

# The Life Divine

[Draft C]

## Chapter II

The perfect truth of the Veda, where it is now hidden, can only be recovered by the same means by which it was originally possessed. Revelation and experience are the doors of the Spirit. It cannot be attained either by logical reasoning or by scholastic investigation, — na pravachanena, na bahuná srutena . . . na tarkenaishá matir apaneyá. “Not by explanation of texts nor by much learning” . . . “not by logic is this realisation attainable.” Logical reasoning and scholastic research can only be aids useful for confirming to the intellect what has already been acquired by revelation and spiritual experience. This limitation, this necessity are the inexorable results of the very nature of Veda.

It is ordinarily assumed by the rationalistic modern mind, itself accustomed to arrive at its intellectual results either by speculation or observation, the metaphysical method or the scientific, that the sublime general ideas of the Upanishads, which are apparently of a metaphysical nature, must have been the result of active metaphysical speculation emerging out of an attempt to elevate and intellectualise the primitively imaginative and sensational religious concepts of the Veda. I hold this theory to be an error caused by the reading of our own modern mental processes into the very different mentality of the Vedic Rishis. The higher mental processes of the ancient world were not intellectual, but intuitive. Those inner operations, the most brilliant, the most effective, the most obscure, are our grandest and most powerful sources of knowledge, but to the logical reason, have a very obscure meaning and doubtful validity. Revelation, inspiration, intuition, intuitive discrimination, were the capital processes of ancient enquiry. To the logical reason of

modern men revelation is a chimera, inspiration only a rapid intellectual selection of thoughts or words, intuition a swift and obscure process of reasoning, intuitive discrimination a brilliant and felicitous method of guessing. But to the Vedic mind they were not only real and familiar, but valid processes; our Indian ancients held them to be the supreme means of arriving at truth, and, if any Vedic Rishi had composed, after the manner of Kant, a Critique of Veda, he would have made the ideas underlying the ancient words drishti, sruti, smriti, ketu, the principal substance of his critique; indeed, unless these ideas are appreciated, it is impossible to understand how the old Rishis arrived so early in human history at results which, whether accepted or questioned, excite the surprise and admiration even of the self-confident modern intellect. I shall try to show at a later stage what I hold to be, in the light of the psychological experience of Yoga, the exact processes involved in these ancient terms and their practical and philosophical justification. But, whatever the validity attached to them or the lack of validity, it is only by reproducing the Vedic processes and recovering the original starting point that we can recover also whatever is, to the intellect, hopelessly obscure in the Veda and Vedanta. If we know of the existence of a buried treasure, but have no proper clue to its exact whereabouts, there are small chances of our enjoying those ancient riches; but if we have a clue, however cryptic, left behind them by the original possessors, the whole problem is then to recover the process of their cryptogram, set ourselves at the proper spot and arrive at their secret cache by repeating the very paces trod out by them in their lost centuries.

All processes of intellectual discovery feel the necessity of reposing upon some means of confirmation and verification which will safeguard their results, deliver us from the persistent questioning of intellectual doubt & satisfy, however incompletely, its demand for a perfectly safe standing-ground, for the greatest amount of surety. Each therefore has a double movement, one swift, direct, fruitful, but unsafe, the other more deliberate and certain. The direct process of metaphysics is speculation, its confirmatory process is reasoning under strict

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rules of verbal logic; the direct process of science is hypothesis, its confirmatory process is proof by physical experiment or by some kind of sensational evidence or demonstration. The method of Veda may be said to have in the same way a double movement; the revelatory processes are its direct method, experience by the mind and body is the confirmatory process. The relation between them cannot, indeed, be precisely the same as in the intellectual methods of metaphysics & science; for the revelatory processes are supposed to be self-illuminating and self-justifying. The very nature of revelation is to be a supra-intellectual activity occurring on the plane of that self-existent, self-viewing Truth, independent of our searching & finding, the presumed existence of which is the sole justification for the long labour of the intellect to arrive at truth. In Veda drishti & sruti illumine & convey, the intellect has only to receive & understand. Experience by the mind & body is necessary not for confirmation, but for realisation in the lower plane of consciousness on which we mental and physical beings live. We see a truth self-existent above this plane, self-existent in the satyam ritam brihat of the Veda, the True, the Right, the Vast which is the reality behind phenomena, but we have to actualise it on the levels on which we live, levels of imperfection & uncertainty, striving & seeking; otherwise it does not become serviceable to us; it remains merely a truth seen and does not become a truth lived. But when we moderns attempt to repeat the Vedic revelatory processes, experience by the mind and body becomes an indispensable confirmatory process, even a necessary preliminary process for their acquisition; for the use of these supreme instruments of intuitive & revelatory knowledge is naturally attended, for those to whom the intellect is and has always been the chief and ordinary mental organ, by dangers and difficulties which did not to the same extent pursue the knowledge of the ancient Rishis. To them it was natural in its possession, easily purified in its use; to us it is a difficult acquisition, hampered in its use by the interference of the lower movements. Experience is, for us, indispensable; we may not be certain of excluding by its means all false sight and false intuition, but we can correct much that has been imperfectly seen

and confirm beyond the possibility of all intellectual scepticism that which does clearly come down to us as illumination from our Higher self to be confirmed in life & experience, constantly and regularly, by our lower instruments.

We have, for instance, the remarkable passages in the Isha Upanishad about the sunless worlds, the luminous lid concealing Truth, the marshalling & concentration of the rays of Surya & his goodliest form of all, that form which, once seen, leads direct to the supreme realisation of oneness, So'ham asmi. Our intellect sees in these expressions a brilliant poetry, but no determinable philosophical sense; yet no one can follow thoughtfully the succession of the phrases without feeling that the Seer of the Upanishad did not really intend to lead up to the direct clarity of his supreme philosophical statement by a flight of vague poetical images; he has a more serious meaning, detailed, definite, precise, pregnant, in the carefully arranged procession of these splendid images. How are we to discover it? Using the scholastic method we may hunt for a clue in the other Upanishads; we may find it or imagine we have found it and by the aid of speculative inference and a liberal dose of fancy we may construct a brilliant or even a plausible theory of the Rishi's meaning. Or, without any such clue, by the aid of a clear intelligence and putting together of the ascertainable ideas of Veda or Vedanta, we may fix a meaning which will adequately explain the text, fit into the course of the argument and, in addition, justify itself by shedding light on other passages where there is a reference to the Sun, to its rays or to its revelatory function. These means, however, can only conduct us to a plausible hypothesis, a twilight certainty, or at most a convincing probability. Nor, in this passage at least, will the metaphysical methods of Shankara at all assist us; for it is a question not of metaphysical logic but of the meaning of an ancient symbol, the connotation of certain antique figures. On the other hand, if we have been able to revive by Yoga the old methods used by the ancients themselves, we may, either in the ordinary course of our experiments or guided by the suggestion of the Upanishad, arrive at the actual experiences on which, in Vedic times, the use of this symbol and

these figures was founded. We may perceive in our own selves the interposition of the golden vessel, the action of the rays, their disposition, their concentration; we may have the vision of the goodliest form of all, *tejo yat te rupam kalyanatamam*, and know, by luminous experience, the link between that vision and the realisation of the supreme Vedantic truth, *So'ham asmi*. We shall then be certain of our knowledge, our unity with the one & only existence. If the ancient ideas of our psychology are correct, by process of revelation and intuition we could have arrived at the same results; the old Rishis, accustomed to use that process habitually and follow its progressive action with as much surety and confidence as we follow the steps of a logician, would have needed nothing more for certainty, though much more for realisation; but we, habitually intellectual, pursued into the higher processes, when we can arrive at them, by those more brilliant and specious movements of the intellect which ape their luminosity & certainty, could not feel entirely safe & even, one might say, ought not to feel entirely safe against the possibility of error. The confirmation of experience is needed for our intellectual security.

