

Chapter IV

The Sacrifice, the Triune Path and the Lord of the Sacrifice

THE LAW of sacrifice is the common divine action that was thrown out into the world in its beginning as a symbol of the solidarity of the universe. It is by the attraction of this law that a divinising principle, a saving power descends to limit and correct and gradually to eliminate the errors of an egoistic and self-divided creation. This descent, this sacrifice of the Purusha, the Divine Soul submitting itself to Force and Matter so that it may inform and illuminate them, is the seed of redemption of this world of Inconscience and Ignorance. “For with sacrifice as their companion,” says the Gita, “the All-Father created these peoples.” The acceptance of the law of sacrifice is a practical recognition by the ego that it is neither alone in the world nor chief in the world. It is its admission that, even in this much fragmented existence, there is beyond itself and behind that which is not its own egoistic person, something greater and completer, a diviner All which demands from it subordination and service. Indeed, sacrifice is imposed and, where need be, compelled by the universal World-Force; it takes it even from those who do not consciously recognise the law, — inevitably, because this is the intrinsic nature of things. Our ignorance or our false egoistic view of life can make no difference to this eternal bedrock truth of Nature. For this is the truth in Nature, that this ego which thinks itself a separate independent being and claims to live for itself, is not and cannot be independent nor separate, nor can it live to itself even if it would, but rather all are linked together by a secret Oneness. Each existence is continually giving out perforce from its stock; out of its mental receipts from Nature or its vital and physical assets and acquisitions and belongings a stream goes to all that is around it. And

always again it receives something from its environment gratis or in return for its voluntary or involuntary tribute. For it is only by this giving and receiving that it can effect its own growth while at the same time it helps the sum of things. At length, though at first slowly and partially, we learn to make the conscious sacrifice; even, in the end, we take joy to give ourselves and what we envisage as belonging to us in a spirit of love and devotion to That which appears for the moment other than ourselves and is certainly other than our limited personalities. The sacrifice and the divine return for our sacrifice then become a gladly accepted means towards our last perfection; for it is recognised now as the road to the fulfilment in us of the eternal purpose.

But, most often, the sacrifice is done unconsciously, egoistically and without knowledge or acceptance of the true meaning of the great world-rite. It is so that the vast majority of earth-creatures do it; and, when it is so done, the individual derives only a mechanical minimum of natural inevitable profit, achieves by it only a slow painful progress limited and tortured by the smallness and suffering of the ego. Only when the heart, the will and the mind of knowledge associate themselves with the law and gladly follow it, can there come the deep joy and the happy fruitfulness of divine sacrifice. The mind's knowledge of the law and the heart's gladness in it culminate in the perception that it is to our own Self and Spirit and the one Self and Spirit of all that we give. And this is true even when our self-offering is still to our fellow-creatures or to lesser Powers and Principles and not yet to the Supreme. "Not for the sake of the wife," says Yajnavalkya in the Upanishad, "but for the sake of the Self is the wife dear to us." This in the lower sense of the individual self is the hard fact behind the coloured and passionate professions of egoistic love; but in a higher sense it is the inner significance of that love too which is not egoistic but divine. All true love and all sacrifice are in their essence Nature's contradiction of the primary egoism and its separative error; it is her attempt to turn from a necessary first fragmentation towards a recovered oneness. All unity between creatures is in its essence a self-finding, a fusion with that from which we have separated, a discovery of one's self in others.

But it is only a divine love and unity that can possess in the light what the human forms of these things seek for in the darkness. For the true unity is not merely an association and agglomeration like that of physical cells joined by a life of common interests; it is not even an emotional understanding, sympathy, solidarity or close drawing together. Only then are we really unified with those separated from us by the divisions of Nature, when we annul the division and find ourselves in that which seemed to us not ourselves. Association is a vital and physical unity; its sacrifice is that of mutual aid and concessions. Nearness, sympathy, solidarity create a mental, moral and emotional unity; theirs is a sacrifice of mutual support and mutual gratifications. But the true unity is spiritual; its sacrifice is a mutual self-giving, an interfusion of our inner substance. The law of sacrifice travels in Nature towards its culmination in this complete and unreserved self-giving; it awakens the consciousness of one common self in the giver and the object of the sacrifice. This culmination of sacrifice is the height even of human love and devotion when it tries to become divine; for there too the highest peak of love points into a heaven of complete mutual self-giving, its summit is the rapturous fusing of two souls into one.

This profounder idea of the world-wide law is at the heart of the teaching about works given in the Gita; a spiritual union with the Highest by sacrifice, an unreserved self-giving to the Eternal is the core of its doctrine. The vulgar conception of sacrifice is an act of painful self-immolation, austere self-mortification, difficult self-effacement; this kind of sacrifice may go even as far as self-mutilation and self-torture. These things may be temporarily necessary in man's hard endeavour to exceed his natural self; if the egoism in his nature is violent and obstinate, it has to be met sometimes by an answering strong internal repression and counterbalancing violence. But the Gita discourages any excess of violence done to oneself; for the self within is really the Godhead evolving, it is Krishna, it is the Divine; it has not to be troubled and tortured as the Titans of the world trouble and torture it, but to be increased, fostered, cherished, luminously opened to a divine light and strength and joy and wideness. It

is not one's self, but the band of the spirit's inner enemies that we have to discourage, expel, slay upon the altar of the growth of the spirit; these can be ruthlessly excised, whose names are desire, wrath, inequality, greed, attachment to outward pleasures and pains, the cohort of usurping demons that are the cause of the soul's errors and sufferings. These should be regarded not as part of oneself but as intruders and perverters of our self's real and diviner nature; these have to be sacrificed in the harsher sense of the word, whatever pain in going they may throw by reflection on the consciousness of the seeker.

