

DISCOURSES ON
THE KENOPANISHAD

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INTRODUCTION

In the present state of general degradation of our moral, ethical and cultural standards, to totally ignore our religion would be making our dash to ruin quicker. However decadent our religion may be, it is far better than having none at all. The wise thing would be for us to try and bring about a Renaissance of Hinduism so that under its proved greatness, we may come to reach the very heights of culture and civilization that was ours in the historical past.

In India Hinduism has come to mean nothing more than a bundle of sacred superstitions and a certain way of dressing, eating, feeding, talking, etc. Our Deities have fallen to the mortal level of "control offices" at whose altars the faithful Hindu might pray and get special 'permits' for the things he desires most.

This degradation is not the product of any accidental and sudden historical upheaval. For thousands of years Hinduism has been remaining an unwanted orphan without any patronage of the State or encouragement of the rich. Once upon a time, the learned philosophers were rightly the advisers of the State. During the past few centuries, the quality of the adviser-class and the ruler-class deteriorated and their slow putrefaction in the leprous warmth of luxury and power has taken us to the regrettable stage in which we find ourselves now. The general cry of the educated class is really against this *unreligion*.

Hinduism is a Science of Perfection. There is in Hinduism a vitality which we can all reach and share.

There is in it an answer to every problem—individual, social, national and international. In our sacred books we miss many of our beliefs which are taught to us as the very backbone of Hinduism. Hinduism is the religion of VEDANTA, the Eternal Religion of the *Upanishads*.

Upanishads declare in unmistakable terms that man in reality, at the peak of his evolutionary achievement, is God Himself. He is advised to live his day-to-day experience in life in such a systematic and scientific way that, hour by hour, he is consciously cleansing himself of all the encrustations of imperfections which have gathered themselves to conceal the beauty and divinity of the Real and the Eternal personality in him. How an individual can consciously and by self-effort, purify himself and evolve to regain the status of his Real Nature, is the content of Hinduism. Hinduism has, in its vast amphitheatre, the sacred Temple of Truth, preserved and worshipped under the camouflage of heavy descriptions as in the *Puranas*, *Itihasas* and *Sastras*, and thousand and one theories and interpretations. These overgrowths have so effectively come to conceal the real beauty and grandeur of the tiny Temple of Truth that today the college-educated 'illiterates', in their ignorance of the language and style of the ancient Sanskrit writers, miss the Temple amidst its own festoons !

To try to enquire into the very text-books of our religion with a view to bringing its message to serve us in our day-to-day problems is the main aim of the *Upanishad Gnana Yagna*.

Religion becomes ineffectual if its followers are not ready to live its dictates of loving advice. As for that matter, is there any philosophy, political,

social or cultural, which can take us to its promised Land of Joy without our following the principles of that philosophy faithfully in our day-to-day life?

However great our culture might have been in the past, that dead glory, reported in the pages of history, is not going to help us in our present trials. If the barbarous cave-men of the unexplored African jungles want to become as civilised as the modern nations, they cannot achieve this total revolution through mere discourses or even exhaustive study of the literature describing the ways of modern civilised nations. They will have to *know* and *live* the civilised values of life. A mere knowledge of it will not help them. They can claim the blessings of their knowledge only if they are ready to live it. In order to live as civilised men, they will have to renounce completely their ways of uncivilised thinking and acting. In fact without renunciation no progress is ever possible. We must renounce the thrills of our childhood games in order to grow ourselves into young men of noble actions. Again unless we renounce our youthful dash, we cannot reach the revered heights of old age.

Unless we are ready to renounce the low animal values of material life and substitute them with the noble values of the truly religious life, we cannot hope to gain the blessings of religion. The study of a cookery-book, however thorough it might be, will not satisfy our hunger. However much we may meditate upon and repeat the name of a medicine, we cannot get the cure we need. The medicine is to be taken in if the cure is to be ours. Similarly, the blessings of religion can be ours only when we are ready to live the values advocated in it.

During the small span of life of every person, one

should try to discover the Eternal Happiness and Bliss which is the succulent content of all true religions. In the light of the principles of Truth declared in the *Upanishads*, we can try to get at the scientific significance of the various institutions that have come to be worked out as part of our religion in our communal living. We shall in the end come to discover the Science of Perfection which is truly what Hinduism is.

Let us then try to know what Hinduism is. Let us make an honest resolve, not only for our own sake but also for the sake of the entire world, that we shall, when once we are convinced of the truth of Hinduism, try and live honestly, as far as possible, the values advocated by this ancient and sacred Religion.

Let us be Hindus, and thus build up a true Hindustan peopled with many Shankaras, Buddhas and Vivekanandas.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

Religion is a privilege of man and not an instinct of the animals. To the animal, life is one round of eating, sleeping and mating. Man, even when he has food, shelter, clothing and recreation, does not feel satisfied. He yearns to seek for a greater purpose in life. So long as he has not these minimum necessities of life—food, shelter, clothing and recreation—his entire personality strives for them. But once these are satisfied, he sits back as it were to listen to the muffled voice of enquiry from within.

These questionings and innermost cravings of the soul, come only to a *Full-grown* man. I mean, even among the bipeds we can recognise the animals ; we have among us tigers, wolves, deers, serpents, scorpions,

etc. Such men who are lowly evolved fail to listen to the doubts and despairs of the soul-quest from within. Having no such inner voiceless-woe, they need no remedy also.

But to one who has evolved himself into a full-grown man, such cravings of the soul flood his being and push him incessantly towards the limit of his understandings and feelings. In the unrest of the soul he comes to despair at the wonder and majesty of the most intimate fact with him—Life. The questions he asks himself are : Where did I come from? Where do I go? Why have I come? Is life an empty and meaningless incident? Has life a purpose? Is there a mission in life?

Only a full-grown man, who has lived his days' experiences intelligently and has throughout kept an alert critical attention upon the incidents of life, can attain an inner maturity in which he comes to feel the 'Soul's-unrest'. Religion is addressed to such an individual. Religion explains, assures and guides him. It lends a purpose to his day-to-day existence, far more divine and noble than mere eating, drinking, sleeping, laughing and weeping.

Every true Religion contains two important limbs : (i) the ritualistic injunctions and (ii) philosophical suggestions. The former alone is accepted generally as Religion by many of us. But a Religion (rituals, formalities, etc.) without philosophy is superstition, and philosophy without Religion is madness. Both must go hand in hand. Philosophy reinforces the external practices of rituals and formalities and blesses them with a purpose and an aim. Together they bring out the full significance of Religion.

Religion, in its full significance, has for its content

a vivid discussion upon the Goal of Life and its nature. It is also a description of an elaborate system of spiritual practices by pursuing which men of all degrees can start, from their present stations in evolution, on a pilgrimage to the Goal held out.

Vedanta deals more vividly and elaborately with Truth than any other Religion, and its discussions, based upon the intimate and personal experiences of the Seers, bring us to the conclusion that the Supreme is in man himself and that man, by removing certain of his misunderstandings about his own identity, can succeed in recognising himself as the Eternal, All-pervading Truth. All true Religions bring to the despairing man, struggling against his own bondages and limitations in life, the comfort and solace he so badly needs.

Figuratively it is something like this. A man who has temporarily lost his memory stands out upon his own terrace and despairs at the gathering darkness and the descending chill of the wintry night. He suffers agonies. He weeps. He sighs. He feels impotent and besieged by pain and sorrow. But a few yards behind him is the balcony window, kept half-open, through which he could see his own warm home where his bed is ready, his dinner is laid and his beloved is waiting in all devotion and love. He has only to turn round to see the welcoming, comforting, inviting sight of his own luxurious home of sweetness and joy. At will he can walk in and claim all the bliss as his own birthright.

Similarly, man stands on the open terrace of life looking outward into the deepening darkness and suffers cold and loneliness. His own beloved Religion, invitingly bids him to come in. It reminds him of

the discomforts on the terrace and appeals to him to turn back. "Renounce the terrace and walk into the lit up Halls of Joy within where I shall attend to your every comfort," cries Religion. But the mad master of the house hears not the call of Religion and thus suffers as a *Samsarin*.

The remedy is simple. We have only to turn inward. As it is, our entire attention is focussed on the external material world and we seek there joy and peace. Naturally we miss them. The finite external objects cannot, by their very nature, yield for us our demand which is in fact an Eternal Joy—a Blissful satisfaction that will be ever with us. Such a complete *Anand* and *Shanti* cannot be had out *there*. They can be had only in *here*—within each individual. "Turn within! Right about-turn and you are face to face with what you are seeking," is the saintly advice unanimously voiced forth by all the great Religions of the world. And, "It is true; It is true; It is true," is the repeated endorsement that comes to us from all the mystics and masters.

The external world of sense-objects has no real joy content. It seems to give us now and then a little joy; but this very sweetness soon gets putrefied to sourness and bitterness. In everyone's experience all circumstances have in themselves an atmosphere of sorrow.

Religion promises no magical change in the nature of the sense-objects or in the pattern of their arrangements under various circumstances. The world will remain the same and the nature of the circumstances will continue to function according to the Eternal Law. Religion enables the faithful only to face life with a greater liveliness, and lends a psychological balance

and a spiritual poise to the individual.

The external world of objects remaining the same, the experiences provided by it are different in different individuals. For example, a father lives with his wife and two sons under the same roof. They eat the same food, cooked in the same kitchen, enjoy the same radio, sit, chat, sing and laugh under the same ceiling fan. But while thus sitting together one Sunday afternoon after dinner, what is the experience of each? It cannot be very difficult for anyone of us to know that the "experience" is certainly not the same in all the bosoms in that happy family. If the experiences are different while the objects remain the same, what is the cause for this variety? Can we have a uniform experience? This brings us to the question—what is experience? Is it not the impression left on one when one's mind and intellect come in contact with an object (or objects) and react with it (or them) at a given time and place? The same object can give different experiences to the same mind on different occasions, in different places or in a changed set-up. But the one common factor in all the experiences is that we must have our minds reacting with the world-of-objects.

We find that the world-of-objects remain, function and play their frolics according to a Law over which we have absolutely no control. But objects must come in contact with our mind in order to produce the reaction, which alone is the seed of our experience. So then, if we can control, train and culture our minds in such a way that they can only react positively with all sets of objects and under all sets of circumstances, then our reactions would all be positive. Happiness and peace is his who has thus trained his mind to

react 'positively' to the world outside. The outer world remaining the same, in this very world of imperfections and sorrows, we shall have an unbroken experience of sweet solace and full contentment. We shall gain in ourselves a capacity to remain aloof in a safe island within and watch the fierce storms of passions that madly blast about us. We shall learn to witness in a glorious sense of inner freedom and detachment the very tears and sobs in us, and if we be but true followers of Religion, gain through its practices a mental equipment which can, seek for itself and gain poise and balance under all circumstances.

Thus understanding the real function of Religion and the secret scheme of its blessings, we can approach it with a certainty of gain. What greater gift can we expect of any institution than a hearty presentation of the Philosopher's Stone, which by its touch can convert all sorrows into joy, all failures into success and all losses into gain? A truly devoted heart does not go mad with power, become boastful of success; commit suicide at failures, murder in anger, suffer in jealousy, grow arrogant in wealth, despair in poverty and dance and sing in joy. Under all conditions he is unmoved, unagitated. His heart is an ocean of peace (*Shanti*), rest (*Samadhan*) and joy (*Sukh*).

Such a one among us mortals is a Godman. He is a saint, a *Mahatma*, a prophet. Such were all our great masters and such are all true men of Religion. Religion promises us a world peopled with a generation of Sree Ramakrishnas, Vivekanandas, Shankaras, Buddhas, Christs and Mohamads. What more do we need?

The paths advocated by all Religions are the same—renounce the false ego and its consequent

variations. The sorrows and sighs belong to the *ego-phantom*. Surrender it at the Lord's feet in love. Sublimate the ego in constant *Vichar*. In your discrimination of the real and unreal, the false ego-dream ends. Divinise the ego through an inner revolution brought about by the ending of all the negativities in your character and by surcharging yourself with the dynamic positive value of a true divine life.

