The Real Awakener

The Light of Lights

Words of Sri Aurobindo – 33

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The Secret of the Veda, Remains Still a Secret

"To enter into the very heart of the mystic doctrine, we must ourselves have trod the ancient paths and renewed the lost discipline, the forgotten experience. And which of us can hope to do that with any depth or living power? Who in this Age of Iron shall have the strength to recover the light of the Forefathers or soar above the two enclosing firmaments of mind and body into their luminous empyrean of the infinite Truth? The Rishis sought to conceal their knowledge from the unfit, believing perhaps that the corruption of the best might lead to the worst and fearing to give the potent wine of the Soma to the child and the weakling. But whether their spirits still move among us looking for the rare Aryan soul in a mortality that is content to leave the radiant herds of the Sun for ever imprisoned in the darkling cave of the Lords of the sense-life or whether they await in their luminous world the hour when the Maruts shall again drive abroad and the Hound of Heaven shall once again speed down to us from beyond the rivers of Paradise and the seals of the heavenly waters shall be broken and the caverns shall be rent and the immortalising wine shall be pressed out in the body of man by the electric thunderstones, their secret remains safe to them. Small is the chance that in an age which blinds our eyes with the transient glories of the outward life and deafens our ears with the victorious trumpets of a material and mechanical knowledge many shall cast more than the eye of an intellectual and imaginative curiosity on the passwords of their ancient discipline or seek to penetrate into the heart of their radiant mysteries. The secret of the Veda, even when it has been unveiled, remains still a secret." (368-69)

Selections from the Secret of the Veda (CWSA 15)

1. Sri Aurobindo's Translation of the Veda

"To translate the Veda is to border upon an attempt at the impossible. For while a literal English rendering of the hymns of the ancient Illuminates would be a falsification of their sense and spirit, a version which aimed at bringing all the real thought to the surface would be an interpretation rather than a translation. I have essayed a sort of middle path, – a free and plastic form which shall follow the turns of the original and yet admit a certain number of interpretative devices sufficient for the light of the Vedic truth to gleam out from its veil of symbol and image.

The Veda is a book of esoteric symbols, almost of spiritual formulae, which masks itself as a collection of ritual poems. The inner sense is psychological, universal, impersonal; the ostensible significance and the figures which were meant to reveal to the initiates what they concealed from the ignorant, are to all appearance crudely concrete, intimately personal, loosely occasional and allusive. To this lax outer garb the Vedic poets are sometimes careful to give a clear and coherent form quite other than the strenuous inner soul of their meaning; their language then becomes a cunningly woven mask for hidden truths. More often they are negligent of the disguise which they use, and when they thus rise above their instrument, a literal and external translation gives either a bizarre, unconnected sequence of sentences or a form of thought and speech strange and remote to the uninitiated intelligence. It is only when the figures and symbols are made to suggest their concealed equivalents that there emerges out of the obscurity a transparent and well-linked though close and subtle sequence of spiritual, psychological and religious ideas. It is this method of suggestion that I have attempted.

It would have been possible to present a literal version on condition of following it up by pages of commentary charged

with the real sense of the words and the hidden message of the thought. But this would be a cumbrous method useful only to the scholar and the careful student. Some form of the sense was needed which would compel only so much pause of the intelligence over its object as would be required by any mystic and figurative poetry. To bring about such a form it is not enough to translate the Sanskrit word into the English; the significant name, the conventional figure, the symbolic image have also frequently to be rendered.

If the images preferred by the ancient sages had been such as the modern mind could easily grasp, if the symbols of the sacrifice were still familiar to us and the names of the Vedic gods still carried their old psychological significance, – as the Greek or Latin names of classical deities, Aphrodite or Ares, Venus or Minerva, still bear their sense for a cultured European, – the device of an interpretative translation could have been avoided. But India followed another curve of literary and religious development than the culture of the West. Other names of Gods have replaced the Vedic names or else these have remained but with only an external and diminished significance; the Vedic ritual, well-nigh obsolete, has lost its profound symbolic meaning; the pastoral, martial and rural images of the early Aryan poets sound remote, inappropriate, or, if natural and beautiful, yet void of the old deeper significance to the imagination of their descendants. Confronted with the stately hymns of the ancient dawn, we are conscious of a blank incomprehension. And we leave them as a prey to the ingenuity of the scholar who gropes for forced meanings amid obscurities and incongruities where the ancients bathed their souls in harmony and light.

A few examples will show what the gulf is and how it was created. When we write in a recognised and conventional imagery, "Laxmi and Saraswati refuse to dwell under one roof", the European reader may need a note or a translation of the phrase into its plain unfigured thought, "Wealth and Learning seldom go together", before he can understand, but

every Indian already possesses the sense of the phrase. But if another culture and religion had replaced the Puranic and Brahminical and the old books and the Sanskrit language had ceased to be read and understood, this now familiar phrase would have been as meaningless in India as in Europe. Some infallible commentator or ingenious scholar might have been proving to our entire satisfaction that Laxmi was the Dawn and Saraswati the Night or that they were two irreconcilable chemical substances – or one knows not what else! It is something of this kind that has overtaken the ancient clarities of the Veda; the sense is dead and only the obscurity of a forgotten poetic form remains. Therefore when we read "Sarama by the path of the Truth discovers the herds", the mind is stopped and baffled by an unfamiliar language. It has to be translated to us, like the phrase about Saraswati to the European, into a plainer and less figured thought, "Intuition by the way of the Truth arrives at the hidden illuminations." Lacking the clue, we wander into ingenuities about the Dawn and the Sun or even imagine in Sarama, the hound of heaven, a mythological personification of some prehistoric embassy to Dravidian nations for the recovery of plundered cattle!

And the whole of the Veda is conceived in such images. The resultant obscurity and confusion for our intelligence is appalling and it will be at once evident how useless would be any translation of the hymns which did not strive at the same time to be an interpretation. "Dawn and Night," runs an impressive Vedic verse, "two sisters of different forms but of one mind, suckle the same divine Child." We understand nothing. Dawn and Night are of different forms, but why of one mind? And who is the child? If it is Agni, the fire, what are we to understand by Dawn and Night suckling alternately an infant fire? But the Vedic poet is not thinking of the physical night, the physical dawn or the physical fire. He is thinking of the alternations in his own spiritual experience, its constant rhythm of periods of a sublime and golden illumination and other periods of obscuration or relapse into normal

unillumined consciousness and he confesses the growth of the infant strength of the divine life within him through all these alternations and even by the very force of their regular vicissitude. For in both states there works, hidden or manifest, the same divine intention and the same high-reaching labour. Thus an image which to the Vedic mind was clear, luminous, subtle, profound, striking, comes to us void of sense or poor and incoherent in sense and therefore affects us as inflated and pretentious, the ornament of an inapt and bungling literary craftsmanship.

So too when the seer of the house of Atri cries high to Agni, "O Agni, O Priest of the offering, loose from us the cords," he is using not only a natural, but a richly-laden image. He is thinking of the triple cord of mind, nerves and body by which the soul is bound as a victim in the great world-sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Purusha; he is thinking of the force of the divine Will already awakened and at work within him, a fiery and irresistible godhead that shall uplift his oppressed divinity and cleave asunder the cords of its bondage; he is thinking of the might of that growing Strength and inner Flame which receiving all that he has to offer carries it to its own distant and difficult home, to the high-seated Truth, to the Far, to the Secret, to the Supreme. All these associations are lost to us; our minds are obsessed by ideas of a ritual sacrifice and a material cord. We imagine perhaps the son of Atri bound as a victim in an ancient barbaric sacrifice, crying to the god of Fire for a physical deliverance!

A little later the seer sings of the increasing Flame, "Agni shines wide with vast Light and makes all things manifest by his greatness." What are we to understand? Shall we suppose that the singer released from his bonds, one knows not how, is admiring tranquilly the great blaze of the sacrificial fire which was to have devoured him and wonder at the rapid transitions of the primitive mind? It is only when we discover that the "vast Light" was a fixed phrase in the language of the Mystics for a wide, free and luminous consciousness beyond mind,

that we seize the true burden of the Rik. The seer is hymning his release from the triple cord of mind, nerves and body and the uprising of the knowledge and will within him to a plane of consciousness where the real truth of all things transcendent of their apparent truth becomes at length manifest in a vast illumination.

But how are we to bring home this profound, natural and inner sense to the minds of others in a translation? It cannot be done unless we translate interpretatively, "O Will, O Priest of our sacrifice, loose from us the cords of our bondage" and "this Flame shines out with the vast Light of the Truth and makes all things manifest by its greatness." The reader will then at least be able to seize the spiritual nature of the cord, the light, the flame; he will feel something of the sense and spirit of this ancient chant.

