# The Real Awakener



# The Light of lights

## Words of Sri Aurobindo – 27

**21st February, 2022**

**Volume 20** **Issue 2**

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# Vedic and Philological Studies (CWSA 14)

# I. Essays in Vedic Interpretation*

## 1. The Veda and European Scholarship*

"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

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

** * The numbers at the end of the quotations are the page numbers of the original reference.*

& 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." (3-4)

"In a work devoted to the formulation of the early Vedantic philosophy of the Upanishads – and especially to that philosophy as we find it massively concentrated into some of its greatest principles in the Isha Upanishad, I hazarded the theory that the Vedas were not a collection of sacrificial hymns to material Nature-gods, as supposed by the Europeans, but something more profound and noble, that they were indeed, I thought, the true substance & foundation of the Upanishads, if not of all "Hindu" religion & spirituality. Certain considerations were added which, it seemed to me, delivered me from the intellectual necessity of implicit submission to European standards and modern theories." (5)

"Like the labours of the European scholars, my work must be, from the intellectual standpoint, inductive and conjectural; – it is a large suggestion that I am offering to the religious consciousness of India, a suggestion time & human knowledge may confirm, if it is true & fortunately supported, but will reject, if it turns out to be an error or a premature discovery. It would be highly out of place in such

a tentative to be positive or dogmatic. For although the position I take, that the Veda contains the foundations of Brahmavidya, is old & hoary in Indian tradition, it is an audacious novelty to the modern intellect. Sayana does not establish it for us. Shankara acknowledges only to turn away from it and take refuge in the trenchant division of Karmakanda from Jnanakanda." (5-6)

**2. The Indian Servility to the European Scholarship**

"Who are they, the gods of the Rigveda? Ancient and yet ever youthful powers, full of joy, help and light, shining ones with whose presence the regions of earth and the hearts of men were illuminated, Angels and Deputies of the mysterious unknown God, worshipped in India, worshipped in Mesopotamia & Central Asia fifteen hundred years before the Christian era, worshipped by the wild Scythians, – for the name of Bhaga is still the Russian name for God, – worshipped in Iran before Ahuramazda replaced them, – for Ahriman, the dark spirit of the Persians, preserves the name of the strong Vedic deity, – worshipped at some time by Greek & Roman & Celt and Scandinavian, they have long given way even in India to the direct adoration of their Master whom they revealed, the Deva Adhiyajna whom through them the ancient masters of the sacrifice so persistently sought and finally attained." (7-8)

"The Europeans believe that these Vedic gods were personifications of the material powers of Nature; Sky, Rain, Sun, Moon, Wind, Fire, Dawn and the Ocean are the gods of the Aryans. The names, they think, carry with them their own interpretation, and the language of the hymns, as translated

by them, consents to this modern insight. Vayu blows, Agni burns, Indra opens the cloud and hurls the thunderbolt." (8)

"The Indian Pundits, with Sayana at their head, give us little help against these ideas which attack so fatally the ancient bedrock of our religion; servant & passive minds, they make no inquiry of their own, but preserve for us the traditions of Puranic mythology, which, themselves symbols, cannot, unless themselves first explained, help us to explain more ancient images. Consequently, these European notions have had a sweeping victory, until at last an Indian hater of India's past, brought up in their school of thought, was able to say, not without some plausibility, that the best way to destroy popular faith in the Hindu religion would be to print and publish broadcast cheap translations of the Veda, – of course, as they are now, by those foreign minds, understood and interpreted. But the method might be partially effective, without the effect being just. The European theory of the Vedas well supported though it seems may not be the true theory or even the only rational theory now available. A past race of men, great thinkers, whose writings are the source and fountainhead of some of the sublimest philosophies in the world, much nearer to the Vedic Rishis in time, more capable of understanding and entering into their mentality, did not hold this view of the ancient deities. They considered them to be divine beings whose nature was vital, moral and spiritual, not simply material; they thought sacrifice to be a helpful and even a necessary symbolism. Throughout the Brahmanas & Upanishads we see this constant idea and the great pains taken to penetrate into the meaning not only of Vedic language but of Vedic ritual." (9)

### 3. The Colloquy of Agastya and Indra *

"But we are not limited to the evidence [of] isolated passages or collected inferences for the symbolic, spiritual and psychological character of the Vedic sacrifice. There are entire hymns in which this character is brought out with a remarkable consistency & vividness. We will take first the brief & striking colloquy between the Rishi Agastya and the great god Indra which forms the five verses of Hymn 170 in the first Mandala. 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. What sublime & numerous echoes wake in our memory as we repeat this mantra. There comes to us the solemn stanza of the Gita, Ascharyavat pashyati kaschid enam...; there come the words of the Mandukya Upanishad, yachchanyat trikalatitam; the solemn assertion of the Kena, na tatra vag gacchati no manah; its subtle distinction avijnatam vijanatam vijnatam avijanatam; vividly there comes the great fable of the mighty Yaksha who stood before the gods, the advance of this very Indra to know him, the vanishing of the Brahman as soon as approached, utadhitam vi nashyati. The whole of Vedanta might be described as one vast commentary on the four words, anyasya chittam abhi sancharenyam.

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." (20-23)

**4. Dispelling Misconceptions around the Vedas**

"The consistent religious development of India has been theosophic, mystical, Vedantic. Its beginnings are now supposed to have been naturalistic, materialistic, Pagan, almost Graeco-Roman. No satisfactory explanation has been given of this strange transformation in the soul of a people, and it is not surprising that theories should have been started attributing to Vedanta & Brahmavada a Dravidian origin. Brahmavada was, some have confidently asserted, part of the intellectual property taken over by the Aryan conquerors from the more civilised races they dispossessed." (25)

"The confident presumption that religion started in fairly recent times with the terrors of the savage, passed through stages of Animism & Nature worship & resulted variously in Paganism, monotheism or the Vedanta has stood in the way of any extension of scepticism to this province of Vedic enquiry." (26)

"No other religion of which there is any undisputed record or sure observation, can be defined as a system of pure Nature worship. Even the savage-races have had the conception of gods & spirits who are other than personified natural phenomena." (26)

"It is therefore evident that even in the lowest religious strata the impulse to personify Nature-phenomena is not the ruling cult-idea of humanity. It is exceedingly unlikely that at any time this element should have so far prevailed as to cast out all the others so as to create a type of cult confined within a pure & rigid naturalism. Man has always seen in the universe the replica of himself. Unless therefore the Vedic Rishis had no thought of their subjective being, no perception of

intellectual and moral forces within themselves, it is a psychological impossibility that they should have detected divine forces behind the objective world but none behind the subjective." (26)

"The other Aryan religions which are most akin in conception to the Vedic and seem originally to have used the same names for their deities, present themselves to us even at their earliest vaguely historic stage as moralised religions. Their gods had not only distinct moral attributes, but represented moral & subjective functions. Apollo is not only the god of the sun or of pestilence – in Homer indeed Haelios (Saurya) & not Apollo is the Sun God – but the divine master of prophecy and poetry; Athene has lost any naturalistic significance she may ever have had and is a pure moral force, the goddess of strong intelligence, force guided by brain; Ares is the lord of battles, not a storm wind; Artemis, if she is the Moon, is also goddess of the free hunting life and of virginity; Aphrodite is only the goddess of Love & Beauty. There is therefore a strong moral element in the cult & there are clear subjective notions attached to the divine personalities. But this is not all. There was not only a moral element in the Greek religion as known & practised by the layman, there was also a mystic element and an esoteric belief & practice practised by the initiated." (26-27)

"The question at any rate may fairly be put, Were the Vedic Rishis, thinkers of a race which has shown itself otherwise the greatest & earliest mystics & moralisers in historical times, the most obstinately spiritual, theosophic & metaphysical of nations, so far behind the Orphic & Homeric Greeks as to be wholly Pagan & naturalistic in their creed, or

was their religion too moralised & subjective, were their ceremonies too supported by an esoteric symbolism?