This method, by which, as I hold, the meaning of Veda can alone be entirely recovered, is, then, a process of psychological experiment and spiritual experience aided by the higher intuitive or revelatory faculties, — the *vijnana* of Hindu psychology, — of which mankind has not yet, indeed, anything but a fitful and disordered use, but which are capable of being, within certain limits, educated and put into action even in our present transitional & unsatisfactory stage of evolution. It differs from the method by which the ancient Rishis received Vedic truth, — revelation confirmed by experience, — only by the side of approach which must be for us from below, not from above, and the weight of the emphasis which must rest for a mentality preponderatingly intellectual and only subordinately intuitional, on experience more than on intuition. For the rest, the common consent of humanity has agreed that only by higher than intellectual faculties can the truths of a supra-human or supra-sensuous order, if at all they exist, be really known. Religion,

except in ethical & rationalistic creeds like Buddhism and Confucianism which have put aside all such questionings as outside the human domain, has always insisted that revelation is the indispensable angel and intermediary and the intellect at best only its servant, assistant and pupil. Science & rationalism have virtually agreed to this distinction; they have accepted the idea that all knowledge, which does not reach us through the doors of the senses and, on its arrival, submit its pretensions to the judgment of the reason, is incapable of solution by the intellect; but they add that, for this very reason, precisely because the senses are our only doors of experience and the reason our only safe counsellor, the questions raised by religion and metaphysics are utterly vain and insoluble; they relate either to the unknowable or the non-existent; either the material only exists, or, if there is any other existence, the material only can be known and therefore alone exists for the purview of humanity. As man marches upon the dust and is circumscribed by the pressure of the terrestrial atmosphere, so also his thought moves only in the material ether and is circumscribed within the laws & results of material form and motion. Recently we see, even in Europe or chiefly in Europe, — for Asia is too busy imitating Europe of yesterday to perceive whither Europe of today is tending, — a revolt against this arbitrary denial of the rarest parts of human experience. The existence of the supra-sensuous & the infinite is reconquering belief and, at the same time, it is coming again to be admitted that there are faculties of intuitive & supra-rational knowledge which answer in the domain of Consciousness to these supra-sensuous facts of the domain of Being. The belief & the admission go together rationally. For to every order of facts in Nature there should be in the same Nature, inevitably, a corresponding order of faculties in knowledge by which they can be comprehended; if we have no certain knowledge of the facts, it is because we have not as yet the clear and steady use of the faculties.

In three of the external aids by which Veda has been perpetuated in India, religion, Yoga, the guru-parampara, this fundamental principle is amply admitted. Religion starts from

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revelation; it rests upon spiritual and moral experience. Yoga, admitting the truth of verbal revelation, the word of God & the word of the Master, yet starts from experience and rises, as a result of experimental development by fixed methods, to the use of intuitive and revelatory knowledge. The Guru-parampara starts with the word of the Guru, accepted as the knowledge of one who has seen, and proceeds to personal mastery by the experience of the disciple who may indeed go beyond his master & even modify his knowledge, but is not allowed to disown his starting-point. But there is one of our great Indian spiritual activities which has developed progressively in the direction of rationalistic methods and given the responsibility for nine-tenths of its work in these supra-sensuous fields to the very organ, pronounced by the consensus of human opinion insufficient for such inquiries, — the intellect. It is in Darshana, in the path of metaphysics, that this paradoxical phenomenon has been permitted. It is true that our metaphysical thinkers, unlike the European, do not launch themselves into the full flood of metaphysical rationalism; they hug the coast. They admit the supreme authority of revelation, but only of verbal revelation, of the spoken Veda. But the sense and the bearing of the Vedic text has long been doubtful and warring philosophies have founded themselves on the sacred Word; how is doubt to be resolved, dispute to be decided? By appeal to other texts? But if there is still dissonance, not entire consonance? By the aptavakya, the word of the fit authority. If that fails or there is, here also, a conflict? By logic; the intellect is called in as the arbiter of the sense of the Sruti. The word of the adept, the aptavakya, is admitted; but different Masters seem to have taught different doctrines. Who or what is to decide? Let it be settled by logical argument. Once more the intellect is called in as supreme judge; neither the Sruti, nor aptavakya, but logical judgment becomes the real master of our knowledge. Psychological experience also is admitted in certain fields of the argument; but men have different experiences, even different ultimate experiences. Advaita asserts the pure self as an ultimate experience of consciousness; Buddhism denies it, holds it to be an illusion and goes beyond to the experience of

psychological Nothingness. Yet again, logical argument is called in to decide the question. Therefore we find that our metaphysical method of arriving at the higher truth is practically, — though in theory this is subject to certain qualifications, — as much an intellectual & logical method as the method of European metaphysics or the method of scientific rationalism. Only, the Indian metaphysician admits certain data, values certain orders of evidence, which are ruled out of court as invalid or irrelevant by European thinkers. The scientific rationalist observes the sensible facts of life & Nature; these are the data on which alone he feels himself entitled to build his conclusions. The European metaphysician observes the general facts of sensible existence and adds to them the study of words, abstract concepts & categories which answer to no concrete existence, but are the general forms into which human thought has cast itself; these vast nebulae are the metaphysician's data. It is in this ethereal void that he disports himself in a grandiose freedom. The Indian thinker adds to the generalities of natural phenomenon and the abstractions of thought two other classes of evidence, the facts of psychological experience and the word of the revealed Scripture or of competent authorities. But he uses them sparingly & as a last resort. All that is really solid in our metaphysics (I except Patanjali's Yoga Shastra which stands by itself in the six Darshanas,) consists in its parts of logical inference and analogy; — we value in it not what it builds on revelation & experience, but its strenuous manner of justifying certain great assertions of Veda & high experiences of spiritual seekers by the reason and by logical disputation. The method of Darshana, the way of Shankara and Buddha, although it works round and upon certain grand psychological experiences, Maya, Nirvana, is essentially speculative and logical, not intuitive and experiential.

How came this method to be substituted for the old Vedic tradition and what is its real validity? The question has a great practical importance; for every Indian thinker<sup>1</sup> who approaches

<sup>1</sup> The only exception, to my knowledge, is Swami Vivekananda and even he has not entirely escaped the necessity of his environment.

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these questions feels himself naturally impelled to be metaphysical in his method or his atmosphere and follow, with whatever modern variations, the path of Shankara, Buddha and the Sankhyas. The way of knowledge has become in India the way of metaphysical disquisition. Are we really bound to continue this tradition or is the more ancient method also the right method, to which humanity must eventually return; and, if so, what have we gained or lost by this more than millennial substitution of speculation for revelation and verbal logic for actual experience? The substitution itself has come about by a powerful general movement of humanity, simultaneous throughout the world, although it most thoroughly affected Greece and through Greece extended to the general temperament & thought of modern Europe. It cannot quite be said that Greece invented the intellect or the intellectual temperament, but it is certain that the Hellenic race first began the application of reason, inexorably, to the remoulding of thought & life in the temperament of intellectuality. Mankind can never be wholly rational, because our race is essentially built up of various elements, none of which can be eliminated from its system of being. It is our nature to be physical, animal, emotional & sensational as well as intellectual and the coldest thinker or most inexorable rationalist cannot escape from the constitution of our common nature. But mankind, under the great impulse which overtook it at a certain stage of its conscious activity, felt the need of rationalising, as far as that could with safety be done, its other irrational members, the heart, the senses, the life-action, even the body. This tendency, pursued simultaneously by Graeco-Roman civilisation, by Confucian China, by philosophical & Post-Buddhistic India, combated in India by the vitality of Yoga and religion, in Europe by the great united floods of barbarism and Catholic Christianity, has finally triumphed and reached a pitch of success, an extent of victorious propagation which, in human movements, is usually the precursor of arrest and decay. The movement of pure intellectualism has itself, indeed, no clear premonition of its own end. It hopes to conquer, to perpetuate itself, to bring under its sway the nations that are still exempt from its yoke

or only imperfectly subdued to it; outwardly it seems to be on the point of success. It still holds the mind of Europe, although the soul of Europe begins to attempt uneasily an escape from its narrowing rigidity & dryness; it has seized on Mongolian Japan & is revivifying the traditional intellectualism of China by a flood of fresh ideas, by the inspiration of a new & wider horizon; it has touched already the Mahomedan world; the political subjugation of India has been followed by a pervasive invasion of European intellectualism which is striving hard to substitute itself progressively for the ancient law & nature of our Indian temperament and being. But these manifestations, however overwhelming in appearance, however conclusive they seem of approaching victory, conceal the seeds of a profound revolution in the inverse sense. An outward conquest is often the means of an inward defeat. What is happening now, has happened before on a smaller scale and under less developed conditions. When the combined intellectuality of Greece and practical materialism of the Latins, supported by the conquering military force of the Roman Republic and Empire, came into contact with the old tradition of Asia, the result was the collapse of the politically victorious civilisation under the assault of an Oriental religion which in its tenets & methods not only exceeded but trampled alike on the vital force of the body & on the free play of the intellect, alike on Greece & on Rome. And it was from a part of Asia which underwent directly the Roman yoke, but persisted with the most deep-rooted perseverance in its spiritual traditions that the revanche proceeded; conquered Judaea took captive the victorious civilisation. Once more Europe, much more profoundly intellectualised, much more profoundly materialised in its intellectualism, throws itself upon Asia with a yet more supreme military force, compelling a yet more widespread political subjugation; once more a penetrating eye can discover the preparation of the same result obscurely outlining itself behind the deceptive appearances of the moment. The first effect on the West from this impingement of the mental atmosphere of Europe on the mental atmosphere of Asia and the breaking down of the walls that separated them has been the

