

THE ABSOLUTE

THE ULTIMATE REALITY

(PARABRAHMAN)

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The Theosophical Society in England

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OM PŪRNAMADAH PŪRNAMIDAM
PŪRNĀT PŪRNAMUDACHYATE
PŪRNASYA PŪRNAMĀDAYA
PŪRNAMEVĀVASHISHYATE
OM SHĀNTIH, SHĀNTIH, SHĀNTIH.

‘O Almighty God, thou art Fulness itself. The Universe which has come out of Thee is also Fulness. Whatever is wanting in that Fulness, since it has emerged from Brahman, it will also become Full. The living and embodied Soul, realising the incompleteness of material existence, also reaches the state of Fulness in the All-Soul. So too this Universe will attain Fulness after ‘*Pralaya*’, the final dissolution of creation. Ultimately, it is Fulness alone which will remain after all things have completed their existence.

OM: Peace, Peace, Peace.

THE ABSOLUTE—THE ULTIMATE REALITY (PARABRAHMAN)

“ADRIŚHTAM, AVYAVAHARYAM, AGRĀHYAM,
ALAKSHNAM, ACHINTYAM, AVYAPADESHYAM”¹

“Unperceivable, beyond empirical dealings, beyond grasp of the organs of action, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable. . . .” (Māndukya Upanishad)

These words of the Mandukya Upanishad are not the only significant references to the Absolute, the Ultimate Reality; Parabrahman. Such words about Brahman and Ātman abound in most of the Upanishads. I quote here just a few. Maitri Upanishad says—“The Spirit Supreme is immeasurable, inapprehensible, beyond conception, never-born, beyond reasoning, beyond thought.”^{1a} Taittiriya Upanishad says—“Words and mind go to him, but reach him not and return”.^{1b} Mundaka Upanishad says—“He cannot be seen by the eye, and words cannot reveal him. He cannot be reached by the senses, or by an austerity or sacred action. . . .”^{1c}

Not only have these ancient seers of the East repeatedly warned us about this stupendous problem which the seekers of the Ultimate Reality have to face, but the thinkers and poets of the West have also echoed the same ideas. Kant has made it perfectly clear in “The Critique of Reason” that the attempt to know Reality is the greatest challenge given to the mind when it touches its furthest limits of thinking and reasoning. Regarding the role of philosophy, he says that instead of discovering truth, its modest function is to guard against error. And did not Shakespeare hint at the same limitation when he made Hamlet speak these words:

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”² H.P.B. too has given a clear warning— “The Absolute is not to be depicted, and no mortal or immortal has ever seen or comprehended it during the period of Existence. The mutable cannot know the Immutable, nor can that which lives perceive the Absolute Life”³

Such are the views of those great ones who have tried to explore the unknown region of Reality and experienced the insurmountable difficulties which the limited faculties of the human being always present.

The first requisite condition for such an exploration is the full awareness of the inadequate instrument that we generally use. The mind, which we use in our speculations, lives and functions in the domain of duality. The world it has created is composed of names and forms—NĀMA-RUPA. It puts everything in the mould of time and space. It is a thinking mind, its thoughts are in words and the words don't have the wings to fly to that ultimate height. Even if they try desperately, they meet the fate of Icarus and fall

down burnt and baffled. Its power of reasoning takes us further to some extent and then it gets exhausted. It seeks proof of everything. As Einstein very truly remarked this mind can go as far as it can know and prove, and no further. That well-known dialogue between H.P.B. and one of her pupils is very relevant in this context. The pupil went on asking her several questions and at the end when he asked 'What is Parabrahman?', she snapped at him—'Go and ask Parabrahman'. Her answer meant to point out that it is possible for the thinking mind neither to understand nor to describe. Lord Buddha has categorically stated in "DHAMMAPADA" the common attributes of this mind—"wavering, restless, difficult to guard and restrain, fickle and flighty, unsteady, etc." Such a mind is hardly a suitable vehicle to explore fully even the manifested world, let alone its adventure in the region beyond. We need a different kind of mind—the mind which is fully controlled, concentrated, one-pointed and illumined. But we shall deal with it later on.

Let us first try to make the maximum use of the power of intellect, reasoning and words, and explore the mystery of the Ultimate Reality which we call the Absolute. This word is derived from a Latin word "Absolutum", meaning 'freed', 'unloosed'. The ordinary dictionary meaning of Absolute is 'complete, perfect, pure, unrestricted, independent, unlimited, independent of relation to other things, existing in and by itself without necessary relation to anything else, capable of being conceived independently of anything else'. When it is used in the context of higher philosophical speculation, its meaning has to be carefully understood. Sir W. Hamilton in his "Discussions" uses this word as meaning "finished, perfected, completed". He observes—"The Absolute is dramatically opposed to, is contradictory of, the Infinite. In careful theosophical writings this word should be used in this very sense, as meaning that which is freed, unloosed, perfected, completed".⁴ Some scholars find the Samskrit words 'MOKSHA' or 'MUKTI' or 'NIRVĀNA', which mean 'completely free' or 'Liberated one', very close to the word 'Absolute'. Although the other Samskrit words like BRAHMAN, PARABRAHMAN, PARAMĀTMAN are also used in the sense of the Absolute, some orthodox scholars hesitate to use them as synonymous. There is neither occasion nor the necessity to go into these complex etymological and metaphysical discussions here. We will take the liberty of using the word ABSOLUTE, PARABRAHMAN, ĀTMAN and PARAMĀTMAN to refer to the Ultimate Reality.

H.P.B. has referred to the Absolute in so many ways in different contexts. Here are some examples:

"... the first fundamental axiom of the Secret Doctrine is this metaphysical One Absolute—Be-ness—symbolised by finite intelligence as the theological Trinity"
 "Parabrahman, the One Reality, the Absolute is the field of Absolute Consciousness... Spirit and Matter are

however, to be regarded, not as independent realities, but as the two symbols or aspects of the Absolute, Parabrahman, which constitute the basis of conditioned Being whether subjective or objective.”⁶

Talking about ‘MAHAT’ she says that “Mahat, the first-born of Jnāna (or gnosis), Knowledge, wisdom or the Logos—is a phantasm reflected from the Absolute Nirguna (Parabrahman), the One Reality, ‘devoid of attributes and qualities’”.

Talking about the ‘UPĀDHI’, basis, she says—“Thus there is but one Absolute UPĀDHI (Basis) in the spiritual sense, from, on, and in which, are built for manvantaric purposes the countless basic centres, on which proceed the universal, cyclic, and individual Evolutions during the active period.”⁷

Associating ‘SAT’, Existence and ‘CHID’, Consciousness with the Absolute she says:

“There are ‘Seven Paths’ or ‘Ways’ to the ‘Bliss’ of Non-Existence, which is absolute Being, Existence and Consciousness.”⁸

She has again used Words such as ‘Being’ and ‘Subhāva’, meaning “the Substance giving substance to itself”,⁹

“One Unconditioned All” for the Ultimate Reality.¹⁰

She further makes it clear that Parabrahman is the Absolute Principle. She says

“Parabrahman is not ‘God’ because It is not a God. It is that which is supreme, and not supreme. It is supreme as cause, not supreme as effect. Parabrahman is simply, as a Secondless Reality, the all-inclusive Kosmos—or rather the infinite Cosmic Space—in the highest spiritual sense, of course. . . . Parabrahman is, in short, the collective aggregate of Kosmos in its infinity and eternity, the ‘That’ and ‘This’ to which distributive aggregates cannot be applied.”¹¹

Here she is referring to the Vedanta Sutra. Quoting Shankaracharya she says:

“In the beginning This was the Self, One only—‘This’ refers to the Universe (JAGAT) the words ‘in the beginning’ meaning before the reproduction of phenomenal universe.”

The Vedanta scholars and Commentators accepted Perception and Scriptures as the two valid sources of knowledge or Wisdom. By

'perception' they meant not the sense perceptions but intuitive perception or direct experience, as they regarded the Vedas as the ultimate authority. The Secret Doctrine is the scripture, the words of authority for a theosophist. He has to accept them in good faith, and then try first with the help of his sharp intellect, developed reasoning and high speculative powers, and then with the help of intuitive experiences through deep meditation, to verify the truth of these words of authority, and make it his own experience.

