



Theosophy of the Upanishads

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Introduction

“A Man’s religion,” says Tolstoi, “is the relation which he believes himself to bear to the endless universe around him, and to the source of that endless universe; and, as every man believes himself to bear some relation to the universe, every man must have a religion.”

Tolstoi further thinks that the relations which men believe themselves to bear to the universe may be divided into three great types, and only three: the first of these three he calls the primitive or savage, the relation that a man bears, to the universe when he looks on it solely as the source from which he, as an isolated individual, may draw the largest amount of gratification possible; the second relation he calls the social or pagan, that wherein a man no longer regards the universe as the great treasure-house of good things for his own enjoyment, but looks on it rather as something to be used and profited by, not by himself personally, but by the tribe, or clan, or community to which he belongs, or even by the whole human race; the third relation is that which a man stands in to the universe when he believes that universe to be the expression of a divine Will, “the Will that sent him,” and therefore makes the whole of his life an obedience to “the Will that sent him,” the divine Will that has given birth to the worlds. As every man must believe either that the universe exists for his enjoyment and profit, or for the profit of the race to which he belongs, or, lastly, for the purposes of the divine “Will that sent him into the world,” so every man must hold one of the three religions, whether knowingly or not.

These great types of religion are very ably developed and illustrated

by the thinker from whom this quotation is taken; and it cannot be denied that the whole study of religion and morality, of which it forms a part, is of the highest interest and value; yet it may be held that the most valuable thought is the initial one—that a man's religion is the relation he believes himself to hold to the endless universe around him—and that the further development of this thought, and the analysis of this relation under three great types, is of subsidiary worth.

A man's religion is the relation he believes himself to bear to the endless universe around him, or to its cause and source; one objection may, perhaps, be taken to this thought, an objection that will naturally occur to every one: that this use of the word "religion" is too wide and universal; that it would be better to keep the word "religion" for one special relation of man to the universe, the nature of which will presently be considered; that it would be better to find other less universal terms for other types of man's relation to the universe, if these relations lack the special character which is inevitably suggested by the word "religion".

Let us consider the initial idea somewhat further, the idea that every man must believe himself, and does believe himself, to stand in some relation to the endless universe around him. We shall find it subject to a very important qualification. Every man does, it is true, believe himself to stand in some relation to the universe; but this he may believe either consciously or unconsciously, either by original observation or by imitation. And it will hardly be denied that the vast majority of mankind, when they recognize that they stand in a relation to the world, to the endless universe around them, and to its cause, do so without any clear and vivid consciousness, in a rather instinctive and dumb way; and that they are very strongly influenced, by imitation; very prone to accept as their true relation to the universe whatever view they may find nearest to hand; that tradition has far more to do with confirming them in their belief as to their relation to the universe than any clearly conscious thought or will or observation of their own.

So that, if we speak of men's religion, of their belief as to the relation they bear to the endless universe around them and to its source, we must recognize that for the vast majority this belief is

unconscious or largely unconscious; drawn from tradition, or lightly adopted from whatever source was nearest to hand; and held all their lives long without any very clear or vivid thought or feeling at all. We must recognize that only very few men, a very small part of the whole human race, have any conscious and consciously held belief as to their relation to the universe; that only this very small number have entered into first-hand relations with the universe, have dealt with the universe and life face to face.

Setting aside, for a while, all beliefs as to man's relation to the universe and life which are held unconsciously, by imitation or adoption, let us turn to those beliefs that may be held with full consciousness and original intent, the beliefs of those who have entered into first-hand relations with the universe and life, and have dealt with life originally and face to face.

If we consider these original and conscious beliefs as to man's relation to the universe and life, we shall find that they may very fitly be divided into three types, though these three types will not quite coincide with the three types of relation described by the thinker who has already been quoted from.

We shall find that the first type of belief as to man's relation with the universe is this: the universe is primarily presented to us, life primarily affects us, as a series of pictures and impressions, sounds and tastes and contacts, that build themselves up into a great unity which we call the world; the mountains and forests, and rivers and seas, the sun and moon and stars, the blue arch of heaven and the coloured clouds that make up the splendid scenery of our life. By this pictorially presented world we may be so entirely engrossed that it holds our thought and observation altogether; that our thought and observation have no energy to disengage themselves from the pictorial world and pass beyond it; that the pictorial world seems to us all in all, the whole of life, the endless universe in its completeness. If our thought is thus enthralled by the pictorial world, we inevitably regard ourselves as a part of the picture, as subject to the destinies and powers that make themselves felt in the mountains and rivers, the forests and clouds; we inevitably regard ourselves as a part of this, of the nature of this, limited to this. To this first belief it is difficult to give a suitable name.

We might, with the thinker whom we have referred to, call it the savage or primitive belief as to man's relation to the world; or, seeing that it is at the present day, largely the belief of those who consider themselves the teachers and upholders of science, we might call it the scientific belief; or, again, as one particular hypothesis has been largely identified with this view of the pictorial world—the hypothesis of “matter” and the continuity of matter—we might very well speak of this belief as materialist—so that we may choose between these three names—savage, scientific, materialist—to describe this belief as to man's relation to the universe and life. The result of our choice matters little, for names are but the servants of thoughts; the important thing is only that we should clearly keep in mind that by this first belief—savage, scientific, or materialist—we mean the belief that man is altogether a part of the pictorial universe, altogether subject to its destinies and laws.

But if our thought and observation, after laying hold of the pictorial world around us, have energy to pass beyond it; if our consciousness has power to return upon itself, to flow back again from observing the pictorial world, we shall find that the door is opened to a new and higher belief as to man's relation to the world, to the endless universe that surrounds him. When our consciousness thus flows back upon itself, we shall find that our first belief as to our being entirely one with the pictorial world, as to our being entirely of the same nature as the pictorial world, was false; we shall find that between our own being and the being of the pictorial world, there are such complete differences that to believe any longer in our entire oneness with the pictorial world, becomes impossible. We shall find within us a quality that we shall find nowhere in the pictorial world; a quality so important as to overshadow all others, the quality of self-conscious being. We shall find that the first and chief element of our consciousness is the consciousness that we really are; while only as a second and subsidiary element comes the consciousness that we perceive; and as an outcome of this second, inferior element, we perceive the pictorial world, the world of mountains and rivers, of sky and stars and sea. So that our evidence for our own real being is of a far stronger and more intimate kind than our evidence for the real being of the pictorial world which at first enthralled our thought and

observation altogether. If we call our self-consciousness, our consciousness of our own real being, the primary reality, we can only call our consciousness of the pictorial world a secondary reality, dependent on the first reality, on our self-consciousness. If on the other hand, we deny to our self-consciousness the claim to be a primary reality, if we call our self-consciousness unreal, we must then call our consciousness of the pictorial world doubly unreal, we must call the pictorial world itself a double unreality—the shadow of a shadow, a dream within a dream. We must say that there is no reality anywhere; that nothing really is. But we at once recognize that this is mere futility and meaningless; we do not and cannot doubt for a moment—once our consciousness has found the energy to return upon itself—that our self-consciousness really is, that we really are; we perceive at once that we have no other standard of reality than this; that when we speak of reality, we can mean nothing else than our own self-conscious being, on which our consciousness of the pictorial universe depends as a secondary, subordinate reality; as relatively an unreality. If we called the first attitude toward the world scientific, savage, or materialist, we may call the second relation the attitude of metaphysics, of philosophy or idealism. And to this point all the men of science who have any real power of thought as distinguished from mere skill in observation, have naturally and inevitably come. The facts of our consciousness are primary realities; all other facts are secondary realities, or as one great man of science said, more or less probable hypotheses.

But there is another relation of man to the universe; a relation that one cannot touch on without reverence; a relation that rises above metaphysics and philosophy, as metaphysics and philosophy rise above materialism; a relation which carries with it so much of unutterable divinity that one hesitates greatly to give it a name, through fear that any name may prove inadequate, may narrow and limit and crystallize the free and flowing power of its original, transcendent life.

When our thought and consciousness, gathering energy to return upon themselves, discover the great truth that self-conscious being is primary reality, the universe becomes thereby divided into two: the outer pictorial world, and the inner conscious world to which the outer pictorial world is subordinate, before which the outer pictorial

world is unrolled in ever-changing and flowing abundance of beauty. There were danger here that our self-conscious being might linger for ever a passive beholder of this endlessly developed picture, that we might be enthralled anew by the lust of the eyes. But just as the returning energy of thought inevitably brings us to a knowledge of the realities of self-conscious being, so the great quietness and disengagement that follow the knowledge of the unassailable reality and the isolation and independence of our self-conscious being bring with them, in the silence, the latent power to take a new step onward.

In the knowledge of our self-conscious isolation, the pictorial world and the tyranny of the pictorial world begin to stand aloof from us, to withdraw from us, and leave us in silence and loneliness; and, in this loneliness of our hearts and minds, we may become conscious of a new power and reality, presenting itself directly to our consciousness, to our hearts and minds, and in some sense, setting itself in opposition to the pictorial world and the tyranny of the pictorial world, appealing to us and approaching us, as it were, from above, while the pictorial world appeals to us and approaches us from below. And this new power that appeals directly to our consciousness, to our hearts and minds from above, carries with it a strength of new and flowing life, holding out new promises of largeness and perfection to our self-conscious being, and strongly leading us away from our attitude of mere beholders of the world, as our returning self-consciousness had before led us away from our enthrallment and subjection to the world. The new power of life appeals to our consciousness from above; it carries with it a commanding majesty, a winning imperiousness, whereby our consciousness is impelled to recognize this new power as higher and deeper and stronger, approaching us directly and intimately in the inner chamber of our hearts and minds, very close to us, and with none of the aloofness and apartness that have been taken on by the pictorial world.

This power above us, with its commanding majesty and winning imperiousness appealing to and approaching our hearts and minds from within, has ever drawn forth the profoundest life and feeling that our humanity possesses. Towards this imperious power the highest and best that is in us goes forth, as to a still greater highest and best. All the wealth of flowing imagination, all the best and purest parts of our wills

are readily offered to show in some degree the profound and overmastering impulse and enkindling that this new reality brings into life. It brings with it something better than metaphysics and philosophy; it brings with it a high and divine mood that viewed from one side is righteousness, viewed from another side is wisdom and light, a divine mood to which goodness and truth and beauty are a familiar and constant presence.

To the present enkindling of this divine power, approaching our hearts and minds from above, and appealing to them with commanding majesty and gracious imperiousness, it were better to give no name. This richest experience that our life is capable of is, in itself, something too high and deep for any words. But to the visible results of this power, enkindling in us righteousness and wisdom, names may well and profitably be given. If there be a preponderant tendency towards righteousness, an enkindling of the will rather than the thought, we may well call this visible result religion; if there be a preponderance of wisdom, an enkindling of thought, an illumination of mind, then, perhaps, we may call the visible result theosophy.

It will readily be perceived that, in thus grouping the relations which man may bear to the universe into these three great types, we have followed chiefly the form they take in thought, in understanding; while, in reality, they are rather conditions or moods of the will than of the understanding, which is the helper and explainer of the will. For our real life is closer to will than to understanding; our real life, though it is neither pure will nor pure understanding, is yet more nearly akin to will than to understanding; will is a larger, deeper, more embracing part of our lives than understanding. If we were to convert into terms of the will the types of relation to the universe which we have expressed in terms of understanding, we should come much more nearly to the three types traced by the thinker whose words we referred to at the outset.

But, for our present purpose, it seems more fit and profitable to speak rather of the understanding than of the will; and for these reasons. We have tried to indicate the nature of religion as a tendency to righteousness, the visible outcome of a certain high and divine power approaching our consciousness from above, appealing with

winning majesty to our hearts and minds. As we saw at the outset, any such primary and first-hand dealing with life, especially in the high and divine degree this deepest experience implies, is a very rare thing, a thing possessed consciously and vividly by very few. And, outside these few, the same experience is either dull and dumb, or it is reached rather by imitation and adoption than by original and vivid possession. This is exactly what has happened to our age and epoch. For the great majority, religion, the tendency towards righteousness, is based on an experience either dully and dumbly possessed, or possessed solely by imitation and adoption from others. And, through this cause, through this dull and dumb attitude of the mind towards the power that enkindles religion, there is great darkness and confusion in our understandings; for our understandings are still halting at the second relation to the world—the philosophical—or are in bondage altogether to the first, the materialist and sensualist relation, subjection to the tyranny of outward things. Therefore our understandings have fallen far behind our wills, and our wills themselves receive their stimulus darkly and blindly, by imitation and tradition, rather than by first-hand dealing with the universe, and that best power in the universe that approaches us imperiously from above.

Therefore, by the conditions of our time and age, with its religion so largely a matter of tradition and imitation, with its understanding so completely enthralled and given over to the tyranny of the outer world, an enlightening of the understanding is more imperatively necessary than an enkindling of the will. We would follow righteousness willingly, were we not so totally in the dark, if we could really understand what righteousness should be and may be, if we knew where to find rightness of life, we would be only too glad to obey; but we demand light first; light is indispensable before we can move at all.

Therefore our needs are rather for the understanding than for the will; for wisdom than for righteousness; for a theosophy than for a religion. And nowhere, it is certain, shall we find these needs better supplied, or nearly as well supplied, as in the theosophy of the great Indian Upanishads.

For this work of enkindling our understandings, the great Indian

Upanishads are specially and strikingly endowed, and this for three chief reasons.

In the first place, by a happy accident of language, by the happy union of the highest poetic suggestiveness and beauty, the highest degree of natural magic, with the highest degree of pure idealism, of light, they give a clear and vivid stimulus to mind and will that no other work can rival. Every true student of them has paid a tribute to this enkindling power of the Upanishads in virtue of their equally balanced beauty and light. Then, again, the Upanishads consist rather of a series of vivid intuitions of life than of a system of thought woven into philosophic completeness and continuity; and each of these intuitions of life, these perceptions of our high and divine relation to the endless universe, has a lasting and enduring truth that no completed system could have; has the lasting and enduring truth of high poetic inspiration, and not the conditional and limited truth of philosophic systems, which, though based on high inspiration, are yet elaborated and finished by the mind in a mood far below inspiration. And, as these intuitions of life, with their high degree of inspiration, are woven into no completed and elaborated system, they have none of that terrible burden of tradition, of superstition, of half science and half truth that so fatally overweighted the intuition of righteousness in the religion we are most familiar with. In the Upanishads, every intuition of life stands out full of vivid power and freedom, full of light; nothing can compare with them for stimulating and kindling that high side of our nature that is the home and birthplace of righteousness and Wisdom; the Upanishads bring us into the mood in which their intuitions were first luminously apprehended, and lead us to the point where we may ourselves open our doors to the sunlight and become receptive to that wonderful power, appealing to our hearts and minds from above, whose visible workings are wisdom and righteousness.