The method I have employed will be clear from these instances. I have sometimes thrown aside the image, but not so as to demolish the whole structure of the outer symbol or to substitute a commentary for a translation. It would have been an undesirable violence to strip from the richly jewelled garb of the Vedic thought its splendid ornaments or to replace it by a coarse garment of common speech. But I have endeavoured to make it everywhere as transparent as possible. I have rendered the significant names of the Gods, Kings, Rishis by their half-concealed significances, – otherwise the mask would have remained impenetrable; where the image was unessential, I have sometimes sacrificed it for its psychological equivalent; where it influenced the colour of the surrounding words, I have sought for some phrase which would keep the figure and yet bring out its whole complexity of sense. Sometimes I have even used a double translation. Thus for the Vedic word which means at once light or ray and cow, I have given according to the circumstances "Light", "the radiances", "the shining herds", "the radiant kine", "Light, mother of the herds". Soma, the ambrosial wine of the Veda, has been rendered "wine of delight" or "wine of immortality".

The Vedic language as a whole is a powerful and remarkable instrument, terse, knotted, virile, packed, and in its turns careful rather to follow the natural flight of the thought in the mind than to achieve the smooth and careful constructions and the clear transitions of a logical and rhetorical syntax. But translated without modification into English such a language would become harsh, abrupt and obscure, a dead and heavy movement with nothing in it of the morning vigour and puissant stride of the original. I have therefore preferred to throw it in translation into a mould more plastic and natural to the English tongue, using the constructions and devices of transition which best suit a modern speech while preserving the logic of the original thought; and I have never hesitated to reject the bald dictionary equivalent of the Vedic word for an ampler phrase in the English where that was necessary to bring out the full sense and associations. Throughout I have kept my eye fixed on my primary object – to make the inner sense of the Veda seizable by the cultured intelligence of today." (363-68)

2. The Doctrine of the Mystics

"The doctrine of the Mystics recognises an Unknowable, Timeless and Unnameable behind and above all things and not seizable by the studious pursuit of the mind. Impersonally, it is That, the One Existence; to the pursuit of our personality it reveals itself out of the secrecy of things as the God or Deva, – nameless though he has many names, immeasurable and beyond description, though he holds in himself all description of name and knowledge and all measures of form and substance, force and activity.

The Deva or Godhead is both the original cause and the final result. Divine Existent, builder of the worlds, lord and begetter of all things, Male and Female, Being and Consciousness, Father and Mother of the Worlds and their inhabitants, he is also their Son and ours: for he is the Divine Child born into the Worlds who manifests himself in the growth of the creature.

He is Rudra and Vishnu, Prajapati and Hiranyagarbha, Surya, Agni, Indra, Vayu, Soma, Brihaspati, – Varuna and Mitra and Bhaga and Aryaman, all the gods. He is the wise, mighty and liberating Son born from our works and our sacrifice, the Hero in our warfare and Seer of our knowledge, the White Steed in the front of our days who gallops towards the upper Ocean.

The soul of man soars as the Bird, the Hansa, past the shining firmaments of physical and mental consciousness, climbs as the traveller and fighter beyond earth of body and heaven of mind by the ascending path of the Truth to find this Godhead waiting for us, leaning down to us from the secrecy of the highest supreme where it is seated in the triple divine Principle and the source of the Beatitude. The Deva is indeed, whether attracting and exalted there or here helpful to us in the person of the greater Gods, always the Friend and Lover of man, the pastoral Master of the Herds who gives us the sweet milk and the clarified butter from the udder of the shining Cow of the infinitude. He is the source and outpourer of the ambrosial Wine of divine delight and we drink it drawn from the sevenfold waters of existence or pressed out from the luminous plant on the hill of being and uplifted by its raptures we become immortal.

Such are some of the images of this ancient mystic adoration.

The Godhead has built this universe in a complex system of worlds which we find both within us and without, subjectively cognised and objectively sensed. It is a rising tier of earths and heavens; it is a stream of diverse waters; it is a Light of seven rays, or of eight or nine or ten; it is a Hill of many plateaus. The seers often image it in a series of trios; there are three earths and three heavens. More, there is a triple world below, – Heaven, Earth and the intervening mid-region; a triple world between, the shining heavens of the Sun; a triple world above, the supreme and rapturous abodes of the Godhead.

But other principles intervene and make the order of the

worlds yet more complex. These principles are psychological; for since all creation is a formation of the Spirit, every external system of worlds must in each of its planes be in material correspondence with some power or rising degree of consciousness of which it is the objective symbol and must house a kindred internal order of things. To understand the Veda we must seize this Vedic parallelism and distinguish the cosmic gradations to which it leads. We rediscover the same system behind the later Puranic symbols and it is thence that we can derive its tabulated series most simply and clearly. For there are seven principles of existence and the seven Puranic worlds correspond to them with sufficient precision, thus: –

Principle	*World*
1. Pure Existence – Sat	World of the highest truth of being (Satyaloka)
2. Pure Consciousness – Chit	World of infinite Will or conscious force (Tapoloka)
3. Pure Bliss – Ananda	World of creative delight of existence (Janaloka)
4. Knowledge or Truth – Vijnana	World of the Vastness (Maharloka)
5. Mind	World of light (Swar)
6. Life (nervous being)	Worlds of various becoming (Bhuvar)
7. Matter	The material world (Bhur)

Now this system which in the Purana is simple enough, is a good deal more intricate in the Veda. There the three highest worlds are classed together as the triple divine Principle, – for they dwell always together in a Trinity; infinity is their scope, bliss is their foundation. They are supported by the vast regions of the Truth whence a divine Light radiates out

towards our mentality in the three heavenly luminous worlds of Swar, the domain of Indra. Below is ranked the triple system in which we live.

We have the same cosmic gradations as in the Puranas but they are differently grouped, – seven worlds in principle, five in practice, three in their general groupings:

1. The Supreme Sat-Chit-Ananda — The triple divine worlds
2. The Link-World
   Supermind — The Truth, Right, Vast, manifested in Swar, with its three luminous heavens
3. The triple lower world
   - Pure Mind — Heaven (Dyaus, the three heavens)
   - Life-force — The Mid-Region (Antariksha)
   - Matter — Earth (the three earths)

And as each principle can be modified by the subordinate manifestation of the others within it, each world is divisible into several provinces according to different arrangements and self-orderings of its creative light of consciousness. Into this framework, then, we must place all the complexities of the subtle vision and fertile imagery of the seers down to the hundred cities which are now in the possession of the hostile kings, the Lords of division and evil. But the gods shall break them open and give them for his free possession to the Aryan worshipper!

But where are these worlds and whence are they created? Here we have one of the profoundest ideas of the Vedic sages. Man dwells in the bosom of the Earth-Mother and is aware of this world of mortality only; but there is a superconscient high beyond where the divine worlds are seated in a luminous secrecy; there is a subconscient or inconscient below his surface

waking impressions and from that pregnant Night the worlds as he sees them are born. And these other worlds between the luminous upper and the tenebrous lower ocean? They are here. Man draws from the life-world his vital being, from the mind-world his mentality; he is ever in secret communication with them; he can consciously enter into them, be born into them, if he will. Even into the solar worlds of the Truth he can rise, enter the portals of the Superconscient, cross the threshold of the Supreme. The divine doors shall swing open to his increasing soul.

This human ascension is possible because every being really holds in himself all that his outward vision perceives as if external to him. We have subjective faculties hidden in us which correspond to all the tiers and strata of the objective cosmic system and these form for us so many planes of our possible existence. This material life and our narrowly limited consciousness of the physical world are far from being the sole experience permitted to man, – be he a thousand times the Son of Earth. If maternal Earth bore him and retains him in her arms, yet is Heaven also one of his parents and has a claim on his being. It is open to him to become awake to profounder depths and higher heights within and such awakening is his intended progress. And as he mounts thus to higher and ever higher planes of himself, new worlds open to his life and his vision and become the field of his experience and the home of his spirit. He lives in contact and union with their powers and godheads and remoulds himself in their image. Each ascent is thus a new birth of the soul, and the Veda calls the worlds "births" as well as seats and dwelling-places.

For as the Gods have built the series of the cosmic worlds, even so they labour to build up the same series of ordered states and ascending degrees in man's consciousness from the mortal condition to the crowning immortality. They raise him from the limited material state of being in which our lowest manhood dwells contented and subject to the Lords of Division, give him a life rich and abundant with the many

and rapid shocks and impulsions from the dynamic worlds of Life and Desire where the Gods battle with the demons and raise him yet higher from those troubled rapidities and intensities into the steadfast purity and clarity of the high mental existence. For pure thought and feeling are man's sky, his heaven; this whole vitalistic existence of emotion, passions, affections of which desire is the pivot, forms for him a mid-world; body and material living are his earth.