An Intellectual Approach

Let us first use our reasoning and stretch it as far as we can, in order to have an intellectual appreciation of these great occult Truths before we take recourse to the method of meditation leading to direct intuitive experience. Religion, Philosophy and Science—all have approached this subject of the Ultimate Reality and given us a part of their findings in so many different ways. We will confine our area of investigation to the fields of philosophy and science only, and see for ourselves how far they help us in responding to this "question of questions"—What is Reality?

Clues to the mystery of the Unmanifest can be found in the manifested world. We have to look around us and view the world. Both philosophers and scientists have speculated and experimented on the nature of life in the Universe and come to one conclusion that behind all these temporary forms and shapes, and manifestations of energy lies something else which is Permanent, Enduring and Real. They may differ upon the question of the Nature of this Reality but they all agree that "Reality is One", of which all nature is but varying degrees of manifestation, emanation or expression.

The materialists call this One Reality—Matter, which is self-existent, eternal and infinite. Another school regards it as Energy. The Idealists call it Mind which has both matter and energy in it. The Naturalistic school calls it Nature and the theologians regard it as a personal God. The occultists hold that this one Reality is a Being who is the source of all life and forms. Thus whether it is a Principle or a Substance or Energy or Spirit or a known or Unknown God—all are based on the fundamental concept of monism.

Following the same line of speculation they all agree that there must be One Life which is the source of all manifested forms, forces, energies and principles. The word 'Spirit' has been popularly used by the philosophers and occultists to denote that One Reality which lies behind Matter, Energy and Mind. That is the 'Essence' of Life and Being. In the same way, the word 'Absolute' is a favourite metaphysical term to refer to that Ultimate Reality. The attempt to define 'The Absolute' is futile because It cannot be described in terms of the Relative. All words, thoughts and definitions are used in describing the individual, separate things, objects or beings of the manifested world. Shankaracharya, in his commentary on Bhagwad Gita has stated—"Every word employed to denote a thing denotes that thing as associated with a certain 'genus', or act, or quality, or mode of relation." In his commentary on 'Brahma-Sutra', he has remarked

“We may speak about Brahman, though we cannot describe it adequately or have any logical knowledge of it.”
(Appendix A)

Still, with the stretch of the power of our intellect we can try to analyse and synthesize certain basic knowledge.

One of the conclusions which the intellect helps us to come to regarding the Absolute is that it must have existed for ever and will continue to do so. It is not an arbitrary conclusion. Sheer logic comes to our help in thinking that the Absolute could not have come out of Nothing and there could not be any cause outside itself which determined its beginning or its end. So, the Absolute must be eternal. The human mind can easily see that everything in the relative world has had a cause, but it is not so easy for it to conceive of a causeless cause and believe there must have been an Original One that can have had no cause. Also, the Mind finds it difficult to think of the Eternal above and outside Time. We take Time to be a reality but Time exists solely in our mind.

Again, with the help of the intellect we can think of the Absolute as Infinite space. It is Omnipresent. This too is difficult for the mind to understand, as it measures everything that has dimensions; it cannot measure the Immeasurable.

With our intellectual effort, we can also imagine that the Absolute must be the All-Power, the source of all Energy, Force, or Power manifested in the Universe at different levels of existence.

The Absolute must be the Law-giver. It must contain within itself all knowledge or Wisdom. It is the Source of Life manifesting itself in the Universe. The Absolute is immanent in and abiding in all forms of Life in the Universe. The Immanent and the Transcendental nature has been very clearly described in the Bhagwad Gita where Lord Krishna, who is our inner Self and for that reason the Absolute, says to Arjuna, the enquiring mind—

YO MĀM AJAM ANADI CHA VETTI
LOKAMAHESHVARAM
ASAMMOODHAH SA MARTYESHU SARVA
PAPAIH PRAMUCHYATE¹²

“He who knows I am beginningless, unborn, the Lord of all the worlds, this mortal is free from delusions and from all evils he is free.”

“He who knows my glory and power, he has the oneness of unwavering harmony. This is my truth!”¹³

“I am the one Source of all; the evolution of all comes from me. The Wise think this and they worship me in adoration of love.”¹⁴

Further on, he says—"Worship thou Me". Lord Krishna's words find an echo in the saying of Lord Jesus Christ—"No man cometh to the Father save through me". It is not as separate individual beings that they speak but as the Unborn, beginningless, External, the 'BRAHMAN' in which all abide, by whom all this is pervaded.

A couple of couplets from the Seventh Chapter throw further light on the Reality.

"The visible forms of my nature are eight—earth, water, fire, air, ether, the mind, reasons and the sense of 'I'"¹⁵

"But beyond my visible nature is my invisible Spirit. This is the foundation of life whereby this Universe has its being."¹⁶

Such is the Immanent power of the Absolute. We can try to describe its inmost nature with the help of two words— Life and Love. All-pervading Life describes its outer nature and All-pervading Love expresses its inner nature.

Life and Love

The Absolute has been referred to in the Upanishads and other philosophical texts as the Witness to or the Silent Watcher of the great panorama of the universal activities. The Māndukya Upanishad refers to this aspect of the nature of the Absolute in these words—

"There are two birds, two sweet friends, who dwell on the self-same tree. The one eats the fruits thereof, and the other looks on in silence.

"The first is the human soul who, resting on that tree, though active, feels sad in his unwisdom. But on beholding the power and glory of the higher Spirit, he becomes free from sorrow"¹⁷

Such a description leads us to imagine that the Absolute is a cold, indifferent and feelingless Being, who is devoid of all attributes, thoughts and emotions. From the purely human point of view, this concept may not be wrong. The quality of thoughts, ideas, emotions and feelings on our mental level which is the level of duality is entirely different from that of the Universal or Divine Ideation. But, none the less, the source of all love that informs life on the earth and elsewhere is the Absolute. It is the fountain of love and compassion. It cannot be an indifferent witness or a cold dispenser of justice. It is bound with its own creation—the whole manifested Cosmos—with the tie of love. Earthly love, human love is just the shadow of the Divine Love. This great drama of love is being constantly played out in the realm of nature and on the stage of human life. The pulsation of life everywhere seems to be motivated by the instinct or feeling of love.

Shelley has very poetically portrayed this picture of Universal love in his poem entitled "Love's Philosophy"—

"... Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one spirit meet and mingle. . ."¹⁸

(see Appendix B for the whole poem)

This universal action of love must have emanated from that source alone from which life has emanated. The ancient seers of the East have very judiciously attributed three great qualities to that Ultimate Being—SAT (Being, Is), CHID (Consciousness) and ĀNANDA (Joy or Bliss). The last quality—Joy—springs up in the heart of Love. The Divine Love sustains life on all planes of existence. The Creative Will of the Absolute is Its Divine Love. Whether it is on the physical, material plane or the abstract plane of art, or the universal plane—everywhere creation is the outcome of Love. This love on the earthly, lower mental plane may be selfish, partial and impure, but love on the higher mental, universal, Divine plane is unselfish, perfect and pure. But all is Love. Here it is the love of the finite, there it is the love of the Infinite; here it is fragmented, there it is whole, but the fact remains that wherever there is Life there is Love.

A Scientific Approach

The Yogis of the East experimented, realised and taught that life is Omnipresent. Modern Science is fast moving in that direction. The scientific theory of "dead matter" has been replaced by the theory of "All-Life, All-Energy, All-Motion". The scientists believe that Life is potential in Matter and Mind is potential in Life. Spinoza had long ago recognised that Mind and Matter are the Warp and Weft of what Goethe called "the living garment of God". Dr. Saleeby has explained this fact in his valuable scientific work "Evolution; the Master Key". H.P.B. has asked the readers of the Secret Doctrine to hold fast, as the basis of ideation, to the Four Basic Ideas—(1) The Fundamental Unity of All Existence; (2) There is no Dead Matter; (3) Man is a microcosm; (4) There is but One Life and Law and he that worketh is One.¹⁹ Modern science has been steadily coming close to these basic and fundamental Truths.