Lastly, the Upanishads have found for this power an expression so happy, so admirable, that this alone gives them an incomparable value. The great religion we are most familiar with found for this high and majestic power, that appeals with such winning imperiousness to our hearts and minds, two chief expressions that characterize two of the greatest religious movements in the world. In the first epoch, the

supreme expression for this power was “the Eternal that makes for righteousness,” an expression that with a narrow and formal idea of righteousness, led to the stunting and withering of human life; to the formation of ceremonial and intolerant religions. The other expression, and a far higher one, marking a singularly happy inspiration, but an inspiration rather poetical than religious, described this power as “the Father in heaven”. Yet, wonderful as this expression is, in its warmth and colour, it tends, when the full inspiration that gave it birth has flowed back, to dwarf human life into insignificance, to limit it to a position perpetually secondary and inferior.

Not so the expression of the Upanishads for the same high power: “the supreme Self, the real Self of all beings”. Here is an expression for the greatest power in life, that draws our hearts toward it as no other could, that gives us, so to say, a permanent stake and interest in the high purposes of the divinity, which we recognize as our own truest Self.

The Upanishads, therefore, tend to enkindle in us a true and admirable relation to the endless universe around us, and above all to make us enter this relation, not blindly, but in steadily growing light.

Chapter I.

The Beginning of the Way

The small old path stretching far away.

—*Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*

The dawn grows out of the darkness, a darkness unbroken even by the light of the stars.

The beginning of the small old path lies in hopelessness and weariness; in the hopelessness of desires that can never be fulfilled; in the weariness of desires that, fulfilled to the utmost, yet bring with their fulfilment, no lasting joy.

In an age like this we are all very near the beginning of the way. The heaven of old that lay before us, a sunny harbour of refuge after the disastrous storms of life, has been growing dimmer and dimmer, the sunlight of hope dying out of it, until nothing is left for us but the grey cloud wrack of evening twilight, fading before the chill winds of night.

Cut off from the hope of a heaven where the gods no longer listen to our prayers, we are thrown back to earth, to slake if we can our perpetual thirst for happiness. We are incessantly tormented by a longing for joy, for repose, for a firm resting place wherein we may secure to ourselves a little well-being; safely guarded against the mutability of things that incessantly breaks down whatever we have built up, and pitilessly takes from us the fruit wherewith we had hoped at last to satisfy our desires.

We are thrown back to earth for happiness; to earth, where sickness and sorrow and death unfailingly wait on us, grimly assuring us that our longing for happiness will be frustrated; that the little refuges we have made for ourselves, to dream a while in the sunshine, will be swept away almost before we have grown used to them; that our sunshine will pass, and leave us to the darkness of night.

Hoping against hope, we try to evade these grim watchers; try once again to build our sand fortresses on the shores of the ocean; only to receive once more the relentless demonstration that only more lasting than our longing for joy is the ever-present fatality that destroys our foundations of hope. Whatever we built is broken down; whatever we would secure and shelter is again laid open to the storms; the grim counsellors, sickness, sorrow, death, though hidden for a little while, are not long to be forgotten.

We hope against hope, only through terror of hopelessness. Even when one after another, the resting places and shelters we have made for ourselves have all been destroyed and passed, away into nothingness, we must still be busy with something; must still, shutting our eyes to old invariable experience, begin again to build new shelters and refuges, only not to be alone with despair. With every new generation, the children of men begin the lesson afresh, sunny eyed in the morning of hope, and eager with new vigour to be up and doing; they at least will find this long-sought-for joy, and make for themselves a secure rest in the midst of mutabilities; the old men are still hoping for heaven, or hiding from themselves and from each other their sad secret that hope is dead; and so with closed lips, they go down into night.

Their children are still flushed with the joy of the morning; dazzled by the young light on the horizon, they pass unnoticed the old men's faces; and thus from year to year the secret remains untold; the secret that this joy we have all set our hearts on is not to be won; that the grim companions, sickness and sorrow and death, can mar more than we can make, can destroy faster than we can build.

To keep our eyes off despair, we set ourselves endless tasks; we begin to count the sands of the sea, or the water drops in the rivers, knowing well that we shall still be busy when the last grim counsellor

overtakes us, so that his coming may in some sort be unawares.

We have nearly guessed the secret, but we too shall presently go down into night without revealing it; and a new generation will rise up in our places to continue the search for that joy which we know already they cannot find. Well, let us leave them to their hope; let us wish them well, as they rise up in the joy of the morning.

We know now what we would not have believed before, that their best friend is necessity, which keeps them continually moving, continually busy with efforts and expedients; so pre-occupied that they will never lift their eyes to see what we have seen; we know now that their best riches are poverty, which always leaves them something to hope for; if poor in all else, at least rich in hope.

So they will go on, pre-occupied; fighting a brave fight against relentless destiny that seems to single them out from all others for misfortune, that seems to frustrate their efforts while allowing others to succeed, that seems to dog their steps alone vitiating all their best calculations, bringing some mortifying accident that robs them in the hour of harvest; yet letting them still imagine sunshine, and joy in the lives of others. These others know better, but they will not undeceive them. Or perhaps they too are victims of the same illusion that throws a romance for us over all lives but our own.

The others are so busy with their search for joy, in whole-hearted faith, that we may well believe our ill-fate singular, and unending disappointment attendant on us alone. And thus after every failure, we gather courage to try again, and repeat once more the old experiment of desire, as if no use could make us familiar with its inevitable result.

For this seems to be the deepest reality in the nature of desire: that it can never be satisfied, that there is no such thing as its fulfilment. Its only satisfaction, the only delight of desire, lies in its pursuit. With incredible toil and unwearying exertion, we follow after the almost unattainable fruit; at last it is within sight, within reach, within our grasp. At last we have actually reached the moment of enjoying; but, by some incredible fate, the joy escapes from us the moment the fruit is in our hands; we have only a bitterness in the mouth, and must instantly renew the pursuit to escape the bitterness, a little less confident that with the fruit of desire we shall gain joy too.

At last convinced that our joy cannot be reached, that our desire cannot be fulfilled or can only have a fugitive, evasive fulfilment, we seek a new, strange way to escape from despair. Led on by that gracious illusion which paints romance for us attendant on all lives but our own, we try to enrich others with what we now know to be no riches for ourselves. Finding our own happiness eluding us in every case, we devote ourselves to the happiness of others, hoping that they will have a better appetite for the feast of shadows.

Or we come to the beginning of the path in another way. The relentless destiny that mocks at others' efforts, the restless change that sweeps away the resting-places of others, seems to spare us awhile and to forget us. The goals we set before us are reached, the walls we built to shelter us are firm against the storm, our harvests are well saved and securely housed, our utmost desires are gratified, our highest hopes fulfilled. And yet when all is won, we are to find that all is lost; that although the joy-bringers are with us, the joy that should have given life to them is missing, when it comes to counting up our wealth; our thirst of happiness is still burning thirst unquenched.

This the fiery longing for joy burns in us always, casting in front of us its shadow, hope. We assure ourselves that unaccountable failure: this time may be accounted for and guarded against the next. If not today, then tomorrow; if not in this, then in that object of desire; if not soon, then later, at the end, joy will be found; and so the pursuit goes on.

We build ourselves houses and plant gardens for ourselves; hiding from ourselves our certainty that some day we shall not be there to secure our houses against decay, to keep the weeds from over-running our gardens; all the time knowing that in a few years or a few decades, our well-built walls will be bare to the sky, our gardens over-grown and returning to the waste of the wilderness.

Or we seek to be repaid for our work, not by our own enjoyment, but by the admiration of others; we try to find our happiness in others' assurances that we are happy. Yet if we look well at it we are convinced beforehand that this admiration will never reach us; or that it will fade even before we fade into the darkness, and pass where no admiration can reach us.

Or we shut our eyes to these things, and still the voices in our hearts, feeding ourselves on dreams.

Yet the mutation of things is incessant, the grim associates death and sorrow, never absent long; and sooner or later we shall reach the ripe experience that there is no resting-place to be found; no firm standing ground at all; no secure shelter where we can taste secret joy, hidden safely from the stern law that overtakes us. Sooner or later, we shall reach this conviction; shall admit to ourselves our hopelessness, or the weariness that never leaves us even when hope has been fulfilled. We shall acknowledge hopeless and weary that there is no satisfaction of desire. We shall admit our defeat in the battle with outward things.

Besides the battle with outward things, our thirst for joy will urge us into another battle, the battle with other personalities. Surrounded on all sides with other natures like our own, we are impelled by the necessity of our lives to make our personalities triumph over theirs; to prove to ourselves and them, but most to ourselves, that our own personalities are wiser and better and stronger than theirs.

This impulse of self-assertion, this necessity to triumph, finds one of its causes in that first hunger of ours, the hunger to satisfy our desires. Desire in us has no limit; the things by which we seek to satisfy it are very limited; and they are not less eagerly pursued by all others, who are as full of longing as ourselves for satisfaction.

But besides this cause, there is in us a longing to triumph over other personalities, a necessity for self-assertion, quite independent of the struggle to satisfy our desires, to outstrip the others in running to the stream that is to quench our thirst. We feel a necessity to triumph, not to feed our desires, but to feed our personalities themselves. We have within us a necessity of self-assertion for self-assertion's sake.

Here again there is a relentless destiny that is not less inflexible than that eternal changefulness of things which robs us of the secure satisfying of our desires. A relentless destiny that always frustrates our self-assertion, or robs it of all sweetness and satisfaction. If our triumph over other personalities is almost assured, if we have almost compelled them to testify to our superiority, we have still misgivings that there may be one dissident voice of blame, which all voices of praise will not keep us from hearing; or that though we may hear open praise, there

may still be secret blame eating out the sweetness of praise; or that though we are strong and our strength is assured, the stronger than us is already on the way, and will presently arrive to dispute our supremacy.

Even in the fullest satisfaction of our personalities we shall find no rest; for we are surrounded by other personalities not less restlessly desiring satisfaction; and any lack of alertness on our parts will be a signal to them that their opportunity has come, that our supremacy may be questioned, that our self-assertion may give place to theirs.

No satisfaction of desire, no firm resting-place anywhere, no complacency for our personalities. These are the laws of life that we are daily verifying, that we are convincing ourselves of by endless experiment, with one invariable result. And once we look the result of our experiments clearly in the face, once we become quite conscious of our firmly established conviction, there is nothing possible for us but hopelessness and weariness, the hopelessness and weariness that are to lead us to the beginning of the small old, path stretching far away.

We must in truth convince ourselves that these are really the laws of life, that there is in very deed no satisfaction for desire, no sure resting-place, no complacency for our personalities, before we can enter on the beginning of the way.

For only when we have worn out all hope and belief in the joy of our habitual lives and our habitual selves are we ready to turn away from our habitual lives and our habitual selves, to seek our well-being where well-being is really to be found, in a new life, and a new self above and behind our habitual selves; a new life and a new self far away, to which the small old path will lead.

Our experience and conviction must have grown perfectly ripe and perfectly unshakeable before we are ready for the beginning of the way; for otherwise, having put our hands to the plough, we may be led to look back, may be shown unfit to enter the divine kingdom of real joy.

No satisfaction, no resting-place, no complacency; in the Upanishads the lesson is taught thus:

“This doubt that there is when a man has gone forth—some say ‘he is,’ and some say ‘he is not,’—this I would know, taught by thee; of my wishes this is the third wish.”

“By the gods even it was doubted about this of old, nor easily knowable is this subtle law; choose another wish, Nachiketas; hold me not to it, spare me this.”

“By the gods even the gods even it was doubted about this truly, and thou, Death, sayest it is not easily knowable. Another voicer of this like thee may not be found; no other wish at all is equal to this.”

“Choose sons, grandsons, of a hundred years, much cattle, elephants, gold, horses; choose the wide abode of the earth, and live thyself as many autumns as thou wilt.

“If thou thinkest this an equal wish, choose wealth and long life; be thou great on earth, Nachiketas, I make thee a possessor of desires according to thy desire.

“Whatever desires are hard to gain in the world of mortals, ask all desires according to thy will; these beauties with their chariots, with their lutes, not such as these are to be obtained by men; be served by them, given by me—ask not about dying, Nachiketas.”

“As tomorrow, thou Ender, these things of mortality, and this radiance of all the powers, wear themselves out; the whole of life also is in truth little, thine truly are chariots, thine dance and song.

“Not by wealth is man to be satisfied; shall we accept wealth if we have seen thee? Shall we live as long as thou art master? But the wish, to be chosen by me is truly that.

“Coming near to the unfading immortals, what fading mortal here below, understanding and thinking closely on the delights of beauty and pleasure, would rejoice in long life?

“But this that they have doubted about, Death, what is in the great Beyond, speak that to us. This wish that enters into the secret Nachiketas chooses nothing else but this.”

[Katha Upanishad]

Chapter II. The Higher Self

When all desires that dwelt in the heart are let go,
Then the mortal becomes immortal, and reaches the Eternal.
—*Katha Upanishad.*

Out of this darkness, unlit even by the stars, a new dawn is to arise.

We have become entirely convinced by long, unflinching experience that there is no satisfaction for desire, no sure resting-place in what we have desired, no complacency for our personalities. If our conviction is still dim and doubting, ever-present experience is already preparing to make it quite certain; the grim attendants, sickness and sorrow, and death, will not fail to bring it home to us, to make it quite intimate in our hearts!

We have worn out all belief and hope in our habitual lives and our habitual selves; we know that they are no givers of lasting joy. Yet we have not lost, nor shall ever lose, the old longing for joy that first brought us into being.

This immemorial longing for joy that outlives strongly our full loss of faith in the habitual lives of our habitual selves, is our first admonition that we have been seeking for what rightly belongs to us, only have sought it in a wrong direction, where it is not to be found.

The longing for joy lives eternal in our hearts; it is an intimation that eternal joy lives somewhere, for if it were not, we could never even have dreamed of it. The longing for joy is a voice of the inner sense of

the trueness of things, an assurance that joy is.

When our disbelief in habitual life is quite unshakeable, we shall reach a kind of repose, the repose of admitted hopelessness and weariness; and in this grey repose we shall gradually become conscious of a new thing, a new reality, faintly suggesting itself in the dark background of our being.

Softly as the buds open under the persuasion of rain and sunlight, this new being begins to make itself felt in the dark places of our consciousness, faintly drawing and winning us away from the habitual life of our habitual selves.

This dim light, shining as it were within and behind us, is at first so faint, so hardly perceptible, that only when our outer darkness is altogether complete, when not even the stars break its blackness, can we catch any certain sight of the new ray of dawn.

The light of dawn, once seen, is irresistible to the night watchers, drawing and holding their eyes with a power that they cannot and dare not withstand, that indeed nothing would induce them to withstand. As they watch it, the dim light gradually grows; this new faint being in the dark background of our consciousness becomes more clearly seen, more clearly grasped and held. It is destined to become a new radiant point for all the forces of our lives.

Gradually, as this faint, new light, this dim, new reality within and behind us is more firmly adhered to, it grows stronger and brighter, and begins very slowly to light up the dark places of life, to make clear, one after another things that before were very obscure.

We see first that this new reality sets itself against the old unrealities of our former lives; that this new light opposes the old, false fires that so long deluded us. We are being drawn in a new way, directly contrary to the old way that our desires drew us. They led us outwards, wanderingly; this leads us inwards, towards home.