But the true essence of sacrifice is not self-immolation, it is self-giving; its object not self-effacement, but self-fulfilment; its method not self-mortification, but a greater life, not self-mutilation, but a transformation of our natural human parts into divine members, not self-torture, but a passage from a lesser satisfaction to a greater Ananda. There is only one thing painful in the beginning to a raw or turbid part of the surface nature; it is the indispensable discipline demanded, the denial necessary for the merging of the incomplete ego. But for that there can be a speedy and enormous compensation in the discovery of a real greater or ultimate completeness in others, in all things, in the cosmic oneness, in the freedom of the transcendent Self and Spirit, in the rapture of the touch of the Divine. Our sacrifice is not a giving without any return or any fruitful acceptance from the other side; it is an interchange between the embodied soul and conscious Nature in us and the eternal Spirit. For even though no return is demanded, yet there is the knowledge deep within us that a marvellous return is inevitable. The soul knows that it does not give itself to God in vain; claiming nothing, it yet receives the infinite riches of the divine Power and Presence.

Last, there is to be considered the recipient of the sacrifice and the manner of the sacrifice. The sacrifice may be offered to others or it may be offered to divine Powers; it may be offered to the cosmic All or it may be offered to the transcendent Supreme. The worship given may take any shape from the dedication of a leaf or flower, a cup of water, a handful of rice, a loaf of bread, to consecration of all that we possess and the submission of all

that we are. Whoever the recipient, whatever the gift, it is the Supreme, the Eternal in things, who receives and accepts it, even if it be rejected or ignored by the immediate recipient. For the Supreme who transcends the universe, is yet here too, however veiled, in us and in the world and in its happenings; he is there as the omniscient Witness and Receiver of all our works and their secret Master. All our actions, all our efforts, even our sins and stumblings and sufferings and struggles are obscurely or consciously, known to us and seen or else unknown and in a disguise, governed in their last result by the One. All is turned towards him in his numberless forms and offered through them to the single Omnipresence. In whatever form and with whatever spirit we approach him, in that form and with that spirit he receives the sacrifice.

And the fruit also of the sacrifice of works varies according to the work, according to the intention in the work and according to the spirit that is behind the intention. But all other sacrifices are partial, egoistic, mixed, temporal, incomplete, — even those offered to the highest Powers and Principles keep this character: the result too is partial, limited, temporal, mixed in its reactions, effective only for a minor or intermediate purpose. The one entirely acceptable sacrifice is a last and highest and uttermost self-giving, — it is that surrender made face to face, with devotion and knowledge, freely and without any reserve to One who is at once our immanent Self, the environing constituent All, the Supreme Reality beyond this or any manifestation and, secretly, all these together, concealed everywhere, the immanent Transcendence. For to the soul that wholly gives itself to him, God also gives himself altogether. Only the one who offers his whole nature, finds the Self. Only the one who can give everything, enjoys the Divine All everywhere. Only a supreme self-abandonment attains to the Supreme. Only the sublimation by sacrifice of all that we are, can enable us to embody the Highest and live here in the immanent consciousness of the transcendent Spirit.

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This, in short, is the demand made on us, that we should turn our whole life into a conscious sacrifice. Every moment and every movement of our being is to be resolved into a continuous and a devoted self-giving to the Eternal. All our actions, not less the smallest and most ordinary and trifling than the greatest and most uncommon and noble, must be performed as consecrated acts. Our individualised nature must live in the single consciousness of an inner and outer movement dedicated to Something that is beyond us and greater than our ego. No matter what the gift or to whom it is presented by us, there must be a consciousness in the act that we are presenting it to the one divine Being in all beings. Our commonest or most grossly material actions must assume this sublimated character; when we eat, we should be conscious that we are giving our food to that Presence in us; it must be a sacred offering in a temple and the sense of a mere physical need or self-gratification must pass away from us. In any great labour, in any high discipline, in any difficult or noble enterprise, whether undertaken for ourselves, for others or for the race, it will no longer be possible to stop short at the idea of the race, of ourselves or of others. The thing we are doing must be consciously offered as a sacrifice of works, not to these, but either through them or directly to the One Godhead; the Divine Inhabitant who was hidden by these figures must be no longer hidden but ever present to our soul, our mind, our sense. The workings and results of our acts must be put in the hands of that One in the feeling that that Presence is the Infinite and Most High by whom alone our labour and our aspiration are possible. For in his being all takes place; for him all labour and aspiration are taken from us by Nature and offered on his altar. Even in those things in which Nature is herself very plainly the worker and we only the witnesses of her working and its containers and supporters, there should be the same constant memory and insistent consciousness of a work and of its divine Master. Our very inspiration and respiration, our very heart-beats can and must be made conscious in us as the living rhythm of the universal sacrifice.

It is clear that a conception of this kind and its effective

practice must carry in them three results that are of a central importance for our spiritual ideal. It is evident, to begin with, that, even if such a discipline is begun without devotion, it leads straight and inevitably towards the highest devotion possible; for it must deepen naturally into the completest adoration imaginable, the most profound God-love. There is bound up with it a growing sense of the Divine in all things, a deepening communion with the Divine in all our thought, will and action and at every moment of our lives, a more and more moved consecration to the Divine of the totality of our being. Now these implications of the Yoga of works are also of the very essence of an integral and absolute Bhakti. The seeker who puts them into living practice makes in himself continually a constant, active and effective representation of the very spirit of self-devotion, and it is inevitable that out of it there should emerge the most engrossing worship of the Highest to whom is given this service. An absorbing love for the Divine Presence to whom he feels an always more intimate closeness, grows upon the consecrated worker. And with it is born or in it is contained a universal love too for all these beings, living forms and creatures that are habitations of the Divine — not the brief restless grasping emotions of division, but the settled selfless love that is the deeper vibration of oneness. In all the seeker begins to meet the one Object of his adoration and service. The way of works turns by this road of sacrifice to meet the path of Devotion; it can be itself a devotion as complete, as absorbing, as integral as any the desire of the heart can ask for or the passion of the mind can imagine.

