindo took publicly in Indian politics was of brief duration, for he turned aside from it in 1910 and withdrew to Pondicherry; much of his programme lapsed in his absence, but enough had been done to change the whole face of Indian politics and the whole spirit of the Indian people, to make independence its aim and non-cooperation and resistance its method, and even an imperfect application of this policy heightening into sporadic periods of revolt has been sufficient to bring about the victory. The course of subsequent events followed largely the line of Sri Aurobindo's idea. The Congress was finally captured by the Nationalist party, declared independence its aim, organised itself for action, took almost the whole nation minus a majority of the Mohammedans and a minority of the depressed classes into acceptance of its leadership and eventually formed the first national, though not as yet an independent, Government in India and secured from Britain acceptance of independence for India.

At first Sri Aurobindo took part in Congress politics only from behind the scenes as he had not yet decided to leave the Baroda service; but he took long leave without pay in which, besides carrying on personally the secret revolutionary work, he attended the Barisal Conference broken up by the police and toured East Bengal along with Bepin Pal and associated himself closely

with the forward group in the Congress. It was during this period that he joined Bepin Pal in the editing of the *Bande Mataram*, founded the new political party in Bengal and attended the Congress session at Calcutta at which the Extremists, though still a minority, succeeded under the leadership of Tilak in imposing part of their political programme on the Congress. The founding of the Bengal National College gave him the opportunity he needed and enabled him to resign his position in the Baroda service and join the college as its Principal. Subodh Mullick, one of Sri Aurobindo's collaborators in his secret action and afterwards also in Congress politics, in whose house he usually lived when he was in Calcutta, had given a lakh of rupees for this foundation and had stipulated that Sri Aurobindo should be given a post of professor in the college with a salary of Rs. 150; so he was now free to give his whole time to the service of the country. Bepin Pal, who had been long expounding a policy of self-help and non-cooperation in his weekly journal, now started a daily with the name of *Bande Mataram*, but it was likely to be a brief adventure since he began with only Rs. 500 in his pocket and no firm assurance of financial assistance in the future. He asked Sri Aurobindo to join him in this venture to which a ready consent was given, for now Sri Aurobindo saw his opportunity for starting the public propaganda necessary for his revolutionary purpose. He called a meeting of the forward group of young men in the Congress and [they] decided then to organise themselves openly as a new political party joining hands with the corresponding group in Maharashtra under the proclaimed leadership of Tilak and to join battle with the Moderate party which was done at the Calcutta session. He also persuaded them to take up the *Bande Mataram* daily as their party organ and a Bande Mataram Company was started to finance the paper, whose direction Sri Aurobindo undertook during the absence of Bepin Pal who was sent on a tour in the districts to proclaim the purpose and programme of the new party. The new party was at once successful and the *Bande Mataram* paper began to circulate throughout India. On its staff were not only Bepin Pal and Sri Aurobindo but some other very able writers, Shyam Sundar Chakravarty, Hemendra Prasad Ghose and Bejoy Chatterji. Shyam Sundar and Bejoy were masters of the English language, each with a style of his own; Shyam Sundar caught up something like Sri Aurobindo's way of writing and later on many took his articles for Sri Aurobindo's. But after a time dissensions arose between Bepin Pal on one side and the other contributors and the directors of the Company because of temperamental incompatibility and differences of political view especially with regard to the secret revolutionary action with which others sympathised but to which Bepin Pal was opposed. This ended soon in Bepin Pal's separation from the journal. Sri Aurobindo would not have consented to this departure, for he regarded the qualities of Pal as a great asset to the *Bande Mataram,* since

Pal, though not a man of action or capable of political leadership, was perhaps the best and most original political thinker in the country, an excellent writer and a magnificent orator: but the separation was effected behind Sri Aurobindo's back when he was convalescing from a dangerous attack of fever. His name was even announced without his consent in *Bande Mataram* as editor but for one day only, as he immediately put a stop to it since he was still formally in the Baroda service and in no way eager to have his name brought forward in public. Henceforward, however, he controlled the policy of the *Bande Mataram* along with that of the party in Bengal. Bepin Pal had stated the aim of the new party as complete self-government free from British control but this could have meant or at least included the Moderate aim of colonial self-government and Dadabhai Naoroji as President of the Calcutta session of the Congress had actually tried to capture the name of Swaraj, the Extremists' term for independence, for this colonial self-government. Sri Aurobindo's first preoccupation was to declare openly for complete and absolute independence as the aim of political action in India and to insist on this persistently in the pages of the journal; he was the first politician in India who had the courage to do this in public and he was immediately successful. The party took up the word Swaraj to express its own ideal of independence and it soon spread everywhere; but it was taken up as the ideal of the Congress much later on at the [Lahore] session of that body when it had been reconstituted and renovated under Nationalist leadership. The journal declared and developed a new political programme for the country as the programme of the Nationalist Party, non-cooperation, passive resistance, Swadeshi, Boycott, national education, settlement of disputes in law by popular arbitration and other items of Sri Aurobindo's plan. Sri Aurobindo published in the paper a series of articles on passive resistance, another developing a political philosophy of revolution and wrote many leaders aimed at destroying the shibboleths and superstitions of the Moderate Party, such as the belief in British justice and benefits bestowed by foreign government in India, faith in British law courts and in the adequacy of the education given in schools and universities in India and stressed more strongly and persistently than had been done the emasculation, stagnation or slow progress, poverty, economic dependence, absence of a rich industrial activity and all other evil results of a foreign government; he insisted especially that even if an alien rule were benevolent and beneficent, that could not be a substitute for a free and healthy national life. Assisted by this publicity the ideas of the Nationalists gained ground everywhere especially in the Punjab which had before been predominantly moderate. The *Bande Mataram* was almost unique in journalistic history in the influence it exercised in converting the mind of a people and preparing it for revolution. But its weakness was on the financial side; for the Extremists were

still a poor man's party. So long as Sri Aurobindo was there in active control, he managed with great difficulty to secure sufficient public support for running the paper, but not for expanding it as he wanted, and when he was arrested and held in jail for a year, the economic situation of *Bande Mataram* became desperate: finally, it was decided that the journal should die a glorious death rather than perish by starvation and Bejoy Chatterji was commissioned to write an article for which the Government would certainly stop the publication of the paper. Sri Aurobindo had always taken care to give no handle in the editorial articles of the *Bande Mataram* either for a prosecution for sedition or any other drastic action fatal to its existence; an editor of *The Statesman* complained that the paper reeked with sedition patently visible between every line but it was so skilfully written that no legal action could be taken. The manoeuvre succeeded and the life of the *Bande Mataram* came to an end in Sri Aurobindo's absence.

The Nationalist programme could only achieve a partial beginning before it was temporarily broken by severe government repression. Its most important practical item was Swadeshi plus Boycott; for Swadeshi much was done to make the idea general and a few beginnings were made, but the greater results showed themselves only afterwards in the course of time. Sri Aurobindo was anxious that this part of the movement should be not only propagated in idea but given a practical organisation and an effective force. He wrote from Baroda asking whether it would not be possible to bring in the industrialists and manufacturers and gain the financial support of landed magnates and create an organisation in which men of industrial and commercial ability and experience and not politicians alone could direct operations and devise means of carrying out the policy; but he was told that it was impossible, the industrialists and the landed magnates were too timid to join in the movement, and the big commercial men were all interested in the import of British goods and therefore on the side of the status quo: so he had to abandon his idea of the organisation of Swadeshi and Boycott. Both Tilak and Sri Aurobindo were in favour of an effective boycott of British goods – but of British goods only; for there was little in the country to replace foreign articles: so they recommended the substitution for the British of foreign goods from Germany and Austria and America so that the fullest pressure might be brought upon England. They wanted the Boycott to be a political weapon and not merely an aid to Swadeshi; the total boycott of all foreign goods was an impracticable idea and the very limited application of it recommended in Congress resolutions was too small to be politically effective. They were for national self-sufficiency in key industries, the production of necessities and of all manufactures of which India had the natural means, but complete self-sufficiency or autarchy did not seem practicable or even desirable since a free India would need to

export goods as well as supply them for internal consumption and for that she must import as well and maintain an international exchange. But the sudden enthusiasm for the boycott of all foreign goods was wide and sweeping and the leaders had to conform to this popular cry and be content with the impulse it gave to the Swadeshi idea. National education was another item to which Sri Aurobindo attached much importance. He had been disgusted with the education given by the British system in the schools and colleges and universities, a system of which as a professor in the Baroda College he had full experience. He felt that it tended to dull and impoverish and tie up the naturally quick and brilliant and supple Indian intelligence, to teach it bad intellectual habits and spoil by narrow information and mechanical instruction its originality and productivity. The movement began well and many national schools were established in Bengal and many able men became teachers, but still the development was insufficient and the economical position of the schools precarious. Sri Aurobindo had decided to take up the movement personally and see whether it could not be given a greater expansion and a stronger foundation, but his departure from Bengal cut short this plan. In the repression and the general depression caused by it, most of the schools failed to survive. The idea lived on and it may be hoped that it will one day find an adequate form and body. The idea of people's courts was taken up and worked in some districts, not without success, but this too perished in the storm. The idea of volunteer groupings had a stronger vitality; it lived on, took shape, multiplied its formations and its workers were the spearhead of the movement of direct action which broke out from time to time in the struggle for freedom. The purely political elements of the Nationalist programme and activities were those which lasted and after each wave of repression and depression renewed the thread of the life of the movement for liberation and kept it recognisably one throughout nearly fifty years of its struggle. But the greatest thing done in those years was the creation of a new spirit in the country. In the enthusiasm that swept surging everywhere with the cry of Bande Mataram ringing on all sides men felt it glorious to be alive and dare and act together and hope; the old apathy and timidity were broken and a force created which nothing could destroy and which rose again and again in wave after wave till it carried India to the beginning of a complete victory.

After the *Bande Mataram* case, Sri Aurobindo became the recognised leader of Nationalism in Bengal. He led the party at the session of the [district] Conference at Midnapore where there was a vehement clash between the two parties. He now for the first time became a speaker on the public platform, addressed large meetings at Surat and presided over the Nationalist conference there. He stopped at several places on his way back to Calcutta and was the speaker at large meetings called to hear him. He led the party again at the

session of the Provincial Conference at Hooghly. There it became evident for the first time that Nationalism was gaining the ascendant, for it commanded a majority among the delegates and in the Subjects Committee Sri Aurobindo was able to defeat the Moderates' resolution welcoming the Reforms and pass his own resolution stigmatising them as utterly inadequate and unreal and rejecting them. But the Moderate leaders threatened to secede if this was maintained and to avoid a scission he consented to allow the Moderate resolution to pass but spoke at the public session explaining his decision and asking the Nationalists to acquiesce in it in spite of their victory so as to keep some unity in the political forces of Bengal. The Nationalist delegates, at first triumphant and clamorous, accepted the decision and left the hall quietly at Sri Aurobindo's order so that they might not have to vote either for or against the Moderate resolution. This caused much amazement and discomfiture in the minds of the Moderate leaders who complained that the people had refused to listen to their old and tried leaders and clamoured against them, but at the bidding of a young man new to politics they had obeyed in disciplined silence as if a single body.

About this period Sri Aurobindo had decided to take up charge of a Bengali daily, *Nava Shakti*, and had moved from his rented house in Scott's Lane, where he had been living with his wife and sister, to rooms in the office of this newspaper, and there, before he could begin this new venture, early one morning while he was still sleeping, the police charged up the stairs, revolver in hand, and arrested him. He was taken to the police station and thence to Alipore Jail where he remained for a year during the magistrate's investigation and the trial in the Sessions Court at Alipore. At first he was lodged for some time in a solitary cell but afterwards transferred to a large section of the jail where he lived in one huge room with the other prisoners in the case; subsequently, after the assassination of the approver in the jail, all the prisoners were confined in contiguous but separate cells and met only in the court or in the daily exercise where they could not speak to each other. It was in the second period that Sri Aurobindo made the acquaintance of most of his fellow-accused. In the jail he spent almost all his time in reading the Gita and the Upanishads and in intensive meditation and the practice of Yoga. This he pursued even in the second interval when he had no opportunity of being alone and had to accustom himself to meditation amid general talk and laughter, the playing of games and much noise and disturbance; in the first and third periods he had full opportunity and used it to the full. In the Sessions Court the accused were confined in a large prisoners' cage and here during the whole day he remained absorbed in his meditation attending little to the trial and hardly listening to the evidence. C. R. Das, one of his Nationalist collaborators and a famous lawyer, had put aside his large practice and devoted himself for

months to the defence of Sri Aurobindo who left the case entirely to him and troubled no more about it; for he had been assured from within and knew that he would be acquitted. During this period his view of life was radically changed; he had taken up Yoga with the original idea of acquiring spiritual force and energy and divine guidance for his work in life. But now the inner spiritual life and realisation which had continually been increasing in magnitude and universality and assuming a larger place took him up entirely and his work became a part and result of it and besides far exceeded the service and liberation of the country and fixed itself in an aim, previously only glimpsed, which was world-wide in its bearing and concerned with the whole future of humanity.

When he came out from jail, Sri Aurobindo found the whole political aspect of the country altered; most of the Nationalist leaders were in jail or in self-imposed exile and there was a general discouragement and depression, though the feeling in the country had not ceased but was only suppressed and was growing by its suppression. He determined to continue the struggle; he held weekly meetings in Calcutta, but the attendance which had numbered formerly thousands full of enthusiasm was now only of hundreds and had no longer the same force and life. He also went to places in the districts to speak and at one of these delivered his speech at Uttarpara in which for the first time he spoke publicly of his Yoga and his spiritual experiences. He started also two weeklies, one in English and one in Bengali, the *Karmayogin* and *Dharma*, which had a fairly large circulation and were, unlike the *Bande Mataram*, easily self-supporting. He attended and spoke at the Provincial Conference at [Hooghly] in 1909: for in Bengal owing to the compromise at [Pabna] the two parties had not split altogether apart and both joined in the Conference, though there could be no representatives of the Nationalist party at the meeting of the Central Moderate Body which had taken the place of the Congress. Surendra Nath Banerji had indeed called a private conference attended by Sri Aurobindo and one or two other leaders of the Nationalists to discuss a project of uniting the two parties at the session in [Lahore] and giving a joint fight to the dominant right wing of the Moderates; for he had always dreamt of becoming again the leader of a united Bengal with the Extremist party as his strong right arm: but that would have necessitated the Nationalists being appointed as delegates by the Bengal Moderates and accepting the constitution imposed at Surat. This Sri Aurobindo refused to do; he demanded a change in that constitution enabling newly formed associations to elect delegates so that the Nationalists might independently send their representatives to the All-India session and on this point the negotiations broke down. Sri Aurobindo began however to consider how to revive the national movement under the changed circumstances. He glanced at the possibility of falling back on a Home Rule movement which the Government could not repress, but this, which was

actually realised by Mrs. Besant later on, would have meant a postponement and a falling back from the ideal of independence. He looked also at the possibility of an intense and organised passive resistance movement in the manner afterwards adopted by Gandhi. He saw however that he himself could not be the leader of such a movement.

At no time did he consent to have anything to do with the sham Reforms which were all the Government at that period cared to offer. He held up always the slogan of "no compromise" or, as he now put it in his Open Letter to his countrymen published in the *Karmayogin*, "no co-operation without control". It was only if real political, administrative and financial control were given to popular ministers in an elected Assembly that he would have anything to do with offers from the British Government. Of this he saw no sign until the proposal of the Montagu Reforms in which first something of the kind seemed to appear. He foresaw that the British Government would have to begin trying to meet the national aspiration half-way, but he would not anticipate that moment before it actually came. The Montagu Reforms came nine years after Sri Aurobindo had retired to Pondicherry and by that time he had abandoned all outward and public political activity in order to devote himself to his spiritual work, acting only by his spiritual force on the movement in India, until his prevision of real negotiations between the British Government and the Indian leaders was fulfilled by the Cripps' proposal and the events that came after.

