

ANNIE BESANT



YOGA

THE NATURE & PRACTICE OF

Annie Besant

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THE BIG NEST

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Author: Annie Besant

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FOREWORD

These lectures are intended to give an outline of Yoga, in order to prepare the student to take up, for practical purposes, the Yoga sutras of Patanjali, the chief treatise on Yoga. I have on hand, with my friend Bhagavan Das as collaborateur, a translation of these Sutras, with Vyasa's commentary, and further commentary and elucidation written in the light of Theosophy. To prepare the student for the mastering of that more difficult task, these lectures were designed; hence the many references to Patanjali. They may, however, also serve to give to the ordinary lay reader some idea of the Science of the Yogis, and perhaps to allure a few towards its study.

Annie Besant

THE NATURE OF YOGA

In this first discourse we shall concern ourselves with the gaining of a general idea of the subject Yoga, seeking its place in nature, its own character, its object in human evolution.

THE MEANING OF THE UNIVERSE

Let us, first of all, ask ourselves, looking at the world around us, what it is that the history of the world signifies. When we read history, what does the history tell us? It seems to be a moving panorama of people and events, but it is really only a dance of shadows; the people are shadows, not realities, the kings and statesmen, the ministers and armies; and the events—the battles and revolutions, the rises and falls of states—are the most shadowlike dance of all. Even if the historian tries to go deeper, if he deals with economic conditions, with social organisations, with the study of the tendencies of the currents of thought, even then he is in the midst of shadows, the illusory shadows cast by unseen realities. This world is full of forms that are illusory, and the values are all wrong, the proportions are out of focus. The things which a man of the world thinks valuable, a spiritual man must cast aside as worthless. The diamonds of the world, with their glare and glitter in the rays of the outside sun, are mere fragments of broken glass to the man of knowledge. The crown of the king, the sceptre of the emperor, the triumph of earthly power, are less than nothing to the man who has had only a glimpse of the majesty of the Self. What is, then, real? What is truly valuable? Our answer will be very different from the answer given by the man of the world.

“The universe exists for the sake of the Self.” Not for what the outer world can give, not for control over the objects of desire, not for the sake even of beauty or pleasure, does the Great Architect plan and build His worlds. He has filled them with objects, beautiful and pleasure-giving. The great arches of the sky above, the mountains with snow-clad peaks, the valleys soft with verdure and fragrant with blossoms, the oceans with their vast depths, their surface now calm as a lake, now tossing in the fury—they all exist, not for the objects themselves, but for their value to the Self. Not for themselves because they are anything in themselves but that the purpose of the Self may be served, and His manifestations made possible.

The world, with all its beauty, its happiness and suffering, its joys and pains” is planned with the utmost ingenuity, in order that the powers of the Self may be shown forth in manifestation. From the fire-mist to the LOGOS, all exist for the sake of the Self. The lowest grain of dust, the mightiest deva in his heavenly regions, the plant that grows out of sight in the nook of a mountain, the star that shines aloft over us—all these exist in order that the fragments of the one Self, embodied in countless forms, may realize their own identity, and manifest the powers of the Self through the matter that envelops them.

There is but one Self in the lowliest dust and the loftiest deva. “Mamamsaha”—“My portion, My portion of My Self,” says Sri Krishna, are all these Jivatmas, all these living spirits. For them the universe exists; for them the sun shines, and the waves roll, and the winds blow, and the rain falls, that the Self may know Himself as manifested in matter, as embodied in the universe.

THE UNFOLDING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

One of those pregnant and significant ideas which Theosophy scatters so lavishly around is this—“the same scale is repeated over and over again, the same succession of events in larger or smaller cycles. If you understand one cycle, you understand the whole. The same laws by which a solar system is builded go to the building up of the system of man. The laws by which the Self unfolds his powers in the universe, from the fire-mist up to the LOGOS, are the same laws of consciousness which repeat themselves in the universe of man. If you understand them in the one, you can equally understand

them in the other. Grasp them in the small, and the large is revealed to you. Grasp them in the large and the small becomes intelligible to you.

The great unfolding from the stone to the God goes on through millions of years, through aeons of time. But the long unfolding that takes place in the universe, takes place in a shorter time-cycle within the limit of humanity, and this in a cycle so brief that it seems as nothing beside the longer one. Within a still briefer cycle a similar unfolding takes place in the individual—rapidly, swiftly, with all the force of its past behind it. These forces that manifest and unveil themselves in evolution are cumulative in their power. Embodied in the stone, in the mineral world, they grow and put out a little more of strength, and in the mineral world accomplish their unfolding. Then they become too strong for the mineral, and press on into the vegetable world. There they unfold more and more of the divinity, until they become too mighty for the vegetable, and become animal.

Expanding within and gaining experiences from the animal, they again overflow the limits of the animal, and appear as the human. In the human being they still grow and accumulate with ever increasing force, and exert greater pressure against the barrier; and then out of the human, they press into the super-human. This last process of evolution is called “Yoga.”

Coming to the individual, the man of our own globe has behind him his long evolution in other chains than ours—this same evolution through mineral to vegetable, through vegetable to animal, through animal to man, and then from our last dwelling-place in the lunar orb on to this terrene globe that we call the earth. Our evolution here has all the force of the last evolution in it, and hence, when we come to this shortest cycle of evolution which is called Yoga, the man has behind him the whole of the forces accumulated in his human evolution, and it is the accumulation of these forces which enables him to make the passage so rapidly. We must connect our Yoga with the evolution of consciousness everywhere, else we shall not understand it at all; for the laws of evolution of consciousness in a universe are exactly the same as the laws of Yoga, and the principles whereby consciousness unfolds itself in the great evolution of humanity are the same principles that we take Yoga and deliberately apply to the more rapid unfolding of our own consciousness. So that Yoga when it is definitely begun, is not a new thing, as some people imagine.

The whole evolution is one in its essence. The succession is the same, the sequences identical. Whether you are thinking of the unfolding of consciousness in the universe, or in the human race, or in the individual, you can study the laws of the whole, and in Yoga you learn to apply those same laws to your own consciousness rationally and definitely. All the laws are one, however different in their stages of manifestation.

If you look at Yoga in this light, then this Yoga, which seemed so alien and so far off, will begin to wear a familiar face, and come to you in a garb not wholly strange. As you study the unfolding of consciousness, and the corresponding evolution of form, it will not seem so strange that from man you should pass on to superman, transcending the barrier of humanity, and finding yourself in the region where divinity becomes more manifest.

THE ONENESS OF THE SELF

The Self in you is the same as the Self Universal. Whatever powers are manifested throughout the world, those powers exist in germ, in latency, in you. He, the Supreme, does not evolve. In Him there are no additions or subtractions. His portions, the Jivatmas, are as Himself, and they only unfold the powers in matter as conditions around them draw those powers forth. If you realize the unity of the Self amid the diversities of the Not-Self, then Yoga will not seem an impossible thing to you.

THE QUICKENING OF THE PROCESS

OF SELF-UNFOLDMENT

Educated and thoughtful men and women you already are; already you have climbed up that long ladder which separates the present outer form of the Deity in you from His form in the dust. The manifest Deity sleeps in the mineral and the stone. He becomes more and more unfolded in vegetables and animals, and lastly in man He has reached what appears as His culmination to ordinary men. Having done so much, shall you not do more? With the consciousness so far unfolded, does it seem impossible that it should unfold in the future into the Divine?