Next, the practice of this Yoga demands a constant inward remembrance of the one central liberating knowledge, and a constant active externalising of it in works comes in too to intensify the remembrance. In all is the one Self, the one Divine is all; all are in the Divine, all are the Divine and there is nothing else in the universe, — this thought or this faith is the whole background until it becomes the whole substance of the consciousness of the worker. A memory, a self-dynamising meditation of this kind, must and does in its end turn into a profound and uninterrupted

vision and a vivid and all-embracing consciousness of that which we so powerfully remember or on which we so constantly meditate. For it compels a constant reference at each moment to the Origin of all being and will and action and there is at once an embracing and exceeding of all particular forms and appearances in That which is their cause and upholder. This way cannot go to its end without a seeing vivid and vital, as concrete in its way as physical sight, of the works of the universal Spirit everywhere. On its summits it rises into a constant living and thinking and willing and acting in the presence of the Supramental, the Transcendent. Whatever we see and hear, whatever we touch and sense, all of which we are conscious, has to be known and felt by us as That which we worship and serve; all has to be turned into an image of the Divinity, perceived as a dwelling-place of his Godhead, enveloped with the eternal Omnipresence. In its close, if not long before it, this way of works turns by communion with the Divine Presence, Will and Force into a way of Knowledge more complete and integral than any the mere creature intelligence can construct or the search of the intellect can discover.

Lastly, the practice of this Yoga of sacrifice compels us to renounce all the inner supports of egoism, casting them out of our mind and will and actions, and to eliminate its seed, its presence, its influence out of our nature. All must be done for the Divine; all must be directed towards the Divine. Nothing must be attempted for ourselves as a separate existence; nothing done for others, whether neighbours, friends, family, country or mankind or other creatures merely because they are connected with our personal life and thought and sentiment or because the ego takes a preferential interest in their welfare. In this way of doing and seeing all works and all life become only a daily dynamic worship and service of the Divine in the unbounded temple of his own vast cosmic existence. Life becomes more and more the sacrifice of the eternal in the individual constantly self-offered to the eternal Transcendence. It is offered in the wide sacrificial ground of the field of the eternal cosmic Spirit; and the Force too that offers it is the eternal Force, the omnipresent

Mother. Therefore is this way a way of union and communion by acts and by the spirit and knowledge in the act as complete and integral as any our Godward will can hope for or our soul's strength execute.

It has all the power of a way of works integral and absolute, but because of its law of sacrifice and self-giving to the Divine Self and Master, it is accompanied on its one side by the whole power of the path of Love and on the other by the whole power of the path of Knowledge. At its end all these three divine Powers work together, fused, united, completed, perfected by each other.

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The Divine, the Eternal is the Lord of our sacrifice of works and union with him in all our being and consciousness and in its expressive instruments is the one object of the sacrifice; the steps of the sacrifice of works must therefore be measured, first, by the growth in our nature of something that brings us nearer to divine Nature, but secondly also by an experience of the Divine, his presence, his manifestation to us, an increasing closeness and union with that Presence. But the Divine is in his essence infinite and his manifestation too is multitudinously infinite. If that is so, it is not likely that our true integral perfection in being and in nature can come by one kind of realisation alone; it must combine many different strands of divine experience. It cannot be reached by the exclusive pursuit of a single line of identity till that is raised to its absolute; it must harmonise many aspects of the Infinite. An integral consciousness with a multiform dynamic experience is essential for the complete transformation of our nature.

There is one fundamental perception indispensable towards any integral knowledge or many-sided experience of this Infinite. It is to realise the Divine in its essential self and truth unaltered by forms and phenomena. Otherwise we are likely to remain caught in the net of appearances or wander confusedly in a chaotic multitude of cosmic or particular aspects, and if we

avoid this confusion, it will be at the price of getting chained to some mental formula or shut up in a limited personal experience. The one secure and all-reconciling truth which is the very foundation of the universe is this that life is the manifestation of an uncreated Self and Spirit, and the key to life's hidden secret is the true relation of this Spirit with its own created existences. There is behind all this life the look of an eternal Being upon its multitudinous becomings; there is around and everywhere in it the envelopment and penetration of a manifestation in time by an unmanifested timeless Eternal. But this knowledge is valueless for Yoga if it is only an intellectual and metaphysical notion void of life and barren of consequence; a mental realisation alone cannot be sufficient for the seeker. For what Yoga searches after is not truth of thought alone or truth of mind alone, but the dynamic truth of a living and revealing spiritual experience. There must awake in us a constant indwelling and enveloping nearness, a vivid perception, a close feeling and communion, a concrete sense and contact of a true and infinite Presence always and everywhere. That Presence must remain with us as the living, pervading Reality in which we and all things exist and move and act, and we must feel it always and everywhere, concrete, visible, inhabiting all things; it must be patent to us as their true Self, tangible as their imperishable Essence, met by us closely as their inmost Spirit. To see, to feel, to sense, to contact in every way and not merely to conceive this Self and Spirit here in all existences and to feel with the same vividness all existences in this Self and Spirit, is the fundamental experience which must englobe all other knowledge.

This infinite and eternal Self of things is an omnipresent Reality, one existence everywhere; it is a single unifying presence and not different in different creatures; it can be met, seen or felt in its completeness in each soul or each form in the universe. For its infinity is spiritual and essential and not merely a boundlessness in Space or an endlessness in Time; the Infinite can be felt in an infinitesimal atom or in a second of time as convincingly as in the stretch of the aeons or the stupendous enormity of the intersolar spaces. The knowledge or experience of it can begin

anywhere and express itself through anything; for the Divine is in all, and all is the Divine.

This fundamental experience will yet begin differently for different natures and take long to develop all the Truth that it conceals in its thousand aspects. I see perhaps or feel in myself or as myself first the eternal Presence and afterwards only can extend the vision or sense of this greater self of mine to all creatures. I then see the world in me or as one with me. I perceive the universe as a scene in my being, the play of its processes as a movement of forms and souls and forces in my cosmic spirit; I meet myself and none else everywhere. Not, be it well noted, with the error of the Asura, the Titan, who lives in his own inordinately magnified shadow, mistakes ego for the self and spirit and tries to impose his fragmentary personality as the one dominant existence upon all his surroundings. For, having the knowledge, I have already seized this reality that my true self is the non-ego, so always my greater Self is felt by me either as an impersonal vastness or an essential Person containing yet beyond all personalities or as both these together; but in any case, whether Impersonal or illimitable Personal or both together, it is an ego-exceeding Infinite. If I have sought it out and found it first in the form of it I call myself rather than in others, it is only because there it is easiest for me, owing to the subjectivity of my consciousness, to find it, to know it at once and to realise it. But if the narrow instrumental ego does not begin to merge in this Self as soon as it is seen, if the smaller external mind-constructed I refuses to disappear into that greater permanent uncreated spiritual I, then my realisation is either not genuine or radically imperfect. There is somewhere in me an egoistic obstacle; some part of my nature has opposed a self-regarding and self-preserving denial to the all-swallowing truth of the Spirit.