The new reality brings an inward sense of the trueness of things, of the real values of things. This inward sense of the trueness of things, this knowledge of the real values of things, at the very outset pronounces judgement and condemnation on the old lives of our old selves.

We are instantly admonished by it that our old search after the gratification of desires, the quenching of the thirst for pleasure, was

not merely futile and useless, but was actively wrong; that it had, not merely a negative but a positive wrongness.

We are admonished by this growing light of the trueness of things that the battle for the supremacy of our personalities, for their triumph over other personalities, was likewise wrong; not merely with a negative wrongness, because it was foredoomed to fail, but with a positive, active wrongness.

The new light, the new reality, faintly dawning in the background of our consciousness, has set itself in opposition to our old habitual life; it has declared the active wrongness of our old life. It has done this by unveiling within us a contrasting power, a sense of rightness, of righteousness.

We become aware that we perceived wrongly, that we willed wrongly. The defect in our perceiving was unwisdom; the defect in our will was sin. The defect of unwisdom is to be cured by wisdom, by an inner sense of the trueness of things, and of the real values of things. The defect of sin is to be cured by rightness, by righteousness. Both wisdom and righteousness are the gradual growing stronger of the new light, the new reality within us, beginning to gleam faintly in the dark background of our consciousness.

A new light, a new reality. The keener our sense of darkness has been, the more vividly do we feel that this is light. The bitterer our weariness of the old unrealities, the more strongly do we know that this is real. The more extended and repeated our experience of old things, the more perfect is our knowledge that this is new. Our vivid, intimate knowledge that a new light, a new reality, has dawned within us springs from the completest contrast that we are momentarily sensible of between this new thing and the old.

Over the hills, in the evening twilight, the new crescent moon rises in silver shining; its inner rim holds a great dull ball of copper murkiness. The silver crescent is shining in sunlight; the murky copper ball is glowing dully with the light of the earth. No one looking at the two will mistake earthshine for sunshine, or be weak in conviction that the new silver light is different from, and better than, the old dull glow.

Not less absolute and undoubted than this contrast is the

opposition between the old habitual things and the new reality that draws within our consciousness. One has only to see the two together—to feel the two—to know which is brighter and more real.

No one in whom the light of rightness, of righteousness, has even begun to shine has or can have any doubt as to the relative values of sin and righteousness. No one who has begun to follow the inner light of wisdom has or can have any doubt about the difference between wisdom and unwisdom, reality and unreality. By sheer force of contrast, we know with first-hand knowledge that this new power drawing us upward is higher than the old powers that drew us downward; that this is the primary, the other secondary.

And thus in the inner light, the old outward things begin to wear another face. They are lower, secondary, inferior; while that is higher, primary, superior.

By sheer force of contrast we are led to see that outward things, all the many-coloured pictures and delights that drew forth our desires, are only secondary realities, if they are real at all; in comparison with this new inner reality, they are hardly real or altogether unreal.

Thus by most intimate and inward experience, an experience incomparably closer to him than any other thing, a man comes to idealism; to the clear sense that outward things are only secondary realities, dependent on and secondary to the inward reality of consciousness; and this idealism is the beginning of wisdom, as the sense of the true value, the worthlessness of sin, is the beginning of righteousness.

There may be one beginning without the other, growing wisdom without growing righteousness, or growing righteousness without growing wisdom; but true, fair, and happy growth demands the perfect equality of both; the parallel unveiling of righteousness and wisdom; the twin brotherhood of right willing and right perceiving.

The new inward light, the new inward reality, which begins to bear these fruits, unveils itself in the darkness within us, in the inner background of our consciousness. And it brings a strange secret with it.

For although it opposes itself directly to the habitual life of our habitual selves with an unswerving unaltering opposition, it yet brings with it no sense of hostility or foreignness to ourselves, but

rather a sense of being our most intimate possession, the very self of our very selves.

Opposed to our personalities, undoubtedly higher than our personalities, and, yet the very self of our very selves; something far more ourselves than our personalities are.

Therefore this new light and power within us, dawning behind our personalities, is the light and, power of a higher Self.

When opposing itself to our wrong willing, to the sin of our old habitual selves, it is conscience, the god-like voice that resists me, even in little things, when I am about to do anything not rightly.

When opposing itself to our wrong perceiving, to the unwisdom of our old habitual lives that saw realities in outward things which are no realities, or at best secondary, dependent, realities, this power is the wisdom of the higher Self; the inner sense of the trueness of things, of the real values of things.

The new dawn of the higher Self within and above the habitual self draws us forward to right willing and right perceiving. And just as the sense of the worthlessness of the old outward life, with its desires that can never be fulfilled, or that with fulfilment bring no sweetness and joy, is a universal experience, or an experience which the grim, irresistible process of things is making universal; so this new experience, the dawn of conscience and righteousness, the dawn of wisdom and the inner sense of the trueness of things is universal, or is destined to be universal. But for the most part, as will is a far more intimate part of our lives than knowledge, the sense of right willing, of conscience, is far more universal than right perceiving and wisdom. And as only by right perceiving by the sense of the real values of things, can we know that this new reality is in very deed our own truest Self, the understanding that it is our higher Self is far less universal than the sense of conscience, which is the relation of this higher Self to our wills.

The full sense of the higher Self is only reached when the primitive power of conscience becomes radiant and luminous with consciousness.

The rightness of the will in conscience, in righteousness, is a grand thing; but the union of this rightness with conscious knowledge is a

grander thing, which alone gives us a mastery of life.

Thus our darkness of hopelessness and weariness is broken by a new dawn, a dawn steadily growing light in the dark recesses of our being; a brightness that at once holds our eyes and wills; a voice that once consciously heard, commands our willing obedience.

As conscience, this new reality introduces us to righteousness, to rightness of will, making clear to us the folly and futility of our old fight for the gratification of desire, for the supremacy of our personalities.

As wisdom, altogether different from and higher than knowledge, this new reality brings us to the rightness of perceiving, to clear intuition; showing us that outward things are unrealities in comparison with this new enduring reality.

We also grow into a sense that this power, with its right and left hands—conscience and wisdom—is not foreign or hostile to us, but rather the very self of us, our truer, higher Self. And therewith we grow into a sense of the everlastingness of this higher Self; and untying the knot of the heart, become immortal, and reach the Eternal.

Hear again the words of Death, the teacher:

“The better is one thing, the dearer is another; these two draw a man in opposite ways. Of these two, it is well for him who chooses the better; he fails of his aim who chooses the dearer.

“The better and the dearer approach a man; looking well at them, the wise man discerns between them. The wise man chooses the better rather than the dearer. The fool chooses the dearer through lust of possession.

“Thou indeed, looking closely at dear and dearly loved desires, Nachiketas, hast passed them by. Not that way of wealth has thou chosen in which many men sink.

“Far apart are these two minds—wisdom, and what is known as unwisdom. I esteem Nachiketas as one seeking wisdom, nor do manifold desires allure thee.

“Others turning about in unwisdom, self-wise, thinking they are learned, wander, lagging in the way, fooled like the blind, led by the blind.

“The Beyond shines not for the child, foolishly raving under

the delusion of wealth; this is the world, there is no other—he says in his pride and falls again and again under my dominion. . . .

“That, hard to be seen, entering into the secret place, hidden in secret, most mysterious, ancient; intent on this shining, by the path of union with the higher Self, the wise man leaves pleasure and sorrow behind.

“A mortal hearing this, grasping it firmly, passing forward to that righteous subtle one and obtaining it, rejoices, having good cause for rejoicing; the door thither is open wide, Nachiketas. . . .

“This is verily the unchanging Eternal, this is the unchanging Supreme; knowing this unchanging one, whatever he wishes, it is his.

“This is the best foundation, this is the supreme foundation; knowing this foundation, he is mighty in the world of the Eternal.

“This seer is never born nor dies, nor is it from anywhere, nor did any become it. Unborn, everlasting, immemorial, this ancient is not slain when the body is slain.

“If the slayer thinks to slay it, if the slain thinks this is slain, they both know not; this nor slays nor is slain.

“Smaller than small, mightier than mighty, this Self is hidden in the secret place of the heart. This he beholds who has ceased from offerings, his sorrow gone; through the favour of that ordainer, he beholds the greatness of the Self. . . .

“Bodiless among embodied things, stable among unstable; intent upon this mighty lord, the Self, the wise man sorrows not.

“Nor is this Self to be gained by preaching, nor by learning, nor by much hearing; whom this chooses, by him it may be gained; the Self chooses his body as its own.

“He who has ceased not from evil, who has not found peace, who stands not firm, whose emotion is not at rest through understanding, may not obtain it.

“Of whom priest and warrior are the food, and its anointing is death—who thus knows where it is?” [Katha Upanishad.]

Chapter III.

The Supreme Self

As from a glowing fire, kindred sparkles come forth
thousand-fold,

So from the Eternal, manifold beings are born, and return also.

—*Mundaka Upanishad.*

In the beginning, while we are still very busy with our habitual lives, our habitual selves, we learn the nature of the higher Self chiefly by contraries; as one may learn the position of a light behind him chiefly by the shadows it casts.

We have already noticed that in our old habitual lives, we were foiled, principally in two ways; we could find no resting-place in desire; we could assure no complacency to our personalities.

When the light within us began to dawn, we were soon made aware further that the attempt to find a resting-place, the struggle for the triumph of our personalities, were something more than futile—were positively and actively wrong.

These feelings—the keen sense of futility and wrongness of our pursuit of desire, the keen sense of the futility and wrongness of our self-assertion—are the shadows that are to show us the direction and nature of the new light behind us, the dawning light of the higher Self.

From the first feeling, the keen sense of the futility of desire, we may learn in this way. We were led to this pursuit of desire by a strong instinct within us, impelling us to seek for joy, for delight, for

gratification; and this instinct was further enforced by an impulse of preservation, impelling us to make permanent and sure the conditions of things wherein we hoped for the gratification of desire.

We were all the time looking for and striving earnestly after a resting-place, a secure foothold and harbour in outward things, a warm, well-guarded nest, wherein we could enjoy our pleasures securely. This is far the strongest instinct in habitual life, the instinct that leads men to seek for wealth, for possessions, for property, for riches, not for their own sake, but because they hope by these things to gratify desire and to secure the power of gratifying desire, not only now but tomorrow, next year, in the future, as long as they can keep sickness and death at bay.

And the clear vision that the grim laws of things are against them; that there is no such thing as gratifying desire, or that desire has at best only a fugitive, evasive gratification, leading to bitterness and still keener thirst; that by no possibility can they secure their pleasant resting-places and sheltered nests for very long, because even if they withstand for a while by strenuous efforts the strong mutability of things, there is one mutability they can never withstand, one grim controversialist who gets the best of every argument at the end;—the clear vision of all this fills men with a kind of terror, of cold and abject fear, of craven cowardice that urges them into all kinds of folly to find forgetfulness of the spectre, even for a little while.

A dark enough shadow this, the treachery of desire, the insecurity of things, the inevitable end of it all; crying, we enter this is life; crying, we depart—this is death.

A black enough shadow, sharply marked enough, undoubted enough. A shadow cast by the dawning inner light. We may judge of the brightness of the light by the darkness of the shadow.

For if we look well at it, this inner light will presently instruct us of the reason of all this; of the true cause of this crying insecurity of things. And the cause we shall find is this.

We found in the growing light more than one positive intimation. We were drawn to perceive that this new power within us behind our personalities, was higher than and opposed to our personalities, while yet it was in no sense hostile and foreign to ourselves, but rather the

very self of our very selves. And we found in this new power also a new savour, a savour of enduringness, of everlastingness; an intimate intuition that this immemorial ancient changes not with changing things; that the power whose right hand is conscience, whose left hand is wisdom, is undying, immortal, eternal, and yet our very selves.

To the question: How can a man be certain that this higher Self in him is eternal?, one may best answer by another question: How can a man be certain that he is alive? He feels that he is alive; he experiences that he is alive; he knows that he is alive. And so with the higher Self. Its very presence carries with it a sense of eternalness, of everlastingness. One can only answer—taste and see. Every one who has once recognized the touch of this divine power has recognized, and recorded also, the sense of its eternalness.

A growing light, a power drawing us upwards and onwards, carrying with it the sense of eternalness, the sense that its growth and splendour know no limits; a power like this, and yet the very self of our very selves; our most intimate possession; our most real being.

This is the light that threw so black a shadow; and from the nature of the light, we can fully understand the form and blackness of the shadow; just as from the direction of the shadow we might guess the position of the light.

For if it be true that there is within us a higher Self, a divine Self, whose growth and splendour know no limits, whose very nature is eternalness, then it is very clear why there could be no satisfaction for us in desire, why the grim way of things kept breaking up our shelters and setting us again adrift, why the relentless waves washed our sand fortresses away. If the laws of things had reversed all this, if they had allowed gratification of desire, a full joy in gratification, a lasting refuge and security for this joy, then our lower and habitual selves would have been made permanent, lasting, all-sufficing, and we would have been shut out irrevocably from the truer and higher Self, from the Self whose nature is eternalness, whose growth and splendour shall know no limit. Finding full satisfaction in husks, we should have been shut out from our kingdom.

If the seedlings taken from a hot-house and planted in the rain and sunshine of fair natural day could become vocal, they would doubtless

bewail their unhappy lot for a while before they recognized the vigour and healing of new, strong life. Like them, we also bewail our fate; but presently we shall understand, and be very thankful for that rough, sanative counsel of mutability, and the grim prevailing arguments of death. We shall see that life is a larger, broader, stronger thing than we suspected; and shall set about the work of living in real earnest, in a better mind.

The perpetual failure to gratify desire and the longing for a safe shelter for gratifying desire, and finally the new, keen sense of the wrongness of desire, are to teach us this: that these sorrows are the best advisers for our wrongheadedness; for our destiny is not to gratify desire in snug shelters, but rather to enter into the life of the higher Self, of the Self whose growth and splendour know no limit.

Then the other shadow, not less black and terrible: the law that there is no complacency for our personalities. The little ambition of vanity, the great vanity of ambition, bring us something different from a sense of glad well-being, of placid content and joy. And this quite undesired result they bring us with an unflinching and dogged regularity, at every attempt of ours at self-assertion, every effort of ours to make our personalities prevail and triumph over other personalities. Strife breeds hate, and hate breeds fear, and fear hath torment.

And this law we have unlimited opportunity to verify, such is the grim generosity of things. Someday we shall take our experience to heart, and fall to seeking the reason of so universal a law. No complacency for our personalities; our vanity perpetually thwarted; our little self-security incessantly undone. And, this with an unerring iteration that fills us with lamentation and despair, till we see the reason of it.

We shall find this reason two-fold, a lower and a higher reason. The lower reason is very like what we have found in the futility of desire, the perpetual restlessness of things. It is that if our lower selves were allowed to triumph and prevail, their triumph would shut the door against the higher Self; would shut us out of our kingdom, out of the divine life whose essence is eternalness, whose growth and splendour know no limit.