Religion claims that our real nature is pure Knowledge, pure Bliss. But the sense of ego has created in us the grievous misunderstanding that we are the ego-entities. Whether we like it or not, through a slow process of evolution, we are every hour creeping towards this Goal of Self-realisation. Life's experiences are wearing us down in a slow mill of sorrow only to make us sit up and realise the foolish delusion in which we have come to suffer.

Wake up ! Arise ! Awake ! Stop not till the goal is reached. This in short is the fundamental cry of all Religions.

Religion is the Science of all the Sciences since it guides us to the Absolute Knowledge, our own Real Nature, the Self—the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* State of total perfection.

VEDANTA—THE RELIGION OF DETACHMENT

In one of our most important *Upanishads*, the *Kathopanishad*, we have the story of an aspirant reaching the very portico of Death, and there face to face with Him, the seeker enquires about Supreme Knowledge. This must be the spirit of a true student of Vedanta. Life and Death are in reality so close together that it is ordinarily even difficult to distinguish between

them. To have the courage to continue seeking even after death, is real living. To a seeker, if he be honest and persevering, there is no death.

It is in this sense that we consider, and our *Sastras* declare, that the great Saints, Sages, Incarnations and Prophets are immortal. Sree Ramakrishna, Bhagavan Ramana, Sree Rama and Sree Krishna, to mention but a few, are immortal in the sense that they understood the meaning of life and lived that meaning in life. Their physical bodies have perished yet they live! How is this possible?

Let me explain this. An ant living in salt-hill in Poona met in Ahmedabad a friend of his from a sugar-mill in Meerut. The fat, corpulent, cheerful Meerut-ant enquired in sympathy and friendship if there was famine in Poona, for the Poona ant was thin, emaciated and melancholy. During the meeting it was decided that the Poona ant should visit the home of the fat friend from Meerut. While packing for the holiday trip to Meerut, the Poona ant carried a few days' ration with it. Even after a couple of days' stay in the mount of sugar, the Poona ant looked all the more depressed and unhappy. His host was anxious and worried. On enquiry for the cause of his depression, the Poona ant replied, "friend, there is every comfort here. But the taste of your food does not suit me". It was a shocking surprise to the host. "If sugar which is all but sweetness is not sweet to the Poona friend" he wondered, "what else can taste sweet for him?" On closer enquiry it was discovered that the Poona ant had still some salt bits in his mouth! He was however persuaded to spit them out, and then lo! the very same sugar which was not sweet before became the sweetest thing the

Poona ant had ever tasted !

We are all in life acting and suffering as true Poona ant. Spit out the saline contents of thy heart then we can taste the Sugar of Divine Life, which is nothing but sweetness. End all thy fears, limitations, disappointments and come to enjoy the joyous, unlimited, hopeful existence. This is the call of Vedanta, the Religion of Detachment. Detach yourself from the salt bits and you shall come to taste the sweetness of the Mount of Sugar.

There are in us two distinct personalities : the God and the Man. The birth right of manhood is the experiences of limitations and death. In its very nature Godhood is unlimited and immortal. Our attachments to the false negativities in us—the manhood—is the cause for all the Poona ant melancholia. Detach yourselves from manhood, we regain Godhood. This is the theory of Vedanta, and *Upanishad Gnana Yagna* is an attempt to convince ourselves that by ending the man in us we gain the God within. If there be an enemy concealed in us, who is the cause of all our imbecilities and sorrows, the sooner we unearth and destroy him, the earlier we shall come to realise our aim. Who is then this enemy ? Unanimously all the *Sastras* and Scriptures cry : “It is the ego.” “Kill this little ‘i’ to live.” “End the ego and end the woe.” If the ego in us is the *Samsarin*, if ego is the tormentor, if ego is the enemy, let us spy on him more closely and come to know who he is. Once we know our enemy, we can plan our war with him.

Each of you now please ask this question to yourself : “Who is this ? Or what constitutes this ego-sense in me ?” Is not the I-personality in each of us nothing but the memories of certain facts of life lived in the

past such as, I am the son of so-and-so, educated, lived, loved, hated, taught, etc., etc.? In short, I am the sum total of all the retained memories of all the vivid experiences I had in the past. The I-concept includes also my hopes for the future.

Pursuing our enquiry further, we shall, on analysis of the memory bits and hopeflakes, discover that they have only a reality with reference to either the dead past or the unborn future. That means the ego in me has no existence in the present moment ; it thrives in the burial-ground of the dead hours and in the womb of time.

So then, this ego, is in fact a myth, a non-entity, a dream, an unsubstantial nothing, a phantom, a mere false shadow. All the sorrow and mortality belong to this shadow of our own Reality. And in our own thoughtlessness, we have surrendered ourselves to the endless tyranny of this shadow of us lurking within ourselves. "Detach yourself from this shadow. Know thy Real self. Kill the tyrant within us. It will bring real Ramarajya in your bosoms." This is the clarion call of Vedanta.

The methods of eliminating this ghost within us are the processes advocated by all religions. Every spiritual practice is an attempt at the total elimination of this shadow-nothingness within us. All *Sastras* serve only to teach us the *unreality* of the *non-existent*.

It is by a process of superimposition that the unreal has come to veil the Real. Superimposition is a mental trick, a jugglery of our minds, by which it comes to misunderstand a thing to be something different from what it is in reality. The famous example is the serpent and the rope. In the darkness a man mistakes a rope for a serpent and suffers the

false agonics of a "snake-bite". Any amount of assurance that it is not a serpent but is in fact only a rope, given to the "deluded" sufferer will not comfort him. He will have to be led to the place and shown the rope. The moment he recognises the rope, the "serpent that bit him" disappears.

The 'Serpent' idea rose up only in his mind. The serpent born in his mind was removed when the knowledge of the rope dawned upon him. The 'Serpent' rose from his *ignorance of the rope*, and when this ignorance is removed by knowledge, the serpent, born of ignorance, is also removed. So too, in our ignorance of our own reality we have the superimposition in ourselves, of the ego. The ego is ended with the Knowledge of the Self in us. As the knowledge of the rope ended the agonies of the 'deluded' victim, so too with the Knowledge of the Self, the painful agonies of the ego (*Jiva*) end. Detach the ego, and claim *Shanti*, which is our essential nature.

The ego in us is but a bundle of memories of our experiences lived by us in the past and our hopes to be fulfilled by us in the future. Without reference to these two, the dead past and the unborn future, if we live vitally and dynamically, the present moments in themselves, we have achieved the annihilation of the ego. The Self, living in full detachment from ego, in the Self as the Self, is the *Samadhi* state advocated and claimed by all the different *Yogas* as their sole and sublime goal. All *Yogas* end in eliminating the ego in the *Sadhaka*. The *Yogas* advocate different methods to suit different temperaments, yet their aim is the same—Self-discovery.

We shall now analyse one or two paths of *Yoga* and examine how they succeed in bringing about

this annihilation of the ego in the *Yogin*. "Without any expectations of the 'fruits' of action act and thy achievements shall be supreme," is the injunction in *Gita*. Readers superficially glancing at this idea might wonder how this can be practicable.

Let us examine this theory in application and see if it cannot be practical. Suppose we have an agent who has an appointment with an industrial magnate to strike a business for lakhs of rupees, and where he has a commission to gain. If the day before the appointment, the poor agent allows himself to be hypnotised by his own expectations, if he dreams of the amounts he would be getting, the ways in which he would spend the income in purchasing a house, in marrying the girl of his choice, in living happily..... etc., etc., he would be indeed a great loser. For, on the appointed day, at the appointed hour, when the agent enters the drawing room of the business magnate, his mental faculties—alertness, cheerfulness, clarity and poise—which are so essential in the make-up of a successful agent, would all be totally dried up in him. He has by then imagined himself to be already living in his new house with his new wife, etc., acquired from the income of his transaction. The responsibility of maintaining and protecting this hope for 'fruit' shackles him in such strong bondages of 'fears' that he trembles at the thought of not realising them through a possible fall out with the capitalist. Nerve shattered, pale and trembling he enters the room, carrying a storm within him, and in his anxiety he forgets half the points he had to emphasise, fails to canvass convincingly, with the result the business is lost.

On the other hand, another agent under the same circumstances proves successful for, he is intelligent

enough to reject the anxieties for the 'fruits' and not to indulge in futile dreams over them, and acts with ease and poise. He is jovial and almost cheeky with the business magnate who is attracted and charmed by the young man's dash and smartness. The bargain is struck with hearty hand-shakes and pleasant smiles.

If renunciation of attachment to 'fruits' is a guarantee for sure success in the market place bargainings, how much more so it must be in all the nobler and greater fields of man's social and national activities. Rejecting the 'fruits', act. Let us not waste our faculties and potentialities in worrying over the unborn future. Act on, Act on, in the living present.

But this is not so readily possible unless we have a strong faith in the understanding that Lord is the real conductor and the accomplisher. We are actors in His drama. We are His servants executing His Will in the fulfilment of His plans. "The fruits" are His and ours is only action. And the more we get aligned with Him, the more shall our actions be in line with His Will, and thereby we shall be fulfilling more effectively His plans.

None of us can ever remain without action. The greatest profit is not in expecting some immediate finite 'fruit' but in making use of the action itself as a field for us to evolve. Our gain will be more if we renounce the ego in us. Let this *Sadhoo* not have the least vanity that he is giving out the ancient wisdom and teaching you all the *Brahma Vidya*. Let him act in the humble belief that Lord, in His infinite mercy, is merely making use of him as His chosen instrument for His own progress. So too each of

you. To each of you, this assembly of hearers and, a Swami from Uttarakasi to discourse upon the *Upanishads*, are the patterns of circumstances necessary for your spiritual growth.

Thus by continuously surrendering to His Will and living as His Instrument we come to forget the false ego in us. When once the ego (the man) has ended its career, what remains is the intimate personal experience of the divinity in us. Fall flat at His Feet in love and surrender. When the ego-sense is thus offered at His Feet, the mortal limitations end and the *Bhakta* who has done thus a full and complete *Atma-Arpanam* becomes the Lord.

All *Yogas* aim at the extinction of the ego-sense in the *Yogin*. When the sense of *Jiva*-hood ends, the sense of Godhood begins. Recognise! Re-see! Let us come to remember our own Real Nature. Let us stop dreaming with such ideas as "I am poor", "I am a mortal," "I am rich", "I am wise", "I am a *Samsarin*", etc.

The one way to end the shadow in front of us is to turn our gaze towards the Light within. If we cannot all of a sudden do so, let us then do the easier act of self-surrender. The taller we stand the longer shall be our shadow. Bend double, the shadow is half. Sit down, the shadow is still smaller. Fall flat at His Feet, in love and surrender, and the shadow is no more. End the shadow in us, this ego, by surrendering unto Him, the *Atman*, the Self in us. Detach the false ego from the true Self. Detach the mind from memories and hopes. Cleanse our bosoms of all desires. Desirelessness is the State of Perfection. ~ Egolessness is the State of Godhood. Attain this Supreme Goal of life through knowledge and right living.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ABSOLUTE

In the great *Upanishads* we often meet with the scene in which a full-grown disciple meets a Master of Perfection. The brief terse *Mantras* of the *Upanishads* take pains to paint in vivid colours, the physical, mental and spiritual personality of the disciple. Without an exception we find that all of them were stalwart, full grown, healthy men : healthy in their physical, mental and spiritual personalities. They were beaming with the brilliance of health and shining in the glory of *Brahmacharya*. Mentally and intellectually they were alert and shrewd, alert to every one of their experiences in life, and shrewd in their logical analysis and final conclusions upon the experiences they had in life.

The Disciple who in the past reached his Master, living in retirement in his *Ashram* in the Himalayas, was one who having lived vividly his day-to-day experiences in the sense-world, had discovered for himself that life was hollow, empty and meaningless, in the sense that it had nothing to compensate sufficiently for the energy and effort put forth by him into the business of living.