Meanwhile the Government were determined to get rid of Sri Aurobindo as the only considerable obstacle left to the success of their repressive policy. As they could not send him to the Andamans they decided to deport him. This came to the knowledge of Sister Nivedita and she informed Sri Aurobindo and asked him to leave British India and work from outside so that his work would not be stopped or totally interrupted. Sri Aurobindo contented himself with publishing in the *Karmayogin* a signed article in which he spoke of the project of deportation and left the country what he called his last will and testament; he felt sure that this would kill the idea of deportation and in fact it so turned out. Deportation left aside, the Government could only wait for some opportunity for prosecution for sedition and this chance came to them when Sri Aurobindo published in the same paper another signed article reviewing the political situation. The article was sufficiently moderate in its tone and later on the High Court refused to regard it as seditious and acquitted the printer. Sri Aurobindo one night at the *Karmayogin* office received information of the Government's intention to search the office and arrest him. While considering what should be his attitude, he received a sudden command from above to go to Chandernagore in French India. He obeyed the command at once, for it was now his rule to move only as he was moved

by the divine guidance and never to resist and depart from it; he did not stay to consult with anyone but in ten minutes was at the river ghat and in a boat plying on the Ganges, in a few hours he was at Chandernagore where he went into secret residence. He sent a message to Sister Nivedita asking her to take up the editing of the *Karmayogin* in his absence. This was the end of his active connection with his two journals. At Chandernagore he plunged entirely into solitary meditation and ceased all other activity. Then there came to him a call to proceed to Pondicherry. A boat manned by some young revolutionaries of Uttarpara took him to Calcutta; there he boarded the *Dupleix* and reached Pondicherry on April 4, 1910.

At Pondicherry, from this time onwards Sri Aurobindo's practice of Yoga became more and more absorbing. He dropped all participation in any public political activity, refused more than one request to preside at sessions of the restored Indian National Congress and made a rule of abstention from any public utterance of any kind not connected with his spiritual activities or any contribution of writings or articles except what he wrote afterwards in the *Arya*. For some years he kept up some private communication with the revolutionary forces he had led through one or two individuals, but this also he dropped after a time and his abstention from any kind of participation in politics became complete. As his vision of the future grew clearer, he saw that the eventual independence of India was assured by the march of Forces of which he became aware, that Britain would be compelled by the pressure of Indian resistance and by the pressure of international events to concede independence and that she was already moving towards that eventuality with whatever opposition and reluctance. He felt that there would be no need of armed insurrection and that the secret preparation for it could be dropped without injury to the nationalist cause, although the revolutionary spirit had to be maintained and would be maintained intact. His own personal intervention in politics would therefore be no longer indispensable. Apart from all this, the magnitude of the spiritual work set before him became more and more clear to him, and he saw that the concentration of all his energies on it was necessary. Accordingly, when the Ashram came into existence, he kept it free from all political connections or action; even when he intervened in politics twice afterwards on special occasions, this intervention was purely personal and the Ashram was not concerned in it. The British Government and numbers of people besides could not believe that Sri Aurobindo had ceased from all political action and it was supposed by them that he was secretly participating in revolutionary activities and even creating a secret organisation in the security of French India. But all this was pure imagination and rumour and there was nothing of the kind. His retirement from political activity was complete, just as was his personal retirement into solitude in 1910.

But this did not mean, as most people supposed, that he had retired into some height of spiritual experience devoid of any further interest in the world or in the fate of India. It could not mean that, for the very principle of his Yoga was not only to realise the Divine and attain to a complete spiritual consciousness, but also to take all life and all world activity into the scope of this spiritual consciousness and action and to base life on the Spirit and give it a spiritual meaning. In his retirement Sri Aurobindo kept a close watch on all that was happening in the world and in India and actively intervened whenever necessary, but solely with a spiritual force and silent spiritual action; for it is part of the experience of those who have advanced far in Yoga that besides the ordinary forces and activities of the mind and life and body in Matter, there are other forces and powers that can act and do act from behind and from above; there is also a spiritual dynamic power which can be possessed by those who are advanced in the spiritual consciousness, though all do not care to possess or, possessing, to use it, and this power is greater than any other and more effective. It was this force which, as soon as he had attained to it, he used, at first only in a limited field of personal work, but afterwards in a constant action upon the world forces. He had no reason to be dissatisfied with the results or to feel the necessity of any other kind of action. Twice however he found it advisable to take in addition other action of a public kind. The first was in relation to the second World War. At the beginning he did not actively concern himself with it, but when it appeared as if Hitler would crush all the forces opposed to him and Nazism dominate the world, he began to intervene. He declared himself publicly on the side of the Allies, made some financial contributions in answer to the appeal for funds and encouraged those who sought his advice to enter the army or share in the war effort. Inwardly, he put his spiritual force behind the Allies from the moment of Dunkirk when everybody was expecting the immediate fall of England and the definite triumph of Hitler, and he had the satisfaction of seeing the rush of German victory almost immediately arrested and the tide of war begin to turn in the opposite direction. This he did, because he saw that behind Hitler and Nazism were dark Asuric forces and that their success would mean the enslavement of mankind to the tyranny of evil, and a set-back to the course of evolution and especially to the spiritual evolution of mankind: it would lead also to the enslavement not only of Europe but of Asia, and in it India, an enslavement far more terrible than any this country had ever endured, and the undoing of all the work that had been done for her liberation. It was this reason also that induced him to support publicly the Cripps' offer and to press the Congress leaders to accept it. He had not, for various reasons, intervened with his spiritual force against the Japanese aggression until it became evident that Japan intended to attack and even invade and conquer India. He

allowed certain letters he had written in support of the war affirming his views of the Asuric nature and inevitable outcome of Hitlerism to become public. He supported the Cripps' offer because by its acceptance India and Britain could stand united against the Asuric forces and the solution of Cripps could be used as a step towards independence. When negotiations failed, Sri Aurobindo returned to his reliance on the use of spiritual force alone against the aggressor and had the satisfaction of seeing the tide of Japanese victory, which had till then swept everything before it, changed immediately into a tide of rapid, crushing and finally immense and overwhelming defeat. He had also after a time the satisfaction of seeing his previsions about the future of India justify themselves so that she stands independent with whatever internal difficulties.

Written 7 November 1946; revised and published 1948" (36: 47-66)

Sri Aurobindo on Barin's Guru Sakaria Swami

"Sakaria Swami was Barin's Guru: he had been a fighter in the Mutiny on the rebel side and he showed at the breaking of the Surat Congress a vehement patriotic excitement which caused his death because it awoke the poison of the bite of a mad dog which he had reduced to inactivity by a process of his Yogic will; but Sri Aurobindo would not have chosen him for any control of the political side of such an institution. The idea of Bhawani Mandir simply lapsed of itself. Sri Aurobindo thought no more about it, but Barin who clung to the idea tried to establish something like it on a small scale in the Maniktala Garden." (36: 75)

Sri Aurobindo on Gokhale

"After an hour's conversation with Gokhale in the train between Ahmedabad and Baroda it was impossible for Sri Aurobindo to retain any great respect for Gokhale as a politician, whatever his merits as a man." (36: 76)

Sri Aurobindo Never Brought Any Rancour into His Politics

"Sri Aurobindo never brought any rancour into his politics. He never had any hatred for England or the English people; he based his claim for freedom for India on the inherent right to freedom, not on any charge of misgovernment or oppression; if he attacked persons even violently, it was for their views or political action, not from any other motive." (36: 80-81)

The Bande Mataram Articles

"The Bande Mataram was never prosecuted for its editorial articles. The editor of the Statesman complained that they were too diabolically clever, crammed full of sedition between the lines, but legally unattackable because of the skill of the language. The Government must have shared this view, for they never ventured to attack the paper for its editorial or other articles, whether Sri Aurobindo's or from the pen of his three editorial colleagues. There is also the fact that Sri Aurobindo never based his case for freedom on racial hatred or charges of tyranny or misgovernment, but always on the inalienable right of the nation to independence. His stand was that even good government could not take the place of national government, – independence." (36: 81)

"This version does not represent accurately the facts as Sri Aurobindo remembers them. So far as he knows there was no attempt at fire. The session of the Congress had first been arranged at Nagpur, but Nagpur was predominantly a Mahratta city and violently extremist. Gujerat was at that time predominantly moderate, there were very few Nationalists and Surat was a stronghold of Moderatism though afterwards Gujerat became, especially after Gandhi took the lead, one of the most revolutionary of the provinces. So the Moderate leaders decided to hold the Congress at Surat. The Nationalists however came there in strength from all parts, they held a public conference with Sri Aurobindo as president and for some time it was doubtful which side would have the majority, but finally in this moderate city that party was able to bring in a crowd of so-called delegates up to the number of 1300 while the Nationalists were able by the same method to muster something over 1100. It was known that the Moderate leaders had prepared a new constitution for the Congress which would make it practically impossible for the extreme party to command a majority at any annual session for many years to come. The younger Nationalists, especially those from Maharashtra, were determined to prevent this by any means and it was decided by them to break the Congress if they could not swamp it; this decision was unknown to Tilak and the older leaders but it was known to Sri Aurobindo. At the sessions Tilak went on to the platform to propose a resolution regarding the presidentship of the Congress; the president appointed by the Moderates refused to him the permission to speak but Tilak insisted on his right and began to read his resolution and speak. There was a tremendous uproar, the young Gujerati volunteers lifted up chairs over the head of Tilak to beat him. At that the Mahrattas became furious, a Mahratta shoe came hurtling across the pavilion aimed at the President Dr. Rash Behari Ghose and hit Surendra Nath Banerji on the shoulder. The young Mahrattas in a body charged up to the platform, the Moderate leaders fled and after a short fight on the platform with chairs the session broke up not to be resumed. The Moderate leaders decided to suspend the Congress and replace it by a national conference with a constitution and arrangement which would make it safe for their party. Meanwhile Lajpatrai came to Tilak and informed him that the Government had decided, if the Congress split, to crush the Extremists by the most ruthless repression. Tilak thought, and the event proved that he was right, that the country was not yet ready to face successfully such a repression and he proposed to circumvent both the Moderate plan and the Government plan by the Nationalists joining the conference and signing the statement of adhesion to the new constitution demanded by the Moderates. Sri Aurobindo and some other leaders were opposed to this submission; they did not believe that the Moderates would admit any Nationalists to their conference (and this proved to be the case) and

they wanted the country to be asked to face the repression. Thus the Congress ceased for a time to exist; but the Moderate conference was not a success and was attended only by small and always dwindling numbers. Sri Aurobindo had hoped that the country would be strong enough to face the repression, at least in Bengal and Maharashtra where the enthusiasm had become intense and almost universal; but he thought also that even if there was a temporary collapse the repression would create a deep change in the hearts and minds of the people and the whole nation would swing over to nationalism and the ideal of independence. This actually happened and when Tilak returned from jail in Burma after 6 years he was able in conjunction with Mrs Besant not only to revive the Congress but to make it representative of a nation pledged to the nationalist cause. The Moderate party shrank into a small body of liberals and even these finally subscribed to the ideal of complete independence." (36: 82-83)

Sri Aurobindo's Sadhana – The Four Great Realisations

"Sri Aurobindo had already realised in full two of the four great realisations on which his yoga and his spiritual philosophy are founded. The first he had gained while meditating with the Maharashtrian Yogi Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, at Baroda in January 1908; it was the realisation of the silent spaceless and timeless Brahman gained after a complete and abiding stillness of the whole consciousness and attended at first by an overwhelming feeling and perception of the total unreality of the world, though this feeling disappeared after his second realisation which was that of the cosmic consciousness and of the Divine as all beings and all that is, which happened in the Alipore jail and of which he has spoken in his speech at Uttarpara. To

the other two realisations, that of the supreme Reality with the static and dynamic Brahman as its two aspects and that of the higher planes of consciousness leading to the Supermind, he was already on his way in his meditations in Alipore jail. Moreover, he had accepted from Lele as the principle of his sadhana to rely wholly on the Divine and his guidance alone both for his sadhana and for his outward actions. After that it was impossible for him to put himself under any other guidance and unnecessary to seek help from anyone. In fact Sri Aurobindo never took any formal initiation from anyone; he started his Sadhana on his own account by the practice of pranayama and never asked for help except from Lele." (36: 94-95)

Beginnings of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga

"My yoga begun in 1904 had always been personal and apart; those around me knew I was a sadhak but they knew little more as I kept all that went on in me to myself. It was only after my release that for the first time I spoke at Uttarpara publicly about my spiritual experiences. Until I went to Pondicherry I took no disciples; with those who accompanied me or joined me in Pondicherry I had at first the relation of friends and companions rather than of a guru and disciples; it was on the ground of politics that I had come to know them and not on the spiritual ground. Afterwards only there was a gradual development of spiritual relations until the Mother came back from Japan

and the Ashram was founded or rather founded itself in 1926. I began my yoga in 1904 without a guru; in 1908 I received important help from a Mahratta yogi and discovered the foundations of my sadhana; but from that time till the Mother came to India I received no spiritual help from anyone else. My sadhana before and afterwards was not founded upon books but upon personal experiences that crowded on me from within. But in the jail I had the Gita and the Upanishads with me, practised the yoga of the Gita and meditated with the help of the Upanishads; these were the only books from which I found guidance; the Veda which I first began to read long afterwards in Pondicherry rather confirmed what experiences I already had than was any guide to my

sadhana. I sometimes turned to the Gita for light when there was a question or a difficulty and usually received help or an answer from it, but there were no such happenings in connection with the Gita as are narrated in the book. It is a fact that I was hearing constantly the voice of Vivekananda speaking to me for a fortnight in the jail in my solitary meditation and felt his presence, but this had nothing to do with the alleged circumstances narrated in the book, circumstances that never took place, nor had it anything to do with the Gita. The voice spoke only on a special and limited but very important field of spiritual experience and it ceased as soon as it had finished saying all that it had to say on that subject." (36: 98-99)

Sri Aurobindo's Relations with Sister Nivedita

"Then about my relations with Sister Nivedita – they were purely in the field of politics. Spirituality or spiritual matters did not enter into them and I do not remember anything passing between us on these subjects when I was with her. Once or twice she showed the spiritual side of her but she was then speaking to someone else who had come to see her while I was there. The whole account about my staying with her for 24 hours and all that is said to have passed between us then is sheer romance and does not contain a particle of fact. I met Sister Nivedita first at Baroda when she came to give some lectures there. I went to receive her at the station and to take her to the house assigned to her; I also accompanied her to an interview she had sought with the Maharaja of Baroda. She had heard of me as one who "believed in strength and was a worshipper of Kali" by which she meant that she had heard of me as a revolutionary. I knew of her already because I had read and admired her book "Kali the Mother". It is in these days that we formed our friendship. After I had started my revolutionary work in Bengal through certain emissaries, I went there personally to see and arrange things myself. I found a number of small groups of revolutionaries that had recently sprung into existence but all scattered and acting without reference to each other. I tried to unite them under a single organisation with the barrister P. Mitra as the leader of the revolution in Bengal and a central council of five persons, one of them being Nivedita. The work under P. Mitra spread enormously and finally contained tens of thousands of young men and the spirit of revolution spread by Barin's paper "Yugantar" became general in the young generation; but during my absence at Baroda the council ceased to exist as it was impossible to keep up agreement among the many groups. I had no occasion to meet Nivedita after that until I settled in Bengal as principal of the National College and the chief editorial writer of the Bande Mataram. By that time I had become one of the leaders of the public movement known first as extremism, then as nationalism, but this gave me no occasion to meet her except once or twice at the Congress, as my collaboration with her was solely in the secret revolutionary field. I was busy with my work and she with hers, and no occasion arose for consultations or decisions about the conduct of the revolutionary movement. Later on I began to make time to go and see her occasionally at Bagbazar.