The immediate or at any rate the earliest known successors of the Rishis, the compilers of the Brahmanas, the writers of the Upanishads give a clear & definite answer to this question. The Upanishads everywhere rest their highly spiritual & deeply mystic doctrines on the Veda. We read in the Isha Upanishad of Surya as the Sun God, but it is the Sun of spiritual illumination, of Agni as the Fire, but it is the inner fire that burns up all sin & crookedness. In the Kena Indra, Agni & Vayu seek to know the supreme Brahman and their greatness is estimated by the nearness with which they "touched" him, – nedistham pasparsha. Uma the daughter of Himavan, the Woman, who reveals the truth to them is clearly enough no natural phenomenon. In the Brihadaranyaka, the most profound, subtle & mystical of human scriptures, the gods & Titans are the masters, respectively, of good and of evil. In the Upanishads generally the word devah is used as almost synonymous with the forces & functions of sense, mind & intellect. The element of symbolism is equally clear. To the terms of the Vedic ritual, to their very syllables a profound significance is everywhere attached; several incidents related in the Upanishads show the deep sense then & before entertained that the sacrifices had a spiritual meaning which must be known if they were to be conducted with full profit or even with perfect safety. The Brahmanas everywhere are at pains to bring out a minute symbolism in the least circumstances of the ritual, in the clarified butter, the sacred grass, the dish, the ladle. Moreover, we see even in the earliest Upanishads already developed the firm outlines and minute details of an extraordinary

psychology, physics, cosmology which demand an ancient development and centuries of Yogic practice and mystic speculation to account for their perfect form & clearness. This psychology, this physics, this cosmology persist almost unchanged through the whole history of Hinduism. We meet them in the Puranas; they are the foundation of the Tantra; they are still obscurely practised in various systems of Yoga. And throughout, they have rested on a declared Vedic foundation." (27-28)

"If there was no common origin, if Greek & Indian separated during the naturalistic period of the common religion supposed to be recorded in the Vedas it is surprising that even the little we know of Greek rites & mysteries should show us ideas coincident with those of Indian Tantra & Yoga." (29)

**5. Vedic Terminology and Functions**

"(1) Vedic religion is based on an elaborate psychology & cosmology of which the keyword is the great Vedic formula OM, Bhur Bhuvah Swah; the three vyahritis and the Pranava. The three Vyahritis are the three lower principles of Matter, Life & Mind, Annam, Prana & Manas of the Vedanta. OM is Brahman or Sacchidananda of whom these three are the expressions in the phenomenal world. OM & the vyahritis are connected by an intermediate principle, Mahas, Vijnanam of the Vedanta, ideal Truth which has arranged the lower worlds & on which amidst all their confusions they rest.

(2) Corresponding roughly to the vyahritis are three worlds, Bhurloka (Prana-Annam, the material world), Bhuvarloka (Prana-Manas, the lower subjective world),

Swarloka (Manas- Buddhi, the higher subjective world). These are the tribhuvana of Hinduism.

(3) Corresponding to Mahas is Maharloka or Mahi Dyaus, the great heavens (pure Buddhi or Vijnana, the ideal world). The Pranava in its three essentialities rules over the three supreme worlds, the Satyaloka (divine being), Tapoloka (divine Awareness & Force), Anandaloka (divine Bliss) of the Puranas, which constitute Amritam, immortality or the true kingdom of heaven of the Vedic religion. These are the Vedic sapta dhamani & the seven different movements of consciousness to which they correspond are the sapta sindhu of the hymns.

(4) According to the Vedanta, man has five koshas or sheaths of existence, the material (Annamaya), vital (Pranamaya), mental (Manomaya) which together make up the aparardha or lower half of our conscious-being; the ideal (vijnanamaya) which links the lower to the parardha or higher half; the divine or Anandamaya in which the divine existence (Amrita) is concentrated for communion with our lower human being. These are the pancha kshitis, five earths or rather dwelling places of the Veda. But in Yoga we speak usually of the five koshas but the sapta bhumis, seven not five. The Veda also speaks of sapta dhamani.

(5) In each of the seven strata of consciousness all the other six work under the law of the stratum which houses them. This means seven sub-strata in each; in the three vyahritis there are therefore thrice seven, trih saptani.

(6) Man, although living here in Bhu, belongs to Swar & Bhuvar. He is manu, the Thinker, – the soul in him is the manomayah pranasarira neta of the Upanishad, "the mental

captain & guide of life & body". He has to become vijnanamaya (mahan) and anandamaya, to become in a word immortal, divine in all his laws of being (vrata & dharman). By rising to Mahas in himself he enters into direct touch with ideal Truth, gets truth of knowledge by drishti, sruti & smriti, the three grand ideal processes, and by that knowledge truth of being, truth of action (satyadharma), truth of bliss (satyaradhas) constituting amritam, swarajyam & samrajyam, immortality, self-rule & mastery of the world. It is this evolution which the Vedic hymns are intended to assist.

(7) In his progress man is helped by the gods, resisted by the Asuras & Rakshasas. For the worlds behind have their own inhabitants, who, the whole universe being inextricably one, affect & are affected by the activities of mankind. The Bhuvar is the great place of struggle in which forces work behind the visible movements we see here and determine all our actions & fortunes. Swar is man's resting place but not his final or highest habitation which is Vishnu's highest footing, Vishnoh paramam padam, high in the supreme parardha.

(8) The 33 great gods belong to the higher worlds but rest in Swar & work at once in all the strata of consciousness, for the world is always one in its complexity. They are masters of the mental functions, masters also of the vital & material. Agni, for instance, governs the actions of the fiery elements in Nature & in man, but is also the vehicle of pure tapas, tu, tuvis or divine force. They are therefore mankind's greatest helpers.

(9) But in order that they may help, it is necessary to reinforce them in these lower worlds, which are not their own, by self-surrender, by sacrifice, by a share in all man's action, strength, being & bliss, and by this mutual help man's being

physical, vital, mental, spiritual is kept in a state of perfect & ever increasing force, energy & joy favourable to the development of immortality. This is the process of Yajna, called often Yoga when applied exclusively to the subjective movements & adhwara when applied to the objective. The Vritras, Panis etc of the Bhuvarloka who are constantly preventing man's growth & throwing back his development, have to be attacked and slain by the gods, for they are not entirely immortal. The sacrifice is largely a battle between evolutionary & reactionary powers.