But pure thought and pure psychic state are not the highest height of the human ascension. The home of the Gods is an absolute Truth which lives in solar glories beyond mind. Man ascending thither strives no longer as the thinker but is victoriously the seer; he is no longer this mental creature but a divine being. His will, life, thought, emotion, sense, act are all transformed into values of an all-puissant Truth and remain no longer an embarrassed or a helpless tangle of mixed truth and falsehood. He moves lamely no more in our narrow and grudging limits but ranges in the unobstructed Vast; toils and zigzags no longer amid these crookednesses, but follows a swift and conquering straightness; feeds no longer on broken fragments, but is suckled by the teats of Infinity. Therefore he has to break through and out beyond these firmaments of earth and heaven; conquering firm possession of the solar worlds, entering on to his highest Height he has to learn how to dwell in the triple principle of Immortality.

This contrast of the mortality we are and the immortal condition to which we can aspire is the key of the Vedic thought and practice. Veda is the earliest gospel we have of man's immortality and these ancient stanzas conceal the primitive discipline of its inspired discoverers.

Substance of being, light of consciousness, active force and possessive delight are the constituent principles of existence; but their combination in us may be either limited, divided, hurt, broken and obscure or infinite, enlightened, vast, whole and unhurt. Limited and divided being is ignorance;

it is darkness and weakness, it is grief and pain; in the Vast, in the integral, in the infinite we must seek for the desirable riches of substance, light, force and joy. Limitation is mortality; immortality comes to us as an accomplished self-possession in the infinite and the power to live and move in firm vastnesses. Therefore it is in proportion as he widens and on condition that he increases constantly in substance of his being, brightens an ever loftier flame of will and vaster light of knowledge, advances the boundaries of his consciousness, raises the degrees and enlarges the breadth of his power, force and strength, confirms an intenser beatitude of joy and liberates his soul into immeasurable peace that man becomes capable of immortality.

To widen is to acquire new births. The aspiring material creature becomes the straining vital man; he in turn transmutes himself into the subtle mental and psychical being; this subtle thinker grows into the wide, multiple and cosmic man open on all sides of him to all the multitudinous inflowings of the Truth; the cosmic soul rising in attainment strives as the spiritual man for a higher peace, joy and harmony. These are the five Aryan types, each of them a great people occupying its own province or state of the total human nature. But there is also the absolute Aryan who would conquer and pass beyond these states to the transcendental harmony of them all.

It is the supramental Truth that is the instrument of this great inner transfiguration. That replaces mentality by luminous vision and the eye of the gods, mortal life by breath and force of the infinite existence, obscure and death-possessed substance by the free and immortal conscious-being. The progress of man must be therefore, first, his self-expanding into a puissant vitality capable of sustaining all vibrations of action and experience and a clear mental and psychical purity; secondly, an outgrowing of this human light and power and its transmutation into an infinite Truth and an immortal Will.

Our normal life and consciousness are a dark or at best a

starlit Night. Dawn comes by the arising of the Sun of that higher Truth and with Dawn there comes the effective sacrifice. By the sacrifice the Dawn itself and the lost Sun are constantly conquered out of the returning Night and the luminous herds rescued from the darkling cave of the Panis; by the sacrifice the rain of the abundance of heaven is poured out for us and the sevenfold waters of the higher existence descend impetuously upon our earth because the coils of the obscuring Python, the all-enfolding and all-withholding Vritra, have been cloven asunder by the God-Mind's flashing lightnings; in the sacrifice the Soma wine is distilled and uplifts us on the stream of its immortalising ecstasy to the highest heavens.

Our sacrifice is the offering of all our gains and works to the powers of the higher existence. The whole world is a dumb and helpless sacrifice in which the soul is bound as a victim self-offered to unseen Gods. The liberating Word must be found, the illuminating hymn must be framed in the heart and mind of man and his life must be turned into a conscious and voluntary offering in which the soul is no longer the victim, but the master of the sacrifice. By right sacrifice and by the all-creative and all-expressive Word that shall arise out of his depths as a sublime hymn to the Gods man can achieve all things. He shall conquer his perfection; Nature shall come to him as a willing and longing bride; he shall become her seer and rule her as her King.

By the hymn of prayer and God-attraction, by the hymn of praise and God-affirmation, by the hymn of God-attainment and self-expression man can house in himself the Gods, build in this gated house of his being the living image of their deity, grow into divine births, form within himself vast and luminous worlds for his soul to inhabit. By the word of the Truth the all-engendering Surya creates; by that rhythm Brahmanaspati evokes the worlds and Twashtri fashions them; finding the all-puissant Word in his intuitive heart, shaping it in his mind the human thinker, the mortal creature can create in himself all the forms, all the states and conditions he desires and, achieving,

can conquer for himself all wealth of being, light, strength and enjoyment. He builds up his integral being and aids his gods to destroy the evil armies; the hosts of his spiritual enemies are slain who have divided, torn and afflicted his nature.

The image of this sacrifice is sometimes that of a journey or voyage; for it travels, it ascends; it has a goal – the vastness, the true existence, the light, the felicity – and it is called upon to discover and keep the good, the straight and the happy path to the goal, the arduous, yet joyful road of the Truth. It has to climb, led by the flaming strength of the divine Will, from plateau to plateau as of a mountain, it has to cross as in a ship the waters of existence, traverse its rivers, overcome their deep pits and rapid currents; its aim is to arrive at the far-off ocean of light and infinity.

And this is no easy or peaceful march; it is for long seasons a fierce and relentless battle. Constantly the Aryan man has to labour and to fight and conquer; he must be a tireless toiler and traveller and a stern warrior, he must force open and storm and sack city after city, win kingdom after kingdom, overthrow and tread down ruthlessly enemy after enemy. His whole progress is a warring of Gods and Titans, Gods and Giants, Indra and the Python, Aryan and Dasyu. Aryan adversaries even he has to face in the open field; for old friends and helpers turn into enemies; the kings of Aryan states he would conquer and overpass join themselves to the Dasyus and are leagued against him in supreme battle to prevent his free and utter passing on.

But the Dasyu is the natural enemy. These dividers, plunderers, harmful powers, these Danavas, sons of the Mother of division, are spoken of by the Rishis under many general appellations. There are Rakshasas; there are Eaters and Devourers, Wolves and Tearers; there are hurters and haters; there are dualisers; there are confiners or censurers. But we are given also many specific names. Vritra, the Serpent, is the grand Adversary; for he obstructs with his coils of darkness

all possibility of divine existence and divine action. And even when Vritra is slain by the light, fiercer enemies arise out of him. Shushna afflicts us with his impure and ineffective force, Namuchi fights man by his weaknesses, and others too assail, each with his proper evil. Then there are Vala and the Panis, miser traffickers in the sense-life, stealers and concealers of the higher Light and its illuminations which they can only darken and misuse, – an impious host who are jealous of their store and will not offer sacrifice to the Gods. These and other personalities – they are much more than personifications – of our ignorance, evil, weakness and many limitations make constant war upon man; they encircle him from near or they shoot their arrows at him from afar or even dwell in his gated house in the place of the Gods and with their shapeless stammering mouths and their insufficient breath of force mar his self-expression. They must be expelled, overpowered, slain, thrust down into their nether darkness by the aid of the mighty and helpful deities.

The Vedic deities are names, powers, personalities of the universal Godhead and they represent each some essential puissance of the Divine Being. They manifest the cosmos and are manifest in it. Children of Light, Sons of the Infinite, they recognise in the soul of man their brother and ally and desire to help and increase him by themselves increasing in him so as to possess his world with their light, strength and beauty. The Gods call man to a divine companionship and alliance; they attract and uplift him to their luminous fraternity, invite his aid and offer theirs against the Sons of Darkness and Division. Man in return calls the Gods to his sacrifice, offers to them his swiftnesses and his strengths, his clarities and his sweetnesses, – milk and butter of the shining Cow, distilled juices of the Plant of Joy, the Horse of the Sacrifice, the cake and the wine, the grain for the God-Mind's radiant coursers. He receives them into his being and their gifts into his life, increases them by the hymn and the wine and forms perfectly – as a smith forges iron, says the Veda – their great and luminous godheads.

All this Vedic imagery is easy to understand when once we have the key, but it must not be mistaken for mere imagery. The Gods are not simply poetical personifications of abstract ideas or of psychological and physical functions of Nature. To the Vedic seers they are living realities; the vicissitudes of the human soul represent a cosmic struggle not merely of principles and tendencies but of the cosmic Powers which support and embody them. These are the Gods and the Demons. On the world-stage and in the individual soul the same real drama with the same personages is enacted.