Such a fit student, a student of life, active, alert, shrewd and aspiring, that reached the Master and asked, " My Lord and Master, kindly tell me if there is a fuller life of permanent happiness which I could lead? Is there a mission in life more sacred than eating and drinking, breeding and bothering, yearning and striving, weeping and dying? Is life to be a mere meaningless pilgrimage from as uncertain a destination as birth, to an equally mysterious and unknown end as death? Is there a Realm of Experience, having reached which, I can shake off the

shackles of my limitations and live there for ever, in perfect freedom and bliss? It is to this outpouring of a mature soul that the great *Upanishadic* teachers roared in unison—"TATH TWAM ASI" *Tath* means That; *Twam* means Thou; *Asi* means Art. "That Thou art." In this *Maha Vakya*, That stands for "That of Which you are asking me now". "O Seeker, what thou art seeking is in thyself."

To the ordinary man, his body is himself. His identification with the body is deep and strong. He lives for the body, strives for the body, and knows no other mission in life than sensuous joys. To such a one, living such a low level of existence, the only relationship he could have with the Absolute must be one of *separativeness* and *slavery*.

There is yet another class of men who have slightly grown up and have come to recognise that they are not only the bodies but also creatures endowed with mind and intellect. Such men, have, therefore, come to recognise the existence and the workings of the psychological personalities in them. To them, they being not merely their bodies, Man is not a perishable ineffectual worm but is a sacred creature possessing almost godly powers evident in the manifestations of the mind and the intellect. They review the achievements of science and poetry; they recognise the thinkers and discoverers; they take into account the total victory Man has so far gained over the mighty Nature and come to the conclusion that Man as a thinking creature has a glory and a might not much inferior to the Gods. Thus, to men of this degree of development their relationship with the Absolute is that they are a *part of the whole*.

Based on the above concept of the two classes

of men, we have in our philosophy two views of life and approaches to Truth ; the *Dualism* of Madhwa-charya and the *Qualified Monism* of Sree Ramanuja. The former concludes that the Lord and his Devotee would ever remain as two distinct entities and the relationship of the Devotee to Lord is one of complete surrender in love and reverence. The Supreme Goal of Man is in reaching His feet and Eternally remaining there ever in His *Sewa*. The latter, however, argues in a different line and arrives at the conclusion that the Devotee is a part of the Whole, the Lord.

It is only in the daring declarations of Perfect Philosophy, the philosophy that discusses the vital and final experience of man in this realms of the spiritual, the Vedanta, that we find an unequivocal emphatic declaration that Man is God. To a student of *Dualism* and *Qualified Monism* this may appear fantastic for, the former views Truth with reference to his body, while the latter views Truth from the psychological personality.

The perfect student of Vedanta has reached the Master after discovering in his discrimination that neither his body nor his psychological personality can be sufficiently sacred and divine as to satisfy himself. He has come to feel that some power subtler than the mind and the intellect is playing hide-and-seek within him, and that it is really the dynamic Life Centre which vitalises the other coatings of matter that come to envelope and hide it. The *Guru* endorses the disciple's vague and accidental conclusions. The Vedantic Seer provides the disciple with arguments and convictions and leads him to this Seat of Life, the Self, that lies within the seeker himself. When the disciple comes to understand fully the depth and

significance of the *Guru's* mystical words and comes to vitally and intensely experience first hand the Great Grand Truth that he is "THAT," he gains Perfect Knowledge.

To such a one in his perfection he is but *That*. As *That* he has once for all dropped all his wrong identifications with his body or his psychological entity. He becomes pure Spirit, and as Spirit his relationship with the Absolute is one of *perfect identity*; there cannot be any relationship, as "relationship" denotes the existence of at least a pair of things. Though the Vedantic student sought Truth within himself, yet in his discovery of It, as though in his bosom, he *experiences himself as the Whole*. This type of student is served by the School of Philosophy called *Non-Dualism* of Shankara. These three kinds of our relationships with Truth have been beautifully described in *Ramayana* when Hanuman the greatest devotee of Sree Ramachandra explains his relationship with Sree Ramachandra.

Hanuman says, "O Lord, at moments when I am steeped in my body consciousness I am *thy slave*; when I identify myself with the mind and intellect, i.e., as a *Jiva*, I am *a part of thee*; and when I am in my *Swarupa*, that is as the Spirit, I am *Thyself*". Thus our relationship with the Absolute can be explained in three different ways according to our state of self-consciousness. There are moments when even the greatest Seer is conscious of the sorrows of physical pains and even of the inclemencies of weather. At such moments even a *Gnani* falls prostrate at His feet and mentally seeks the Lord's mercy. There are moments when he is conscious of some inner mental agitations or irresistible poetic outburst or high intellec-

tual fight and recognises within himself a might and a power almost equivalent to that of the Lord. It is only in those rare moments of bliss and peace in *Samadhi*, when he has completely retired from the false outer covering of matter to the Subtlest of Subtle Spirit within, that he recognises and cries forth "*Shivoham*", "*Shivoham*", "I am that" ; the individual and the Absolute constitute *One Perfect Whole*.

It must also be clear to you all that the three schools of thought in Hindu Philosophy are not competing and contradicting theories, but that each explains a necessary stage we must pass through in our slow pilgrimage to the Peak of Perfection. It is only more intellectual *Pundits* who quarrel and seek to establish one or the other declaration and fight over them. In fact, the moment we step on to the Path of Spiritual *Sadhana* we shall realise that these three are three way-side inns for the spiritual pilgrims to rest and proceed ahead. Every pilgrim must first visit Madhwa, from where he proceeds ahead to worship Ramanuja and then alone can he reach the portals of Vedanta and recognise himself to be no other than Sree Shankara himself.

Let us therefore stop our quarrels. Let us act. Let us embark on the pilgrimage, and see for ourselves what is our Relationship with the Absolute.

THE PATH

We start to-day the study of the *Upanishads*. The study is called *Brahma Vidya*. Just as various branches of knowledge (similar to Physics, Chemistry, Geography, etc.) are the themes of our different studies, this is also a branch of knowledge and, it too has a special

name, which is *Brahma Vidya*. The only difference between *Brahma Vidya* and the other subjects of study is that *Brahma Vidya* is the *Vidya* of all the *Vidyas*; it is the Science of all Sciences. The theme of *Brahma Vidya* explains other Sciences.

Brahma Vidya teaches us a Factor which is the goal of all other Sciences. In Chemistry we experiment to find out the element, the source of all other elements. If we once find out such an element in nature, out of which we can create all other elements in the world, then there is no more research in Chemistry. Thereafter the role of research in Chemistry would be only to find out what are the reactions of the various combinations. Once we reach the "Element", the "Eternal Element", the first and the last Element, out of which all other elements have come, and in which all elements stay, we have found out all that is to be discovered in Chemistry.

We are here to seek the source of all life, the one Reality. We shall be satisfied only with Truth, from which the World and our experiences have risen up, and in which they exist and into which our experiences of the life moment to moment, get merged in. It is the fundamental substratum, the foundation, the Reality behind the seeming appearances. We are seeking the Goal, the one single Goal, which can explain not only the poverty of the poor, but also the richness and might of the rich and the powerful. It explains not merely the workings of the senses and emotions but also the total experience of life. It not only explains the physical body and the forms we see around us, but also how the mind works and with what potency it functions. Thus, we are trying to go deeper and deeper into the very source of Life in us. Seeking the

truth, we go from the gross to the subtlest. From the gross external world we are slowly and carefully going into the centre which is very subtle. The subtler the theme, the more difficult it would be to explain it and equally so for the listeners to understand. Our enquiry then shall be fruitful only when we adopt a very systematic method.

It is not haphazard conclusions that are given to us in *Upanishads* by some unknown *Rishis*. The conclusions in the *Upanishads* are not dictatorial orders thrust upon us to believe that there is a Supreme Reality. The *Rishis* help us to go step by step into the very portals of this Truth. They teach us even how to turn the key, open the doors and enter the Temple of Truth.

It is no easy task to explain the Inexplicable. It is only the gross objects that can be expressed and explained in words. In the *Upanishads*, the Masters attempt to show us the Reality only through the significance of words. We should not go to the *Upanishads* with the idea that we shall grasp *Brahma Vidya* with our mind and intellect. Mind and intellect are only two 'chappals' that we may wear, but at the Doors of the Mightiest of the Mighty, we will have to keep them away. We shall walk in and reach the Portals of God with bare feet. At His doors we leave them and enter in all reverence. Thus, we will have to progress in stages in our study, and hence, if we come here with the boastful attitude of a collegian we may miss the exact import of Vedanta. We will have to come prepared with a mind and an intellect sharpened, and trained to work for a higher purpose.

Truth is not a Factor thrust upon us. There is no force used at all. It is through logical reasoning and analysis of the values of the external world and

its conditions that we slowly get away from the false sense-objects, step by step, and ultimately reach the Real. Generally, there is a feeling that the spiritual life of God-seeking is meant for those persons who are physically deformed or mentally hysterical or intellectually abnormal, or for those persons who in life are ridden with disappointments and disastrous calamities. When we fail in life, we run frantically to Religion. There is a general belief that Religion is an open door for all the scum of society. This is absurd. Those who hold such views know not what Religion is. Religion is not for the unworthy, unintelligent and the abnormal. Religion is for the most level-headed and balanced men ; spiritually, psychologically and physically sound men.

Cowards cannot progress in spiritual life. Spiritual life is meant for those persons who enjoy good health and have a healthy physical equipment. It is meant for that man who is alert in mind and intellect, and who has a deep 'craving for the soul'. Only such thirsty, full blossomed human beings who have fully lived life can come to '*Vairagya*' or dispassion.

The directive, that in teaching the Vedas, the Teacher must see to it that the student is fit for it, is generally misunderstood. Veda is not meant only for the master-minds. It is for the people like you and me. Remember Sree Veda Vyasa was himself not a "*Brahmin*" in the now-accepted-sense of the term ! He was the son of a "*Brahmin*" born of a fisher-woman. And when a son is born to a *Brahmin* of a *Sudra* lady, the son, according to *Dharma Sastra*, is a *Chandala*. Is then Veda Vyasa in any sense of the term a "*Chandala*" ? To classify man according to birth is dangerous.

To-day if we are able to discuss the *Upanishads*, it is because of the progressive and revolutionary way in which Sree Vyasa Bhagawan collected and codified the Vedas. Before that period, Vedas were handed down from generation to generation, from teacher to the taught, by word of mouth and preserved in memory. Veda Vyasa saw that the world was leaning more and more towards materialism and he had the mighty vision and foresight to see that if they were not collected and preserved as books, the Vedas would be lost to mankind in the waves of revolutions and social upheavals that were to come in the world. He, therefore, collected them and codified the then existing and known *Veda-mantras*, into the four Vedas.

Sree Veda Vyasa, the great master-mind, in his wisdom found courage for such a daring act. Similarly, we find in every critical period of history a great master-mind coming up to guide man-kind in all walks of life including Religion. What was once a great law or rule got changed by them according to the demands of the new periods. They had the vision, the authority, power and courage within themselves to make such revolutionary changes.

Similarly, when it came down to the time of Sree Shankaracharya, the need for a '*Mutt*' System was felt. Before Shankaracharya, there was no organisation of the *Mutt* type. It became necessary that the Hindus must have these *Mutts* to fight down Budhism, which was spreading at the period. So, Sree Shankara opened up the various *Mutts* where a Teacher, a *Sanyasin* of Vedanta, would be teaching the students regularly, and the teacher and the taught would tour the villages near about 8 months of the year, spreading

the message of the Vedas.

Thus from time to time, some great master comes and changes the non-essentials of Religion to suit the convenience of the age in which he lives. When, for the first time, *Ramayana* was translated into Hindi by Sree Tulsidas, what an uproar was there against it ! And yet, but for that translation, to-day, North Indians would have been totally ignorant of our great Epic !! There are to-day some orthodox shortsighted persons who are aghast at the idea of the *Upanishads* being preached at the 'market-place'. They think that *Upanishads* are only for "fit students", with some special qualities of the head and the heart. But some of the great master-minds of our own times had the vision to discriminate and foresee that in another quarter of a century we would have so much materialism in our own country, that Hinduism would no more dare to raise its head, unless it was revived right now.