In one of these visits she informed me that the Government had decided to deport me and she wanted me to go into secrecy or to leave British India and act from outside so as to avoid interruption of my work. There was no question at that time of danger to her; in spite of her political views she had friendly relations with high Government officials and there was no question of her arrest. I told her that I did not think it necessary to accept her suggestion; I would write an open letter in the Karmayogin which, I thought, would prevent this action by the Government. This was done and on my next visit to her she told me that my move had been entirely successful and the idea of deportation had been dropped. The departure to Chandernagore happened later and there was no connection between the two incidents…" (36: 99-100)

First Turn towards Spiritual Seeking

"Sri Aurobindo's first turn towards spiritual seeking came in England in the last year of his stay there. He had lived in the family of a Non-conformist clergyman, minister of a chapel belonging to the "Congregational" denomination; though he never became a Christian, this was the only religion and the Bible the only scripture with which he was acquainted in his childhood; but in the form in which it presented itself to him, it repelled rather than attracted him and the hideous story of persecution staining mediaeval Christianity and the narrowness and intolerance even of its later developments disgusted him so strongly that he drew back from religion altogether. After a

short period of complete atheism, he accepted the Agnostic attitude. In his studies for the I.C.S, however, he came across a brief and very scanty and bare statement of the "Six philosophies" of India and he was especially struck by the concept of the Atman in the Adwaita. It was borne in upon his mind that here might be [a] true clue to the reality behind life and the world. He made a strong and very crude mental attempt to realise what this Self or Atman might be, to convert the abstract idea into a concrete and living reality in his own consciousness, but conceiving it as something beyond or behind this material world, – not having understood it as something immanent in himself and all and also universal." (36: 106)

Sri Aurobindo's Habit in Action

"Sri Aurobindo's habit in action was not to devise beforehand and plan, but to keep a fixed purpose, watch events, prepare forces and act when he felt it to be the right moment. His first organised work in politics (grouping people who accepted the idea of independence and were prepared to take up an appropriate action) was undertaken at an early age, but took a regular shape in or about 1902; two years later he began his practice of Yoga – not to clarify his ideas, but to find the spiritual strength which would support him and enlighten his way." (36: 107)

Sources of His Philosophy

"The basic idea of the Self caught me when I was in England. I tried to realise what the Self might be. The first Indian writings that took hold of me were the Upanishads and these raised in me a strong enthusiasm and I tried later to translate some of them. The other strong intellectual influence [that] came in India in early life were the sayings of Ramakrishna and the writings and speeches of Vivekananda, but this was a first introduction to Indian spiritual experience and not as philosophy. They did not, however, carry me to the practice of Yoga: their influence was purely mental.

My philosophy was formed first by the study of the Upanishads and the Gita; the Veda came later. They were the basis of my first practice of Yoga; I tried to realise what I read in my spiritual experience and succeeded; in fact I was never satisfied till experience came and it was on this experience that later

on I founded my philosophy, not on ideas by themselves. I owed nothing in my philosophy to intellectual abstractions, ratiocination or dialectics; when I have used these means it was simply to explain my philosophy and justify it to the intellect of others. The other source of my philosophy was the knowledge that flowed from above when I sat in meditation, especially from the plane of the Higher Mind when I reached that level; they [*the ideas from the Higher Mind*] came down in a mighty flood which swelled into a sea of direct Knowledge always translating itself into experience, or they were intuitions starting from experience and leading to other intuitions and a corresponding experience. This source was exceedingly catholic and many-sided and all sorts of ideas came in which might have belonged to conflicting philosophies but they were here reconciled in a large synthetic whole." (36: 113)

Extract from a Letter to His Father

"Last night I was invited to coffee with one of the Dons and in his rooms I met the Great O.B. otherwise Oscar Browning, who is the feature par excellence of King's. He was extremely flattering; passing from the subject of cotillions to that of scholarships he said to me "I suppose you know you passed an extraordinarily high examination. I have examined papers at thirteen examinations and I have never during that time [seen] such excellent papers as yours (meaning my classical papers at the scholarship examination). As for your essay it was wonderful." In this essay (a comparison between Shakespeare

and Milton) I indulged in my Oriental tastes to the top of their bent; it overflowed with rich and tropical imagery; it abounded in antitheses and epigrams and it expressed my real feelings without restraint or reservation. I thought myself that it was the best thing I had ever done, but at school I would have been condemned as extraordinarily Asiatic & bombastic. The Great O.B. afterwards asked me where my rooms were & when I had answered he said "That wretched hole!" then turning to Mahaffy "How rude we are to our scholars! we get great minds to come down here and then shut them up in that box! I suppose it is to keep their pride down." 1890" (36: 121)

The Hindu Myth

"The impression that Hindu Myth has made on you, is its inevitable aspect to a taste nourished on the pure dew and honey of Hellenic tradition; for the strong Greek sense of symmetry and finite beauty is in conflict with the very spirit of Hinduism, which is a vast attempt of the human intellect to surround the universe with itself, an immense measuring of itself with the infinite and amorphous. Hellenism must necessarily see in the greater part of Hindu imaginations and thoughts a mass of crude fancies equally removed from the ideal and the real. But when it condemns all Hindu legend without distinction, I believe it is acting from an instinct which is its defect, – the necessary defect of its fine quality. For in order to preserve a pure, sensitive and severe standard of taste and critical judgment, it is compelled to be intolerant; to insist, that is, on its own limits and rule out all that exceeds them, as monstrous and unbeautiful. It rejects that flexible sympathy based on curiosity of temperament, which attempts to project itself into differing types as it meets them and so pass on through ever-widening artistic experiences to its destined perfection. And it rejects it because such catholicity would break the fine mould into which its own temperament is cast. This is well; yet is there room in art and criticism for that other, less fine but more many-sided, which makes possible new elements and strong departures. Often as the romantic temperament stumbles and creates broken and unsure work, sometimes it scores one of those signal triumphs which subject new art forms to the service of poetry or open up new horizons to poetical experience. What judgment would such a temperament, seeking its good where it can find it, but not grossly indiscriminating, not ignobly satisfied, pronounce on the Hindu legends?

I would carefully distinguish between two types of myth, the religious-philosophical allegory and the genuine secular legend. The former is beyond the pale of profitable argument. Created by the allegorical and symbolising spirit of mediaeval Hinduism, the religious myths are a type of poetry addressed to a peculiar mental constitution, and the sudden shock of the bizarre which repels occidental imagination the moment it comes in contact with Puranic literature, reveals to us where the line lies that must eternally divide East from West. The difference is one of root-temperament and therefore unbridgeable. There is the mental composition which has no facet towards imaginative religion, and if it accepts religion at all, requires it to be plain, precise and dogmatic; to such these allegories must always seem false in art and barren in significance. And there is the mental composition in which a strong metaphysical bent towards religion combines with an imaginative tendency seeking symbol both as an atmosphere around religion, which would otherwise dwell on too breathless mountaintops, and as a safeguard against the spirit of dogma. These find in Hindu allegory a perpetual delight and refreshment; they believe it to

be powerful and penetrating, sometimes with an epical daring of idea and an inspiration of searching appropriateness which not unoften dissolves into a strange and curious beauty. The strangeness permeating these legends is a vital part of themselves, and to eliminate the bizarre in them – bizarre to European notion, for to us they seem striking and natural – would be to emasculate them of the most characteristic part of their strength. Let us leave this type aside then as beyond the field of fruitful discussion.

There remain the secular legends; and it is true that a great number of them are intolerably puerile and grotesque. My point is that the puerility is no essential part of them but lies in their presentment, and that presentment again is characteristic of the Hindu spirit not in its best and most self-realising epochs. They were written in an age of decline, and their present form is the result of a literary accident. The Mahabharata of Vyasa, originally an epic of 24,000 verses, afterwards enlarged by a redacting poet, was finally submerged in a vast mass of inferior accretions, the work often of a tasteless age and unskilful hands. It is in this surface mass that the majority of the Hindu legends have floated down to our century. So preserved, it is not surprising that the old simple beauty of the ancient tales should have come to us marred and disfigured, as well as debased by association with later inventions which have no kernel of sweetness. And yet very simple and beautiful, in their peculiar Hindu type, were these old legends with infinite possibilities of sweetness and feeling, and in the hands of great artists have blossomed into dramas and epics of the most delicate tenderness or the most noble sublimity. One who glances at the dead and clumsy narrative of the Shacountala legend in the Mahabharata and reads after it Kalidasa's masterpiece in which delicate dramatic art and gracious tenderness of feeling reach their climax, at once perceives how they vary with the hands which touch them.

But you are right. The Hindu myth has not the warm passionate life of the Greek. The Hindu mind was too austere and idealistic to be sufficiently sensitive to the rich poetical colouring inherent in crime and sin and overpowering passion; an Oedipus or an Agamemnon stands therefore outside the line of its creative faculty. Yet it had in revenge a power which you will perhaps think no compensation at all, but which to a certain class of minds, of whom I confess myself one, seems of a very real and distinct value. Inferior in warmth and colour and quick life and the savour of earth to the Greek, they had a superior spiritual loveliness and exaltation; not clothing the surface of the earth with imperishable beauty, they search deeper into the white-hot core of things and in their cyclic orbit of thought curve downward round the most hidden fountains of existence and upward over the highest, almost invisible arches of ideal possibility. Let me touch the subject a little more precisely. The difference between the Greek and Hindu temperaments was that one was vital, the other supra-vital; the one physical, the other metaphysical; the one

sentient of sunlight as its natural atmosphere and the bound of its joyous activity, the other regarding it as a golden veil which hid from it beautiful and wonderful things for which it panted. The Greek aimed at limit and finite perfection, because he felt vividly all our bounded existence; the Hindu mind, ranging into the infinite tended to the enormous and moved habitually in the sublime. This is poetically a dangerous tendency; finite beauty, symmetry and form are always lovely, and Greek legend, even when touched by inferior poets, must always keep something of its light and bloom and human grace or of its tragic human force. But the infinite is not for all hands to meddle with; it submits only to the compulsion of the mighty, and at the touch of an inferior

mind recoils over the boundary of the sublime into the grotesque. Hence the enormous difference of level between different legends or the same legend in different hands, – the sublimity or tenderness of the best, the banality of the worst, with little that is mediocre and intermediate shading the contrast away. To take with a reverent hand the old myths and cleanse them of soiling accretions, till they shine with some of the antique strength, simplicity and solemn depth of beautiful meaning, is an ambition which Hindu poets of today may and do worthily cherish. To accomplish a similar duty in a foreign tongue is a more perilous endeavour." (36: 125-29)

The Hindu Epic Model

"The true subject of Hindu epic is always a struggle between two ideal forces universal and opposing, while the human and divine actors, the Supreme Triad excepted, are pawns moved to and fro by immense world-impulses which they express but cannot consciously guide. It is perhaps the Olympian ideal in life struggling with the Titanic ideal, and then we have a Ramaian. Or it may be the imperial ideal in government and society marshalling the forces of order, self-subjection, self-effacement, justice, equality, against the aristocratic ideal, with self-will, violence, independence, self-assertion, feudal loyalty, the sway of the sword and the right of the stronger at its back; this is the key of the Mahabharata. Or it is again, as in the tale of Savitrie, the passion of a single woman in its dreadful silence and strength pitted against Death, the divorcer of souls. Even in a purely domestic tale like the Romance of Nul, the central idea is that of the Spirit of Degeneracy, the genius of the Iron age, overpowered by a steadfast conjugal love. Similarly, in this story of Ruaru and Priyumvada the great Spirits who preside over Love and Death, Cama and Yama, are the real actors and give its name to the poem.

The second essential feature of the Hindu epic model is one which you have selected for especial condemnation and yet I have chosen to adhere to it in its entirety. The characters of Hindu legend are, you say, lifeless patterns of moral excellence. Let me again distinguish. The greater figures of our epics are ideals, but ideals of wickedness as well as virtue and also of mixed characters which are not precisely either vicious or virtuous. They are, that is to say, ideal presentments of character-types. This also arises from the tendency of the Hindu creative mind to look behind the actors at tendencies, inspirations, ideals. Yet are these great figures, are Rama, Sita, Savitrie, merely patterns of moral excellence? I who have read their tale in the swift and mighty language of Valmekie and Vyasa and thrilled with their joys and their sorrows, cannot persuade myself that it is so. Surely Savitrie that strong silent heart, with her powerful and subtly-indicated personality, has both life and charm; surely Rama puts too much divine fire into all he does to be a dead thing, – Sita is too gracious and sweet, too full of human lovingness and lovableness, of womanly weakness and womanly strength! Ruaru and Priyumvada are also types and ideals; love in them, such is the idea, finds not only its crowning exaltation but that perfect *idea* of itself of which every existing love is a partial and not quite successful manifestation. Ideal love is a triune energy, neither a mere sensual impulse, nor mere emotional nor mere spiritual. These may exist, but they are not love. By itself the sensual is only an animal need, the emotional a passing mood, the spiritual a religious aspiration which has lost its way. Yet all these are necessary elements of the highest passion. Sense impulse is as necessary to it as the warm earth-matter at its root to the tree, emotion as the air which consents with its life, spiritual aspiration as the light and the rain from heaven

which prevent it from withering. My conception being an ideal struggle between love and death, two things are needed to give it poetical form, an adequate picture of love and adequate image of Death. The love pictured must be on the ideal plane, and touch therefore the farthest limit of strength in each of its three directions. The sensual must be emphasised to give it firm root and basis, the emotional to impart to it life, the spiritual to prolong it into infinite permanence. And if at their limits of extension the three meet and harmonise, if they are not triple but triune, then is that love a perfect love and the picture of it a perfect picture." (36: 131-32)

The Ancient Rishis of India

"The Rishies won their knowledge by meditation working through inspiration to intuition. Austere concentration of the faculties stilled the waywardness of the reason and set free for its work the inner, unerring vision which is above reason, as reason is itself above sight; this again worked by intuitive flashes, one inspired stroke of insight quivering out close upon the other, till the whole formed a logical chain; yet a logic not coldly thought out nor the logic of argument but the logic of continuous and consistent inspiration. Those who sought the Eternal through physical austerities, such as the dwelling between five fires (one fire on each side and the noonday sun overhead) or lying for days on a bed of swordpoints, or Yoga processes based on an advanced physical science, belonged to a later day. The Rishies were inspired thinkers, not working through deductive reason or any physical process of sense-subdual. The energy of their personalities was colossal; wrestling in fierce meditation with God, they had become masters of incalculable spiritual energies, so that their anger could blast peoples and even the world was in danger when they opened their lips to utter a curse. This energy was by the principle of heredity transmitted, at least in the form of a latent and educable force, to their offspring. Afterwards as the vigour of the race exhausted itself, the inner fire dwindled and waned. But at first even the unborn child was divine. When Chyavan was in the womb, a Titan to whom his mother Puloma had been betrothed before she was given to Bhrigou, attempted to carry off his lost love in the absence of the Rishi. It is told that the child in the womb felt the affront and issued from his mother burning with such a fire of inherited divinity that the Titan ravisher fell blasted by the wrath of an infant. For the Rishies were not passionless. They were prone to anger and swift to love. In their pride of life and genius they indulged their yearnings for beauty, wedding the daughters of Titans or mingling with nymphs of Paradise in the august solitudes of hills and forests. From these were born those ancient and sacred clans of a prehistoric antiquity, Barghoves, Barhaspaths, Gautamas, Kasyapas, into which the descendants of the Aryan are to this day divided. Thus has India deified the great men who gave her civilisation.