As you realize that the laws of the evolution of form and of the unfolding of consciousness in the universe and man are the same, and that it is through these laws that the yogi brings out his hidden powers, then you will understand also that it is not necessary to go into the mountain or into the desert, to hide yourself in a cave or a forest, in order that the union with the Self may be obtained. The Self who is within you and without you. Sometimes for a special purpose seclusion may be useful. It may be well at times to retire temporarily from the busy haunts of men. But in the universe planned by Ishvara, in order that the powers of the Self may be brought out, there is your best field for Yoga planned with Divine wisdom and sagacity. The world is meant for the unfolding of the Self: why should you then seek to run away from it? Look at Shri Krishna Himself in that great Upanishad, the yoga, the Bhagavad-Gita. He spoke it out on a battle-field, and not on a mountain peak. He spoke it to a Kshatriya ready to fight, and not to a Brahmana quietly retired from the world. The Kurukshetra is the world is the field of Yoga. They who cannot face the world have not the strength to face the difficulties of Yoga practice. If the outer world out-wearies your powers, how do you expect to conquer the difficulties of the inner life? If you cannot climb over the little troubles of the world, how can you hope to climb over the difficulties that a yogi has to scale? Those men blunder, who think that running away from the world is the road to victory, and that peace can be found only in certain localities.

As a matter of fact, you have practised Yoga unconsciously in the past, even before your self-consciousness had separated itself, was aware of itself. Sand knew itself to be different, in temporal matter at least, from all the others that surround it. And that is the first idea that you should take up and hold firmly: Yoga is only a quickened process of the ordinary unfolding of consciousness.

Yoga may then be defined as the "rational application of the laws of the unfolding of consciousness in an individual case". That is what is meant by the methods of Yoga. You study the laws of the unfolding of consciousness in the universe, you then apply them to a special case—and that case is your own. You cannot apply them to another. They must be self-applied. That is the definite principle to grasp. So we must add one more word to our definition: "Yoga is the rational application of the laws of the unfolding of consciousness, self-applied in an individual case."

YOGA IS A SCIENCE

Next, Yoga is a science. That is the second thing to grasp. Yoga is a science, and not a vague, dreamy drifting or imagining. It is an applied science, a systematized collection of laws applied to bring about a definite end. It takes up the laws of psychology, applicable to the unfolding of the whole consciousness of man on every plane, in every world, and applies those rationally in a particular case. This rational application of the laws of unfolding consciousness acts exactly on the same principle that you see applied around you every day in other departments of science.

You know, by looking at the world around you, how enormously the intelligence of man, co-operating with nature, may quicken "natural" processes, and the working of intelligence is as "natural" as anything else. We make this distinction, and practically it is a real one, between "rational" and "natural" growth, because human intelligence can guide the working of natural laws; and when v

come to deal with Yoga, we are in the same department of applied science as, let us say, is the scientific farmer or gardener, when he applies the natural laws of selection to breeding. The farmer or gardener cannot transcend the laws of nature, nor can he work against them. He has no other laws of nature to work with save universal laws by which nature is evolving forms around us, and yet he does in a few years what nature takes, perhaps, hundreds of thousands of years to do. And how? By applying human intelligence to choose the laws that serve him and to neutralize the laws that hinder him. He brings the divine intelligence in man to utilise the divine powers in nature that are working for general rather than for particular ends.

Take the breeder of pigeons. Out of the blue rock pigeon he develops the pouter or the fan-tail, he chooses out, generation after generation, the forms that show most strongly the peculiarity that he wishes to develop. He mates such birds together, takes every favouring circumstance into consideration and selects again and again, and so on and on, till the peculiarity that he wants to establish has become a well-marked feature. Remove his controlling intelligence, leave the birds to themselves, and they revert to the ancestral type.

Or take the case of the gardener. Out of the wild rose of the hedge has been evolved every rose of the garden. Many-petalled roses are but the result of the scientific culture of the five-petalled rose of the hedgerow, the wild product of nature. A gardener who chooses the pollen from one plant and places it on the carpels of another is simply doing deliberately what is done every day by the bee and the fly. But he chooses his plants, and he chooses those that have the qualities he wants intensified, and from those again he chooses those that show the desired qualities still more clearly, until he has produced a flower so different from the original stock that only by tracing it back can you tell the stock whence it sprang.

So is it in the application of the laws of psychology that we call Yoga. Systematized knowledge of the unfolding of consciousness applied to the individualized Self, that is Yoga. As I have just said, it is by the world that consciousness has been unfolded, and the world is admirably planned by the LOGOS for this unfolding of consciousness; hence the would-be yogi, choosing out his objects and applying his laws, finds in the world exactly the things he wants to make his practice of Yoga real, a vital thing, a quickening process for the knowledge of the Self. There are many laws. You can choose those which you require, you can evade those you do not require, you can utilize those you need, and thus you can bring about the result that nature, without that application of human intelligence, cannot so swiftly effect.

Take it, then, that Yoga is within your reach, with your powers, and that even some of the lower practices of Yoga, some of the simpler applications of the laws of the unfolding of consciousness to yourself, will benefit you in this world as well as in all others. For you are really merely quickening your growth, your unfolding, taking advantage of the powers nature puts within your hands, and deliberately eliminating the conditions which would not help you in your work, but rather hinder you to march forward. If you see it in that light, it seems to me that Yoga will be to you a far more real and practical thing, than it is when you merely read some fragments about it taken from Sanskrit books and often mistranslated into English, and you will begin to feel that to be a yogi is not necessarily a thing for a life far off, an incarnation far removed from the present one.

MAN A DUALITY

Some of the terms used in Yoga are necessarily to be known. For Yoga takes man for a special purpose and studies him for a special end and, therefore, only troubles itself about two great facts regarding man, mind and body. First, he is a unit, a unit of consciousness. That is a point to be definitely grasped. There is only one of him in each set of envelopes, and sometimes the Theosophical

has to revise his ideas about man when he begins this practical line. Theosophy quite usefully and rightly, for the understanding of the human constitution, divides man into many parts and pieces. We talk of physical, astral, mental, etc. Or we talk about Sthula-sarira, Sukshma-sarira, Karana-sarira, and so on. Sometimes we divide man into Anna-maya-kosa, Prana-maya-kosa, Mano-maya-kosa, etc. We divide man into so many pieces in order to study him thoroughly, that we can hardly find the man because of the pieces. This is, so to say, for the study of human anatomy and physiology.

But Yoga is practical and psychological. I am not complaining of the various sub-divisions of other systems. They are necessary for the purpose of those systems. But Yoga, for its practical purpose, considers man simply as a duality—mind and body, a unit of consciousness in a set of envelopes. This is not the duality of the Self and the Not-Self. For in Yoga, “Self” includes consciousness plus such matter as it cannot distinguish from itself, and Not-Self is only the matter it can put aside.

Man is not pure Self, pure consciousness, Samvid. That is an abstraction. In the concrete universe there are always the Self and His sheaths, however tenuous the latter may be, so that a unit of consciousness is inseparable from matter, and a Jivatma, or Monad, is invariably consciousness plus matter.

In order that this may come out clearly, two terms are used in Yoga as constituting man—Prana and Pradhana, life-breath and matter. Prana is not only the life-breath of the body, but the totality of the life forces of the universe or, in other words, the life-side of the universe.

“I am Prana,” says Indra. Prana here means the totality of the life-forces. They are taken to include consciousness, mind. Pradhana is the term used for matter. Body, or the opposite of mind, means for the yogi in practice so much of the appropriated matter of the outer world as he is able to put away from himself, to distinguish from his own consciousness.

This division is very significant and useful, if you can catch clearly hold of the root idea. Of course, looking at the thing from beginning to end, you will see Prana, the great Life, the great Self, always present in all, and you will see the envelopes, the bodies, the sheaths, present at the different stages, taking different forms; but from the standpoint of yogic practice, that is called Prana, or Self, with which the man identifies himself for the time, including every sheath of matter from which the man is unable to separate himself in consciousness. That unit, to the yogi, is the Self, so that it is a changing quantity. As he drops off one sheath after another and says: “That is not myself,” he is coming nearer and nearer to his highest point, to consciousness in a single film, in a single atom of matter, a Monad. For all practical purposes of Yoga, the man, the working, conscious man, is so much of him as he cannot separate from the matter enclosing him, or with which he is connected. Only that is body which the man is able to put aside and say: “This is not I, but mine.” We find we have a whole series of terms in Yoga which may be repeated over and over again. All the states of mind exist on every plane, says Vyasa, and this way of dealing with man enables the same significant words, as we shall see in a moment, to be used over and over again, with an ever subtler connotation; they all become relative and are equally true at each stage of evolution.