Ours is the Divine Mission for the revival of Hinduism ; therein lies the redemption of man, and Chinmaya is only one of the followers in that great Camp of Masters, who has been sent here to place before the educated class the ideals preached in the *Upanishads*. It is with this aim in view that this *Gnana Yagna* is being started.

Now before going into the study of the *Upanishads*, I shall take some of the general topics which are necessary for the right understanding of the *Upanishadic* textbooks. In all sciences, we have certain fundamentals to be learnt first, and then only, can the students understand the experiments conducted and the conclusions arrived at. Similarly we too shall first go through some of the *Vedanta Prakriyas*, some of the fundamental principles of Vedanta which have been reduced into

laws and upon which the entire Vedanta the Science of Truth is built up.

As in every branch of study, the student of *Brahma Vidya* also must have certain preliminary qualifications if he were to enter the Vedanta Hall, to hear the discourses with benefit and profit by them. This is nothing new. But when it is put under the grave term, '*Sadhana Chatusthaya*'—(the four qualifications necessary for a student) we are apt to feel surprised and uncomfortable. On a little closer analysis we shall find that we all have already these qualifications.

The "Four qualifications" necessary are : (1) a capacity to discriminate the Real from the unreal, the true from the false, the object from its shadow. Who has not got this? We may not have it playing in the higher Realms of Thought, but we all have this faculty of discrimination. We are not mere worms and animals. We are a cultured society of young men who can apply their power of discrimination in everyday life.

(2) *Vairagya* or detachment is a quality of the mind which enables one to get detached from the false and painful things. Do not be frightened away with false notions about *Vairagya*. Who among us has not got *Vairagya*? When the intellect has come to a sure and definite understanding, and is, consequently, fully aware that a given thing is but a shadow and a valueless paltry nothing, the mind naturally gets detached from it. Intellectual conviction of the truth and the desirability of things are prerequisites absolutely necessary for the mental attachment for those things. For example, if in a dream you get married to a lovely princess, on waking you cannot maintain your love or attachment for her. The moment you are awake

you realise the falsehood of the dream-love, and so your mind rolls off from the lady of the dream. The detachment gained as a result of a knowledge of the untrue nature of the object is *Vairagya*. And he who has *Vairagya* is a fit student of Vedanta.

This faculty for dispassion is in man and the *Srutis* make use of it. Gradually the untrue nature of the world is realised by a close student of the *Srutis*, and then dispassion in him becomes natural and intense. The function of the *Upanishads* is not merely a negative one : one of removing us from the world. It also opens up for our view of Greater World of Perfection to be achieved.

To-day we have in us these great qualities, but not the Field for them to play. Our *Upanishads'* study would be mainly an attempt to draw the Iron Curtain. Let us go into the higher realms in that Land of Truth, unpopulated now for the last so many years ! There is plenty of fertile land. It is a Land of *Shanti*. Let us make a mass pilgrimage to that Land—uninhabited, but so fertile—a Land flowing with milk and honey—the “Spiritual India”. It is our responsibility to see that we make India regain her Spiritual Empire. We can do it, and thus take a Message to the mankind, by ourselves living up to these qualities. The *Yagna* shall be an honest and sincere attempt on our part to try and understand the Land of Hope which the *Upanishads* describe.

The two other necessary qualifications to enter this *Yagna*-University are *Sadhana Sampat* or other noble qualities of head and heart and a burning eagerness to become Perfect and Powerful.

What is there that we cannot realise ? Now-a-days much currency has been gained by the idea that

Spiritualism or Religion is for the disappointed man, for the man of sorrow, for the unsuccessful man of the world. This is far from the Truth. Vedanta is a subject for the physically able, mentally balanced and intelligent men of the world.

A fit student of Vedanta would start his enquiries by asking from where the world had come and where will it go. When once we understand the outer world, our enquiry shall be about our body, the five sense-organs or the *Indriyas*. Step by step the seeker slowly comes to the Centre within himself from the outer world. To a man born-blind there is no 'form'. To a deaf man it would appear that the cannon is only fuming but not roaring. In order to enjoy tastes and smells one needs the tongue and the nose ; in their absence his world shall be without any taste or smell. Thus if we take away the five *Indriyas* there is no world at all for us. The world would appear as an existent nothing ! That is, our conception of the outer world is gained through our *Indriyas*.

Next the enquirer comes to enquire how his mind works, how his intellect functions, and from where the joy-element bubbles forth in him. Thus, seeking on, from the gross outer world to subtler and still subtler inner Spirit, he moves in the world. In Vedanta each of these grosser external coatings is called a "Sheath" (*Kosa*), and just as the Sheath merely encases the sword blade, here too the Reality within is untouched by the matter covering it. Our body forms the grossest encumbrance, the Physical Sheath, and slightly subtler than it is the "*Prana*" or the Vital Air-Sheath. Subtler still is the Mental Sheath. In Vedanta the word subtle denotes a greater pervasiveness or "*Vyapakatvam*". Still more subtle

than the mind is the Intellectual Sheath, and subtler still is the Bliss Sheath, the seat of all joy waves in us.

In Vedanta the attempt is to reach and recognise 'face to face' the Subtlest of the Subtle, the Self. At that moment of self-vision the grosser robes fall off, and Truth, our Real Nature, comes to be recognised as the All-pervasive Intelligence.

When we recognise the Vital Forces of Life, the very Fountain Head of All Life in the Universe, the world itself shall have an existence in ourselves, and when we gain a peep into the Centre of the Centre, when we meet the Mightiest of the Mighty, the Lord of the Lords at the peak experience in Life, in our Self-Realisation, we shall gain full freedom from the thralldom of all sorrows, disappointments, successes, failures, etc., and come to enjoy the voiceless joy of perfection, the Immortal State of Godhood.

Earlier I mentioned some of the fundamental grounds upon which the entire basis of Vedanta is built up. We find that the subtlest of the subtle, the Principle of Truth, resides within us as a Divine Spark enveloped as it were by the grosser coating of matter, the grossest being our physical body. In order to drive home this fact we had the expressive and ample illustrations of the chocolates in different wrappings and shapes.

We will discuss and try to understand the Reality. If there is a Reality, what then is the relationship between that Reality and myself; how and where do the names and forms that I see all round, fit in the scheme of the All-pervading Entity, the Truth? What is a *Jeeva* and the individualised, localised Ego-Centre? What is *Jagat*, the entire visible Universe? What is God?

And if once we have a full understanding of what these three—*Iswara*, *Jeeva*, *Jagat*—are, we ought to know the relationship between *these three* and the Supreme Reality. That is, we have to enquire into and discover what is the relationship between the Individual Ego-Centres the “I, I, I”—concept which all of us constantly have.

The sum total of all the intellect of all the *Jeevas* that are living in the visible world, the *Jagat*, is the Conception of God. Not our conception of a God, as Rama, Krishna, Siva, Christ, Mohammed, etc., but the Total Concept, the God-Principle. The particular *Avatars*, Incarnations, are only manifestations of the God-Principle. “God is the Total Causal Body (*Karana Sareera*) of the ‘Universe’.”

We should now try to find out the relationship of the grosser to the Supreme Essence, the Self. Our work will not be very easy as it is very difficult for words to alight, as it were, directly upon the exact relationship. Words are finite and finite words cannot express fully the Infinite. So the method adopted in Vedanta to convey the knowledge of the Self to the Seeker is through examples or illustrations. Now these illustrations are meant to, and can only point out one or two aspects of similarity and not all the aspects. It is often said in Vedanta that God, the Truth-Principle, is like “*Akasa*”. It only means that Truth is all-pervasive, and that it is untouched by or unconnected with, any of the things that exist in it. Space has got no real connection with the outer things. Space, even if crimes be committed in it, ever remains serene, and pure, nor does it gain its purity because of the *Yagas* done in it. It is in these aspects of its subtlety, of its all-pervasiveness,

of its integral and essential purity, that the *Sastras* say that the Supreme Reality is something like "*Akasa*". We need not quarrel and come to hair-splitting arguments about it. We should not understand from words such as "*Akasa*" that there is a Sun or a Moon or clouds hanging like vapours in the Absolute Reality. These are not to be considered from the illustration. The example of "*Akasa*" is only to point out one or two aspects of it.

Similarly, in trying to find out the relationship between the world and God, the Supreme Truth, we are forced to adopt the suggestive meaning or certain illustrations. Illustrations in themselves can bring forth only a few principles, but as we go on munching it mentally, as we apply our sharpened intellect and purified mind to it, as we go on doing what we call 'rotating the ideas in our own hearts', the illustrations yield to us their sacred juice or sweetness.

The relationship that exists among the *Jeeva*, *Jagat* and God is explained by the example of a piece of cloth in which we have some decorative patterns embroidered by the very same threads ; something like our bed-sheets or table-cloths which have got some embroidery on them made by the same thread. Now, therein we have a piece of cloth ; we have threads passing in it and the same threads have woven themselves into the patterns in it. The various patterns together give us the idea for example of a family sitting at tea. Now the "conception" that we gain out of it, of a family sitting round taking tea, is equivalent to our total conception of the *Jagat* with so many oceans, continents, mountains, etc.

Now, in what does this piece of cloth exist ? Has it got an existence other than the thread ? If we

were to remove all the threads, where would be the cloth? The cloth is the thread, but in our not seeing the thread and when seeing only the thread "patterns", we come to have the conception that there is a "family at tea". The thread here stands in the place of God. *Isvara sarva bhutanam*. "O Arjuna, I sit in the heart of everybody"; "like a thread in a garland I penetrate through every form and hold them all together" says Krishna in *Gita*. In this pattern of the family at tea, what is the essence? Nothing but the thread. But for the thread, there would have been no pattern, and but for God, there would have been no *Jagat*. Thus the names and forms, tastes and smells, sounds and touches constitute the "total conception" of the outer world we have. The whole world is made a pattern in the Lord by Truth; the God-Principle of the *Jagat*, the piece of cloth. If we take away the Divine Principle the entire pattern must necessarily melt into nothingness, just as the piece of cloth ends if all the threads in it are removed. The patterns in the embroidery individually stand for the individuals constituting the world. The thread stands for the God-Principle, the *Is-wara*.

Now let us analyse and try to go more deeply into the God-Principle. Let us analyse a piece of thread. What is the thread made of? Is the thread itself a self-born thing and Eternal? Does it exist by itself and in itself? What is the cause of the thread? Certainly from the standpoint of the cloth, the thread is a cause. But is the thread in itself self-sufficient to be a cause for itself? If it has a cause, what is the cause?.....Cotton!

But for the cotton, the thread would not have been there, and but for the thread there would have

been neither the cloth nor the patterns woven upon it. In cotton, the thread, the patterns, and the cloth exist. Out of cotton, all the three came and into the cotton back again they all must go when they perish.

There are, say, some ten idols made of mud. Each idol may be named differently. Each has got, according to its form, a different name. Names change according to the form. The forms change with the names. Break them all. What do we find? Mud! Mud they were, in mud they exist and into mud they go back. Mud is the Truth-Principle in that array of idols.

Similarly, the Truth-Principle in this piece of cloth is nothing but cotton. Remove all the cotton in it and give me a piece of cloth, if you dare! And yet even so, we rarely recognise cloth as nothing but cotton; we understand but we fail to maintain the understanding. For example, a shop-boy knows the cloth-pieces in his shop only as 'cloth' and not as cotton. So too in life, we seek the Truth, while life is nothing but Truth!!

We ever strive only to have an objective understanding and not a subjective realization of Truth. The relationship between the individual Ego, the *Jeeva* and God is the relationship between the pattern and the thread. God is the immediate transformation of the permanent Truth, and the next transformation is man. From Truth, a step down, an immediate modification is God-Principle, and the modification of God-Principle is man. Now we have understood that God is man in the sense that the pattern is nothing but the 'thread'.