Scientists like W. Heisenberg and F. Capra have realised the limitation of the language and that of the mechanistic views of universe. Heisenberg says—

"The problems of language here are readily obvious. We wish to speak in some way about the structures of the atoms. . . . But we cannot speak about it in ordinary language."²⁰

F. Capra points out the importance of the organic view of the universe in these lines—

"... Physics in the twentieth century has shown that the concepts of the organic world view . . . become extremely useful at the atomic and sub-atomic level. The organic view, therefore seems to be more fundamental than the mechanistic."^{20a}

Among the few theosophists who have also been scientists, Dr. I. K. Taimni occupies a very distinguished place. Being a professor of Chemistry and a great exponent of yogic literature at the same time, he had the unique advantage of translating the abstruse metaphysical ideas of the higher esoteric literature into the terminology of modern science and the idiom suitable for the Twentieth Century intellectual readers.

He admits, to start with, that the Absolute is beyond intellectual comprehension, but he still professes that

"from the intellectual point of view it is the most profound concept in the whole realm of philosophy. . . . Thinking and making enquiries about the Absolute or Parabrahman is not discouraged, but is, on the other hand, considered as the highest object of pursuit and enquiry for the intellect."²¹

He further points out that thinking about this Ultimate Reality is permissible as long as one does not consider one's thoughts as knowledge of that Reality.

"It is unknowable and yet the highest object of realization, unthinkable and yet the most profound object of philosophical enquiry. But this enquiry must be a joint effort of earnest thought and deep devotion and not mere speculation or exercise of sterile logic if it is to be of any practical use."²²

Here, Dr. Taimni echoes the teachings of Shankaracharya who was deeply concerned with the mechanical, intellectual pursuits of the students and scholars of philosophy, grammar and scriptures of his own time. He maintains that Self-realisation through deep meditation, devotion and prayer, aided by high moral and ethical disciplines in life must be the motto of every aspirant of Truth, the Reality. But this aspect of the investigation will be taken up later on.

All the ideas which throw light on the different aspects of the Absolute will look like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. The fact is that the intellect can grasp only the separate, disjointed aspects of any concept. It cannot grasp the Whole. Hence it can not give us any perception of the Truth we are seeking. It can prepare the ground for that perception by providing certain intellectual ideas and concepts for our investigation through earnest concentration and deep devotion.

A few facts of natural phenomena may be treated as analogous to the greater Reality and finally to the Ultimate Reality. "As it is above, so it is below". The phenomenal world is just a shadow of the Reality. The knowledge of the shadow can give us some insight into the "Mystery of Mysteries". And here is the great value of science. For this very reason one of the adepts has said—"Science is our greatest ally".

The first of the two natural phenomena, which I would like to refer to here, is the light phenomenon—the dispersion of White light by a prism. It can be illustrated with a diagram how a beam of white light is passed through a prism and the emergent beam allowed to fall on a white screen. The image on that screen is a band of colours which is called a spectrum. Thus, on both sides of the Prism there are different pictures—on one side is the White Light and on the other side are the colours. Scientifically it can be explained that the Prism is responsible for the dispersion or differentiation of the beam of White Light. Being thus differentiated, those vibrations form a continuous spectrum. If one wants to experiment further, one can put another inverted prism in the path of the emergent rays and will discover that those colourful rays will become integrated again with the original beam of white light. In this way, one can see how the whole process is reversible.

Another point to note is that those who are always on this side of the prism are able to see only the colours. They cannot know about the other side of the prism. For them there are no colours on that side, and the absence of the colours will mean to them darkness, not White Light.

Now, let us use this analogy to explain the nature of the Absolute. The Absolute has been called 'NIRGUNA' Brahman—Brahman without any 'Gunas' or attributes, the Ever-Darkness. We have already seen that to the entities living in the world of the colours, the absence of colours will mean darkness. Only those who succeed in crossing over to the other side of the prism, will realise that it is not darkness but White Light which has all the colours in the integrated form. Similarly, the world of manifestation is the world of colours, the world of attributes. For the beings living in this manifested world, the colours or the attributes, the 'Gunas' are the realities, but those who seek the source of those attributes and try to transcend their mind beyond those attributes, realize the White Light—the Eternal Radiance which apparently has no colours, no attributes but in reality contains all the colours, all the attributes in Itself. It is the source of those principles, 'tattvas', forces which invest all things in the manifested universe with the 'Gunas', the attributes.

Another analogous point may be taken from Mathematics—the Zero, which

"is the most intriguing, baffling and unpredictable entity in the whole field of Mathematics with the exception of its counterpart, infinity".²²

Zero and infinity appear to be polar opposites. These two are the extreme limits, and all possible magnitudes of things are contained between them.

This analogy can be applied to the point and space in geometry, and also to the point and space as the two polar vestures of the Absolute.

Now, a word about the extra-ordinary property of the Zero. Let us write a figure of five digits, such as 23456 and place against it the same figure of five digits but in a reverse order 65432. These two similar figures but balanced in the opposite way disappear together in a zero. We can discover two truths—first is that we can reduce anything to zero by introducing its equal and opposite, and the second is that zero can contain both the +ve and -ve (positive and negative) quantities without being affected in any manner.

Let us see how this mathematical truth helps us to guess the nature of the mystery of the Absolute. The Absolute contains an infinite number of all equal and opposite principles in an integrated form and in a potential state. It finds expression in the manifested universe in opposites called 'DVANDVAS'—pairs of opposites.

Lord Krishna says to Arjuna in the Bhagwad Gita
"TRAIGUNYA VISHAYA VEDA NISTRIGUNYA
BHAVA ARJUNA" "The Vedas deal with the three
'Gunas', the three attributes. In other words, the three
Gunas of Nature are the world of the Vedas. Arise above
or beyond the three Gunas, O Arjuna, beyond the pair of
the opposites."²³

All these pairs of opposites have their source in the Unmanifest where they remain integrated and perfectly balanced. These two different states of the same Reality—one in the Unmanifest and the other in the manifested—have been very well expressed in the Isha Upanishad.

"He moves, and he moves not. He is far, and he is near.
He is within all, and he is outside all."

Thus we note that there are innumerable entities of all sizes and qualities in the manifested Universe but each is balanced by its equal and opposite. When they are juxtaposed, they disappear in the Zero. In other words, there may be multifarious contents, but the Absolute can still be a Void, containing everything and yet nothing.

H.P.B. has explained the significance of the 'Void' in "The Voice of the Silence". While elaborating the PARAMITĀS, six in number, the noble gates of virtue, leading to Bodhi and to Prajnā, the seventh step of Wisdom, and giving instruction for necessary moral and spiritual requirements for the fourth Portal, she states—

"Thou hast to study the voidness of the seeming full, the
fullness of the seeming void. . . ."²⁴

H.P.B. has repeatedly stressed the great need to transcend the lower self, meaning thereby complete detachment from worldly desires and sensuous feelings. Unless one is able to rise above all his desires, thoughts and passions that keep parading themselves on the parapet of the personality,

one can never experience that moment of silence, the Void, which is the reward of DHYĀNA—meditation.

Discussing the nature and condition of the sixth Portal 'DHYĀNA', she says—

“The DHYĀNA Gate is like an alabaster vase, white and transparent; within there burns a steady golden fire, the flame of ‘Prajñā’ that radiates from Ātma. Thou are that vase.”²⁵

The vase, which is an empty vessel or cup, represents the void. In ‘Dhyāna’, meditation, in that silent moment of communion, the Universal Light of Energy, which is called in religious term the Lord’s Grace, pours into that empty, pure chalice and fills it up. That indeed is Fullness in the right sense of the term. The manifested world seems to be full of objects, things, and entities but they are not real. That is why it is called ‘the seeming fullness of the void’. Those who realise the illusory nature of this universe know ‘the voidness of the seeming fullness’. To experience ‘the fullness of the seeming void’, one has to create a state of emptiness, a state of total negation, a state of silence. The Voice of the Silence brings about the state of ‘the fullness of the void’.

