

# The Metaphysic and Psychology of Theosophy - Part 1

by Bhagavan Das

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## 1. THE EVOLUTION THEORY AS HELD IN THE WEST TODAY

[Page 1] As a single tree with its endlessly diverse parts, root and trunk and branch and leaf, core and layer and fibre and bark, grows up out of a single simple-looking seed, and grows up by successive small steps; even so has everything in the world which can be at all looked upon as a system, a unified aggregate, an organism, a diversity dominated by a unity, grown up by infinitesimal successive steps out of a nebulous plasm by continual differentiation and integration. Such is the evolution theory, which has been gradually coming more and more to the front amongst thinkers since the middle of the nineteenth century, and which has transformed science and literature in the modern West as completely as a turn of the kaleidoscope transforms the arrangement of the [Page 2] colored pieces of glass and produces an entirely new figure. Star-systems, solar systems, planets; the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the human kingdoms existing on one of these planets, *i.e.*, our earth; the individual organisms composing these kingdoms, the individual mind of the animal and the human, and finally, the groupings of men in societies, and in the domestic, ecclesiastical, political, professional, industrial and other institutions which constitute the organs of the social whole — are all seen to have gradually and slowly developed out of small beginnings.

Extremely valuable work has been done along these lines, most admirable collections of facts made, luminous inductions generalized out of them, the law of analogy justified more and more, and the growth of all and each seen to be as the growth of one.

## 2. ITS INCOMPLETENESS

But obviously something more — perhaps the most important thing — remains to be done. What is the good of building up the finest palace if no one can be found to live in it? The material coefficient has been prepared with much labor; the spiritual coefficient has to be joined to it. To *know* that the growth of all is as the growth of one is not enough. It is only the beginning, the preparation, the [Page 3] pioneer work, the strong and indispensable foundation, if we would have it so, for the further and complete *knowing* that *all lives are the One Life*, then for the *feeling* of that *common life* running through all, and finally for the *deliberate living* of such a *common life*; the realization in thought has to be followed up by the realization in emotion and then in conduct, of the solidarity, first of the human race, and then of all living beings whatsoever; and as it is rapidly becoming clear that all matter is living, that there is *no dead matter*, “all living beings” will soon be seen to mean the whole universe.

### 3. THE SUPPLEMENT REQUIRED

For this auspicious completion of the labour, a further step has to be taken. As the textbooks of science stand today, revised in the light of this great theory, they are *descriptions* of the *how* of things, they are not *explanations* of the *why* of the process; they set forth the *effects*, they do not really touch *causes*. The *why* is the purpose, the end and aim, the *final cause*, as rightly named by Plato; and the *how* is the subservient means. The one is Spiritual; the other Material. Evolution, professing to explain everything else, does not explain itself. That which explains evolution, *why* it takes place, is the Owner of the palace and the gardens, Who indeed has planned and built and evolved and developed them [Page 4] and spread them out for His own satisfaction, without Whom they are empty and desolate indeed.

When the further step is taken by the workers in the field of evolutionary research, of extending the Law of Analogy, which they now confine mostly to the *growth* of organisms (at least so far as the larger organic wholes are concerned), to the birth, decay and death, and the *rebirth* or *reproduction* of these also; and when we carefully study the *why* of the world-process as a whole, then will the spiritual counterpart of the material appearance be found.

Only when the embryo has attained a certain minimum maturity of form within the womb, does *viability* descend upon it. Only when the body, the material sheathing of the human being, has arrived at a certain stage of development, does self-consciousness appear in him. Only when he has arrived at a certain further stage can the "All-Self-Consciousness" manifest within and inspire him. In Theosophical language, as the lower becomes more and more fit, so does the higher enter more and more fully into it, and abide in it; having influenced it towards maturity from above, from a distance, so to say, until the entrance, even as the master guides the construction of the house from without, until it is ready for his occupation. Even so, only when the collection of the facts showing evolutionary growth is completed by further facts of this and also of the subtler worlds, relating to decay and death and [Page 5] *rebirth*, individual as well as racial, then only can the true metaphysic descend into it and fulfil its purpose.