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revival of the invincible intuitionism of the Aryan or Aryanised races. The philological tripartite division of the Old World into the Aryan, Semitic & Mongolian peoples, even if it be ethnologically untenable, does correspond roughly to real divisions in the cultural temperament of the human race, the result much less of original race than of historical formations & past influences. The Mongolian is predominantly intellectual, his lower nature is largely tamed & rationalised, the intuitive parts of his mind are slow and their beats tepid in their impulse; there is much less in his temperament to resist the intellectualising process of rationalism than in any other portion of humanity; in the Semite intellect is subordinated, he is intuitionist, but intuitionist through his lower members only, with as much of the higher activity as the heart & senses allow; the Aryan is intuitionist either directly or through and by the heart and the intellect. The Aryan is therefore unfitted by his temperament to persevere in the relentless rationalising of our whole being; always there comes a time when he pauses, listens to a voice within that he has disregarded and, convinced by that inner daemon, departs from the paths hewn for him by the sceptical intellect with the same speed and enthusiasm with which he has followed their straight & level vistas. The very nations which are today the hope of a purely intellectual civilisation, hold in themselves that which can never remain satisfied with the pure reason, and this ineradicable betraying force is now being powerfully stimulated by the mental currents which for almost a century have been consciously or subconsciously reaching Europe with a slowly increasing force from the East. Therefore, the repetition, no doubt in a very different form & to very different issues, of the miracle of Christianity is psychologically inevitable.

If indeed, as modern thought imagines, intellectual reason were the last & highest term of evolution, this consummation need not have been inevitable, or, if inevitable, it would have been deplorable; for perfection depends on the rule of our highest member over its inferior cohabitants. But our evolution is only the progressive unfolding of our nature and faculties, & in the list of those faculties reason does not hold the highest

place; it is not even a separate and independent power, but a link, servant and intermediary. Its business, when it is allowed to rule, is to train the lower man so as to make him a fit vessel for an activity higher than its own. The animal is content to follow his impulses under the flashlight of instinct. If ever, as is likely, there was a time when man also was a supreme animal, he must have been guided by an instinct different, perhaps, in its special kind but as trustworthy as animal instinct & of the same essential nature. It was, then, the development in us of that reason which we see ill developed in the animal which deprived man of his sure animal instinct & compelled him to seek for a higher guide. Everything goes to show that he must have sought it at first in the lower intuition & revelation which works in the heart, the aesthetic impulses, the senses. Again, it is the insistent development of reason that has served to make him dissatisfied with these powerful, but still inferior guides. But not until reason, without lapsing back to the lower movements, yet becomes permanently dissatisfied with its own limitations, can it fulfil its work of preparation. For there is a faculty in us superior to the rational, there is that direct seeing & touch of things which shows itself in the higher revelation & intuition & works obscurely, like a fire enveloped in smoke, in the phenomena of intellectual genius & unusual personality. Beyond direct seeing there is a faculty of direct being, if I may so express it, which, if we can entirely reach & hold to it, makes us one with God, brahmabhúta, can reveal in this material life the perfection of Brahman as it is intended to be manifested in humanity, so that man on the human level, in the human cadre, becomes perfect as God is perfect. The intellect itself cannot reach these heights. It can only discipline, chasten & prepare the lower members to receive & hold without harm or disintegration that higher force which has alone the power to raise us to the summits. In the intellectual ages of mankind, reason forgets these limitations; it tries to do a double work, to judge correctly all the knowledge which presents itself to the sensorium & its instruments and also to know things directly & in their essence. The former is its legitimate work & deserves the name of Science; the latter is

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an illegitimate attempt to go beyond its sphere and conceals an error under the name of Metaphysics. The intellect can know & judge phenomena; by its labour in examining them it arrives, in spite of much presumption & error, at a considerable number of phenomenal certainties; but it cannot know & judge the essence of things; by attempting to examine that field, whether unaided or as the principal inquirer, it only arrives, if it is honest with itself, at this one truth, that it can be certain of nothing; — all the rest is appearance, asseveration or opinion. We can know things as they seem to be in the order of the physical Nature in which they live; by the reason we cannot be sure what anything is, in itself, in that order of realities of which physical Nature is only the external seeming. Therefore the last refuge of reason, when it becomes conscious of its blunder, is to deny that such an order of realities exists at all, & to confine itself to the knowledge of material & phenomenal certainties. But such a restriction of knowledge brings with it a lowering, narrowing & petrifying of our humanity, because contrary to the whole nature and ineradicable tendency of our kind & sure therefore to falsify & slow down the springs of our action & being. Therefore Nature, mightier & wiser than the Scientist, compels man to revolt against the cold & debasing tyranny of a negative scepticism. She compels him back to the way to his internal skies & compels him to recover, in whatever new terms, the promise of his Scriptures & his Gospels. She makes him listen again for some indirect echo, if not for the actual resonance of the eternal, immutable chant, the ever-rhythmic unwritten Veda.

The European attempt must, therefore, come to nought the moment it is brought face to face, as daily it is being brought more & more nearly face to face with its own inalienable insufficiency. The tradition of Asia will again impose itself on humanity, & it is probable that it will be again a country politically subject to Europe but more than any other tenacious of its spiritual temperament & tradition, which will be the instrument of the revanche. But the revelation that will conquer this time the forces of material rationalism must be one which includes the intellect in exceeding it, fulfils, not annuls it; for the conditions

demand this greater consummation. In the Roman days the intellect was attacked before its constructive work had proceeded beyond the first insufficient paces; today the intellect has done its constructive work and the work must be accepted. It is India alone that can satisfy this double claim of the human reason & the divine intelligence; & the new reconquest will differ as much and in the same way from the old as India differs from old Judaea.

It is true that in this country the reason has never fulfilled itself, triumphed & held undisputed sway to the same extent as in modern Europe. If we take in its general results in India the great intellectual movement of humanity, we see that it broke up & scattered about in fragments the ancient catholic tradition & knowledge, placed its stamp on much that yet remains, destroyed a great deal which it could not assimilate, left a little surviving under veils & in our remote & secret places. On the mental temperament of our people, the long struggle had a disastrous effect; for it has deprived all except the few of the higher supra-intellectual inner life of our forefathers, it has made impossible any general resort to that discipline which gave them the use to a certain extent, at least, of the higher intuitive mentality, the satyadrishti, the direct sight, and has driven the many to be content rather with the irregular intuitions of the heart, the aesthetic faculties & the senses; we have kept those faculties which receive the actual touch of the higher truth obscurely, with the eyes of the intellect closed but lost those which receive them directly, with the eyes of the intellect open and luminously transmitting them to the mind imprisoned in matter. We have therefore neither been able to organise the intellectual efficiency of the Europeans, nor retain the principles of inner greatness known to our forefathers. Nevertheless, we still have among us important remnants of the old knowledge & discipline & we have firm hold in our schools of Yoga on the supreme means by which its lost parts can be recovered. The key of a divine life upon earth lies, rusted indeed in an obscure corner of our mansion, used only by a few, but still it lies there & is still used. It has to be singled out from amid much waste matter, made

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fit for complete & general use and given freely to mankind. We have kept, fortunately, the intuitional temperament to which its use is easy & natural. The failure of the intellect to assume complete sway and entirely rationalise our life, was a necessary condition for the preservation of that temperament, itself necessary for the appointed work & God-decreed life of our nation. On the other hand, the indispensable work of Buddha and his predecessors & successors has not been entirely lost on our nation. Their great movement which denied, limiting itself in rationality, the capacity or the need of the human mind to know beyond the laws of phenomena, seized in metaphysical philosophy upon only so much as was necessary for conduct, sought to establish on pure logic & reason the few fundamental principles it needed and, feeling obscurely the necessity of completing itself by physical science, as soon as it entered that field, far outpaced the accomplishment of Europe or Arabia, ended in a defeat & collapse necessary for the final salvation of humanity. Its defeat necessitated in the divine scheme the later arrival in India of an intellectual & rationalistic civilisation, armed, organised, politically dominant, culturally aggressive, so that we might be forced, against our will & natural tendency, to hear from the rational intellect that which it was entitled to say to us & to perceive at last that the indirect & inferior intuition, great, divine & inspiring as it is in its more intense individual results, is still insufficient for humanity & that we must turn back to a higher guide & recover a lost & superior state. When, without falling into the European error, we have recognised this truth, — and the logical & rationalistic capacity developed in us by Buddha & Shankara gives us the power to recognise it & the tendency, — we shall be ready both for our national survival and for that greater world-work for which, alone among the nations, we keep still the necessary materials and the necessary capacity. Children of the Rishis, not entirely disinherited, repositories of the Veda, still clinging to our trust, we alone can recover in our experience its half lost truths for the growing need of humanity. We have acquired, too, by our long philosophical discipline, the power of stating supra-intellectual knowledge in that language

of the intellect on which the modern world insists as the proper vehicle of understanding and the first condition of acceptance.