In Vedanta, the All-Pervading Supreme Reality has in Itself gone into no modifications. The Cotton

is ever cotton. Only that has changed its form, and we gave it the name thread at one stage and the name cloth at another stage. According to our own angle of view, the same piece of cloth changes its impressions or reactions upon us. On a casual superficial look, we see it as a bed-sheet ; here we see only the gross total form. When observed a little more closely, we see the "thread" and when we examine it closer still we gain the *Darsan* of the cotton in it ! Having seen the cotton, there is no difference between the plurality in the various patterns and the different kinds of cloths. According to our grossest of views, there is no unity whatsoever in the world of clothes but when we start seeing the "threads" our plurality is much reduced, and again our vision becomes one homogeneous whole when we see that it is all cotton.

So too the waves, their froth, the bubbles and the whirls in the ocean are all nothing but the ocean. The names change with the forms but the fundamental Truth remains the same. From the standpoint of Truth, there is no difference, there is no plurality.

In order to act up to his temperament, each person has been provided with a vehicle, different form and a different body. And because there are different forms in the object, we call them by different names. Universal oneness is the Truth-Principle. If we approach the world from the stand-point of Truth, there is but the One Reality. Thus no relationship is possible between the individual, the world and God and the Supreme Eternal Truth because, relationship connotes two things at least. If we sincerely seek the exact relationship between us and God, we have to conclude that there is no difference at all—

just as there can be no difference between the thread and the patterns in an embroidered piece of cloth.

Similarly, what is the relationship between gold and a gold ring? The ring is gold. What then is the relationship between me and God? "I am God". But the hitch comes in with the misunderstanding which I entertain regarding who and what I am. Realising my real Nature, and looking out from within as the Self, to me the Self, "I am God".

In order to achieve this State of *Iswara Darsan*, to achieve the full realization of the All-Pervasive Supreme Reality, it is an unavoidable step to seek the Lord through love and devotion. It is through interception of the Lord, *Iswara Bhakti*, that one can realise the highest Truth as Himself. Without *Iswara Bhakti*, no progress is possible and not even a distant intellectual cognition of the Truth is possible for the individual. It is an absolute necessity, an unavoidable Self-training given by Religion—the temple, the *Kirtan* and the *Satsang*. These are unavoidable.

So then when we have once understood this divine relationship, it automatically produces in our mind, a thirst to know more and we continue our enquiries. A grave question will then come to our mind as to when did all these rise up? Don't you think that if there be in reality only one Fundamental Truth, as the *Satsang* has shown, what about the many forms that I see around me? Vedanta does not say "Don't worry, keep quiet". Vedanta gives maximum licence for our intellect. It explains the why and the how of creation.

A hundred similar questions face us as soon as we step into the pages of the *Upanishads* and try to follow the *Sruti* declarations. To seek an answer

to all of them at one stretch would be a futile effort. We proceed with our studies and as we progress onward many of our riddles shall get resolved by themselves and into many of our doubts Light shall stream in from the Grace of the *Upanishad Rishis* themselves.

Vedanta never accepts that the Supreme has suffered any change in its Eternal Nature of Oneness. As a result of a mysterious trick-of-the-mind, we have come to perceive and experience false plurality in Truth just as a traveller in darkness mistakes the rope for the serpent, and the lamp-post for the ghost ! This power of veiling the Truth in us is termed as *Māya* in Vedanta.

LAW OF *Karma*

The Law of *Karma* has been often misunderstood as Law of Destiny. There is, indeed, a lot of difference between Law of *Karma* and Law of Destiny. Had our Law of *Karma* been equal to the Law of Destiny, the Hindu civilization would have been long ago ended like the Roman or the Egyptian civilization. The Law of Destiny has a corroding effect upon the human heart and in a short time it renders its devotees and followers to be mere ineffectual lotus-eaters. If a nation depends entirely upon the Law of Destiny to guide it, it shall fall and become a country of narrow-minded, inactive animals.

On the other hand, a people believing in the Law of *Karma* and who live up to it become a generation of spiritual giants and dynamic citizens. There is a lot of difference between *inactivity* and *unactivity*. The *Sanyasin* in the jungle is *not* inactive. He is no ineffectual individual ; he is potent but *unactive*. He does not,

in his selfish ego, initiate any action deliberately, that is all.

The Law of *Karma* is based upon the final conclusion that this life is not an end in itself but is just one of the little incidents in the Eternal Existence of each of us. Among us, each one is a type and has a life different from the other. The destiny of each is obviously different from that of the other. Had this been the very first and the last of our births, we should have had a more uniformity of experience in life.

Let us suppose that we have just "fallen" from Truth or Reality into this momentous and calamitous misunderstanding, then we should not have such a dissimilar scheme, of each Ego living its own life of special joys and woes. When we enquire, why there are such differences we are driven to the conclusion that, having risen from different "causes", each of us should manifest as a different "effect". Effects depend upon their causes. This life in which we are living is only one of our incarnations. We have had many incarnations in the past, and probably, many more shall come to our lot. From birth to death and from death to birth, the whirl goes on, but we do not appreciate it or understand it because we are viewing life from a very circumscribed point of view.

We think that life means the period spent by us between our birth and our death, and what we see and experience around during this interval is life. Supposing there hangs a picture painted on a canvass. In order to see the entire picture painted on it, we have to step back to some distance, and only then can we see the entire view, the rhythm of the colours, the beauty of the curves, etc. Similarly, when Life is viewed, in its nearer perspective, we find that it is

illogical, unrhythmic, etc. In detachment we will have to move away from our present Life to view the whole Life and understand it as such.

Some of us blame the Creator for our unfortunate lives, and despair by saying 'it is all our FATE'. You should understand that there is a Rhythm in the Universe, in that the Sun 'moves' regularly, the stars 'ride' their appointed paths, etc. Everywhere, there is the Law of Rhythm, and everything conforms to that Law. Only when we come to the subject of Life, we say "there is no Rhythm and there is no logic or system in it".

It is not so. We are the various 'effects' rising from different 'causes'. The 'causes' being different, the 'effects' are different. Thus, each of our actions of the past has its own reactions, and each of us must have a treasure-house of the entire-past-actions. This is called the '*Sanchita Karma*'. We all should understand that at the end of living the 'fruits' allotted for the life are called *Prarabdha*; on departing, each should take the next form according to the pattern ordained by the ripened ones in our total *Sanchita Karma*.

Let me explain it more clearly. Suppose I have a piece of land divided into plots. In one, I plant coconut seedlings, in the second seeds of ladies-finger and in the third mango seeds. In order to germinate, grow and give fruit, each seed would take its own time. This is very well known to us. Similarly, each of our action has got its own time-limit for its fruition. Every action has got its own reaction; certain actions give their reaction immediately, while others will provide their reactions only after an interval.

To enjoy and suffer the reactions of the past

actions, each of us need certain joys and sorrows, and in order to bring forth these required experiences, each must have a definite 'field' of his own experiences. The world *Loka* does merely indicate its generally-accepted meaning : the world. *Loka* means the special world in which I live my own inner experiences, the external world-of-objects remaining almost the same for all. *Loka* etymologically means a field of experience.

Again, people misunderstand the real meaning of *Prarabdha* when they take the word to mean all the failure, impotence and weakness in them. If we are to be guided by this delusion, the *Prarabdha*, in every act of ours, there is no room for self-improvement through self-efforts. There are some who console themselves by saying that, "I have no faith or love in God, and it is my *Prarabdha*". This is a defeatist mentality. So far as we entertain and live in a defeatist mentality we cannot expect progress. Without a personal morale we cannot work for our progress. In *Yoga Vasishta*, Sage Vasishta, advises repeatedly Sree Ramachandra, the true householder, to constant self-effort. Sree Ramachandra, the Seeker, used to have daily *Satsang* with Sage Vasishta and the discussions which took place constitute the *Yoga Vasishta*, the last text-book in Vedanta. While championing the *Ajada vada* and declaring all sense-objects as unreal, the Great Master ever insists on the importance of *Purushartha*, self-effort, in detecting the hollowness of life and rising above it.

From where does this *Purushartha* come in if *Prarabdha* orders every action? That we have been given by the Divine Being a limited freedom is the truth. For example, we cannot bend a piece of rail as it is, but supposing this rail-piece is beaten out

and made into a chain, the rail-matter becomes very easily pliable. Similarly, when a cow is tied to a rope in the centre of a pasture land, she is not free to graze the entire field but she can move freely within that circle drawn by that rope. Similarly, man, though he has taken his body to live a fixed *Prarabdha*, can reach the Supreme Goal of life by living the freedom allowed to him from moment to moment.

No doubt, we have come here into this world to enjoy and suffer for certain of our past *Karmas*, through the circumstances ordered by our *Prarabdha*. And there is provision for us to discriminate and act rightly. For example, is there not a certain amount of freedom in choosing whether we should go to a cinema or a *Satsang*? Every moment in our life there is a challenge on these lines : " Shall I do this or shall I do that ". There are two ways to deal with each challenge. Two distinct paths are open to us. The Path of the Good and the Path of the Pleasant. We find ourselves moment to moment standing at the junction of these two paths. Often we are at a loss to decide which path to pursue. There is a tussle between Satan and God in us at such a moment of trial. By adopting the Path of the Pleasant, man cannot get, in the long run, his full satisfaction. This is the experience of all. Have you ever been to that cinema which has given you complete satisfaction? There is no such ' picture ' yet released ! One who has adopted the Path of the Good, as in our case, one who attends the *Satsang*, gains peace of mind and learns some good things about life and himself. Slowly, the former, under the impact of repeated disappointments, comes to think that he should go through the Path of the Good.

The mind is made up of a soft matter, as it were. As each thought passes through it, an 'impression' is left, on the mind-stuff like a scratch and when similar thoughts are repeated, it deepens into a canal. Every subsequent thought wave has got a tendency to flow through that ready-made thought-canal. Thus, if the impression or the canal made is of good thought-waves, then a good character is maintained and strengthened by the subsequent thought-waves flowing irresistibly in that direction.

Let us take an example and examine the working of the mind. If you have got a tendency to get angry and want to put out that tendency you should first of all feel sorrowful or repentant about it. Then you will have already suppressed the anger to some extent. Of course, pent-up anger will burst forth at a later date if you merely suppress it. But, if you be intelligent, you should divert that anger-energy into some other profitable direction. You should not succumb to the anger-weakness, meekly saying, "It is my *Prarabdha*".

Carve out a new canal in your mind with repeated good thought-waves. Repeat to yourself, "I love all", "I am very very tolerant". Go on repeating the self-suggestive thoughts, "I am kind", "I will never get angry", "I am tolerant", etc., and in a very short time, you will observe that you have no anger at all in your mental make-up.

First of all, you should cognise things. Be aware of your weakness. Be fully aware of them. Man is his mind. He is the very composition of his mind. When one does some actions, repeatedly, one's mind gets fixed with certain impressions. It is in a world of reactions related to the outer world-of-objects that we live. The quality of one's experiences depends

upon the quality of the mind which one brings up to undergo the experience. The mind, being what it is, is ordered and set by the various impressions, it has gathered in its different transactions in Life. Thus, when we have controlled and chastened the motives and thoughts in the mind, we should have purified it.

Each moment of our life, we are not only living the fruits of the past actions, but also *creating* those of to-morrow. Each moment we are preparing ourselves for the lives yet to come. *Prarabdha* is caused by the actions done in the past. It is only the very self-effort of the past. So, if our *Prarabdha* be a sorrowful one now, let us do such acts today so that we can now determine or order a happier life for us in the future.

The Law of Destiny does not explain to us how, even while we live the preordained and *Prarabdha*-controlled pattern of circumstances, we can have in the immediate moments a freedom to create afresh. This idea is not explained in the Law of Destiny. So it shatters our morale and a soul-killing defeatist mentality comes to choke us. It takes away the fire, the enthusiasm, the grit in Man and makes him a dull inactive individual, a mere dumb animal.

A happier morrow is built up only when we live today a Life Divine. Religion has been asking us to entertain and live such values of life so that while living them we shall be creating an ordered life of fuller joys for the morrow. Not only in this life but also in the next life we shall be able to enjoy the fruits of our Divine actions. Use the main righteous path ; avoid the by-lanes, the narrow, thorny, unrighteous path. We must start and constantly keep on to the right path, to reach the Supreme, our Goal. If our course be in the right direction, then we shall certainly

reach in time, our destination, the Supreme.

