

The Superphysics of the Great War by Bhagavan Das

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[Page 1] It is true that no course of human action, no solution of any problem in any department of human life, is wholly good or wholly evil. Good hides in the secret heart of evil, somewhere; as, alas! does evil in the deepest heart of good also. The purest joy leaves behind it an after-taste of some sorrow; and the worst pain bears within its womb the seed and the promise of some satisfaction.

सुखस्यानन्तरं दुःखं दुःखस्यानन्तरं सुखम् ॥
किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।
कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥
कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥—*Gītā*.

“What is right action, what is wrong action — even the wise are sorely perplexed to distinguish. He who sees each in the distant consequences of the other, and [Page 2] real absence of action (absence of any real change in the aggregate total whole of the Universe) in both ultimately — as taught by the Final Knowledge — he alone sees well and truly, and he alone does all acts duly and with an even mind”, for he realizes that the World-Process is essentially made up of सत् and असत्, of opposites of all kinds, that “it takes all kinds to make a world”, (wherefore “to understand all is to forgive all”), and that every one should diligently discharge his duty of the moment, the net total of world-activities remaining always the same.

Short of this Final and Total View, the perplexity is ever present that “there are two sides to every question”, and that either side alternately acquires the greater importance according as we shift the limits of space and time and circumstance in considering consequences. In the course of nature, disadvantages are always meeting their “compensations” in advantages, and vice versa, everywhere. The fairest flowers spring from the foulest manures. The finest known living organism, the human, makes the most putrid and pestilential corpse. The saddest tragedy of an individual life makes the sweetest poetry for a whole people. The genius in one respect is a neuropath in another. The fools of this world are the wise of the next; and the successful here are not so successful hereafter. Where the outer life is rich, the inner is often poor; and the public honours generally hide burning heart-hungers in the private life.

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In Fiji, parents, when they become feeble with old age, are, or at least were till recently, killed and eaten up by their own children, as a religious duty, and by the insistent wish of the parents themselves. Horrible — from the civilized standpoint; a merciful release from the miseries of a helpless old age among a people that derive their livelihood almost exclusively from hunting and fishing, and a great “economic” and “biologic” advantage from the point of view of the tribe as a whole, in respect of “efficiency”.

What seems more harmless, nay, right and proper and indeed due, than to give alms to the poor? Yet economists tell us, and tell us not untruly, that in much almsgiving is hidden a potent encouragement to the vice of idle parasitism, and that charity, intended to relieve and diminish poverty, in the long run increases it and spreads it wider. The fifty lakhs of “professional mendicants” of the India of today are living testimony.

What duty of the sovereign seems clearer than to diffuse widely the benefits of “literacy”? Yet it is pointed out, and not altogether without good reason, that “literacy” (as distinguished from “education”) is not an unalloyed blessing; that even in the wider sense of education, predominantly literary studies unfit, rather than prepare, the ordinary man for many of the more objective pursuits of real life and the avocations that require physical activity; that the hostility, or at least incompatibility [Page 4] and “disparity of temperament,” between “intellect” and “muscle”, “thought” and “action,” **विद्या and कर्म**, is irreconcilable in more senses than one; (**ज्ञानकर्म- विरोधाच्च ।** Mundaka, I, i, Shânkara-Bhâshya); that it is not every one who can benefit himself or the State by the reading and writing of books or journalistic articles; and that it is not useful, or wise, or even safe to force the **वेद** on the person who has not the nature of the **द्विज**

Even so, what can be more undesirable, more horrible than War? Yet there are many writers at the present time who are loud in praise of it as an effectual check upon luxurious effeminacy, as a tonic, a stimulus, an awakener, a promoter of mental health and dormant energies and new arts and sciences and discoveries and inventions.

So far as *defensive* war is concerned, obviously none can gainsay its duty, its virtue, its heroism its necessity.

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ राजन् सूर्यमण्डलभेदिनौ ।

योगी योगसमारूढः शूरश्च समरे हतः ॥—Mahābhārata.

ब्राह्मणार्थे गवार्थे वा देहत्यागोऽनुपस्कृतः ।

स्त्रीबालाभ्युपपत्तौ च बाह्यानां सिद्धिकारणम् ॥—Manu.