(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.

(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) 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.*

(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." (33-36)

**6. Saraswati**

"Saraswati is known to us in the Purana, – the Muse with her feet on the thousand leaved lotus of the mind, the goddess of thought, learning, poetry, of all that is high in mind and its knowledge. But, so far as we can understand from the Purana,

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** 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.*

she is the goddess of mind only, of intellect & imagination and their perceptions & inspirations. Things spiritual & the mightier supra-mental energies & illuminations belong not to her, but to other powers. Well, we meet Saraswati in the Vedas; – and if she is the same goddess as our Puranic & modern protectress of learning & the arts, the Personality of the Intellect, then we have a starting point – we know that the Vedic Rishis had other than naturalistic conceptions & could call to higher powers than the thunder-flash & the storm-wind. But there is a difficulty – Saraswati is the name of a river, of several rivers in India, for the very name means flowing, gliding or streaming, – and the Europeans identify it with a river in the Punjab. We must be careful therefore, whenever we come across the name, to be sure which of these two is mentioned or invoked, the sweet-streaming Muse or the material river." (37-38)

## 7. The Ideal Knowledge and its Perception of Various Faculties of Human Mind

### *a. The Mahas*

"What is Mah or Mahas? The word means great, embracing, full, comprehensive. The Earth, also, because of its wideness & containing faculty is called mahi, – just as it is called prithivi, dhara, medini, dharani, etc. In various forms, the root itself, mahi, mahitwam, maha, magha, etc, it recurs with remarkable profusion and persistence throughout the Veda. Evidently it expressed some leading thought of the Rishis, was some term of the highest importance in their system of psychology. Turning to the Purana we find the term mahat applied to some comprehensive principle which is

supposed itself to be near to the unmanifest, avyaktam but to supply the material of all that is manifest and always to surround, embrace and uphold it." (40)

"We turn to the Upanishads and find mention made more than once of a certain subjective state of the soul, which is called Mahan Atma, a state into which the mind and senses have to be drawn up as we rise by samadhi of the instruments of knowledge into the supreme state of Brahman and which is superior therefore to these instruments. The Mahan Atma is the state of the pure Brahman out of which the vijnana or ideal truth (sattwa or be-ness of things) emerges and it is higher than the vijnana but nearer us than the Unmanifest or Avyaktam (Katha: III.10, 11, 13 & VI.7). If we understand by the Mahan Atma that status of soul existence (Purusha) which is the basis of the objective mahat or mahati prakriti and which develops the vijnanam or ideal knowledge as its subjective instrument, then we shall have farther light on the nature of Mahas in the ancient conceptions. We shall see that it is ideal knowledge, vijnanam, or is connected with ideal knowledge." (41)

"Between the upper hemisphere & the lower is Maharloka, the seat of ideal knowledge & pure Truth, which links the free spirits to the bound, the gods who deliver to the gods who are in chains, the wide & immutable realms to these petty provinces where all shifts, all passes, all changes. We see therefore that Mahas is still vijnanam and we can no longer hesitate to identify our subjective principle of mahas, source of truth & right thinking awakened by Saraswati through the perceptive intelligence, with the Vedantic principle of vijnana or pure buddhi, instrument of

pure Truth & ideal knowledge." (42)

### *b. Limitations of the 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. Satyam eva jayate nanritam satyena pantha vitato devayanah yenakramantyrishayo hyaptakama yatra tat satyasya paramam nidhanam. Truth conquers and not falsehood, by truth the path has been extended which the gods follow, by which sages attaining all their desire arrive where is that Supreme Abode

of Truth. The very eagerness of man for Truth, his untameable yearning towards an infinite reality, an infinite extension of knowledge, the fact that he has the conception of a fixed & firm truth, nay the very fact that error is possible & persistent, are indications that pure Truth exists. We follow no chimaera as a supreme good, nor do the Powers of Darkness fight against a mere shadow. The ideal Truth is constantly coming down to us, constantly seeking to deliver us from our slavery to our senses and the magic circle of our limited data. It speaks to our hearts & creates the phenomenon of Faith, but the heart has its lawless & self-regarding emotions & disfigures the message. It speaks to the Imagination, our great intellectual instrument which liberates us from the immediate fact and opens the mind to infinite possibility; but the imagination has her pleasant fictions & her headlong creative impulse and exaggerates the truth & distorts & misplaces circumstances. It speaks to the intellect itself, bids it criticise its instruments by vichara and creates the critical reason, bids it approach the truth directly by a wide passionless & luminous use of the pure judgment, and creates shuddha buddhi or Kant's pure reason; bids it divine truth & learn to hold the true divination & reject the counterfeit, and creates the intuitive reason & its guardian, intuitive discrimination or viveka. But the intellect is impatient of error, eager for immediate results and hurries to apply what it receives before it has waited seen & understood. Therefore error maintains & even extends her reign. At last come the logician & modern rationalist thinker; disgusted with the exaggeration of these movements, seeing their errors, unable to see their indispensable utility, he sets about sweeping them away as intellectual rubbish, gets rid of faith, gets rid of flexibility of

mind, gets rid of sympathy, pure reason & intuition, puts critical reason into an ill lightened dungeon & thinks now, delivered from these false issues, to compass truth by laborious observation & a rigid logic. To live on these dry & insufficient husks is the last fate of impure vijnanam or buddhi confined in the data of the mind & senses – until man wronged in his nature, cabined in his possibilities revolts & either prefers a luminous error or resumes his broadening & upward march." (42-45)

### *c. Working of the Mahas and Its Significance*

"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. Ananda is the soul of Nature, its essentiality, creative power & peace." (45)

"Whoever enters this kingdom of Mahat, this Maho Arnas or great sea of ideal knowledge, comes into possession of his true being, true knowledge, true bliss. He attains the ideal powers of drishti, sruti, smriti – sees truth face to face, hears her unerring voice or knows her by immediate recognising memory – just as we say of a friend "This is he" and need no reasoning of observation, comparison, induction or deduction to tell us who he is or to explain our knowledge to ourselves – though we may, already knowing the truth, use a self-evident reasoning masterfully in order to convince others. 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." (45-46)

"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." (46-47)

### *d. Saraswati and Mahas: The Significance of Sacrifice*

"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, as we might 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.