To what gods shall the sacrifice be offered? Who shall be invoked to manifest and protect in the human being this increasing godhead?

Agni first, for without him the sacrificial flame cannot burn on the altar of the soul. That flame of Agni is the seven-tongued power of the Will, a Force of God instinct with knowledge. This conscious and forceful will is the immortal guest in our mortality, a pure priest and a divine worker, the mediator between earth and heaven. It carries what we offer to the higher Powers and brings back in return their force and light and joy into our humanity.

Indra, the Puissant next, who is the power of pure Existence self-manifested as the Divine Mind. As Agni is one pole of Force instinct with knowledge that sends its current upward from earth to heaven, so Indra is the other pole of Light instinct with force which descends from heaven to earth. He comes down into our world as the Hero with the shining horses and slays darkness and division with his lightnings, pours down the life-giving heavenly waters, finds in the trace of the hound, Intuition, the lost or hidden illuminations, makes the Sun of Truth mount high in the heaven of our mentality.

Surya, the Sun, is the master of that supreme Truth, – truth of being, truth of knowledge, truth of process and act and movement and functioning. He is therefore the creator or rather the manifester of all things – for creation is outbringing,

expression by the Truth and Will – and the father, fosterer, enlightener of our souls. The illuminations we seek are the herds of this Sun who comes to us in the track of the divine Dawn and releases and reveals in us night-hidden world after world up to the highest Beatitude.

Of that beatitude Soma is the representative deity. The wine of his ecstasy is concealed in the growths of earth, in the waters of existence; even here in our physical being are his immortalising juices and they have to be pressed out and offered to all the gods; for in that strength these shall increase and conquer.

Each of these primary deities has others associated with him who fulfil functions that arise from his own. For if the truth of Surya is to be established firmly in our mortal nature, there are previous conditions that are indispensable; a vast purity and clear wideness destructive of all sin and crooked falsehood, – and this is Varuna; a luminous power of love and comprehension leading and forming into harmony all our thoughts, acts and impulses, – this is Mitra; an immortal puissance of clear-discerning aspiration and endeavour, – this is Aryaman; a happy spontaneity of the right enjoyment of all things dispelling the evil dream of sin and error and suffering, – this is Bhaga. These four are powers of the Truth of Surya.

For the whole bliss of Soma to be established perfectly in our nature a happy and enlightened and unmaimed condition of mind, vitality and body are necessary. This condition is given to us by the twin Ashwins; wedded to the daughter of Light, drinkers of honey, bringers of perfect satisfactions, healers of maim and malady they occupy our parts of knowledge and parts of action and prepare our mental, vital and physical being for an easy and victorious ascension.

Indra, the Divine Mind, as the shaper of mental forms has for his assistants, his artisans, the Ribhus, human powers who by the work of sacrifice and their brilliant ascension to the high dwelling-place of the Sun have attained to immortality

and help mankind to repeat their achievement. They shape by the mind Indra's horses, the Ashwins' chariot, the weapons of the Gods, all the means of the journey and the battle. But as giver of the Light of truth and as Vritra-slayer Indra is aided by the Maruts, who are powers of will and nervous or vital Force that have attained to the light of thought and the voice of self-expression. They are behind all thought and speech as its impellers and they battle towards the Light, Truth and Bliss of the supreme Consciousness.

There are also female energies; for the Deva is both Male and Female and the gods also are either activising souls or passively executive and methodising energies. Aditi, infinite Mother of the gods, comes first; and there are besides five powers of the Truth-consciousness, – Mahi or Bharati, the vast Word that brings us all things out of the divine source; Ila, the strong primal word of the Truth who gives us its active vision; Saraswati, its streaming current and the word of its inspiration; Sarama, the Intuition, hound of heaven who descends into the cavern of the subconscient and finds there the concealed illuminations; Dakshina, whose function is to discern rightly, dispose the action and the offering and distribute in the sacrifice to each godhead its portion. Each god, too, has his female energy.

All this action and struggle and ascension is supported by Heaven our Father and Earth our Mother, Parents of the Gods, who sustain respectively the purely mental and psychic and the physical consciousness. Their large and free scope is the condition of our achievement. Vayu, Master of life, links them together by the mid-air, the region of vital force. And there are other deities, – Parjanya, giver of the rain of heaven; Dadhikravan, the divine war-horse, a power of Agni; the mystic Dragon of the Foundations; Trita Aptya who on the third plane of existence consummates our triple being; and more besides.

The development of all these godheads is necessary to

our perfection. And that perfection must be attained on all our levels, – in the wideness of earth, our physical being and consciousness; in the full force of vital speed and action and enjoyment and nervous vibration, typified as the Horse which must be brought forward to upbear our endeavour; in the perfect gladness of the heart of emotion and a brilliant heat and clarity of the mind throughout our intellectual and psychical being; in the coming of the supramental Light, the Dawn and the Sun and the shining Mother of the herds, to transform all our existence; for so comes to us the possession of the Truth, by the Truth the admirable surge of the Bliss, in the Bliss infinite Consciousness of absolute being.

Three great Gods, origin of the Puranic Trinity, largest puissances of the supreme Godhead, make possible this development and upward evolution; they support in its grand lines and fundamental energies all these complexities of the cosmos. Brahmanaspati is the Creator; by the word, by his cry he creates, – that is to say, he expresses, he brings out all existence and conscious knowledge and movement of life and eventual forms from the darkness of the Inconscient. Rudra, the Violent and Merciful, the Mighty One, presides over the struggle of life to affirm itself; he is the armed, wrathful and beneficent Power of God who lifts forcibly the creation upward, smites all that opposes, scourges all that errs and resists, heals all that is wounded and suffers and complains and submits. Vishnu of the vast pervading motion holds in his triple stride all these worlds; it is he that makes a wide room for the action of Indra in our limited mortality; it is by him and with him that we rise into his highest seats where we find waiting for us the Friend, the Beloved, the Beatific Godhead.

Our earth shaped out of the dark inconscient ocean of existence lifts its high formations and ascending peaks heavenward; heaven of mind has its own formations, clouds that give out their lightnings and their waters of life; the streams of the clarity and the honey ascend out of the subconscient ocean below and seek the superconscient ocean

above; and from above that ocean sends downward its rivers of the light and truth and bliss even into our physical being. Thus in images of physical Nature the Vedic poets sing the hymn of our spiritual ascension.

That ascension has already been effected by the Ancients, the human forefathers, and the spirits of these great Ancestors still assist their offspring; for the new dawns repeat the old and lean forward in light to join the dawns of the future. Kanwa, Kutsa, Atri, Kakshiwan, Gotama, Shunahshepa have become types of certain spiritual victories which tend to be constantly repeated in the experience of humanity. The seven sages, the Angirasas, are waiting still and always, ready to chant the word, to rend the cavern, to find the lost herds, to recover the hidden Sun. Thus the soul is a battlefield full of helpers and hurters, friends and enemies. All this lives, teems, is personal, is conscious, is active. We create for ourselves by the sacrifice and by the word shining seers, heroes to fight for us, children of our works. The Rishis and the Gods find for us our luminous herds; the Ribhus fashion by the mind the chariots of the gods and their horses and their shining weapons. Our life is a horse that neighing and galloping bears us onward and upward; its forces are swift-hooved steeds, the liberated powers of the mind are wide-winging birds; this mental being or this soul is the upsoaring Swan or the Falcon that breaks out from a hundred iron walls and wrests from the jealous guardians of felicity the wine of the Soma. Every shining godward Thought that arises from the secret abysses of the heart is a priest and a creator and chants a divine hymn of luminous realisation and puissant fulfilment. We seek for the shining gold of the Truth; we lust after a heavenly treasure.

The soul of man is a world full of beings, a kingdom in which armies clash to help or hinder a supreme conquest, a house where the gods are our guests and which the demons strive to possess; the fullness of its energies and wideness of its being make a seat of sacrifice spread, arranged and purified for a celestial session.

Such are some of the principal images of the Veda and a very brief and insufficient outline of the teaching of the Forefathers. So understood the Rig Veda ceases to be an obscure, confused and barbarous hymnal; it becomes the high-aspiring Song of Humanity; its chants are episodes of the lyrical epic of the soul in its immortal ascension.