On the other hand — and to some this is an easier way — I may see the Divinity first in the world outside me, not in myself but in others. I meet it there from the beginning as an indwelling and all-containing Infinite that is not bound up with all these

forms, creatures and forces which it bears on its surface. Or else I see and feel it as a pure solitary Self and Spirit which contains all these powers and existences, and I lose my sense of ego in the silent Omnipresence around me. Afterwards it is this that begins to pervade and possess my instrumental being and out of it seem to proceed all my impulsions to action, all my light of thought and speech, all the formations of my consciousness and all its relations and impacts with other soul-forms of this one world-wide Existence. I am already no longer this little personal self, but That with something of itself put forward which sustains a selected form of its workings in the universe.

There is another basic realisation, the most extreme of all, that yet comes sometimes as the first decisive opening or an early turn of the Yoga. It is the awakening to an ineffable high transcendent Unknowable above myself and above this world in which I seem to move, a timeless and spaceless condition or entity which is at once, in some way compelling and convincing to an essential consciousness in me, the one thing that is to it overwhelmingly real. This experience is usually accompanied by an equally compelling sense either of the dreamlike or shadowy illusoriness of all things here or else of their temporary, derivative and only half-real character. For a time at least all around me may seem to be a moving of cinematographic shadow forms or surface figures and my own action may appear as a fluid formulation from some Source ungrasped as yet and perhaps unseizable above or outside me. To remain in this consciousness, to carry out this initiation or follow out this first suggestion of the character of things would be to proceed towards the goal of dissolution of self and world in the Unknowable, — Moksha, Nirvana. But this is not the only line of issue; it is possible, on the contrary, for me to wait till through the silence of this timeless unfilled liberation I begin to enter into relations with that yet ungrasped Source of myself and my actions; then the void begins to fill, there emerges out of it or there rushes into it all the manifold Truth of the Divine, all the aspects and manifestations and many levels of a dynamic Infinite. At first this experience imposes on the mind and then on all our being an

absolute, a fathomless, almost an abysmal peace and silence. Overpowered and subjugated, stilled, liberated from itself, the mind accepts the Silence itself as the Supreme. But afterwards the seeker discovers that all is there for him contained or new-made in that silence or through it descends upon him from a greater concealed transcendent Existence. For this Transcendent, this Absolute is not a mere peace of signless emptiness; it has its own infinite contents and riches of which ours are debased and diminished values. If there were not that Source of all things, there could be no universe; all powers, all works and activities would be an illusion, all creation and manifestation would be impossible.

These are the three fundamental realisations, so fundamental that to the Yogin of the way of Knowledge they seem ultimate, sufficient in themselves, destined to overtop and replace all others. And yet for the integral seeker, whether accorded to him at an early stage suddenly and easily by a miraculous grace or achieved with difficulty after a long progress and endeavour, they are neither the sole truth nor the full and only clues to the integral truth of the Eternal, but rather the unfilled beginning, the vast foundation of a greater divine Knowledge. Other realisations there are that are imperatively needed and must be explored to the full limit of their possibilities; and if some of them appear to a first sight to cover only Divine Aspects that are instrumental to the activity of existence but not inherent in its essence, yet, when followed to their end through that activity to its everlasting Source, it is found that they lead to a disclosure of the Divine without which our knowledge of the Truth behind things would be left bare and incomplete. These seeming Instrumentals are the key to a secret without which the Fundamentals themselves would not unveil all their mystery. All the revelatory aspects of the Divine must be caught in the wide net of the integral Yoga.

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If a departure from the world and its activities, a supreme release and quietude were the sole aim of the seeker, the three great

fundamental realisations would be sufficient for the fulfilment of his spiritual life: concentrated in them alone he could suffer all other divine or mundane knowledge to fall away from him and himself unencumbered, depart into the eternal Silence. But he has to take account of the world and its activities, learn what divine truth there may be behind them and reconcile that apparent opposition between the Divine Truth and the manifest creation which is the starting-point of most spiritual experience. Here, on each line of approach that he can take, he is confronted with a constant Duality, a separation between two terms of existence that seem to be opposites and their opposition to be the very root of the riddle of the universe. Later, he may and does discover that these are the two poles of One Being, connected by two simultaneous currents of energy negative and positive in relation to each other, their interaction the very condition for the manifestation of what is within the Being, their reunion the appointed means for the reconciliation of life's discords and for the discovery of the integral truth of which he is the seeker.

For on one side he is aware of this Self everywhere, this everlasting Spirit-Substance — Brahman, the Eternal — the same self-existence here in time behind each appearance he sees or senses and timeless beyond the universe. He has this strong overpowering experience of a Self that is neither our limited ego nor our mind, life or body, world-wide but not outwardly phenomenal, yet to some spirit-sense in him more concrete than any form or phenomenon, universal yet not dependent for its being on anything in the universe or on the whole totality of the universe; if all this were to disappear, its extinction would make no difference to this Eternal of his constant intimate experience. He is sure of an inexpressible Self-Existence which is the essence of himself and all things; he is intimately aware of an essential Consciousness of which thinking mind and life-sense and body-sense are only partial and diminished figures, a Consciousness with an illimitable Force in it of which all energies are the outcome, but which is yet not explained or accounted for by the sum or power or nature of all these energies together; he feels, he lives in an inalienable self-existent Bliss which is not this lesser

transient joy or happiness or pleasure. A changeless imperishable infinity, a timeless eternity, a self-awareness which is not this receptive and reactive or tentacular mental consciousness, but is behind and above it and present too below it, even in what we call Inconscience, a oneness in which there is no possibility of any other existence, are the fourfold character of this settled experience. Yet this eternal Self-Existence is seen by him also as a conscious Time-Spirit bearing the stream of happenings, a self-extended spiritual Space containing all things and beings, a Spirit-Substance which is the very form and material of all that seems non-spiritual, temporary and finite. For all that is transitory, temporal, spatial, bounded, is yet felt by him to be in its substance and energy and power no other than the One, the Eternal, the Infinite.