For we perceive at once that the yajna here can be no material sacrifice, no mere pouring out of the Soma-wine on the sacred flame to the gods of rain & cloud, star & sunshine. Saraswati is not even here the goddess of speech whose sole function is to inspire & guide the singer in his hymn. In other passages she may be merely Bharati, – the Muse. But here there are greater depths of thought & soul-experience. She has to do things which mere speech cannot do. And even if we were to take her here as the divine Muse, still the functions asked of her are too great, there is too little need of all these high intellectual motions, for a mere invitation to Rain & Star Gods to share in a pouring of the Soma-wine. She could do that without all this high intellectual & spiritual labour. Even, therefore, if it be a material sacrifice which Madhuchchhanda is offering, its material aspects can be no more than symbolical." (47-48)

## 8. Spiritual Symbolisms of the Vedic Gods

### *a. Ashwins: Masters of Rapture*

"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. So runs the first verse, Aswina yajwaririsho dravatpani subhaspati, Purubhuja chanasyatam. O Aswins, cries Madhuchchhanda, I am in the full rush, the full ecstasy of the sacrificial action, O swift-footed, much-enjoying masters of happiness, take in me your delight. Again they are purudansasa, wide-distributing, nara, strong. "O strong wide-distributing Aswins," continues the singer, "with your bright-flashing (or brilliantly-forceful) understanding take pleasure in the words (of the mantra) which are now firmly settled (in the mind)". Aswina purudansasa nara shaviraya dhiya, Dhishnya vanatam girah. Again we have the stress on things subjective, intellectual and spiritual." (48-49)

"In the next verse the epithets are dasra, bountiful, which, like wide-distributing is again an epithet appropriate to the givers of happiness, weal and youth, rudravartani, fierce & impetuous in all their ways, and Nasatya, a word of doubtful meaning which, for philological reasons, I take to mean gods of movement. As the movement indicated by this and kindred words nâ, (natare), especially meant a gliding, floating, swimming movement, the Aswins came to be especially the protectors of ships & sailors, and it is in this capacity that we find Castor & Polydeuces (Purudansas) acting, their Western counterparts, the brothers of Helen (Sarama), the swift riders of the Roman legend. "O givers, O lords of free movement," runs the closing verse of this invocation, "come to the outpourings of my nectar, be ye fierce in action; – I feel full of youthful vigour, I have prepared the sacred grass," – if

that indeed be the true & early meaning of *barhis*. Dasra yuvakavah suta nasatya vriktabarhishah, Ayatam rudravartani. It is an intense rapture of the soul (rudravartani) which Madhuchchhandas asks first from the gods. Therefore his first call is to the Aswins." (48-49)

### *b. Indra: Lord of Purified Mental Faculties*

"I have already said that in my view Indra is the master of mental force."

""Indra," sings the Rishi, "arrive, O thou of rich and varied light, here are these life-streams poured forth, purified, with vital powers, with substance. Arrive, O Indra, controlled by the understanding, impelled forward in various directions to my soul faculties, I who am now full of strength and flourishing increase. Arrive, O Indra, with protection to my soul faculties, O dweller in the brilliance, confirm our delight in the nectar poured." It seems to me that the remarkable descriptions dhiyeshito viprajutah are absolutely conclusive, that they prove the presence of a subjective Nature Power, not a god of rain & tempest, & prove especially a mind-god. What is it but mental force which comes controlled by the understanding and is impelled forward by it in various directions? What else is it that at the same time protects by its might the growing & increasing soul faculties from impairing & corrupting attack and confirms, keeps safe & continuous the delight which the Aswins have brought with them? The epithets chitrabhano, harivas become at once intelligible and appropriate; the god of mental force has indeed a rich and varied light, is indeed a dweller in the brilliance. The progress of the thought is clear. Madhuchchhanda, as a result of Yogic

practice, is in a state of spiritual & physical exaltation; he has poured out the nectar of vitality; he is full of strength & ecstasy. This is the sacrifice he has prepared for the gods. He wishes it to be prolonged, perhaps to be made, if it may now be, permanent. The Aswins are called to give & take the delight, Indra to supply & preserve that mental force which will sustain the delight otherwise in danger of being exhausted & sinking by its own fierceness rapidly consuming its material in the soul faculties. The state and the movement are one of which every Yogin knows." (50-51)

### *c. Vishve Devah: The All-Gods*

"He wishes to pour out this strength & joy in action on the world, on his fellows, on the peoples, therefore he calls to the Visve Devah to come, A gata! – all the gods in general who help man and busy themselves in supporting his multitudinous & manifold action. They are kindly, omasas, they are charshanidhrito, holders or supporters of all our actions, especially actions that require effort, (it is in this sense that I take charshani, again on good philological grounds), they are to distribute this nectar to all or to divide it among themselves for the action, – dasvanso may have either force, – for Madhuchchhanda wishes not only to possess, but to give, to distribute, he is dashush. Omasas charshanidhrito visve devasa a gata, daswanso dashushah sutam. He goes on, Visve devaso apturah sutam a ganta turnayah Usra iva swasarani. Visve devaso asridha ehimayaso adruhah, Medham jushanta vahnayah. "O you all-gods who are energetic in works, come to the nectar distilled, ye swift ones, (or, come swiftly), like calves to their own stalls, – (so at least we must translate this last phrase, till we can get the real meaning, for I do not believe this is the real

or, at any rate, the only meaning). O you all-gods unfaltering, with wide capacity of strength, ye who harm not, attach yourselves to the offering as its supporters." And then come the lines about Saraswati. For although Indra can sustain for a moment or for a time he is at present a mental, not an ideal force; it is Saraswati full of the vijnana, of mahas, guiding by it the understanding in all its ways who can give to all these gods the supporting knowledge, light and truth which will confirm and uphold the delight, the mental strength & supply inexhaustibly from the Ocean of Mahas the beneficent & joy-giving action, – Saraswati, goddess of inspiration, the flowing goddess who is the intermediary & channel by which divine truth, divine joy, divine being descend through the door of knowledge into this human receptacle. In a word, she is our inspirer, our awakener, our lurer towards Immortality. It is immortality that 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." (51-52)

## 9. Varuna and the Law

### *a. Upholder of Ritam and Uru*

"Ritam is Truth, Law, that which is straight, upright, direct, rectum; it is that which gives everything its place & its

motion (ritu), that which constitutes reason (ratio) in mind and rectitude in morals, – it is the rightness or righteousness which makes the stars move in their orbits, the seasons occur in their order, thought & speech move towards truth, trees grow according to their seed, animals act according to their species & nature, & man walk in the paths which God has prescribed for him. It is that in the Akasha – the Akasha where Varuna is lord – which develops arrangement & order, it is the element of law in Nature. But not only in material Nature, not only in the moral akasha even, the akasha of the heart of which the Rishis spoke, but on higher levels also. I have pointed out that Ritam is the law of the Truth, of vijnana. It is this ideal Truth, the Truth of being, by which everything animate or inanimate knows in its fibres of being & serves in action & feeling the truth of itself, in which Law is born. This Law which belongs to Satyam, to the Mahas, is Ritam. Neither of the English words, Law & Truth, gives the idea; they have to be combined in order to be equivalent to ritam. Well, then Varuna is represented to us as increasing in his nature by this Truth & Law, attaining to it or possessing it; Law & Truth are the source of his strength, the means by which he has arrived at his present force & mightiness.