This at least; what more there may be in the Veda of ancient science, lost knowledge, old psycho-physical tradition remains yet to be discovered. " (370-84)

3. Agni, the Divine Will-Force

"The Vedic deity Agni is the first of the Powers, the pristine and preeminent, that have issued from the vast and secret Godhead. By conscious force of the Godhead the worlds have been created and are governed from within by that hidden and inner Control; Agni is the form, the fire, the forceful heat and flaming will of this Divinity. As a flaming Force of knowledge he descends to build up the worlds and seated within them, a secret deity, initiates movement and action. This divine Conscious Force contains all the other godheads in itself as the nave of a wheel contains its spokes. All puissance of action, strength in the being, beauty of form, splendour of light and knowledge, glory and greatness are the manifestation of Agni. And when he is entirely delivered and fulfilled out of the envelope of the world's crookednesses, this deity of flame and force is revealed as the solar godhead of love and harmony and light, Mitra, who leads men towards the Truth.

But in the Vedic cosmos Agni appears first as a front of divine Force compact of burning heat and light which forms, assails, enters into, envelops, devours, rebuilds all things in Matter. He is no random fire; his is a flame of force instinct with the light of divine knowledge. Agni is the seer-will in the universe unerring in all its works. Whatever he does in his passion and power is guided by the light of the silent Truth within him. He is a truth-conscious soul, a seer, a priest and a worker, – the immortal worker in man. His mission is to purify

all that he works upon and to raise up the soul struggling in Nature from obscurity to the light, from the strife and the suffering to love and joy, from the heat and the labour to the peace and the bliss. He is, then, the Will, the Knowledge-Force of the Deva; secret inhabitant of Matter and its forms, visible and beloved guest of man, it is he that guards the law of the Truth of things in the apparent aberrations and confusions of the world. The other gods awake with the Dawn, but Agni wakes also in the Night; he keeps his divine vision even in the darkness where there is neither moon nor star; the flame of the divine will and knowledge is visible even in the densest obscurity of inconscient or half-conscient things. The infallible worker is there even when we see nowhere the conscious light of the guiding mind.

No sacrifice is possible without Agni. He is at once the flame on the altar and the priest of the oblation. When man, awakened from his night, wills to offer his inner and outer activities to the gods of a truer and higher existence and so to arise out of mortality into the far-off immortality, his goal and his desire, it is this flame of upward aspiring Force and Will that he must kindle; into this fire he must cast the sacrifice. For it is this that offers to the gods and brings down in return all spiritual riches, – the divine waters, the light, the strength, the rain of heaven. This calls, this carries the gods to the house of the sacrifice. Agni is the priest man puts in front as his spiritual representative (*purohita*), a Will, a Force greater, higher, more infallible than his own doing for him the works of the sacrifice, purifying the materials of the oblation, offering them to the gods whom it has summoned to the divine ritual, determining the right order and season of its works, conducting the progress, the march of the sacrificial development. These and other various functions of the symbolic priesthood, represented in the outward sacrifice by different officiating priests, are discharged by the single Agni." (387-88)

"Even when Agni emerges, he is outwardly obscure in his

workings. He becomes, first, not a pure Will, though really he is always pure, but a vital Will, the desire of the Life in us, a smoke-obscured flame, son of our crookednesses, a Beast grazing in its pasture, a force of devouring desire that feeds upon earth's growths, tears and ravages all upon which it feeds and leaves a black and charred line to mark its path where there was the joy and glory of earth's woodlands. But in all this there is a work of purification, which becomes conscious for the man of sacrifice. Agni destroys and purifies. His very hunger and desire, infinite in its scope, prepares the establishment of a higher universal order. The smoke of his passion is overcome and this vital Will, this burning desire in the Life becomes the Steed that carries us up to the highest levels, – the white Steed that gallops in the front of the Dawns.

Delivered from his smoke-enveloped activity he burns high in our skies, scales the ether of the pure mind and mounts upon the back of heaven. There on that rarer level its god Trita Aptya takes this high-flaming force and forges it into a weapon of sharpness that shall destroy all evil and ignorance. This Seer-Will becomes the guardian of the illuminations of knowledge – herds of the Sun that graze in the pastures of life secure from the Sons of division and darkness, protected by the warrior force of the Will that knows. He attains the immortality and maintains unhurt its law of truth and joy in the human creature. In the end we overpass all crookednesses of falsehood and error, emerge from the low and broken and devious ground to the straight path and the high and open levels. Will and Knowledge become one; every impulse of the perfected soul becomes conscious of the essential truth of its own self-being, every act fulfils it consciently, joyously, victoriously. Such is the godhead to which the Vedic Fire exalts the Aryan who does the sacrifice. The Immortal conquers in the mortal and by his sacrifice Man, the thinker, fighter, toiler, becomes a seer, self-ruler and king over Nature. " (389-90)

4. The Liberation of the Divine Force

"Nature in her ordinary limited and material workings holds the Divine Force concealed in her secret or subconscient being; only when consciousness enlarges itself towards the One and Infinite, is it manifested, born for the conscient Mind. The clarities of the higher illumination cannot be kept so long as there is not this Strength to guard them, for hostile powers snatch them away and conceal them again in their secret cavern. Divine Will manifested in man, itself liberated, liberates him from the cords which bind him as a victim in the world-sacrifice; we attain to it by the teaching of Indra, the divine Mind, and it protects the uninterrupted play of the Light and destroys the powers of falsehood whose limitations cannot hem in its growth and its out-flaming; it brings the divine waters from the luminous Heaven, the divine wealth liberated from the attacks of the Enemy, and gives the final peace and perfection." (397)

5. A Hymn of Enlargement and Ultimate Aspiration

"A state arrives in which man goes beyond the mere subtlety and fineness of the intelligence and reaches to a rich and manifold largeness of soul. Even then though he has now the wide law of his being which is our right foundation, he needs a force greater than his to lead him; for largeness and multiplicity of soul-force and knowledge are not enough, there must be the divine truth in thought, word and act. For we have to attain beyond the enlarged mental being to the beatitude of a state beyond mind. Agni has the light and the force, the Word and the true impulsion, the embracing knowledge and the achieving power. He shall bring the divine wealth in his chariot and carry us towards the blissful state and the supreme good." (444)

6. Ashwamedha

"The Horse-sacrifice is the offering of the Life-power with all its impulses, desires, enjoyments to the divine existence.

The Life-soul (Dwita) is itself the giver of this sacrifice which it performs when by the power of Agni it attains to vision on its own vital plane, when it becomes, in the figure of the hymn, the illumined seer Ashwamedha."(468)

7. The Honey Wine of the Soma

"The delight extracted from existence is typified by the honey wine of the Soma; it is mixed with the milk, the curds and the grain, the milk being that of the luminous cows, the curds the fixation of their yield in the intellectual mind and the grain the formulation of the light in the force of the physical mind. These symbolic senses are indicated by the double meaning of the words used, go, *dadhi* and *yava*." (468)

8. The Guardians of the Light

(a) Surya, Light and Seer

"The Rig Veda rises out of the ancient Dawn with the sound of a thousand-voiced hymn lifted from the soul of man to an all-creative Truth and an all-illumining Light. Truth and Light are synonymous or equivalent words in the thought of the Vedic seers even as are their opposites, Darkness and Ignorance. The battle of the Vedic Gods and Titans is a perpetual conflict between Day and Night for the possession of the triple world of heaven, mid-air and earth and for the liberation or bondage of the mind, life and body of the human being, his mortality or his immortality. It is waged by the Powers of a supreme Truth and Lords of a supreme Light against other dark Powers who struggle to maintain the foundation of this falsehood in which we dwell and the iron walls of these hundred fortified cities of the Ignorance.

This antinomy between the Light and the Darkness, the Truth and the Falsehood has its roots in an original cosmic antinomy between the illumined Infinite and the darkened finite consciousness. Aditi the infinite, the undivided is the mother of the Gods, Diti or Danu, the division, the separative

consciousness the mother of the Titans; therefore the gods in man move towards light, infinity and unity, the Titans dwell in their cave of the darkness and issue from it only to break up, make discordant, wounded, limited his knowledge, will, strength, joy and being. Aditi is originally the pure consciousness of infinite existence one and self-luminous; she is the Light that is Mother of all things. As the infinite she gives birth to Daksha, the discriminating and distributing Thought of the divine Mind, and is herself born to Daksha as the cosmic infinite, the mystic Cow whose udders feed all the worlds.