### 4. NEED FOR CRITICISM

As the recognition of one's deficiencies is the primary condition of the search for the remedy, and divine discontent (*vairāgya*) is the only means of finding the Divine, we might usefully dwell on those of the current evolution theory.

The old Creation theory, in India called the *Ârambhavāda*, made only *one* large assumption, of omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience, which could create everything out of nothing at one stroke. The new Evolution theory (which, with completions, is called the *Parināma-vāda* in Samskrt literature) makes endless small assumptions at every step. What the former did at one *infinite* stroke, this does by *infinitesimal* changes, differentiations and integrations, formations and dissolutions, variations and selections. The marvel is as great, the unintelligibility no less, to the thinker who does not permit himself to mistake *mere familiarity* for intelligibility, mere slowing down for complete rest, the infinitesimal for anything less than the infinite. The need for *final* explanations becomes, if possible, deeper than ever.

Formerly it was the pastime of God, or His benevolence and compassion, the wish to share His joy with other conscious beings, [Page 6] or to have His glory seen and sung by such. Now, for the time being, even this has been lost, and no other clearer purpose has risen in its place; and the Force behind each step of the evolution is called the Unknowable.

Of course, even as in the house that is being built, the builders, directly or indirectly but inevitably, feel the guidance of the owner, even so the investigators of evolution, the collectors of facts, the makers of lesser generalizations, cannot help sensing the Something which is behind and around all evolution and involution and perpetual re-volution; but they do so somewhat dimly, and often even ignore the feeling, as not of any obvious use to the work immediately in hand. This naturally leads to errors of omission and commission, of interpreting facts wrongly, of emphasizing the smaller, unimportant and subordinate ones, and minimizing the greater and more vital; even as ignorance of the needs and purposes of the owner leads builders to leave things undone or make excrescences in the house. And the errors are not insignificant and negligible. They have vital consequences. A wrong outlook upon life may make it all barren, pessimistic, quarrelsome, fevered, desperate, instead of joyful, loving and fruitful. An apparently small defect of sanitation, ventilation or drainage, may mean the difference between disease and health, life and death, to the occupant of the house. [Page 7]

## **5. SPENCER'S UNFRUITFUL RECOGNITION OF THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE AS THE UNKNOWNABLE**

Herbert Spencer, whose collection of facts is the most comprehensive amongst the Western workers, and who, therefore, was the readiest to receive the fulfilling inspiration of the Spirit, postulates the Unknowable, at the very outset of his encyclopaedic system of Synthetic Philosophy, in answer to the Final Why, in place of the Eternal Reason (of the Joy of Self-assertion and Other-denial) which will explain all. And in so far as he recognises and declares the Presence of this Unknowable Absolute behind and through all the phenomena of the Relative, he rises to his duty as a true scientist and philosopher. But because his collection of facts is incomplete, because he could not seriously take into account the facts of the superphysical worlds, because he had not before him the complete history of any complete cycle, from birth, through growth and reproduction and decay, to death, of any sun-system or planet or race or sub-race, because he could not venture to push the Law of Analogy far enough, therefore his recognition of the Unknowable, the Absolute, the Anirvachaniya or Indescribable, as the Vedāntin names It, remains vague, cloudy, meaningless and devoid of living use. He just mentions it, once for all, so to say, and does not revert to it again, whereas he should do so constantly, throughout the [Page 8] story of the Relative, if not to make the latter really intelligible (for a mere Unknowable could scarcely do that), yet at least to prevent the reader from forgetting that there was something left for further research.

## **6. HOW THAT PRINCIPLE UNDERLIES ALL EVOLUTIONARY AND OTHER PROCESSES**

As it is, hasty readers, and not merely hasty readers but more industrious delvers in the field of evolutionary investigation, have sometimes, in the first flush of the finding of this great idea, rushed to the conclusion that they had come to the bottom of the Universe, finally and completely abolished all the old superstitions, and explained everything. They have gone the way of the astronomer who declared with a sensational flourish: "I have swept the heavens with my telescope and found no God" — a statement