But he is more than that; he is tuvijata, urukshaya. Uru, we shall find in other hymns, the Vast, is a word used as equivalent to Brihat to describe the ideal level of consciousness, the kingdom of ideal knowledge, in its aspect of joyous comprehensive wideness and capacity." (54-55)

"Therefore Uru must be taken as equivalent to Brihat; it must mean Mahas. Our Vedic Varuna, then, is a dweller in Mahas, in the vastness of ideal knowledge. But he is not born

there; he is born or appears first in tuvi, that is, in strength or force." (55)

### *b. Manifestation of Varuna and Mitra in the World of Consciousness*

"According to our conceptions this universe has been created by & in divine Awareness by Force, Shakti, or Power which [is] inherent in Awareness, Force of Awareness or Chit Shakti that moves, forms & realises whatever it wills in Being. This force, this Chit-shakti in its application to its work, is termed in the ancient phraseology Tapas. Therefore, it is told us that when Brahma the Creator lay uncreative on the great Ocean, he listened & heard a voice crying over the waters OM Tapas! OM Tapas! and he became full of the energy of the mantra & arose & began creation. Tapas & Tu or Tuvi are equivalent terms. We can see at once the meaning. Varuna, existing no doubt in Sat, appears or is born to us in Tapas, in the sea of force put out in itself by the divine Awareness, & descending through divine delight which world is in Jana, in production or birth by Tapas, through Ananda, that is to say, into the manifest world, dwells in ideal knowledge & Truth and makes there Ritam or the Law of the Truth of Being his peculiar province. It is the very process of all creation, according to our Vedic & Vedantic Rishis. Descending into the actual universe we find Varuna master of the Akash or ether, matrix and continent of created things, in the Akash watching over the development of the created world & its peoples according to the line already fixed by ideal knowledge as suitable to their nature and purpose – yathatathyato vihitam shashwatibhyah samabhyah – and guiding the motion of things & souls in the line of the ritam. It is in his act of guidance

and bringing to perfection of the imperfect that he increases by the law and the truth, desires it and naturally attains to it, has the spriha & the sparsha of the ritam. It is from his fidelity to ideal Truth that he acquires the mighty power by which he maintains the heavens and orders its worlds in their appointed motion.

Such is his general nature and power. But there are also certain particular subjective functions to which he is called. He is rishadasa, he harries and slays the enemies of the soul, and with Mitra of pure discernment he works at the understanding till he brings it to a gracious pureness and brightness. He is like Agni, a kavih, one of those who has access to and commands ideal knowledge and with Mitra he supports and upholds Daksha when he is at his works; for so I take Daksham apasam. Mitra has already been described as having a pure daksha. The adjective daksha means in Sanscrit clever, intelligent, capable, like dakshina…" (56-57)

"…Daksha is originally he who divides, analyses, discerns; he is the intellectual faculty or in his person the master of the intellectual faculty which discerns and distinguishes. Therefore was Mitra able to help in making the understanding bright & pure, – by virtue of his purified discernment." (57)

### *c. Varuna and Indra: Givers of Victory*

"So much Varuna does but what is he actually? We cannot tell with accuracy until we have separated him from his companion Mitra. We come across him next no longer in company with Mitra, but still not by himself, accompanied this time by Indra and helping him in his work, in the seventeenth sukta of the first Mandala, a hymn of

Medhatithi Kanwa, a hymn whose burden is joy, calm, purity & fulfilment. "Of Indra & Varuna, the high rulers, I choose the protection, may they be gracious to us in this our state (of attainment). For ye are they who come to the call of the enlightened soul that can contain you; you are they who are upbearers of his actions. Take ye your pleasure to your hearts' content in the felicity, O Indra, O Varuna; so we desire you utterly near to us. May we gain the full pitch of the powers, the full vigour of the right thoughts that give men the assured plenty. Indra is the desirable Strength of all that gives force, Varuna of all that is ample & noble. By their protection may we remain in safety and meditate, may there be indeed an utter purification. Indra and Varuna, I call you for rich and varied ecstasy, do ye render us victorious. Indra and Varuna, now may our understandings be entirely obedient to you, that in them you may give to us peace. May the good praise be grateful to you, O Indra & Varuna, which I call aloud to you, the fulfilling praise which you bring to prosperity."" (57-58)

"It is clear from the third verse that Varuna and Indra are called to share in the felicity of the poet's soul, – that felicity is his material of sacrifice, – "anukamam tarpayetham," he says, Delight in it to your heart's content; and again in the seventh shloka he tells them, Vam aham huve chitraya radhase, a phrase which, in view of verse 3, I can only translate "I call you for rich and varied ecstasy"; for it is evidently meant to describe that felicity, that heart-filling satisfaction which he has already offered in the third sloka. In return he asks them to give victory. Always in the Veda there is the idea of the spiritual battle as well as the outer struggles of life, the battle with the jealous forces of

Nature, with Vala, the grudging guardian of light, with the great obscuring dragon Vritra & his hosts, with the thieving Panis, with all the many forces that oppose man's evolution & support limitation and evil. A great many of the words for sacrifice, mean also war and battle, in Sanscrit or in its kindred tongues.

Indra and Varuna are called to give victory, because both of them are samrat. The words samrat & swarat have in Veda an ascertained philosophical sense. One is swarat when, having self-mastery & self-knowledge, & being king over his whole system, physical, vital, mental & spiritual, free in his being, [one] is able to guide entirely the harmonious action of that being. Swarajya is spiritual Freedom. One is Samrat when one is master of the laws of being, ritam, rituh, vratani, and can therefore control all forces & creatures. Samrajya is divine Rule resembling the power of God over his world. Varuna especially is Samrat, master of the Law which he follows, governor of the heavens & all they contain, Raja Varuna, Varuna the King as he is often styled by Sunahshepa and other Rishis. He too, like Indra & Agni & the Visvadevas, is an upholder & supporter of men's actions, dharta charshaninam. Finally in the fifth sloka a distinction is drawn between Indra and Varuna of great importance for our purpose. The Rishi wishes, by their protection, to rise to the height of the inner Energies (yuvaku shachinam) and have the full vigour of right thoughts (yuvaku sumatinam) because they give then that fullness of inner plenty (vajadavnam) which is the first condition of enduring calm & perfection & then he says, Indrah sahasradavnam, Varunah shansyanam kratur bhavati ukthyah. Indra is the master-strength, desirable indeed, (ukthya, an object of prayer, of longing and aspiration) of

one class of those boons (vara, varyani) for which the Rishis praise him, Varuna is the master-strength, equally desirable, of another class of these Vedic blessings. Those which Indra brings, give force, sahasram, the forceful being that is strong to endure & strong to overcome; those that attend the grace of Varuna are of a loftier & more ample description, they are shansya." (58-59)

"I shall show elsewhere that shansa is in its essential meaning "self-expression", the bringing out of our sat or being that which is latent in it and manifesting it in our nature, in speech, in our general impulse & action. It has the connotation of self-expression, aspiration, temperament, expression of our ideas in speech; then divulgation, publication, praise – or in another direction, cursing. Varuna is urushansa because he is the master of wide self-expression, wide aspirations, a wide, calm & spacious temperament, Agni narashansa because he is master of strong self-expression, strong aspirations, a prevailing, forceful & masterful temperament; – nrishansa had originally the same sense, but was afterwards diverted to express the fault to which such a temper is prone, – tyranny, wrath & cruelty; the Rishis call to the gods to protect their shansa, that which by their yoga & yajna they have been able to bring out in themselves of being, faculty, power, joy, – their self-expression. Similarly, shansya here means all that belongs to self-expression, all that is wide, noble, ample in the growth of a soul. It will follow from this rendering that Indra is a god of force, Varuna rather a god of being and as it appears from other epithets, of being when it is calm, noble, wide, self-knowing, self-mastering, moving freely in harmony with the Law of things because it is aware of that Law and accepts it. In that acceptance is his mighty

strength; therefore is he even more than the gods of force the king, the giver of internal & external victory, rule, empire, samrajya to his votaries. This is Varuna." (60-61)

### *d. Definitions of Sin and Evil and the Role of Daksha*

""O Mitra who upholdest rule of action & Varuna, enjoy Daksha in his unconquerable force, enjoy by the ideal law the sacrifice."