It is this divine daughter of Daksha who is the mother of the gods. In the cosmos Aditi is the undivided infinite unity of things, free from the duality, *advaya*, and has Diti the separative dualising consciousness for the obverse side of her cosmic creation, – her sister and a rival wife in the later myth. Here in the lower being where she is manifested as the earth-principle, her husband is the lower or inauspicious Father who is slain by their child Indra, the power of the divine Mind manifested in the inferior creation. Indra, says the hymn, slays his father, dragging him by the feet, and makes his mother a widow. In another image, forcible and expressive though repugnant to the decorousness of our modern taste, Surya is said to be the lover of his sister Dawn and the second husband of his mother Aditi, and by a variation of the same image Aditi is hymned as the wife of the all-pervading Vishnu who is in the cosmic creation one of the sons of Aditi and the younger brother of Indra. These images which seem gross and confused when we lack the key to their mystic significance, become clear enough the moment that is recovered. Aditi is the infinite consciousness in the cosmos espoused and held by the lower creative power which works through the limited mind and body, but delivered from this subjection by the force of the divine or illumined Mind born of her in the mentality of man. It is this Indra who makes Surya the light of the Truth rise in heaven and dispel the darknesses and falsehoods and

limited vision of the separative mentality. Vishnu is the vaster all-pervading existence which then takes possession of our liberated and unified consciousness, but he is born in us only after Indra has made his puissant and luminous appearance.

This Truth is the light, the body of Surya. It is described as the True, the Right, the Vast; as the luminous supramental heaven of Swar – "vast Swar, the great Truth" – concealed beyond our heaven and our earth; and as Surya, the Sun, "that Truth" which dwells lost in the darkness, withheld from us in the secret cave of the subconscient. This hidden Truth is the Vast because it dwells free and manifest only on the supramental plane where existence, will, knowledge, joy move in a rapturous and boundless infinity and are not limited and hedged as in this many-walled existence of the mind, life and body which form the lower being. That is the wideness of the higher being to which we have to ascend breaking beyond the two enclosing firmaments of the mental and physical; it is described as a divine existence free and large in its unbounded range; it is a wideness where there is no obstacle nor any siege of limitation; it is the fear-free pasture of the luminous herds of the Sun; it is the seat and house of the Truth, the own home of the Gods, the solar world, the true light where there is no fear for the soul, no possibility of any wound to the large and equal bliss of its existence.

This supramental vastness is also the fundamental truth of being, *satyam*, out of which its active truth wells out naturally and without strife of effort into a perfect and faultless movement because there is upon those heights no division, no gulf between consciousness and force, no divorce of knowledge and will, no disharmonising of our being and its action; everything there is the "straight" and there is no least possibility of crookedness. Therefore this supramental plane of vastness and true being is also Ritam, the true activity of things; it is a supreme truth of movement, action, manifestation, an infallible truth of will and heart and knowledge, a perfect truth of thought and word and emotion; it is the spontaneous Right, the free Law, the

original divine order of things untouched by the falsehoods of the divided and separative consciousness. It is the vast divine and self-luminous synthesis born of a fundamental unity, of which our petty existence is only the poor, partial, broken and perverted cutting up and analysis. Such was the Sun of the Vedic worship, the paradise of light to which the Fathers aspired, the world, the body of Surya son of Aditi.

Aditi is the infinite Light of which the divine world is a formation and the gods, children of the infinite Light, born of her in the Ritam, manifested in that active truth of her movement guard it against Chaos and Ignorance. It is they who maintain the invincible workings of the Truth in the universe, they who build its worlds into an image of the Truth. They, bounteous givers, loose out upon man its floods variously imaged by the mystic poets as the sevenfold solar waters, the rain of heaven, the streams of the Truth, the seven mighty Ones of heaven, the waters that have knowledge, the floods that breaking through the control of Vritra the Coverer ascend and overflow the mind. They, seers and revealers, make the light of the Truth to arise on the darkened sky of his mentality, fill with its luminous and honey-sweet satisfactions the atmosphere of his vital existence, transform into its vastness and plenitude by the power of the Sun the earth of his physical being, create everywhere the divine Dawn."(473-76)

"Travelling on the path of the Truth with the straight and perfect leading of the gods the limitations of mind and body are at length transcended; we take possession of the three luminous worlds of the higher heaven, enjoy the beatific immortality, grow into the epiphany of the gods and build in our human existence the universal formations of the higher or divine creation. Man then possesses both the divine and the human birth; he is lord of the double movement, he holds Aditi and Diti together, realises the universal in the individual, becomes the Infinite in the finite.

It is this conception that Surya embodies. He is the light of

the Truth rising on the human consciousness in the wake of the divine Dawn whom he pursues as a lover follows after his beloved and he treads the paths she has traced for him. For Dawn the daughter of Heaven, the face or power of Aditi, is the constant opening out of the divine light upon the human being; she is the coming of the spiritual riches, a light, a power, a new birth, the pouring out of the golden treasure of heaven into his earthly existence. Surya means the illumined or the luminous, as also the illumined thinker is called *sūri*; but the root means, besides, to create or, more literally, to loose, release, speed forth, – for in the Indian idea creation is a loosing forth of what is held back, a manifestation of what is hidden in the infinite Existence. Luminous vision and luminous creation are the two functions of Surya. He is Surya the creator and he is Surya the revealing vision, the all-seer.

What does he create? First the worlds; for everything is created out of the burning light and truth of the infinite Being, loosed out of the body of Surya who is the light of His infinite self-vision, formed by Agni, the seer-will, the omniscient creative force and flaming omnipotence of that self-vision. Secondly, into the night of man's darkened consciousness this Father of things, this Seer of the truth manifests out of himself in place of the inauspicious and inferior creation, which he then looses away from us, the illimitable harmony of the divine worlds governed by the self-conscious supramental Truth and the living law of the manifested godhead. Still, the name Surya is seldom used when there is question of this creation; it is reserved for his passive aspects as the body of the infinite Light and the revelation. In his active power he is addressed by other names; then he is Savitri, from the same root as Surya, the Creator; or he is Twashtri the Fashioner of things; or he is Pushan, the Increaser, – appellations that are sometimes used as if identical with Surya, sometimes as if expressing other forms and even other personalities of this universal godhead. Savitri, again, manifests himself, especially in the formation of the Truth in man, through four great and

active deities Mitra, Varuna, Bhaga and Aryaman, the Lords of pure Wideness, luminous Harmony, divine Enjoyment, exalted Power.

But if Surya is the creator, he who is, as the Veda says, the self of all that moves and all that is stable, and if this Surya is also the divine, "the wide-burning Truth that is lodged in the law which upholds heaven", then all the worlds should manifest that law of the Truth and all of them should be so many heavens. Whence then comes this falsehood, sin, death, suffering of our mortal existence? We are told that there are eight sons of the cosmic Aditi who are born from her body; by seven she moves to the gods, but the eighth son is Martanda, of the mortal creation, whom she casts away from her; with the seven she moves to the supreme life, the original age of the gods, but Martanda is brought back out of the Inconscient into which he had been cast to preside over mortal birth and death.

This Martanda or eighth Surya is the black or dark, the lost, the hidden sun. The Titans have taken and concealed him in their cavern of darkness and thence he must be released into splendour and freedom by the gods and seers through the power of the sacrifice. In less figurative language the mortal life is governed by an oppressed, a hidden, a disguised Truth; just as Agni the divine seer-will works at first upon earth concealed or obscured by the smoke of human passion and self-will, so Surya the divine Knowledge lies concealed and unattainable in the night and darkness, is enveloped and contained in the ignorance and error of the ordinary human existence. The Seers by the power of truth in their thoughts discover this Sun lying in the darkness, they liberate this knowledge, this power of undivided and all-embracing vision, this eye of the gods concealed in our subconscient being; they release his radiances, they create the divine Dawn. Indra the divine Mind-power, Agni the Seer-Will, Brihaspati the Master of the inspired word, Soma the immortal Delight born in man aid them to shatter the strong places of the mountain, the

artificial obstructions of the Titans are broken and this Sun soars up radiant into our heavens. Arisen he mounts to the supramental Truth. "He goes where the gods have made a path for him cleaving like an eagle to his goal"; he ascends with his seven shining horses to the utter luminous ocean of the higher existence; he is led over it by the seers as in a ship. Surya, the Sun, is himself perhaps the golden ship in which Pushan the Increaser leads men beyond evil and darkness and sin to the Truth and the Immortality."(476-79)

(b) The Divine Dawn

"As the Sun is image and godhead of the golden Light of the divine Truth, so Dawn is image and godhead of the opening out of the supreme illumination on the night of our human ignorance. Dawn daughter of Heaven and Night her sister are obverse and reverse sides of the same eternal Infinite. Utter Night out of which the worlds arise is the symbol of the Inconscient. That is the inconscient Ocean, that the darkness concealed within darkness out of which the One is born by the greatness of His energy. But in the world of our darkened mortal view of things there reigns the lesser Night of the Ignorance which envelops heaven and earth and the mid-region, our mental and physical consciousness and our vital being. It is here that Dawn the daughter of Heaven rises with the radiances of her Truth, with the bliss of her boons; putting off the darkness like a black woven robe, as a young maiden garbed in light, this bride of the luminous Lord of beatitude unveils the splendours of her bosom, reveals her shining limbs and makes the Sun ascend upon the upclimbing tier of the worlds.