There is another reason, higher still. We were persistently thwarted

in our efforts to make our personalities prevail over other personalities; our weapons of strife and hate wherewith we would have wounded these other personalities, were turned against ourselves as fear and torment. And, in the quiet light of the truer Self, we shall begin to understand the reason of this, and to be profoundly grateful that it was so. For we shall begin to understand that these surrounding personalities whom we would have triumphed over and wronged, are in a close and intimate way akin to us; that the higher Self lives for them also; that the truest Self of us is very near to the truest Self of them also.

And as the light grows stronger within us, as we become more and more at one with the higher, truer Self, and enter deeper into that rich, strong life of the higher Self, whose essence is eternalness, we shall find a growing necessity, a commanding impulse to substitute harmony and love for strife and hate. We shall find that our own well-being imperatively demands the well-being of our neighbour also; and this imperative demand, we shall fulfil, not to secure our own well-being, not unwillingly and grudgingly at all, but with a certain gracious readiness that bears the name of love.

And it is whispered that when we are perfected in this path we shall come upon the well-hidden secret of the Eternal—that the highest eternal Self of ourselves is the highest eternal Self of those others also; that the supreme Self of all is One.

Therefore in a very real sense, love is the fulfilling of the law, the one commandment which, if truly kept, will make us free. It is a law springing out of the profoundest reality of our being.

So that we are led little by little, by this new light within us, to perceive that our true way lies not in the gratification of desire, not in the triumph of our personalities, not in sensuality and selfishness, but in the opposite of these, in the turning away from these. And, thus with a certain earnest strenuousness more and more touched with gracious sunlight, we shall enter the life of the truer and better Self, which is the bridge and pathway to the supreme Self, the Self of all beings.

For these two reasons we may find no complacency for our personalities, and we should be profoundly grateful that we may not find this complacency. And as the second reason—our final oneness

with the other selves—is higher than the first—our right to growth and splendour—so the violation of the second law is more pregnant of real evil than the violation of the first—our self-assertion, the attempt to make our personalities triumph over other personalities, is a greater evil even than the gratification of our desires; selfishness, self-assertion, whether of bitterness or of self-righteousness, is a greater violation of law than drunkenness or evil living. And, for this reason it was said: This one commandment I give you, that you love one another; and again, unless your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the self-righteous, you shall in no wise enter the divine kingdom.

There is only one right assertion of self—the assertion by a man of the divine Self within himself, against the lower self, the self of sensuality and selfishness. And while a man is busy with this, the last feeling likely to come to him is self-righteousness; feeling the enormously strong hold of the lower self, with its grossness, its timidity, its cravings and cowardice, he will rather declare himself the chief of sinners. While he is busy with this, he will have little time for condemning others; others who are still under the clouds that have hardly dispersed for him; others who are still, by painful experience, verifying the grim laws of being that have so newly brought him to the beginning of the way. And when he has perfectly become one with the divine Self, he will have little inclination for condemning others, for he will have learned that the divine Self for him is the divine Self for them also; that they are in truth his other selves. And his other selves a man will help with generous sympathy and love, and not with bitter denunciation.

Thus we find in the light of the higher Self, with its eternal life, that the old grim counsellors who sowed sorrow for us so unceasingly before, were really our best and gentlest friends; winning us by the only way that could have won us to the life of the truer Self that is the path to the Eternal.

They barred the way to gratification of desire to save us, from the sense of well-being where no well-being is; they forbade us to find a false resting-place in outward unlasting things in order to bring us to our true rest; they sharply destroyed the complacency of our personalities, and thwarted all our efforts for their triumph, to win us

to a better way than strife, to love and union that shall at the end be perfect oneness. From the wandering, limited, faulty life of our habitual selves, grim death and sorrow have led us, by their irresistible persuasion, to the true life of the true Self, eternal and universal; the Self of all that lives.

“The Spirit that wakes in the dreamers, fashioning desire after desire; this is the shining, this the Eternal, this they have declared as the immortal. In this all the worlds rest, nor does any go beyond it.

“As one fire, entering the world, becomes one with form after form, so one inner Self of all beings grows one with form after form, and is yet outside them.

“As one breath, entering the world, becomes one with form after form, so one inner Self of all beings grows one with form after form, and is yet outside them.

“As the sun, the eye of all the world, is not smirched by visible outer chains, so the inner Self of all beings is not smirched by the sorrow of the world, but remains outside it.

“The one Ruler, the inner Self of all beings, who makes one form manifold, the wise who behold him within themselves, theirs is enduring happiness, not others.

“The enduring of unenduring things, the soul of souls; who, though one, disposes the desires of many; the wise who behold him within themselves, theirs is peace everlasting, not others.

“This is that, they know, the unindicable supreme joy. How then may I know whether this shines or reflects its light?

“The sun shines not there, nor moon and stars, nor lightnings, nor fire like this. After that Shining, verily, all shines; from the shining of that, all this reflects its light.”

[Katha Upanishad.]

Chapter IV.

The Three Worlds

What powers sleep in a man? what wake? which is the shining one who beholds dreams? whose is that bliss? in whom do all these rest?—*Prashna Upanishad*.

By gleams of intuition and inspiration, the Upanishads reached this understanding of the world: behind the habitual self is the higher Self; behind and above this, the supreme Self of all beings, the Eternal. Compared with this primary reality, all else is unreal, or has only a secondary, inferior, dependent reality. And this dependent reality, the outward world, the world outward from the Self, is a power, an energy, a potency of the Self, exercised by the Self, for the purposes and to the ends of the Self.

The supreme reality is the Self; the Eternal. All else exists for the purposes of the Eternal.

This outward world serves the purposes of the Self, not in one way only, but in many ways, in graduated steps, in different modes. And of these modes the Upanishads for the most part enumerate three.

The first mode in which the potency of the Self subserves the Self, is present outwardly to the Self, is the outward, waking life of the physical world. In this lowest and outermost mode, the Self gleams and glows as earthly fire, in the words of another Upanishad; that is, subserves its own purposes under all the modes of energy, of force, up to and including, the force of physical vitality.

In this physical life of the waking world of day, the vesture of the

Self is the physical body; the wearer of the vesture is the Self appearing as the vital, physical self of the animal body. The purposes of the Self are to be served by the development of its own potency under the outward forms of waking day, the rocks and rivers, the hills and skies, the forests and the restless sea. Through all these, the Self appearing as the physical self exerts its affinities, makes its claims, satisfies its necessities, in the endless variations of outward, physical life. It gradually becomes possessed of a whole range of perceptions, a whole range of powers; perceptions, to make it receptive of the outward world; powers, by which it is to act on the outwards world.

The whole range of outer appearances, visible, tangible, audible, sensible; the whole range of activities, vocal, motive, constructive, destructive, by which physical man comes into contact with physical nature, make up the content of this outer-most and lowest world, the world of earth, the world of the body, the world of waking day.

The whole energy of this lowest and outermost world is an energy of appetite; appetite prompted by two instincts, the instinct of self preservation and the instinct of race preservation. For each of these, the two chief and vital functions of outward waking life, the potencies of the Self have made complete provision; they have their suitable powers ordered by the potency of the Self appearing as the vital fire of the physical organism. These senses and functions are spoken of in the Upanishads as the nineteen mouths or windows of the seven-limbed form; the physical man, that is, with five extremities, and the upper and lower trunk.

Of this outer, physical life of waking day, although it takes such a large part in our lives, it is difficult to speak without introducing elements which belong to the world next above it; as these elements have been steadily bearing in upon and entering our life ever since man began to become man, ever since the period of pure animal simplicity came to an end.

That new world that has been so long bearing in upon us, adding itself to the physical life of the outward world, is what the Upanishads call the middle world, the world of dream, the interspace between earth and heaven.

Primarily, for the purpose's of psychology, it is the world of dream

and desire. In the words of the *Prashna Upanishad*, the passage from waking to dream is thus described:

“As the rays of the setting sun are all gathered up in his luminous orb, and come forth again when he rises, so the other powers are gathered up in the bright one, in mind. Then the man hears not, nor sees, nor smells, nor touches, nor tastes, nor speaks, nor takes, nor enjoys, nor puts forth, nor moves. So they say: he sleeps . . .

“So the bright one, mind, enjoys greatness in dreams; what has been seen, he beholds as seen; what has been heard, he hears again; and, for the other powers, he experiences again what has been experienced. Things seen and unseen, heard and unheard, experienced and unexperienced, manifested and unmanifested; he beholds all—as all, he beholds it.”

Thus the Upanishad. In dream life, the Self meets the world of dream in a vesture fashioned by the mind after the model of the body; a body of dream, the vesture of a self of dream, with active, perceptive, vital powers made by the building power of imagination after the outward model.

This same building power, or pictorial energy, presents to the dream self and its perceptions a world of images, of pictures, of models, of doubles, made on the pattern, in the shape, with the colouring and qualities of the outwards things of waking life. Things seen in waking life are seen again, mountains and hills, faces and forms. Things heard are heard again, voices and words, in chaotic, tumbling luxuriance. And the things experienced by the other senses are experienced again, in like character.

Thus the outward scenery of the world of dream is built up from images and impressions received in the waking world. But the essential quality of the waking world was not the simple observation of scenery, the simple reception of sense perceptions. It was rather a somewhat ruthless activity of two impulses, the impulse for self preservation and the impulse for race preservation; two appetites, peremptory, insistent, incessant.

And, following the genius of the world of dream, its power of catching and reflecting images, these two peremptory appetites make

themselves visible in the dream world in a reflected form. They have lost their simple externalness, their character as the mere contact of an appetite with what gratifies that appetite, and have become rather the picture of that gratification extending before and after gratification; the one picture being memory, the other expectation. Memory and expectation, as far as they refer to desire, are essentially the same. Memory of desire contains the expectation of new satisfaction. Expectation of desire contains the memory of what is expected. Both are pictures moulded by imagination, by mind, after the model of appetite.

Thus one characteristic of the dream world is the perversion of appetite into desire, by the retention and continued presentment of the picture of gratification. And applying this to the two great impulses of waking life—self preservation and race preservation—we shall see that, when appetite is perverted to desire, they must become selfishness and sensuality.

And in dream life this is completely the case, for one of the most uniformly observed and recorded characteristics of dreams is a lowering or effacing of the moral sense, so that the desires of the heart stalk abroad unmasked.

Just as the rigidity, the fixity, in space, which dominates the scenery of waking life is absent in dream life, so the conventional morality, the formal propriety, the outward fitness of things that regulate and safeguard the life of day, are absent in dream. All is fluid, chaotic, interblending; the pictures of appetites appear as desires, unchecked by formal fitness; unhampered by the isolating of energies which, in waking life, keeps the appetites to their own proper realm.

Nor does this dream world, this mirror world or world of reflection, occupy the period of actual sleep only. As it gradually superadds itself to waking life, as a nightly shadow and reflection of pictures, in the same measure does it begin to bear in upon waking life itself, during the hours of waking day.

So that to the outward waking world is added an inward waking world; to the objective stream of images and sensations is added a subjective stream of images and sensations; and in this way waking life becomes not single any longer, but double. Mental life, the life of

memory and imagination, of expectation, whether fearing or hoping, of trains of images and pictures, chains of thought, make up the energy and content of the inner subjective stream.

And, if one watches the forming of a train of images in this inner waking life, one finds that the images are subject to just the same incongruity, the same chaotic shapelessness, and tumbling abundance as in the worlds of dream; so that it is often as difficult to recall the links of a chain of thought, of a moment ago as to recall the dreams of the night. The two things, the dream chain of night and the thought chain of day, are essentially the same in chaotic, tumbling abundance, fluid, prolific, illogical; only the thought chain of day acquires a seeming consistency and unity from the ever present background of outward things, with their physical rigidity and lasting form.

Dreams are only chains of thought released from the rigidity of space. They are released also from the sense of form, of convention, of fitness, which rules the things of outward life, and ranges them in isolated groups. And thought forms are thus released also, for who has not committed, in imagination, not murder only, but theft and coveting, and every crime banned by the decalogue?

Here follows a point of great importance. Just as the vital forces and energies build up for the Self, in its lowest degree, a physical vesture, the body; so the forces and energies of the middle world, and, above all, this power of reflecting, of image-making, builds up for the Self, already one degree higher, a fitting vesture, the personal, habitual self.

The personality, the personal self, is built up of images, memories, desires, fears, hopes, expectations; all of them pictures of appetites and gratifications drawn from outward life.

The simple outward life of appetite and its gratification was satisfactory enough; there was a certain rest and stability in mere animal life; so that birds and beasts are never tortured with pessimism, but find all things altogether well, until their hour is come.

But when the dream life is added, the dream world entered in sleep and waking, this restfulness and stability entirely disappear. They give place to desire, which can never be satisfied; to memory, which has always the impossibility of restoring exactly the happiness

remembered; to expectation, which has, as hope, hardly less of torment than as fear. The personal self is fully formed; its cravings for self-assertion, for gratification, are doomed to disappointment. Man has taken on his humanity, and become the child of unrest.

But just as, above the outward, waking world, supervened the dream world with its mental life; so to the dream world is added yet another energy and degree of life, which bears in upon the dream world and finally changes it altogether.

This new world is the divine, the heaven world of the Upanishads; the world of the higher Self. We have already marked the stages by which it bears in upon the habitual life, in speaking of the beginning of the way. It remains only to see how this new world gradually touches the habitual mental life in two different ways.

This mental life, we saw, may either be free from the rigid frame and back-ground of space, as in dreaming; or it may be bound by this rigid frame, and in some degree, kept in order by it, as in the thought chains of waking life.

In either of these modes, the new divine world, with its new divine life, may press in upon it. If touching the worlds of dreams, it lifts the dreams up gradually from mere disordered series of pictures to ordered forms, which gradually emerge into the clear inspiration of spiritual waking, wherein "the Self blissful, enjoys bliss".

Or, touching the mental life of day, this new life makes of its pictures images of beauty—the high inspirations of the purest art.

And this touch of the higher Self which, coming to the imagination, brings forth art and beauty, when it comes to the will, brings forth rightness—gradually dethrones selfishness and sensuality.

This is the Upanishad teaching of the three worlds:

"This imperishable is the All; its farther expansion is what has been, what is, what is to be. All this is designated by Om.

"And whatever else there is, outside the three times, this also verily is designated by Om.

"For all this is the Eternal, and this Self is the Eternal. And this Self has four degrees.

"The first degree consists in waking life, outwardly perceiving,

seven-limbed, with nineteen mouths, a taster of physical things, the vital fire common to all men.

“The second degree consists in dreaming life, inwardly perceiving, seven-limbed, with nineteen mouths, a taster of refined, derived things, the radiant, emotional.

“The third degree is where, resting, he desires no desire at all, and sees no dream at all; this is dreamlessness. Consisting in dreamlessness, unified, with collective perception, blissful verily, and a taster of bliss through the soul as mouth, intuitional. This is the All-lord, this the All-knower, this the inner ruler, this the womb of all, the outgoing and incoming of beings.

“Neither outwardly perceiving nor inwardly perceiving, nor both ways perceiving, nor collective perception, nor perception, nor non-perception. Unseen, intangible, unseizable, unmarked, unimaginable, unindicable, whose essence is the attaining of the Self's oneness, wherein the world is at rest; peaceful, benign, secondless—this they think of as a fourth degree, this is the Self, this is to be known.” [Mandukya Upanishad.]