“Two souls, O king! pierce through the photosphere of the Sun and enter into Its Heart where is the abode of the Free — the soul of him who has achieved perfect Yoga, and the soul of the brave warrior who has fallen, face forwards, battling for a [Page 5] just cause. To lay down life in righteous defence of women and children and the aged wise and the milch-cows that help to nourish the babies — this

supreme sacrifice wins at one stroke the highest results of long perfected Yoga and heavenly bliss for even the outcaste”.

It is true there are some who hold that even defensive war is not right, that it is better always to suffer wrong and resist not, e.g., the followers of Count Tolstoy, the Doukhobortscoi of Russia, the original Bahâis of Persia, or, in a less extreme form, the Quakers; but Sanâtana Dharma makes the right distinction and supplies the needed correction to this extreme doctrine by saying that it is true and due only for the Brâhmana, and especially the Sannyâsi, and then too when the wrong is done to himself. Then it is right that he should “turn the other cheek”. For the householder, and yet more for the

Kshattriya, and yet more when the wrong is done to a dependent, the doctrine is **तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत**, “Fight, then, O Arjuna!” Even the Brâhmana and the hermit is enjoined to interfere in extreme cases, on pain of losing his high status:

**ब्राह्मणः समदृक् शान्तो दीनानां समुपेक्षकः ।
स्त्रवते ब्रह्म तस्यापि भिन्नभाण्डात्पयो यथा ॥—Bhāgavata.**

As regards offensive war, there is naturally much difference of opinion. Those who feel strong, and confident of their ability to conquer aggressively, [Page 6] are loud in the praise of the duty of **दिग्विजय**, “world-conquest”, “world-dominion”. As Tulasî Dâs says, **समरथ के नहीं दोष गुसाई**, herein translating the verse of the Bhāgavata:

**धर्मव्यतिक्रमो दृष्ट ईश्वराणां च साहसम् ।
तेजीयसां न दोषाय बहेः सर्वभुजो यथा ॥**

“The man of might will often flout the right quite recklessly; the Fire-flame will devour everything and suffer not from indigestion.”

But those whose lands and homes are being laid to waste by the ruthless invader, whose kith and kin are being outraged and murdered before their eyes, they cannot but cry for heaven’s curse upon the oppressor and upon all aggressive war. And the indefeasible law, ordained by the very Nature of the Universal Self, is that:

ईश्वरैरपि भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाशुभम् ।

“Even the mightiest must suffer to the full the appropriate consequences of their doings!” The cry of the weak is stronger than the sword of the tyrant. The sword cuts the body of the victim; the cry fastens upon the soul of the wrong-doer with greater torture.

And so sick of this horrible slaughter that began with August 1914, and has now been going on in Europe for a year and a half nearly, and of the [Page 7] tremendous waste of life and livelihood, are people by this

time that, there is good reason to believe, the bulk of the populations of even the aggressive countries are wishing now for a cessation of hostilities; and many think — the wish being father to the thought — that this, the greatest of all wars of history, will be the last also, because of its so bitter lessons to all the nations, and that the millennium will follow close upon its ending.

If it be permissible and useful to add to the conjectures on this point, not idly but with a practical aim in view, we may perhaps make an attempt to find out the bearing of the principles of Adhyâtma-Vidyâ on the problem.

If there were concerned only the present mood of those who are not actually engaged in fighting, and who have therefore leisure for other than the actively martial emotions, the present mood of the mothers, the fathers, the wives, the children of the bread-winners who are fighting, on both sides, then there is little doubt but that they are all united in raising one continuous and passionate cry to the heavens, “O God! how long?” and there is little doubt also that the longed-for peace and शान्ति would be re-established before long and more permanently than ever before. But, it is quite certain, it is not only this present mood, and of such only, that is concerned. Their other moods, in potentia, are also of account; as also the moods of others, who, themselves not actually fighting, [Page 8] are yet actively helping on the War; and much more so, the passions of those who are actively fighting; and, finally, more important than all others, the last passions of those who have gone to the other worlds direct from the fields of battle or from the hospitals.