perfectly true, by the way, for God indeed is not to be found by looking *outwards*, with a telescope, at the surface of the visible heavens, but by looking *inwards*, with concentrated and attentive mind, into the depths of one's own being, which is then seen to be identical with All Being. God was verily hiding *within* the wielder of the telescope and smiling while the hands were sweeping the heavens with the instrument. So a physiologist spoke of the brain secreting thought as the liver secretes bile, and [Page 9] others accepted the teaching; till one, erstwhile a disciple and propagandist, happened to study the works of some idealists, and discovered that while the so-called producers, liver and brain, might have something in common, the so-called products, bile and thought, had very little similarity with each other; and that between objective phenomena and subjective phenomena, between so many thousands or millions of vibrations at one end of a nerve and a sound-sensation or a colour-sensation at the other end thereof, there was a gulf which could not be bridged by lightly declaring the former to be the cause of the latter. Later scientists have gone even further, and declared that physical phenomena have to be explained by and reduced into terms of the psychical, and not *vice versa* and thus have come to the point where the influx of spiritual metaphysic can take place, completing, re-arranging and making new for them the whole scheme of knowledge and feeling and conduct, even as a stream of rays of light, converging in a cone to the pin-hole in a pin-hole camera, reappears on the other side, reversed and re-arranged, without losing any valuable and useful fact that it possessed before. The scientific world is beginning to realise that while the testimony on which all its knowledge of realities is based, is the testimony of the five senses, these senses do not testify to their own reality; while they prove the existence of other things, their own existence they cannot prove. The [Page 10] eye sees all things; itself it does not see. The ear hears all sounds; itself it does not hear. Their existence is proved only by the Consciousness behind them. This Principle of Consciousness sees the eye and hears the ear. As the sense-organs cognize, so various emotion-organs feel, and action-organs act. But the Principle of Consciousness behind cognizes the senses, feels the emotion-organs and moves the muscles. It gives existence to, keeps going and at will puts to sleep everything and all things, even as the audience, by *attending* or otherwise, brings the playhouse into being, and keeps it going, or closes it.

## 7. HOW THE EVOLUTIONIST MUST COME TO IT AT LAST

This Principle the scientist has to come to, more and more closely. Shrī Harsha, the William James, in brilliance, of the India of a thousand years ago, and deeper-seeing than he in insight into causes, spoke of the Self-disbeliever as the defaulter who, having successfully dodged the tax-collectors all night through the devious lanes of the town, went to sleep in a dark porch towards the morning, and woke up in the broad daylight to find that his shelter was the threshold of the chief tax-assessor's office building, and that the collectors were smiling benignly upon him. [Page 11]

Even so the modern evolutionist, after having dodged more or less successfully the upholders of special creation, through the winding pathways of infinite and infinitely-changing environments, endless spontaneous variations and survivals of the fittest, and incessant differentiations and integrations and dissolutions and re-integrations — all perfectly true, finds at the end, when he is feeling most self-satisfied, that he has walked into the arms of an even more formidable, exacting and ruthless account-keeper; that he has only come to the conclusion that *the infinite possibility* of all possible forms *is already present*, from the beginningless beginning, in the primeval biophore, the atomic speck of life — this same Infinite Potentiality, plus all Actuality, being what the Vedāntin calls Brahman, which is, and wherein is, “All, everywhere and always”.

## 8. THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN DIFFERENT ASPECTS

Herbert Spencer himself seems to have felt uncomfortable, and asked himself *how* all the richness of later development in religion could arise from the primitive man's shadow, through ancestral ghost and gods, if the shadow was really all shadow, a pure falsehood. And he confesses (*Principles of Sociology*, Vol. III, p. 170) that there *must* be some element of truth in the primitive notions, and again, in the [Page 12] postscript to the last edition of his *First Principles*, he states that no views or theories of religion or metaphysic are either controverted or supported by his descriptions of facts, and that these views and theories have to be worked out for themselves by persons interested in such matters. He seems to have realized that if nothing can come out of nothing in affairs material, surely the same law should hold good in affairs psychical. The perception of the shadow and the conception of the ghost — are these, or are these not, the same ? If not — *whence* the difference ? The primitive notion of the ghost, and the systems of theology and religion of today are *not identical*; and if different, how has the difference been implanted ? Professor Lombroso's investigations in spiritualism, and his conversion to a belief in the actual existence of ghosts, will explain. Having, as he thought, disproved the original Fiat, the (a) Primal Will, and (b) Imagination, and (c) Active Being or Substance of God, the evolutionist, even otherwise than by psychical research, has to accept all these again, no doubt with a more specific meaning, under the names of (a) persistence of survival or instinct of self-preservation, and (b) spontaneity of variation in (c) an endless activity of struggle for self-maintenance and other-resistance amidst an infinity of possible and actual forms and environments. God, who was invisible and far-away, has appeared all around us, amongst us. [Page 13]