Going back to the mathematical truth about the Zero and Infinity, we are now in a better position to think about ‘the Fullness of the seeming Void’ that the Absolute is. All these pairs of opposite forces have emanated from that Source and they all return and become integrated in the same Source. When the act of differentiation takes place, it is Absolute in the process of manifestation, the Brahman with the attributes, and when all those pairs of opposite forces recombine and are reconciled in the integrated form, it is called the Absolute, Brahman without attributes.

In the Vedānta philosophy, Brahman has been discussed in both aspects—NIRGUNA and SAGUNA, Brahman without attributes and Brahman with attributes. We can appreciate the validity of the ideas of both these schools by applying this Universal Law of the pairs of opposites. There can be no Ultimate Reality without the two opposite aspects of the Manifest and the Unmanifest being inherent in it. The two opposite processes of going forth and returning are connected with the two states of Being. One cannot be without the other, its opposite in a balanced whole. If there is the Unmanifest, there must also be the Manifest. In other words, if there is NIRGUNA Brahman, there must be SAGUNA Brahman. They must both be inherent in the very nature of Reality.

This fact helps us to speculate on the Personal and Impersonal God. The popular image of a Personal God is associated with man’s anthropomorphic tendencies. Similarly there is a general impression among some people that occultism considers God as a purely Impersonal Principle and it is not possible to establish any personal relationship with Him in our inner Life. Each opinion takes into account only one point of view and ignores the opposite. The Absolute must have both aspects. If He is utterly impersonal

in one of His aspects, He must be utterly personal in the opposite aspect. The question of Personality and Impersonality can also be approached in the same way and treated as the two opposite principles. Impersonality in its Universal aspect must be balanced by personality in the individual aspect.

It is upon this fundamental principle that the idea of a SAGUNA—Brahman, Personal God is based and the possibility of establishing the most intimate relationship of lover and beloved between the individual soul and the Universal soul rests. The cult of 'BHAKTI', love, devotion, in India and the love philosophy of the Sufi mystics are some good examples.

The philosophy of Rāmānujachārya was the basis for the promotion of the cult of 'Bhakti',—love or devotion—among the people who worshipped Rama, and the same kind of philosophy of Vallabhācharyā irrigated the soil of India on which grew the cult of love for Lord Krishna. These two sects of Rama lovers and Krishna lovers always regarded the Brahman as approachable in a personal capacity and believed that it was possible to establish the most intimate relationship of a lover and a beloved, or a deity and a devotee. These two Divine Incarnations called 'AVATĀRAS' were regarded as the "Seen God", Lord ISHVARA.

In the Middle East, the Sufi mystics had a similar approach. They thought it possible and perfectly natural to establish the relationship of a lover and beloved between the Individual Soul and the Universal Soul. The verses of the Sufi poets like Jalaluddin Rumi, Hafiz, Omar Khayyam, Hakim Jami Attar, etc. are replete with the feelings of love experienced in the ecstacy of Divine intercourse.

Christian metaphysical poets like Donne, Vaughan and Herbert and mystic poets like Blake and Francis Thompson thought and felt about God in the same personal, devotional way. Some sample verses from their poetry are included in the appendix. (Appendix C).

No personal relationship is possible with that Ultimate Reality in Its Unmanifest state. But the Unmanifest wills to manifest Itself. The first differentiation or the very first removal from that Unmanifest appears as PURUSHA and PRAKRITI, or SHIVA and SHAKTI, according to Vedic philosophy, or Father–Mother, according to the Secret Doctrine. At this stage it is possible to establish a personal relationship with what may be called SAGUNA Brahman, the Brahman with the attributes.

The concept of Father–Mother, their origin and functions etc. has been couched carefully in the MANTRA-like Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan. Here are some lines from Stanza 3.

“THE ROOT OF LIFE WAS IN EVERY DROP OF
THE OCEAN OF IMMORTALITY, AND THE
OCEAN WAS RADIANT LIGHT, WHICH WAS
FIRE, AND HEAT, AND MOTION. DARKNESS
VANISHED AND WAS NO MORE: IT DISAP-
PEARED IN ITS OWN ESSENCE, THE BODY OF
FIRE AND WATER, OF FATHER AND MOTHER.”²⁷

“LIGHT IS COLD FLAME, AND FLAME, IS FIRE,
AND FIRE PRODUCES HEAT, WHICH YIELDS
WATER—THE WATER OF LIFE IN THE GREAT
MOTHER”.^{27a}

“FATHER-MOTHER SPIN A WEB, WHOSE
UPPER END IS FASTENED TO SPIRIT, THE
LIGHT OF THE ONE DARKNESS, AND THE
LOWER ONE TO ITS SHADOWY END, MATTER;
AND THIS WEB IS THE UNIVERSE SPUN OUT
OF THE TWO SUBSTANCES MADE IN ONE,
WHICH IS SVABHĀVAT”.^{27b}

“IT EXPANDS WHEN THE BREATH OF FIRE IS
UPON IT; IT CONTRACTS WHEN THE BREATH
OF THE MOTHER TOUCHES IT. . .”.^{27c}

The main purpose in quoting these lines is to stress the fact that the Father-Mother Principle is the prototype of all Fathers and Mothers in the physical world and thus the ultimate source of parental love. All our feelings of love, tenderness, care and compassion have originated from the same Primordial Father-Mother Principle. It is the fountain-head of that love which is manifested on all levels of Consciousness. The seed of love was sown on the Divine soil at the first ever stage of manifestation and it went on sprouting forth into a plant and a tree with infinite branches.

The story of Svetaketu from the Chhandogya Upanishad illustrates this point very well. He breaks the fruit of the Banyan tree and finds tiny seeds inside. He then breaks one seed and finds nothing. His father explains—“My son, from the very essence of the seed which you cannot see comes in truth the vast Banyan tree. Believe me, my son, an invisible and subtle essence is the spirit of the whole universe. That is Reality”.

MAHĀBINDU and MAHĀKĀSHA

Occult literature including Vedic literature recognises both ‘MAHĀBINDU’ and ‘MAHĀKĀSHA’. ‘MAHĀBINDU’ means the Great Point, or the central Ultimate Point and ‘MAHĀKĀSHA’ means the great Space, which is also referred to as the ‘Container’ or ‘Vesture’ of the Ultimate Reality. These are the two opposite and limiting aspects of the same Reality which underlies the idea of magnitude or ‘extension’. ‘MAHĀKĀSHA’—the Ideal Space, is the ultimate form of an ‘expanding sphere’, and ‘MAHĀBINDU’—the Ideal Point, is the ultimate limit of a contraction. The Absolute must have the form of the Ultimate Space and that of the Ultimate Point. The Unmanifest and Manifest states of the Absolute are not alternative; both are co-existing states; they exist simultaneously and eternally. That eternal central point is called the ‘LAYA’ centre. ‘Laya’ means cessation, merger, withdrawal, rest. ‘PRALAYA’ means the long rest or cessation of activities for a long time.

This Ideal Point is the vehicle of NIRGUNA Brahman, the Reality. Thus, Zero represents the Absolute, No. 1 represents NIRGUNA Brahman, and No. 2 represents PURUSHA-PRAKRITI or SHIVA-SHAKTI. (Appendix D).

The Samskrit Metaphysical terms for creation or projection or manifestation and dissolution are 'SRISHTI' and 'PRALAYA'. The former is extension and the latter is contraction. The cycle of manifestation and dissolution is continuous. The Second Fundamental Proposition of the 'Secret Doctrine' is as follows—

“The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane, periodically the playground of the numberless universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing, called the 'Manifesting stars' and the 'Sparks of Eternity' . . . The Second assertion of the Secret Doctrine is the absolute universality of that law of periodocity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of Nature. . .”²⁸

The Law of Periodocity stresses the necessity for a Constant Renewal. Geoffrey Barborka has elaborated this point very clearly in 'The Divine Plan'.²⁹ Every period of activity is followed by a period of rest. A period of activity is called a 'MANVANTARA'. MANU is a great Divine Being represented as Sovereign of the Earth. Each MANU is in charge of a Great Period. 'ANTARA' means a period between two MANUS. Fourteen MANUS reign during the period referred to as one day of BRAHMA. (Appendix E)

A few verses from the Bhagwad Gita describe the cycle of evolution and involution briefly but clearly—

SAHASRA YUGA PARYANTAM AHARYAD
BRAHMANO VIDUH
RĀTRIM YUGA SAHASRA ANTAM TE
AHORATRAVIDO JANAH³⁰

“The people who know the day of BRAHMĀ, a thousand 'Yugas' or ages in duration and the night, a thousand ages in ending, they know day and night.”