Daksha we have supposed to be the viveka, the intuitive discriminating reason which once active is hard to overcome by the powers of ignorance & error; it is again his activity which here also constitutes the essence or the essential condition of the successful sacrifice; for it is evidently meant that by enjoying or stimulating the activity of Daksha, Daksham dúdabham, daksham apasam, Mitra & Varuna are enabled to enjoy the effective activities of men under the law of truth, ritena kratum brihantam, rituná yajnamásháthe, activities of right knowledge, right action, right emotion, free from crookedness & ignorance & sin. For it is viveka that helps us to distinguish truth from error, right-doing from wrong-doing, just feeling from false & selfish emotions. Once again it is Mitra & Varuna who preside over & take the enjoyment of Daksha's functioning. The same psychological intention perseveres, the same simple & profound ideas & expressions recur in the same natural association, with the same harmony & fixed relation founded on the eternal truth of human nature & a fine & subtle observation of its psychological faculties & functionings." (65)

""Do thou, O Brahmanaspati, & may Soma & Indra and Dakshina protect that mortal from evil."

If we suppose evil in this rik to connote or include moral evil we find Dakshina to have a share, the active energy of the viveka to take its part in the function of protection from sin which is one of the principal attributes of Varuna. It is part of the ideas of Vedanta that sin is in reality a form of ignorance and is purified out of the system by the illumination of divine knowledge. We begin to find by this sin-effacing attribute of Varuna, prachetá, uruchakshas, pútadaksha, ritasya jyotishas pati, by this sin-repelling attribute of Dakshina, the energy of ideal discrimination, the same profound idea already anticipated in the Rigveda. The Veda abounds with confirmatory passages, of which I will quote at present one only from the hymn of Kanwa to Agni, the thirty-sixth of thisMandala. "High-uplifted protect us from evil by the perception, burn utterly every devourer," páhi anhaso ni ketuná. All evil is a deviation from the right & truth, from the ritam, a deviation from the self-existent truth & right of the divine or immortal nature; the lords of knowledge dwelling in the human consciousness as the *prachetasah*, informing its acts of consciousness which include in the ancient psychology action & feeling no less than thought & attuning them to follow spontaneously the just rhythm of the divine right & truth, deliver effectually this human & mortal nature from evil & sin. The place of Daksha & Dakshina in that action is evident; it is primary & indispensable; for the mortal nature being full of wrong perceptions, warped impulses, evil & mixed & confused states of feeling, it is the business of the viveka to sort out the confusion & accustom the mind & heart of man to a juster, truer & purer working. The action of the other faculties of the Truth may be said to come after that of Daksha, of the viveka. In these hymns of Sunahshepa the clear

physiognomy of Varuna begins to dawn upon us. He is evidently the master of right knowledge, wide, self-luminous & all-containing in the world-consciousness & in human consciousness. His physical connection with the all-containing ether, – for Varuna is Uranus, the Greek Akasha, & wideness is constantly associated with him in the Veda, – leads us to surmise that he may also be the master in the ideal faculty, ritam brihat, where he dwells, urukshaya, of pure infinite conscious-being out of which knowledge manifests & with which it is, ultimately, one entity." (67-68)

## 10. The Vedic Bedrock of Our Civilisation

### *a. Out Vedic Foundation*

"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 the most 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." (80-81)

### *b. 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." (81-82)

### *c. Recourse to Vedantic Scholarship*

"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.

But these are secondary and transient considerations. When we put them aside and look face to face, using the critical reason and without prejudgment, at these sacred writings, when we have perused carefully & thoughtfully the

twelve great Upanishads from end to end, how much have we understood of them?" (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." (87)

### *d. Persistence of Vedas in Indian Psyche*

"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." (87-88)

"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." (89)

"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." (89)

"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." (90)

### *e. Psychological Bases of Metaphysical Thought and Religion in India*

"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." (90-91)

"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." (91-92)

### *f. Vedic Source of Indian Schools of Thought*

"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." (92)

"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." (92)

"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." (93)

### *g. Transmission and Retention of Vedic Knowledge – The Institution of Guruparampara*

"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." (94)

"…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." (94)

"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." (94-95)

"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." (95)

"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." (96)

"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…" (96)

"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." (96-97)

**11. The Universality of 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." (111)

"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." (112)

"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.

But in the last century a new scholarship has invaded the country, the scholarship of aggressive & victorious Europe, which for the first time denies the intimate connection and the substantial identity of the Vedas & the later Scriptures." (112-13)

"With the acceptance of these modern opinions Hinduism ought by this time to have been as dead among educated men as the religion of the Greeks & Romans." (113)

"It is, on the contrary, stronger & more alive, fecund & creative than it had been for the previous three centuries. To a certain extent this unexpected result may be traced to the high opinion in which even European opinion has been compelled to hold the Vedanta philosophy, the Bhagavat Gita and some of the speculations – as the Europeans think them – or, as we hold, the revealed truths of the Upanishads. But 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." (113-14)

## 12. The Essential Characteristic of the Vedic Outlook on Existence

### *a. The Vedic View of 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.

Nevertheless existence is not simple in its infinite oneness. Matter is prithivi, tanu or tanva (terra), a wide yet formal extension of being; but behind matter and containing it is a term of being, not formal though instrumentally creative of form, measuring & containing it, mind, mati or manas. Mind itself is biune in movement, modified mind working in direct relation to material life (anu, the Vedantic prana) and moulding itself to its requirements in order to seize and enjoy it, and pure mind above and controlling it. For each of these three subjective principles there must exist in the nature of things an objective world in which it fulfils its tendencies and in which beings of that particular order of consciousness can live and manifest themselves. The three worlds, tribhuvana, trailokya are called in Vedic terminology, Bhu, the material world, Bhuvar, the intermediate world and Swar, the pure blissful mental world, – Bhur, Bhuvar, Swar, earth, the lower heavens and paradise, are the three sacred & mighty *vyahritis* of the Veda, and the great Vedic formula OM Bhur Bhuvah Swah expressive of our manifest existence triply founded in matter, mind-in-sense & vital movement and pure mind, still resounds in the Indian consciousness & comes with a solemnity, ill-understood but felt, to the descendants of the

ancient Rishis. They persist in later belief as three inferior worlds of the Purana, constituents of the aparardha, or lower hemisphere of conscious existence, in which the Vedantic principles of matter, life & mind, anna, prana and manas severally predominate and determine the conditions of existence. Bhuvar & Swar are the two heavens, the double firmament, ubhe rodasi so frequently mentioned in the sacred verses." (119-20)