Now it is quite clear that, so far as many of us are concerned, the physical body is the only thing which we can say: “It is not myself”; so that, in the practice of Yoga at first, for you, all the words that would be used in it to describe the states of consciousness, the states of mind, would deal with the waking consciousness in the body as the lowest state, and, rising up from that, all the words would be in relative terms, implying a distinct and recognisable state of the mind in relation to that which is the lowest. In order to know how you shall begin to apply to yourselves the various terms used to describe the states of mind, you must carefully analyse your own consciousness, and find out how much of it is really consciousness, and how much is matter so closely appropriated that you cannot separate it from

yourself.

STATES OF MIND

Let us take it in detail. Four states of consciousness are spoken of amongst us. “Waking consciousness or Jagrat; the “dream” consciousness, or Svapna; the “deep sleep” consciousness, Sushupti; and the state beyond that, called Turiya (It is impossible to avoid the use of these technical terms, even in an introduction to Yoga. There are no exact English equivalents, and they are no more troublesome to learn than any other technical psychological terms.) How are those related to the body?

Jagrat is the ordinary waking consciousness, that you and I are using at the present time. If our consciousness works in the subtle, or astral, body, and is able to impress its experiences upon the brain, it is called Svapna, or in English, dream consciousness; it is more vivid and real than the Jagrat state. When working in the subtler form—the mental body—it is not able to impress its experiences on the brain, it is called Sushupti or deep sleep consciousness; then the mind is working on its own contents, not on outer objects. But if it has so far separated itself from connection with the brain, that it cannot be readily recalled by outer means, then it is, called Turiya, a lofty state of trance. These four states, when correlated to the four planes, represent a much unfolded consciousness. Jagrat is related to the physical; Svapna to the astral; Sushupti to the mental; and Turiya to the buddhic. When passing from one world to another, we should use these words to designate the consciousness working under the conditions of each world. But the same words are repeated in the books of Yoga with a different context. There the difficulty occurs, if we have not learned their relative nature. Svapna is not the same for all, nor is Sushupti the same for everyone.

Above all, the word samadhi, to be explained in a moment, is used in different ways and in different senses. How then are we to find our way in this apparent tangle? By knowing the state which is the starting-point, and then the sequence will always be the same. All of you are familiar with the waking consciousness in the physical body. You can find four states even in that, if you analyse it, and a similar sequence of the states of the mind is found on every plane.

How to distinguish them, then? Let us take the waking consciousness, and try to see the four states in that. Suppose I take up a book and read it. I read the words; my eyes are related to the outer physical consciousness. That is the Jagrat state. I go behind the words to the meaning of the words. I have passed from the waking state of the physical plane into the Svapna state of waking consciousness, that sees through the outer form, seeking the inner life. I pass from this to the mind of the writer; here the mind touches the mind; it is the waking consciousness in its Sushupti state. If I pass from this contact and enter the very mind of the writer, and live in that man’s mind, then I have reached the Turiya state of the waking consciousness.

Take another illustration. I look at any watch; I am in Jagrat. I close my eyes and make an image of the watch; I am in Svapna. I call together many ideas of many watches, and reach the ideal watch; I am in Sushupti. I pass to the ideal of time in the abstract; I am in Turiya. But all these are stages in the physical plane consciousness; I have not left the body.

In this way, you can make states of mind intelligible and real, instead of mere words.

SAMADHI

Some other important words, which recur from time to time in the Yoga-sutras, need to be understood, though there are no exact English equivalents. As they must be used to avoid clumsy circumlocutions, it is necessary to explain them. It is said: “Yoga is Samadhi.” Samadhi is a state in which the consciousness is so dissociated from the body that the latter remains insensible. It is a state of trance in which the mind is fully self-conscious, though the body is insensitive, and from which the mind returns to the body with the experiences it has had in the superphysical state, remembering the

when again immersed in the physical brain. Samadhi for any one person is relative to his waking consciousness, but implies insensitiveness of the body. If an ordinary person throws himself in trance and is active on the astral plane, his Samadhi is on the astral. If his consciousness is functioning in the mental plane, Samadhi is there. The man who can so withdraw from the body as to leave it insensitive, while his mind is fully self-conscious, can practice Samadhi.

The phrase “Yoga is Samadhi” covers facts of the highest significance and greatest instruction. Suppose you are only able to reach the astral world when you are asleep, your consciousness there is as we have seen, in the Svapna state. But as you slowly unfold your powers, the astral forms begin to intrude upon your waking physical consciousness until they appear as distinctly as do physical forms and thus become objects of your waking consciousness. The astral world then, for you, no longer belongs to the Svapna consciousness, but to the Jagrat; you have taken two worlds within the scope of your Jagrat consciousness—the physical and the astral worlds—and the mental world is in your Svapna consciousness. “Your body” is then the physical and the astral bodies taken together. As you go on, the mental plane begins similarly to intrude itself, and the physical, astral and mental all come within your waking consciousness; all these are, then, your Jagrat world. These three worlds form but one world to you; their three corresponding bodies but one body, that perceives and acts. The three bodies of the ordinary man have become one body for the yogi. If under these conditions you want to see only one world at a time, you must fix your attention on it, and thus focus it. You can, in that state of enlarged waking, concentrate your attention on the physical and see it; then the astral and mental will appear hazy. So you can focus your attention on the astral and see it; then the physical and the mental, being out of focus, will appear dim. You will easily understand this if you remember that, in this hall, I may focus my sight in the middle of the hall, when the pillars on both sides will appear indistinctly. Or I may concentrate my attention on a pillar and see it distinctly, but I then see you only vaguely at the same time. It is a change of focus, not a change of body. Remember that all which you can put aside as not yourself is the body of the yogi, and hence, as you go higher, the lower bodies form but a single body and the consciousness in that sheath of matter which it still cannot throw away—that becomes the man.

“Yoga is Samadhi.” It is the power to withdraw from all that you know as body, and to concentrate yourself within. That is Samadhi. No ordinary means will then call you back to the world that you have left. (Indian yogi in Samadhi, discovered in a forest by some ignorant and brutal Englishmen, was so violently ill used that he returned to his tortured body, only to leave it again at once by death.) This will also explain to you the phrase in The Secret Doctrine that the Adept “begins his Samadhi on the atmic plane.” When a Jivan-mukta enters into Samadhi, he begins it on the atmic plane. All planes below the atmic are one plane for him. He begins his Samadhi on a plane to which the mere man cannot rise. He begins it on the atmic plane, and thence rises stage by stage to the higher cosmic planes. The same word, samadhi, is used to describe the states of the consciousness, whether it rises above the physical into the astral, as in self-induced trance of an ordinary man, or as in the case of the Jivan-mukta when, the consciousness being already centred in the fifth, or atmic plane, it rises to the higher planes of a larger world.

THE LITERATURE OF YOGA

Unfortunately for non-Sanskrit-knowing people, the literature of Yoga is not largely available in English. The general teachings of Yoga are to be found in the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad-Gita; those, in many translations, are within your reach, but they are general, not special; they give you the main principles, but do not tell you about the methods in any detailed way. Even in the Bhagavad-Gita, while you are told to make sacrifices, to become indifferent, and so on, it is all of the nature

moral precept, absolutely necessary indeed, but still not telling you how to reach the conditions p before you. The special literature of Yoga is, first of all, many of the minor Upanishads, “the hundred and-eight” as they are called. Then comes the enormous mass of literature called the Tantras. These books have an evil significance in the ordinary English ear, but not quite rightly. The Tantras are very useful books, very valuable and instructive; all occult science is to be found in them. But they are divisible into three classes: those that deal with white magic, those that deal with black magic, and those that deal with what we may call grey magic, a mixture of the two. Now magic is the word which covers the methods of deliberately bringing about super-normal physical states by the action of the will.