### 8 (a). IN BIOLOGY

The evolutionary biologist set out with the determination to abolish the very words *vital force* and reduce into terms of the non-vital forces — as if they were any better understood and were less mysterious — all the manifestations that were ascribed by common ignorance and superstition to that mysterious *vital force*. But after digging up whole mountains, he is still as far from discovering the particular mouse he wanted as ever before; though in the course of his labours he had incidentally made many other most valuable finds, like the sons of Aesop's peasant who, dying, told them to dig for hidden treasure in the ancestral field, and so ensured a deep and thorough upturning of the soil and a rich harvest. Verily the biologists' nucleus and protoplasm are the reflections of soul and body, Spirit and Matter, and the living cell's powers of reproduction and metabolism and contractile irritability are the same old discarded Will and wise Imagination and Active Being, in more specific form. God, who was distant, has come nearer, so near as to be immanent in every cell of the living temple. As the Vedāntin says, the mother, forgetting where she had put away her baby, went about distracted, crying for it all over the town; and ultimately returning home in despair, found it safely tucked away in her own bed. [Page 14]

### 8 (b). IN SOCIOLOGY

The growth from the priest-king-patriarch, of the sociologists' ecclesiastico-professional, politico-military, and domestico-industrial, or, more briefly, the educative, regulative and sustentative factors of society, and the intellectual, militant, and artist-craftsman, or brāhmana, kshatriya and vaishya types of individuals — can be accounted for satisfactorily only by the eternal presence in the Principle of Consciousness of the same constituent elements of Imagination, Active Self-assertion, and Wilful Expansion by means of substantial possessions.

### 8 (c). IN PHYSIOLOGY

So also, the physiologist's nervous, glandulovascular and muscular systems (with their repeated triple subdivisions), evolved, out of centrosome-chromatin-protoplasm or endoderm-hypoderm-ectoderm, can be really explained only by reference to the same psychological triplet of Imagination, etc., better called Cognition, Desire and Action, ever present (in mutual solution and neutralization) in that Absolute Consciousness which is made up of the Self, the Not-Self, and the Relation of Interplay, between them, of the nature of Denial of one another. [Page 15]

### 8 (d). IN CHEMISTRY

The chemist, too, having resolved the world of matter into atoms, valencies and composition-properties, in order really to understand what these mean, must translate them into terms of consciousness; the same old desiring and desirable Self as substance, Its activity as affinity, and Its wisdom or imagination as special sense-property, and these together as being the underlying significance of the chemical triplet.

### 8 (e). IN PHYSICS

So the physicist, having arrived with admirable industry at the general fact and conception of Force, manifesting in many forms with many material coefficients of these forms, finds that the thing Force is wholly unintelligible. He gives it different names, he calls it energy, power, resistance, push, pull, negative, positive, defines it in terms of weight and work and distance and measure and number — but cannot really bring it home to himself, until he sees it as Will, his own will, his own desire, with its branchings in negative passion and positive action, and its many transformations (Imaginations) in our psychical and physiological functionings, with the help of the various Substances, material coefficients, physical bases, vehicles, organs, receivers, foci, diffusers, which make up the living body we know so well yet so little. [Page 16]

### 8 (f). IN MATHEMATICS

Even the mathematician, that wielder of the most exact of sciences, must ultimately take refuge in the *airy nothings* of metaphysic, which, being airy, are, as the breath, far more incessantly necessary to our life than solids or liquids. Who ever saw the geometrician's point that had a position but no magnitude, or the line that was all length but no breadth, or the sphere whose center was really and truly equidistant from all points of the periphery? These are all purely metaphysical conceptions. The only such point that we know and feel and realize is our self-consciousness, our Ego, which is here and now and yet cannot be measured, the only such line is our memory-expectation, that stretches continuously before and after, the only such sphere is our field of consciousness, our Kshetra, our rounded-out being, wherein everything and all experiences exist always, and each point of which is neither more nor less distant than any other from that central Self which is the Kshetrajaña, the owner and the knower of that field, who moves over it from point to point, at will, in the shape of Attention. The geometrician's definitions stand for Desire, his axioms for Knowledge, his postulates for Action; and out of these three the whole of his science is built. Even the arithmetician's *one*, his *many*, his *zero* — are all entirely unfixable in the