### *b. The Objective Reality of Subjective Experience*

"But why, it might be asked, should each subjective order or stratum of consciousness necessarily involve the co-existence of a corresponding order of beings & objective world-stratum? For the modern mind, speculative & introspective like the Vedic, is yet speculative within the limits of sensational experience and therefore unable to believe in, even if it can conceive of existence, least of all of an objective existence under conditions different from those [with] which we are familiar and of which our senses assure us. We may therefore admit the profundity & subtlety of the subjective distinction, but we shall be apt to regard the belief in objective worlds & beings unseen by our senses as either an early poetic fancy or a crude superstition of savages. But the Vedic mentality, although perfectly rational, stood at the opposite pole of ideas from the modern and its subjective consciousness admitted a class of experiences which we reject and cut short the moment they begin to present themselves by condemning them as hallucinations. The idea of modern men that the ancients evolved their gods by a process of poetic imagination, is an error due to inability to understand an alien mentality & unwillingness to investigate from within those

survivals of it which still subsist though with difficulty under modern conditions. Encouraging this order of phenomena, fostering & developing carefully the states of mind in which they were possible and the movements of mind & sense by which they were effected, the Vedic Rishis saw and communed with the gods and threw themselves into the worlds of which they had the conception. They believed in them for the same reason that Joan of Arc believed in her saints & her voices, Socrates in his daemon or Swedenborg in his spirits, because they had constant experience of them and of the validity both of the experiences and of the instruments of mind & sense by which they were maintained in operation. They would have answered a modern objector that they had as good a proof of them as the scientist has of the worlds & the different orders of life revealed to his optical nerve by microscope & telescope. Some of them might even question whether these scientific discoveries were not optical illusions due to the excitation of the nerve by the instruments utilised! We may, similarly, get rid of the Vedic experiences, disbelieve and discount them, saying that they missed one essential instrument of truth, the sceptical distrust of their instruments, – but we cannot argue from them in the minds that received them a childish irrationality or a savage superstition. They trusted, like us, their experience, believed their mind & senses and argued logically from their premisses." (120-21)

## 13. The Gods of the Veda

### *a. Saraswati and the Maho Arnas*

"Madhuchchhanda turns to Saraswati at the close of his hymn after successively calling to the Aswins, Indra & the

Visvadevas. To each of these deities he has addressed three riks of praise & invocation; the last three of the twelve reiterate in each verse the name, epithets & functions of Saraswati. The Sukta falls therefore into four equal parts of which the last alone immediately concerns us.

Pávaká nah Saraswatí, vájebhir vájinívatí,
Yajnam vashtu dhiyávasuh.
Chodayitrí súnritánám, chetantí sumatínám,
Yajnam dadhe Saraswatí.
Maho arnah Saraswatí, prachetayati ketuná,
Dhiyo viśvá vi rájati.*

On the strength of Sayana's commentary these lines would have to bear in English the following astounding significance. "Let the purifying goddess of Speech, equipped by means of food-offerings with a ritual full of food, desire (that is to say, up-bear) the sacrifice, she who is the cause of wealth as a result of the ritual. Sender of pleasant & true sayings and explainer (of this sacrifice) to the performers of the ritual who have a good intelligence, the goddess of Speech upholds the sacrifice. The river Saraswati makes known by her action (that is, her stream) much water, she (the Muse) illumines all the ideas of the sacrificer." Truly, whatever Saraswati may do for the sacrificer, – who does not appear at all in the lines except to the second sight of Sayana, – the great scholar does not succeed in illumining our ideas

** The metre of the Vedic hymns depends as in English on the number of syllables in the line, quantity only entering in [as] an element of rhythmic variation. The sign ´ marks a naturally long a, i, u, – to which e & o must be added. Vowels followed by a double consonant are long as in Latin & Greek. V & y are often interpreted as separate short syllables as if they were u and i.*

about the sense of the Sukta. The astonishing transition from the Muse to the river & the river to the Muse in a single rik is flagrantly impossible." (125-26)

"The effectual motive for Sayana's admission of Saraswati's double rôle in this Sukta is the expression maho arnas, the great water, of the third rik. Only in her capacity as a river-goddess has Saraswati anything to do with material water; an abundance of liquid matter is entirely irrelevant to her intellectual functions. If therefore we accept arnah in a material sense, the entrance of the river into the total physiognomy of Saraswati is imposed upon us by hard necessity in spite of the resultant incoherence. But if on the other hand, arnah can be shown to bear other than a material significance or intention, then no other necessity exists for the introduction of a deified Aryan river. On the contrary, there is an extraordinary accumulation of expressions clearly intellectual in sense." (126-27)

"Arnas or samudra is the image of the sea, flood or stream in which the Vedic seers saw the substance of being and its different states. Sometimes one great sea, sometimes seven streams of being are spoken of by the Rishis; they are the origin of the seven seas of the Purana. It cannot be doubted that the minds of the old thinkers were possessed with this image of ocean or water as the very type & nature of the flux of existence, for it occurs with a constant insistence in the Upanishads." (129)

"Water was to them, let us hold in our hypothesis, the symbol of unformed substance of being, earth of the formed substance. They even saw a mystic identity between the thing symbolised & the symbol.

What then is maho arnas?" (130)

"We find our clue in the Taittiriya Upanishad. It is said there that there are three recognised vyahritis of the Veda, Bhur, Bhuvar, Swah, but the Rishi Mahachamasya affirmed a fourth. The name of this doubtful fourth vyahriti is Mahas. Now the mystic vyahritis of the Veda are the shabdas or sacred words expressing objectively the three worlds, subjectively mentalised material being, mentalised vital being & pure mental being, the three manifest states of our phenomenal consciousness. Mahas, therefore, must express a fourth state of being, which is so much superior to the other three or so much beyond the ordinary attainment of our actual human consciousness that it is hardly considered in Vedic thought a vyahriti, whatever one or two thinkers may have held to the contrary. What do we know of this Mahas from Vedantic or later sources? Bhuh, Bhuvah, Swar of the Veda rest substantially upon the Annam, Prana, Manas, matter, life & mind of the Upanishads. But the Upanishads speak of a fourth state of being immediately above Manas, preceding it therefore & containing it, Vijnanam, ideal knowledge, and a fifth immediately above Vijnanam, Ananda or Bliss. Physically, these five are the pancha kshitayah, five earths or dwelling-places, of the Rig Veda and they are the pancha koshas, five sheaths or bodies of the Upanishads." (130-31)

"Objectively vijnana becomes mahat, the great, wide or extended state of phenomenal being, – called also brihat, likewise signifying vast or great, – into which says the Gita, the Self or Lord casts his seed as into a womb in order to engender all these objects & creatures. The Self, standing in vijnanam or mahat, is called the Mahan Atma, the great Self;

so that, if we apply the significance [of] these terms to the Vedic words mah, mahas, mahi, mahán, then, even accepting mahas as an adjective and maho arnas in the sense of the great Ocean, it may very well be the ocean of the ideal or pure ideative state of existence in true knowledge which is intended, the great ocean slumbering in our humanity and awakened by the divine inspiration of Saraswati." (131-32)