And yet there is not only in him or before him this eternal self-aware Existence, this spiritual Consciousness, this infinity of self-illuminated Force, this timeless and endless Beatitude. There is too, constant also to his experience, this universe in measurable Space and Time, some kind perhaps of boundless finite, and in it all is transient, limited, fragmentary, plural, ignorant, exposed to disharmony and suffering, seeking vaguely for some unrealised yet inherent harmony of oneness, unconscious or half-conscious or, even when most conscious, still tied to the original Ignorance and Inconscience. He is not always in a trance of peace or bliss and, even if he were, it would be no solution, for he knows that this would still be going on outside him and yet within some larger self of him as if for ever. At times these two states of his spirit seem to exist for him alternately according to his state of consciousness; at others they are there as two parts of his being, disparate and to be reconciled, two halves, an upper and a lower or an inner and an outer half of his existence. He finds soon that this separation in his consciousness has an immense liberative power; for by it he is no longer bound to the Ignorance, the Inconscience; it no longer appears to him the very nature of himself and things but an illusion which can be overcome or at least a temporary wrong self-experience, Maya. It is tempting to regard it as only a contradiction of the Divine,

an incomprehensible mystery-play, masque or travesty of the Infinite — and so it irresistibly seems to his experience at times, on one side the luminous verity of Brahman, on the other a dark illusion of Maya. But something in him will not allow him to cut existence thus permanently in two and, looking more closely, he discovers that in this half-light or darkness too is the Eternal — it is the Brahman who is here with this face of Maya.

This is the beginning of a growing spiritual experience which reveals to him more and more that what seemed to him dark incomprehensible Maya was all the time no other than the Consciousness-Puissance of the Eternal, timeless and illimitable beyond the universe, but spread out here under a mask of bright and dark opposites for the miracle of the slow manifestation of the Divine in Mind and Life and Matter. All the Timeless presses towards the play in Time; all in Time turns upon and around the timeless Spirit. If the separate experience was liberative, this unitive experience is dynamic and effective. For he now not only feels himself to be in his soul-substance part of the Eternal, in his essential self and spirit entirely one with the Eternal, but in his active nature an instrumentation of its omniscient and omnipotent Consciousness-Puissance. However bounded and relative its present play in him, he can open to a greater and greater consciousness and power of it and to that expansion there seems to be no assignable limit. A level spiritual and supramental of that Consciousness-Puissance seems even to reveal itself above him and lean to enter into contact, where there are not these trammels and limits, and its powers too are pressing upon the play in Time with the promise of a greater descent and a less disguised or no longer disguised manifestation of the Eternal. The once conflicting but now biune duality of Brahman-Maya stands revealed to him as the first great dynamic aspect of the Self of all selves, the Master of existence, the Lord of the world-sacrifice and of his sacrifice.

On another line of approach another Duality presents itself to the experience of the seeker. On one side he becomes aware of a witness recipient observing experiencing Consciousness which does not appear to act but for which all these activities inside

and outside us seem to be undertaken and continue. On the other side he is aware at the same time of an executive Force or an energy of Process which is seen to constitute, drive and guide all conceivable activities and to create a myriad forms visible to us and invisible and use them as stable supports for its incessant flux of action and creation. Entering exclusively into the witness consciousness he becomes silent, untouched, immobile; he sees that he has till now passively reflected and appropriated to himself the movements of Nature and it is by this reflection that they acquired from the witness soul within him what seemed a spiritual value and significance. But now he has withdrawn that ascription or mirroring identification; he is conscious only of his silent self and aloof from all that is in motion around it; all activities are outside him and at once they cease to be intimately real; they appear now mechanical, detachable, endable. Entering exclusively into the kinetic movement, he has an opposite self-awareness; he seems to his own perception a mass of activities, a formation and result of forces; if there is an active consciousness, even some kind of kinetic being in the midst of it all, yet there is no longer a free soul in it anywhere. These two different and opposite states of being alternate in him or else stand simultaneously over against each other; one silent in the inner being observes but is unmoved and does not participate; the other active in some outer or surface self pursues its habitual movements. He has entered into an intense separative perception of the great duality, Soul-Nature, Purusha-Prakriti.

But as the consciousness deepens, he becomes aware that this is only a first frontal appearance. For he finds that it is by the silent support, permission or sanction of this witness soul in him that this executive nature can work intimately or persistently upon his being; if the soul withdraws its sanction, the movements of Nature in their action upon and within him become a wholly mechanical repetition, vehement at first as if seeking still to enforce their hold, but afterwards less and less dynamic and real. More actively using this power of sanction or refusal, he perceives that he can, slowly and uncertainly at first,

more decisively afterwards, change the movements of Nature. Eventually in this witness soul or behind it is revealed to him the presence of a Knower and master Will in Nature, and all her activities more and more appear as an expression of what is known and either actively willed or passively permitted by this Lord of her existence. Prakriti herself now seems to be mechanical only in the carefully regulated appearance of her workings, but in fact a conscious Force with a soul within her, a self-aware significance in her turns, a revelation of a secret Will and Knowledge in her steps and figures. This Duality, in aspect separate, is inseparable. Wherever there is Prakriti, there is Purusha; wherever there is Purusha, there is Prakriti. Even in his inactivity he holds in himself all her force and energies ready for projection; even in the drive of her action she carries with her all his observing and mandatory consciousness as the whole support and sense of her creative purpose. Once more the seeker discovers in his experience the two poles of existence of One Being and the two lines or currents of their energy negative and positive in relation to each other which effect by their simultaneity the manifestation of all that is within it. Here too he finds that the separative aspect is liberative; for it releases him from the bondage of identification with the inadequate workings of Nature in the Ignorance. The unitive aspect is dynamic and effective; for it enables him to arrive at mastery and perfection; while rejecting what is less divine or seemingly undivine in her, he can rebuild her forms and movements in himself according to a nobler pattern and the law and rhythm of a greater existence. At a certain spiritual and supramental level the Duality becomes still more perfectly Two-in-one, the Master Soul with the Conscious Force within it, and its potentiality disowns all barriers and breaks through every limit. Thus this once separate, now biune Duality of Purusha-Prakriti is revealed to him in all its truth as the second great instrumental and effective aspect of the Soul of all souls, the Master of existence, the Lord of the Sacrifice.