On earth the Rishies, in heaven the Gods. These were great and shining beings who preserved the established cosmos against the Asuras, or Titans, spirits of disorder between whom and the Hindu Olympians there was ever warfare. Yet their hostility did not preclude occasional unions. Sachi herself, the Queen of Heaven, was a Titaness, daughter of the Asura, Puloman; Yayati, ally of the Gods, took to himself a Daitya maiden Surmishtha, child of imperial Vrishopurvan (for the Asuras or Daityas, on the [terrestrial]* plane, signified the adversaries of Aryan civilisation), and Bhrigou's wife, Puloma, was of the

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* *MS (typed)* territorial

Titan blood. Chief of the Gods were Indra, King and Thunderer, who came down when men sacrificed and drank the Soma wine of the offering; Vaiou, the Wind; Agni, who is Hutaashon, devourer of the sacrifice, the spiritual energy of Fire; Varouna, the prince of the seas; Critanta, Death, the ender, who was called also Yama (Government) or Dhurma (Law) because from him are all order and stability, whether material or moral. And there were subtler presences; Cama, also named Modon or Monmuth, the God of desire, who rode on the parrot and carried five flowery arrows and a bow-string of linked honey-bees; his wife, Ruthie, the golden-limbed spirit of delight; Saruswatie, the Hindu Muse, who is also Vach or Word, the primal goddess – she is the unexpressed idea of existence which by her expression takes visible form and being; for the word is prior to and more real, because more spiritual, than the thing it expresses; she is the daughter of Brahma and has inherited the creative power of her father, the wife of Vishnou and shares the preservative energy of her husband; Vasuqie, also, and Seshanaga, the great serpent with his hosts, whose namemeans finiteness and who represents Time and Space; he upholds the world on his hundred colossal hoods and is the couch of the Supreme who is Existence. There were also the angels who were a little less than the Gods; Yukshas, the Faery attendants of Kuvere, lord of wealth, who protect hoards and treasures and dwell in Ullaca, the city of beauty,

the hills of mist
Golden, the dwelling place of Faery kings,
And mansions by unearthly moonlight kissed: –
For one dwells there whose brow with the young moon
Lightens as with a marvellous amethyst –

Ullaca, city of beauty, where no thought enters but that of love, no age but that of youth, no season but that of flowers. Then there are the Gundhurvas, beautiful, brave and melodious beings, the artists, musicians, poets and shining warriors of heaven; Kinnaries, Centauresses of sky and hill with voices of Siren melody; Opsaras, sky-nymphs, children of Ocean, who dwell in Heaven, its songstresses and daughters of joy, and who often mingle in love with mortals. Nor must we forget our own mother, Ganges, the triple and mystic river, who is Mundaqinie, Ganges of the Gods, in heaven, Bhagirathie or Jahnavie, Ganges of men, on earth, and Boithorinie or coiling Bhogavatie, Ganges of the dead, in Patala, the grey under-world and kingdom of serpents, and in the sombre dominions of Yama. Saraswatie, namesake and shadow of the Muse, preceded her in her sacredness; but the banks of those once pure waters have long passed to the barbarian and been denounced as unclean and uninhabitable to our race, while the deity has passed to that other mysterious underground stream which joins Ganges and Yamouna in their tryst at Proyaga." (36: 134-37)

The Value of a Gift

"…the value of a gift depends on the spirit of the giver rather than on its own suitability to the recipient." (36: 137)

Sri Aurobindo on Mrinalini Devi's Death

"Pondicherry

19 February 1919

My dear father-in-law,

I have not written to you with regard to this fatal event in both our lives; words are useless in face of the feelings it has caused, if even they can ever express our deepest emotions. God has seen good to lay upon me the one sorrow that could still touch me to the centre. He knows better than ourselves what is best for each of us, and now that the first sense of the irreparable has passed, I can bow with submission to His divine purpose. The physical tie between us is, as you say, severed; but the tie of affection subsists for me. Where I have once loved, I do not cease from loving. Besides she who was the cause of it, still is near though not visible to our physical vision.

It is needless to say much about the matters of which you write in your letter. I approve of everything that you propose. Whatever Mrinalini would have desired, should be done, and I have no doubt this is what she would have approved of. I consent to the chudis being kept by her mother; but I should be glad if you would send me two or three of her books, especially if there are any in which her name is written. I have only of her her letters and a photograph. Aurobindo" (36: 148)

Spirituality Is India's Only Politics

"Spirituality is India's only politics, the fulfilment of the Sanatan Dharma its only Swaraj. I have no doubt we shall have to go through our Parliamentary period in order to get rid of the notion of Western democracy by seeing in practice how helpless it is to make nations blessed." (36: 170)

God's Habit of Waiting Till the Last Moment

"No doubt, God will provide, but He has contracted a bad habit of waiting till the last moment. I only hope He does not wish us to learn how to live on a minus quantity, like Bharati." (36: 176)

Sri Aurobindo's View of His Sadhana

"15th August is usually a turning point or a notable day for me personally either in sadhana or life – indirectly only for others. This time it has been very important for me. My subjective sadhana may be said to have received its final seal and something like its consummation by a prolonged realisation & dwelling in Parabrahman for many hours. Since then, egoism is dead for all in me except the Annamaya Atma, – the physical self which awaits one farther realisation before it is entirely liberated from occasional visitings or external touches of the old separated existence.

My future sadhan is for life, practical knowledge & shakti, – not the essential knowledge or shakti in itself which I have got already – but knowledge & shakti established in the same physical self & directed to my work in life. I am now getting a clearer idea of that work & I may as well impart something

of that idea to you; since you look to me as the centre, you should know what is likely to radiate out of that centre.

1. To reexplain the Sanatana Dharma to the human intellect in all its parts, from a new standpoint. This work is already beginning, & three parts of it are being clearly worked out. Sri Krishna has shown me the true meaning of the Vedas, not only so but he has shown me a new Science of Philology showing the process & origins of human speech so that a new Nirukta can be formed & the new interpretation of the Veda based upon it. He has also shown me the meaning of all in the Upanishads that is not understood either by Indians or Europeans. I have therefore to reexplain the whole Vedanta & Veda in such a way that it will be seen how all religion arises out of it & is one

everywhere. In this way it will be proved that India is the centre of the religious life of the world & its destined saviour through the Sanatana Dharma.

2. On the basis of Vedic knowledge to establish a Yogic sadhana which will not only liberate the soul, but prepare a perfect humanity & help in the restoration of the Satyayuga. That work has to begin now but will not be complete till the end of the Kali.

3. India being the centre, to work for her restoration to her proper place in the world; but this restoration must be effected as a part of the above work and by means of Yoga applied to human means & instruments, not otherwise.

4. A perfect humanity being intended society will have to be remodelled so as to be fit to contain that perfection." (36: 177-78)

Sri Ramakrishna and His Mission

"Remember also that we derive from Ramakrishna. For myself it was Ramakrishna who personally came & first turned me to this Yoga. Vivekananda in the Alipore jail gave me the foundations of that knowledge which is the basis of our sadhana. The error of the Mission is to keep too much to the forms of Ramakrishna & Vivekananda & not keep themselves open for new outpourings of their spirit, – the error of all "Churches" and organised religious bodies. I do not think they will escape from it, so long as their "Holy Mother" is with them. She represents now the Shakti of Ramakrishna so far as it was manifested in his life. When I say do not enter into conflict with them, I really mean "do not enter conflict with her." Let her fulfil her mission, keeping always ours intact and ever-increasing." (36: 179)

Sri Aurobindo's Mission and Yoga

"You must understand that my mission is not to create maths, ascetics and Sannyasis; but to call back the souls of the strong to the Lila of Krishna & Kali. That is my teaching, as you can see from the Review, and my name must never be connected with monastic forms or the monastic ideal. Every ascetic movement since the time of Buddha has left India weaker and for a very obvious reason. Renunciation of life is one thing, to make life itself, national, individual, world-life greater & more divine is another. You cannot enforce one ideal on the country without weakening the other. You cannot take away the best souls from life & yet leave life stronger & greater. Renunciation of ego, acceptance of God in life is the Yoga I teach, – no other renunciation." (36: 222)

The Difficult Lesson to Be Learned

"The revolt and impatience may come and will come in the heart or the prana when these are still subject to imperfection and impurity; but it is then for the will and the faith in your buddhi to reject them, not to act upon them. If the will consents, approves and supports them, it means that you are siding with the inner enemy. If you want rapid progress, the first condition is that you should not do this; for every time you do it, the enemy is strengthened and the *shuddhi* postponed. This is a difficult lesson to learn, but you must

learn it. I do not find fault with you for taking long over it, I myself took full twelve years to learn it thoroughly, and even after I knew the principle well enough, it took me quite four years and more to master my lower nature in this respect. But you have the advantage of my experience and my help; you will be able to do it more rapidly, if you consciously and fully assist me, by not associating yourself with the enemy Desire; *jahi kâmam durâsadam*, remember that utterance of the Gita, it is a keyword of our Yoga." (36: 229)

The Supreme Importance of Shuddhi in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and the Way to It

"Shuddhi is the most difficult part of the whole Yoga, it is the condition of all the rest, and if that is once conquered, the real conquest is accomplished. The rest becomes a comparatively easy building on an assured basis, – it may take longer or shorter, but it can be done tranquilly and steadily. To prevent the shuddhi the lower nature in you and around you will exhaust all its efforts, and even when it cannot prevent, it will try to retard. And its strongest weapon then is, when you think you have got it, suddenly to break in on you and convince you that you have not got it, that it is far away, and so arouse disappointment, grief, loss of faith, discouragement, depression and revolt, the whole army of troubles that wait upon impure Desire. When you have once found calm, peace of mind, firm faith, equality and been able to live in it for some time, then and only then you may be sure that suddhi is founded; but you must not think it will not be disturbed. It will be, so long as your heart and prana are still capable of responding to the old movements, have still any memory and habit of vibrating to the old chords. The one thing necessary when the renewed trouble comes, is to stand back in your mind and will from it, refuse it the sanction of your higher being, even when it is raging in the lower nature. As that habit of refusal fixes itself, – at first you may not be able to do it, the buddhi may be lost in the storm, – you will find that the asuddhi, even though it still returns, becomes less violent, more and more external, until it ceases to be anything more than a faint and short-lived touch from outside and finally comes no more. That is the course it has followed with me, not only with regard to this kind of disturbance, but with regard to all imperfections. You, since you have chosen to share my Yoga for mankind, must follow the same way, undergo the same disturbances.

This is a thing which it is necessary for you to understand clearly. I myself have had for these fourteen years, and it is not yet finished, to bear all the possible typical difficulties, troubles, downfalls and backslidings that can rise in this great effort to change the whole normal human being. How else could I have been able to help or guide others on the same way? Those who join me at the present stage, must share in my burden, especially those who are themselves chosen in any degree to lead, help and guide. It may be that when I have the complete siddhi, – which I have not yet, I am only on the way to it, – then, if it be God's will to extend very largely and rapidly my work in this body, those who come after may have the way made very easy for them. But we are the pioneers hewing our way through the jungle of the lower prakriti. It will not do for us to be cowards and shirkers and refuse the burden, to clamour for everything to be made quick and easy for us. Above all things I demand from you endurance, firmness, heroism, – the true spiritual heroism. I want strong men, I do not want emotional children. Manhood first, দেবত্ব can only

be built upon that. If I do not get it in those who accept my Yoga, then I shall have to understand that it is not God's will that I should succeed. If that be so, I shall accept his will calmly. But meanwhile I go on bearing whatever burden he lays on me, meeting whatever difficulties he puts in the way of my siddhi. Personally, I am now sure of success in everything except in the *kaya-siddhi*, which is still doubtful, and in my work. The work can only succeed if I find noble and worthy helpers, fitted for it by the same struggles and the same endurance. I expect them in you.

Again you must not expect the *shuddhi* or any part of the *siddhi* to be simultaneous and complete at once in all whom you associate with you. One may attain, others progress, others linger. You must not expect a sudden collective miracle. I have not come here to accomplish miracles, but to show, lead the way, help, on the road to a great inner change of our human nature, – the outer change in the world is only possible if and when that inner transmutation is effected and extends itself. You must not expect to establish a perfect *sangha* all at once and by a single leap. If you make such demands on me, I can only say that I cannot do what is not God's will. Go forward calmly and firmly, not attached to success, not disturbed by unsuccess; my help will then not fail you." (36: 230-31)

The Possibility of Sri Aurobindo's Return to India in 1920

"As for me, I do not see, if Lajpatrai is coming to India, how they can object to my going to Bengal. But, allowed or not allowed, I have not the least intention of doing that at present or for another year at the earliest. When I do go, this or that circumstance will make no difference. Mr Gandhi, like the man in Macedonia with St Paul, sent me a message to "come over and help", but I had to say that I was not ready to join in the old politics and had no new programme formed for a more spiritual line of work, and it would be no use my going out till I saw my way." (36: 234-35)

The Commercial and Industrial Spirit

"The old politics in India persist in a chaos of parties and programmes centred round the Congress quarrel and the Reforms, and in Bengal we have a rush of the commercial and industrial spirit which follows the Western principle and, if it succeeds on those lines, is likely to create a very disastrous reproduction or imitation of the European situation with its corrupt capitalism and the labour struggle and the war of classes. And all that is the very reverse of our own ideal." (36: 236)

The Basis for the Expansion of the Work and the Precautions to Be Taken

"The mind of the outside world may be too shallow, restless and impatient to understand a great, profound and difficult truth like ours on the side of the idea, but a visible accomplishment, a body of things done has always the power to compel and to attract the world to follow it. The only danger then is that when this body of things becomes prominent and attractive, numbers may rush into it and try to follow the externals without realising and reproducing in themselves the truth and the power of the real thing that made it possible. It was that against which I warned you when there came the first possibility of

a considerable expansion. It is your business to enlarge your field of work and the work itself but not at the cost of any lowering or adulteration of its spirit. The first condition you have to assure is that all who have the work in hand or share in its direction must be of the spirit and work from the self outward; they must be men of the Yoga; but, secondly, all who enter in must have this imposed on them as the thing to be developed, must learn to develop this self-realisation first and foremost and the work only as its expression. The safety of the work lies in a strict adherence to this principle. The majority of the

educated people of Bengal care only to get something done – and are not troubled by the fact that really nothing sure and lasting does get done or else only something that is likely to do as much harm as good; they care nothing about the spiritual basis of life which is India's real mission and the only possible source of her greatness, or give to it only a slight, secondary or incidental value, a something that has to be stuck on as a sentiment or a bit of colouring matter. Our whole principle is different and you have to insist on our principle in all that you say and do." (36: 236-37)

The Spirit and the Form – The Past of India

"The spirit, the truth must be the same, but the formations may be different with advantage to the spirit. To insist on one form only might well bring in that rigidity which grew upon Indian society and its civilisation in the past and brought about an imprisonment and decline of the spirit. India was strongest and most alive when she had many variations of form but one spirit. And I think, – that at least was the prevision that came on me in the Alipur jail and I do not yet see a different prospect, – that this will be the case also in the future." (36: 238)

The English Mind and the Indian Mind

"..if the English mind would take the first step and try to see things from the Indian's standpoint – see their mind and act accordingly, all difficulties might be solved. The Indian mind has not the Irish memory for past wrongs and discords, it forgives and forgets easily. Only it must be made to feel that the approach on the other side is frank and whole hearted. If it once felt that, every difficulty would be solved." (36: 253)

Sri Aurobindo's Letter to Batista Explaining His Stay in Pondicherry and His Views on Politics and His Past Actions in This Field

"I came to Pondicherry in order to have freedom and tranquillity for a fixed object having nothing to do with present politics – in which I have taken no direct part since my coming here, though what I could do for the country in my own way I have constantly done, – and until it is accomplished, it is not possible for me to resume any kind of public activity. But if I were in British India, I should be obliged to plunge at once into action of different kinds. Pondicherry is my place of retreat, my cave of tapasya, – not of the ascetic kind, but of a brand of my own invention. I must finish that, I must be internally armed and equipped for my work before I leave it.