Chapter V. Death and Rebirth

Knowest thou whither beings go, departing hence?

Knowest thou how they return again?

Knowest thou the division of the two paths—the way of the gods and the way of the fathers?

Knowest thou why that world is not filled?

—*Chhandogya Upanishad.*

By direct perception and first-hand experience, we come to a certainty of the being of the Self within us; a being which is self-existent, self-poised, self-dependent. The Self is; I am: these convictions are reached not by inference or argument or deduction, but by an inward realization which comes closer to us than anything else conceivably can.

It is not the reality of the Self, but the existence of not-self, of all outward things, that is reached by inference and argument and deduction; and we cannot even begin to form this argument for the existence of outward things until we have reached the full conviction of the reality of the Self to whose consciousness these outward things are presented, and, whose consciousness of them is the sole argument for their existence.

The only direct reality we have primary knowledge of, is the reality of the Self; the clear, unshakable sense that “I am”. To this is added the further sense of outward things; the sense that “I perceive”. And

only as a deduction, a more or less likely hypothesis based on that primary reality, do we reach the third affirmation, "things perceived exist". So that, at the very best, all outward things have only a secondary reality, based on and depending on the primary reality: consciousness, the Self.

To this absolute knowledge we are led by pure reason. Once this insight is reached, it can never be lost or modified or abrogated. And therefore a materialist may and ultimately must become an idealist, but no idealist can possibly become a materialist. The door of progress opens only in one direction.

This pure conviction is therefore reached: the Self is, I am; the Self is not dependant on outward things; but, on the contrary, outwards things depend on the self, whose consciousness of them is the sole evidence of their existence.

The Self that really is, independent of outward things, cannot be subject to the vicissitudes of outward things; cannot be under the tyrannical necessity of mutation which runs through the whole existence of outward things. Mutation decrees that all that has a beginning shall also have an end. The Self has no part in this mutation; therefore, the Self is before beginning and after end; is born not nor dies, but subsists eternal, immortal, as these fleeting clouds of appearances drift past it.

This is the affirmation of pure reason, of wisdom, the left hand of the higher Self. It must be perfected by the affirmation of pure will, of righteousness, the right hand of the same Self. Pure will expresses the same affirmation within us: I am eternal; I am the heir to perfection like the perfection of the Father in heaven, like the perfection of the supreme Self; in my proper nature, I am immortal, invincible, infinite, I am the Eternal.

But this affirmation of pure will and wisdom which wells up perpetually within us, which finds an echo in every heart, is true only of the pure Self after every vestige of imperfection, every stain and limitation, every veil and disguise, is utterly worn away.

And we are still very far from this high perfection at the beginning of the way, when the light of the higher Self has only just begun to gleam and glow in the dark places of our souls. Though we have

reached a complete distrust for the habitual lives of our habitual selves, these lower selves have still an enormously strong hold on us, weakening our wills, tainting us with cowardice, staining us with sickly longing for the gratification of desire, even long after we know well that this longing can never be fulfilled.

We already feel that there is in us a higher Self, a more real, more enduring Self, behind and above our personal selves; but this is far yet from such a complete and plenary realization as would make us full sharers in the life of the higher Self; quite heedless of the fate of the personal Self, and already full enjoyers of the immortality which belongs to the higher Self.

We can already see clearly that once we have carried the sense of our identity upward, and lodged it completely in the higher, immortal Self, we shall thereby become immortal, and all these floating clouds of outward things will drift past us without very deeply engaging our attention; will drift past us, growing gradually thinner and more translucent, until our heaven is altogether clear and we are ushered into the perfect sunlight of realized oneness with the Eternal.

This is a far away hope for us, who have already caught the dim light of the Self within. But for those who are still in darkness—still taking the false fires of outward things for the true light, still pledged to desire, to the struggle for personal satisfaction and personal triumph, what fate is in store?

They are still entirely confident of the reality and sufficiency of outward things. They are still full of hope for their personalities, full of belief in their personalities. They have implicated themselves in outward things, identified themselves with outward things; they must abide by this identification, and endure the necessity that lies on all outward things.

This necessity is perpetual change, eternal mutation; building, unbuilding, rebuilding, and again rebuilding. To this necessity they also must submit.

They are identified with the outward life of the senses, the pictures that continually pass and change before their eyes. They too must pass and change with the endless mutation of necessity.

They are identified with the life of dreams, of mental images

mirrored in desire and fear; they must share the fate of dreams, fugitive as dreams; they must have a part in the destiny of desire and fear; desire with its shadows, disappointment; fear that has torment.

These things have as their essential qualities suffering and sorrow and death; those who put their trust in them, who identify themselves with them, must share the suffering, the sorrow, the death. The mutation of things is endless, incessant. They also must submit to an endless, relentless destiny.

But there is another law in outward things, besides the law of ceaseless mutation; the law of alternate activity, which makes night give place to day, darkness to light, new moon to full moon, winter to summer. And this law of alternation is universal, permeating outward things through and through, encompassing the life of our personal selves; so, that, for us, evening follows morning, sleep follows waking, age follows youth, death follows life.

Our personal life is made up of a double stream: outward appetite and inward desire. Outward appetite belongs to waking day; the mirror world, the world of dream, catches the images of appetite and prolongs them through the night. When the outward appetites with the whole organism that gives expression to them—the physical body—sink to sleep under the law of alternation, the inward desires and images continue, flowing into each other in rapid succession, blending, changing, whirling past in chaotic luxuriance.

Then again comes waking, the vital force of the outward appetites, coming under the other phase of alternation, reasserts itself; the physical body wakes, a new period of the activities of day is ushered in.

Under all this changing flow of things, there is the unchanging reality, the higher Self in us, which is lasting, immemorial, eternal; for the purposes of which all these outward things exist; in which all these forces adhere. But while we are quite unconscious of the Self—in other words, while we have never realized that we really are—we are utterly at the mercy of outwards things, tossed backwards and forwards between waking appetite and dreaming desire.

Yet we have all a certain dull, dumb consciousness, that we really are; and by this dull consciousness the mutability of things is tempered and mitigated; a certain permanent quality is given to our selfhood

that of the changefulness of things. And this dumb, hardly realized selfhood binds together the perpetually changing appetites, the incessantly fugitive dreams, forming them into a more lasting unity, which we call the personal life of our personal selves.

This more lasting unity makes us feel that we who wake today are the same as we who went to sleep yesterday; that we who dreamed last night are the same as we who dreamed the night before.

But if, between going to sleep and waking, our circumstances and everything round us were so completely transformed that no outward objects remained to remind us of the day before, our sense of unity would be greatly blurred and we should only recognize ourselves by the inward objects in our minds; by the continuity of our waking dreams, our thoughts.

If our thoughts also had become worn out and left us, we, though the same personalities all the while, should have nothing at all to recognize ourselves by as the same; we should die out of each moment to be reborn in the next, without memory or sense of identity.

And this is what actually happens to us, so long as we trust for our sense of identity to the continuity of outward things, of things outwards from, or other than, the Self that we really are. We are tossed from one stream of outward things to another, restlessly, incessantly, by the laws of change and alternation; retaining our sense of identity only so long as each stream lasts. While, the stream of waking appetite lasts, we are our waking selves; when it gives way to the stream of inward desire, we are our dream selves; when this again gives way to the waking life, we are our waking selves again, with just as much sense of continuity as is given us by the sameness of our outward circumstances and of our thoughts, and no more.

There is no conceivable reason why the very same laws of mutation and alternation should break down for us at a certain point—the moment of death. The only really permanent element in the whole endless mutation is the Self within us; this, as altogether foreign to, and apart from outward things can have no part in death, which is merely a breaking off of one stream of outward things, just as going to sleep is the breaking off of the stream of outward appetites, their powers and satisfaction. As the one stream, broken

off, is immediately followed by another of a different kind, so the stream of activities that made up life must be followed by a new stream of activities making up death. And as waking followed sleep, so must a new life follow death. The reawakening of outward appetites brought about a new day of life; there is no reason why, under the same law, the reawakening of the same appetites should not bring about another life of day, a new rebirth.

We take up each morning the stream of appetites and waking energies exactly where we laid them down the night before; there is no reason why the law should not hold good for each new life; why we should not take up again our energies and desires where we laid them down at death.

And just as our sense of waking identity depends on our finding the same objects round us in the morning, and extends only so far as these objects are each day the same, whether they be the furniture of our rooms or the furniture of our memories, so our sense of identity in a new life depends on the identity of the outward things around us. And as this identity hardly goes farther than the outward nature of life and our humanity, so our sense of identity in a new life goes no farther than a sense that we are alive; that we are human beings; as all outward details are changed, we have no sense of identity in detail. So long as we are utterly oblivious to the real life of the real Self, and rest wholly in outward things, there seems very little to choose between the different streams of outward things; little to choose between waking and dreaming, between waking life and dreaming death. We are probably convinced that each is the best while it endures; or perhaps with our native unrest and dissatisfaction in the presence of the one, we are discontented with it, and long for the other. So that now in waking life we say that sleep is better than waking; that death is better than sleep. When the dream of death is with us, we shall probably say the very opposite, and thus by degrees will ourselves into outward waking life once more.

But we are in reality never utterly oblivious to the real Self; no living being but feels, though only in a dull, dumb way, that real being is, that the real Self is, the Self that is immortal, the Self that is bliss. And thereby the restless mutation of things is mitigated and tempered with

gleams of joy, with dreams of rest and immortality, and with the overshadowing presence of the real Self comes also the consciousness of our other selves, so that the dreary changefulness of things is now and again touched and gladdened by echoes of divine love; of love that, even amid the mists of appetites and desires, never entirely loses its divinity.

And as, in dreams, the rigidity and pressure of outward unrealities disappear, so in the longer dreams of death we cannot doubt that a certain measure of unreality also disappears; that we draw, even unconsciously, one step closer to the essential reality of things; apprehending one degree more clearly the closeness of our other selves, and feeling more strongly the unison that is the foreshadowing of perfect unity.

But these dreams of paradise we shall know more about by-and-by when our little day of life comes to its close, as all days, even the longest, infallibly will. The Upanishads do not greatly expatiate on these dreams of paradise; whether the little they say is true, we shall soon see for ourselves. What the Upanishads do say is this:

“The knowers of the Eternal say that the light and the shadow—the self and its vesture—entering into the secret place in the upper half of the life cycle, enjoys bliss, the fruit of good deeds, done in the world.”

And again:

“Master, he who, amongst men, thinks on the imperishable Om his whole life long, what world does he gain thereby?”

“To him he answered. Om represents the supreme and manifest Eternal; hence the wise man, meditating on it, gains one or other of these:

“If he meditate with one measure, enlightened by it, he is soon reborn in the world. The Rig verses bring him to the world of men; he there gains power through fervour, faith, service of the Eternal.

“And if he meditate with two measures, he is lead to the middle world by the Yajur verses; this is the lunar world; after enjoying brightness in the lunar worlds he is born again.”

[Prashna Upanishad.]

Chapter VI.

The Way of Liberation

Knowest thou the gaining of the path of the gods, and of the path of the fathers? or having done what they gain the path of the gods or the path of the fathers?

As the word of the Seer has been heard by us:

Two paths for mortals were heard by me: the path of the fathers and the path of the gods;

By these two, all that moves here proceeds, whatever lives between father and mother.—*Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*.

The life-cycle is a lord of beings; it has two paths, the southern and the northern; they who worship by sacrifices and gifts; they, verily, win the lunar world—they, verily, return again. Therefore the seers who are desirous of offspring gain the southern path; this is the body, this is the way of the fathers.

So by the northern path—by fervour, service of the eternal, faith, wisdom—seeking the Self, they gain the sun. This; verily, is the home of lives, this is the immortal, the fearless, the better way; from thence they return not again, for this is the end of the way.—*Prashna Upanishad*.

In the chain of birth and rebirth, the Self, deluded and fallen from divinity, is enmeshed by appetite in the outward stream of sensuous things, and, by desire in the inward stream of lusts and fears. For each stream, it makes itself an illusory vesture, a lower representative self

who is to play the part of the true Self, and, for a while, simulate the life of the true Self.

In the outward stream of sensuous things that make up the physical world, the representative of the Self is the physical self, the body. In the inwards stream of sensuous things that make up the emotional world of day dreams and dreams by night, the representative of the Self is the personal self, the self of desires and fears, lusts and hates.

Each of these lower selves is absolutely involved and captivated by the sensuous world to which it belongs; the physical self, by sensuous appetites; the personal self, by sensuous desires. As these worlds are under the perpetual law of mutation, the lower selves are not only not enjoyers of perpetual happiness—they are rather endurers of unceasing misery and affliction, hardly lightened by the expectation that is the shadow of appetite, and the hope that is the shadow of desire.

Thus the life of the Self, embodied in its representatives and ministers, is incessantly tossed from one stream of circumstance to the other; from waking to dreaming, from dreaming to waking; from life to death, from death to life.

And as both these lives are essentially unreal, as they are both based on a fictitious life of the self built up in the mutable streams of things, and not on the real life of the Self-subsistent, so the teachers of the Upanishads draw very little distinction between the worth or worthlessness of these two forms of life, life in a sensuous world, and life in a sensuous paradise; both, they declare, are inherently futile.

So much is this so, that the great school of Indian thought that best preserves the ideals of the Upanishads, the Vedanta, lays down at the very beginning, as an indispensable condition of any right progress at all, an indifference to, even a revulsion from, the feasts of this world and paradise alike.

The eternal mutations of the streams of things that make up the feasts of both worlds culminate in the supreme mutation, the supreme affliction, of death, the greatest privation in a mode of life that is everywhere privation. Death is an inevitable outcome of these modes of life, and quite indispensable, for it is simply the clear and definite cutting off of one stream of circumstance, and the tossing of the life of the Self into another stream of circumstance—a quite necessary result

of the combined laws of mutation and alternation everywhere penetrating outward things.

This breaking off by death is attended by another evil, the loss of memory; for this outward memory, as we have seen, is no real or sterling thing, but depends absolutely on the continuity of the streams of circumstance and thought, on the furniture of the rooms of our minds. Every time this furniture is changed, memory breaks down and is interrupted; the total loss of physical memory must follow, as far as we can see, the dissolution of the physical self—the body; and a not less total loss of the personal memory must follow the not less inevitable dissolution of the personal self; for the personal self, being but a web of desires and lusts and hates, can have no more permanence than any other woof of time's weaving.

The relentless laws that thus dog the footsteps of the physical and personal selves, perpetually overwhelming them with misery and affliction, are really kindly counsellors, pointing with friendliest insistence to the real path, the true destiny, the better way.

For what is the basis of all this affliction and the real root of all this misery? Simply this: the whole evil arises from our habit of mirroring the Self in the stream of circumstance, and then grieving over every distortion of the image that the breaking of the waves perpetually brings. What we are grieving over is not a real thing at all; it is insubstantial as the mirage in the desert, the silver imagined in a pearl-shell, the serpent imagined in a rope. It is not nothing, for it is even less than nothing.