On yet another line of approach the seeker meets another corresponding but in aspect distinct Duality in which the biune

character is more immediately apparent, — the dynamic Duality of Ishwara-Shakti. On one side he is aware of an infinite and self-existent Godhead in being who contains all things in an ineffable potentiality of existence, a Self of all selves, a Soul of all souls, a spiritual Substance of all substances, an impersonal inexpressible Existence, but at the same time an illimitable Person who is here self-represented in numberless personality, a Master of Knowledge, a Master of Forces, a Lord of love and bliss and beauty, a single Origin of the worlds, a self-manifester and self-creator, a Cosmic Spirit, a universal Mind, a universal Life, the conscious and living Reality supporting the appearance which we sense as unconscious inanimate Matter. On the other side he becomes aware of the same Godhead in effectuating consciousness and power put forth as a self-aware Force that contains and carries all within her and is charged to manifest it in universal Time and Space. It is evident to him that here there is one supreme and infinite Being represented to us in two different sides of itself, obverse and reverse in relation to each other. All is either prepared or pre-existent in the Godhead in Being and issues from it and is upheld by its Will and Presence; all is brought out, carried in movement by the Godhead in power; all becomes and acts and develops by her and in her its individual or its cosmic purpose. It is again a Duality necessary for the manifestation, creating and enabling that double current of energy which seems always necessary for the world-workings, two poles of the same Being, but here closer to each other and always very evidently carrying each the powers of the other in its essence and its dynamic nature. At the same time by the fact that the two great elements of the divine Mystery, the Personal and the Impersonal, are here fused together, the seeker of the integral Truth feels in the duality of Ishwara-Shakti his closeness to a more intimate and ultimate secret of the divine Transcendence and the Manifestation than that offered to him by any other experience.

For the Ishwari Shakti, divine Conscious-Force and World-Mother, becomes a mediatrix between the eternal One and the manifested Many. On one side, by the play of the energies which she brings from the One, she manifests the multiple Divine in the

universe, involving and evolving its endless appearances out of her revealing substance; on the other by the reascending current of the same energies she leads back all towards That from which they have issued so that the soul in its evolutionary manifestation may more and more return towards the Divinity there or here put on its divine character. There is not in her, although she devises a cosmic mechanism, the character of an inconscient mechanical Executrix which we find in the first physiognomy of Prakriti, the Nature-Force; neither is there that sense of an Unreality, creatrix of illusions or semi-illusions, which is attached to our first view of Maya. It is at once clear to the experiencing soul that here is a conscious Power of one substance and nature with the Supreme from whom she came. If she seems to have plunged us into the Ignorance and Inconscience in pursuance of a plan we cannot yet interpret, if her forces present themselves as all these ambiguous forces of the universe, yet it becomes visible before long that she is working for the development of the Divine Consciousness in us and that she stands above drawing us to her own higher entity, revealing to us more and more the very essence of the Divine Knowledge, Will and Ananda. Even in the movements of the Ignorance the soul of the seeker becomes aware of her conscious guidance supporting his steps and leading them slowly or swiftly, straight or by many detours out of the darkness into the light of a greater consciousness, out of mortality into immortality, out of evil and suffering towards a highest good and felicity of which as yet his human mind can form only a faint image. Thus her power is at once liberative and dynamic, creative, effective, — creative not only of things as they are, but of things that are to be; for, eliminating the twisted and tangled movements of his lower consciousness made of the stuff of the Ignorance, it rebuilds and new-makes his soul and nature into the substance and forces of a higher divine Nature.

In this Duality too there is possible a separative experience. At one pole of it the seeker may be conscious only of the Master of Existence putting forth on him His energies of knowledge, power and bliss to liberate and divinise; the Shakti may appear to him only an impersonal Force expressive of these things or

an attribute of the Ishwara. At the other pole he may encounter the World-Mother, creatrix of the universe, putting forth the Gods and the worlds and all things and existences out of her spirit-substance. Or even if he sees both aspects, it may be with an unequal separating vision, subordinating one to the other, regarding the Shakti only as a means for approaching the Ishwara. There results a one-sided tendency or a lack of balance, a power of effectuation not perfectly supported or a light of revelation not perfectly dynamic. It is when a complete union of the two sides of the Duality is effected and rules his consciousness that he begins to open to a fuller power that will draw him altogether out of the confused clash of Ideas and Forces here into a higher Truth and enable the descent of that Truth to illumine and deliver and act sovereignly upon this world of Ignorance. He has begun to lay his hand on the integral secret which in its fullness can be grasped only when he overpasses the double term that reigns here of Knowledge inextricably intertwined with an original Ignorance and crosses the border where spiritual mind disappears into supramental Gnosis. It is through this third and most dynamic dual aspect of the One that the seeker begins with the most integral completeness to enter into the deepest secret of the being of the Lord of the Sacrifice.