This is the reference to the period of 14 MANVANTARAS which make one day of BRAHMĀ. And that is the period of a Cosmic Day which is followed by the same period of a Cosmic Night, when everything returns and rests in the ideal Central Point—the 'LAYA' Centre—of the Absolute. The length of one day of BRAHMA, that is, one Cosmic Day is marked by one thousand revolutions of the 'MAHA YUGAS'—the Great Ages—which will be equivalent to 4,320,000,000 years. (Appendix F)

Now a vital question arises which is not easy to answer. When the night of Brahma comes, all beings and things return to the Unmanifested root of all and rest for billions of years until the next Cosmic Dawn. Then the

Unmanifested Mother, 'Moola-Prakriti', sends forth her shoots again. This alternate movement towards manifestation and dissolution should correspond in the realm of the Unmanifest to an outward and inward movement about a neutral or 'laya' centre. The Zero potential of the 'laya' centre cannot by itself produce a positive thrust onward to manifestation. Scientifically speaking any dead organism cannot revive by itself. Now, the 'laya' centre of the Ultimate Reality cannot need help from outside because it is Absolute and hence independent and self-sufficient. So logically we must look for some such forces that bring about the changes within the Absolute itself. Also, the Absolute cannot be only a Static Reality, it must have its dynamic aspects as the exact opposite of the static. This dynamic aspect of the Reality can be best referred to as Cosmic Rhythm. There is not only a recurrent periodical movement from 'Srishti' to 'Pralaya' but also a movement from 'Pralaya' to 'Srishti'. This leads us to believe that "there must be an eternal periodic movement in the Ultimate Reality Itself which accounts for and automatically brings about these periodic changes of 'Srishti' and 'Pralaya'".¹¹

The notion that we generally have about 'PRALAYA'—the long period of rest and inactivity—is not correct. Such a concept is the outcome of our illusion. The whole thing cannot die totally into the darkness of 'PRALAYA', because life cannot come from death, energy from inertia. The activity must continue on the other side of the central Zero of 'PRALAYA'. It is 'PRALAYA' to us because everything is dark to us after that. Only one half of the rhythmic movement is intellectually visible on this side. The other half which takes place on the other side of the screen of the Zero level is beyond our intellectual comprehension. It can be illustrated by referring to the pendulum of a big clock. The movement of the pendulum from left to right and from right to left is continuous. If we cover half the lower portion of the clock, say on our left-hand side, we can see only half of the total movement of the pendulum on our right side. Then the pendulum will disappear for a while and we cannot see its movement. But when it reappears, all the same, we know that its movement was continuous, although not visible to us. This analogy can be applied to the cosmic rhythmic movement. The visible movement of the pendulum on the right side represents the phenomenon of manifestation and the invisible movement of the pendulum on the left side represents the continuation of the Eternal Cosmic Rhythm on the other side of the central Zero. In one word, the Eternal Cosmic Rhythm never stops functioning; it continues expanding and contracting on both sides of the central Zero of the Absolute.

This picture of the Eternal Cosmic Rhythm provides us with a far more satisfactory picture of the whole process which is simple, harmonious, self-contained, eternal and in harmony with the scientific laws with which we are familiar. It also lends a unique beauty and grandeur to our concept of the Absolute.

Both the seers of the East and the Athenian philosophers have very subtly expressed this idea of an eternal rhythm pervading the Cosmos. The seers of

the Vedic period looked at the whole Cosmos as a set of vibrations from the celestial music. The various stages of evolution appeared to them as different notes of music with varied pitch and rhythm. The Source from which these myriad tunes have emanated was called by them "NĀDA BRAHMA"—the Absolute, in which all sounds of music, physical, universal and divine are integrated and harmonised. That Spiritual Sound is the Divine Music. Its vibrations constantly fill the whole Cosmos. We cannot hear them with our gross, earthly ears. We have to awaken our inner ear in the deep moments of meditation and tune it to the Celestial Music in silence. That Music is the 'Voice of the Silence'. H.P.B. says—"He who would hear the voice of 'NĀDA', 'the Soundless Sound', and comprehend it, has to learn the nature of 'DHARANA' ".¹²

The same concept of Cosmic Music was given to the western world by the Greek philosopher Pythagoras, whom H.P.B. has referred to as 'the first Adept and real scientist in Pre-Christian Europe' in his Doctrine on Music of the Spheres. She has also affirmed that Pythagoras studied Esoteric Science in India. According to Pythagoras each planet in its movement produces the vibrations of its own music and contributes to the Cosmic Music and Cosmic Rhythm.

The Cosmic dance of Lord Shiva called 'TĀNDAVA NRITYA' the Ecstatic Dance, is one of the most brilliant pictures of this dynamic aspect of the Ultimate Reality. Shiva's playing the 'DAMARU' and dancing in ecstasy are symbolical of the Cosmic Rhythm which lies at the basis of all rhythmic, harmonious movements found everywhere in Nature. These rhythmic movements take place eternally within the heart of the Universe, and therefore, within the heart of every human being.

Shakespeare has referred to the same Cosmic Music in these lines:

"There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins,
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."¹⁴

Now, having made so much effort with the help of our intellect, we realise more than ever before that we can go as far as this and no further. Thought, reason, speculation, imagination—all these qualities of the lower mind used together and to their maximum capacity can help us this way to obtain a very faint impression of the nature of the Absolute, which is hardly wholly satisfying. What should we do then to realise more fully the Ultimate Reality?

At the outset, I proposed to take up this issue of the transformation of the lower, desire-mind, 'KĀMA-MANAS', into the higher, intuitive, illumined Mind, 'BUDDHI-MANAS'. The mind which depends on the senses, brain, thoughts and ideas can grasp only the parts, never the whole. Such a mind lives in time and space; it functions in duality and, seized by the

‘Gunas’, the three attributes; it rests in the self of the matter, not in the Self of the Spirit. It is born in the first Hall of Ignorance and in most cases, lives and dies in it. In some cases, it advances into the second Hall of Learning. Its knowledge acquired in that Hall is Head learning, which is no good for the seeker of Reality. It is not inclined on its own to go to the third Hall, the Hall of Wisdom, because it is not prepared to pay the entry-fee to that Hall. The entry-fee constitutes the total denial of all possessions—its ideas, opinions, concepts, beliefs, biases, prejudices, convictions, memories etc. It must leave them all behind before it is allowed admission to the Hall of Wisdom and it does not want to do so. This is the real crunch, the real problem: how can we persuade and coax this fickle and unruly, selfish and rebellious mind to throw away all its hoarded treasures, empty itself, become naked and humble, and enter the Hall of Wisdom, where the Higher Self with the higher intuitive mind—‘BUDDHI-MANAS’—is waiting to receive it and transmute it with its divine alchemy. It requires great skill, an inexhaustible fund of patience, untiring industry and indomitable will. There is no other alternative.