This night of our darkness is not entirely unillumined. If there be nothing else, if all is deep gloom, yet the divine flame of the seer-will Agni burns through the dense murk giving light to him who sits afar in its shadow; though not yet kindled, as it shall be at dawn, on a sacrificial altar, yet even so it fulfils on our earth as the lowest and greatest of the gods the will

and works of the hidden Light in spite of all this enveloping smoke of passion and desire. And the stars shine out and the moon comes at night making manifest the invincible workings of the infinite King. Moreover, always Night holds hidden in her bosom her luminous sister; this life of our ignorance taught by the gods in their veiled human working prepares the birth of the divine Dawn so that, sped forth, she may manifest the supreme creation of the luminous Creator. For the divine Dawn is the force or face of Aditi; she is the mother of the gods; she gives them birth into our humanity in their true forms no longer compressed into our littleness and veiled to our vision.

But this great work is to be done according to the ordered gradations of the Truth, in its fixed seasons, by the twelve months of the sacrifice, by the divine years of Surya Savitri. Therefore there is a constant rhythm and alternation of night and dawn, illuminations of the Light and periods of exile from it, openings up of our darkness and its settling upon us once more, till the celestial Birth is accomplished and again till it is fulfilled in its greatness, knowledge, love and power. These later nights are other than those utter darknesses which are dreaded as the occasion of the enemy, the haunt of the demons of division who devour; these are rather the pleasant nights, the divine and blessed ones who equally labour for our growth. Night and Dawn are then of different forms but one mind and suckle alternately the same luminous Child. Then the revealing lustres of the brighter goddess are known in the pleasant nights even through the movements of the darkness. Therefore Kutsa hymns the two sisters, "Immortal, with a common lover, agreeing, they move over heaven and earth forming the hue of the Light; common is the path of the sisters, infinite; and they range it, the one and the other, taught by the gods; common they, though different their forms." For one is the bright Mother of the herds, the other the dark Cow, the black Infinite, who can yet be made to yield us the shining milk of heaven.

Thus the Dawns come with a constant alternation, thrice ten – the mystic number of our mentality–making the month, till some day there shall break out upon us the wondrous experience of our forefathers in a long bygone age of humanity when the dawns succeeded each other without the intervention of any night, when they came to the Sun as to a lover and circled round him, not returning again and again in his front as a precursor of his periodical visitations. That shall be when the supramental consciousness shines out fulfilled in the mentality and we shall possess the year-long day enjoyed by the gods on the summit of the eternal mountain. Then shall be the dawning of the "best" or highest, most glorious Dawn, when "driving away the Enemy, guardian of the Truth, born in the Truth, full of the bliss, uttering the highest truths, fulfilled in all boons she brings the birth and manifestation of the godheads." Meanwhile each dawn comes as the first of a long succession that shall follow and pursues the path and goal of those that have already gone forward; each in her coming impels the life upwards and awakens in us "someone who was dead". "Mother of the gods, force of the Infinite, the vast vision that awakes from the sacrifice she creates expression for the thought of the soul" and gives us the universal birth in all that is born."(481-83)

(c) Pushan, the Increaser

"Since the divine work in us cannot be suddenly accomplished, the godhead cannot be created all at once, but only by a luminous development and constant nurture through the succession of the dawns, through the periodic revisitings of the illumining Sun, Surya the Sun-Power manifests himself in another form as Pushan, the Increaser. The root of this name means to increase, foster, nourish. The spiritual wealth coveted by the Rishis is one that thus increases "day by day", that is, in each return of this fostering Sun; increase or growth (*puṣṭi*) is a frequent object of their prayers. Pushan represents this aspect of the Surya-power. He is the "lord and master of

plenitudes, lord of our growings, our comrade". Pushan is the enricher of our sacrifice. Vast Pushan shall advance our chariot by his energy; he shall become for the increase of our plenitudes. Pushan is described as himself a stream of the divine riches and a lavish heap of its substance. He is lord of the vast treasure of its joy and companion of our felicity.

The return of the night of ignorance which intervenes between the successive dawns is imaged as the loss of the radiant herds of the Sun frequently stolen from the seer by the Panis and sometimes as the loss of the Sun itself hidden by them again in their tenebrous cavern of the subconscient. The increase which Pushan gives depends on the recovery of these disappearing illuminations of the Truth. Therefore this god is associated with Indra the Power of divine Mind, his brother, friend, ally in battle, in their forceful recovery. He perfects and accomplishes our host that seeks for the herds so that they conquer and possess. "Let Pushan pursue after our luminous herds, let Pushan guard our war-horses, let Pushan conquer for us the plenitude. O Pushan, go after our cows. . . . Let Pushan hold his right hand over us in front; let him drive back to us that which we have lost." So also he brings back the lost Surya. "O shining Pushan, bring to us, as if our lost herd, the God of the varied fullness of flame who upholds our heavens. Pushan finds the shining King who was hidden from us and concealed in the cave." And we are told of the luminous goad which this resplendent deity bears, the goad that urges the thoughts of the soul and is the means of accomplishment of the herd of the radiant illuminations. What he gives to us is secure; for because he has the knowledge, he loses not the herd and is the guardian of the world of our becoming. He has the variously ordaining and comprehensive no less than the complete unified vision of all our worlds and therefore he is our fosterer and increaser. He is the lord of our felicity who loses not our possession of knowledge and so long as we abide in the law of his workings we shall suffer no hurt nor diminution. The happy state of the soul that he gives removes

from it all sin and evil and makes today and makes tomorrow for the building up of the whole godhead in our universal being." (486-87)

(d) Savitri, the Creator

"The result of the procession of the shining dawns, of the divine returns of Surya, of the increasings of Pushan and his leading on the Path is summed up in the creation of Savitri the luminous Creator. It is the god Savitri who sets us there where the ancient doers of the Work have preceded us; that is the desirable flame and splendour of the divine Creator on which the seer has to meditate and towards which this god impels our thoughts, that the bliss of the creative godhead on the forms of which our soul must meditate as it journeys towards it. It is the supreme creation in which the goddess undivided and infinite speaks out her Word ….

That divine word is the word of the Truth; for a superconscient Truth lies concealed and is the basis of the infinite being which stands revealed on those higher altitudes of our ascension. What we now accept as life is the evil dream, the death that governs us because we live in a false knowledge, a limited and divided existence exposed to every devourer. That is not real life. For life we have to be able to look long upon the Sun; for life we have to be able to hold in our thought a knowledge and a word full of the consummate perception; we have to bring forward the Truth as an offering so that the luminous god with his golden hands full of the Light may rise high in our heavens and hear our word. We must choose and take into ourselves that supreme and vast state of this Mighty One who has the thought of the knowledge, he who creates for the gods the immortality and the highest enjoyment; we must widen out the cord of Savitri so that it shall release us into higher states of life made accessible to men and harmonised with their being. To hold that felicity we have to become free from sin and evil in the wideness and purity of Varuna, in the all-embracing harmony

of Mitra, in the supreme creation of Savitri. Then Savitri shall loose away from us, shall uncreate the suffering of the evil dream. For the seeker of the straightness he shall create an increasing wideness of his existence so that even with our incomplete knowledge we shall grow in our being towards the gods. By the godheads he will foster our knowledge and lead us towards that universal formation of them in the undivided consciousness of the infinite Aditi which we have chosen as our goal. All that we have done in our ignorance, in our divided and oppressed discernment of things, in our mere mortal becoming and humanity, against gods or men, he shall uncreate and make us free from the sin. For he is the creator of the Right, he is the creator who creates the Truth."(489-90)

(e) The Four Kings

"The creation of Surya Savitri starts from the repeated risings of the divine Dawn and grows by the constant nourishing of her spiritual gifts and possessions through the work in us of Surya Pushan. But the actual formation, the perfected fullness depend on the birth and growth in us of all the gods, the children of Aditi, the All-Gods (*Viśve Devāḥ*) and especially of the four great luminous Kings, Varuna, Mitra, Bhaga, Aryaman. Indra and the Maruts and the Ribhus, Vayu, Agni, Soma and the Ashwins are indeed the principal agents; Vishnu, Rudra, Brahmanaspati, the future mighty Triad, preside over the indispensable conditions, – for the one paces out the vast framework of the inner worlds in which our soul-action takes place, the other in his wrath and might and violent beneficence forces onward the great evolution and smites the opponent and the recusant and the ill-doer, and the third administers always the seed of the creative word from the profundities of the soul; so too Earth and Heaven and the divine Waters and the great goddesses and Twashtri the Fashioner of things on whom they attend, either provide the field or bring and shape the material; but over the utter creation, over its perfect vast space and pure

texture, over the sweet and ordered harmony of its steps, over the illumined force and power of its fulfilment, over its rich, pure and abundant enjoyment and rapture the Sun-gods Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga cast the glory and protection of their divine gaze.