Next in the matter of the work itself. I do not at all look down on politics or political action or consider I have got above them. I have always laid a dominant stress and I now lay an entire stress on the spiritual life, but my idea of spirituality has nothing to do with ascetic withdrawal or contempt or disgust of secular things. There is to me nothing secular, all human activity is for me a thing to be included in a complete spiritual life, and the importance of politics at the present time is very great. But my line and intention of political activity would differ considerably from anything now current in the field. I entered into political action and continued it from 1903 to 1910 with one aim and one alone, to get into the mind of the people a settled will for

freedom and the necessity of a struggle to achieve it in place of the futile ambling Congress methods till then in vogue. That is now done and the Amritsar Congress is the seal upon it. The will is not as practical and compact nor by any means as organised and sustained in action as it should be, but there is the will and plenty of strong and able leaders to guide it. I consider that in spite of the inadequacy of the Reforms, the will to self-determination, if the country keeps its present temper, as I have no doubt it will, is bound to prevail before long. What preoccupies me now is the question what it is going to do with its self-determination, how will it use its freedom, on what lines is it going to determine its future?" (36: 255-56)

Sri Aurobindo's Views on the Future Political System Suited to India

"You may ask why not come out and help, myself, so far as I can, in giving a lead? But my mind has a habit of running inconveniently ahead of the times, – some might say, out of time altogether into the world of the ideal. Your party, you say, is going to be a social democratic party. Now I believe in something which might be called social democracy, but not in any of the forms now current, and I am not altogether in love with the European kind, however great an improvement it may be on the past. I hold that India having a spirit of her own and a governing temperament proper to her own civilisation, should in politics as in everything else strike out her own original path and not

stumble in the wake of Europe. But this is precisely what she will be obliged to do, if she has to start on the road in her present chaotic and unprepared condition of mind. No doubt people talk of India developing on her own lines, but nobody seems to have very clear or sufficient ideas as to what those lines are to be. In this matter I have formed ideals and certain definite ideas of my own, in which at present very few are likely to follow me, since they are governed by an uncompromising spiritual idealism of an unconventional kind and would be unintelligible to many and an offence and stumbling block to a great number." (36: 256)

Answer to Dr. Moonje's Request to Accept the Presidentship of the Nagpur Congress

"The central reason however is this that I am no longer first and foremost a politician, but have definitely commenced another kind of work with a spiritual basis, a work of spiritual, social, cultural and economic reconstruction of an almost revolutionary kind, and am even making or at least supervising a sort of practical or laboratory experiment in that sense which needs all the attention and energy that I can have to spare. It is impossible for me to combine political work of the current kind and this at the beginning. I should practically have to leave it aside, and this I cannot do, as I have taken it up as my mission for the rest of my life. This is the true reason of my inability to respond to your call.

I may say that in any case I think you would be making a wrong choice in asking me to take Tilak's place at your head. No one now alive in India, or at least no one yet known, is capable of taking that place, but myself least of all. I am an idealist to the marrow and could only be useful when there is something drastic to be done, a radical or revolutionary line to be taken, (I do not mean revolutionary by violence) a movement with an ideal aim and direct method to be inspired and organised. Tilak's policy of "responsive cooperation", continued agitation and obstruction whenever needed – and that would be oftener than not in the present circumstances – is, no doubt, the only alternative to some form of non-cooperation or passive resistance. But it would need at its head a man of his combined suppleness, skill and determination to make it effective." (36: 258-59)

The Status of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga in 1922
Excerpts from His Letter to C.R. Das

"I have become confirmed in a perception which I had always, less clearly and dynamically then, but which has now become more and more evident to me, that the true basis of work and life is the spiritual, that is to say, a new consciousness to be developed only by Yoga. I see more and more manifestly that man can never get out of the futile circle the race is always treading until he has raised himself on to the new foundation. I believe also that it is the mission of India to make this great victory for the world. But what precisely was the nature of the dynamic power of this greater consciousness? What

was the condition of its effective truth? How could it be brought down, mobilised, organised, turned upon life? How could our present instruments, intellect, mind, life, body be made true and perfect channels for this great transformation? This was the problem I have been trying to work out in my own experience and I have now a sure basis, a wide knowledge and some mastery of the secret. Not yet its fulness and complete imperative presence – therefore I have still to remain in retirement. For I am determined not to work in the external field till I have the sure and complete possession of this new power of action, – not to build except on a perfect foundation." (36: 260-61)

Sri Aurobindo's Belief in Expanding Hinduism

"I believe in an aggressive and expanding, not in a narrowly defensive and self-contracting Hinduism." (36: 274)

Sri Aurobindo's Letter to the Editor of the Independent on the Passing of Lokamanya Tilak

""A GREAT MIND, A GREAT WILL"

A great mind, a great will, a great and pre-eminent leader of men has passed away from the field of his achievement and labour. To the mind of his country Lokamanya Tilak was much more, for he had become to it a considerable part of itself, the embodiment of its past effort, and the head of its present will and struggle for a free and greater life. His achievement and personality have put him amidst the first rank of historic and significant figures. He was one who built much rapidly out of little beginnings, a creator of great things out of an un-worked material. The creations he left behind him were a new and strong and self-reliant national spirit, the reawakened political mind and life of a people, a will to freedom and action, a great national purpose. He

brought to his work extraordinary qualities, a calm, silent, unflinching courage, an unwavering purpose, a flexible mind, a forward-casting vision of possibilities, an eye for the occasion, a sense of actuality, a fine capacity of democratic leadership, a diplomacy that never lost sight of its aim and pressed towards it even in the most pliant turns of its movement, and guiding all, a single-minded patriotism that cared for power and influence only as a means of service to the Motherland and a lever for the work of her liberation. He sacrificed much for her and suffered for her repeatedly and made no ostentation of his suffering and sacrifices. His life was a constant offering at her altar and his death has come in the midst of an unceasing service and labour." (36: 275-76)

Sri Aurobindo on the Passing of Sri Chittaranjan Das

"Chittaranjan's death is a supreme loss. Consummately endowed with political intelligence, constructive imagination, magnetism, driving force combining a strong will and an uncommon plasticity of mind for vision and tact of the hour, he was the one man after Tilak who could have led India to Swaraj.

Aurobindo Ghose.

published 22 June 1925" (36: 279)

Sri Aurobindo's View of His Own Efforts in Yoga in 1915

"The whole earth is now under one law and answers to the same vibrations and I am sceptical of finding any place where the clash of the struggle will not pursue us. In any case, an effective retirement does not seem to be my destiny. I must remain in touch with the world until I have either mastered adverse circumstances or succumbed or carried on the struggle between the spiritual and physical so far as I am destined to carry it on. This is how I have always seen things and still see them. As for failure, difficulty and apparent impossibility I am too much habituated to them to be much impressed by their constant self-presentation except for passing moments." (36: 285)

"One needs to have a calm heart, a settled will, entire self-abnegation and the eyes constantly fixed on the beyond to live undiscouraged in times like these which are truly a period of universal decomposition. For myself, I follow the Voice and look neither to right nor to left of me. The result is not mine and hardly at all now even the labour. 6 May 1915" (36: 285)

To Make Earth and Heaven Equal and One

"Heaven we have possessed, but not the earth; but the fullness of the yoga is to make, in the formula of the Veda, "Heaven and Earth equal and one". 20 May 1915" (36: 286)

The Status of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga in 1916

"The ordinary Yoga is usually concentrated on a single aim and therefore less exposed to such recoils; ours is so complex and many-sided and embraces such large aims that we cannot expect any smooth progress until we near the completion of our effort, – especially as all the hostile forces in the spiritual world are in a constant state of opposition and besiege our gains; for the complete victory of a single one of us would mean a general downfall among them. In fact by our own unaided effort we could not hope to succeed. It is only in proportion as we come into a more and more universal communion with the Highest that we can hope to overcome with any finality. For myself I have had to come back so often from things that seemed to have been securely

gained that it is only relatively that I can say of any part of my Yoga, "It is done". Still I have always found that when I recover from one of these recoils, it is always with a new spiritual gain which might have been neglected or missed if I had remained securely in my former state of partial satisfaction. Especially, as I have long had the map of my advance sketched out before me, I am able to measure my progress at each step and the particular losses are compensated for by the clear consciousness of the general advance that has been made. The final goal is far but the progress made in the face of so constant and massive an opposition is the guarantee of its being gained in the end. But the time is in other hands than ours. Therefore I have put impatience and dissatisfaction far away from me." (36: 289)

"When the Unity has been well founded, the static half of our work is done, but the active half remains. It is then that in the One we must see the Master and His Power, – Krishna and Kali as I name them using the terms of our Indian religions; the Power occupying the whole of myself and my nature which becomes Kali and ceases to be anything else, the Master using, directing, enjoying the Power to his ends, not mine, with that which I call myself only as a centre of his universal existence and responding to its workings as a soul to the Soul, taking upon itself his image until there is nothing left but Krishna and Kali. This is the stage I have reached in spite of all setbacks and recoils, imperfectly indeed in the secureness and intensity of the state, but well enough

in the general type. When that has been done, then we may hope to found securely the play in us of his divine Knowledge governing the action of his divine Power. The rest is the full opening up of the different planes of his world-play and the subjection of Matter and the body and the material world to the law of the higher heavens of the Truth. To these things towards which in my earlier ignorance I used to press forward impatiently before satisfying the first conditions – the effort, however, was necessary and made the necessary preparation of the material instruments – I can now only look forward as a subsequent eventuality in a yet distant vista of things.

To possess securely the Light and the Force of the supramental being, this is the main object to which the Power is now turning. But the remnant of the old habits of intellectual thought and mental will come so obstinate in their determination to remain that the progress is hampered, uncertain and always falls back from the little achievement already effected. They are no longer within me, they are blind, stupid, mechanical, incorrigible even when they perceive their incompetence, but they crowd round the mind and pour in their suggestions whenever it tries to remain open only to the supramental Light and the higher Command, so that the knowledge and the will reach the mind in a confused, distorted and often misleading form. It is, however, only a question of time: the siege will diminish in force and be finally dispelled. 23 June 1916" (36: 290-91)

The Action of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in the Yoga

"..it will be a mistake if you make too rigid a separation between A.G and Mira. Both influences are necessary for the complete development of the sadhana. The work of the two together can alone bring down the supramental Truth into the physical plane. A.G acts directly on the mental and on the vital being through the illumined mind; he represents the Purusha element whose strength is predominantly in illumined (intuitive, supramental or spiritual) knowledge and the power that acts in this knowledge, while the psychic being supports this action and helps to transform the physical and vital plane. Mirra acts directly on the psychic being and on the emotional, vital and physical

nature through the illumined psychic consciousness, while the illumined intuitions from the supramental being give her the necessary knowledge to act on the right lines and at the right moment. Her force representing the Shakti element is directly psychic, vital, physical and her spiritual knowledge is predominantly practical in its nature. It is, that is to say, a large and detailed knowledge and experience of the mental, vital and physical forces at play and with the knowledge the power to handle them for the purposes of life and of Yoga." (36: 329-30)

The Sexual Impulse and the Yoga

"The vital power behind the sexual impulse is an indispensable force for the perfection of the nature and for the Yoga. Often it is those who because of the strong vital force in them are most capable of the supramental transformation of the physical nature that have the strongest sexual impulses. All lust, the sexual act and the outward dragging impulse have to be thrown away by the sadhaka, but the power itself has to be kept and transformed into the true force and Ananda. You are right in thinking that a certain fundamental

purity in this respect is needed in order to approach Mira and have her help. It is not possible for her to have relations with one who is full of coarse animal or perverted sexual impulses or unable because of them to have the true spiritual or psychic regard on women. But an absence of all sexual impulse is not necessary, still less an ascetic or puritanic turn in this matter. On the contrary. Neither the conventional Puritan nor the coarse animal man can receive anything from her." (36: 330-31)

Letters to Barindra Kumar Ghose During 1922-23

"I have been till now and shall be for some time longer withdrawn in the practice of a yoga destined to be a basis not for withdrawal from life, but for the transformation of human life. It is a yoga in which vast untried tracts of inner experience and new paths of sadhana had to be opened up and which therefore needed retirement and long time for its completion. But the time is approaching, though it has not yet come, when I shall have to take up a large external work proceeding from the spiritual basis of this yoga.

It is therefore necessary to establish a number of centres, small and few at first but enlarging and increasing in number as I go on, for training in this sadhana, one under my direct supervision, others in immediate connection with me. Those trained there will be hereafter my assistants in the work I shall have to do, but for the present these centres will be not for external work but for spiritual training and tapasya.

The first, which will be transferred to British India when I go there, already exists at Pondicherry, but I need funds both to maintain and to enlarge it. The second I am founding through you in Bengal. I hope to establish another in Guzerat during the ensuing year.

Many more desire and are fit to undertake this sadhana than I can at present admit and it is only by large means being placed at my disposal that I can carry on this work which is necessary as a preparation for my own return to action.

I have empowered you to act for me in the collection of funds and other collateral matters. I have an entire confidence in you and I would request all who wish me well to put in you the same confidence." (36: 332-33)

"The utility of psychic experiences and knowledge of the invisible worlds as of other yogic experiences is not to be measured by our narrow human notions of what may be useful for the present physical life of man. In the first place these things are necessary for the fulness of the consciousness and the completeness of the being. In the second place these other worlds are actually working upon us. And if you know and can enter into them then instead of being the victims and puppets of these powers we can consciously deal with, control and use them. Thirdly, in my Yoga, the Yoga of the supramental, the opening of the psychic consciousness to which these experiences belong is quite indispensable. For it is only through the psychic opening that the supramental can fully descend with a strong and concrete grasp and transform the mental, vital and physical being." (36: 337)

"In the complete Sadhana there are two powers necessary, the masculine, *Purusha* or *Ishwara* power coming down in knowledge, light, calm, strength, wide consciousness from above and the feminine, Nature or *Ishwari* power opening in receptivity, passivity, psychic sensibility, the responsiveness on all the planes of the being from below. The first by itself tends to be predominantly mental or mentalised intuitive and afterwards mentalised supramental. It is slow in action but sure and safe, only there is often a difficulty of opening up the separate psychic, vital and physical being to the illumination and change. The second by itself is rapid, sensitive, full of extraordinary and striking experiences but apt in the absence of psychic or occult powers to be chaotic, uneven and open to many dangers. It is when both are present and act upon each other in the being that the Sadhana is likely to be most perfect." (36: 340-41)

"As for the doubt of the physical mind as to whether the thing is possible, who has not had it? In my own case it pursued me years and years and it is only in the last two years that the last shadow of doubt, not latterly of its theoretical feasibility, but of the practical certainty of its achievement in the present state of the world and of the human nature, entirely left me. The same can be said of the egoistic poise, – that almost all strong men have the strong egoistic poise." (36: 360)

Persistence of Evil Habits in Sleep

"The survival of the evil habits in sleep is easily explained and is a thing of common experience. It is a known psychological law that whatever is suppressed in the conscious mind remains in the subconscient being and recurs either in the waking state when the control is removed or else in sleep. Mental control by itself cannot eradicate anything entirely out of the being. The subconscient in the ordinary man includes the larger part of the vital being and the physical mind and also the secret body-consciousness. In order to

make a true and complete change, one has to make all these conscious, to see clearly what is still there and to reject them from one layer after another till they have been entirely thrown out from the personal experience. Even then, they may remain and come back on the being from the surrounding universal forces and it is only when no part of the consciousness makes any response to these forces of the lower plane that the victory and transformation are absolutely complete." (36: 365)

Difficulty Due to a Strong Formation of Ego-Individuality

"The idea that comes to you to go away and try a severe asceticism, "to go *my* way to fight *my* battle alone and in *my* own way", as you express it, is an error and the suggestion of an adverse force, and at the same time it points directly to the real difficulty in you that has stood blocking your progress. If you went, you would go very far not only from us but from the Yoga and be lost to the Path, and you would fare no better than now. The difficulties would be always with you or sleep for a time only to rise again in your nature. However hard the fight, the only thing is to fight it out now and here to the end.