A high tension of the nerves, brought on by anxiety or disease, leads to ordinary hysteria, emotion and foolish. A similarly high tension, brought about by the will, renders a man sensitive to super-physical vibrations. Going to sleep has no significance, but going into Samadhi is a priceless power. The process is largely the same, but one is due to ordinary conditions, the other to the action of the trained will. The Yogi is the man who has learned the power of the will, and knows how to use it to bring about foreseen and foredetermined results. This knowledge has ever been called magic; it is the name of the Great Science of the past, the one Science, to which only the word “ great “ was given in the past. The Tantras contain the whole of that; the occult side of man and nature, the means whereby discoveries may be made, the principles whereby the man may re-create himself, all these are in the Tantras. The difficulty is that without a teacher they are very dangerous, and again and again a man trying to practice the Tantric methods without a teacher makes himself very ill. So the Tantras have got a bad name both in the West and here in India. A good many of the American “ occult “ books now sold are scraps of the Tantras which have been translated. One difficulty is that these Tantric works often use the name of a bodily organ to represent an astral or mental centre. There is some reason for that because all the centres are connected with each other from body to body; but no reliable teacher would set his pupil to work on the bodily organs until he had some control over the higher centres, and had carefully purified the physical body. Knowing the one helps you to know the other, and the teacher who has been through it all can place his pupil on the right path; but if you take up these words, which are all physical, and do not know to what the physical word is applied, then you will only become very confused, and may injure yourself. For instance, in one of the Sutras it is said that if you meditate on a certain part of the tongue you will obtain astral sight. That means that if you meditate on the pituitary body, just over this part of the tongue, astral sight will be opened. The particular word used to refer to a centre has a correspondence in the physical body, and the word is often applied to the physical organs when the other is meant. This is what is called a “ blind,” and it is intended to keep the people away from dangerous practices in the books that are published; people may meditate on that part of their tongues all their lives without anything coming of it; but if they think upon the corresponding centre in the body, a good deal of harm may come of it. “ Meditate on the navel,” it is also said. This means the solar plexus, for there is a close connection between the two. But to meditate on that to incur the danger of a serious nervous disorder, almost impossible to cure. All who know how many people in India suffer through these practices, ill-understood, recognize that it is not wise to plunge into them without some one to tell you what they mean, and what may be safely practiced and what not. The other part of the Yoga literature is a small book called the sutras of Patanjali. That is available, but I am afraid that few are able to make much of it by themselves. In the first place, to elucidate the Sutras, which are simply headings, there is a great deal of commentary in Sanskrit, only partially translated. And even the commentaries have this peculiarity, that all the most difficult words are merely repeated, not explained, so that the student is not much enlightened.

SOME DEFINITIONS

There are a few words, constantly recurring, which need brief definitions, in order to avoid confusion; they are: Unfolding, Evolution, Spirituality, Psychism, Yoga and Mysticism.

“Unfolding” always refers to consciousness, “evolution” to forms. Evolution is the homogeneous becoming the heterogeneous, the simple becoming complex. But there is no growth and no perfecting for Spirit, for consciousness; it is all there and always, and all that can happen to it is to turn itself outwards instead of remaining turned inwards. The God in you cannot evolve, but He may show forth His powers through matter that He has appropriated for the purpose, and the matter evolves to serve Him. He Himself only manifests what He is. And on that, many a saying of the great mystics may come to your mind: “Become,” says St. Ambrose, “what you are”—a paradoxical phrase; but one that sums up a great truth: become in outer manifestation that which you are in inner reality. That is the object of the whole process of Yoga.

“Spirituality” is the realisation of the One. “Psychism” is the manifestation of intelligence through any material vehicle. (See “Spirituality and Psychism” by Annie Besant.)

“Yoga” is the seeking of union by the intellect, a science; “Mysticism” is the seeking of the same union by emotion. (The word yoga may, of course, be rightly used of all union with the self, whatever the road taken. I am using it here in the narrower sense, as peculiarly connected with the intelligence as a Science, herein following Patanjali.)

See the mystic. He fixes his mind on the object of devotion; he loses self-consciousness, and passes into a rapture of love and adoration, leaving all external ideas, wrapped in the object of his love, and a great surge of emotion sweeps him up to God. He does not know how he has reached that lofty state. He is conscious only of God and his love for Him. Here is the rapture of the mystic, the triumph of the saint.

The yogi does not work like that. Step after step, he realises what he is doing. He works by science and not by emotion, so that any who do not care for science, finding it dull and dry, are not at present unfolding that part of their nature which will find its best help in the practice of Yoga. The yogi may use devotion as a means. This comes out very plainly in Patanjali. He has given many means whereby Yoga may be followed, and curiously, “devotion to Isvara” is one of several means. There comes out the spirit of the scientific thinker. Devotion to Isvara is not for him an end in itself, but means to an end—the concentration of the mind. You see there at once the difference of spirit. Devotion to Isvara is the path of the mystic. He attains communion by that. Devotion to Isvara as a means of concentrating the mind is the scientific way in which the yogi regards devotion. No number of words would have brought out the difference of spirit between Yoga and Mysticism as well as this. The one looks upon devotion to Isvara as a way of reaching the Beloved; the other looks upon it as a means of reaching concentration. To the mystic, God, in Himself is the object of search, delight in Him is the reason for approaching Him, union with Him in consciousness is his goal; but to the yogi, fixing the attention on God is merely an effective way of concentrating the mind. In the one, devotion is used to obtain an end; in the other, God is seen as the end and is reached directly by rapture.

GOD WITHOUT AND GOD WITHIN

That leads us to the next point, the relation of God without to God within. To the yogi, who is the very type of Hindu thought, there is no definite proof of God save the witness of the Self within to His existence, and his idea of finding the proof of God is that you should strip away from your consciousness all limitations, and thus reach the stage where you have pure consciousness—save the veil of the thin nirvanic matter. Then you know that God is. So you read in the Upanishad: “Whose only proof is the witness of the Self.” This is very different from Western methods of thought, which

try to demonstrate God by a process of argument. The Hindu will tell you that you cannot demonstrate God by any argument or reasoning; He is above and beyond reasoning, and although the reason may guide you on the way, it will not prove to demonstration that God is. The only way you can know Him is by diving into yourself. There you will find Him, and know that He is without as well as within you, and Yoga is a system that enables you to get rid of everything from consciousness that is not God, save that one veil of the nirvanic atom, and so to know that God is, with an unshakable certainty and conviction. To the Hindu that inner conviction is the only thing worthy to be called faith, and that gives you the reason why faith is said to be beyond reason, and so is often confused with credulity. Faith is beyond reason, because it is the testimony of the Self to himself, that conviction of existence as Self, of which reason is only one of the outer manifestations; and the only true faith is that inner conviction, which no argument can either strengthen or weaken, of the innermost Self of you, that which alone you are entirely sure. It is the aim of Yoga to enable you to reach that Self constantly not by a sudden glimpse of intuition, but steadily, unshakably, and unchangeably, and when that Self is reached, then the question: "Is there a God?" can never again come into the human mind.

CHANGES OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND VIBRATIONS OF MATTER

It is necessary to understand something about that consciousness which is your Self, and about that matter which is the envelope of consciousness, but which the Self so often identifies with himself. The great characteristic of consciousness is change, with a foundation of certainty that it is. The consciousness of existence never changes, but beyond this all is change, and only by the changes does consciousness become Self-consciousness. Consciousness is an everchanging thing, circling round an idea that never changes—Self-existence. The consciousness itself is not changed by any change of position or place. It only changes its states within itself.

In matter, every change of state is brought about by change of place. A change of consciousness is a change of a state; a change of matter is a change of place. Moreover, every change of state in consciousness is related to vibrations of matter in its vehicle. When matter is examined, we find three fundamental qualities—rhythm, mobility, stability—sattva, rajas, tamas. Sattva is rhythm, vibration. It is more than; rajas, or mobility. It is a regulated movement, a swinging from one side to the other over a definite distance, a length of wave, a vibration.