We can see, from this point of view, the causes of the general substitution of the logical & speculative method for the intuitional & experiential; it was an incident in the inevitable recurrence of one of those periods in which pure intellectuality dominates & which have for their function to refine & chasten the lower nature in the general mass of humanity. We can see what we have gained, — the power of ratiocination, the openness to the processes of reason, the ability to express intellectually — so far as that is possible — supra-intellectual knowledge & experience, the control of the lower members by the reason. We can see, too, the natural limitations of the intellect & the inevitably inferior validity of the metaphysical method to the experiential in the attempt to grasp the truths of Veda, in that the certainty of these truths cannot be acquired either by speculation or logic. We can see how this inferiority has worked for the obscuration or elimination of much that was potent, active & living in the more ancient knowledge; for the intellect tends to reject in its self-confidence what it cannot grasp & define, just as the heart tends to reject in its self-will what it does not desire or enjoy; yet what the intellect cannot grasp & define, includes often the most valuable parts of experience and knowledge.

The seeds of this movement of the intellect are contained in the Sanhitas & Upanishads themselves, although the movement itself is foreign to the Scriptures. The Sanhitas are Karmakanda; their object is not the enunciation of the general Truths of Brahman, but the practice of its particulars; they are the perfect monuments, sufficient to themselves, of especial moments, stages, movements in the progress of the individual towards his divine goal; they are instruments by thought & speech for the stabilisation of his increasing gains in light, force & joy; they are the praise & invocation of the gods who preside over particular functionings in our nature & in world-nature; they are statements of experience packed full of psychological detail and minute spiritual realisation, which confirm the seer & help the seeker. They are truth of experience & have therefore no room

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for speculation; they are ascertained truth & give therefore no room to doubt, debate & logical reasoning. But there are passages, rare seeds of the method pursued by the Upanishads, in which a general question is put and the suggestion of an answer offered. The Upanishads, on the contrary, are Jnanakanda; they have for their object the enunciation of the Truth of Brahman & the fundamental principles of Brahman's self-manifestation in universe. But with one remarkable exception they do not use, in order to arrive at this truth, these principles, the method of logical reasoning. Unlike the Sanhitas, they admit, not so much of doubt, as of debate; they move by positive questioning and the positive answer to questioning. But, again, the answer to questioning does not move by logic either in its inception, in its process or in its consummation. When Yajnavalkya holds his grand debate with the Brahmavadins at the court of King Janaka, when the proud Balaki vails his pride to the superior knowledge of King Ajatashatru, it is not by the field of logic or with the arms of metaphysic disquisition that they encounter each other. The question one puts to another is not "What thinkest thou of this?" but "What dost thou know?" and he whose knowledge proves to be deeper than his adversary's, is the conqueror in the discussion. Nor has this superior knowledge been arrived at by a more just or a more brilliant speculation, but by deeper sight, by a more powerful concentration. He has arrived at it, *tapas taptwa*; that is the method laid down by Varuna to his son Bhrigu in the Taittiriya Upanishad; for, he adds, *tapo Brahma*, *Tapas is Brahman*. *Tapas*, in other words, is the dwelling of the soul on its object, by which Brahman originally created the world through vision — *sa ikshata* — saw Itself, that is to say, as world & what It saw, became, — the dwelling of the soul on its object whether, prospectively, in creative vision, outwardly realising, as the poet & the genius of action dwells, or, retrospectively, in perceptive vision of the thing created, inwardly realising, as the prophet dwells; *tapas* is the very foundation of the method of revelation & intuition. Therefore, as in the acquisition of knowledge, speculation & logic are not used, so also in the imparting of knowledge, disquisition and logic are not used.

The thing has been seen by the seer, he is the drashta & to him Veda is drishti; it is spoken to the hearer & he sees, indirectly, through the medium of the word what the seer has seen by the self-vision, directly; to the hearer, Veda is Sruti. Yajnavalkya speaks his knowledge, his adversaries do not dispute it; they, too, see, being themselves habituated to these supreme processes, and the thing seen they silently & without debate acknowledge. If they are to dispute, since dispute is only a comparison of knowledge, of sight, of Veda, of drishti,<sup>2</sup> they must themselves first see farther, more profoundly, more subtly; and to see farther, they must first plunge into farther tapas, remain long constant in a farther dwelling of the soul on its object.

Still, just as in the Sanhitas there is the seed of the Upanishadic method, so in the Upanishads there is the seed of the later philosophical & intellectual method; we have, very occasionally, an obscure & casual preparation for the Darshanas. One passage, indeed a line, entirely typifies this secret bridging of the two methods; by a slight glance at it we can see how the mighty many-branching tree of the metaphysical philosophies burgeoned out from a very insignificant grain of tendency. Gautama in the Chhandogya, declares to his son Svetaketu the fundamental principle that all existence apparent to us here comes out of one anterior & ultimate existence, and he immediately notices the opposite appreciation, accepted as a starting point in the Aitareya, that existence originally emerges out of an original state of non-being, but only to reject it on the ground of a logical difficulty, "How could existence be created or create itself out of the non-existent";<sup>3</sup> it is the earliest statement of the metaphysical principle common to all our positive & orthodox philosophies that nothing comes out of Nothing. The logic is large, axiomatic & elemental; we have a perception of logic

<sup>2</sup> The word for knowledge, vid, veda, is the Latin word for sight &, for the early Rishis, had probably not yet lost entirely all colour of its physical & more primitive meaning.

<sup>3</sup> The language of the Sruti is remarkable, Asat ekam evadwitiyam, Non-Being one without a second, & shows that the old use of not-being differs essentially from our idea of nothingness.

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rather than a process of logic or a generalisation from one perception & a priori exclusion of another as evidently impossible, not a logical demonstration of the impossibility. We are still within the four walls of the Upanishadic process, but stand already in the cadre of the doorway leading out into metaphysical disquisition. When we come to the sermons of Buddha, one knows not how many centuries later, and the formal foundation of the six orthodox philosophies we see, in spite of an immense logical & rationalistic development, that they proceed, initially, on this method of Gautama; they start from an act of logical discrimination, the acceptance of one statement of general perception & the rejection of another which seems to be inconsistent with the first or its contrary. All the ancient philosophies refer back to the Veda for the justification of the fundamental formulas in which they differ most obstinately & irreconcilably from each other. They are right in their positive claim; where they are wrong, where Shankara himself goes so hopelessly astray, is in founding on the same authority not only their own ultimate justification, but the confutation of their adversaries. The Veda is not logical, does not really confute anything; its method is experiential, intuitional; its principle is to receive all experiences, all perceptions of truth about the Brahman, and either to place them side by side in order of experience & occasional relation, as in the Sanhitas, or to arrange them in order of perception and fundamental relation, as in the Upanishads, putting each in its place, correcting misplacement & exaggeration, but not excluding, not destroying. This is admirably seen in the colloquy of Ajatashatru & the proud Balaki; Ajatashatru does not deny the experiences & perceptions of Balaki; he accepts them, denies only their claim to represent the ultimate truth, gives them their true character, puts them in their right place & leads up by this purificatory process to his own deeper knowledge. Harmony, synthesis is the law of the Veda, not discord & a dissection of the members of truth in order to replace the manysided reality of existence by a narrower logical symmetry. But the metaphysical philosophies are compelled by the law of their being to effect precisely this dissection. Veda can admit two propositions that

are logically contradictory, so long as they are statements of fundamental experience & perception; it does not get rid of the contradiction by denying experience but seeks instead the higher truth in which the apparent contradiction is reconciled. Logic, by its very nature, is intolerant even of apparent contradiction; its method is verbal, ideative; it accepts words & thoughts as rigid & iron facts instead of what they really are, imperfect symbols & separate sidelights on truth. Being & Non-Being are ideas opposed to each other; therefore, in logic, one or the other must be excluded. The One cannot be at the same time the many; therefore, in logic, either the Many is an illusion, or Duality is the fundamental reality of things. Brahman is Nirguna, without qualities, beyond definition; therefore, to the rigid Advaitins, the Saguna Brahman, the Infinite Personality of God becomes a supreme myth of Maya, a basic & effective fact indeed, but basic & effective only in and of the grand cosmic illusion which It directs. Logic, the tyrant of the metaphysician, is satisfied by these abstract processes, but Truth is hurt & dismembered. Illusions of truth, dogmas of syllogism, take its place, and war upon each other, as indeed, so long as they live, they must go on warring for ever, since none can ever be established as undisputedly true, resting, as they do, on pure opinion of Smriti poured into the mould of Opinion, having, as they all have, a part only of Truth which they pretend vainly to be the whole.