The trouble is that you have never fully faced and conquered the real obstacle. There is in a very fundamental part of your nature a strong formation

of ego-individuality which has mixed in your spiritual aspiration a clinging element of pride and spiritual ambition and is supported by a long-formed habit of leadership, self-confident activity and self-reliance. This formation has never consented to be broken up in order to give place to something more true and divine. Therefore, when the Mother has put her force upon you or when you yourself have pulled the force upon you, this in you has always prevented it from doing its work in its own way. It has begun itself building according to the ideas of the mind or some demand, trying to make its own creation in its "own way", by its own strength, its own Sadhana, its own Tapasya. There has never been any real surrender, any giving up of yourself freely and

simply into the hands of the Divine Mother. And yet that is the only way to succeed in the Supramental Yoga. To be a Yogi, a Sannyasi, a Tapaswi is not the object here.…

A complete will to surrender in the mind is the first condition, but not by itself sufficient. The trouble lies deeper than the surface mind and you have to find it out where it is and extirpate it. It is only when this has been done, that the help given you (and it was always there till now) can bear fruit in the true spiritual and psychic (not an ascetic) change of the recalcitrant parts of your nature." (36: 367-68)

Danger of Egoism and Confusion in Responding to Forces

"…egoism is the greatest danger of the Sadhana and is never spiritually justifiable. All greatness is God's; it belongs to no other.

Be on your guard against anything that suggests to you to keep or cling to any impurity or imperfection, confusion in the mind, attachment in the heart, desire and passion in the *Prana* or disease in the body. To keep up these things by ingenuous justifications and coverings, is one of the usual devices of the hostile forces.

Be on your guard against any idea which will make you admit these hostile forces on the same terms as the divine forces. I understand you have said that you must admit all because all is a manifestation of God. All is a manifestation of God in a certain sense but if misunderstood as it often is, this Vedantic truth can be turned to the purposes of falsehood. There are many things which are partial manifestations and have to be replaced by fuller truer manifestations. There are others which belong to the ignorance and fall away when we move to the knowledge. There are others which are of the darkness and have to be combated and destroyed or exiled." (36: 372)

Sri Aurobindo's Truth

"If you really accept and give yourself to me, you must accept my truth. My truth is one that rejects ignorance and falsehoods and moves to the knowledge, rejects darkness and moves to the light, rejects egoism and moves to the Divine Self; rejects imperfections and moves to perfection. My truth is not only the truth of Bhakti or of psychic development but also of knowledge, purity, divine strength and calm and of the raising of all these things from their mental, emotional and vital forms to their Supramental reality." (36: 373)

A Case of Hostile Possession from the Vital World

"These cases are not those of a truly physical malady but of an attempt at possession from the vital world; and the fits and other physical symptoms are signs, not of the malady itself, but of the struggle of the natural being against the pressure of the hostile influence. Such a case in a child of this age indicates some kind of accumulation in the physical heredity creating an opportunity or a predisposition of which the vital invasion takes advantage. It is especially the physical consciousness and the physico-vital which contain the germs or materials of this predisposition. The physical being is always changing its constituents and in each period of seven years a complete change is effected. If the symptoms of this predisposition in the nature are detected and a wise influence and training used by the parents to eradicate them and this is done so effectively that in the first seven years no seeds of the malady appear, then usually there is no further danger. If on the contrary they manifest by the seventh year, then the next period of seven years is the critical period and, ordinarily, the case would be decided one way or the other by or before the fourteenth year.

There are normally three possible eventualities. The difficulty in dealing with the case of so young a child is that the mind is not developed and can give no help towards the cure. But as the mind develops in the second seven years it will, if it is not abnormally weak which I think is not the case here, react more and more against the influence. Aided by a good control and influence it may very well succeed in casting out the hostile intrusion and its pressure altogether. In that case the fits and other signs of the physical struggle pass away, the strange moral and vital tendencies fade out of the habits and the child becomes mentally, morally and physically a healthy normal being.

The second possibility is that the struggle between the natural being and the intruding being may not be decisive in the psychic sense, that is to say, the intruder cannot take full possession but also he cannot be thrown out entirely. In that case anything may happen, a shattered mind and health, the death of the body or a disturbed, divided and permanently abnormal nature.

The third and worst possibility is that the intruding being may succeed and take entire possession. In that case the fits and other violent symptoms will disappear, the child may seem to be physically cured and healthy, but he will be an abnormal and most dangerous being incarnating an evil vital force with all its terrible propensities and gifted with abnormal powers to satisfy them.

In Rathin's case there is not as yet possession in the full sense of the word, but a strong pressure and influence indicated by the strange habits of which you have written. These are suggested and dictated by the intruding being and not proper to the boy himself. The fearlessness and security with which he does these things is inspired from the same source. But the fits

prove that there is as yet no possession. There is a struggle indicated by them and a temporary hold which passes out again. He is evidently in the earlier part of the critical period. I have indicated the course normally taken by the illness, but it is not necessary to pass through it and take its risks. There are other means which can come to his help and effect a complete cure.

The first and easiest is to cure by hypnotic suggestion. This if properly applied is an absolutely sure remedy. But in the first place, it must be applied by someone who is not himself under the influence of evil powers, as some hypnotists are. For that obviously will make matters worse. Moreover, it must be done by someone who has the proper training and knows thoroughly what he is about, for a mistake might be disastrous. The best conditions would be if someone like yourself who has a natural relation and already an influence over the child could do it with the necessary training and knowledge.

The other means of cure is the use of spiritual power and influence. If certain psycho-spiritual means could be used, this would be as sure and effectual as the other. But this is not possible because there is no one there who has the right knowledge. The spiritual influence by itself can do it but the working is likely to be slow. It must ordinarily be conveyed through someone on the spot and you yourself are obviously the right instrument. What you have to do is to keep the idea that I am sending to you power for this object, to make yourself receptive to it and at the same time make your own will and natural influence on the child a direct channel for it. The will must be a quiet will, calm and confident and intent on its object, but without attachment and unshaken by any amount of resistance and unalarmed and undiscouraged by the manifestations of the illness. Your attitude to the child must be that of a calm

and firm protecting affection free from emotional weakness and disturbance. The first thing is to acquire such an influence as to be able to repel the attack when it comes and if it takes any hold to diminish steadily its force and the violence of its manifestation. I understand from your letter that you have already been able to establish the beginning of such an influence. But it must be able to work at a distance as well as in his presence. Further you must acquire the power of leaving a protection around him when you are absent. Secondly, you must be able to convey to him a constant suggestion which will gradually inhibit the strange undesirable habits of which you speak in your letter. This, I may say, cannot be effectively done by any kind of external coercion. For that is likely to make these impulses more violent. It must be a will and suggestion and silent influence. If you find the control increasing and

these habits diminishing, you can understand that the work of cure has begun. Its completion may take some time because these vital beings are very sticky and persistent and are always returning to the attack. The one thing which can make the cure rapid is if the boy himself develops a will in his mind to change, for that will take away the ground of the hostile influence. It is because something in him is amused and takes pleasure in the force which comes with the influence that these things are able to recur and continue. This element in him calls the invading presence back even when it has been centrally rejected. I shall of course try to act directly on him as well as through you, but the instrumentality of one on the spot greatly enforces and is sometimes indispensable to the action." (36: 374-77)

The Circle of the Vital Ego

"There is nothing more congenial to the vital ego than to put on the cloak of Yoga and imagine itself free, divinised, spiritualised, siddha, and all the rest of it, or advancing towards that end, when it is really doing nothing of the kind, but [is] just its old self in new forms. If one does not look at oneself with a constant sincerity and an eye of severe self-criticism, it is impossible to get out of this circle." (36: 378)

America and India

"The spiritual future of America is not yet decided; it is in the balance. There is a great possibility before her, but it depends on Americans themselves whether she will make good and realise it. Otherwise she will follow the disastrous curve of other western peoples. India and America stand prominent at the two poles that have to meet and become one, the spiritual and the material life; one has shown a preeminent capacity of realisation on the spiritual, the other on the material plane. America must be able to receive freely India's riches and to give freely in return from her own for the material organisation of a higher life on the physical plane; this is at once a condition and her chance. At present it is only a possibility; let us see whether it can be made an achieved and perfected symbol." (36: 388)

The Work of Swami Yogananda

"First, let me say, that the absorption of ideas and the remoulding of the mental aims and attitude is one thing and the remoulding of the inner life and consciousness and eventually also of the outer life, which is the aim of Yoga, is quite another. The first can be done to some extent by the method of dissemination you indicate. But as you rightly see, instructions in Yoga cannot be fruitfully given on the same lines. That can only be given successfully to a few, to each separately as an intimately personal thing which he must assimilate and make living and true in himself according to his own capacity and nature. That is why I am led to believe that the work of Swami Yogananda is not only elementary but can hardly be the true thing – Yoga cannot be taught in schools

and classes. It has to be received personally, it has to be lived, the seeker, *sadhaka*, has to change by a difficult aspiration and endeavour his whole consciousness and nature, his mind, heart, life, every principle of his being and all their movements into a greater Truth than anything the normal life of man can imagine. Those who can do this are not yet many, but some are to be found everywhere, and I see no reason why those in America should be condemned to only an elementary "instruction". The true Truth, the great Path has to be opened to them; how far they will go in it depends on their own personal capacity and the help they receive." (36: 388-89)

The Dangers and the Three Safeguards in Sadhana

"..to open the centres is only a beginning, for then comes one of the most difficult periods for the disciple. The consciousness opens not only to the true Light and Power, but to all kinds of experiences and all sorts of influences from all the planes and from all sources and quarters. There is a period of intense and overpowering internal activity of formation, vision and movements of new consciousness and new power. If then the disciple is carried away by the brilliance and splendour and delight of his experiences, he can easily wander far from the highest way. But the Forces and Beings that are behind them are sometimes adverse Forces, sometimes the lesser Gods of the mental and vital planes. In either case they try to occupy and use the instrument, but for their own purpose, for the play of the Ideas and Forces they represent,

not the highest Truth. There are only three safeguards for the disciple. One is to call down first the eternal peace, calm and silence of the Divine into the mind and the vital and physical being. In that peace and silence there is a true possibility that the mental and vital formations will fall to rest and the supramental creation can have free space. The second safeguard is to remain entirely detached even from the most absorbing experiences and observe them without being carried away by their brilliance. The power of discernment and discrimination will slowly form from above and he will be able to distinguish between the higher truth and the lower truth as between truth and falsehood. The third safeguard is to follow implicitly the instructions of the spiritual guides who have already trod the path and to follow their guidance." (36: 393)

Heart and Mind

"The "essence" is always more easily seized by the heart and the internal sense than by the mind – for the heart is in touch with the psychic and the internal sense is the essential action of mind as opposed to its external and formal action. Both of these are nearer to a knowledge by identity or by direct communion than the active mind, and the "essence" can only be seized by identity or by direct communion. The active mind cannot do it except by falling silent and leaning on the psychic and on the internal sense." (36: 398)

All Is Substance

"If you mean by matter substance, in one sense or in one line of experience all is substance – spirit, being, consciousness, ananda are substance; mind, life and matter are substance. Not only so, but all are one substance in its different powers and various degrees. All these except Matter can be described as immaterial substance." (36: 398)

Habit of the Vital and the Vital Danger Throwing Itself on One

"I am perfectly aware that you can advance many explanations justifying your action as against what I have written. All that makes no difference. It is always the habit of the vital being to find out things by which it persuades the mind and justifies its desires; and circumstances usually shape themselves to justify it still farther. For what we have within us creates the circumstances outside us.…

The vision of which you give a description is the indication of a vital attack or of a vital danger throwing itself upon you. The form you saw was evidently a strong Power of the hostile vital world – a red hot copper-like bust can mean nothing else. If you thought it was your being, it must have been because something in your vital nature responded to the force which

this form embodied. The serpent was the indication of the evil force contained in him. The nature of the bust would seem to indicate that the force was that of vital greed (*lobha* of all kinds) and desire. The fact that the blow given was on the mouth would confirm this interpretation – but that would also be consistent with the force being that of falsehood, (*moha, mithyâ*). The grace and protection have always been with you in spite of everything, but for it to work fully you must get rid of all in you that responds to the power that threatens you. The blow and the smashing of the face or hood and drawing out and upward of the serpent are an indication that now you have a chance of getting free from this force and throwing away from your vital nature greed, egoism and desire. It is for you to fulfil the favourable end of the vision by taking the chance." (36: 436-37)

"To H.H the Maharani of Baroda

It is true that I have by the practice of Yoga attained to the higher spiritual consciousness which comes by Yoga, and this carries with it a certain power. Especially there is the power to communicate to those who are ready or to help them towards that spiritual state which, in its perfection is a condition of unalterable inner calm, strength and felicity. But this spiritual peace and joy is something quite different from mental peace and happiness. And it cannot be reached without a spiritual discipline.

I do not know whether this has been rightly explained to Your Highness. I may say briefly that there are two states of consciousness in either of which one can live. One is a higher consciousness which stands above the play of life and governs it; this is variously called the Self, the Spirit or the Divine. The other is the normal consciousness in which men live; it is something quite superficial, an instrument of the Spirit for the play of life. Those who live and act in the normal consciousness are governed entirely by the common movements of the mind and are naturally subject to grief and joy and anxiety and desire or to everything else that makes up the ordinary stuff of life. Mental quiet and happiness they can get, but it can never be permanent or secure. But the spiritual consciousness is all light, peace, power and bliss. If one can live entirely in it, there is no question; these things become naturally and securely his. But even if he can live partly in it or keep himself constantly open to it, he receives enough of this spiritual light and peace and strength and happiness to carry him securely through all the shocks of life. What one gains by opening to this spiritual consciousness, depends on what one seeks from it; if it is peace, one gets peace; if it is light or knowledge, one lives in a great light and receives a knowledge deeper and truer than any the normal mind of man can acquire; if it [is] strength or power, one gets a spiritual strength for the inner life or Yogic power to govern the outer work and action; if it is happiness, one enters into a beatitude far greater than any joy or happiness that the ordinary human life can give.