The real life of the Self is self-existent, self-subsistent, self-poised, self-based; it is above time, free from space, absolutely independent of mutation, in its own essence it is perfect being, perfect consciousness, perfect bliss; it is the fullness of things, the water of life, the all. And we deliberately or through mere folly, set ourselves outside this splendid reality, and conjure up for ourselves a self of appetites and a self of dreams, and straightway fall aggrieved over their mishaps, wrapped in contemplation of their misery, full of sentimental sorrow for their misfortunes. The clear part of wisdom is to have done with all this; to take neither part nor lot in the foolish self of appetite, or the fatuous self of dream; to turn back from these to the real Self behind

and above them, whose immemorial divine life, by its very constitution, is eternally free from their miseries and afflictions. It would hardly be exaggeration to say that the Upanishads subordinate every other consideration to this one, the turning back from the false selves of appetite and dream to the real Self of eternity; that they hold this to be the purpose of habitual life—the thorough demonstration of its purposelessness; that they esteem the unhappiest life the happiest, as it the sooner cures us of the conceit of false life.

Yet the Upanishads, though they recognize these things, the necessity and fitness of these things, do not unduly weigh on them, or drag themselves on in an insistent and lamentable pessimism. They rather reach this initial conclusion briefly and incisively, and then pass on to the real business of life; the life of the real Self, the Self of all beings.

It is part of the beneficent law of things that, to those who have not yet entered the life of the real Self, its divine nature cannot be made intelligible and clear; for thus they would be robbed of the great delight of discovery in this new dominion; a delight which is to be theirs as soon as they make up their minds to taste it.

But many of the circumstances of the life of the Self may be made clear enough, even to those to whom the Self is still unknown. There is, first, an end of sorrow, of affliction, of misery, of death. For these sad companions are the children of mutation, born from the perpetual flowing of the waves of the stream of time. While we are sunk in the river, while the waves ever and ever sweep over our heads and crush us down into the depths, we shall see no end or cessation to these children of the ever-breaking waves.

But after a while, though the waves still break upon us, they will cease to overwhelm us, no longer blinding our eyes and stifling our breath of life. Presently, though still direly beaten and driven by the waves, we shall raise our heads permanently above the water; then, after a while, we shall reach the bank, and stand firmly on the shore, wondering, like prisoners in an open prison, why we never thought of finding obvious liberation before.

The conditions of liberation are two; we had best face them unflinchingly, and recognize them. The false children of the Self were

also two, and the dethronement of each of them is the fulfilment of one condition of liberation. The first usurping self was the self of appetite, spinning for itself the vesture of the physical body. The second usurper was the self of desire, spinning as its vesture the body of dreams, the personal self. To restore order in the kingdom of man, the two usurpers must disappear. The self of appetite must come to an end, through the ripe experience that there is no lasting satisfaction in gratifying appetite, no real joy in the satisfaction of lust. The personal self, far the stronger and more dangerous usurper of the two, must likewise come to an end; first, by the clear intuition of the higher Self above and behind the habitual, personal self; then by the clear perception of this personal self's worthlessness and weariness and inferiority; and, lastly, by the quiet determination to make real and living the relation thus perceived between the higher self and the lower self, to throw all the force of our lives on the side of the higher Self, relentlessly subordinating the lower self in every particular and degree.

This subjugation of the personal self, of the vicious centre of selfishness and vanity, must be set about with the grave care to avoid all error or false residuum that a good chemist takes in a difficult experiment. The guide is the voice and light of the higher Self, revealing itself in conscience and intuition; the circumstances of the experiment are the ordinary conditions of daily life, which make constant calls on vanity and selfishness, and draw them into prominent notice.

If an individual were sole king of the universe, fallen solitary from the divinity of the higher Self into the degradation of selfishness and sensuality, then this gradual subordination of the usurping lower selves to the rightful lord, the higher Self, would be the whole of life, a thing solely for the individual, a lonely triumph in the midst of the solitudes of eternity.

But it is no lonely struggle, nor lonely, empty triumph; for we have seen that the supreme Self is not only our true Self, but the true Self of all beings as well; and, in our great training ground of daily life, we are constantly admonished of this deepest truth, for the intervention of the guide, the voice and light of the higher Self, is most constantly made in this very matter of our other selves, the fellow beings who, equally with ourselves, are the broken rays of the supreme and

everlasting One.

And we learn that, above the two false selves—the physical and personal—there is yet another Self, so great and mighty that we can hardly call it unreal, even though it stops one degree short of perfect reality. And of this, the casual Self, with its light of intuition, the supreme function seems to be the constant establishing of right relations between us and our other selves; so that our mutual needs shall in every particular be satisfied, our mutual defects supplied by each other's qualities.

And this great work of harmonizing goes perpetually forward—has been going perpetually forward for many a long age of birth and rebirth, death and entering into the paradise of rewards, and again death and re-entering into life. The great unison has been steadfastly sought out and followed, with a strength above all sentimental considerations; a might that brings together those who are to be together, even if only to hate each other; a might that separates those who should be separated, even if only that the sense of bitterest loss shall cast them back upon the selfless consolation of the deeper Self within them.

This divine harmonizer, the inner ruler, that stands above the world of waking and above the world of dream, above the world of life and above the world of death, is of such lasting power and might that we cannot call it unreal, or class it together with the lower unreal and usurping selves of appetite and desire. Yet, we are told, it falls one degree short of the perfect reality of the Eternal; the consciousness of its perfect oneness with the Eternal, of its perfect oneness with all other selves through the Eternal, is veiled from it by the thin web of ineffable illusion and error, the sense of separation that made the first possibility of individual life with all its train of individual sorrow, of isolation and enmity. The cause of this ineffable error it is useless to seek; it is enough for us that it exists, and that we daily and hourly pay the penalty for its existence. Its final removal will mark the hour of our perfect liberation, of the plenary possession, by each individual self, of the whole infinite and eternal might of the supreme Self, with all its lasting joy.

This causal Self, so lasting and mighty that it is meaningless for us

to call it unreal, we gradually learn to recognize as the ruler and guide and motive power in all the long tragedy of life that led us through the weariness of ages to the beginning of the way. To the direct design and interposition of this causal Self we shall ascribe that sad, wise law of mutability that made it for ever impossible for us to find rest and satisfaction in outward things, driving us perpetually inward and homeward, and using all these grinding and tearing contacts with outward things to kindle us to a vivid consciousness that is to be one of the treasures of the Eternal.

To this wise ruler and guide, whose wisdom and mind are drawn from its nearness to, and veiled, identity with the Eternal, we shall learn also to ascribe all those contacts of ours with other personalities, our other selves, whether in love, or hate, in craft or generosity, in bitterness or beneficence. Only by these attractions and repulsions, concussions and separations, can the thorough mutual, knowledge and understanding be reached that is one day to lead to perfect harmony, to the perfect union, far higher than passionate love, that is needed for dissipating the old illusion of separation, for re-establishing the perfect unity of the One.

There are therefore these three chief aids and means for progressing along the path of liberation: a perfect dissipation of sensuality, whereby the smirching tenacity and defilement of appetite shall give place to a clearness like the fresh brightness of a summer morning; the perfect conquest of all vanity and predilection for our personal selves with their wailing sentimentality, to be replaced by the strong, vigorous life of the free Self; and, last of all, the crown and end of all, the establishing of the finest harmony between the self of each and all other selves, without any exception or reservation at all, by which harmony we shall gradually prepare the way to perfect reunion in the One, where each shall be freed from every bond and limitation, by plenary possession of the All.

“By realness is to be gained that Self, by fervour, by knowledge of oneness, by service of the Eternal for ever.

“In the inner vesture is this shining being of light, whom the pure serve, whose stains are worn away.

“Realness verily conquers, not unrighteousness; the path of the

gods stretches onward through realness.

“The path of the gods whereon the seers walk, who have gained their hearts desire, where is that supreme treasure-house of the real. . . .

“Gone are all differences, the bright ones sink back in the bright powers behind them.

“All deeds and the perceiving self itself become one in the unchanging supreme.

“As rolling rivers in the ocean reach their setting laying name and form aside; so he who has reached illumination, rid of name and form, enters the divine Spirit, more supreme than the supreme.” [Mundaka Upanishad.]

Chapter VII. The Eternal

This Self is then, verily, of all beings the overlord, of all beings the king; as in the nave and felloe all the spokes are held firm, so verily in this Self all beings, all gods, all worlds, all lives, all selves are held firm.—*Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*.

This soul that is the Self of all that is, this is the real, this the Self; THAT THOU ART.—*Chhandogya Upanishad*.

A Prime object of the teaching of the Upanishads is to establish a clear intuition and perception of the difference between Self and not-self; the root distinction between the self-shining, self-subsistent, self-balanced One and the myriad circumstances and chains of coarser and finer objects that present themselves as the material for the will and perception of that One.

To the end of establishing this intuition, we have spoken for the most part as if the not-self, the chains of outward circumstance, the objective worlds, were quite apart from, even hostile to, the true life of the Self; as if the entanglement of the Self in these things were so much clear misfortune and loss.

This attitude was necessary, because until that primary distinction is clearly recognized, no firm and sane return to the inward life of the Self is possible; and until this self-subsistent life of the Self is in some degree reached, no clear understanding of the real meaning and significance of the many coloured life of outward things can be formed.

But as soon as this self-balanced, self-shining life of the Self within us begins to take the place of the old storm-tossed life of physical and personal self, a deeper and truer understanding of the meaning of these outward things begins to arise; a more penetrating insight into the purpose of the whole long world-drama that we have been spectators of, or rather, unhappy actors in for so many ages.

As there seems to be a radical tendency in the wide life we share to form itself into a threefold division, whether of the three worlds, the three fires—vital, emotional, intuitional—the three modes, of perceiving—waking, dreaming, dreamlessness—so we may very well follow this tendency, and divide the long world drama into three acts.

In the first act, the long ages of unconscious, or rather unreflecting physical life unfold themselves; the Self, through the primeval delusion of separateness, falling into the illusion of an endless number of selves, meets with the pure simplicity of physical things, the mountains and rivers, forests and seas, the broad sunlight, the far-away background of the quiet stars. The great incidents of this simple physical life are a vigorous and continuous contest with the physical world, under the guise of a search for sustenance and shelter, and a first rude acquaintanceship between the estranged selves, under the guise of the multiplying and the continuing of the race. The real purpose is that the outwardly manifest selves should be set face to face with the eternal laws of their being, presented to them visibly in outward nature, which mirrors the eternal laws of the Self; and that the first foundation for the final reuniting of the estranged selves in the one Self should be laid by the rude acquaintanceships, whether of contest or attraction, that make up the drama of animal physical life.

For a long time this physical animal life continues, broken into a rhythmical series of alterations by the illusion of ever-present death; an illusion, because the reality is the ever-presence of life, perpetually present in all its plenitude throughout every instant of time. As far as we can see, as far as we can guess, this drama of physical life is nearly or perfectly painless and free from sorrow, full of a young animal vigour and exultation, without regret for a speedily forgotten past, without misgiving for a yet undreamed of future, in radiant, self-renewing vitality.

Then the second act begins; the mirror world, the "world between earth and heaven," begins to bear in upon life; to appetite it adds reflection, forming in the mirror of past gratification a desire of gratification to come; to present enjoyment it adds regret by setting up beside the present an image of all that has gone before; to satisfaction it adds a picture of all possible satisfactions to come, with all the possibilities of losing them. Thus come longing and regret, desire and fear, memory and hope; the drama of human life has begun.

And as we saw that the character of animal physical life was twofold, the objective presentment of the eternal laws to be instinctively apprehended through outward things, and the first rude, wild acquaintanceship with the other selves, as a primary foundation for futures reunion; so the purpose of human life is likewise twofold, and in both cases this twofold purpose is fulfilled by the new life of the mirror world, the world between earth and heaven.

For once the eternal laws of things, the eternal necessities of things, have been outwardly presented; and instinctively apprehended in the outward physical world, it is necessary that the perceiving self should be disengaged from these outward things; that it should be driven back on itself, and transfer within the knowledge gained of the eternal laws. This purpose the mirror world serves in two ways.

First, it forms a material for the better holding and apprehending of the eternal laws, by building up a new, inner, subjective double of the outer, physical world; a mental world formed of images of physical things; a world, which lends itself far more easily to the formation of general concepts, broad notions of things, collective judgements, abstract deductions, because while presenting a perfect picture of outward things in a subjective mental form, it is free from the impediments of gross materiality and the tyranny of space that in the physical world dim and blur the images of the eternal laws. So that it is only after the life of the mirror world is fully formed and entered on, or in other words, after the mental, reflective life of humanity has begun, that such a thing as conscious knowledge of the eternal laws becomes possible. Up to this, in pure physical life, the most that could be reached was an instinctive knowledge of law, formed under the impulse of appetite and the disappointment of appetite, such a

knowledge as the burnt child has of fire, but in no sense a conscious reflective knowledge at all.

Then the mirror world does its work in another way. We have already seen how by its operation sheer physical appetite was superseded and relegated to a second place, by the birth of desire, of fear and hope, of expectation and disappointment. Now in this way the selves are in one degree disengaged from outward things, the things of appetite and, as desire, under the sanative laws of things, invariably carries with it sorrow and suffering, this sorrow and suffering strongly farther the work of disengaging the selves; from outward things, the work of their disenchantment, and disillusioning that must precede awakening to reality.

Thus the mirror world, the world between earth and heaven, the mental, subjective world we should call it, not only gives the perceiving selves a better material for laying hold on the eternal laws, but gives them a strong impulse towards this material, by disengaging them from outward things. Hereby it subserves the work of knowledge, which is to become wisdom, when the next step upward toward the divine is taken.

But this knowledge of the selves that perceive is only half of life, and the lesser half; the greater half is the righteousness of the selves that will. And this end also is wonderfully subserved by the mirror world. For what is the true end of righteousness but the Eternal, the supreme reality? and what reality can be greater than the perfect oneness of the One? Therefore all true righteousness is the establishing of the oneness of the One, the reuniting of the estranged selves with the Eternal, the supreme Self that they really are. This purpose was furthered in the animal physical life, as we have seen, by the first rude acquaintanceship of appetite and contest. In the new mental life of the mirror world, it is carried incomparably further. For the mere physical presence of the desired one, ministering to appetite, is substituted the perpetual image of the beloved, all the wild romance of passion, of hoping and fearing for the beloved for the most absorbing part of human life. This long love-song of humanity brings the estranged selves together with a penetrating force and vigour that nothing else can compare with, an overwhelming power that constantly sets at

naught and dwarfs to insignificance every other relation of human life. If the dominant notes of the first act of the threefold life drama were instinct and appetite, the strongest chords of the second are undoubtedly knowledge and love.

Thus for the first two worlds, the first two steps to the Self, the first two fires, the first two acts of life.

As the purity and healthy innocence of animal life is altogether disconcerted and thrown out of balance when the mental life of the subjective world begins to bear down on it; so the qualities of well-balanced and satisfying human life—so far as the pursuit of knowledge and love are ever satisfying—begin gradually to be over-ridden and disturbed, convulsed and subtly penetrated by a new reality, a new life, a new world bearing in upon human life from above. This new gradually dawning life is the light of the higher Self, gradually leading humanity onward to a new era of divinity.

