THE MODES of the Self which we have dealt with in our last Chapter may seem at first to be of a highly meta-
physical character, to be intellectual conceptions more fit for philosophical analysis than for practical realisation. But this is a false distinction made by the division of our faculties. It is at least a fundamental principle of the ancient wisdom, the wisdom of the East on which we are founding ourselves, that philosophy ought not to be merely a lofty intellectual pastime or a play of dialectical subtlety or even a pursuit of metaphysical truth for its own sake, but a discovery by all right means of the basic truths of all-existence which ought then to become the guiding principles of our own existence. Sankhya, the abstract and analytical realisation of truth, is one side of Knowledge. Yoga, the concrete and synthetic realisation of it in our experience, inner state, outer life is the other. Both are means by which man can escape out of falsehood and ignorance and live in and by the truth. And since it is always the highest he can know or be capable of that must be the aim of the thinking man, it is the highest truth which the soul must seek out by thought and by life accomplish.

Here lies the whole importance of the part of the Yoga of Knowledge which we are now considering, the knowledge\(^1\) of those essential principles of Being, those essential modes of self-existence on which the absolute Divine has based its self-manifestation. If the truth of our being is an infinite unity in which alone there is perfect wideness, light, knowledge, power, bliss, and if all our subjection to darkness, ignorance, weakness, sorrow, limitation comes of our viewing existence as a clash of infinitely multiple separate existences, then obviously it is the

\(^1\) \textit{tattvajñāna}.\)
most practical and concrete and utilitarian as well as the most lofty and philosophical wisdom to find a means by which we can get away from the error and learn to live in the truth. So also, if that One is in its nature a freedom from bondage to this play of qualities which constitute our psychology and if from subjection to that play are born the struggle and discord in which we live, floundering eternally between the two poles of good and evil, virtue and sin, satisfaction and failure, joy and grief, pleasure and pain, then to get beyond the qualities and take our foundation in the settled peace of that which is always beyond them is the only practical wisdom. If attachment to mutable personality is the cause of our self-ignorance, of our discord and quarrel with ourself and with life and with others, and if there is an impersonal One in which no such discord and ignorance and vain and noisy effort exist because it is in eternal identity and harmony with itself, then to arrive in our souls at that impersonality and untroubled oneness of being is the one line and object of human effort to which our reason can consent to give the name of practicality.

There is such a unity, impersonality, freedom from the play of qualities which lifts us above the strife and surge of Nature in her eternal seeking through mind and body for the true key and secret of all her relations. And it is the ancient highest experience of mankind that only by arriving there, only by making oneself impersonal, one, still, self-gathered, superior to the mental and vital existence in that which is eternally superior to it, can a settled, because self-existent peace and internal freedom be acquired. Therefore this is the first, in a sense the characteristic and essential object of the Yoga of Knowledge. But, as we have insisted, this, if first, is not all; if the essential, it is not the complete object. Knowledge is not complete if it merely shows us how to get away from relations to that which is beyond relations, from personality to impersonality, from multiplicity to featureless unity. It must give us also that key, that secret of the whole play of relations, the whole variation of multiplicity, the whole clash and interaction of personalities for which cosmic existence is seeking. And knowledge is still incomplete if it gives
us only an idea and cannot verify it in experience; we seek the key, the secret in order that we may govern the phenomenon by the reality it represents, heal its discords by the hidden principle of concord and unification behind them and arrive from the converging and diverging effort of the world to the harmony of its fulfilment. Not merely peace, but fulfilment is what the heart of the world is seeking and what a perfect and effective self-knowledge must give to it; peace can only be the eternal support, the infinite condition, the natural atmosphere of self-fulfilment.