The question is often put: "How can things in such different categories, as matter and Spirit, affect each other? Can we bridge that great gulf which some say can never be crossed?" Yes, the Indian has crossed it, or rather, has shown that there is no gulf. To the Indian, matter and Spirit are not only the two phases of the One, but, by a subtle analysis of the relation between consciousness and matter, he sees that in every universe the LOGOS imposes upon matter a certain definite relation of rhythm to every vibration of matter corresponding to a change in consciousness. There is no change in consciousness, however subtle, that has not appropriated to it a vibration in matter; there is no vibration in matter, however swift or delicate, which has not correlated to it a certain change in consciousness. That is the first great work of the LOGOS, which the Hindu scriptures trace out in the building of the atom, the Tanmatra, "the measure of That," the measure of consciousness. He who knows consciousness imposes on his material the answer to every change in consciousness, and that is an infinite number of vibrations. So that between the Self and his sheaths there is this invariable relation—the change in consciousness and the vibration of matter, and vice versa. That makes it possible for the Self to know the Not-Self.

These correspondences are utilised in Raja Yoga and Hatha Yoga, the Kingly Yoga and the Yoga of Resolve. The Raja Yoga seeks to control the changes in consciousness, and by this control to rule the

material vehicles. The Hatha Yoga seeks to control the vibrations of matter, and by this control to evoke the desired

changes in consciousness. The weak point in Hatha Yoga is that action on this line cannot reach beyond the astral plane, and the great strain imposed on the comparatively intractable matter of the physical plane sometimes leads to atrophy of the very organs, the activity of which is necessary for effecting the changes in consciousness that would be useful. The Hatha Yogi gains control over the bodily organs with which the waking consciousness no longer concerns itself, having relinquished them to its lower part, the “subconsciousness”. This is often useful as regards the prevention of disease, but serves no higher purpose. When he begins to work on the brain centres connected with ordinary consciousness, and still more when he touches those connected with the super-consciousness, he enters a dangerous region, and is more likely to paralyse than to evolve.

That relation alone it is which makes matter cognizable; the change in the thinker is answered by a change outside, and his answer to it and the change in it that he makes by his answer re-arrange again the matter of the body which is his envelope. Hence the rhythmic changes in matter are rightly called its cognizability. Matter may be known by consciousness, because of this unchanging relation between the two sides of the manifest LOGOS who is one, and the Self becomes aware of changes within himself, and thus of those of the external world to which those changes are related.

MIND

What is mind? From the yogic standpoint it is simply the individualized consciousness, the whole of it, the whole of your consciousness including your activities which the Western psychologist puts outside mind. Only on the basis of Eastern psychology is Yoga possible. How shall we describe the individualized consciousness? First, it is aware of things. Becoming aware of them, it desires them. Desiring them, it tries to attain them. So we have the three aspects of consciousness—intelligence, desire, activity. On the physical plane, activity predominates, although desire and thought are present. On the astral plane, desire predominates, and thought and activity are subject to desire. On the mental plane; intelligence is the dominant note, desire and activity are subject to it. Go to the buddhic plane and cognition, as pure reason, predominates, and so on. Each quality is present all the time, but one predominates. So with the matter that belongs to them. In your combinations of matter you get rhythmic, active, or stable ones; and according to the combinations of matter in your bodies will be the conditions of the activity of the whole of these in consciousness. To practice Yoga you must build your bodies of the rhythmic combinations, with activity and inertia less apparent. The yogi wants to make his body match his mind.

STAGES OF MIND

The mind has five stages, Patanjali tells us, and Vyasa comments that “these stages of mind are on every plane”. The first stage is the stage in which the mind is flung about, the Kshipta stage; it is the butterfly mind, the early stage of humanity, or, in man, the mind of the child, darting constantly from one object to another. It corresponds to activity on the physical plane. The next is the confused stage, Mudha, equivalent to the stage of the youth, swayed by emotions, bewildered by them; he begins to feel he is ignorant—a state beyond the fickleness of the child—a characteristic state, corresponding to activity in the astral world. Then comes the state of preoccupation, or infatuation, Vikshipta, the stage of the man possessed by an idea—love, ambition, or what not. He is no longer a confused youth, but a man with a clear aim, and an idea possesses him. It may be either the fixed idea of the madman, or the fixed idea which makes the hero or the saint; but in any case he is possessed by the idea. The quality of the idea, its truth or falsehood, makes the difference between the maniac and the martyr.

Maniac or martyr, he is under the spell of a fixed idea. No reasoning avails against it. If he has

assured himself that he is made of glass, no amount of argument will convince him to the contrary. He will always regard himself as being as brittle as glass. That is a fixed idea which is false. But there is a fixed idea which makes the hero and the martyr. For some great truth dearer than life is everything thrown aside. He is possessed by it, dominated by it, and he goes to death gladly for it. That state is said to be approaching Yoga, for such a man is becoming concentrated, even if only possessed by one idea. This stage corresponds to activity on the lower mental plane. Where the man possesses the idea instead of being possessed by it, that one-pointed state of the mind, called Ekagrata in Sanskrit, is the fourth stage. He is a mature man, ready for the true life. When the man has gone through life dominated by one idea, then he is approaching Yoga; he is getting rid of the grip of the world, and is beyond its allurements. But when he possesses that which before possessed him, then he has become fit for Yoga, and begins the training which makes his progress rapid. This stage corresponds to activity on the higher mental plane.

Out of this fourth stage or Ekagrata, arises the fifth stage, Niruddha or Self-controlled. When the man not only possesses one idea but, rising above all ideas, chooses as he wills, takes or does not take according to the illumined Will, then he is Self-controlled and can effectively practice Yoga. This stage corresponds to activity on the buddhic plane.

In the third stage, Vikshipta, where he is possessed by the idea, he is learning Viveka or discrimination between the outer and the inner, the real and the unreal. When he has learned the lesson of Viveka, then he advances a stage forward; and in Ekagrata he chooses one idea, the inner life; and as he fixes his mind on that idea he learns Vairagya or dispassion. He rises above the desire to possess objects of enjoyment, belonging either to this or any other world. Then he advances towards the fifth stage—Self-controlled. In order to reach that he must practice the six endowments, the Shatsamapattis. These six endowments have to do with the Will-aspect of consciousness as the other two, Viveka and Vairagya, have to do with the cognition and activity aspects of it.

By a study of your own mind, you can find out how far you are ready to begin the definite practice of Yoga. Examine your mind in order to recognize these stages in yourself. If you are in either of the two early stages, you are not ready for Yoga. The child and the youth are not ready to become yogis, nor is the preoccupied man. But if you find yourself possessed by a single thought, you are nearly ready for Yoga; it leads to the next stage of one-pointedness, where you can choose your idea, and cling to it of your own will. Short is the step from that to the complete control, which can inhibit all motions of the mind. Having reached that stage, it is comparatively easy to pass into Samadhi.

INWARD AND OUTWARD-TURNED CONSCIOUSNESS

Samadhi is of two kinds: one turned outward, one turned inward. The outward-turned consciousness is always first. You are in the stage of Samadhi belonging to the outward-turned waking consciousness, when you can pass beyond the objects to the principles which those objects manifest when through the form you catch a glimpse of the life. Darwin was in this stage when he glimpsed the truth of evolution. That is the outward-turned Samadhi of the physical body.

This is technically the Samprajnata Samadhi, the “Samadhi with consciousness,” but to be better regarded, I think, as with consciousness outward-turned, i.e. conscious of objects. When the object disappears, that is, when consciousness draws itself away from the sheath by which those objects are seen, then comes the Asamprajnata Samadhi; called the “Samadhi without consciousness”. I prefer to call it the inward-turned consciousness, as it is by turning away from the outer that this stage is reached.