“Buddhi is Atmic vehicle. The Spiritual Divine Ego is the Spiritual Soul Or Buddhi, in close union with Manas, the Mind-principle, without which it is no Ego at all, but only the Atmic Vehicle.”^{34a}

Patanjali has given us the best technique to control and discipline the mind in his “Yoga-Sutra”—‘Aphorisms on Raja-Yoga’. His is the Yoga of mental discipline for which he has given guide lines for moral and ethical codes of behaviour, for physical and vital energy, and finally for the correct form of meditation in its three stages of DHĀRANĀ, DHYĀNA, SAMĀDHI, with which we are all familiar, at least in theory. What I would like to mention here is “KRIYĀ-YOGA” which is often overlooked by Yoga Students and Teachers in general. It is described in one aphorism containing three words only:

TAPAH SVĀDHYĀYA ISHVARA-
PRANIDADHĀNĀNI KRIYĀ-YOGA

“Austerity, Self-Study, and Self-Surrender to the Lord
constitute ‘KRIYĀ-YOGA’.”³⁵

‘KRIYĀ-YOGA’ means preliminary and practical yoga. This yoga is preliminary because it has to be taken up in the initial stages of the practice of yoga. If one finds that this ‘KRIYA-YOGA’ is too difficult for him to practise, then Raja-Yoga is not his cup of tea. It is also practical because the resolution and seriousness and dedication of the practitioner is tested through it. ‘Tapas’ means ‘heating’, used for purification, as for example alloyed gold is subjected to strong heating, whereby all the dross is burnt off and pure gold is left behind. Thus ‘Tapas’ includes all the practices meant for ‘purification’ and self-discipline. ‘SVĀDHYĀYA, Self-Study refers to regular and repeated study of esoteric literature and constant brooding and

reflection over their inner meaning. 'ISHVARA-PRANIDHĀNĀNI'—resignation to the Lord, means in this context, the complete merger of the individual will with the Divine Will. It starts first with the mental assertion—'Not my will but Thy Will be done'. Then it takes the form of our earnest desire to become a conscious instrument of the Supreme Will. Our false lower 'I' disappears and the Divine Will can work freely through the 'I-less' centre of our consciousness.

This practice is most suitable for a person who has a highly emotional temperament and who is treading the path of 'BHAKTI', love and devotion. To a practitioner treading the path of knowledge, it is the merger of the individual will in the Divine Will, but to a lover and devotee it is the union with the 'Beloved' through love. Here it is love which is the driving force and which brings the destruction of egoism and fusion of consciousness.

Whether it is the path of knowledge or the path of love, our action cannot be perfect and conducive to the desired result without our one—pointed attention, exclusive devotion and absolute dedication to that cause. The Mahatmas, the adepts, who have given us a fragment of the Ancient-Wisdom have very frankly and repeatedly warned us against our present mental state which is a curious combination of materialism and intellectualism, and not open to receive any occult knowledge that cannot be proved by the logic of the lower mind. Master K.H. tells us in one of his letters—"So, you see, the insurmountable difficulties in the way of attaining not only 'Absolute' but even primary knowledge in Occult Science, for one situated as you are. How could you make yourself understood—'Command' in fact, these semi-intelligent forces, whose means of communicating with us are not through spoken words but through sounds and colours, in correlation between the vibrations of the two? For, sound, light and colours are the main factors in forming these beings, of whose very existence you have no conception, nor are you allowed to believe in them—Atheists and Christians, Materialists and Spiritualists, all bringing forward their respective arguments against such a belief—Science objecting stronger than either of these to such 'a degrading superstition' ".³⁶

The situation of the world in general and the mental state of mankind on the whole have not changed much since the time when these letters were written by the Masters, towards the end of the 19th century. Doubts and prejudices are still rampant, traditions and superstitions still have their sway, and selfishness and Agnosticism are still held as the sign of an open mind. Dedication to the spiritual values of life is never possible in this condition. High spiritual discipline and total negation of base, wordly values are the basic demands of one who intends to tread the path of Occultism. Master K.H. further adds—

"But if you believe in my friendship for you, if you value the word of 'honour' of one who never-never during his whole life polluted his lips with an untruth, then do not forget the words I once wrote to you (see my last letter) of

those who engage themselves in Occult Sciences; he who does it must either reach the goal or perish. Once fairly started on the way to the great Knowledge, to doubt is to risk insanity; to come to a dead stop is to fall; to recede is to tumble backward, headlong into an abyss. Fear not, if you are sincere'. . . .³⁷

Purification

Purification of the mind and heart is a prerequisite condition for a neophyte in the occult world. Patanjali has laid down five points of Observances for a student of meditation, Raja-yoga.

SHAUCH SANTOSHA TAPAH SWĀDHYĀYA
ISHVAR PRANDIDHĀNĀNI NIYAMĀH

“Purity, contentment, austerity, self- study and self-surrender constitute Observances”.³⁸

The purpose of these observances is the transmutation of the lower nature so that it may serve properly as a vehicle of the Yogic or Spiritual life. These practices are disciplined and constructive. The ‘Sādhaka’, the practitioner, has to go through these practices regularly, day by day whatever the circumstances in which he is placed. The first element of the Observances is ‘SHAUCH’—Purity. This word connotes a very wide range of cleanliness. It covers all the five sheaths—KOSHA—of our being—ANNAMAYA KOSHA, Physical sheath, PRĀNAMAYA KOSHA, Vital sheath, MANOMAYA KOSHA, Mental sheath, VIJNĀNAMAYA KOSHA, Higher, Intuitive, Intelligent sheath, and ĀNANDAMAYA KOSHA, Blissful sheath. For the purification of the physical body, we need right food and right drink. Food and drinks are divided into three classes—TAMAS, RAJAS, SĀTTVIKA, conducive of the qualities of the three GUNAS, attributes. Only the foods and drinks that belong to the SĀTTVIC class can help us to build a pure and refined physical vehicle. Non-Vegetarian food coarsens the body and Vegetarian food makes it refined.

Purification is then needed for the vital and mental bodies. These subtler vehicles serve as instruments for the expression of thoughts and emotions. The purification of thoughts and emotions is a much more difficult process than that of the physical sheath. All the selfish and undesirable thoughts and emotions have to be discarded, and thoughts and emotions of a higher and purer nature have to be brought into our daily practice. Through very long and consistent efforts these vehicles are adequately purified, and enjoy normal vibrational tendencies. Once these vehicles are charged with proper vibrations, they start functioning easily and naturally, and entertain pure thoughts and pure emotions. An impure mind cannot cherish high and noble thoughts and emotions. In order to purify these vehicles and bring into them harmonious vibrations the regular practice of ‘MANTRAS’—repetition of a certain spiritually powerful word or words—and prayers are very helpful.

Mantra and Invocation

The science of 'MANTRA' should form a vital part of the study and practice of a 'Sādhaka', a spiritual practitioner. It is the science of Sound, symbolically represented in script. The sound is eternal. The study of Sound comprises not only the sound at its articulated level but the subtle levels too, in other words, the origin of sound and various vibrant patterns. The Samskrit word 'VĀK' used both for sound and speech, refers both to thought and expression. H.P.B. refers to 'VĀK' as

"the most mysterious of all Brāhmanical Goddesses; she who is termed 'the melodious Cow who milked forth sustenance and Water—the Earth with all her mystic powers; and again she 'who yields us nourishment and sustenance'—the physical Earth. Isis is also mystic Nature and also Earth; and her cow's horns identify her with 'Vāch' who, after being recognised in her highest form as 'Parā', becomes, at the lower or material end of creation, 'Vaikhari'. Here she is mystic, though physical, Nature, with all her magic ways and properties. Again, as goddess of Speech and of Sound, and a permutation of Aditi, she is 'Chaos' in one sense. At any rate, she is the 'Mother of the Gods', and it is from Brahamā, Ishwara or the Logos, and Vāch, as from Adam Kadmon and Sephira, that the real 'manifested' theogony has to start. Beyond, all is Darkness and abstract speculation."³⁹

Philosophically speaking, 'PARĀ VĀK' is the finest sound, the Ultimate Sound, the Transcendental Sound and thought pattern. The next one is 'PASHYANTI VĀK'; 'Pashyanti' means 'one who sees'. The Supreme Consciousness sees the entire universe by its primeval desire—direct cause of the Universe. It is concentrated thought pattern. This language of 'silence' is a universal language—the source of all languages and speech. The third is 'MADHYAMĀ VĀK'—that which is neither Transcendental nor Universal nor completely expressed. It is formulated thought pattern ready for expression. The last one is 'VAIKHARI VĀK'. It is completely manifested and audible. It is the gross state of sound which is to be perceived through the sense of hearing.