Moreover, the knowledge that finds the true secret of multiplicity, personality, quality, play of relations, must show us some real oneness in essence of being and intimate unity in power of being between the impersonal and the source of personality, the qualitiless and that which expresses itself in qualities, the unity of existence and its many-featured multiplicity. The knowledge that leaves a yawning gulf between the two, can be no ultimate knowledge, however logical it may seem to the analytical intellect or however satisfactory to a self-dividing experience. True knowledge must arrive at a oneness which embraces even though it exceeds the totality of things, not at a oneness which is incapable of it and rejects it. For there can be no such original unbridgeable chasm of duality either in the All-existence itself or between any transcendent Oneness and the All-existent. And as in knowledge, so in experience and self-fulfilment. The experience which finds at the summit of things such an original unbridgeable chasm between two contrary principles and can at most succeed in overleaping it so that it has to live in one or the other, but cannot embrace and unify, is not the ultimate experience. Whether we seek to know by thought or by the vision of knowledge which surpasses thought or by that perfect self-experience in our own being which is the crown and fulfilment of realisation by knowledge, we must be able to think out, see, experience and live the all-satisfying unity. This is what we find in the conception, vision and experience of the One whose oneness does not cease or disappear from view by self-expression in the Many, who is free from bondage to qualities but is yet infinite quality, who contains and combines all relations, yet is ever
absolute, who is no one person and yet all persons because He is all being and the one conscious Being. For the individual centre we call ourselves, to enter by its consciousness into this Divine and reproduce its nature in itself is the high and marvellous, yet perfectly rational and most supremely pragmatic and utilitarian goal before us. It is the fulfilment of our self-existence and at the same time the fulfilment of our cosmic existence, of the individual in himself and of the individual in his relation to the cosmic Many. Between these two terms there is no irreconcilable opposition: rather, our own self and the self of the cosmos having been discovered to be one, there must be between them an intimate unity.

In fact all these opposite terms are merely general conditions for the manifestation of conscious being in that Transcendent who is always one not only behind, but within all conditions however apparently opposite. And the original unifying spirit-stuff of them all and the one substantial mode of them all is that which has been described for the convenience of our thought as the trinity of Sachchidananda. Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, these are everywhere the three inseparable divine terms. None of them is really separate, though our mind and our mental experience can make not only the distinction, but the separation. Mind can say and think “I was, but unconscious” — for no being can say “I am, but unconscious” — and it can think and feel “I am, but miserable and without any pleasure in existence.” In reality this is impossible. The existence we really are, the eternal “I am”, of which it can never be true to say “It was”, is nowhere and at no time unconscious. What we call unconsciousness is simply other-consciousness; it is the going in of this surface wave of our mental awareness of outer objects into our subliminal self-awareness and into our awareness too of other planes of existence. We are really no more unconscious when we are asleep or stunned or drugged or “dead” or in any other state, than when we are plunged in inner thought oblivious of our physical selves and our surroundings. For anyone who has advanced even a little way in Yoga, this is a most elementary proposition and one which offers no difficulty whatever to the thought because it is
proved at every point by experience. It is more difficult to realise
that existence and undelight of existence cannot go together.
What we call misery, grief, pain, absence of delight is again
merely a surface wave of the delight of existence which takes on
to our mental experience these apparently opposite tints because
of a certain trick of false reception in our divided being — which
is not our existence at all but only a fragmentary formulation or
discoloured spray of conscious-force tossed up by the infinite sea
of our self-existence. In order to realise this we have to get away
from our absorption in these surface habits, these petty tricks of
our mental being, — and when we do get behind and away from
them it is surprising how superficial they are, what ridiculously
weak and little-penetrating pin-pricks they prove to be, — and
we have to realise true existence, and true consciousness, and
true experience of existence and consciousness, Sat, Chit and
Ananda.

Chit, the divine Consciousness, is not our mental self-
awareness; that we shall find to be only a form, a lower and
limited mode or movement. As we progress and awaken to
the soul in us and things, we shall realise that there is a
consciousness also in the plant, in the metal, in the atom,
in electricity, in everything that belongs to physical nature; we
shall find even that it is not really in all respects a lower or more
limited mode than the mental, on the contrary it is in many
“inanimate” forms more intense, rapid, poignant, though less
evolved towards the surface. But this also, this consciousness
of vital and physical Nature is, compared with Chit, a lower
and therefore a limited form, mode and movement. These
lower modes of consciousness are the conscious-stuff of inferior
planes in one indivisible existence. In ourselves also there is
in our subconscious being an action which is precisely that of
the “inanimate” physical Nature whence has been constituted
the basis of our physical being, another which is that of plant-
life, and another which is that of the lower animal creation
around us. All these are so much dominated and conditioned
by the thinking and reasoning conscious-being in us that we
have no real awareness of these lower planes; we are unable to
perceive in their own terms what these parts of us are doing, and receive it very imperfectly in the terms and values of the thinking and reasoning mind. Still we know well enough that there is an animal in us as well as that which is characteristically human,—something which is a creature of conscious instinct and impulse, not reflective or rational, as well as that which turns back in thought and will on its experience, meets it from above with the light and force of a higher plane and to some degree controls, uses and modifies it. But the animal in man is only the head of our subhuman being; below it there is much that is also sub-animal and merely vital, much that acts by an instinct and impulse of which the constituting consciousness is withdrawn behind the surface. Below this sub-animal being, there is at a further depth the subvital. When we advance in that ultra-normal self-knowledge and experience which Yoga brings with it, we become aware that the body too has a consciousness of its own; it has habits, impulses, instincts, an inert yet effective will which differs from that of the rest of our being and can resist it and condition its effectiveness. Much of the struggle in our being is due to this composite existence and the interaction of these varied and heterogeneous planes on each other. For man here is the result of an evolution and contains in himself the whole of that evolution up from the merely physical and subvital conscious being to the mental creature which at the top he is.