These two stages of Samadhi follow each other on every plane; the intense concentration on objects in the first stage, and the piercing thereby through the outer form to the underlying principle, a

followed by the turning away of the consciousness from the sheath which has served its purpose, and its withdrawal into itself, i.e., into a sheath not yet recognised as a sheath. It is then for a while conscious only of itself and not of the outer world. Then comes the “cloud,” the dawning sense again of an outer, a dim sensing of “something” other than itself; that again is followed by the functioning of the higher sheath and the Recognition of the objects of the next higher plane, corresponding to the sheath. Hence the complete cycle is: Samprajnata Samadhi, Asamprajnata Samadhi, Megha (cloud) and then the Samprajnata Samadhi of the next plane, and so on.

THE CLOUD

This term—in full, Dharma-megha, cloud of righteousness, or of religion—is one which is very scantily explained by the commentators. In fact, the only explanation they give is that all the manifold past karma of good gathers over him, and pours down upon him a rain of blessing. Let us see if we cannot find something more than this meagre interpretation.

The term “cloud” is very often used in mystic literature of the West; the “Cloud on the Mount,” the “Cloud on the Sanctuary,” the “Cloud on the Mercy-Seat,” are expressions familiar to the student. And the experience which they indicate is familiar to all mystics in its lower phases, and to some in its fullness. In its lower phases, it is the experience just noted, where the withdrawal of the consciousness into a sheath not yet recognised as a sheath is followed by the beginning of the functioning of the sheath, the first indication of which is the dim sensing of an outer. You feel as though surrounded by a dense mist, conscious that you are not alone but unable to see. Be still; be patient; wait. Let your consciousness be in the attitude of suspense. Presently the cloud will thin, and first in glimpses, then in its full beauty, the vision of a higher plane will dawn on your entranced sight. This entrance into a higher plane will repeat itself again and again, until your consciousness, centred on the buddhic plane and its splendour having disappeared as your consciousness withdraws even from that exquisite sheath, you find yourself in the true cloud, the cloud on the sanctuary, the cloud that veils the Holy that hides the vision of the Self. Then comes what seems to be the draining away of the very life, the letting go of the last hold on the tangible, the hanging in a void, the horror of great darkness, loneliness unspeakable. Endure, endure. Everything must go. “Nothing out of the Eternal can help you.” God only shines out in the stillness; as says the Hebrew: “Be still, and know that I am God.” In that silence a Voice shall be heard, the voice of the Self, In that stillness a Life shall be felt, the life of the Self. In that void a Fullness shall be revealed, the fullness of the Self. In that darkness a Light shall be seen, the glory of the Self. The cloud shall vanish, and the shining of the Self shall be made manifest. That which was a glimpse of a far-off majesty shall become a perpetual realisation and knowing the Self and your unity with it, you shall enter into the Peace that belongs to the Self alone.

LECTURE II

SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

In studying psychology anyone who is acquainted with the Sanskrit tongue must know how valuable that language is for precise and scientific dealing with the subject. The Sanskrit, or the well-made, the constructed, the built-together, tongue, is one that lends itself better than any other to the elucidation of psychological difficulties. Over and over again, by the mere form of a word, a hint given, an explanation or relation is suggested. The language is constructed in a fashion which enables a large number of meanings to be connoted by a single word, so that you may trace all allied ideas, truths, or facts, by this verbal connection, when you are speaking or using Sanskrit. It has a limited number of important roots, and then an immense number of words constructed on those roots.

Now the root of the word yoga is a word that means “to join,” yuj, and that root appears in many languages, such as the English—of course, through the Latin, wherein you get *jugare, jungere*, “join”—and out of that a number of English words are derived and will at once suggest themselves to you: junction, conjunction, disjunction, and so on. The English word “yoke” again, is derived from this same Sanskrit root so that all through the various words, or thoughts, or facts connected with that one root, you are able to gather the meaning of the word yoga and to see how much that word covers the ordinary processes of the mind and how suggestive many of the words connected with it are acting, so to speak, as sign-posts to direct you along the road to the meaning. In other tongues, as French, we have a word like *rapport*, used constantly in English; “being en rapport,” a French expression, but so Anglicized that it is continually heard amongst ourselves. And that term, in some ways, is the closest to the meaning of the Sanskrit word yoga; “to be in relation to”; “to be connected with”; “to enter into”; “to merge in”; and so on: all these ideas are classified together under the old head of “Yoga”. When you find Sri Krishna saying that “Yoga is equilibrium,” in the Sanskrit He is saying a perfectly obvious thing, because Yoga implies balance, yoking and the Sanskrit equilibrium is “*samvata—togetherness*”; so that it is a perfectly simple, straightforward statement, not connoting anything very deep, but merely expressing one of the fundamental meanings of the word He is using. And so with another word, a word used in the commentary on the Sutra I quoted before which conveys to the Hindu a perfectly straightforward meaning: “Yoga is Samadhi.” To an ordinary English-knowing person that does not convey any very definite idea; each word needs explanation. To a Sanskrit-knowing man the two words are obviously related to one another. For the word yoga, we have seen, means “yoked together,” and Samadhi derived from the root *dha*, “to place,” with the prepositions *sam* and *a*, meaning “completely together”. Samadhi, therefore, literally means “fully placing together,” and its etymological equivalent in English would be “to compose” (*com=sam, posita=place*). Samadhi therefore means “composing the mind,” collecting it together, checking all distractions. Thus by philological, as well as by practical, investigation the two words yoga and samadhi are inseparably linked together. And when Vyasa, the commentator, says: “Yoga is the composed mind,” he is conveying a clear and significant idea as to what is implied in Yoga. Although Samadhi has come to mean, by a natural sequence of ideas, the trance-state which results from perfect composure, its original meaning should not be lost sight of.

Thus, in explaining Yoga, one is often at a loss for the English equivalent of the manifold meanings of the Sanskrit tongue, and I earnestly advise those of you who can do so, at least to acquaint yourselves sufficiently with this admirable language, to make the literature of Yoga more intelligible to you than it can be to a person who is completely ignorant of Sanskrit.

ITS RELATION TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHIES

Let me ask you to think for a while on the place of Yoga in its relation to two of the great Hindu schools of philosophical thought, for neither the Westerner nor the non-Sanskrit-knowing Indian can

ever really understand the translations of the chief Indian books, now current here and in the West, and the force of all the allusions they make, unless they acquaint themselves in some degree with the outlines of these great schools of philosophy, they being the very foundation on which these books are built up. Take the Bhagavad-Gita. Probably there are many who know that book fairly well, who use it as the book to help in the spiritual life, who are not familiar with most of its precepts. But you must always be more or less in a fog in reading it, unless you realise the fact that it is founded on a particular Indian philosophy and that the meaning of nearly all the technical words in it is practically limited by their meaning in philosophy known as the Samkhya. There are certain phrases belonging rather to the Vedanta, but the great majority are Samkhyan, and it is taken for granted that the people reading or using the book are familiar with the outline of the Samkhyan philosophy. I do not want to take you into details, but I must give you the leading ideas of the philosophy. For if you grasp these you will not only read your Bhagavad-Gita with much more intelligence than before, but you will be able to use it practically for yogic purposes in a way that, without this knowledge, is almost impossible.

Alike in the Bhagavad-Gita and in the Yoga-sutras of Patanjali the terms are Samkhyan, and historically Yoga is based on the Samkhya, so far as its philosophy is concerned. Samkhya does not concern itself with the existence of Deity, but only with the becoming of a universe, the order of its evolution. Hence it is often called Nir-isvara Samkhya, the Samkhya without God. But so closely is it bound up with the Yoga system, that the latter is called Sesvara Samkhya, with God. For a better understanding, therefore, I must outline part of the Samkhya philosophy, that part which deals with the relation of Spirit and matter; note the difference from this of the Vedantic conception of Self and Not-Self, and then find the reconciliation in the Theosophic statement of the facts in nature. The directions which fall from the lips of the Lord of Yoga in the Gita may sometimes seem to you opposed to each other and contradictory, because they sometimes are phrased in the Samkhyan and sometimes in the Vedantic terms, starting from different standpoints, one looking at the world from the standpoint of matter, the other from the standpoint of Spirit. If you are a student of Theosophy, then the knowledge of the facts will enable you to translate the different phrases. That reconciliation and understanding of these apparently contradictory phrases is the object to which I would ask your attention now.