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These verses of the Gītâ, and of its origins, the *Upanishats*, state the superphysical law that seems to govern the problem. The passions of human beings, their greeds and jealousies, their lusts for “wine, women, wealth”, for “finery, flirtation, and fascination of men”, for “zar, zamin o zan”, their

दारैषणा, वित्तैषणा, लोकैषणा, their consuming ambitions and rankling hatreds and undying wraths, as also their sublimely self-effacing compassions and devotions and sacrifices and quenchless yearnings to protect and help — in short their loves and hates with their countless [Page 9] derivative emotions — these constitute the strong bonds which inescapably bind souls to each other, and form the electric wires along which plays the soul-force (their own essence), which unflinchingly, exactly, accurately, brings about the adjustments of karmic consequences in pleasure and pain, by action and reaction, endlessly, between those souls, till the fire of the Final Realization of the Unity of All gradually evaporates these passions and burns up the cords, and the electric wires fuse and the currents disappear in a Flash of

Non Separateness, and the souls are set free, by realizing that there is none else who compels. But till then the play goes on. The motley troupe of actors, rogue-heroes and heroines, as well as angel-heroes and heroines, tangle themselves up with each other in marvellous complications, quite voluntarily, in this world-drama, under the guidance of their own self-chosen Leader, the Great Playwright — who is indeed the aggregate of themselves, their Oversoul, their Sûtrâtmâ, in whose Consciousness they all live and move and have their being. It is only when the Playwright and the players are tired of the play, the sport, the lîlâ, in which they have plunged and lost themselves, and recover fully the consciousness that it is all make-believe and fun and mâyâ — it is only then that the play ceases, for the time being, and the sleep of *pralaya* reigns instead. Love and War (in their infinite shades) are the only two *interests* of all this life-play; they are the very [Page 10] substance and essence of the wires with which the Oversoul pulls the puppets of this Punch-and-Judy show to and fro; they are the only instruments of the law of Karma, and are invariably accompanied by their retributive coefficients of joy and sorrow, happiness and misery, triumph and mortification.

सुखानुशयी रागः । दुःखानुशयी द्वेषः ॥ — *Yoga-Sûtras*.

According, then, as is “the ruling passion strong in death” — and only the passion that has ruled throughout life, or a strong reaction therefrom to its opposite which has been long maturing under the surface, thus having a good chance of being strong at the death also — such will be the rebirth of the departing soul, such its next appearance in the succeeding scene and act, in surroundings fitted to manifest that passion and its train of consequences. If any variety of the mood of love is in the ascendant at that supreme moment, then the next birth will be a loving one in an appropriate environment. If, however, any kind of hate prevails then, the consequent birth will be a hateful one also. In the words of the Upanishats above quoted, the departing soul, in the moment of profound trance that precedes the actual severance from the last centre of life (some say in the heart, some in the brain, some in the navel, — all being connected by the Sushumnâ, suggest others in reconciliation,

उदरमुपासते य ऋषिवर्त्मसु कूर्पदृशः *etc.*, Bhâgavata) “reviews [Page 11] its whole past life and sums it up, saying to itself, ‘Remember thy prevailing motive, thy ruling passion, to which all else of thy life was subordinated’, and then departs to the other world, with its subtle organ-germs and faculties, (its biophorids and determinants, re-arranged like the coloured pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope, in a new adjustment, a new seed of a new life), to manifest in a new birth in this world in due time.”

Now if there be any truth in these views, their bearing on the problem before us, *viz.*, What are the probable results of this War on the future history of the human race, is obvious; but, also, it is no more and no less easy to state these results clearly than it is to describe positively the emotional conditions of the combatants and the non-combatants involved, individually, and in the mass.

How many of the nations concerned crave for self-aggrandizement at the expense of others, as one openly does for एकछत्रता, Universal Sovereignty, for World-Dominion, for the opportunity of imposing its own super-eminent culture and type of civilization on all the others? Does any one, do most of the nations and countries sincerely think of self-sacrifice, pure and simple? How many of them are maintaining a keen eye on the main chance of a substantial share in the spoils? How many of the souls that are being deprived of their bodies violently and are flinging them away lavishly — how [Page 12] many

of these pass into the other worlds with thoughts of “peace on earth and good-will amongst men”, and how many in frenzies of wrath and bitterness, or terror and despair, or burning hate and maddening horror?