We see, as a result, a progressive dissection of the fundamental truths of Veda, &, curiously enough, a dissection of the various parts of method which make up the totality of the Veda. The totality of Vedantic knowledge consists of several processes; first, Vedanta, the direct perception of the fundamental reality out of which all emerges & to which all returns; secondly, Sankhya, the analysis, by the discriminating perception, of the fundamental principles of being & knowledge in which the Reality manifests itself as world, as subject, & as object; thirdly, Yoga, the psychological basis of experience, experiment, practical analysis, synthesis which verifies the discriminative analysis; fourthly, Vaisheshika, the physical analysis of the form or matter in which the manifesting world-energy

is expressed & established to our outgoing perceptions; fifthly, Nyaya, the analysis of the processes of discrimination whether by the intellect or by higher functions; sixthly, Karma of Veda, the application of the knowledge acquired in formulas of life-action by which the individual & the community can ensure the highest phenomenal expression of the fundamental Reality of which their special nature is capable, — by which, let us say, man can express Brahman in his superior & more plastic kind as the bee or the ant expresses Brahman in its inferior & more rigid & limited nature; — these six rank among other processes, — for life of Veda is supple, flexible and wide, — some of which are the foundation of Purana & Itihasa. The fundamental perception, separating, narrowed itself and became the Uttara Mimansa of Badarayana; the discriminative analysis, separating, narrowed itself and became Sankhya of Kapila; the psychological experimentation, separating, narrowed itself & became Yoga of Patanjali; the physical analysis, separating, narrowed itself and became Vaisheshika of Kanada; the analysis of discriminative processes, separating, narrowed itself and became Nyaya of Gautama; the application in formulas of life-action, separating, narrowed itself extremely & became the Purva Mimansa of Jaimini; yet each of the six arrogated to itself the functions & the sufficiency of the other five. Other parts of knowledge & process, ejected by the ever-narrowing tendency of logical exclusiveness, established themselves in other philosophies and branches of practice & knowledge and have come down to us, changed, often disfigured, in Shastra, in Purana, in legend & history, in different schools of Yoga.

The original method of all these differences was the method of Gautama in the episode of the Chhandogya, the exclusive affirmation of one's own seeing, the logical exclusion, by process of verbal & ideative distinction, of that which has [been] seen by others. We perceive very well this root of the evil in the grand example, supreme in its kind, of the Buddha. Unhelped by the conflicting philosophies of the schools, dissatisfied with the too rigorously materialised methods of the Yogins, he takes the right, the supreme step, he retires into himself & gives his soul

the charge of the Truth. Sa tapo atapyata. He emerges from this concentration of soul, tapas taptwa, with the great illumination received in the ever-memorable night under the Bo tree. What is this illumination of Buddha? It is the perception of the chain of Karma, of the impermanence of sanskaras, of the illusoriness of the mental ego, of the release into the motionless peace of Nirvana. There was nothing new in these things considered merely as tenets; they belong, in one form or another, to Vedanta; they cannot have been unknown to the philosophers of the age. What was new in them was their puissant revivification in a supreme soul and a great personality, their removal from the category of metaphysical dogmas & abstractions, into realities of life, concrete, human, vivid, which could once more be pursued by all, realised, practised and lived. It was this return to the sources, this puissant reconnection of Vedanta with ordinary life which was the secret of the Buddha's tremendous effectuality. New also was the particular connection & interlinking of all these central ideas in the thought of the Buddha, the singular cast given to them by his unique, yet universal temperament & the formulation in the mould of that temperament of a system of Vedantic ethics. Still, in his fundamental method, in his approach to truth & his handling of truth, Buddha had not, so far, gone beyond the method of the Vedantic Rishis; Yajnavalkya or Pippalada would have so sought in themselves for the truth, received illumination in the same fashion, equally cast that knowledge into well-linked formulae of experience which could be lived and practised. But Yajnavalkya or Pippalada would not have shot the iron bolt of logic on the knowledge they had gained and shut themselves in a prison of ratiocination to the experiences of others and to fresh vision. It was here that, owing, perhaps, to the very strenuousness of Buddha's search as well as to the limits of the question with which he had started, "How shall one escape from the pain & grief of the world," he turned from the ancient path and allowed the metaphysical & logical training of his past [to] lay its heavy hand upon him. He built up walls of logic; he shut himself up in a creed. Thus it came about that this great destroyer of the ego, sanctioned in his disciples the supreme act

of intellectual egoism and this giant render of chains imposed on his Sangha, without positively intending it, deprecating it indeed, the bondage to a single personality & the chain of a specific formula of thought. The movement of the metaphysical philosophies, more purely intellectual, far less temperamental & personal than the Buddha's, yet followed the same limiting process. They obeyed not a personal illumination, but the logic of their starting point. Sankhya, for instance, proceeded on a discriminative analysis of the world, proceeded indeed to the last limit of that analysis and found that, fundamentally, Existence starts & maintains its manifestation of world on the basis, first, of the Unity of Nature, — the unity, the Yogin would say, of the energy of the Lord, — and, secondly, of the multiplicity of souls observing & reflecting the works of Nature, — the multiplicity, the Vedantin would say, of the individual souls, in which Brahman, the Lord, the one Supreme soul, puts Himself forth to enjoy the works of His energy. Of these two fundamental principles the Sankhya metaphysician made a formula, an ultimate perception; he refused to go beyond; he built up a wall of logical disquisition to shelter himself from wider perceptions and a more complex experience. Such was the method of all these schools, the developed method of which we find so indistinct a seed in the Upanishads.

Still, it was from some fundamental experience or revelation that the metaphysicians started; the logical element intervened only as a second term of knowledge. Moreover, the method of the aphorism preserved the suggestive profundity of the intuition or revelatory experience & tended to maintain in the practice of knowledge the original closeness of the intellectual concept to that vision in the soul which thought can only translate very imperfectly to the reason. But about a thousand years later we find a new movement of the intellect in force, illustrated by the names of Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa, in which logic covers the whole field, leaving only a narrow corner to experience & intuition; but, for that very reason, the experience, the intuition assumes a character of much more eager intensity, exclusiveness, monotone of emphasis and steeps itself more fervently in the

personality & temperament of the thinker. Hence a passion of dispute, an intolerance in logomachy which leaves far behind the measure of more ancient disputants. The battle is, finally, a civil strife between Vedantist & Vedantist; temporarily victorious over rival schools, they turn to rend each other; but the strife is still mainly about fundamental perceptions. The great question now is the fundamental unity or difference between the supreme soul & the individual or another, which would have astonished greatly the ancient Rishis, the question whether the world is false or real, — false, not only in its appearance to the senses, but per se, in itself, in its essence & its being. In the Mayavada of Shankara, Buddha, the rationalist, completes his work in India. He has led the reason to a great act of self-slaughter, the denial of existence to the world which alone it can study, more, the denial of Brahman in the world on the authority of that very Veda which spends so much time in affirming & elaborately explaining Brahman in the world. In other countries, in other ages, the Buddhistic agnostic train of thought led to a still more supreme suicide of reason; for it came to the denial of its own power to know anything real & fundamental, came almost, like Buddhistic Nihilism, to deny the existence of anything real & fundamental. In India the farther advance after Shankara & his successors has been mechanical & practical rather than theoretic; it has led towards the final divorce of intellect from experience. The metaphysician, devoted to intellect, has abandoned experience in favour of the authority of departed Acharyas. The schools of Yoga devoted to experience, have practised their psychological methods according to a fixed tradition without the harmonising touch, the generalising light; Sankhya dispensed with Yoga, Yoga divided itself from Sankhya. Thus has the spiritual life of India, by a misplaced & intolerant action of Intellect & its servant, rash-moving, light-winged, — the chameleon-hued phantasm Opinion, been shredded, parcelled out, narrowed into many streams & shallows, like the Oxus of the poet. Thus has it come down to our own age, ever narrowing more & more, shorn of its victorious streams, awaiting its return to a wider flood and a more grandiose motion.

## Chapter III

We have, then, to choose between two methods, one historic & modern, in possession of the field, easily applied in its fullness, the other ancient, difficult to employ, impossible indeed for us to utilise safely except by an inversion of the process of knowledge known to the Rishis. According as we choose the one or the other, we shall arrive at a logical and symmetrical result, a private room hired for ourselves in the mansion of Truth & marked out by us as her sole temple, or shall be free to range in all her domain, gleaning wide & various results, but not soon or easily sure of possessing her entirety. I have indicated the disadvantages of the intellectual & logical method for the interpretation of Vedanta, but, in view of its long dominion & wide acceptance, it will be as well to consider & convince ourselves of the more important of them clearly and in some detail before we proceed.