But this evolution is really a manifestation and just as we have in us these subnormal selves and subhuman planes, so are there in us above our mental being supernormal and superhuman planes. There Chit as the universal conscious-stuff of existence takes other poises, moves out in other modes, on other principles and by other faculties of action. There is above the mind, as the old Vedic sages discovered, a Truth-plane, a plane of self-luminous, self-effective Idea, which can be turned in light and force upon our mind, reason, sentiments, impulses, sensations and use and control them in the sense of the real Truth of things just as we turn our mental reason and will upon our sense-experience and animal nature to use and control them in the sense of our rational and moral perceptions. There
there is no seeking, but rather natural possession; no conflict
or separation between will and reason, instinct and impulse,
desire and experience, idea and reality, but all are in harmony,
concomitant, mutually effective, unified in their origin, in their
development and in their effectuation. But beyond this plane
and attainable through it are others in which the very Chit
itself becomes revealed, Chit the elemental origin and primal
completeness of all this varied consciousness which is here used
for various formation and experience. There will and knowledge
and sensation and all the rest of our faculties, powers, modes
of experience are not merely harmonious, concomitant, unified,
but are one being of consciousness and power of consciousness.
It is this Chit which modifies itself so as to become on the Truth-
plane the supermind, on the mental plane the mental reason,
will, emotion, sensation, on the lower planes the vital or physical
instincts, impulses, habits of an obscure force not in superficially
conscious possession of itself. All is Chit because all is Sat; all is
various movement of the original Consciousness because all is
various movement of the original Being.

When we find, see or know Chit, we find also that its essence
is Ananda or delight of self-existence. To possess self is to possess
self-bliss; not to possess self is to be in more or less obscure search
of the delight of existence. Chit eternally possesses its self-bliss;
and since Chit is the universal conscious-stuff of being, conscious
universal being is also in possession of conscious self-bliss, mas-
ter of the universal delight of existence. The Divine whether it
manifests itself in All-Quality or in No-Quality, in Personality
or Impersonality, in the One absorbing the Many or in the One
manifesting its essential multiplicity, is always in possession of
self-bliss and all-bliss because it is always Sachchidananda. For
us also to know and possess our true Self in the essential and
the universal is to discover the essential and the universal delight
of existence, self-bliss and all-bliss. For the universal is only the
pouring out of the essential existence, consciousness and delight;
and wherever and in whatever form that manifests as existence,
there the essential consciousness must be and therefore there
must be an essential delight.
The individual soul does not possess this true nature of itself or realise this true nature of its experience, because it separates itself both from the essential and the universal and identifies itself with the separate accidents, with the unessential form and mode and with the separate aspect and vehicle. Thus it takes its mind, body, life-stream for its essential self. It tries to assert these for their own sake against the universal, against that of which the universal is the manifestation. It is right in trying to assert and fulfil itself in the universal for the sake of something greater and beyond, but wrong in attempting to do so against the universal and in obedience to a fragmentary aspect of the universal. This fragmentary aspect or rather collection of fragmentary experiences it combines around an artificial centre of mental experience, the mental ego, and calls that itself and it serves this ego and lives for its sake instead of living for the sake of that something greater and beyond of which all aspects, even the widest and most general are partial manifestations. This is the living in the false and not the true self; this is living for the sake of and in obedience to the ego and not for the sake of and in obedience to the Divine. The question how this fall has come about and for what purpose it has been done, belongs to the domain of Sankhya rather than of Yoga. We have to seize on the practical fact that to such self-division is due the self-limitation by which we have become unable to possess the true nature of being and experience and are therefore in our mind, life and body subject to ignorance, incapacity and suffering. Non-possession of unity is the root cause; to recover unity is the sovereign means, unity with the universal and with that which the universal is here to express. We have to realise the true self of ourselves and of all; and to realise the true self is to realise Sachchidananda.