Yet another way of looking at it and coming to the same conclusion is by re-viewing life in the light of Time-flow, wherein the *future*, through the *present*, is ever becoming the *past*. Anything that is now in the future must in time arrive to become the present—and erelong should pass on to be of the past.

We have already said that human intellect cannot rest without seeking the cause of things. This causation-hunting-urge in us is not generally investigated into, seriously and thoroughly, by the students. If we do so, we shall discover certain facts in it which shall reveal to us the inner meaning and the deeper significances of the Law of Karma.

From the seed the tree comes : the seed is the cause, and the tree is the effect. From cotton the cloth is made ; the cotton is the cause, and the cloth is the effect. Now, in all conceivable examples the *cause* is, like the father of a child, *anterior*, and the *effect*, like the child born, *posterior*, with reference to time : father was in existence before the son was born. Cause is thus that which was, and the effect is that which is. The past *causes* the present ; the present will, therefore, come to cause the future !

In short, it is, therefore, said that the future is not a mystery—an unknown miracle that man must wait for its stunning revelations. *The past modified in the present alone is the future.* The things to come are not ordered by a mere continuity of the past ; it can never be. This freedom to modify the past, and thereby create a future, for the better or for the worse, is *Purushartha* : self-effort.

To illustrate : if down a river, running at 2 miles an hour, a log is floating, then it will also move at the

same speed as the waters of the river. But supposing now, the log is fitted with a motor and manned by an intelligent driver, the log will have an independent movement of itself—no doubt, conditioned by the flow of the river. When the speedometer shows 10 miles an hour, the log will move 12 miles in an hour down the river, and only 8 miles an hour, if it is moving up stream. The flow of the river will be always there ; but due to the machine and the intelligence of the captain, the log has developed a “ limited freedom ” of movement now.

Similarly, the plant and the animal kingdoms, like the log that floats down, irresistably in the flood of the past, move, directed and guided by their natural instincts and mere impulses. But on reaching the human level, man acquires his reasoning capacity and a captain in his discriminative faculty. Using these two, he can steer the ship of his life safely to his destination—the Goal, the Ideal.

In fact, the *present* becomes an effect only with reference to the *past* ; the present itself becomes a *cause* with reference to the future. You are the son (effect) of your father (cause). With reference to your father you are an effect. You are also the father (cause) of your son (effect).. With reference to your son you are a cause. In fact, nobody can say whether he is a cause or an effect ; both these terms are only with reference to the past or the future.

The present, looked *against the past*, is an effect ; a man is now the sum total of his past, indeed. And this is true of any country, community, society or group.

But the present, looked *against the future*, is a cause ; a man would be as he is now. And this too is true of any country, community, society or group.

Viewed carefully the present in itself has no existence : it is a mingling of the past and the futurethe passage of the future to the past is the present. The living present is at once the tomb of the past and the womb of the future. This tomb-womb present has roots going deep into the past and branches spreading around everywhere into the future.

To consider, therefore, that the present is but a product of the past (*Prarabdha*) is undignified ; to recognise then that the future is but a product of the present (*Purushartha*) is unintelligent. There is no slavery ; nor is there full freedom. There is a limited freedom, which, if intelligently used, can redeem us from all entanglements.

Thus, the Law of *Karma* when correctly understood is the greatest force of vitality in our philosophy. It makes us the architects of our own future. We are not helpless pawns in the hands of a mighty tyrant, God, who, it is believed, has created us so weak and tearful to live our lives of limitations and pains. If we are weak or sorrowful it is all because of our own wilful actions. In our ignorance, we in the past had pursued certain negative values of life, and like a Frankenstein, their fruits have come up now to give us the pattern of circumstances we are living today.

Never mind. Take heart. By living rightly today, the Divine values of love, kindness, tolerance, mercy, etc., we shall order a nobler pattern for our future.

Prarabdha is the *Purushartha* of the past. The " Stuff ", while remaining the same with reference to time, has two names : the *Purushartha* and *Prarabdha*.

By careful self-policing, detect the wrong tendencies in us. Eliminate them through constant and wilful

effort. Develop positivity and thus come to be the God of your own future life. Be a GOD !

FALL AND RISE OF MAN

The *OM* in the chart (*see* page lix) represents the Supreme Reality, the Pure Existence-Bliss. *OM* indicates the Truth which is the theme of *Upanishads*. This is the source of all life. It is the Centre of Life in each one of us, and as such it is the Unchanging Eternal Truth in us—the “Real I” in all of us.

We, from that state of Transcendental Glory, from that Nature of Knowledge-Bliss, have fallen down to become Man—the limited, ignorant, sad mortal. How this seeming “fall” has happened is a necessary knowledge so that we may know our Paths to return to our own Home.

Vedanta does not accept any real “fall” in Man from the Reality. The Religion of *Upanishads* is never tired of repeating the assertion “Thou art That” And yet you and I are feeling our separate existence, our weakness, our sorrows and our limitations. The duality about us always brings bitter experiences to us. The phenomenal world is evident and every minute, it is experienced by us in our daily life. But Vedanta asserts that this seeming world of sense-objects is not Real. This is only a finite appearance. It can be ended. The world is seemingly real to us just as the snake is real to the deluded, although there is really only a rope. The ghost is real to the frightened in his ignorance of the post which he mistook to be the ghost. Mirage can never be ; even when we “see” the mirage, desert alone is there.

Thus, the Eternal *Sat-Chit-Ananda* alone is the

world and the ego-centric-idea of our separatist existence is only a superimposition upon Truth. They are all false. Plurality is a sad delusion. The ONE alone is Real and True.

Even so, we today, in our ignorance of the Real, in our *Avidya* (Nescience), live in our own delusions. How did this delusion rise up? This ought to be the natural question now in our minds. An attempt to explain this stumbling doubt in the minds of the Seekers has been made in Vedanta by the introduction of the term *Maya*.

Maya is defined as an inexplicable Power of the Supreme which is in 'That, as inseparable as heat from fire, just as we cannot have fire as a "thing-in-itself", after removing all the heat from it, nor can heat have any existence if the fire-element is removed from it. So too *Maya* is a Power inherent in the Supreme. Fire is heat : heat is fire.

It is possible that we may have a superficial understanding of this term, a growing suspicion that *Maya* is a tricky word introduced by the Vedantins in their *Maya Vada* to veil the main issues of a pointed question and to confuse the questioner with a mysterious nothing. But such a feeling can rise up only out of our own ignorance of the language ; for in Sanskrit, the word *Maya*, in its etymological meaning, stands for "that which is not" (*Yo Ma Sa Maya*). It is *Maya*, a power in our mind to get itself deluded, that creates for us the delusion of the snake-in-the-rope, of the ghost-in-the-post, of the mirage-in-the-desert.

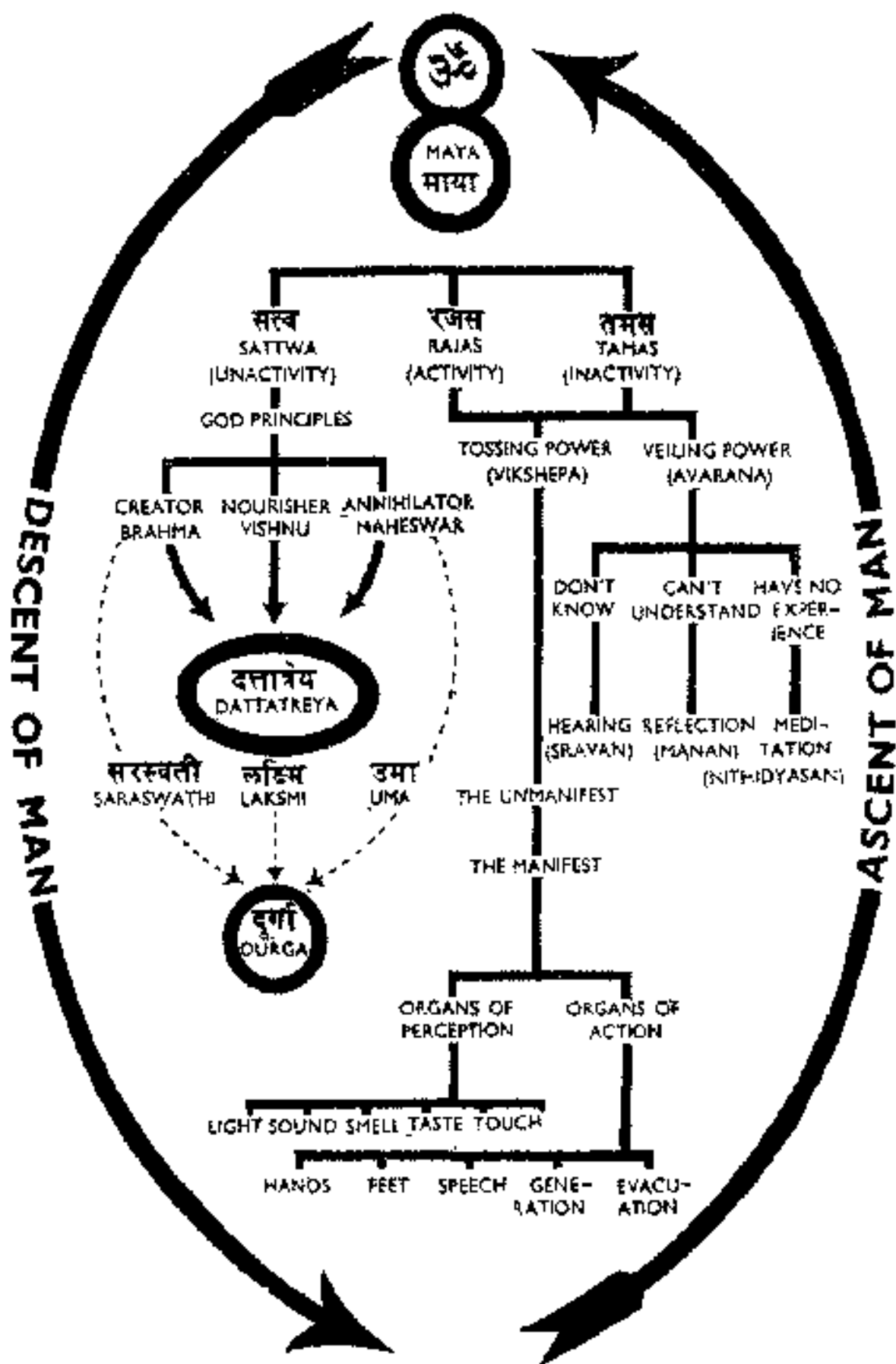
The famous story of Somadutta's father in Vedanta is often quoted to explain the *Maya* in us, deluding us, as it were, with our own active co-operation and sympathy ! Let us examine the story.

One newly initiated anchorite, during a pilgrimage, felt tired and weary, because of the hot day and the burning sun. Seeing a shaded arbour near the Ganges banks, he took shelter in it to rest. There was a narrow piece of rock upon which he stretched and composed himself to a restful siesta. As he was dozing off, his attention was attracted by two young girls who had come to the Ganges to collect water. They filled their pots and went away but the vision generated the following lines of thought in the half-sleepy anchorite : " Supposing, I marry one of them ! Then I shall have a little house with three spacious rooms. And I shall be a very severe and grave husband too ! Working in my own fields I shall live a happy life of contentment and joy ! Then the first born.....Yes, I will have a fat, beautiful son. Of Course, I must name him Somadutta. And we shall all three sleep in the same bed ! But is there space enough for my son ? " Devi, please give some more space for our son, otherwise he might fall down." " Lord, how can I move ? " answers she, " To which side ? you move a bit to your end." " All right ", he says.....And splash !.....

Poor Somadutta's father moved a little towards his side and the stone was narrow. He lost his balance and rolled down into the Ganges water. Awakened, the anchorite swam out and reached the shore.

Now, friends, what made the anchorite fall ? And after his awakening, where should he go to regain his young wife and child ?