In the first place, by the method of intellectual reasoning we are compelled to apply the processes of logic to entities which are beyond the grasp of logic. A single instance will suffice. We find, as a matter of experience, that existence is one and yet existence is multiple; everywhere, to whatever nook or corner of being we penetrate, we find this riddle presenting itself, undeniable & ineffugable, of a multiplicity which appears, a unity concealed which yet the mind insists on as the sole truth of the multiplicity. Nor is the unity which our mind thus asks us to perceive, a sum of factors; that oneness exists, but behind it there is an essential unity out of which both the sum & its factors emerge. Yet, divorce that essential unity from all notion of multiplicity expressed or latent, & it ceases to be unity; it becomes something else of which unity & multiplicity are mutually related aspects. But when we have arrived at this coexistent & coincident unity & multiplicity, before we can proceed to the something else which is neither one nor many, logic has already taken alarm. It cannot be, it says, that two opposites really coexist & coincide as the nature of Being. If we ask why not, — since after all, it is an universal experience, — the answer is that the thing is

illogical & irrational; — unintelligible & contradictory to the view of logic & reason, it is, therefore, to them impossible of credence. A sum and its factors, may & must coexist, but not a thing which is at once one and many. Therefore Logic sets to work to get rid of one or both of the two irreconcilable, yet strangely reconciled opposites. Buddhism dismisses the Many as phenomena of sensation, the One as an ideative illusion of sensation; it gets rid of the unity in sum as a mere combination of sensational factors in the figure of the chariot and its parts, having no existence apart from the factors, no real existence at all; it gets rid of the essential unity as a mere illusion of continuity created by the uninterrupted succession of sensations, in the figure of the flame & the wick. It drives by logical process towards a Nullity, although not all its schools are bold enough to arrive at that void & yawning haven. For the rest, its final conclusion is illogical, for though it claims to be the pure concept of Nullity, it is in reality, when examined, a something that is nothing. Therefore, originally, Buddha seems to have turned aside from the problem and declared to his disciples, Seek not to know, for to know, even if it be possible, helps not at all & leads to no useful result. Buddhism was satisfied with having got rid of the original, actual & pressing contradiction in this world here & now which it had set out to destroy. Advaita asserts the One on the ground of ultimate experience; it dismisses the Many as an illusion; yet since both are ineffugable, since the soul escaping from the illusion, escapes from it merely & does not destroy it, it has to be admitted that the substratum of multiplicity exists eternally. Here again we are led by logical process to a result which is illogical; we have, in the end, a Maya that at once exists and does not exist. This difficulty is at once put aside as beyond enquiry; the contradiction exists, inexplicable but true; we need not enquire farther, for we have got rid of the original contradiction in which we were entangled & cutting through this Gordian knot of Nature, we have released the individual soul from the illusion of multiplicity & therefore from the necessity of phenomenal existence. In both cases the process & result are similar & a like subterfuge is utilised. In both cases Logic, like

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Cato at Utica, has committed suicide in order to assert its rights & liberties; but it has died, as the patients of Molière's doctors had the felicity of dying, according to the rules of the science; therefore it is satisfied. It is not, however, Buddhism & Adwaita alone, but every logical philosophy that arrives at a similar result; we find always that when we would explain existence in an ultimate term which shall be subject to logic, we fail; we arrive either at a term which is plainly illogical, or at an explanation which fails to explain or a success which seems to succeed only because it ignores or suppresses or juggles away an important part of the data. The suggestion irresistibly arises whether this is not so, whether it must not be always so merely because the formulae of logic, a creature as it is & a limited movement of intellectual ideation, which is itself a creature and a limited movement of existence, useful enough within the sphere of their birth & movement, & in the circle of their jurisdiction, cannot control that which is beyond & wider than ideation, yet farther beyond & wider than its creature logic? Invaluable in relating correctly the particulars of the universe and purging our ideas about them, it may be of less sovereign efficacy in dealing with the fundamental things which underlie phenomena and of no efficacy at all in discovering the Reality which lies farther back behind phenomena.

Much of the luminous confusion of Metaphysics is due to the self-satisfied content with which it leans upon words & abstract ideas & uses them not merely as instruments, but as data, forgetting that these are merely useful to symbolise & formulate very imperfectly truths of experience & perception. Therefore in dealing with abstract ideas & conceptions we are unsafe unless we insist always on returning to the thing itself which they symbolise. Otherwise we lose ourselves in facile words or in confusing abstractions. For instance, in order to get rid of the anomaly of a Maya that exists & exists not, we say sometimes that the Many have a relative reality, but no essential reality. But what have we said, after all? Merely this, that we do not find the Many existing except in some relation to a unity behind, established in that Unity and, as far as we can see, existent by

that unity, as indeed the unity itself exists in a certain relation to the eternally existent Many either in their manifestation or in their substratum of Maya. How much farther have we got by this manipulation of words? We have found a fresh formula which expresses the difficulty, but does not solve the difficulty. We have taken refuge in a disingenuous phrase which suggests [to] us that phenomena are unreal, but tries to escape from the consequences of its admission. As well may we say, that water is in any sense unreal because it only exists by the mixture of oxygen & hydrogen; oxygen & hydrogen unreal, because they only exist by the congregation of atoms; atoms unreal because they only exist by some obscure principle of the transformation of energy into forms; energy unreal because it exists to us only in its works & manifestations. In all this we are playing with words, we are making an argument of our own ideative limitations. So again, in a different way, with the question of the Personality & Impersonality of God. Personality is to us a word which we use too lightly without fathoming the depth of the thing which it indicates. We confuse it perhaps with the idea of a separate ego, we imagine God in His personality as one Ego among millions separate from all the others, superior & anterior to them; we refuse to extend or to subtilise our conception, and according to our personal predilections we argue that such a Personal God cannot exist or that He must exist. But the whole method was illegitimate. We ought rather to fathom in experience all the possibilities of human personality & of divine personality, if such a thing exists, in order to know them & arrive at sure results about them instead of battling over a verbal symbol or an arbitrary abstraction & ending only in an eternal war of ill-grounded opinions.

This danger of intellectual predilections thrusting out Truth is the third disadvantage of the logical method. Logic claims & even honestly attempts to get rid of predilection and to see things in the sure light of truth, but it is not equal to its task; our nature is full of subtle disguises and, the moment we form an opinion, attaches itself to it & secretly takes it under its protection under pretence of an exclusive attachment to Truth or a militant zeal

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for reason & the right opinion. We come to our subject with a predisposition towards a particular kind of solution established either in our feelings, in our previous education & formed ways of thinking or in our temperament & very cast of character. We seize passionately or we select deliberately & reasonably the arguments that favour our conclusion; we reject, whether with impatience or after scrupulous & fair attention, the arguments that would shake it. Logic, a malleable & pliant servitor behind all its air of dry & honest rigidity, asks only that it should be provided with suitable premises, unsuitable premises excluded or explained away, & its conscience is entirely satisfied. We perform the comedy with perfect sincerity, but it is still a comedy which Nature plays with us; our garb of intellectual stoicism has concealed from ourselves, the epicure of his own dish of thoughts, the mind enamoured of its favourite ideas. Shankara comes to the Upanishads with a judgment already formed; he is an Adwaitin, his temperament predisposes him to Mayavada. But the Sruti does not contain the Mayavada, at least explicitly; it does contain, side by side with the fundamental texts of Adwaita, a mass of texts which foster the temper & views of the Dualist. But the Sruti is the supreme & infallible authority; it contains nothing but truth; it can inculcate, therefore, nothing but Adwaita. Obviously, then, these dualistic texts must have a meaning & a bearing different from their surface meaning or their apparent bearing; it is Shankara's business, as a commentator in search of truth, to put always the right, that is to say always the Adwaitic interpretation on Sruti. Watch him then seize the text in his mighty hands and, with a swift effort, twist & shape & force it to assume a meaning or a bearing which will either support or at least be consistent with Adwaita, — a giant victoriously wrestling with & twisting into a shape a mass of obstinate iron! There is no insincerity in the process, rather the fervour of a too passionate sincerity. Still, Truth often veils her face with a tear or a smile, when Shankara comments on the Sruti. He is the greatest; the others are not likely to escape from the snare into which he casts himself headlong. Nor do I think the philosopher has yet been born who has escaped from these

original meshes of intellectual preference, predestined belief & ineffugable personal temperament.