concrete, for none [Page 17] ever saw a *one* that had not many parts, and none ever held a *zero* in his hands. These are all fixable only as metaphysical conceptions, corresponding to the same Triad of consciousness, the one Subject, the manifold Object, and the relation of Negation between them, viz., the unconsciousness of sleep, in which the manifold merges into Nothing.

Thus do we see that all paths of enquiry, if only resolutely pursued, bring us to the selfsame goal — that metaphysical conceptions form the very foundations of every science, and that when the house of matter is ready, the Spirit unfailingly comes in to occupy it, the Spirit, the Master of the house, who knows *all* its ins and outs, all its many departments, co-ordinates and utilizes them all; though the mason, the carpenter, the brick-maker, the glazier, the plumber, the electrician, the painter — each knows about his own and no other.

But another illustration, an historical one, of this fact is that when material science had made sufficient progress, there was an inrush of spiritualism in the lower sense of ghost-phenomena as well as the higher sense of spiritual philosophy, Theosophy and metaphysic. The same facts of the life of matter out of which Herbert Spencer built up his system of synthetic philosophy, with many gaps that require filling, and many generalizations that are one-sided and require revision, and with the *why* of everything unexplained—these same facts are evolved by [Page 18] Madame H. P. Blavatsky in her works, written during the same epoch as Spencer's, from spiritual data, the basic principles of the Supreme Consciousness, in a manner which supplements to our satisfaction the results of the evolutionists, fills up their gaps, revises and rectifies their generalizations, explains anomalies, and helps us on towards the reason *why* for all this toil and turmoil.

## **9. THE SCIENCE OF THIS PRINCIPLE OF CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE ABSOLUTE**

For as there is a Science of the Relative, so is there a Science of the Absolute, the so-called Unknowable, the Principle of Consciousness. This latter science is discernible as ramifying through, and indeed constituting, the very science-ness and rationality in the former. It is metaphysic subjectively and mathematics objectively. The element of uniform, law and order, and balancing up, and cyclic periodicity, in the midst of unruly multitudinousness, is the subject-matter of this science. In continually equilibrating up the Relative within Itself, the Absolute manifests as the Omnipotent Will which upholds as well as circumscribes Omniscient Imagination and Omnipresent Action, while It Itself finds possibility of manifestation only through them, in turn. This Universal Consciousness imposes by Force, by Might, by Energy, by Eternal Shakti, [Page 19] the law of unity, of uniformity, of the Axioms, upon the riot and disorder of the infinite material of the Definitions and the endless movement of the Postulates; and, in the first proposition of Euclid, creates, by the intersection of the two circles of Purusha and Prakrti, the equilateral and equiangular Jîvã, with three equally important functions of mind and three equally indispensable components of body. It imposes, by the wisdom of the Rule of Three, the law of just ratio and proportion on the ir-ratio-nal multiplications and divisions of the countless numbers of the world-process.

## **10. THE LINK BETWEEN THE SCIENCES OF THE RELATIVE AND THE ABSOLUTE**

To bridge over the gap between the modern evolution theory and the old Brahma-vidyã and Âtma-vidyã, or metaphysic and psychology, we have to consult the History of the World-Process, as given in the

*Purānas* and in Madame Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, for corrections and additions to such modern collections of facts as are contained in Spencer's monumental writings. These corrections and additions may be briefly noted as below:

(a) While Spencer recognizes and mentions the fact of Dissolution, as the complementary reaction of Evolution, he does not bring out its full significance. It was pointed out by others, in his lifetime, that his [Page 20] statement of the instability of the homogeneous required to be supplemented by a statement of the instability of the heterogeneous. He replied that he had made the needed statement in the form that the heterogeneous tended to become more heterogeneous. But this only means that the element of *homogeneity still left* in the product after a course of hetero-genition, breaks up further. It is not that complement and converse or opposite which is wanted, *viz.*, that as the homogeneous tends to become the heterogenous, so, *per contra*, the heterogeneous tends to become homogeneous. There are *opposing* currents in the stream of the World-process, because it is made up of the *opposite* Factors of Spirit and Matter. This fact, of dust back unto dust, through living body, Spencer has not clearly brought out. He seems to have stopped at the half-truth — of dust to living body, and did not fully realize the other half— living body to dust again — in all its fullness, as applying to all *systems* of planets and suns and stars, as well as *organisms* of microscopic bacilli. Theosophical literature has endeavored to supply this lack, taking wide views of astro-geny and geo-geny, which Spencer could not deal with, either in their physical or their superphysical aspects.

(6) The second fact which the *Puranās* and *The Secret Doctrine* supply is that of Reproduction *on all scales*. The three main events in the life of every [Page 21] organism are birth, marriage and death. The evolutionists have dealt with birth and growth principally; not with decay and death to the same extent, as said above; nor with marriage and reproduction as fully, though these constitute the third outstanding feature of life. The tendency to multiply by reproducing themselves is as inherent in all beings as to be born and to die. Even as a tree is born from a tree, an animal from an animal, a man from a man, even so is a god born from a god, a kingdom from a kingdom, a race from a race, an idea from an idea, an epoch from an epoch, a cycle from a cycle, an aeon from an aeon, a planet from a planet, a sun from a sun, a star-system from a star-system, an atom from an atom, a cell from a cell, a sound from a sound, a visible picture from a visible form, and so on endlessly. Infinity surges everywhere.

By the recognition of these two further facts, in their full significance, the work of the evolutionists is completed, so far as description is concerned, and the course of the world-process is seen to run in an endless cyclical spiral.

(c) The last addition which ancient metaphysic endeavors to make to modern evolutionary science, in terms suited to current needs, is the addition of the Why and Wherefore, the Purpose and Meaning of evolution, reproduction and dissolution, the inner explanation and reason of the appearance which we call the world-process. It explains why (and also, in [Page 22] a re-arranged form, how) all this endless and ceaseless change and motion appears within Eternal Changelessness and Rest; and makes the bewildering multitude of physical and super-physical details intelligible as a synthetic and perfectly co-ordinate unity, wherein there is an appropriate place for every department of science, and every variety of religion, and all possible beliefs and ideas. It tells us of the passionless Absolute which is the Source of the Psychic Energy without the belief in which no religion can exist, and which is also the locus of that Material Substance without the belief in which science is impossible. It also shows us that belief in personal gods of higher and higher grades is in perfect consistency with, nay, required by, strict science. It helps us to realize that this Absolute is that very Principle of Consciousness with which all individual



consciousnesses are identical. It brings home to us the fact that every atom contains the whole world at the same time that it is contained in that world; that everything is everywhere and always, because it is all of the very substance of consciousness, in eternal simultaneity, while manifestation is in and by succession — as the biologist has also discovered when he says that the primeval biophore contains, in the shape of an infinite number of *id*-s, the seeds or potencies of all forms of all species that develop subsequently in the course of ages. Finally, it enables us to reconcile all possible differences by a judicious combination of both the [Page 22] opposite extremes that may be in seemingly hopeless conflict, by means of the great fact that the two ultimate archetypes of opposites, Self and not-Self, are present in eternal and inseparable combination in that selfsame Principle of Consciousness.