There are many ways of opening to this Divine consciousness or entering into it. My way which I show to others is by a constant practice to go inward into oneself, to open by aspiration to the Divine and once one is conscious of it and its action to give oneself to It entirely. This self-giving means not to ask for anything but the constant contact or union with the Divine Consciousness, to aspire for its peace, power, light and felicity, but to ask nothing else and in life and action to be its instrument only for whatever work it gives one to do in the world. If one can once open and feel the Divine Force, the Power of the Spirit working in the mind and heart and body, the rest is a matter of remaining faithful to It, calling for it always, allowing it to do its work when it comes and rejecting every other and inferior Force that belongs to the lower consciousness and the lower nature.

I have written so much in order to explain my position and the nature of my Yogic power. I do not usually ask anyone to practise this Yoga, because it is possible only for those who have from the beginning or who develop a strong call to it; others cannot go through it [ ]* to the end. Nor [do I]** often go out of my way to help those who are merely in need of some kind of quietude of [the] external nature as many Yogins do – though I do not refuse to do it in certain cases. My aim is to create a centre of spiritual life which shall serve as a means of bringing down the higher consciousness and making it a

* *MS* with

** *MS* I do

power not merely for "salvation" but for a divine life upon earth. It is with this object that I have withdrawn from public life and founded this Asram in Pondicherry (so-called for want of a better word, for it is not an Asram of Sannyasins, but of those who want to leave all else and prepare for this work). But at the same time I have a small number of disciples all over India who live in their families and receive spiritual help from me even at a distance.

This is all I can answer to Your Highness at present. It is for Your Highness to decide* whether what you seek has anything to do with what I have explained in this letter. 1930" (36: 440-42)

* *Alternative:* see for yourself

[1]

A. B. PURANI: This is a telegram from Dr. Chandulal Manilal Desai. . . . The other gentleman about whom he writes is Mr. Morarji Desai, originally a district deputy collector who resigned his post in the Non-cooperation movement and has been in public life since. I heard that he had spiritual inclinations.

In case they are permitted [for darshan], they would naturally remain outside. The wire can be sent even tomorrow, on the 16th – and they would have time to reach in time.

It is better if they have no time. Why should prominent politicians come trooping down here like this? I don't understand. Better wire that it is too late.
15 February 1935

[2]

MORARJI DESAI: Since 1930 I have been making an effort to put the Yoga preached by the Gita in practice as I understand it. . . . I cannot however say that I am on the right path and every day I realise how immensely difficult it is to give up attachment in every form & still live the ordinary life.

I have come here as a humble seeker for guidance in this quest of mine & request you to give me a guidance as to whether I should continue on the path I am treading at present or whether I am on a wrong track & should follow another path. If you consider that I should continue in the path followed by me at present I request you to guide me as to what I should do to give up all attachment and if you advise me to change the path, the new path may kindly be indicated and explained to me.

[17 August 1935]

Shri Morarji Desai,

I do not know that it is possible for me to give you any guidance on the path you have chosen – it is at any rate difficult for me to say anything definite without more precise data than those contained in your letter.

There is no need for you to change the line of life and work you have chosen so long as you feel that to be the way of your nature (*svabhava*) or dictated to you by your inner being, or, for some reason, it is seen to be your proper *dharma*. These are the three tests and apart from that I do not think there is any fixed line of conduct or way of work or life that can be laid down for the Yoga of the Gita. It is the spirit or consciousness in which the work is done that matters most; the outer form can vary greatly for different natures. Thus, so long as one does not get the settled experience of the Divine Power taking up one's work and doing it, one acts according to one's nature; afterwards it is that Power which determines what is to be done or not done.

The overcoming of all attachments must necessarily be difficult and cannot come except as the fruit of a long *sadhana*, unless there is a rapid general growth in the inner spiritual experience which is the substance of the Gita's teaching. The cessation of desire of the fruit or attachment to the work itself, the growth of equality to all beings, to all happenings, to good repute or ill repute, the dropping of the ego, which are necessary for the loss of all attachments, can come completely only when all work becomes a spontaneous sacrifice to the Divine, the heart is offered up to Him and one has the settled

experience of the Divine in all things and all beings. This consciousness or experience must come in all parts and movements of the being (*sarvabhavena*), not only in the mind and idea; then the falling away of all attachments becomes easy. I speak of the Gita's way of Yoga; for in the ascetic life one obtains the same objects differently by cutting away from all the objects of attachment and the consequent atrophy of the attachment itself through rejection and disuse." (36: 445-47)

Contributions to Allied War Funds

"We are placing herewith at the disposal of H.E. the Governor of Madras a sum of Rs. 500 as our joint contribution to the Madras War Fund. This donation, which is in continuation of previous sums given by us for the cause of the Allies (10,000 francs to the French Caisse de Défense Nationale before the unhappy collapse of France and Rs. 1000 to the Viceroy's War Fund immediately after the Armistice) is sent as an expression of our entire support for the British people and the Empire in their struggle against the aggressions of the Nazi Reich and our complete sympathy with the cause for which they are fighting.

We feel that not only is this a battle waged in just self-defence and in defence of the nations threatened with the world-domination of Germany and the Nazi system of life, but that it is a defence of civilisation and its highest attained social, cultural and spiritual values and of the whole future of humanity. To this cause our support and sympathy will be unswerving whatever may happen; we look forward to the victory of Britain and, as the eventual result, an era of peace and union among the nations and a better and more secure world-order. 19 September 1940" (36: 453)

On the Cripps Proposal

"[1]

Sir Stafford Cripps

New Delhi

I have heard your broadcast. As one who has been a nationalist leader and worker for India's independence though now my activity is no longer in the political but in the spiritual field, I wish to express my appreciation of all you have done to bring about this offer. I welcome it as an opportunity given to India to determine for herself and organise in all liberty of choice her freedom and unity and take an effective place among the world's free nations. I hope that it will be accepted and the right use made of it putting aside all discords and divisions. I hope too that a friendly relation between Britain and India

replacing past struggles will be a step towards a greater world union in which as a free nation her spiritual force will contribute to build for mankind a better and happier life. In this light I offer my public adhesion in case it can be of any help in your work.*

Sri Aurobindo
The Asram
Pondicherry
31 March 1942" (36: 469)

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* *Sir Stafford Cripps's telegram in reply, dated 1 April 1942:*

I AMMOST TOUCHED AND GRATIFIED BY YOUR KIND MESSAGE ALLOWING ME TO INFORM INDIA THAT YOU WHO OCCUPY UNIQUE POSITION IN IMAGINATION OF INDIAN YOUTH ARE CONVINCED THAT DECLARATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT SUBSTANTIALLY CONFERS THAT FREEDOM FOR WHICH INDIAN NATIONALISM HAS SO LONG STRUGGLED.

STAFFORD CRIPPS

The Fifteenth of August 1947

"[*Long Version*]*

August 15th is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But it has a significance not only for us, but for Asia and the whole world; for it signifies the entry into the comity of nations of a new power with untold potentialities which has a great part to play in determining the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity. To me personally it must naturally be gratifying that this date which was notable only for me because it was my own birthday celebrated annually by those who have accepted my gospel of life, should have acquired this vast significance. As a mystic, I take this identification, not as a coincidence or fortuitous accident, but as a sanction and seal of the Divine Power which guides my steps on the work with which I began life. Indeed almost all the world movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my lifetime, though at that time they looked like impossible dreams, I can observe on this day either approaching fruition or initiated and on the way to their achievement.

I have been asked for a message on this great occasion, but I am perhaps hardly in a position to give one. All I can do is to make a personal declaration of the aims and ideals conceived in my childhood and youth and now watched in their beginning of fulfilment, because they are relevant to the freedom of India, since they are a part of what I believe to be India's future work, something in which she cannot but take a leading position. For I have always held and said that India was arising, not to serve her own material interests only, to achieve expansion, greatness, power and prosperity, – though these too she must not neglect, – and certainly not like others to acquire domination of other peoples, but to live also for God and the world as a helper and leader of the whole human race. Those aims and ideals were in their natural order these: a revolution which would achieve India's freedom and her unity; the resurgence and liberation of Asia and her return to the great role which she had played in the progress of human civilisation; the rise of a new, a greater, brighter and nobler life for mankind which for its entire realisation would rest outwardly on an international unification of the separate existence of the peoples, preserving and securing their national life but drawing them together into an overriding and consummating oneness; the gift by India of her spiritual knowledge and her means for the spiritualisation of life to the whole race; finally, a new step in the evolution which, by uplifting the consciousness to a higher level, would begin the solution of the many problems of existence which have perplexed and vexed humanity, since men began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society.

** Sri Aurobindo wrote this message at the request of All India Radio, Tiruchirapalli, for broadcast on the eve of the day when India achieved independence, 15 August 1947. The text submitted was found to be too long for the allotted time-slot. Sri Aurobindo revised it, and the shorter version (pages 478 – 80) was broadcast on 14 August 1947.*

India is free but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom. At one time it almost seemed as if she might relapse into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest. Fortunately there has now developed a strong possibility that this disastrous relapse will be avoided. The wisely drastic policy of the Constituent Assembly makes it possible that the problem of the depressed classes will be solved without schism or fissure. But the old communal division into Hindu and Muslim seems to have hardened into the figure of a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that the Congress and the nation will not accept the settled fact as for ever settled or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. The partition of the country must go, – it is to be hoped by a slackening of tension, by a progressive understanding of the need of peace and concord, by the constant necessity of common and concerted action, even of an instrument of union for that purpose. In this way unity may come about under whatever form— the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, the division must and will go. For without it the destiny of India might be seriously impaired and even frustrated. But that must not be.

Asia has arisen and large parts of it have been liberated or are at this moment being liberated; its other still subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done and that will be done today or tomorrow. There India has her part to play and has begun to play it with an energy and ability which already indicate the measure of her possibilities and the place she can take in the council of the nations.

The unification of mankind is under way, though only in an imperfect initiative, organised but struggling against tremendous difficulties. But the momentum is there and, if the experience of history can be taken as a guide, it must inevitably increase until it conquers. Here too India has begun to play a prominent part and, if she can develop that larger statesmanship which is not limited by the present facts and immediate possibilities but looks into the future and brings it nearer, her presence may make all the difference between a slow and timid and a bold and swift development. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure. For in any case the unification is a necessity in the course of Nature, an inevitable movement and its achievement can be safely foretold. Its necessity for the nations also is clear, for without it the freedom of the small peoples can never be safe hereafter and even large and powerful nations cannot really be secure. India, if she remains divided, will not herself be sure of her safety. It is therefore to the interest of all that union should take place. Only human imbecility and stupid selfishness could prevent it. Against that, it has been said, even the gods strive in vain; but it cannot stand for ever against the

necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. Nationalism will then have fulfilled itself; an international spirit and outlook must grow up and international forms and institutions; even it may be such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship and a voluntary fusion of cultures may appear in the process of the change and the spirit of nationalism losing its militancy may find these things perfectly compatible with the integrity of its own outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

The spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The rest is still a personal hope and an idea and ideal which has begun to take hold both in India and in the West on forward-looking minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must come through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers. Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far or how soon this connection will be fulfilled, depends upon this new and free India." (36: 474-477)

On the Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi

"[1]

REMAIN FIRM THROUGH THE DARKNESS THE LIGHT IS THERE AND WILL CONQUER.* 4 February 1948 [2]

I would have preferred silence in the face of these circumstances that surround us. For any words we can find fall flat amid such happenings. This much, however, I will say that the Light which led us to freedom, though not yet to unity, still burns and will burn on till it conquers. I believe firmly that a great and united future is the destiny of this nation and its peoples. The Power that

* *Telegram sent to Mr. Kumbi of Gadag, in reply to his telegram "*DARKNESS SORROW SPREADS FAST INDIA BAPUJI DEATH CHILDREN PRAY MESSAGE.*" Sri Aurobindo's telegram was later released to the newspapers. – Ed.*

brought us through so much struggle and suffering to freedom, will achieve also, through whatever strife or trouble, the aim which so poignantly occupied the thoughts of the fallen leader at the time of his tragic ending; as it brought us freedom, it will bring us unity. A free and united India will be there and the Mother will gather around her her sons and weld them into a single national strength in the life of a great and united people.*

Sri Aurobindo

February 5, 1948" (36: 497)

** This piece was sent to All India Radio, Tiruchirapalli, in response to a request for a message. It later was published by the Ashram in the form of a leaflet. – Ed.*

To K. M. Munshi

"[1]

K. M. MUNSHI: In the Constituent Assembly there is debate about the use of international numerals with the Hindi language. The whole of South India will not accept Hindi as the national language unless international numerals are used. The non-Hindi provinces are supporting South India. The organised Hindi group is fighting against the international numeral on the ground of Aryan Culture.

Sri Aurobindo has no decided opinion on the question. But if the South Indians and other non-Hindi Provinces insist on this arrangement, it seems to him that for the sake of unity in this matter and a unified practice and also for international convenience the Hindi-speaking people might make a concession to the others.* 3 September 1949

** Reply dictated by Sri Aurobindo to A. B. Purani for sending to Munshi over Purani's signature. – Ed.*

K. M. MUNSHI: I would like to have your guidance as regards the future of Sanatan Dharma. Starting from your Uttarpara Speech, which has been a sort of beacon to me for years, I have been working for the reintegration of Hindu culture . . . But I am neither learned nor a profound thinker. I can contribute only my faith and the little energy which has been vouchsafed to me. I only pray that strength may be given to me to carry forward the message of the Seers of whom, in my opinion, you are the only surviving Apostle. What shall I do now?

My dear Kanubhai

In reply to your letter to him of July 30th 1950 Sri Aurobindo has asked me to write to you the following: – *

"Your feeling that there should be reintegration of Indian Culture under modern conditions is quite right. It is *the* work that has to be done. And as far as Sri Aurobindo can see at present Indian Spiritual Culture has a great and bright future before it. It is the future power that might dominate the world.

So, your efforts in carrying out that work are quite in the right direction and in carrying out that work you would have his full support and blessings.

3 August 1950" (36: 512-13)

** The paragraphs that follow were dictated by Sri Aurobindo to A. B. Purani and sent to Munshi over Purani's signature. – Ed.*

On Cardinal Wyszynski, Catholicism and Communism

"As to your proposed article on [Wyszynski], it seems to me that it is better to drop the subject. It had and has no value except as a stick with which to beat the Soviets and their allies. The sole question is in that case whether the man was justified in his stand for liberty even in that restricted area of religious freedom and the freedom especially of the Catholic religion to be itself, as every religion has a right to be in all civilised countries and whether it was worth while fighting out that question when the real question is how to get rid, if now it is at all possible, of the Bolshevik monstrosity and the tyranny with which it threatens the world. That can't be done by subtly philosophical and even metaphysical articles balancing the rights and wrongs on each side

and the relative wickedness of the Soviets and the Western nations. Many readers might even take it as a justification or at least a partial condemnation of the prosecuting Government and the martyrdom it has chosen to inflict on the rebellious Cardinal. And what is the pertinence of the past history of the Roman Catholic Church, especially at a time when we have one of the most liberal minded Popes or even the most liberal minded Pope in Roman Catholic history? Even if it is only a fight between the Holy See of Rome and the unholy See of the Kremlin the fight is between one centre of religious intolerance and another centre of a still more damnable and intolerant religion, – for that is what Bolshevism is, – still why give any latitude to what is by far the worse of the two? 3 August 1949" (36: 516-17)

Sri Aurobindo's Asram

"In order to remove many misunderstandings which seem to have grown up about his Asram in Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo considers it necessary to issue the following explicit statement.

An Asram means the house or houses of a Teacher or Master of spiritual philosophy in which he receives and lodges those who come to him for the teaching and practice. An Asram is not an association or a religious body or a monastery – it is only what has been indicated above and nothing more.