In times, places, and circumstances, like those which enframe the previous Great War of the Mahâbhârata, while no doubt the psychological causes of the war were the same as in this case — inordinate land-hungers, immense jealousies, haughty arrogance and pride of power, and reckless lusts of all kinds — yet also there was present, permeating the whole intellectual, emotional and physical atmosphere of Bhârata-Varsha, the thought of, and the aspiration towards, and the working for, other and better worlds, the active and wishful recognition of other births, of the superiority of the spiritual over the material, of the superphysical over the physical. And, thus, most of the warriors, even while they slew each other, felt not unfriendly in their hearts, and, while regretting the circumstances which had made war inevitable, also took it as Kshatriya-duty, and as not altogether unpleasant Kshatriya occupation; to use the modern phrase, took it all as “good sport”, in “the sporting spirit”. The confession of Dhrtarâshtra is typical:

जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः
जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः । [Page 13]

केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन
यथा नियुक्तोऽस्मि तथा करोमि ॥

“I know the right and yet I cannot do it. I know the wrong and yet may not avoid it. As by some god hidden within the heart, I feel compelled and helplessly I act”. Duryodhana himself and his allies all well knew that his cause was wrong, and made no excuses and put forward no sophistries and moral myths — but quite frankly admitted they were wrong and fought for the sake of fighting. It has also to be borne in mind that only the Kshatriya population took part in the war, and not the vast bulk of the rest, the men of learning, the men of trade and industry, and the men of service.

The result of this state of things was that the actors concerned recognized that they were only actors in a divine drama; and so, after the play was over and the war ended, comparatively little bitterness was left behind, and the subsequent peace on earth was a substantial one and lasted for a great many generations, and the warrior-souls from both sides also met together in the heaven-worlds on terms of the most cheerful friendship and were very far from anxious to return early to this planet of sorrows — if we are to believe the *Mahâbhârata* narratives. Do the soldiers of this Greater War possess similar souls?

If any such superphysical, *i.e.*, emotional and intellectual conditions are largely prevalent today [Page 14] also, in Europe, as were in Mahâbhâratan India, then the result will be similar too. We may remember that the proportion of the forces of Good and Evil, which was as seven to eleven akshauhini's (great army corps, numbering two hundred and eighteen thousand and seven hundred fighting men, each, besides elephants, horses, chariots, drivers of these and sub-servants) at the beginning of that war, was changed at the end of it to seven to three (surviving individuals). But if the conditions are different, the result must be different. Many speculations are afloat that inasmuch as the soldiers are fighting and dying for an

exceedingly noble cause, their souls are perforce befitted to promote the purposes of and to help to create and share in the longed-for millennium of universal peace and prosperity. But the relation of cause and effect is very far from clear here. A twofold perplexity confronts us. Each party believes its cause to be just and noble; and the cause, in either case, is, not universal co-operation and federation and peace, but “resistance to aggression and to curtailment of existing power” on the one side, and the (so-alleged) “necessity to expand, for a place in the sun, for room to stand in, *etc.*,” in other words, “resistance to limitation of growth of power”, on the other. In short, “the ruling passion strong in death” is not mutual help, but mutual resistance. Such a mood as cause — and the dying mood of great masses of human beings is a tremendously potent psychical or [Page 15] superphysical force and cause, as said above — is apparently and most unfortunately not likely to lead to a millennium as effect.

Besides the immediate motives and passions of the War, we have also to bear in mind the present widespread condition of cynicism, irreligion and matterward pre-occupation of souls, ever craving for the secular life of sense, and ignoring, even when not positively scouting, all notions of other lives and other worlds. Under such conditions, it is obvious that the souls of most of the slaughtered, suddenly and agonizingly torn from their physical vehicles while in the fullest vigour of manhood, are not likely to be capable of the *pitr-loka* and the *svarga-loka*, and are therefore not ready to pass on to them; but must be hovering about restlessly in the intermediate grey world of the *preta-loka* subdivisions of the Bhû-loka, obsessing and inciting the living combatants and eagerly seeking opportunity to take birth again as soon as may be. It would be very helpful in furthering psychical science, though by no means quite safe, if the members of the Psychical Research Society could make experiments at the present time with their mediums, and endeavoured to communicate with the war-slaughtered departed.