The sacred poems in which the All-Gods and the Adityas, the sons of the Infinite, and Aryaman, Mitra and Varuna are praised, – not the mere hymns of formal invocation to the sacrifice, – are among the most beautiful, solemn and profound that the imagination of man has conceived. The Adityas are described in formulas of an incomparable grandeur and sublimity. No mythic barbarian gods of cloud, sun and shower are these, no confused allegories of wonder-stricken savages, but the objects of worship to men far more inwardly civilised and profound in self-knowledge than ourselves. They may not have yoked the lightning to their chariots, nor weighed sun and star, nor materialised all the destructive forces in Nature to aid them in massacre and domination, but they had measured and fathomed all the heavens and earths within us, they had cast their plummet into the Inconscient and the subconscient and the superconscient; they had read the riddle of death and found the secret of immortality; they had sought for and discovered the One and known and worshipped Him in the glories of His light and purity and wisdom and power." (490-92)

(i) The Vedic Gods

"The sons of the Infinite have a twofold birth. They are born above in the divine Truth as creators of the worlds and guardians of the divine Law; they are born also here in the world itself and in man as cosmic and human powers of the Divine. In the visible world they are the male and female powers and energies of the universe and it is this external aspect of them as gods of the Sun, Fire, Air, Waters, Earth, Ether, the conscious-forces ever present in material being which gives us the external or psycho-physical side of the

Aryan worship. The antique view of the world as a psycho-physical and not merely a material reality is at the root of the ancient ideas about the efficacy of the *mantra* and the relation of the gods to the external life of man; hence the force of prayer, worship, sacrifice for material ends; hence the use of them for worldly life and in so-called magic rites which comes out prominently in the Atharva Veda and is behind much of the symbolism of the Brahmanas. But in man himself the gods are conscious psychological powers. "Will-powers, they do the works of will; they are the thinkings in our hearts; they are the lords of delight who take delight; they travel in all the directions of the thought." Without them the soul of man cannot distinguish its right nor its left, what is in front of it nor what is behind, the things of foolishness or the things of wisdom; only if led by them can it reach and enjoy "the fearless Light". For this reason Dawn is addressed "O thou who art human and divine" and the gods constantly described as the "Men" or human powers (*manuṣaḥ*, *naraḥ*); they are our "luminous seers", "our heroes", "our lords of plenitude". They conduct the sacrifice in their human capacity (*manuṣvat*) as well as receive it in their high divine being. Agni is the priest of the oblation, Brihaspati the priest of the word. In this sense Agni is said to be born from the heart of man; all the gods are thus born by the sacrifice, grow and out of their human action assume their divine bodies. Soma, the wine of the world-delight, rushing through the mind which is its "luminous wide-extended" strainer of purification, cleansed there by the ten sisters, pours forth giving birth to the gods. But the nature of these inner powers is always divine and therefore their tendency is upward to Light and immortality and infinity. They are "the Sons of the Infinite, one in their will and work, pure, purified in the streams, free from crookedness, free from defect, unhurt in their being. Wide, profound, unconquered, conquering, with many organs of vision, they behold within the crooked things and the perfect; all is near to the Kings, even the things that are highest. Sons of the Infinite, they dwell

in the movement of the world and uphold it; gods, they are the guardians of all that becomes as universe; far-thoughted, full of the Truth, they guard the Might." They are kings of the universe and of man and of all its peoples (*nṛpati*, *viśpati*), self-emperors, world-emperors, not as the Titans strive to be in the falsehood and the division, but because they are kings of the Truth. For their mother is Aditi "in whom there is no duality", Aditi "the luminous undivided who upholds the divine habitation that is of the world of Light" and to her her sons "cleave ever waking". They are "most straight" in their being, will, thought, delight, action, movement, they are "thinkers of the Truth whose law of nature is the law of the Truth", they are "seers and hearers of the Truth". They are "charioteers of the Truth, whose seat is in its mansions, purified in discernment, unconquerable, the Men wide-visioned". They are the "Immortals who know the Truth". Thus free from the falsehood and the crookedness, these inner divinities rise in us to their natural level, home, plane, world. "Of a double birth they are true in their being and lay hold on the Truth, very vast and one in the Light and are possessed of its luminous world." In this upward movement they cleave away from us the evil and the ignorance. These are they who "cross beyond into the sinlessness and the undivided existence". Therefore they are "the gods who deliver". For the enemy, the assailant, the doer of harm their knowledge becomes as if snares wide-spread, for to him light is a cause of blindness, the divine movement of good an occasion of evil and a stumbling-block; but the soul of the Aryan seer passes beyond these dangers like a mare hastening with a chariot. In the leading of the gods he avoids all stumblings into evil like so many pitfalls. Aditi, Mitra and Varuna forgive him whatever sin he may have committed against their vast oneness, purity, harmony so that he can hope to enjoy the wide and fearless Light and the long nights shall not come upon him. That the Vedic gods are no mere physical Nature-powers, but the psychic conscious forces behind and within

all cosmic things, is made clear enough by the connection between their cosmic character and this deliverance from sin and falsehood: "Since ye are they who rule over the world by the power of their mind of knowledge, thinkers of all that is stable and mobile, therefore, O gods, carry us beyond the sin of that which we have done and that which we have not done to the felicity." There is always the image of the path and the journey, the Path of the Truth on which we are led forward by a divine leading. "O Sons of the Infinite, effect for us the fearless peace, make us good paths of an easy going to the felicity." "Easy of going is your path, O Aryaman, O Mitra, it is thornless, O Varuna, and perfect." "They whom the Sons of Infinity lead with good leadings pass beyond all sin and evil to the felicity." Always that goal is the felicity, the wide bliss and peace, the unbroken Light, the vast Truth, the Immortality. "O ye gods, put far from us the hostile (dividing) force, give us wide peace for the felicity." "The Sons of Infinity give us the imperishable Light." "Create the Light, O ye minds of knowledge of our sacrifice." "That increasing birth of you we would know today, O sons of the Infinite, which creates, O Aryaman, even in this world of fear the beatitude." For it is the "fearless Light" that is created,where there is no peril of death, sin, suffering, ignorance, – the light of the undivided, infinite, immortal, rapturous Soul of things. For "these are the rapturous lords of Immortality, even Aryaman and Mitra and Varuna all-pervading." (493-95)

(ii) Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga

"The Divine is existence all-embracing, infinite and pure; Varuna brings to us the infinite oceanic space of the divine soul and its ethereal, elemental purity. The Divine is boundless consciousness, perfect in knowledge, pure and therefore luminously right in its discernment of things, perfectly harmonious and happy in its concordance of their law and nature; Mitra brings us this light and harmony, this right distinction and relation and friendly concord, the happy

laws of the liberated soul concordant with itself and the Truth in all its rich thought, shining actions and thousandfold enjoyment. The Divine is in its own being pure and perfect power and in us the eternal upward tendency in things to their source and truth; Aryaman brings to us this mighty strength and perfectly-guided happy inner upsurging. The Divine is the pure, the faultless, the all-embracing, the untroubled ecstasy that enjoys its own infinite being and enjoys equally all that it creates within itself; Bhaga gives us sovereignly that ecstasy of the liberated soul, its free and unfallen possession of itself and the world.

This quaternary is practically the later essential trinity of Sachchidananda, – Existence, Consciousness, Bliss with selfawareness and self-force, Chit and Tapas, for double terms of Consciousness; but it is here translated into its cosmic terms and equivalents. Varuna the King has his foundation in the all-pervading purity of Sat; Mitra the Happy and the Mighty, most beloved of the Gods, in the all-uniting light of Chit; many-charioted Aryaman in the movement and all-discerning force of Tapas; Bhaga in the all-embracing joy of Ananda. Yet as all these things form one in the realised godhead, as each element of the trinity contains the others in itself and none of them can exist separately from the rest, therefore each of the Four also possesses by force of his own essential quality every general attribute of his brothers. For this reason if we do not read the Veda as carefully as it was written, we shall miss its distinctions and see only the indistinguishable common functions of these luminous Kings, – as indeed throughout the hymns the unity in difference of all the gods makes it difficult for the mind not accustomed to the subtleties of psychological truth to find in the Vedic divinities anything but a confused mass of common or interchangeable attributes. But the distinctions are there and have as great a force and importance as in the Greek and Egyptian symbolism. Each god contains in himself all the others, but remains still himself in his peculiar function." (497-98)