The poor *Brahmacharin*, created the world of Somadutta in himself, and identifying completely with it, came to live the dream-life as though ' real ', and thus suffered the fall.



So too, the Pure Eternal Self we are. The Self in a dream has forgotten Itself, and dreams of Its own *Samsar*. Wake up. Role out of this narrow plane-of-false-identifications, dip into the cool Ganges water—the *Srutis*—and get awakened. End the un-divine dream at one stroke.

The power in Somadutta's father, with which he "lived" his domestic life and ultimately fell into the Ganges is *Maya* : "that which is not" in his own mind existing as its own nature!!

Maya is manifested in the world as three distinct Eternal Qualities : the *Sattwa* (unactivity), the *Rajas* (activity) and the *Tamas* (inactivity). All these three qualities are ever in a state of admixture. Their proportions, of course, vary from individual to individual and in the same individual from time to time.

When the Supreme Reality, the Eternal Intelligence gets reflected in Pure *Sattwa-Guna-Pradhana*, *Maya*, we get a very distinct and clear reflection of the Supreme in it : this is the God-Principle. And the dimmer reflection of " *Sattwa* mixed with *Rajas* and *Tamas* " (*Malina-Sattwa-Pradhana Maya*) is the ego-centric *Jiva*, the individual mortal.

Please refer to the Chart. The God-Principle manifests itself around us in the world outside as three main accomplishments. We observe that at every moment things are being created and born, at every moment there is destruction and death, and between these two points, of an unknown beginning and an equally uncertain end, we also watch things being maintained. In order to facilitate the common man to grasp these three Powers manifest in him, we have them represented as the Creator (Lord Brahma) the Maintainer (Lord Vishnu) and the Annihilator

(Lord Siva).

To create a pot, the potter must have a pre-knowledge of what he is going to make ; similarly the Creator ought to ' know ' what he is to create. We have thus Lord Brahma married to Sree Saraswati, the Goddess of learning and knowledge. In order to maintain ourselves, we need the ' capacity to maintain '. A pauper cannot be the head of the family and maintain the family. Thus, we have Sree Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and plenty as the consort of Lord Vishnu. Similarly, Lord Siva cannot carry on the function of annihilation unless there is for Him a field of finite destructible objects. Without the phenomenal world, we cannot have the manifestation of the Rudra—Might. So Lord Siva is ably supported by His devoted partner, Goddess Uma—the *Prakriti*.

Even when the Trinity is thus shown to be three distinct Divine Personalities, it is also shown clearly that they are distinct and separate Divine Powers. The oneness of them is the soulful song in our *Puranas*. But this subtle song is heard only by the most attentive, and the most cultured. *Sad-Guru* Sree Dattatreya, the Teachers' Teacher, is the synthesis of all the three Lords, and in Goddess Durga, we have the representation of the synthesis of the three divine-consorts.

So then, whatever be the seeming plurality among our Gods, there is but one and the same God-Principle. In fact, individually each of them is helpless, and unless there is creation the other two functions are impossible. Without Vishnu, the others are impotent. If *Shivatattva* does not function the Creator or the Maintainer cannot come into play. Only as a well-organised team can the three work together and manifest themselves. One God-Principle alone exists. Plurality

is a delusion, a false understanding.

If the reflection of Truth in Pure *Sattwa Maya* is the God-Principle, the broken, dim reflections of the same Truth Supreme in a medium of Impure *Sattwa Maya* is the individual Ego-Centre, the *Samsarin*. *Rajas* is activity and *Tamas* is inactivity. This medium of reflection producing the *Jiva*-dream is something like a cup of cow-dung water reflecting the sun. The reflection cannot be as pure and steady, as clear and true to the original as the reflection of the same sun in a cup of pure crystal-clear steady water. How this dimness and agitation came to be, is represented on the right-hand side of the Chart.

The *Tamas* quality acts in us in two distinct ways. It produces the mental agitations, *Vikshepa* and the veiling of Truth *Āvarana*. Let us examine what these are. Remember, these two Powers are not independent, each depends upon the other. The *Vikshepa* creates the veil and the *Āvarana* creates the agitation.

The Veiling-Power of the *Tamas* in us plays in three distinct negativities such as (a) I don't know, (b) I can't understand and (c) I have not experienced. These three negative-concepts in us are removed by the three main Vedanta practices : Hearing (*Sraavan*), Reflection (*Manan*) and Meditation (*Nidhidhyasan*).

The first of the three main tragedies, born of the Veiling-Power in us, is that, left to ourselves, few of us have the capacity to independently observe, analyse and conclude that there is a God-Principle behind the ever-changing flux in the phenomenal world. "I don't know," is the grossest state of *Āvarana*. This is removed by "Hearing", directly from the Great Masters, or indirectly through the Great Scriptures.

When we have removed this negativity, a subtler one rises up into prominence, viz., "I can't understand". This is surmounted by intellectual analysis and reasoning, when the seeker comes to feel that in and through the endless names and forms, is running a golden-chord of unity, a sense of Oneness, the *Atman*. But often students of philosophy at this stage learn to devalue their own intellectual awareness of this changeless Truth behind the medley of life as not a fact, since it is "not experienced" by them. This *Avarana* manifestation in us is removed by the process of practice prescribed for the Vedanta-*Sadhaka* called Meditation. Meditation is a process of inner Self-discipline by which through constant practice the seeker learns the art of keeping his mind at one and the same chosen line of thinking to the strict and severe exclusion of all other dissimilar currents of thoughts. Ultimately the *Sadhaka* succeeds in bringing his mind to a complete stillness as in sleep, in which, unlike in sleep, he has his entire awareness brightly lit up and kindling in his bosom. At this moment of Bliss and Knowledge, called the *Savikalpa Samadhi*, the *Sadhaka* comes to chop off his last traces of the *Avarana* in his inner composition.

We have had so long a discussion of one of the manifestations of *Tamas*. The other is the agitations of the mind called *Vikshepa*. From this *Vikshepa* arises the Unmanifest world—the subconscious and from it the grosser emphasis and assertion of the Manifest, the world of the Five Elements. The interplay of the Elements produce the names and forms of objects including the senses of Knowledge and the senses of Action, which together constitute the sad, tearful, ineffectual mortal, the helpless *Samsarin*.

With this, the Fall of Man (*the arrow on the left*

side in the Chart) is complete. From being the Eternal, Immortal, All-full (*nitya suddha mukta paramatman*), Pure consciousness, due to the Play of *Maya*, like Somadutta's father, we too have come to feel our own limitations and live in our unbuilt huts with our unmarried wife and unborn son.

Vedanta is not a pessimistic philosophy to leave its conclusions with a mere theory of the Fall. This very theory has been devised to explain the non-existent dreamfall so that the faithful may be shown a way to wake up and realise their own True and Eternal Nature, the *OM*.

All the different Religions of the world and all the different *Yogas* in Hinduism, however distinct they might seem to be in their approaches, all of them, in one voice, insist that man must learn to control his sense-organs of knowledge and action. Self-control, without and within, is the one point on which all sing in melodious agreement.

But this control of the *Indriyas* is not accomplished by mere violent suppression. The ten-headed monster is us, the Ravana in us, cannot be beheaded even by the Inner Ram! Sree Ramachandra had to first explode the *Amrit Kalasa*—a secret talisman of nectar which Ravana had worn in his body and so long as it was intact not even *Brahma-Astra* (arrow) could end the Rakshasa!

Deep in us lies the *Kalasa* (the jar) containing desires fed by our Nescience. Unless this is ended by drowning the very source of it, the *Avidya* (ignorance), we cannot control effectively the sense-organs. So long as traces of 'delusion' are in us, we shall have desires rising up in us. They whip the *Indriyas* to roam out among their respective Sense-objects. With

‘ knowledge ’ alone can we end our ‘ Ignorance ’.

The knowledge of our Real Nature, the realisation of the “ *Sivoham* ” state, the recognition that “ I am Chinmaya ”, the knowledge that I am not this ‘ name and form personality ’, but a homogeneous mass of Pure Consciousness, alone can end our Ignorance (*Avidya*), the delusion (*Bhrami*), the source of all the desire eruptions. But Pure Knowledge is our Eternal *Svarupa*, and thus, it is not a state to be created. We have only to end the clouding, confusing, deluding ignorance, and when the clouds move off, the Sun hidden behind them appears in all its brilliance.

This removal of Nescience is through Hearing, Reflection and Meditation, and we have already seen how the Veiling Power of *Tamas* acts upon us and how each of its strategy is met and defeated by the Vedanta *Sadhana*, *Sravan*, *Manan* and *Nidhidhyasan* (see Chart).

Thus, by the time a student reaches the *Manan*-state, he gains more and more of an intellectual understanding about the futility of seeking seeming happiness and peace in the world of sense-objects. Here starts the real control of the sense-organs. And when he gains slowly a little of sense-control, the agitations of the mind created by his contact with the world of sense-objects are reduced. This enables him to gain a thousand-fold joy, peace and tranquility within and consequently his meditation-flights reach higher levels and his concentration becomes more pointed and firm. Hand in hand the team works : the more the *Avarana* is controlled, the more the *Vikshepa* is stilled ; the more the tossings and agitations are pacified, the easier the veil gets rolled off. In course of time, in proportion to the intensity of *Abhyasa*, the twin gruesome manifestations of *Tamas* are both completely controlled, and we

shall then have sublimated the *Rajas-Tamas* defects in us, with consequent gain of *Sattwa* in us.

As we hear, reflect and meditate upon the *Sruti Mantras* (the scriptures), the disturbances and the "muddiness" in our mental lake are eliminated. Naturally the Pure Sun-of-Knowledge, the Eternal Truth, gets reflected clearly. The clearest and the truest reflection of the Eternal Truth is the God-Principle. Therefore, a *Sadhaka* slowly comes to manifest in himself Divinity and Godliness at this stage. Miracles are easy to him. Grace is natural to him. Kindness becomes his instinct. Love is his very breath. Mercy is his essence, Truthfulness becomes his very trait, and Lordliness his birthright. In short, a Godman on earth, he lives, poor or starving, suffering or in health, laughing or weeping, to rule, guide and enlighten.

At this stage if he is yet steady in his *Sadhana*, and can still maintain his Divine urge to *know* and to *become*, if he is dispassionate enough to reject and renounce even the powers and joys of Godhood, he during the highest flights of his deepest meditation, wafts even beyond the yonder summits of *Sattwa*, and becomes *Sattwatitha* or one who has transcended even the Gods. He experiences in himself the Supreme Truth and becomes THAT. And having reached *OM* and merging in *OM*, he becomes *OM*. He gains the *Paramam Padam*—the Finale, the Goal of Perfection, the Bliss Absolute.

There in Him rests all. The Universe has only risen from Him : in Him it exists ; towards Him it moves ; into Him it finally must enter and afterwards become Him, the one Eternal Truth Absolute.

The arrow on the left (*see chart*), shows the direction of the Fall of Man from *OM* to delusion. The arrow

on the right shows the Ascent of Man from the vales of tears to the state of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, the Self.

Thus, without the control of the *Indrias*, no spiritual growth is ever possible. And no control is effective until we start the hear-reflect-meditate schooling. Study the *Upanishads*. Independently think over them. Meditate regularly. Hand in hand, learn to control your senses, through a control of the desires. Intelligently pursue *Sadhana*. Success shall be yours. "Here and Now" is the guarantee repeatedly given by all the scriptures. With patience and faith "Serve, Love, Purify, Meditate and Realise Truth" in this very birth.

THE UPANISHADS

To the Vedantins, Veda is immortal and eternal. This statement must necessarily grate against the modern educated view. They shall certainly raise serious objections against such a dictatorial declaration. But when we examine the statement closer, we shall discover that it is not after all such a dictatorial belief thrust upon the faithful from the Vedanta platform.

The word VEDA comes from the root "Vid" meaning "to know". Thus Veda means 'knowledge'. To say that Veda is eternal is not to claim indestructibility to the text-books of the Vedas. The knowledge of the Self is indestructible. Even this statement is not easily acceptable to many.