For it is behind the mystery of the presence of personality in an apparently impersonal universe — as in that of consciousness manifesting out of the Inconscient, life out of the inanimate, soul out of brute Matter — that is hidden the solution of the riddle of existence. Here again is another dynamic Duality more pervading than appears at first view and deeply necessary to the play of the slowly self-revealing Power. It is possible for the seeker in his spiritual experience, standing at one pole of the Duality, to follow Mind in seeing a fundamental Impersonality everywhere. The evolving soul in the material world begins from a vast impersonal Inconscience in which our inner sight yet perceives the presence of a veiled infinite Spirit; it proceeds with the emergence of a precarious consciousness and personality that even at their fullest have the look of an episode, but an episode that repeats itself in a constant series; it arises through experience

of life out of mind into an infinite, impersonal and absolute Superconscience in which personality, mind-consciousness, life-consciousness seem all to disappear by a liberating annihilation, Nirvana. At a lower pitch he still experiences this fundamental impersonality as an immense liberating force everywhere. It releases his knowledge from the narrowness of personal mind, his will from the clutch of personal desire, his heart from the bondage of petty mutable emotions, his life from its petty personal groove, his soul from ego, and it allows them to embrace calm, equality, wideness, universality, infinity. A Yoga of works would seem to require Personality as its mainstay, almost its source, but here too the impersonal is found to be the most direct liberating force; it is through a wide egoless impersonality that one can become a free worker and a divine creator. It is not surprising that the overwhelming power of this experience from the impersonal pole of the Duality should have moved the sages to declare this to be the one way and an impersonal Superconscience to be the sole truth of the Eternal.

But still to the seeker standing at the opposite pole of the Duality another line of experience appears which justifies an intuition deeply-seated behind the heart and in our very life-force, that personality, like consciousness, life, soul, is not a brief-lived stranger in an impersonal Eternity, but contains the very meaning of existence. This fine flower of the cosmic Energy carries in it a forecast of the aim and a hint of the very motive of the universal labour. As an occult vision opens in him, he becomes aware of worlds behind in which consciousness and personality hold an enormous place and assume a premier value; even here in the material world to this occult vision the inconscience of Matter fills with a secret pervading consciousness, its inanimation harbours a vibrant life, its mechanism is the device of an indwelling Intelligence, God and soul are everywhere. Above all stands an infinite conscious Being who is variously self-expressed in all these worlds; impersonality is only a first means of that expression. It is a field of principles and forces, an equal basis of manifestation; but these forces express themselves through beings, have conscious spirits at their head and are

the emanation of a One Conscious Being who is their source. A multiple innumerable personality expressing that One is the very sense and central aim of the manifestation and if now personality seems to be narrow, fragmentary, restrictive, it is only because it has not opened to its source or flowered into its own divine truth and fullness packing itself with the universal and the infinite. Thus the world-creation is no more an illusion, a fortuitous mechanism, a play that need not have happened, a flux without consequence; it is an intimate dynamism of the conscious and living Eternal.

This extreme opposition of view from the two poles of one Existence creates no fundamental difficulty for the seeker of the integral Yoga; for his whole experience has shown him the necessity of these double terms and their currents of Energy, negative and positive in relation to each other, for the manifestation of what is within the one Existence. For himself Personality and Impersonality have been the two wings of his spiritual ascension and he has the prevision that he will reach a height where their helpful interaction will pass into a fusion of their powers and disclose the integral Reality and release into action the original force of the Divine. Not only in the fundamental Aspects but in all the working of his sadhana he has felt their double truth and mutually complementary working. An impersonal Presence has dominated from above or penetrated and occupied his nature; a Light descending has suffused his mind, life-power, the very cells of his body, illumined them with knowledge, revealed him to himself down to his most disguised and unsuspected movements, exposing, purifying, destroying or brilliantly changing all that belonged to the Ignorance. A Force has poured into him in currents or like a sea, worked in his being and all its members, dissolved, new-made, reshaped, transfigured everywhere. A Bliss has invaded him and shown that it can make suffering and sorrow impossible and turn pain itself into divine pleasure. A Love without limits has joined him to all creatures or revealed to him a world of inseparable intimacy and unspeakable sweetness and beauty and begun to impose its law of perfection and its ecstasy even amidst the disharmony of terrestrial life. A spiritual

Truth and Right have convicted the good and evil of this world of imperfection or of falsehood and unveiled a supreme good and its clue of subtle harmony and its sublimation of action and feeling and knowledge. But behind all these and in them he has felt a Divinity who is all these things, a Bringer of Light, a Guide and All-Knower, a Master of Force, a Giver of Bliss, Friend, Helper, Father, Mother, Playmate in the world-game, an absolute Master of his being, his soul's Beloved and Lover. All relations known to human personality are there in the soul's contact with the Divine; but they rise towards superhuman levels and compel him towards a divine nature.

It is an integral knowledge that is being sought, an integral force, a total amplitude of union with the All and Infinite behind existence. For the seeker of the integral Yoga no single experience, no one Divine Aspect, — however overwhelming to the human mind, sufficient for its capacity, easily accepted as the sole or the ultimate reality, — can figure as the exclusive truth of the Eternal. For him the experience of the Divine Oneness carried to its extreme is more deeply embraced and amply fathomed by following out to the full the experience of the Divine Multiplicity. All that is true behind polytheism as well as behind monotheism falls within the scope of his seeking; but he passes beyond their superficial sense to human mind to grasp their mystic truth in the Divine. He sees what is aimed at by the jarring sects and philosophies and accepts each facet of the Reality in its own place, but rejects their narrownesses and errors and proceeds farther till he discovers the One Truth that binds them together. The reproach of anthropomorphism and anthropolatry cannot deter him, — for he sees them to be prejudices of the ignorant and arrogant reasoning intelligence, the abstracting mind turning on itself in its own cramped circle. If human relations as practised now by man are full of smallness and perversity and ignorance, yet are they disfigured shadows of something in the Divine and by turning them to the Divine he finds that of which they are a shadow and brings it down for manifestation in life. It is through the human exceeding itself and opening itself to a supreme plenitude that the Divine must manifest itself here, since

that comes inevitably in the course and process of the spiritual evolution, and therefore he will not despise or blind himself to the Godhead because it is lodged in a human body, *mānuṣīm tanum āśritam*. Beyond the limited human conception of God, he will pass to the one divine Eternal, but also he will meet him in the faces of the Gods, his cosmic personalities supporting the World-Play, detect him behind the mask of the Vibhūtis, embodied World-Forces or human Leaders, reverence and obey him in the Guru, worship him in the Avatar. This will be to him his exceeding good fortune if he can meet one who has realised or is becoming That which he seeks for and can by opening to it in this vessel of its manifestation himself realise it. For that is the most palpable sign of the growing fulfilment, the promise of the great mystery of the progressive Descent into Matter which is the secret sense of the material creation and the justification of terrestrial existence.