The Samkhyan School starts with the statement that the universe consists of two factors, the first pair of opposites, Spirit and Matter, or more accurately Spirits and Matter. The Spirit is called Purusha—the Man; and each Spirit is an individual. Purusha is a unit, a unit of consciousness; they are all of the same nature, but distinct everlastingly the one from the other. Of these units there are many; countless Purushas are to be found in the world of men. But while they are countless in number they are identical in nature, they are homogeneous. Every Purusha has three characteristics, and these three are alike in all. One characteristic is awareness; it will become cognition. The second of the characteristics is life or prana; it will become activity. The third characteristic is immutability, the essence of eternity; it will become will. Eternity is not, as some mistakenly think, everlasting time. Everlasting time has nothing to do with eternity. Time and eternity are two altogether different things. Eternity is changeless, immutable, simultaneous. No succession in time, albeit everlasting—if successions could be—could give eternity. The fact that Purusha has this attribute of immutability tells us that Purusha is eternal; for changelessness is a mark of the eternal.

Such are the three attributes of Purusha, according to the Samkhya. Though these are not the same nomenclature as the Vedantic Sat, Chit, Ananda, yet they are practically identical. Awareness or cognition is Chit; life or force is Sat; and immutability, the essence of eternity, is Ananda.

Over against these Purushas, homogeneous units, countless in number, stands Prakriti, Matter, the second in the Samkhyan duality. Prakriti is one; Purushas are many. Prakriti is a continuum; Purushas are discontinuous, being innumerable, homogeneous units. Continuity is the mark of Prakriti. Pause for a moment on the name Prakriti. Let us investigate its root meaning. The name indicates its essence. Pra means “forth,” and kri is the root “make”. Prakriti thus means “forth-making”. Matter is that which enables the essence of Being to become. That which is Being—is-tence, becomes existence—outbeing, by Matter, and to describe Matter as “forth-making” is to give its essence in a single word. Only by Prakriti can Spirit, or Purusha, “forth-make” or “manifest” himself. Without the presence of Prakriti, Purusha is helpless, a mere abstraction. Only by the presence of, and in Prakriti, can Purusha make manifest his powers. Prakriti has also three characteristics, the well-known gunas—attributes or qualities. These are rhythm, mobility and inertia. Rhythm enables awareness to become cognition. Mobility enables life to become activity. Inertia enables immutability to become will.

Now the conception as to the relation of Spirit to Matter is a very peculiar one, and confused ideas about it give rise to many misconceptions. If you grasp it, the Bhagavad-Gita becomes illuminated and all the phrases about action and actor, and the mistake of saying “I act,” become easy to understand, as implying technical Samkhyan ideas.

The three qualities of Prakriti, when Prakriti is thought of as away from Purusha, are in equilibrium—motionless, poised the one against the other, counter-balancing and neutralizing each other, so that Matter is called jada, unconscious, “dead”. But in the presence of Purusha all is changed. When Purusha is in propinquity to Matter, then there is a change in Matter—not outside, but in it.

Purusha acts on Prakriti by propinquity, says Vyasa. It comes near Prakriti, and Prakriti begins to live. The “coming near” is a figure of speech, an adaptation to our ideas of time and space, for we cannot posit “nearness” of that which is timeless and spaceless—Spirit. By the word propinquity is indicated an influence exerted by Purusha on Prakriti, and this, where material objects are concerned, would be brought about by their propinquity. If a magnet be brought near to a piece of soft iron or an electrified body be brought near to a neutral one, certain changes are wrought in the soft iron or in the neutral body by that bringing near. The propinquity of the magnet makes the soft iron a magnet; the qualities of the magnet are produced in it, it manifests poles, it attracts steel, it attracts or repels the end of an electric needle. In the presence of a positively electrified body the electricity in a neutral body is re-arranged, and the positive retreats while the negative gathers near the electrified body. An internal change has occurred in both cases from the propinquity of another object. So with Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha does nothing, but from Purusha there comes out an influence, as in the case of the magnetic influence. The three gunas, under this influence of Purusha, undergo a marvellous change. I do not know what words to use, in order not to make a mistake in putting it. You cannot say that Prakriti absorbs the influence. You can hardly say that it reflects the Purusha. But the presence of Purusha brings about certain internal changes, causes a difference in the equilibrium of the three gunas in Prakriti. The three gunas were in a state of equilibrium. No guna was manifest. One guna was balanced against another. What happens when Purusha influences Prakriti? The quality of awareness in Purusha is taken up by, or reflected in, the guna called Sattva—rhythm, and it becomes cognition in Prakriti. The quality that we call life in Purusha is taken up by, or reflected, in the guna called Rajas—mobility, and it becomes force, energy, activity, in Prakriti. The quality that we call immutability in Purusha is taken up by, or reflected, in the guna called Tamas—inertia, and shows itself out as will and desire in Prakriti. So that, in that balanced equilibrium of Prakriti, a change has taken place by the mere propinquity of, or presence of, the Purusha. The Purusha has lost nothing, but at the same time a change has taken place in matter. Cognition has appeared in it. Activity, force, has appeared in it. With

or desire has appeared in it. With this change in Prakriti another change occurs. The three attributes of Purusha cannot be separated from each other, nor can the three attributes of Prakriti be separated each from each. Hence rhythm, while appropriating awareness, is under the influence of the whole three-in-one Purusha and cannot but also take up subordinately life and immutability as activity and will. And so with mobility and inertia. In combinations one quality or another may predominate, and we may have combinations which show preponderantly awareness-rhythm, or life-mobility, or immutability-inertia. The combinations in which awareness-rhythm or cognition predominates become “mind-nature,” the subject or subjective half of nature. Combinations in which either of the other two predominates become the object or objective half of nature, the “force and matter” of the western scientist. (A friend notes that the first is the Suddha Sattva of the Ramanuja School, and the second and third the Prakriti, or spirit-matter, in the lower sense of the same.)

We have thus nature divided into two, the subject and the object. We have now in nature everything that is wanted for the manifestation of activity, for the production of forms and for the expression of consciousness. We have mind, and we have force and matter. Purusha has nothing more to do, for he has infused all powers into Prakriti and sits apart, contemplating their interplay, himself remaining unchanged. The drama of existence is played out within Matter, and all that Spirit does is to look at it. Purusha is the spectator before whom the drama is played. He is not the actor, but only a spectator. The actor is the subjective part of nature, the mind, which is the reflection of awareness in rhythm and matter. That with which it works—objective nature, is the reflection of the other qualities of Purusha—life and immutability—in the gunas, Rajas and Tamas. Thus we have in nature everything that is wanted for the production of the universe. The Purusha only looks on when the drama is played before him. He is spectator, not actor. This is the predominant note of the Bhagavad-Gita. Nature does everything. The gunas bring about the universe. The man who says: “I act,” is mistaken and confused. The gunas act, not he. He is only the spectator and looks on. Most of the Gita teaching is built upon this conception of the Samkhya, and unless that is clear in our minds we can never discriminate the meaning under the phrases of a particular philosophy.