The coming of the dawn we saw, was heralded by deeper darkness; the new counsels of perfection that the divine voice begins to whisper, bear as their first fruits a penetrating unrest, almost an agony of despair. The old human love-song jars discordantly, but no divine music has yet taken its place. The pursuit of knowledge has ended in bitterness, but there is as yet, no voice of wisdom to fill its place.

We cannot, even if we would, pierce far into the secrets of that newer day. The life of the higher Self, stopping but one degree short of the perfection of the Eternal, must slowly unfold its divinity within us for many an age yet, before we can know it and declare it fully.

We have, as yet, two oracles only of the hidden things to come; two oracles declared to us hitherto in great suffering and sorrow. For the mists of the old worlds that are passing away still lie heavy on our eyes; we are still caught and dazzled by the flashes of colour, the almost painful sweetness of the old love-song of life; our new birth is strongly tinged with regrets and backward glances, and it will be a long time yet before we shall feel the young joy in our newer life, that properly belongs to it. There is still more of fear than of delight in our tardy acquiescences with the mandates of the higher Self, though we feel already that acquiescence is inevitable.

The two oracles thus declared in sorrow are no satisfaction in

desire, no complacency for our personalities. We see only their shadows now; we shall one day see the light that casts the shadows. It is already whispered to us through the stillness that these two oracles, so pitiful when read in the language of men, bear quite other meaning in the language of the gods.

No satisfaction for desire, because we are born, not to the fleeting things of desire, but to the ever-present and perfect life of the Self; no triumph for our personalities, because we are born, not to over-ride and tyrannize our other selves, but to enter into the fullest and most perfect harmony with our other selves, a harmony that shall, one day, dawn into the perfect unity of the estranged selves in the supreme.

We shall, therefore, further the life of the higher Self most potently by following out and realizing these two divine laws in every detail and particular of life: the law of turning backward from sensuality; and the law of perfect selflessness and subordination of our personal selves, first to the divine Self within us, and then, as our light grows, to the divine Self in all our other selves.

This life of the higher Self will raise us above the changing worlds of birth and rebirth, death and again death, and introduce us to a world of ever-present life that knows no change but the change from greater to greater splendour. It will raise us above appetite and contest, and, not less above passionate love and hate, to make us freeholders in a world of perfect unison with the other selves, a harmony far deeper and more perfect than passionate love.

Thus, retreading the small old path to the supreme Self, we shall gradually enter into our kingdom; and the growing wisdom that is ours may gradually make clear to us the secret and reason of our long exile.

Even now, we may guess something of the causes that led to our fall, a fall that made necessary the long upward journey; the conquest, one after another, of the three worlds; the lighting one after another, of the three fires.

We may guess that for the perfect fullness of the Eternal it was necessary that the whole of the Eternal should be fully revealed to every part of the Eternal; and that from this necessity arose the illusion by which that one Self seems to be mirrored in innumerable selves. Then again, as the whole Eternal, the perfect Self, could not be

revealed at once, in a single flash, to each limited and partial self, it became necessary for the full revelation to be made in a long series of partial revelations, one flowing out of the other, one following the other, and thus dividing the Eternal into the causal series that mark the distinctive character of the causal world, the highest of the threefold outer worlds. And again, as the elements of these causal chains could not present themselves simultaneously, but had to become successively apparent, to causality was thus added time, the union of these two making the distinctive nature of the second, the mental subjective world. Then, that more causal chains than one might together be presented to the perceiver, the illusion of space arose; and thus, through causality, time and space, was woven the full web of the unreal, apparent world; while above these three, above causality, above space and time, stands the real, the Self, the Eternal. With the conquest of each of the three worlds, we shall undo one of the webs of illusion and unreality, and thereby make one step forward towards restoring the pristine excellence of the Self, and bringing back to it the full harvest of wealth gained by rich ages of experience.

But this we shall better know when knowledge expands into the joyful wisdom that is to supersede it.

The dawn comes, and, after the drawn, sunrise and perfect day. And this day shall have a singular divine quality that the Upanishads tell of thus:

“Thereon that Sun rising overhead, shall rise no more nor set any more, but shall stand there, in oneness, in the midst. As this verse tells:

“There is not there any sunset nor sunrise for evermore. Bear witness, ye gods, that I truly tell of that Eternal.

“For him the sun rises not nor sets, for him who knows this hidden wisdom well, there is perfect day forever.”

[Chhandogya Upanishad.]

Chapter VIII. Life and Form

He gains royal power over himself, he gains lordship of mind, he is lord of voice, he is lord of the eye, he is lord of hearing, lord of knowledge; he becomes the eternal, bodied in shining ether, the real Self who delights in life, who is mind, who is bliss, whose wealth is immortal peace.

—*Taittiriya Upanishad.*

Before beginning to speak of the theosophy of the Upanishads, we had occasion to see that, in this age and epoch of ours, religion and religious life are chiefly characterized by two things: a lack of originality and a lack of light. For the vast majority, the overwhelming majority even, there is no first hand dealing with the universe, no meeting of the universe face to face, no openness to the strong and flowing powers of inexhaustible life; on the contrary, there is everywhere a heavy burden of tradition—of tradition full of half science and half truth, that lies like a leaden weight on our minds, or wills, and the whole of our lives; tradition and formalism not merely as to the documents of religion and the teachers of religion, but a crystallized formality, penetrating and shackling the whole of life for us; and deciding for all of us, in every direction and circumstance, the relation we shall bear to the endless universe. This absolute crystallization of life into hard, rigid forms is what we have called the lack of originality in our religious life.

And the lack of light has the same form and character, or nearly the

same. Half truths, or truths touching only a part of life, the outward and inferior division of life, have become so completely accepted, so readily adopted, in most cases through mere imitation, mere dullness and sluggishness of mind, that it becomes of the last difficulty for the understanding even to make preparations for entering into a true and higher relation to the universe so cramped, dulled and deadened are all its powers, by the contracting, crystallizing, formalizing powers that are the great moral and mental characteristics of our age.

A recent school of philosophy, considering the ultimate reality of things as Will, has suggested that all the scenery of the outward world—the pitiless rock, the drooping acacias, tiger and ape and peacock—are but modes and forms of Will; but—Will appearing and made manifest in conventional shapes, according to a series of great ideal types.

Well, there is much of the character of this, much of the nature of Will frozen into pitiless rocks, sharp flint, unyielding adamant, in the moral and spiritual life of our age; form everywhere, and formalism; hard, merciless convention that tyrannizes over Pharisee and Sadducee alike; convention of belief, convention of unbelief, convention of hypocrisy; form everywhere, and formalism, binding will and understanding alike; making inspired will or righteousness, and inspired understanding, or wisdom, equally impossible.

Who will tell these Pharisees, and Sadducees; with their conventional beliefs and unbeliefs, that all this so real-seeming world of theirs is but crystallized Will; that their beliefs, their unbeliefs, their strong refuges in the outer material world, their assured shelters in the inner mental world, are mere formalizings of formless Life, mere bubbles and froth resting for a moment on the bosom of the infinite ocean?

Perhaps no age was ever so cowed by the tyranny of form as this age of ours; perhaps no period of thought, if thought it can be called, was so deadened and crushed and shrunk together by these tendencies of formalizing and crystallizing. If any one would be convinced of it, let him see how much in his own life, in the life of his own will, his own understanding, ordained and governed by forms not flowing freely, from the abundant life within him, but rather imposed on his life from without, as a power of restraint, checking, thwarting, laying down

impassable barriers that cling closer and closer round will and understanding, crushing out their original life and bringing nearer and nearer the time when, if recent philosophy be right, heart and minds will be only less crystallized, if less at all, than pitiless rock, sharp flint and adamant.

Who will come to us with a free and flowing inspiration, telling us that this life of ours may be set free, may be made sweet and potent as the ocean, lucent as the sunlit air of mountaintops? Who will tell us than this so solid-seeming world, our so real-seeming sciences of belief and unbelief, the whole fabric of our outward life—aye, even the startling tragedy of our outward life, grim-eyed death himself, are but forms and moods and humours of the infinite free and flowing Will, the manifest life of the Self? Who will tell us that these chains and fetters binding our spirits and wills, binding them so incessantly, perhaps, that our number souls have almost ceased to feel them, and are sinking into the unresisting lethargy of death—who will tell us that these chains and fetters may one by one be loosed, that the loosing of them depends wholly upon ourselves, or rather upon the real and omnipotent Self within us?

The fetters seem to be imposed on us from without, but the possibility of imposing them on us is made only and entirely by ourselves. We are crushed by the tyranny of the outwards world, subjected to merciless necessity, ever busily devouring us with red tooth and claw. Yes; but the essence of our subjection lies not in the outward world, but in ourselves, in our lust for the feasts of the outward world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the lust of possession. Would you then bid a poor mortal be rid of these things, be rid of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the lust of possession, bid him declare a moral bankruptcy to escape from moral poverty and deprivation, counsel him remedies of despair? If the poor mortal were not an immortal in disguise, perhaps this were a remedy of despair; perhaps the counsel to set himself free from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the lust of possession were really a counsel to declare moral bankruptcy and mere impotence. But the mortal is really an immortal, the bankrupt is really heir to infinite possessions; and the only obstacle that hinders him from entering into his kingdom is this limiting and crystallizing of all his powers that shuts him out from the

free and flowing life that is truly an energy of the immortals. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the lust of possession, what are these but crystallized demands on life for a part, when it is the law of life to give not a part but the whole? What are they but strained and painful attempts to limit the whole energy of the Self to a narrow and weed-grown field, when the Self is heir to the pastures of the infinite? Destiny is kinder to us than we are to ourselves—for destiny is but the will of the supreme Self in us, safeguarding our lesser selves, and destiny forbids us to rest secure in the satisfaction of lust, of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the lust of possession; destiny ordains that these lusts shall bring to us, not satisfaction, but rather a sense of enduring misery, a sense of perpetual subjection to the tyranny of the world; these stern ways of destiny, are no flatterers but counsellors, that feelingly persuade us what we are. The tyranny of the world will press on us, the forms we have made, the forms of lust even, will grow in upon us and crush us, until we meet the world's tyranny by a tyranny more tyrannical, treating these passions and lusts as masters treat their slaves. The tyranny of the world is but the gaunt outward shadow cast by our own lust of the flesh, our own lust of possession.

As the grinding tyranny of the world's material forces is but the result of our own material lusts, our own craving for a warped and stunted part rather than the magnificent all, so the tyranny of the mental forces of life, the wounds of our self-esteem, the perpetually thwarted complacency of our personalities, are but the expressions of the same limiting and crystallizing powers at work.

For what is this personality that we set up for our own worship, and for the worship of others, so far as we can compel it; what is this personal self but an arbitrarily limited and crystallized expression of the infinite Self? an image of this body of us in the minds; the body itself being but an image of our lusts, crystallized into form. The body, an image of our lust; the personality, an image of the body in the minds; and this personality the source of all our misery, our meanness, and our sin.

Is this again a counsel of despair, a recommending of moral bankruptcy, to say that the only cure for the misery and meanness of personality is a renouncing of personality, a having done with

personality, once and for ever? Again, counsel of despair it might be, were personality the whole of life, were not personality, vanity, selfishness, but a harsh and arbitrary limit, a crystallized form, imposed upon the free and flowing abundance of life in the Self above personality.

Then again, besides the tyranny of the material world, denying satisfaction to our lusts, and the tyranny of the mental world, denying complacency to our personalities, there is a tyranny of the moral world, denying freedom to our spirits. Here also we are met with crushing limitation of crystallized form, bidding us to accept this or the other conventional belief or unbelief, shutting us into narrow, hard, and stony pastures where our spirits can find no nourishment or refreshment. And here again, if we rightly understand it, the liability to tyranny is of our own making; we are limited to narrow and crystallized beliefs, to narrow and crystallized unbeliefs, by the cowardice of our own minds and hearts, that dare not open their own doors to the sunlight, dare not go out to the universe and deal with the universe at first hand, face to face. For there is no limit to the richness of belief to which this abundant universe of ours can give legitimate food; there is a wealth of shining and luminous inspiration ready to pour into our minds and hearts from above, from the endless treasure-house of the real Self; inspiration of which the greatest and fullest belief is but the low tide mark, while the high tide mark is self-conscious, exultant divinity.

From this high and luminous mood we are shut out only by the cowardice of our spirits; and if we rightly understand it we shall find that cowardice is the very essence and personal manifestation of that tendency to crystallization that we have seen to be such a potent parent of evil in every age, and in this our age almost beyond all other ages. For that first crystallization of bodily lust that makes us the helpless slaves of the material world's tyranny is but cowardice—a cowardly fear that the heart of all good will be less satisfying, that the water of life will be less potent to quench our thirst, than these our bodily appetites. Then all the woes of our personal selves, all the wounds of vanity, the pangs of thwarted selfishness, what are these but the fruits of another cowardice; a cowardly clinging to personal self as against the higher Self; a poltroon fear that the higher Self will be less self than the

lower self; that in finding the Self of all beings we shall in some strange way lose our precious selves.

Thus the meannesses and miseries of our lives are the children of our cowardice; of our fearful clinging to a single form, a single crystallized mode of life, instead of launching our barks upon the waves, and setting bravely forward on the wide, living ocean, whose warm waves will melt these sharp ice-crystals and frozen fetters, and give us once more the free and flowing life to which we are immortal heirs.

Being is of two things: life and form; form is the limitation of life, and the limitation of life is—death. This is a moral that the Upanishads, and the whole of India's best wisdom after them, are never tired of pointing out. In one of them, the Upanishad of the Questions, this thought is very lucidly put forward, very clearly developed and applied. And we can see the real kernel and germ of the thought, its real meaning to the teachers who put it forward, better than anywhere else in one chief application of it that the Upanishads are never weary of making. This is the application to formal religion of the doctrine that limitation of life is death; and the protest against formal religion, against the formal religion of the ancient Indian priesthood, resounds all through the Upanishads as a grave undertone, everywhere present, though subordinated to the shining intuitions of the Self that are the main purpose of the Upanishads.

What the forms of that religion were we need not ask now, for the strong protest and very often fiery denunciation that go all through the Upanishads have as much applicability to our own formal religion, to our formal religion of unbelief as well as of belief, as to the conventions and ceremonies that the priesthood of ancient India called their faith. It is the principle of limitation, of that limitation that is the shadow of death, that is protested against and denounced, not this particular formality or that; it is crystallization wherever and whenever its contracting and sterilizing power inflicts itself on life, and not one or another rite of the "sixteen sharer's of the sacrifice".

And this alter of ours, with its idea of a material universe, a great world of necessary death, with its idea of the impotence of will and the futility of human life, with its formal religions of belief and its formal religions of unbelief, is more given over to the sway of this evil

tendency to shrinkage and crystallization than any other age perhaps, that the world has known.

For what is the idea of the material universe itself but a gigantic crystallization of life, of the free and flowing impressions and impulses of life? What is the idea of the futility and weakness of human life but a gigantic crystallization of our own futility and weakness in the face of our lusts and passions? What are these beliefs, and unbeliefs of ours but crystallized moods and humours of other men sluggishly adopted and imitated by us for lack of the courage and energy to deal with the universe for ourselves?