H.P.B. wrote about 'VAK' in "The Theosophist", Feb; 1887—

"... these four principles of the Great Kosmos correspond to these four forms of 'Vāch' ... the Whole Kosmos in its objective form is 'VAIKHARI VĀCH: the light of the Logos in the 'MADHYAMĀ' form: and the Logos itself the 'PASHYANTI' form, and Parabraham is 'PARĀ' (beyond the noumenon of all noumena) aspect of that 'Vāch' ".⁴⁰

The Biblical words refer to the same transcendental and Universal Sound “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”.

Thus the origin of speech is transcendental and eternal, and the flow of ‘Pashyanti’, ‘Madhyama’ and ‘Vaikhari’ from the state of ‘Para’ is also the flow of the forceful stream of energy—‘Vāk Shakti’. Speech passing through human mind becomes contaminated with the limitations of time, space and causation. Divinity or truthfulness is thus veiled in everyday speech, but this is not the case with ‘Mantras’. ‘Mantras’ are not mere words but are specific sound vibrations that have been experienced by sages in the deepest state of meditation. They are sound bodies of certain aspects of Cosmic forces. The potential of a ‘Mantra’ lies in a dormant state; it is hidden and diffusive. It is to be awakened by pronouncing and repeating it in the right rhythmic vibrations. The sound patterns are ‘Mantras’ and the forms of expression are ‘DEVATĀ’, the Deity. The Deities or Gods are personified forms of those equations that originate in accordance with the vibrating sound patterns of ‘Mantras’. The all-pervading Consciousness manifests itself in different stages, each of which has a different form called Deity and sound vibration called ‘Mantra’. Deities and ‘Mantras’ are one and the same. A Deity is a gross physical form of a ‘Mantra’, and a ‘Mantra’ is a subtle form of a Deity. When the sequence of vibrations of a ‘Mantra’ is materialised into a particular form or shape, that is called Deity. Likewise, a materialised form can be dematerialised and reduced to certain frequencies of vibrations that can be heard as a ‘Mantra’. The students of Physics know the principle of conversion of energy into matter and matter into energy. The same principle operates in conversion of both Deity and the ‘Mantra’ into each other.

The Vedic “Rishis”—the seers, stress the importance of invoking these great cosmic powers, by creating the proper vibrations in our own mind which will cause sympathetic response in the higher powers, the cosmic forces, referred to by various names such as ‘Brahma-Putras’, ‘Manas-Putras’, ‘Manas-Dhyanis’ ‘Manas-Pitris’, ‘Manas-Devas’ etc. H.P.B. describes them in these words—

“It now becomes plain that there exists in Nature a triple evolutionary scheme for the function of the three periodical ‘upadhis’, or rather three separate schemes of evolution... these are the Monadic (Spiritual), the Intellectual and the Physical evolutions. These three are the finite aspects, or the reflection on the field of Cosmic Illusion, of Ātmā, the Seventh, the One Reality.

1. The Monadic, as the name implies, is concerned with the growth and development into still higher phases of activity of the Monads in conjunction with:

2. The intellectual, represented by the Manas—Dhyanis (the Solar Devas or the Agnishvatta Pitris), the “givers of intelligence and consciousness to man, and:

3. The physical, represented by the 'chhāyās' or the Lunar Pitris, round which Nature has concentered the present physical body. This body serves as the vehicle for the "growth", to use a misleading word, and the transformations through Manas,—and owing to the accumulation of experiences—of the Finite into the Infinite, of the Transient into the Eternal and Absolute".⁴²

For this transformation, man needs to purify all his instruments or vehicles and invoke these powers.

H.P.B. has described these Cosmic Intelligences in good details. She says in one particular context—

"The Sons of God *have* existed and *do* exist. From the Hindu Brahmāputras and Manasputras, Sons of Brahma and Mind—born Sons, down to the B'ne Aleim of the Jewish Bible, the faith of the centuries and universal tradition force reason to yield to such evidence."⁴³

And again—

"The Sons of Wisdom, or the Spiritual Dhyanis had become intellectual through the contact with Matter, because they had already reached, during previous cycles of incarnation, that degree of intellect which enabled them to become independent and self-conscious entities, 'on this plane' of Matter. They were reborn only by reason of Kārmic effects. They entered those who were "ready" and became the Arhats or Sages, alluded to above."⁴⁴

This is the message for all of us—to prepare to get 'ready'. Shakespeare's tragic hero Hamlet speaks words of wisdom at the end—"Readiness is all". The Cosmic Intelligences are waiting for us all the time. Their patience will never be exhausted, but our wisdom lies in expediting our progress and completing the whole process of our purification. Humanity has already had several Manasputras to help it. H.P.B. has given full details about their inception and function. At the conclusion of section 21 in Book V of The Secret Doctrine she says

"This shows sufficiently how the echo of the Secret Doctrine—of the Third and Fourth Races of Men, made complete by the reincarnation in humanity of the Manas Putras, Sons of Intelligence or Wisdom—reached every corner of the globe."⁴⁵

The Secret Doctrine gives us all the details of these Cosmic Intelligences. There is not the least doubt about their operations on our plane, but we have to purify our instruments and produce within us the required vibrations which may invoke the similar vibrations in them. The vibrations of Buddhi-

Manas only can establish a contact between us and the Manas-Putras. H.P.B. has made this point clear—

“Man derives his Spiritual Soul (Buddhi) from the essence of the Manas-Putras, the Sons of Wisdom, who are the Divine Beings (or Angels) ruling and presiding over the planet Mercury.”⁴⁶

Planet Mercury is called ‘Budha’ in Samskrit. Thus the presiding Deities of the planet Budha promote the power of our Buddhi. The transformation of ‘Kāma-Manas’, desire mind into ‘Buddhi-Manas’, the Intuitive or the Enlightened Mind is essential for a living contact with the Higher Forces.

“When the individual consciousness is turned inward a conjunction of Manas and Buddhi takes place. In the spiritually regenerated men this conjunction is permanent, the Higher Mind clinging to Buddhi beyond the threshold of Devachān, and the Soul, or rather Spirit, which should not be confounded with Ātma, the Super Spirit, is then said to have the “Single Eye”. Esoterically in other words, the “Third Eye” is active.”⁴⁷

P. G. Bowen, in his book “The Occult Way”, has addressed seven numbered lessons to the Aspirant who seriously desired to fit himself for discipleship. The fifth lesson is “Invocation”. He explains the significance of the meaning and function of this term.

“Because every successive focusing of the Power of Being bringing Vision of the Soul and new freedom to Self calls into existence new hierarchies of embodied energies of increasing potency, the effort is known as INVOCATION. When the Soul has been found upon the plane of Thought, and when the candidate has become an accepted Neophyte, the MASTER confers upon him the Privilege of Invocation. It is a privilege; for it means drawing to the Self that which is higher than Self. Yet it is also a right—which is earned by obedience to the Law of Life”⁴⁸

He points out that the balance between the positive and negative powers of Being gives to the Aspirant vision of the Soul, but that experience must not be casual or isolated if he wants to act as a conscious agent of the Universal Law. He says—

“Energies more powerful and more subtle than embodied on the human planes ceaselessly enter and ceaselessly leave the Sphere of the Self. They belong to Deep Being, and are always formless until Self in one or other of its protean aspects associated with these and, linked by them with Substance, makes them embodied Powers.”⁴⁹

All these aspects of spiritual discipline, occult practice and yogic acts are directed to one purpose only and that one is well explained by the third object of the Theosophical Society—“To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man”. Methods and techniques may be innumerable but all of these well-tried, ancient occult practices aim at the full unfoldment of the Self. Theoretical, second-hand knowledge obtained from books of philosophy is not enough for Self-Realisation by itself. A long course of intensive yogic or spiritual practice is indispensable to free the Self from the bondage of earthly passions and wordly desires.