In fact, the supreme failing of the metaphysical method is that, owing to the paucity, abstract uncertainty and doubtful bearing of its most essential data, it becomes almost entirely a domain of opinion. The absolute contempt of scientific rationalism for metaphysics which for a long time past has conquered general opinion in Europe & put an end to fruitful philosophical thinking, is almost certainly exaggerated & unjustified. The emergence of a new metaphysical thinking, more practical & realistic than the old abstract philosophies, presaged by Nietzsche, fulfilled in James & Bergson, is a sign at once of the return of Europe upon this dangerous error and of a perception, subconscious perhaps, of that real defect in the character of metaphysics which gave a hold to the destructive criticisms of modern realism. The long and imposing labours of the highest human intellects in the region of metaphysics, has not been a vain waste of priceless energy. Nature makes no such mistakes; her glance, though it seems to rove & fall at random and vary capriciously, is surer & more infallible in its selection than our human reason. Metaphysics have fulfilled a necessary and, when all has been said, a right & true function in our evolution; the materials of the great systems she has built have been general truths and not abstract errors. But the systems themselves are not final expressions of truth; they are the mould of the philosopher's personality, the stamp of his temperament and type of intellect. If we examine the method & substance of our own philosophies, we shall see why this must be so and cannot be otherwise. Their most important data are vast & vague conceptions, infinite in their nature, Being, Non-Being, Consciousness, Prakriti & Purusha (Nature & Soul), Mind, Matter. How can these entities be compelled to give us their secret except by a profound & exhaustive interrogatory such as modern Science has applied to the lowest principle of Being, analysing & experimenting in every possible way with Matter? But the metaphysician does not base his process on the sure steps of experience. He starts with an ideal definition of these great indefinables and he argues logically

from the abstract idea to results which are faultless, indeed, in logic; — but how can we be sure of an equal faultlessness in the reality of things which is after all our proper business? We cannot be; for each thinker handles according to his own light this vague & plastic material of ideas: there is nothing to check him; he asserts his opinion & his opinion is dominated by his education or his temperament. Shankara asserts that works are incompatible with salvation, Jaimini that works are indispensable to salvation. Who shall decide, when each proceeds with a perfect logic from his premises? Therefore, a second class of data have to be called in, the texts of the Sruti. But Jaimini & Shankara appeal equally to the texts of the Sruti; for there are some which, if pressed in their separate meaning, seem to declare the inutility of works, there are others which, if pressed in their separate meaning, seem to declare the indispensability of works. It is a question of interpretation and, where different interpretations are possible, we interpret, again, according to our opinion which is decided, as we have seen, by our education or our temperament. Even when an interpretation in the sense of our opinion seems to be impossible, an ingenious scholarship, a curious & intrepid learning can make it possible. Sa atma tattwamasi Swetaketo, cries Gautama to his son; “That is the Truth, that is the Self, that art thou, O Swetaketu.” The evidence of Revealed Scripture seems to be conclusive for the Adwaitic view of existence. No, cries the Dualist, you have read it wrongly, you have separated átmátattwam into three distinct un-compounded words when there is really an euphonic combination of átmá atat twam, which gives us this result, “Thou art *not* that, O Swetaketu.” Our inalienable perception of right, the satyam ritam in us, tells us that the Dualist’s device is wrong, a desperate expedient only; but how shall we convince the Dualist, whose business it is, as a dualist, not to be convinced? For grammatically, textually, he is within his rights. Nor can Shankara at least complain of this amazing tour-de-force; for he himself has used the very same device, in his commentary on the Isha Upanishad, in order to read, for the convenience of his philosophy, asambhútyá, by the not coming into birth, where tradition, metre, sentence-

structure & context demand sambhútyá, by the coming into birth. In this confusion, is there any other class of data handled by metaphysics which will help us out of the difficulty? Certain psychological experiences are so handled; notably, the phenomena of sleep, the phenomena of samadhi, the phenomena of ultimate experience in consciousness. But how are we to know that these experiences bear the construction put on them or justify the conclusions drawn from them? how are we to know, for instance, that the experiences in consciousness which we find advanced as ultimate are really ultimate or even that they are not entirely illusory & deceptive? As metaphysics handles them, isolating them from each other, advancing them to demonstrate particular views & opinions, we cannot have any certainty. And, indeed, we find that each builder of a metaphysical system has a different formula of ultimate consciousness, ultimate to him, from which he starts; this difference of the ultimate step in experience which is also the starting-point for the chain of our logical systematising, is the strong foundation of all these age long jarrings in religious sect and school of philosophy. Here again opinion is master, very clearly founded not on data, not on pure truth, but on truth as seen in the colouring & with the limitation of our education & temperament. We can see from examples in modern Science how these differences work out & where their remedy is to be found. Physicists & geologists have disagreed in their view of the age of the earth; the geologists had certain data of experience before them which pointed to one conclusion, the physicists had a different set of data before them which pointed to a different conclusion. The difference here [is] a difference of education; the education of each had trained his mind to look only at a certain set of considerations, to move only in a certain way of thinking & reasoning. If physicist & geologist are combined in one mind, the age of the earth will not even then be indisputably fixed, for the necessary data are still wanting, but a juster perception will be gained, a better preparation for considering the problem, a superior chance of arriving as near to the truth as is now possible. Again, we see two scientists, absolutely agreed on all positive physical problems, confronted

with the phenomena of the psychical world, partly true, partly the conscious or half conscious frauds of exploiters & illusions of enthusiasts. One turns eagerly to the new subject, examines widely, believes readily, is discouraged by no disappointments; the other refuses contemptuously to investigate or, if he investigates, hastens as rapidly as he can to the conclusion that the whole business is a sink of fraud, imposture & mystification. It is difference of temperament, not of the facts, that has determined these conflicting opinions. In the positive questions on which they are agreed, in the conclusions of their respective sciences where the geologist & physicist would not dream of disputing each other's conclusions, intellectual type & temperament are by no means entirely banished as factors, but their play is restricted, a mass of actual fact & experience is there to check them & keep them in order. It is this check that is wanting to the method of the metaphysicians.

If, then, our object is to take a number of general truths, a number of abstract conceptions, a few general statements of Vedanta and wide facts of consciousness, and out of these materials build ourselves a bright, aerial house of speculation in which our intellect can live satisfied with the sense of finality and our personal temperament assert itself as the ultimate truth of things, the method of abstract speculation supporting itself on logic will be sufficient for our purpose. But if we wish rather to know anything for certain about God & the ultimate reality of the world and the foundations of our life & existence, it is not by logic and speculation that we shall arrive at our desire. Experience is the first necessity; an experiential method, not a speculative & logical method. What is the utility of logical discussion & the marshalling of Vedic texts to decide whether works are incompatible with salvation or indispensable to it or neither incompatible nor indispensable, but only useful & permissible? What we need is experience. If once it is established by the experience of the Jivanmuktas that works & salvation are compatible, by the experience of the Karmayogins that works also lead to freedom in the Infinite & Divine Existence, — although they need not be the only path, nor the only requisite,

although, even, it may be difficult to harmonise an active existence with the calm & peace of Infinity, — then no amount of logic to the contrary can be of any avail. Nor will Vedic texts avail, since the bearing of the texts has itself to be first decided. And what is the use of proving by logic & a curious scholarship that *Tattwam asi* should be read *atattwam asi* or that *Vidya* & *Avidya* in a particular Upanishad do not mean what they mean in every other Upanishad or that *amritatwam* in one text means the state of the gods & in others the state of Brahman? We need rather to experience always, to experience our unity with the One Truth of things and our difference from it and the relations of the unity to the difference; having experienced we shall understand. We need by practice & experiment, under a fit human guide or guided by the Divinity within, if we have strength & faith in Him, to fathom the outer dissonances & the secret harmonies of *Vidya* & *Avidya*, to achieve & enjoy immortality instead of arguing about immortality, to realise the thing the Veda speaks instead of disputing about the words of the text. In the absence of knowledge of the object, touch with the object, direct experience of the object, argument tends to become a vain jangling and speculation a high-sounding jargon. These things may be useful to awaken our intellectual interest in the subject and move us to the acquisition of knowledge, but only if we become dissatisfied with them & see the necessity of proceeding farther. The Greek philosophers argued, of old, that the world was made out of water or made out of fire, and their speculations & the logical ingenuities of the sophists awakened a widespread curiosity on the subject; but the moment the experimental methods of physical science give us actual experience of the constituents of the material world, such speculations become valueless; the simple relation of connected facts takes the place of abstract logic. No one would dream of trying to settle the constituents of water or the processes of water by speculative logic; the experiential method is there to forbid that inutility. Even if the right experiential method has to be found, it is still by progressive experience step after step aided by the eye of intuition that it has to be discovered. Argument from first principles

can only be of a minor and almost an accidental assistance; its function is always to awaken the mind & attach it to the object, so that the intuition attracted by the mental demand may fall upon the point desired with its light & bright electric shock and its divinely illuminating swiftness.