Let us now turn to the Vedantic idea. According to the Vedantic view the Self is one, omnipresent, all-permeating, the one reality. Nothing exists except the Self—that is the starting-point in Vedantism. All permeating, all-controlling, all-inspiring, the Self is everywhere present. As the ether permeates all matter, so does the One Self permeate, restrain, support, vivify all. It is written in the Gita that as the air goes everywhere, so is the Self everywhere in the infinite diversity of objects. As we try to follow the outline of Vedantic thought, as we try to grasp this idea of the one universal Self, who is existence, consciousness, bliss, Sat-Chit-Ananda, we find that we are carried into a loftier region of philosophy than that occupied by the Samkhya. The Self is One. The Self is everywhere conscious, the Self is everywhere existent, the Self is everywhere blissful. There is no division between the qualities of the Self. Everywhere, all-embracing, these qualities are found at every point, in every place. There is no spot on which you can put your finger and say “The Self is not here.” Where the Self is—and He is everywhere—there is existence, there is consciousness, and there is bliss. The Self, being consciousness, imagines limitation, division. From that imagination of limitation arises form and diversity, manyness. From that thought of the Self, from that thought of limitation, all diversity of things many is born. Matter is the limitation imposed upon the Self by His own will to limit Himself. “Eko’ham, bahu syam,” “I am one; I will to be many”; “let me be many,” is the thought of the One, and in that thought, the manifold universe comes into existence. In that limitation, Self-created, He exists, He is conscious, He is happy. In Him arises the thought that He is Self-existence, and behold, all existence becomes possible. Because in Him is the will to manifest, all manifestation at once

comes into existence. Because in Him is all bliss, therefore is the law of life the seeking for happiness the essential characteristic of every sentient creature. The universe appears by the Self-limitation thought of the Self. The moment the Self ceases to think it, the universe is not, it vanishes as a dream. That is the fundamental idea of the Vedanta. Then it accepts the spirits of the Samkhya—the Purushas; but it says that these spirits are only reflections of the one Self, emanated by the activity of the Self and that they all reproduce Him in miniature, with the limitations which the universal Self has imposed upon them, which are apparently portions of the universe, but are really identical with Him. It is the play of the Supreme Self that makes the limitations, and thus reproduces within limitation the qualities of the Self; the consciousness of the Self, of the Supreme Self; becomes, in the particularised Self, cognition, the power to know; and the existence of the Self becomes activity, the power to manifest; and the bliss of the Self becomes will, the deepest part of all, the longing for happiness, for bliss; the resolve to obtain it is what we call will. And so in the limited, the power to know, and the power to act, and the power to will, these are the reflections in the particular Self of the essential qualities of the universal Self. Otherwise put: that which was universal awareness becomes now cognition in the separated Self; that which in the universal Self was awareness of itself becomes in the limited Self awareness of others; the awareness of the whole becomes the cognition of the individual. So with the existence of the Self: the Self-existence of the universal Self becomes, in the limited Self, activity, preservation of existence. So does the bliss of the universal Self, in the limited expression of the individual Self, become the will that seeks for happiness, the Self-determination of the Self, the seeking for Self-realisation, that deepest essence of human life.

The difference comes with limitation, with the narrowing of the universal qualities into the specific qualities of the limited Self; both are the same in essence, though seeming different in manifestation. We have the power to know, the power to will, and the power to act. These are the three great powers of the Self that show themselves in the separated Self in every diversity of forms, from the minute organism to the loftiest Logos.

Then just as in the Samkhya, if the Purusha, the particular Self, should identify himself with the matter in which he is reflected, then there is delusion and bondage, so in the Vedanta, if the Self eternally free, imagines himself to be bound by matter, identifying himself with his limitations, he is deluded, he is under the domain of Maya; for Maya is the self-identification of the Self with his limitations. The eternally free can never be bound by matter; the eternally pure can never be tainted by matter; the eternally knowing can never be deluded by matter; the eternally Self-determined can never be ruled by matter, save by his own ignorance. His own foolish fancy limits his inherent powers; he is bound, because he imagines himself bound; he is impure, because he imagines himself impure; he is ignorant, because he imagines himself ignorant. With the vanishing of delusion he finds that he is eternally pure, eternally wise.

Here is the great difference between the Samkhya and the Vedanta. According to the Samkhya the Purusha is the spectator and never the actor. According to Vedanta the Self is the only actor, all else is maya: there is no one else who acts but the Self, according to the Vedanta teaching. As says the Upanishad: the Self willed to see, and there were eyes; the Self willed to hear, and there were ears; the Self willed to think, and there was mind. The eyes, the ears, the mind exist, because the Self has willed them into existence. The Self appropriates matter, in order that He may manifest His powers through it. There is the distinction between the Samkhya and the Vedanta: in the Samkhya the propinquity of the Purusha brings out in matter or Prakriti all these characteristics, the Prakriti acts and not the Purusha; in the Vedanta, Self alone exists and Self alone acts; He imagines limitation and matter appears; He appropriates that matter in order that He may manifest His own capacity.

The Samkhya is the view of the universe of the scientist: the Vedanta is the view of the universe of the metaphysician. Haeckel unconsciously expounded the Samkhyan philosophy almost perfectly. So close to the Samkhyan is his exposition, that another idea would make it purely Samkhyan; he has not yet supplied that propinquity of consciousness which the Samkhya postulates in its ultimate dualism. He has Force and Matter, he has Mind in Matter, but he has no Purusha. His last book, criticised by Sir Oliver Lodge, is thoroughly intelligible from the Hindu standpoint as an almost accurate representation of Samkhyan philosophy. It is the view of the scientist, indifferent to the “why” of the facts which he records. The Vedanta, as I said, is the view of the metaphysician; he seeks the unity into which all diversities are rooted and into which they are resolved.

Now, what light does Theosophy throw on both these systems? Theosophy enables every thinker to reconcile the partial statements which are apparently so contradictory. Theosophy, with the Vedanta, proclaims the universal Self. All that the Vedanta says of the universal Self and the Self-limitation Theosophy repeats. We call these Self-limited selves Monads, and we say, as the Vedantin says, that these Monads reproduce the nature of the universal Self whose portions they are. And hence you find in them the three qualities which you find in the Supreme. They are units’ and these represent the Purushas of the Samkhya; but with a very great difference, for they are not passive watchers, but active agents in the drama of the universe, although, being above the fivefold universe, they are spectators who pull the strings of the players of the stage. The Monad takes to himself from the universe of matter atoms which show out the qualities corresponding to his three qualities, and these he thinks, and wills and acts. He takes to himself rhythmic combinations, and shows his quality of cognition. He takes to himself combinations that are mobile; through those he shows out his activity. He takes the combinations that are inert, and shows out his quality of bliss, as the will to be happy. Now notice the difference of phrase and thought. In the Samkhya, Matter changed to reflect the Spirit; in fact, the Spirit appropriates portions of Matter, and through those expresses his own characteristics—an enormous difference. He creates an actor for Self-expression, and this actor is the “spiritual man” of the Theosophical teaching, the spiritual Triad, the Atma-buddhi-manas, to whom we shall return in a moment.

The Monad remains ever beyond the fivefold universe, and in that sense is a spectator. He dwells beyond the five planes of matter. Beyond the Atmic, or Akasic; beyond the Buddhic plane, the plane of Vayu; beyond the mental plane, the plane of Agni; beyond the astral plane, the plane of Varuna; beyond the physical plane, the plane of Kubera. Beyond all these planes the Monad, the Self, stands Self-conscious and Self-determined. He reigns in changeless peace and lives in eternity. But as seen above, he appropriates matter. He takes to himself an atom of the Atmic plane, and in that he, as it were, incorporates his will, and that becomes Atma. He appropriates an atom of the Buddhic plane and reflects in that his aspect of cognition, and that becomes buddhi. He appropriates an atom of the manasic plane and embodies, as it were, his activity in it, and it becomes Manas. Thus we get Atma plus Buddhi, plus Manas. That triad is the reflection in the fivefold universe of the Monad beyond the fivefold universe. The terms of Theosophy can be easily identified with those of other schools. The Monad of Theosophy is the Jivatma of Indian philosophy, the Purusha of the Samkhya, the particularised Self of the Vedanta. The threefold manifestation, Atma-buddhi-manas, is the result of the Purusha’s propinquity to Prakriti, the subject of the Samkhyan philosophy, the Self embodied in the highest sheaths, according to the Vedantic teaching. In the one you have this Self and His sheaths and in the other the Subject, a reflection in matter of Purusha. Thus you can readily see that you are dealing with the same concepts but they are looked at from different standpoints. We are nearer to the Vedanta than to the Samkhya, but if you know the principles you can put the statements of the two

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