As the *Jyotisha-Shâstra* says, after the expiration of the twenty-years' cycle of Rudra, the Destroyer, there will follow the twenty-years' cycle of Brahmâ, [Page 16] the Creator, when there will probably be a multiplication which will more than make up for the present destruction.

The important question is as to the quality of these multiplying numbers. If all the souls that have gone over come back with an enhanced violence of passion and martial ardour, then again after another forty or fifty years when the Brahmâ and Vishnu cycles have run their course and the rotation of time brings round the sway of Rudra, the world may have to endure the agonies of an even worse war. (Otherwise, Rudra would put on the aspect of Shiva, and in place of violent destruction we should have peaceful renunciation, to satisfy cyclic requirements).

And there are further complications to be taken account of. We are told that hate is, if possible, an almost stronger bond than love. The souls of the dying combatants, with their mental gaze fixed upon the “other”, the “enemy”, rather than upon their own side, are very likely to pass over, at the next rebirth, into the physical bodies of this “other” and “enemy” nation, and actuated by the hidden samskâra-instinct of hostility thereto, to become sources of internal and internecine discord there. Thinkers are not wanting who say that if this *military* war of the nations had not arisen, an even more radically destructive *economic* war would have broken out very shortly *within the limits* of almost every great nation; that all the signs were set to the event [Page 17] of an ubiquitous civil strife due to the intense and growing rivalries of industrialism and commercialism, (to say nothing of oppositions of trade-unionism and capitalism, socialism and conservatism, *etc.*), which would have been even more ruinous than is this War caused by the mad race of armaments and the jealousies of army and navy; that it is a false notion that industrialism is the divine panacea against the instincts that make for war; that as a knife in the

hands of a schoolboy produces an irresistible itching to cut something, so armies and navies in the hands of nations produce an itching to fight and justify their existence and achieve their destiny; and, *even so*, the existence and multiplication of factorial machinery (महायन्त्र), as distinguished from hand-machines, (लघुयन्त्र) produces an itching for over-production and consequent competitive struggle and economic disaster; the huge machines invented to serve men, become their masters and insist on being worked incessantly for the livelihood of the producers, even when the consumers *do not* want the produce; the jinn, the Frankenstein monster, evoked for slavery, becomes a relentless and insatiable tyrant who insists on being fed perpetually, on pain of eating up the magician himself; and so, ultimately, the producers and the consumers consume each other, by trade-wars and their consequence, *viz.*, civil war, the international military war being, at bottom, the outcome of the international commercial strife.

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The hopes which some entertain, of a universal peace based on the increase of factorial industrialism stimulated by the lessons of this War, therefore, require to be revised in the light of matter-of-fact and even, so to say, commonplace considerations, to say nothing of superphysical “far-fetchings” — which “far-fetched” considerations, by the way, are *very* near and not far-fetched at all, to those who believe that there are souls as well as bodies, that these souls take birth again and again under certain laws, clearly recognizable by us, and that our inner desires and motives shape our outer life and culture.

Page after page of history repeats the same tale; only the names are new. Egyptian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, Hebrew, Mongolian, Roman, Greek, Peruvian, Mexican, and countless other civilizations and cultures were born, grew up, and, in their prime conquered other effete and senile and “inferior” races; and in their turn, grew effete and senile and inferior, from a variety of causes — seldom sheer old age, often the “diseases” of moral corruption and consequent loss of physical and intellectual vigour, or the “accidents” of mutual mutilation by wars, *etc.*. The remnants of these ancient civilizations have become the barbarous or savage races. Sociologists recognize two kinds of savages, the “primitives” and the “degenerates”. The majority of the “inferior” races of today are of the second kind, having been “superiors” in their day. [Page 19] For every nation has its day. And there is reason to believe that the souls, inhabiting these “inferior” bodies — the souls themselves being, so to say, young, ungrown, undeveloped, nearer as yet to the animal kingdom, though the bodies are “old” and effete (in the national sense) — after the conquest and after the extermination of their bodies by the “superiors”, with their dying thoughts full of these “superiors” and passionately desiring vengeance, are born amongst these same “superiors” as their slum population, their apaches and hooligans, their sundowners and hoboes, their tramps and congenital criminals, or, if somewhat advanced to a higher stage, as the “labouring classes”, who are no longer willing to labour on terms of absolute obedience (किंकर - शूद्र), are but always ready, and often actually able, seriously to dislocate and mangle the limbs of the social organism by means of strikes and revolutions and rebellions and civil wars. Who knows how many souls of the African and American indigenous races may not be now reappearing on both sides of the Great War, intensifying the animosities and cruelties, and giving greater vividness to the drama of rewards and punishments for past “national” deeds, and working them out in “national” of *Sûtrâtmika* triumphs and defeats, elations and depressions?