The shining intuitions of the Upanishads, as we have said, have an unequalled power of establishing within us a high and excellent attitude to the universe around us; of strengthening in us the powers that make for a high and excellent attitude towards the universe; and this power they have more than all, because they so potently combat this tendency to crystallization, this tendency to narrowness and sourness of heart and mind, of will and understanding. Instead of systems of belief, or forms of philosophy, they give us shining inspirations of life that tend to kindle in us the same high mood in which they were first apprehended. Instead of the tyranny of the outward world, and theories of the tyranny of the outward world, they give us intuitions of an inward world of unequalled beauty and majesty, a world not tyrannous to us, but altogether on our side, of the essence of our own truest selves. Instead of the weakness of our wills and the futility of our lives, they point to us an abundant ocean of life, an omnipotence of will, not foreign to us at all, but our proper birthright.

In the whole of this study of the Upanishads, we have tried to let their free and flowing force, the free and flowing force of their inspirations have full play; we have tried to exhibit life in harmony with their spirit, in a free and flowing form; to seize rather the spirit than the mould, the crystallized limitation, of spirit; to deal with ideas and ideals rather than with systems and words.

It is the pre-eminent property of these old theosophic treatises to establish in us a true and excellent relation to the endless universe around us; and, for the present age and time, this property can be set

at best advantage by a treatment of life as free and flowing as must have been the first, radiant inspiration from which the Upanishads took their birth.

To carry out this aim, we have tried all through to disengage the spirit of the Upanishads from all forms and crystallized limits, to reproduce the inspirations in them that stimulate heart and mind, to draw forth from them that essence that tends to put us in a true and excellent relation to the universe, to make the universe an open sea of life, warm and beneficent, where nothing shall impede or check the splendid reality of the Self that we truly are, that Self whose wealth is immortal peace.

“As an eagle or falcon, soaring in the sky, folds his wings and sinks to his nest, so proceeds the spirit to the world where, sinking to rest, he desires no desire, and dreams no dream.

“This is his true nature, when all desires are satisfied; when desire is only for the Self; when there is no longing any more, or any sorrow.

“There the father is father no more; nor the mother, mother; nor the worlds, worlds nor the gods, gods, there the Vedas are no Vedas, nor the thief a thief nor the murderer, a murderer; nor the outcast, an outcast; nor the saint, a saint; this is the highest aim, the highest home, the highest wealth, the highest bliss.” [Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad.]

Chapter IX.

Conduct

This is the teaching, this the counsel, this the hidden wisdom, this the instruction, this, verily, is to be followed.

—*Taittiriya Upanishad.*

Though it is above all things the purpose of the Upanishads to establish in us a true and high relation to the universe, by awakening in us a free and flowing life, by awakening our spirits; yet, this full benediction and inspiration being still far from us, it may be well to point to one or two principles of living, good to follow and wholesome to obey, in the period of transition that lies between our hard and narrow personal life and the free and flowing life of the Self that is the Eternal.

This period of transition, the Upanishads tell us, and its visible outer manifestation—the mid-world—are hard to cross as the sharp edge of a razor; the bridge is narrow, and difficult to find, and many there are who, failing to find it, fall again and again into the widespread net of death.

We may linger a moment over this somewhat relentless sentence—the path of life as hard to cross as a keen razor's edge. It is vain to soften it with sentimental phrases; life is very relentless; has a hard and savage way with us; offers no gratification of our desires; allows no complacency to our personalities. Yet we must pluck up courage to look this stern way of life in the face; nay, more, we must think ourselves into harmony with it, and make it our own way, in dealing

with ourselves and our weakness; we must come to see that this sharp way of life is only the best mercy, the most sanative dealing with unrealities that bring abundant misery and meanness in their train. The path of life is hard to cross as a razor's edge—because it is the path of perfect freedom, and we are so enamoured of bondage that we will by no means be persuaded to be perfectly free, but make this and that reservation of meanness and misery; cling to this or that fetter and bond and imperfection. And this folly of ours can only be cured by the grim treatment spoken of—by falling again and again into the widespread net of death. It is not we, not our real selves, who thus pass under death's dominion, for the real Self can never die. It is but the crystallized forms, the husks of life, that we have gathered round us—these must be dissolved and broken up and cast away.

Therefore one sanative truth we would do well to lay to heart, when setting out on this small old path, is that life is in no sense sentimental, has no tears for folly, will have, for our sensibilities and sentimentalities, absolutely no pity at all. For life is in earnest, and sentimentality is not in earnest, therefore there can be no truce between sentimentality and life.

Life is in earnest. This small old path, stretching far away, is not some curiously elaborate training of curious powers and capacities of our being; it is not this or anything like this; it is rather the establishing of real life, the grave and earnest science of reality. If, therefore, when thinking that it were well for us to set forth on this small old path, we still cherish illusions about reality and unreality, still hope to smuggle a cherished remnant of unrealities along with us, to carry them with us to the world of the real, it were better for us to think the matter over again. Life is in earnest; the path of life is the path of the real; the penalty of cherishing unrealities is to fall again and again into the wide-spread net of death, the king of unrealities. The aim of real life is to establish perfect freedom, to confirm the real Self in its own reality, its own endless and boundless life; and in this work our cherished remnant of unrealities will fare badly, if we will persist in taking them along with us.

Our progress along the narrow path will consist in our becoming, at each step, a larger and more real self; in substituting for a lower,

baser, more limited self, a new self, higher, more excellent, fuller of life. And, it is almost a truism to say it, we cannot substitute for the old self a new self, and yet retain cherished elements of the old self at the same time. If the hour is ripe for us to have done with the animal self that absorbs most of us, almost entirely, and to enter the truly human self we have so long claimed to be, with so little right; if we would be done with the animal self, then let us be done with it, and especially with its two great and dominant instincts—the preservation of self through lust of possession, the preservation of the race through lust of flesh. We must neither be so foolish to believe that the real self within us requires our frantic struggle after outward things for its preservation, nor fatuous enough to think that lust of flesh—even divorced from its first purpose of race-preservation, which redeems it in healthy, bestial life, and thus become a double unreality—can really be a part of the wider life of that truer self, which we must realize in rounded and harmonious completeness, as our first step onward. If we do not care to take a step onward towards the world of the real, we are perfectly at liberty to accept nature's sane alternative, to fall again and again into the wide net of death, king of unrealities. Here, at any rate, is a certain grim freedom of will.

It would be well to get this thought quite clearly realized, that each step onwards means a total substitution for the old self of a new self, in rounded and harmonious completeness; that, therefore, there will be no residue of the old self in the new, nothing common to them but the pure selfhood that is really the representative of the Self supreme.

This tendency to substitute for the old self a larger and more excellent self is the tendency of real life, working towards fullest reality; and real life, in its abundant and even almost profligate richness, will always assure to us the possibility and possession of a new self stronger and wider than the old; our conscious and voluntary part consists hardly in more than in willingly giving up the old—in loosing our frantic graspings after the old; the rebirth within us is not so much our work as the work of the splendid generosity of life; the quiet self-establishing of the higher Self not newly come into being, or to be built up by us, but existing already before the eternities. We should do well to let this thought and power of the higher Self take such hold on us as to develop within us, gradually a certain high courage and

endurance, of the temper and mettle of the immortals; for thus it will be well with us in the darkness and silence that fill our hours of transition from lower to higher Self.

There is so much grave earnestness, so little sentimentality in life, that we shall have much need of this high temper and daring of the immortals, much need of endurance, as our unrealities are torn to shreds, as the great, broad pathway to the real opens out before us.

One opponent we have, whose force outweighs all others, who is far more formidable than the lust of the flesh, far more dangerous than the lust of the eyes, the lust of possession; this enemy above all enemies is the instinct of preservation of our personal selves. Every falsehood as to self-annihilation, every pitiful and sentimental consideration as to the old self doomed to destruction, every strategy and artifice and subterfuge will this Proteus personality employ, before we succeed in bursting its bonds, and, as the Upanishads say, with that exquisite skill in words that so heightens their power—in untying the knot of the heart.

This Proteus personality is the real atheist in us, who combats belief in the divine, because belief in the divine infallibly means that the end of personality is at hand. This is the real sensualist, using the healthy and blameless instincts of bestial life to batten and draw fat upon, in self-conscious self-indulgence. This is the real coward, who trembles before every whisper of change and onward progress, knowing well that onward progress must leave him behind, or rather that his dissolution and disappearance are indispensable before onward progress can rein. Atheism, sensuality, cowardice, are so admirable attributes of our so admirable personality—our king of all the world.

The supreme effort of will is needed before we can consent to the death within us of this most admirable sovereign and worthy ruler; and before our effort succeeds, we shall have had to meet and resist every claim of vested rights and constitutional privilege that the fierce, wild instinct, of self-preservation can suggest.

So that, seeing clearly life's earnestness and entire freedom from sentimentality, we shall clearly apprehend and firmly grasp these two facts; first, that, in the life of the higher Self, the lusts of the flesh will assuredly not have a place; secondly, that the life of the higher Self,

before it can be ours in the fullness of free and flowing power, demands one condition, the death of the lower self—a death, free, perfect, unconditional, and as willing as formerly was our most willing self-indulgence. The assent of the will to the dissolution and disappearance of the lower self must be absolute, before the life of the higher Self can be ours. This is the path to reality; and, along the path of reality, subterfuges and reservations will not greatly help us.

But of the laws of conduct we have said nothing until we have said this—the supreme reason for the dissolution and disappearance of our lower selves is not so much in the interest of our own higher selves as in the interest of our other selves, the men and women around us, who are as much a part of the supreme Self as we are. The instinct of self-preservation in our Proteus-like personality is far more a struggle against our other selves, the men and women who surround our life, than against the higher Self, the divine newcomer who begins to brood over our life. And this truth can never be too often repeated, too insistently brought forward to the light: we sin more against the essential truth of things, we more deeply offend the lasting realities, by giving way to this struggle of our personal selves against the lives of others, our other selves, than by indulgence in the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eyes. Selfishness is worse than drunkenness and evil-living. The Self is for unity and completed, rounded totality; and selfishness is a greater sin against rounded totality than any self-indulgence.

The great argument that our instinct for personal preservation puts forward is that we must perpetually assert our personal selves against the selves of others, against our other selves, on penalty of seeing our personal selves submerged, obliterated, annihilated. And this instinct, thus armed with reasons, becomes wildly apprehensive, wildly aggressive, wildly vindictive.

But the truth is quite other than this. If the nature of our personal selves demands a constant self-assertion, a constant contest and aggression, this evil law of things never enters the world of the higher Self; there the higher Self of one must preserve a quite perfect harmony with the higher Self of another; this is an imperious necessity of their being, because unison there is indispensable before union and perfect

unity can be realized in the highest world of all, the world of the eternal One. The higher Self of one must preserve this harmony with the higher Self of each other, and this is most immediately true of the selves which form groups and societies together in life.

The causal power of the higher Self in each is tending all the time to establish this perfect harmony; and the disappearance of the lower self's resistance will mean the perfect realizing of this harmony, the first true appearance of the individual, and not at all the submergence of the individual. The circumstances of life, all the outward incidents and opportunities, are skilfully guided and chosen by the causal power of the higher Self in each, to the best advantage of this perfect harmony which will one day be established. And if it appear that there is seemingly an enormous proportion of futility and commonness in our lives, out of all keeping with these high destinies, we can only point to the cause—the futility and commonness of our wills, which only consent to our high destinies in a few inspired moments of life. Yet in this great share of futility and commonness which goes to make up our life, the loss of power and progress is apparent rather than real; for this great unillumined part of life is spent in contact and communication with our other selves; in the slow and gradual establishing, by all kinds of hidden, unapparent ways, of a truer knowledge of our other selves; a truer knowledge, without which no real and lasting harmony can exist—and very real and very lasting must be that harmony which is to make up the chiefest perfection of the supreme Self—the One which appears as many, which gratifies the desires of many, and guides the destinies of the many back again toward the unity of the Eternal.

So that we cannot well count the time lost—even though it occupy the whole of life after life for a thousands ages—that is spent in thus initiating us into the mysteries of our other selves; as their mystery and wonderful life are well-nigh infinite, so our learning of them is well-nigh infinite.

Quite plainly stated, the teaching is this. A man shall love his neighbour as himself, because, in a very real sense, his neighbour is himself; because his neighbour is his other self, because the supreme Self is the truest self of both him and his neighbour, and the true

relation between them can never be established on any other terms, than on a recognition of this. The recognition may be at first dull and dumb, tacit and instinctive; it is destined at last to be lit up with radiant consciousness, the clear light that will usher the estranged selves back into the unity of the Eternal.

The great religion with which we are most familiar was based on no other law than this, that a man shall love his neighbour as himself; that its success, however great, in establishing such human love, is still so far from perfect, so far from the ideal beheld two thousand years ago, is due perhaps to this, that in this religion an appeal was made to emotion, and not to the understanding. For however potent emotion may be, however full of tenderness and winning sweetness it undoubtedly often is, yet emotion is, in its nature, necessarily short-lived, and, where the understanding does not give lasting support and approval, a broken reed to lean upon.

The theosophy of the Upanishads, on the other hand, while teaching exactly the same doctrine, that a man shall love his neighbour as himself, sanctions it by an appeal to the understanding. The Self is one; the individual selves are really one in the supreme Self; "he who realizes Self in all beings, and all beings in Self, thenceforth grieves not any more; what cause for sorrow can there be for him, thus beholding oneness only?"

Therefore the death of selfishness is the path for establishing the perfect harmony between higher self and higher self; the perfect harmony that is the doorway to the unity of the one supreme.

These counsels, therefore, seem better than all others, to those who would follow the path of the Self.

Life is reality; the path of life is the path of reality; and as reality, life should be met with a spirit of high daring—the temper and mettle of the immortals.

This narrow personal life of ours is a web of unrealities. We must fortify ourselves with high endurance for the time of transition, while these unrealities are being torn asunder and dissolved.

Every step of progress means the substitution of a higher and more real self for a lower, less real self; the things of the more real self are not the things of the less real self; the path to the more real self must be

entered by the death and dispersal of the elements of the less real self.

Before setting out on the broad, open road of reality, we would do well to decide within ourselves in all sincerity on two questions—the question of sensuality and the question of selfishness—and we would further do well to make our decisions valid by the steady consent and confirmation of our wills.

And, as a last counsel, we would do well to remember that the end of the way will bring us to radiant reality and perfection of life; to such a divinity and majesty of being as our perfect possession and birthright, to such pure joy and plenitude of peace as no tongue can tell, no imagination even dimly paint; to the perfect and intimate beatitude of the All, of the Eternal that we truly are.

So we may end with a quaint old blessing taken from the Taittiriya Upanishad:

“Obeisance to the Eternal; Obeisance to thee, Breath of life, thou art verily the manifested Eternal. I have declared thee, the manifested Eternal. I have declared the true. I have declared the real. It has guarded me. It has guarded the speaker.”

Peace. Peace. Peace.

THE END.