### **11. UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND ITS TWO ASPECTS, PHYSICAL AND PSYCHICAL**

This Principle of Consciousness, Universal Consciousness, pervades all, supports and maintains all, makes possible all memory and mutual understanding and sympathy and help between living individuals, and indeed all recognition by them of each other as *individual consciousnesses*, which would otherwise be wholly impossible; wills the perpetual to-and-fro swing of life and death, integration and dissolution, inspiration and expiration, under laws which are parts of Its Being, Its Nature, Its Sva-bhāva; imagines the endless forms which illustrate that swing in atom and star-system; makes and breaks souls and bodies, *jīvas* and *koshas*, cores and crusts; is ever present in, and always, and in a see-saw fashion, assimilating and also differentiating, both subjects and objects, knowers and known, desirers and desired; leaving nothing inanimate, but only permitting illusive appearances of more animate and less so. It is the Principle which bridges the chasm between the psychical and the physical, for it holds together both in Its hands, [Page 24] imagines and creates both by Its will. Because It identifies Itself with a form and a colour by Its own will and imagination, therefore It becomes an eye which can see forms and colours; because It identifies itself with a sound, It becomes an ear and can hear sounds. There is no chasm between vibrations and sensation, between physical and psychical, *because both are present at both ends of the nerve*. The vibrations are the vibrations of a living substance, the sensation is a sensation in substantialised or materialised Spirit. Because the Self has identified Itself, by Its will and imagination, with a material body, and not only with one but with all, in its universal aspect; therefore living bodies, pieces of matter in which the psychical aspect is more prominent, can cognise other bodies in which the material aspect is more prominent. Only by regarding all forms as en-soul-ed and all souls as in-form-ed, or em-bodi-ed, though in some the one aspect and in others the other is predominant, may we fill up this chasm.

### **12. INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS AS PRODUCT OF COGNITION AND ACTION RUNNING IN AND OUT OF EACH OTHER**

Even as the electric spark is the result of the two kinds of electricity, positive and negative, running into each other after separation, even so life, individualized life, is the running into each other of the [Page 25] forces or aspects belonging to the two halves of the principle of Consciousness, Brahman, the two poles named Spirit and Matter, Self and not-Self. The force belonging to the negative pole, or not-Self, may be said to correspond with *kāma-prāna*, the lower personal passion and its allied selfish intelligence; the other with *Buddhi*, the higher and impersonal passion or compassion and unselfish reason. The running together of the two makes the light of manifest life, or mentality. Thus we have the Self, or *Âtma*, and *Buddhi*, or compassionate wisdom and higher or self-sacrificing desire, on the one hand; and the Not-Self, or Body and *Prāna*, or passionate vitality and lower or selfish desire on the other; and between them

the Manas. And even as the longer-circuited and the more complexly twisted the incandescent wire, the richer the light; even so the more complex the organization of the material sheath and the more numerous its concatenated hormones and mutually stimulating secretions and excretions, the richer the manifestation, in individual intelligence, of the Principle of Consciousness.

Thus then, we may see that it is this Principle which brings about the superimposition — *adhyāsa* — of each other's qualities illusively, on subject and object, and so, bridging over the gulf of opposition between them by the very act of creating them both from within Itself, brings them into relation with each other, and maintains the perpetual motion [Page 26] of this infinite world-process. It pervades all; within. It all live and move and have their being: It cannot be upheld by anything else than Itself.

But we have to remember that it is not the individual consciousness that has this supreme power of sustaining and regulating the world-process. The dissatisfaction felt with such otherwise excellent expositions of Idealism as that of Berkeley is due to this impression left by them that the individual consciousness is the all in all (though that was not Berkeley's intention). It is the Universal Consciousness, or if we like it better, the Universal Principle of Consciousness — for it covers all those manifestations also which are popularly called even unconsciousness, or subconsciousness or supra-consciousness, waking, dreaming, slumbering, etc. — which is that sustainer of the Universe, and which includes all individual consciousnesses as identical with Itself, as so many infinite points, foci, of Its manifestation.

### **13. THE NEXT STEP FOR MODERN PSYCHOLOGY AND THE SCIENCE OF THINKING**

Modern psychology has discovered that no mental phenomenon stands by itself wholly unconnected with others. There is not even a single sensation which can be called a simple state of consciousness. Every such apparently single and simple sensation is also only a point, a factor, an element in and of the total [Page 27] complex consciousness of the moment, of any given individual; its supposed singleness is only an *appearance*, *i.e.*, an illusion, a *māyā*, due to that individual directing his attention to it, so making it *the most prominent* feature of that complex consciousness for the time. So also has modern psychology discovered, or is discovering, that thought and emotion and volition can never be completely dissociated. Each sensation is connected with a desire, each desire with an impulse, a tendency to action. There is no emotion but has a more or less distinct background of ideas; no idea but is tinged, however slightly, with an emotion; neither of these, again, but is directly or indirectly associated with a conation, however incipient. Modern psychology is thus discovering the fact of the continuum of the individual consciousness.