Shankarachārya, the greatest exponent of the Advaita philosophy of Atman and Brahman, after having explained all aspects of Parabrahman in his commentaries on Brahma-Sutra and in his original classic ‘Viveka Chudāmani’, ‘The Crest Jewel of Discrimination’, gave his very well-considered final counsel to the neophytes and disciples in this verse.

VISHAYĀSHĀ MAHĀPĀSHĀDYO VIMUKTAH
SUDUSTYAJĀT SA EVA KALPATE MUKTYAI
NĀNYAH SHATSHĀSTRA VEDYAPI

“He who is free from the great bondage of desire, so difficult to avoid, is alone capable of liberation; not another, even though versed in the six systems of Philosophy.”⁵⁰

The Samskrit word ‘VISHAYA’ or ‘Vāsanā’ connotes the base desires which are personal, selfish, earthly and worldly, pertaining to our lower self. All the recognised occult classics echo this teaching.

“Kill out desire of Life. Kill out desire of Comfort. Kill out desire for Sensation.”⁵¹ “Light on the Path.”

“Kill thy desires, Lanoo, make thy vice impotent, ere the first step is taken on the solemn journey”—‘The Voice of the Silence’⁵²

VEETARĀGABHAYAKRODHA MANMAYĀ
MAMUPĀSHRITAH
BAHAVO JNANTAPASĀ POOTĀ
MADBHĀVAMĀGATAH

“Freed from passion, fear and anger, filled with Me, taking refuge in Me, purified on the fire of Wisdom, many have entered into My Being.”—‘Bhagwad Gita’⁵³

That's why the inadequate vehicle of 'kama-manas', the desire-mind needs to be replaced by the suitable vehicle of 'Buddhi-Manas', the free, pure and Silent Mind. That enlightened and loving mind alone will guide us all along our inward journey towards the realisation of the Self which is tantamount to the realisation of the Absolute, the Ultimate Reality, Parabrahman. The moment we experience that ecstasy of the Divine Union, our hearts will burst forth with feelings like Blakes's

"To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour."⁵⁴

NOTES

"Eight Upanishads"—Vol. II, with the commentary of Shankaracharya. P. 205.

- 1a. "The Upanishads"—Penguin Classics.
- 1b. Ibid.
- 1c. Ibid.
2. "Hamlet"—Act I, Sc. V. ll. 166-67.
3. The S.D. (The Secret doctrine—ADYAR Edition—6 vols.)—Vol. III. pp. 46-47.
4. "Discussions"—Sir W. Hamilton. 3rd Ed. p. 13, footnotes.
5. The S.D. Vol. I. p. 80.
6. Ibid p. 80.
7. The S.D. Vol. III. p. 46.
8. The S.D. Vol. II p. 112.
9. Ibid p. 130.
10. Ibid p. 311.
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12. "BHAGWAD GITA"—Ch. 10, Verse 3.
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51. "Light on the Path"—Mabel Collins—pp. 2-3.
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APPENDIX A

SHANKARACHARYA in his commentary on "BRAHMA-SUTRA" says:-

"We may speak about Brahman, though we cannot describe it adequately or have any logical knowledge of it." (Shankara's 'Bhashya' III.2.23)

In his commentary on "Bhagwad Gita" he states-

"If the finite man can comprehend Brahman, then either our understanding must be infinite or Brahman must be finite. Every word employed to denote a thing denotes that thing as associated with a certain 'genus' or act, or quality, or mode of relation. Brahman has no genus, possesses no qualities, does not act, and is related to nothing else." (Shankara's 'Bhashya'—XIII.12)

APPENDIX B

“Love’s Philosophy”—P. B. Shelley

The fountains mingle in the river
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one another’s being mingle—
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the mountains kiss the sea—
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

(“Golden Treasury”—Book IV)

APPENDIX C

“I am the life of My Beloved”—Jalaluddin Rumi

What can I do Muslims? I do not know myself.
I am no Christian, no Jew, no Magician, no Musul
man.
Not of the East, not of the West,
Not of the Land, not of the Sea,
. . . My place placeless, my trace traceless
Neither body nor soul: all is the life my Beloved.

“Love”—Hakim Jami

“Ordinary human love is capable of raising man to the
experience of real, divine love.”

“The Heart”—Attar

Someone went up to a mad man who was weeping in the bitterest possible way.

He said . . . “why do you cry”

The madman answered. . . “I am crying to attract the pity of His heart”.

The other told him . . . “your words are nonsense, for He has no physical heart”.

The madman answered . . . “It is you who are wrong, for He is the owner of all the hearts which exist. Through the heart you can make your connection with God”. (“The Way of the Sufi”. . . Idries Shah)

“Holy Sonnet”—John Donne

Batter my heart, three person'd God; for you
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine and seek to mend,
That I may rise, and spend, O'erthrow mee, and bend
Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new,
I, like an usurt towne, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but Oh, to no end,
Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weeke or untrue,
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd faine,
But am betroth'd unto your enemye.
Divorce mee, untie, or breake that knot again,
Take mee to you, imprison me, for I
Except you enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee.

This is the state of complete surrender to the forces of love with the great aspiration for the experience or communion with the Divine Love. The poet exhorts the Divine Power to help his soul turn from the world to Him.

Henry Vaughan in his poem ‘Peace’ is persuading his soul to turn from the ephemeral pleasures of the world and look forward to the Heavenly region where reigneth pure love and abiding peace.

My Soul, there is a countrie
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged Sentries
All skilfull in the wars,
There above noise, and danger
Sweet peace sits crowned with smiles,

And one born in a Manger
 Commends the Beauteous Files,
 He is thy gracious friend
 And (O My Soul awake!)
 Did in pure love descend
 To die here for thy sake,
 If thou canst get but thither,
 There grows the flowre of peace,

The Rose that cannot wither,
 Thy fortress, and thy ease;
 Leave them thy foolish ranges;
 For none can thee secure,
 But one, who never changes,
 The God, thy Life, thy Cure.

APPENDIX D

SHIVA-SHAKTI

Shiva appears in Indian mythological and philosophical literature in more than one role. The popular image is obtained in the Trinity of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Mahesha or Shiva. Brahmā is the Deity responsible for the creation, Vishnu for sustaining life and Shiva for destroying it. The word 'Shiva' means 'bliss'. The so-called process of destruction is indispensable for fresh life and further evolution. At other places, Shiva is regarded as Ishwara, the Lord, or Maheshwara, the Great Lord, and the consort of the Deity of Power or Energy, who is called SHAKTI. Thus Shiva corresponds to PURUSHA (Spirit) and Shakti corresponds to PRAKRITI (Nature). The intercourse of both results in the form of manifestation or creation.

APPENDIX E

The period of MANVANTAR and a Day of BRAHMĀ—The manner in which the Chaldean cycles were used has been lost. The manner of using the Indian 'yuga' is well-known. The Indian 'yugas' or Ages are 4 in number—

KALIYUGA, DWĀPARA YUGA, TRETĀ YUGA, SATYA YUGA

The number of the years of the Kali yuga is	432,000 years
The number of the years of Dwapara yuga is	864,000 years
The number of the years of Treta yuga is	1,296,000 years
The number of the years of Satya yuga is	1,728,000 years

The total sum of the 4 yugas, called
“MAHĀYUGA” is

4,320,000 years

The length of one day of BRAHMĀ is marked by 1,000 revolutions of
the ‘Mahāyuga’.

That will be equivalent to

4,320,000,000 years

APPENDIX F

Bhagwad Gita further explains—

“From the Unmanifested all the manifested stream
forth at the coming of the day; at the coming of the night
they dissolve even in That called the Unmanifested”

(Ch. 8, Verse 18).

“But higher than that Unmanifested, there existeth
another

Unmanifested Eternal, which in the destroying of all beings, is not
destroyed.”

(Ch. 8, Verse 20).

This ‘other Unmanifested’ is the Absolute, the Void,
No. 0; the next Unmanifested is the NIRGUNA BRAHMAN, No. 1; and
then comes No. 2, the Primordial manifestation—
PURUSHA-PRAKRITA, SHIVA-SHAKTI.

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