### *b. The Aswins*

"The Aswins, then, are the gods of youthful delight & youthful strength, yuváná pitará, always young yet fathers of men, (purudansasá, abundantly creating), as they are described in another sukta. They have a brilliant strength mental & physical, narás, a bright, strong & eager understanding, śavírayá dhiyá, full hands of bounty and strong fertility of creation, dasrá, purudansasá; an insatiable enjoyment, purubhujá; a swift speed and fiery energy in action, dravatpáni rudravartaní; they are the lords of bliss who give physical, vital & mental well-being to men and that inferior ease, pleasure and delight they lift into the high regions of the original & luminous Ananda supported on the ritam jyotih of Mahas of which all these things are but pallid & broken rays penetrating into this lower play of subjective light & shade which is called the triple world. Because of this double aspect of delight and the force for action & knowledge which is given by delight, of force and the delight in action & enjoyment which is sustained by force, they are twin gods and not one…" (143-44)

"Eternal youth is the essence of their character & the bestowal, maintenance, & increase in men of the gifts which attend youth, is their function." (144)

### *c. The Visvadevas: The All-Gods*

"We are accustomed to speak of the Visvadevas as if they were a separate class of deities, like the Adityas, Maruts or Rudras; but the Veda uses the expression Viśve devásah, which in the absence of any other meaning for viśva, we must render simply "All gods". We shall suppose for the present that when the expression is used, the gods generally and in the mass, whether apart from the great Thirty-three or including them, are invoked, – the gods in their general character as supporters and agents of all internal & external activity, charshanidhritah, without distinction of names or special faculty. A rich and many-sided activity is contemplated; the mass of the divine forces that support the world action in man are summoned to their functions." (155)

"We can now examine the functioning of the Visvadevas as they are revealed to us in these three riks of the ancient Veda: "Come," says the Rishi, "O Visvadevas who in your benignity uphold the activities of men, come, distributing the nectar-offering of the giver. O Visvadevas, swift to effect, come to the nectar-offering, hastening like mornings to the days (or, like lovers to their paramours). O Visvadevas, who stumble not in your work, for you are mighty for all activity and do no hurt, cleave in heart to the sacrifice & be its upbearers." The sense is clear & simple. The kindly gods who support man in his action & development, are to arrive; they are to give abroad the nectar-offering which is now given to them, to pour it out on the world in joy-giving activities of mind or body, for that is the relation of gods & men, as we see in the Gita, giving out whatever is given to them in an abundant mutual helpfulness. Swiftly have they to effect the

many-sided action prepared for them, hastening to the joy of the offering of Ananda as a lover hastens to the joy of his mistress. They will not stumble or fail in any action entrusted to them, for they have full capacity for their great world-functions, nor, for the like reason, will they impair the force of the joy or the strength in the activity by misuse, therefore let them put their hearts into the sacrifice of action and upbear it by this unfaltering strength. Swiftness, variety, intensity, even a fierce intensity of joy & thought & action is the note throughout, but yet a faultless activity, fixed in its variety, unstumbling in its swiftness, not hurting the strength, light & joy by its fierceness or violent expenditure of energy – dhishnya, asridhah, adruhah. That which ensures this steadiness & unfaltering gait, is the control of the mental power which is the agent of the action & the holder of the joy by the understanding. Indra is dhiyeshita. But what will ensure the understanding itself from error & swerving? It is the divine inspiration, Saraswati, rich with mental substance & clearness, who will keep the system purified, uphold sovereignly the Yajna, & illumine all the actions of the understanding, by awakening with the high divine perception, daivyena ketuná, the great sea of ideal knowledge above. For this ideal knowledge, as we shall see, is the satyam, ritam, brihat; it is wide expansion of being & therefore utmost capacity of power, bliss & knowledge; it is the unobscured light of direct & unerring truth, and it is the unstumbling, unswerving fixity of spontaneous Right & Law.

We have gathered much from this brief hymn, one of the deepest in thought in the Veda. If our construction is correct, then this at least appears that the Veda is no loose,

empty & tawdry collection of vague images & shallow superstitions, but there are some portions of it at least which present a clear, well-knit writing full of meaning & stored with ideas." (158-60)

"The gods of the Veda have a clear & fixed personality & functions & its conceptions are founded on a fairly advanced knowledge & theory at least of our subjective nature." (160)

### 14. The History of the Veda: A Paradoxical Phenomenon 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." (166-67)

### *a. How Vedas Ceased to be an Active Pivot of Indian 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." (167-68)

"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." (168-69)

### *b. Sri Aurobindo's Approach and Interpretation of the Veda*

"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 Vedawas 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.

It is therefore a Vedantic or even what would nowadays be termed a theosophic interpretation of the Veda which in this book I propose to establish. 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." (170-72)

### *c. The Double Sense of the Veda*

"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." (179-80)

'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 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." (182-83)

### *d. The Phenomenon of 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." (186-87)

### *e. The Falsity of the Western Scholars' Findings on Aryan invasion and Aryan Culture*

"There is no more glaring instance of the conjectural and unsubstantial nature of these pseudo-Sciences than the results of Ethnology which yet claims to deduce its results from fixed and certain physical tests and data. 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 & unAryan 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." (188-89)

### *f. The Fanciful European Sciences*

"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." (189-90)

### *g. The Utter Falsity of the Western Theories on the North-South Racial Division in India*

"The Aryan theory rests on the ingenious assumption that anarya, dasyu or dasa in the Veda refer to the unfortunate indigenous races who by a familiar modern device were dubbed robbers & dacoits because they were guilty of defending their country against the invaders & Arya is a national term for the invaders who called themselves, according to Max Muller, the Ploughmen, and according to others, the Noble Race. The elaborate picture of an early culture & history that accompanies and supports this theory rests equally on new interpretations of Vedic words and riks in which with the progress of scholarship the authority of Sayana and Yaska has been more & more set at nought and discredited. 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." (191)

**RNI NO. RAJENG/2002/09480**

**Form IV (see rule 8)**

*Statement about the ownership and other particulars about the newspaper* ***"The Real Awakener"*** *to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Place of publication: | The Resurgent India Trust,<br>Mira Ambika Bhawan, Khetan Mohalla,<br>Jhunuhunu - 333001, Rajasthan |
| 2. | Periodicity of its publication: | Quarterly |
| 3. | Printer's name: | Pankaj Bagaria |
| | Nationality: | Indian |
| | Address: | The Resurgent India Trust,<br>Mira Ambika Bhawan, Khetan Mohalla,<br>Jhunuhunu - 333001, Rajasthan |
| 4. | Publisher's Name: | Pankaj Bagaria |
| | Nationality: | Indian |
| | Address: | The Resurgent India Trust,<br>Mira Ambika Bhawan, Khetan Mohalla,<br>Jhunuhunu - 333001, Rajasthan |
| 5. | Editor's Name: | Anjana Dharnidharka |
| | Nationality: | Indian |
| | Address: | Khetan House, 7, Jodhamal Road,<br>Haridwar (Uttaranchal) |
| 6. | Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital: | |

I, Pankaj Bagaria, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

February 2022 (sd) Pankaj Bagaria

**Price : Rs. 65/-** Signature of Publisher