But it has to make a further advance. Even as a single sensation is only an inseparable and organic part of a total of individual consciousness, even so is every so-called total of individual consciousness an organic and inseparable part of the Universal Consciousness. Even as nature, the object-world, is interlinked in all its parts, even more so is the subject-world a breakless unity. The chain of causation stretches unbroken, *akhanda*, from end to end of time; all things are acting and reacting on all other things simultaneously in boundless space; the whole contains the parts in actual and specific detail, each part contains the whole in general potency; the tree [Page 28] contains the seeds, each seed the tree; all sensations are being sensed, all desires felt, all acts done, everywhere, always, by the All. But at any one point, only one sensation, or one desire, or one act is more prominently attended to by that point of

consciousness. Further, when any such jīva-focus, having, in accordance with the cyclic laws of its own particular being, imposed on it by that Universal Being with which it is identical, come to its finest point of personality and egoism, begins to disperse towards Impersonality, this knowledge of its own unbroken continuity with all else arises within it.

#### **14. ITS COMPLETION AND CONVERSION INTO ADVAITA METAPHYSIC**

When modern psychology discovers this, it will become converted into metaphysic, Advaita Vedānta, the “non-dualistic or monistic crown of knowledge”, which sees that there is only One Consciousness without a second, of which all apparently and illusively separate ones are so many points of manifestation. This is how Nyāya and Vaisheshika, corresponding, roughly, with logic-psychology and physics, merge into Yoga and Sañkhya, superphysics and psycho-physics; and these into the two Mīmāṃsās, the Unity of Action - and the Unity of Thought.

An Indian apologue tells of a band of passengers who set out on a long, difficult and dangerous journey, wandered off from each other, on different errands, [Page 29] and met again after long years. Then to make sure that all was well, they counted each other. But every counter counted all his companions but not himself, and so none could obtain full tale. And there was much perplexity and sorrow, till some one remembered, and counting himself also, corrected the oversight, the primal error of Avidyā, “forgetfulness of Self”, and secured full and assured tale of eternal deathlessness for all. By no counting of details *outside*, no heaping up of endless particulars of physical or superphysical worlds, may *that assurance* be gained. Much interesting and instructive work, no doubt, and valuable lessons and experiences, and excellent and indeed indispensable occupation, may be gained. But until man sees himself, his Self, *the* Self, the count is incomplete, the final secret hidden, the *why* unknown, the bondage and the slavery to things and forces outside unbroken, the oneness of all life and all nature unrealized, that perfect same-sightedness unachieved which sees the same Life-Principle manifesting everywhere, the same law of the rhythmic swing of life and death, joy and sorrow, good and evil, evolution and dissolution, working ceaselessly in all creatures, from insect to Star-ruler, the Law which carries eternal assurance of all experiences and equal justice to all souls.

Metaphysic is thus the necessary completion and unification of all sciences, physical and superphysical. It explains the essential laws of all the manifestations [Page 30] of the Universal Principle of Consciousness, in infinite individual lives of combined spirit and matter, of whatever grade of subtlety or density. It enables us to understand the *why*, as the sciences tell us the *how*. [See *The Science of Peace*, and *The Science of the Sacred Word; or the Pranāva-Vāda of Gārgyayana*, by Bhagavan Das]

#### **15. PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES**

But what is the practical bearing, the pragmatic consequence, as it is called now, of this particular understanding ? Just this. The mere *descriptions*, available in modern works, of the evolution of worlds, kingdoms, living beings, the human race, its complex societies and institutions, no more dispense with the study of this Science of the Self than a description of edibles dispenses with the actual eating of them to maintain life. Science, it is universally acknowledged, is useless if we cannot make it subserve life. The knowledge of evolution is useless unless we know also its purpose. Only when we know the purpose can we definitely and deliberately tread our proper path in life, can we make the forces and materials

available help on that purpose. This knowledge of the *why*, of the Svabhāva of Brahman, which includes and regulates the ends of the pursuant and then the renunciant life, is the true spiritual knowledge, Parā-Vidyā; all else, however glorious and far-reaching in detail, is material knowledge, Aparā-Vidyā.