Everything in the Asram belongs to the Teacher; the sadhaks (those who practise under him) have no claim, right or voice in any matter. They remain or go according to his will. Whatever money he receives is his property and not that of a public body. It is not a trust or a fund, for there is no public

institution. Such Asrams have existed in India since many centuries before Christ and still exist in large numbers. All depends on the Teacher and ends with his life-time, unless there is another Teacher who can take his place.

The Asram in Pondicherry came into being in this way. Sri Aurobindo at first lived in Pondicherry with a few inmates in his house; afterwards a few more joined him. Later on after the Mother joined him, in 1920, the numbers began so much to increase that it was thought necessary to make an arrangement for lodging those who came and houses were bought and rented according to need for the purpose. Arrangements had also to be made for the maintenance, repair, rebuilding of houses, for the service of food and for decent living and hygiene. All those were private rules made by the Mother and entirely at her

discretion to increase, modify or alter – there is nothing in them of a public character.

All houses of the Asram are owned either by Sri Aurobindo or by the Mother. All the money spent belongs either to Sri Aurobindo or the Mother. Money is given by many to help in Sri Aurobindo's work. Some who are here give their earnings, but it is given to Sri Aurobindo or the Mother and not to the Asram as a public body, for there is no such body.

The Asram is not an association; there is no constituted body, no officials, no common property owned by an association, no governing council or committee, no activity undertaken of a public character.

The Asram is not a political institution; all association with political activities is renounced by those who live here. All propaganda, religious, political or social, has to be eschewed by the inmates.

The Asram is not a religious association. Those who are here come from all religions and some are of no religion. There is no creed or set of dogmas, no governing religious body; there are only the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and certain psychological practices of concentration and meditation, etc., for the enlarging of the consciousness, receptivity to the Truth, mastery over the desires, the discovery of the divine self and consciousness concealed within each human being, a higher evolution of the nature.

February 1934" (36: 530-31)

A Message to America

"East and West have the same human nature, a common human destiny, the same aspiration after a greater perfection, the same seeking after something higher than itself, something towards which inwardly and even outwardly we move. There has been a tendency in some minds to dwell on the spirituality or mysticism of the East and the materialism of the West; but the West has had no less than the East its spiritual seekings and, though not in such profusion, its saints and sages and mystics, the East has had its materialistic tendencies, its material splendours, its similar or identical dealings with life and Matter and the world in which we live. East and West have always met and mixed more or less closely, they have powerfully influenced each other and at the present day are under an increasing compulsion of Nature and Fate to do so more than ever before.

There is a common hope, a common destiny, both spiritual and material, for which both are needed as co-workers. It is no longer towards division and difference that we should turn our minds, but on unity, union, even oneness necessary for the pursuit and realisation of a common ideal, the destined goal, the fulfilment towards which Nature in her beginning obscurely set out and must in an increasing light of knowledge replacing her first ignorance constantly persevere." (36: 551)

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Name & Addresses	Phone

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Name & Addresses	*Phone*

Name & Addresses	Phone

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

Name & Addresses	*Phone*

READY-REFERENCE CALENDAR

For ascertaining any day of the week for any given time from 1800 to 2050 inclusive

COMMON YEARS, 1800 TO 2050										Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1801	1829	1857	1885	1914	1942	1970	1998	2026													
1807	1835	1863	1891	1925	1953	1981	2009	2037		4	7	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2
1818	1846	1874	1903	1931	1959	1987	2015	2043													
1802	1830	1858	1886	1915	1943	1971	1999	2027													
1813	1841	1869	1897	1926	1954	1982	2010	2038		5	1	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	5	1	3
1819	1847	1875	1909	1937	1965	1993	2021	2049													
1803	1831	1859	1887	1921	1949	1977	2005	2033													
1814	1842	1870	1898	1927	1955	1983	2011	2039		6	2	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4
1825	1853	1881	1910	1938	1966	1994	2022	2050													
1805	1833	1861	1889	1907	1935	1963	1991	2019	2047												
1811	1839	1867	1895	1918	1946	1974	2002	2030		2	5	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7
1822	1850	1878	1901	1929	1957	1985	2013	2041													
1800	1823	1851	1879	1913	1941	1969	1997	2025													
1806	1834	1862	1890	1919	1947	1975	2003	2031		3	6	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1
1817	1845	1873	1902	1930	1958	1986	2014	2042													
1809	1837	1865	1893	1911	1939	1967	1995	2023													
1815	1843	1871	1899	1922	1950	1978	2006	2034		7	3	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5
1826	1854	1882	1905	1933	1961	1989	2017	2045													
1810	1838	1866	1894	1917	1945	1973	2001	2029													
1821	1849	1877	1900	1923	1951	1979	2007	2035		1	4	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6
1827	1855	1883	1906	1934	1962	1990	2018	2046													
LEAP YEARS, 1804 TO 2048											29										
1804	1832	1860	1888		1928	1956	1984	2012	2040	7	3	4	7	2	5	7	3	6	1	4	6
1808	1836	1864	1892	1904	1932	1960	1988	2016	2044	5	1	2	5	7	3	5	1	4	6	2	4
1812	1840	1868	1896	1908	1936	1964	1992	2020	2048	3	6	7	3	5	1	3	6	2	4	7	2
1816	1844	1872		1912	1940	1968	1996	2024		1	4	5	1	3	6	1	4	7	2	5	7
1820	1848	1876		1916	1944	1972	2000	2028		6	2	3	6	1	4	6	2	5	7	3	5
1824	1852	1880		1920	1948	1976	2004	2032		4	7	1	4	6	2	4	7	3	6	1	3
1828	1856	1884		1924	1952	1980	2008	2036		2	5	6	2	4	7	2	5	1	3	6	1

1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
Monday	1	Tuesday	1	Wednesday	1	Thursday	1	Friday	1	Saturday	1	SUNDAY	1
Tuesday	2	Wednesday	2	Thursday	2	Friday	2	Saturday	2	SUNDAY	2	Monday	2
Wednesday	3	Thursday	3	Friday	3	Saturday	3	SUNDAY	3	Monday	3	Tuesday	3
Thursday	4	Friday	4	Saturday	4	SUNDAY	4	Monday	4	Tuesday	4	Wednesday	4
Friday	5	Saturday	5	SUNDAY	5	Monday	5	Tuesday	5	Wednesday	5	Thursday	5
Saturday	6	SUNDAY	6	Monday	6	Tuesday	6	Wednesday	6	Thursday	6	Friday	6
SUNDAY	7	Monday	7	Tuesday	7	Wednesday	7	Thursday	7	Friday	7	Saturday	7
Monday	8	Tuesday	8	Wednesday	8	Thursday	8	Friday	8	Saturday	8	SUNDAY	8
Tuesday	9	Wednesday	9	Thursday	9	Friday	9	Saturday	9	SUNDAY	9	Monday	9
Wednesday	10	Thursday	10	Friday	10	Saturday	10	SUNDAY	10	Monday	10	Tuesday	10
Thursday	11	Friday	11	Saturday	11	SUNDAY	11	Monday	11	Tuesday	11	Wednesday	11
Friday	12	Saturday	12	SUNDAY	12	Monday	12	Tuesday	12	Wednesday	12	Thursday	12
Saturday	13	SUNDAY	13	Monday	13	Tuesday	13	Wednesday	13	Thursday	13	Friday	13
SUNDAY	14	Monday	14	Tuesday	14	Wednesday	14	Thursday	14	Friday	14	Saturday	14
Monday	15	Tuesday	15	Wednesday	15	Thursday	15	Friday	15	Saturday	15	SUNDAY	15
Tuesday	16	Wednesday	16	Thursday	16	Friday	16	Saturday	16	SUNDAY	16	Monday	16
Wednesday	17	Thursday	17	Friday	17	Saturday	17	SUNDAY	17	Monday	17	Tuesday	17
Thursday	18	Friday	18	Saturday	18	SUNDAY	18	Monday	18	Tuesday	18	Wednesday	18
Friday	19	Saturday	19	SUNDAY	19	Monday	19	Tuesday	19	Wednesday	19	Thursday	19
Saturday	20	SUNDAY	20	Monday	20	Tuesday	20	Wednesday	20	Thursday	20	Friday	20
SUNDAY	21	Monday	21	Tuesday	21	Wednesday	21	Thursday	21	Friday	21	Saturday	21
Monday	22	Tuesday	22	Wednesday	22	Thursday	22	Friday	22	Saturday	22	SUNDAY	22
Tuesday	23	Wednesday	23	Thursday	23	Friday	23	Saturday	23	SUNDAY	23	Monday	23
Wednesday	24	Thursday	24	Friday	24	Saturday	24	SUNDAY	24	Monday	24	Tuesday	24
Thursday	25	Friday	25	Saturday	25	SUNDAY	25	Monday	25	Tuesday	25	Wednesday	25
Friday	26	Saturday	26	SUNDAY	26	Monday	26	Tuesday	26	Wednesday	26	Thursday	26
Saturday	27	SUNDAY	27	Monday	27	Tuesday	27	Wednesday	27	Thursday	27	Friday	27
SUNDAY	28	Monday	28	Tuesday	28	Wednesday	28	Thursday	28	Friday	28	Saturday	28
Monday	29	Tuesday	29	Wednesday	29	Thursday	29	Friday	29	Saturday	29	SUNDAY	29
Tuesday	30	Wednesday	30	Thursday	30	Friday	30	Saturday	30	SUNDAY	30	Monday	30
Wednesday	31	Thursday	31	Friday	31	Saturday	31	SUNDAY	31	Monday	31	Tuesday	31

NOTE: To ascertain any day of the week, first look in the table for the year required and under the months are figures which refer to the corresponding figures at the head of the columns of the days below. For Example:- To know on what day of the week 15th Aug., 1872 fell, look in the table of years for 1872, and in a parallel line under August is figure 4, which directs to column 4 in which it will be seen that August 15 fell on Thursday.

CONVERSION FACTORS

CONVERSION FACTORS

Abbreviation	Prefixes		for instance
		Mile (m) $\frac{1}{1000}$ of unit	
Metre-m	kilo (K)-1000 times unit		100 centimetres = 1 metre
Gramme-gm	hecto (h) - 100 times unit	centi (c) $\frac{1}{100}$ of unit	100 milligramme = 1 gramme
Litres-1	deca (dal) - 10 times unit	deci (d) $\frac{1}{10}$ of unit	100 litres = 1 hectolitre

Length

1 inch = 25.4 millimetres (mm)
1 foot = 30.48 centimetres (cm)
1 yard = 0.9144 metre (m)
1 mile = 1.6093 kilometres (km)
1 millimetre = 0.0328 inch.
1 centimetre = 0.0328 foot
1 metre = 1.094 yards
1 kilometre = 0.62137 mile

Centimetres		Inch
2.540	1	0.394
5.080	2	0.787
7.620	3	1.181
10.160	4	1.575
12.700	5	1.969
15.240	6	2.362
17.780	7	2.756
20.320	8	3.150
22.860	9	3.543

Metres		Yards
0.914	1	1.094
1.829	2	2.187
2.743	3	3.281
3.658	4	4.374
4.572	5	5.468
5.486	6	6.562
6.401	7	7.655
7.315	8	8.749
8.230	9	9.843

Kilometres		Miles
1.609	1	0.621
3.219	2	1.243
4.828	3	1.864
6.437	4	2.485
8.047	5	3.107
9.656	6	3.728
11.265	7	4.350
12.875	8	4.971
14.484	9	5.592

Volume

1 inch^3 = 16.387 centimetres^3
1 foot^3 = 28.316 decimetres^3
1 pint^3 = 0.568 litre
1 imperial gallon = 4.546 litres
1 centimetre^3 = 0.0610 inch^3
1 decimetre^3 = 0.035 feet^3
1 litre = 1.76 pints
1 litre = 0.220 Imperial gallon

Litre		Gallons
4.546	1	0.220
9.092	2	0.440
13.638	3	0.660
18.184	4	0.880
22.730	5	1.110
27.276	6	1.320
31.822	7	1.540
36.368	8	1.760
40.914	9	1.980

Weight

1 ounce = 28.349 gm.
1 pound = 0.4536 kg.
1 stone = 6.350 kilogrammes
1 cwt = 50/80 kilogrammes
1 ton = 1.016 metric tonnes
1 gramme = 0.03527 ounce
1 kilogramme = 2.205 pounds
1 kilogramme = 0.158 stone
1 kilogramme = 0.01968 cwt
1 metric tonne = 0.09842

Kilograms		Pounds
0.454	1	2.205
0.907	2	4.405
1.361	3	6.614
1.814	4	8.819
2.268	5	11.023
2.722	6	13.228
3.175	7	15.432
3.629	8	17.637
4.082	9	19.872

Area

1 sq. inch = 6.4516 sq. cm.
1 sq. yard = 0.8361 sq. metre
1 sq. mile = 2.589 sq. kilometres
1 acra = 4047 sq. metres
1 sq. centimetre = 0.155 sq. inch
1 sq. metre = 1.1960 sq. yards
1 sq. kilometre = 0.386 sq. mile
1 hectare = 10.000 sq. metres
1 hectare = 2.471 acres

Sq. Metres		Sq. Yards
0.836	1	1.196
1.672	2	2.392
2.508	3	3.588
3.345	4	4.784
4.181	5	5.980
5.017	6	7.176
5.853	7	8.372
6.689	8	9.568
7.525	9	10.764

Easy Conversion

Metres into yards
add one-tenth
Yards into metres
deduct one-tenth
Kilometres into miles
multiply by 5 and divide by 8
Miles into kilometres
multiply by 8 and divide by 5
Litres into pints
multiply by 7 and divide by 4
Pints into litres
multiply by 4 and divide by 7
Litres into gallons
multiply by 2 and divide by 9
Gallons into litres
multiply by 9 and divide by 2
Kilograms into pounds
divide by 9 and multiply by 20
Pounds into by kilograms
divide by 20 and multiply by 9

Double conversion Tables : The central figures represent either of the two columns besides them, as the case may be Exemple : 1 kilometre = 0.621 mile and one mile = 1.609 kilometres.

The Resurgent India Trust

The fundamental object of this Trust is to work for an integral resurgence of India so that it may assume its rightful place among the community of nations and, by its powerful example and spiritual influence open for humanity the way leading to the establishment of a divine life on earth which will be the supreme fulfillment of the ages long promises and pronouncements of the forthcoming kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

To assume its true position and fulfil its true role in the community of nations India must find back and manifest her soul which, at present, is completely covered up by an overwhelming commercialism which has spread everywhere and which has arisen out of the onslaught on it of the Western spirit of shortsighted utilitarianism. Individually one can fight it by becoming conscious of one's inner being or – better still – psychic being and letting it become conscious of India's soul and interested in knowing and serving it. The individuals who become conscious of India's Soul and its Mission will become the backbone of a group forming a strong body of cohesive will with the spiritual knowledge to save India and the world.

The Resurgent India Trust has been established by just such a group of people who having become conscious of India's Soul have acquired a living faith in its divine destiny and cannot help intensely loving it in spite of all the contrary surface appearances. This Trust hopes to become a powerful instrument of the expression of theirs and their countless other brothers' and sisters' faith and love for India.

It is believed that the most important thing for India – the one which when set right will automatically lead to the dissolution of most of its present problems and difficulties – is to recover the true sense of pride in its great culture, its glorious past and its supreme achievements. Therefore this Trust ardently seeks to awaken Indian people to the truth of their present condition and their great past and thus contribute to the forces leading to the recovery of their lost faith and pride – lost due to over one thousand years of subjugation to the rule of foreign invaders and the still continuing hold of their alien ideas on Indian minds – in the majesty, greatness and invincibility of their spiritual culture.