Thus reveals himself to the seeker in the progress of the sacrifice the Lord of the sacrifice. At any point this revelation can begin; in any aspect the Master of the Work can take up the work in him and more and more press upon him and it for the unfolding of his presence. In time all the Aspects disclose themselves, separate, combine, fuse, are unified together. At the end there shines through it all the supreme integral Reality, unknowable to Mind which is part of the Ignorance, but knowable because self-aware in the light of a spiritual consciousness and a supramental knowledge.

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This revelation of a highest Truth or a highest Being, Consciousness, Power, Bliss and Love, impersonal and personal at once and so taking up both sides of our own being, — since in us also is the ambiguous meeting of a Person and a mass of impersonal principles and forces, — is at once the first aim and the condition of the ultimate achievement of the sacrifice. The achievement itself takes the shape of a union of our own existence with That which is thus made manifest to our vision and experience, and

the union has a threefold character. There is a union in spiritual essence, by identity; there is a union by the indwelling of our soul in this highest Being and Consciousness; there is a dynamic union of likeness or oneness of nature between That and our instrumental being here. The first is the liberation from the Ignorance and identification with the Real and Eternal, *mokṣa*, *sāyujya*, which is the characteristic aim of the Yoga of Knowledge. The second, the dwelling of the soul with or in the Divine, *sāmīpya*, *sālokya*, is the intense hope of all Yoga of love and beatitude. The third, identity in nature, likeness to the Divine, to be perfect as That is perfect, is the high intention of all Yoga of power and perfection or of divine works and service. The combined completeness of the three together, founded here on a multiple Unity of the self-manifesting Divine, is the complete result of the integral Yoga, the goal of its triple Path and the fruit of its triple sacrifice.

A union by identity may be ours, a liberation and change of our substance of being into that supreme Spirit-substance, of our consciousness into that divine Consciousness, of our soul-state into that ecstasy of spiritual beatitude or that calm eternal bliss of existence. A luminous indwelling in the Divine can be attained by us secure against any fall or exile into this lower consciousness of the darkness and the Ignorance, the soul ranging freely and firmly in its own natural world of light and joy and freedom and oneness. And since this is not merely to be attained in some other existence beyond but pursued and discovered here also, it can only be by a descent, by a bringing down of the Divine Truth, by the establishment here of the soul's native world of light, joy, freedom, oneness. A union of our instrumental being no less than of our soul and spirit must change our imperfect nature into the very likeness and image of Divine Nature; it must put off the blind, marred, mutilated, discordant movements of the Ignorance and put on the inherence of that light, peace, bliss, harmony, universality, mastery, purity, perfection; it must convert itself into a receptacle of divine knowledge, an instrument of divine Will-Power and Force of Being, a channel of divine Love, Joy and Beauty. This is the transformation to be effected,

an integral transformation of all that we now are or seem to be, by the joining — Yoga — of the finite being in Time with the Eternal and Infinite.

All this difficult result can become possible only if there is an immense conversion, a total reversal of our consciousness, a supernormal entire transfiguration of the nature. There must be an ascension of the whole being, an ascension of spirit chained here and trammelled by its instruments and its environment to sheer Spirit free above, an ascension of soul towards some blissful Super-soul, an ascension of mind towards some luminous Supermind, an ascension of life towards some vast Super-life, an ascension of our very physicality to join its origin in some pure and plastic spirit-substance. And this cannot be a single swift upsoaring but, like the ascent of the sacrifice described in the Veda, a climbing from peak to peak in which from each summit one looks up to the much more that has still to be done. At the same time there must be a descent too to affirm below what we have gained above: on each height we conquer we have to turn to bring down its power and its illumination into the lower mortal movement; the discovery of the Light for ever radiant on high must correspond with the release of the same Light secret below in every part down to the deepest caves of subconscious Nature. And this pilgrimage of ascension and this descent for the labour of transformation must be inevitably a battle, a long war with ourselves and with opposing forces around us which, while it lasts, may well seem interminable. For all our old obscure and ignorant nature will contend repeatedly and obstinately with the transforming Influence, supported in its lagging unwillingness or its stark resistance by most of the established forces of environing universal Nature; the powers and principalities and the ruling beings of the Ignorance will not easily give up their empire.

At first there may have to be a prolonged, often tedious and painful period of preparation and purification of all our being till it is ready and fit for an opening to a greater Truth and Light or to the Divine Influence and Presence. Even when centrally fitted, prepared, open already, it will still be long before

all our movements of mind, life and body, all the multiple and conflicting members and elements of our personality consent or, consenting, are able to bear the difficult and exacting process of the transformation. And hardest of all, even if all in us is willing, is the struggle we shall have to carry through against the universal forces attached to the present unstable creation when we seek to make the final supramental conversion and reversal of consciousness by which the Divine Truth must be established in us in its plenitude and not merely what they would more readily permit, an illumined Ignorance.

It is for this that a surrender and submission to That which is beyond us enabling the full and free working of its Power is indispensable. As that self-giving progresses, the work of the sacrifice becomes easier and more powerful and the prevention of the opposing Forces loses much of its strength, impulsion and substance. Two inner changes help most to convert what now seems difficult or impracticable into a thing possible and even sure. There takes place a coming to the front of some secret inmost soul within which was veiled by the restless activity of the mind, by the turbulence of our vital impulses and by the obscurity of the physical consciousness, the three powers which in their confused combination we now call our self. There will come about as a result a less impeded growth of a Divine Presence at the centre with its liberating Light and effective Force and an irradiation of it into all the conscious and subconscious ranges of our nature. These are the two signs, one marking our completed conversion and consecration to the great Quest, the other the final acceptance by the Divine of our sacrifice.