Let me try to illustrate the idea with a modern example. From the days of Newton's discovery, we know that there is a measurable quantity of force, called the gravitational force, with which the earth is ever attracting everything unto its own centre. Now, are we not right if we say that the gravitational force is

‘Eternal’ in the sense that it was silently acting even before the fateful afternoon when that apple fell upon the nose of Newton and made him sit up and discover the force of gravity? And now, even when long after we have forgotten about this discovery, the force is acting upon things on and about the globe.

Just as this gravitational force or for that matter, electricity or the energy-content of each atom—is ‘Eternal’, so too, the Truth discussed in the Vedas is Eternal. It is not the Veda text-books; they may get destroyed in some tragic accident. But no harm can ever come to the Truth, the Self, which is the theme of the sacred *Upanishads*.

The modern educated mind is apt to ignore the authority of the teachings of the *Upanishads* and cry it down as a set of fantastic imaginations of the *Rishis*. This view can be maintained only when we have a superficial view of the *Upanishads*. If we study them closely, we shall gain more and more insight into them, and our faith in them will be more steadfast.

The authors or Seers of the *Upanishadic Mantras* were the *Rishis*, who, having lived years of intense experiencing of the world, had come to feel the hollowness of a life of make-shifts among its endless medley of means and ends. They, in the midst of life’s sobs and sorrows, laughters and smiles, heard a “Call”, the Call of the Within, which had set them upon their pilgrimage of seeking the Truth. In deep dispassion they retired into the thick of the majestic forests of the Ganges Valleys and there, with a highly developed mind and intellect, scooped their bosom to observe, analyse, classify and conclude the how and the why of the deeper workings of the psychological and the spiritual man in them.

These wisdom-sparks, the findings of a life-long specialised self-effort, the Master handed down to his disciple, who also had reached him, just as he himself had reached the banks of Mother Ganges. The disciple learned from his *Guru*, and carried the torch of knowledge, maintained, tended, nursed and nourished by his own experiences and conclusions, until he handed it over, intact and blazing, to his disciple.

Thus from teacher to the taught, the Knowledge Supreme has come down, in each succeeding Master, the Self-Science gaining in authority and wealth of detail. These Master-minds were so selflessly true to their pursuit after Truth that they, in the thrill of their divine adventure, ignored even themselves! We have rarely any identity of these men left to us in the body of the *Upanishads*. In almost all the *Upanishads* their authors are unknown; they, as it were, forgot to add their signatures to their master-pieces.

To them the Discovery was all-important, not the individual discoverer. They knew that man has but a few years of bubble-like existence; they recognised the hollowness of personal fame and name. They sought immortality not in a plane of memory of the succeeding generations, but in a subtler plane of the Eternal Consciousness.

Such a brilliant line of Seekers, each crying the Same Truth, could not be false, in any sense of the term, in their statements. Probably, in our times, a modern philosopher might sing a wrong note to earn wealth, to gain social recognition, to flatter his publisher or to capture the fancy of the reading-class. But to the *Upanishad*-Seers no gain was a consideration sufficiently tempting to swerve from Truth. Even

the kings had no hold on them : for the Seers lived in absolute freedom, detached from court life and were in their inner perfections, devout nobilities, mighty in their powers of intellect, consummate in their renunciation, and thus truly kings of kings. They had the grit born of True Knowledge to declare even to the mighty emperor that he was a sad worm, helpless and pain-ridden, ever poor, and powerless !

Such mighty men, self-sufficient, perfect, daring and glorious heroes, cannot be easily labelled down as "mad". The details of their great self-discovery were not thrust down on all ; it was given out only to such mature minds who reached their presence, hungry and thirsty for this Knowledge Supreme. We shall also observe that the Teachers, though they vary in their expressions, in their lines of arguments, and their modes of approaches, all of them, without even a single exception, reach the same Divine Goal. Can we accept then, that these *Rishis* as a class manufactured the same "bluff" and gave it out to generation after generation ? For what purpose ? Such a conclusion can only be illogical, baseless and false.

The *Upanishads* are revelations, not the products of the individual mind and the intellect. By a long process of practice, control and discipline, the mind and intellect are trained to soar into the higher realms of greater subtleties and to remain there in angelic poise and grace. In their very lightness, at such dizzy heights of seeking and soaring, they seem to roll off into a vaporous nothingness ! This is the fulfilment of all *Yogas*. When thus the mind is sublimated, the faculty called *intuition* is awakened in man, and Truth is realised intuitively by the Seers and Sages. The Absolute Truth is not imagined or ratio-

nally determined. It is intuitively *experienced*. Thus it is an empty statement if an intellectual idler dismisses the *Upanishads* as "fantastic imagination".

These sacred *Upanishads* are the cream of human achievements in life, and form the third book in each of the four Vedas. Each Veda contains three books : the *Mantras*, the *Brahmanas*, and *Aranyakas*. The first contains crisp words of secret potencies ; the second comprises the apostrophies to the majesty, grandeur and beauty of Nature, and descriptions of the *yagas* and *yagnas* ; and the third book contains the *Upanishads*.

The very term by which the book containing the *Upanishads* is called, *Aranyakas*, means that which is to be taught and studied in the forest. It means that a field of peace and majesty is necessary for the mind-and-intellect-vehicle to speed out and take off from the gross, material, carth---earthly thoughts and considerations. You need not look aghast at this statement. Even when you have some small personal problem, say to resign the present job or not, what do you do ? Don't you walk out of home and go to a quiet and silent park and lying down there under a tree, mentally review the pros and cons and come to a final decision ? When an ordinary material problem needs this much of solitude, peace and space-sense about us, how much more should one need the help of a right atmosphere to delve within and seek the Eternal Well of Life ?

The entire Vedas were in the early days handed down from teacher to disciple *only* by word of mouth. But in the time of Sree Veda Vyasa, the Master Mind detected a perceptible fall in the quality and stamina in the nature of man. Those were the days when materialism had probably started to throw wide its muslim nest of false values and false charms. Sree

Veda Vyasa rightly foresaw that soon the Science of Sciences would be lost to the future generations unless they were collected, classified and preserved in writing. At that time what a huge uproar it might have made among the orthodox little hearts! So too did the fanatical class at all great occasions such as when Sree Tulasi Das translated *Ramayana* into Hindi, or when the first translations of *Gita* and the *Upanishads* came out in English. Even today it is insufferable to the old-timers to attend a *Satsang* in English!

But greater men than mere book-Pundits, men of perfection living today the life of the *Upanishad* Truths, in divine dispassion and discrimination, away from the world, and its meaningless bustle—these great Masters who are this *Sadhoo's Gurus*, have found it necessary to start this great Movement of a Hindu Revival through a total Spiritual Revolution within each educated Seeker. And if today we worship and adore Sree Veda Vyasa as the noblest guardian of the Hindu culture and knowledge, certainly, the day is not too far off when, not only the Hindus, but the whole world shall come with tears of gratitude to adore and admire the far-sightedness and vision of Chinmaya's *Gurus*. Their progressive and daring programme of this mighty Revival Movement shall bless the world to come.

Sree Veda Vyasa collected all the *Mantras*, then known to some scattered scholars purified them and edited them all into four great Volumes; the *Rig Veda*, the *Sama Veda*, the *Yajur Veda* and the *Atharvana Veda*. Each Veda contains three books: the *Mantras*, the *Brahmanas* and the *Aranyakas*.

The fit students who followed the *Aranyakas* for purposes of specialisation, went to the majestic settings

of the thick forests on the banks of the Ganges. At the mere mention of retirement, we of the modern generation, laugh at the idea. To us retirement is "running-away". Our ancients never ran away from life. On the other hand, we may say that we do not face life and its problems even with half as much faith, sincerity, honesty and thoroughness as they did. This running away attitude is taken, even today as of old, by all men of deep thinking. It is only the dull and the 'animal', who do not, and to them life means only a stereotype drudgery of continuous exertion of earning, spending, sweating, toiling, craving and striving, sobbing, weeping and smiling. To such a crowd of toilers, the market-place is the hub-of-life, and, retirement, study, contemplation, meditation and self-sacrifice are all foolish idealisms and mad actions. But they forget that in their own times they have men suffering from the same '*Rishi-madness*'. Haven't we got them? What about the professors of the day? The scientists, who are not mere duplicating machines of the older generation but who are on the path of discovery striving to strip Nature and peep at Her secret beauties? What about our artists, and even politicians? Are they normal men? Are they not in a deeper sense of the term "runaways from life"? The absent-mindedness of learned professors is too well known to us. The artists face any amount of suffering, insult and privation, and though living in garrets yet carry on with their noble inner profession—the constant pursuit of beauty. We ignore them ; and they seem to ignore us too.

• An oldish man, in shabby clothes was once observed to be sitting in the early hours of a morn near a wayside tank and throwing small pebbles into the water and watching the widening ripples. When an 'honest

citizen' saw the 'idler', still at his 'pebble-play' late in the afternoon, his moral indignation was kindled. He declared ; " Such men should be shot at sight in any progressive state if it is run by responsible men of intelligence and character. Such men are a heavy burden on a country ". Today many of the hasty utterances of the common educated men are almost as wide as the conclusion of the " honest citizen ". But it would be a lesson for us to know that both the citizen and the idler had in time died—the citizen, like any street-dog, was forgotten and forgiven, but the idler is remembered and worshipped even today for he was no other than Medici himself, the master painter, who has left for us his immortal canvas wherein he had caught the eternal play of light and shade upon those ripples in the tank.

In short, the real, productive, original work does never give us any sign of flutter, hurry, excitement or outer sweat. It is a deep and fierce inner toil much too subtle for our gross eyes to see. It is an observed fact, even in our own Machine-Age, that when a wheel is turning at a terrific speed, it seems to be " motionless ". A top at its early fast movements of spinning would look like a picture of a stationary motionless form : only when its speed gets reduced does it deflect, exhibit agitations, swing more and more across its own axis. When a man lives the greater life of thinking and discovering there is less and less of the ordinary external gross activities. In fact such men, even while living in a laboratory, studio or garrett, are men living away from the life of the townsfolk. It is not possible for them to dance or laugh along with the broad-way crowd. They live certain values more seriously and more intensely. It will be foolish and thoughtless on our

part to laugh at such great men and condemn them as "run-aways" from life.

Similarly, some men felt the urge to seek a goal far subtler than mere eating, drinking, sleeping and breeding. For such a life of deep contemplation, a quietude of atmosphere and a desireless state of divine peace within are unavoidable. And such master-minds, in the past, retired to the banks of the Ganges, and living through years of self-watching and self-analysis, slowly cut out the route to the peak of Self-perfection. They handed down their discoveries to their next generation through their disciples; and they in their turn added miles of the path to the Unknown and themselves disappeared through death leaving the work for their disciples to complete.

Upanishads disclose to us the Road to the Within, which is the combined work of many generations of great thinkers, who lived the ideals they had discovered. These final discoveries of the Eternal, Infinite Nature of the human soul refused to be trapped within the meaning of the words of any language. Thus they had to prepare, a specialized, cultured (*Samskarita*) language. The greatest vehicle, to express the Inexpressible, had been thus arrived at in Sanskrit.

Upanishad Mantras fulfil their functions only through their pregnant "suggestiveness". They do not directly and openly express or explain: but with their 'indicative meaning', in their secret "import", in their meaningful "suggestiveness", they simply guide us to the very presence of Truth.

Hence we need always the interpretations from a *Guru* to understand fully the meaning of the *Upanishads*. Any amount of mere reading would not reveal to us their fuller and ampler wealth of meaning. These

Mantras are jealous, shy and secretive by their very nature.

Not only that we need a teacher, but we, the taught, also must have certain special inner energy to concentrate and contemplate upon the subtler factors in our own make-up. This energy is gained only when we live a noble life of ethical and moral values, and keep zealously the vow of *Brahmacharya*.

Be good. Do good. Be regular in your daily half-an-hour meditation. Maintain *Brahmacharya*. Try to get into the spirit of the *Upanishad Mantras* as we go on exploring their inner meanings and implications. May in His *Kripa* we all come to gain at least a single moment's thrill of the *Upanishad Truth* !

OM TAT SATH !