It might seem to follow that as the scientific method has been used to elucidate the problems of matter, so it should be used to elucidate the problems of mind & spirit. Certainly, in the absence of another, the scientific method would be the best, — the method of patient and courageous experiment & observation aided by a scrupulous use of hypothesis & exact reasoning. A beginning has been made in this direction in Europe by the examination of the abnormal conditions of hypnosis, divided personality & rare mental & psychic phenomena as well as in the tendency of psychology towards the abandonment of the superficial, academic and unfruitful methods of the past. But it is doubtful whether the scientific method will bear as great fruit in the things of mind as it has borne in the things of matter; it is certain that it is wholly unsuited to the investigation of the things of the spirit, because here we come into touch with Infinity & even cross the borders that divide the definite from the indefinable. The more we progress in that direction, the more the methods of scientific reasoning become inapplicable, unfruitful & misleading. Even the Mind gives a very limited hold to the scientist. In the first place, experiment is much more dangerous & difficult than in the physical sciences; in the latter we risk death & suffering, in the former we have to go out of the normal, face the dangers of the beyond from which man draws back shuddering, risk even the loss of that very reason which we have chosen for our instrument. The repugnance of mankind to take this step is much greater than that fear & repugnance which set the mass of mankind against the early experiments of science as diabolical sorcery & magic. Similarly, we find denounced as quackery, dupery, hallucination, superstition, the modern attempts to deal with the obscure phenomena of mind, — those in which observation of the familiar & normal is not enough & experiment with the abnormal is necessary. But the difficulty of

convincing the ignorant or the reluctant is here infinitely greater, because of the elusive nature of mind as compared with matter. This is the second capital disadvantage of the scientific method, — that our only field for full experiment is ourselves. In matter we can examine any object by bringing it sufficiently near to be within the vicinity of our senses; but in mind we are unable to see the movements & processes of the minds of others except in so far as we can judge them from their gestures, action & physical expression, — indices unutterably perilous to the reasoner, inconceivably misleading. Unless, therefore, we can discover & use mental instruments, answering to the microscope, telescope, retorts of the astronomer, chemist & physicist, by which we can see, study & analyse the mental processes of thought, feeling & sensation in others as well as in ourselves, we may know indeed the physical movements & organs corresponding to some of the motions of mind, but we shall never know mind itself. It is an obscure perception of this truth that explains the powerful revival in our own day of the occult. Erratic & ignorant as much of it is, it was inevitable & it is salutary. Nature, unerring in her action, is filling mankind with an instinctive sense, a sort of dim subterranean intuition that, now that Science has almost completed its analysis of Matter, the next subject of inquiry must be Mind & Mind cannot be known except by as yet undiscovered or little-used introsopic instruments. Even if these are found, the most dangerous, intricate, difficult & varied experiments will be necessary; for mind is infinitely more elusive & elastic than matter. Where physical Nature confines herself rigidly & stubbornly to a single process, psychical Nature uses, versatily & intricately, a hundred. To have sufficient experience, to be sure of one's results, one must take oneself & others experimentally to pieces, combine & recombine, put in order & put in disorder one's mental & emotional functions in a way & to an extent which humanity of the present day would pronounce chimerical and impossible. Still our own philosophy founding itself on experiments repeated continually through many millenniums declares that it is possible. Our Yoga, if its pretensions are true, enables us to do these things &, given certain difficult

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precautions, to do them with an eventual impunity; it separates the various functions, keeps some inactive while others are acting, experimentally analyses & creates new syntheses of mind and feeling, so that we are able to know the constituents, process & function at least of our own internal forces, with some perfection. Certain forms of Yoga claim to develop faculties by which we can not only know & watch the internal processes of others, but silently control them. If these pretensions are found to be justified, if we can really master & use such methods & instruments, a scientific knowledge & control of the forces of mind may become as possible as our present scientific knowledge & control of the forces of Nature. But how much shall we have gained? A knowledge of constituents, processes, functions we shall have, not, any more than in physical nature, a knowledge of things in themselves. The reality & spirit of objects & forces will still escape us, leaving us only their forms & phenomena. Reason will once more find herself baffled; with regard to the one thing that really matters, the one thing humanity is driven eternally to seek as necessary, supreme & the highest good, we shall have to return, as now, to the sterile result of agnosticism.

Experience, yes; but experience illumined by Veda & vijana. We must by experiment & experience develop those faculties which see the Truth face to face & do not have to approach it indirectly & by inference only. The results of experience will then be illumined by this higher truth; the truth acquired will be confirmed & enlarged by experience. We shall be able to recover our lost kingdoms of the spirit, know the unknowable, enter into relations with the Infinite, be ourselves the reality of the Infinite as well as, if we so choose, its expression in the apparent Finite. We shall not be confined to the silver & copper of mind & matter, but handle also the gold of the Spirit. We shall use indeed the smaller currency in which the Spirit makes itself negotiable in material form & mental impression, not despising even the most apparently insignificant cent or cowrie, since all are divine, but shall use them only as lesser symbols of the higher currency which is alone of a true & self-determined value. This knowledge & possession of the things of the Spirit is the promise of Veda &

Vedanta, — a promise not delayed for its fulfilment to another life & world, but offered, *ihaiva*, in the present life & in this perishable body, nor only offered, but continually realised since prehistoric times by elect spirits in our Indian generations. Yoga, which offers us the knowledge & control of mental processes & forces in ourselves & others, offers us what is infinitely more valuable & the one thing worth pursuing for its own sake, the knowledge & possession of the truth of forms mental & material in the reality of the Self and the realisation of life in the world as the phenomena of a divine epiphany. We can know God, we can become the Brahman.

This promise long confined to the few, to the initiates in India, is once more being placed before the whole world for its acceptance. Of this supreme offer a life recently lived in an obscure corner of the earth seems to me to be the very incarnation & illuminating symbol, — the life of the Paramhansa Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar. Not for any body of teachings that he left behind, not for any restricted type of living, peculiar system of ethics or religious panacea for the ills of existence, — but because it brought once more into the world with an unexampled thoroughness & liberality the great Vedantic method of experience & inner revelation & showed us its possibilities. An illiterate, poor & obscure Bengali peasant, one who to the end of his life used a patois full of the most rustic forms & expressions, ignorant of Sanscrit, of any language but his own provincial dialect, ignorant of philosophy & science, ignorant of the world, yet realised in himself all the spiritual wisdom of the ages, shed in his brief sayings a light so full, so deep on the most difficult profundities of our inner being, the most abstruse questions of metaphysics that the most strenuous thinkers & the most learned Pandits were impressed by his superiority. By what process did he arrive at this great store of living knowledge? Never by any intellectual process, by any steps of reasoning. In all the things of the intellect, even the most elementary, he was as simple as a child, more unsophisticated than the most ignorant peasant of his native village. He could turn indeed an eye of infallible keenness on the hearts & intentions of men, but

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it was the eye of vision, not the eye of thought. Never indeed, in modern times or since the intellectualising of mankind began were reasoning & intellectual processes so rigidly excluded from the process of knowledge with such astonishing results. The secret of his success was that always he lived & saw; where most men only reason and translate thought into sentiment, feel and translate emotion into terms of thinking, he saw with the heart or a higher faculty & threw out his vision into experience with a power of realisation of which modern men have long ceased to be capable; thus living everything to its full conclusion of mental & physical experience his soul opened more & more to knowledge, to direct truth, to the Satyam in things, until the depths hid nothing from him & the heights became accessible to his tread. He first has shown us clearly, entirely & without reserve or attenuating circumstance, the supreme importance of being over thinking, but being, not in terms of the body & life merely, like the sensational & emotional man or the man of action, but in the soul as well and the soul chiefly, in the central entity of this complex human symbol. Therefore he was able to liberate us from the chains imposed by the makeshifts of centuries. He broke through the limitations of the Yogic schools, practised each of them in turn & would reach in three days the consummation which even to powerful Yogins is the accomplishment of decades or even of more lives than one; broke through the limitations of religion and fulfilled himself in experience as a worshipper of Christ and of Allah while all the time remaining in the individual part of him a Hindu of the sect of the Shaktas; broke through the limitations of the Guruparampara, &, while using human teachers for outward process & discipline, yet received his first & supreme initiation from the eternal Mother herself and all his knowledge from the World-Teacher within; broke through the logical limitations of the metaphysical schools and showed us Dwaita & Adwaita inextricably yet harmoniously one in experience, even as they are shown to us in Veda & Vedanta. All that at the time still governed our spiritual life he took typically into his soul & into his mental & physical experience, swallowed up its defects &

imperfections in the infinite abyss of his personality and brought out through these masks & forms always the something beyond that is perfect and supreme. Thus establishing experience and inward revelation as the supreme means of the highest knowledge, he became one of the seed-lives of humanity; and the seed it held was the loosening of the bonds of the rational intellect & the return of humanity's journey from its long detour on the mid-plateaus of reason towards the footpath that winds up to the summits of the spirit.