If such ideas have any truth in them, then it follows that the prospects are very far from strong of universal peace and goodwill after the [Page 20] exhaustion of even this horrible War. Instead of one “balance of power”, one point of equilibrium of forces, one line of neutralization of opposites, one

European problem, there will probably crop up two, or three, or half-a-dozen such, in the different continents, politically, and one or more within the limits of every country, economically and socially — *under present conditions of political and industrial thought and feeling*. For now, as ever, hatred ceaseth not by hatred but by love alone; unless righteousness be achieved, admission into the kingdom of heaven is not possible; and unless the *whole spirit*, the *whole outlook upon life*, of the civilized peoples, is changed, and the whole of society reorganized anew upon a *deliberately spiritual and psychological basis*, any real improvement will be impossible, and history will remain in reality what writers up till recently have made it out to be by a just instinct, *i.e.*, the history mainly of drums and trumpets, mutual hate and mutual injury, rather than a progressive and well-balanced development on the triple line of science, art and commerce, of cognition, desire and action.

To ask any one such questions as the following, *viz.*, “What should be our international policy after the war?” “what should be our industrial policy?” “what should be our educational policy?” *etc.*, and to ask it with exclusion of reference to the other questions, is like asking “what should be our policy with regard to [Page 21] the hands and feet?” or “the head”, or “the stomach”, exclusively. To take account of only one — independently of the others — is fatal. Only when the *whole* nature of man is duly understood, can each or any portion of it be safely and satisfactorily provided for. Only when the life and history and requirements and future goal of the whole international human race is duly understood in broad outlines, as *it can be* in the light of, and only of, Adhyâtma-vidyâ — only then can each and any nation and any department of the national life of each and any such be at all adequately safeguarded. All these questions, all these problems, must be studied, and solved together, with reference to and in the light of each other. Otherwise they will not be understood and solved at all. Otherwise, every nation will always be hustling or being hustled by every other; every department of the life of a community be at daggers drawn with every other; and the lack of proper *balancing* will ever increasingly exacerbate the incompatibility and conflict, between head, heart, and limbs, between science, art and trade between reason, emotion and conduct, between theory, ideal, and practice.

The main types of culture and systems of civilization dealt with by history may, in terms of psychology, be characterized as Brâhmana-râjyam, Kshatriya-râjyam, Vaishya-râjyam, and Shûdra-râjyam, the reigns of the intellectuals, the musculars, the [Page 22] commercials, and of the mob. In their better aspects they correspond respectively with Satya-Yuga (the higher socialism,) Tretâ (patriarchal despotism), Dvâpara (republicanism) and Kali (individualism); in their worse aspects, with that sacerdotalism, feudalism, commercialism, and lower socialism or mob-rule, which have been replacing one another in Europe during the last two thousand years — speaking in terms of the broadest outlines — as the preceding one became enfeebled by its own excesses and corruptions, and so stimulated the succeeding one. But in reality there is no greater (if no less) incompatibility between these four or rather three main types (the fourth not being a “system” or a “culture” at all, but mostly only “confused struggle” and “chaos”), than there is between the three factors of mind, or the three systems (nervous, muscular, and assimilative) of the body. The principles and the ideals of the old Varna Dharma and Âshrama-Dharma must be studied and mastered by statesmen and rulers, if they would understand how such a reconciliation between incongruous-seeming elements, functions, and types, can be brought about, and how any lasting peace on earth and goodwill amongst men can be established, by giving to *each* its due — *and not more than due* — share of *work* and share of *remuneration* for that work, and so establishing that *just proportion* and balance between all the fundamental elements and organs of the social whole which only can [Page 23] minimize the bitterness of internecine jealousy, promote healthy emulation, and ensure a long and healthy life.

The natural psycho-physical differences in the qualities and the temperaments of men must be recognized; men must be assigned to corresponding broad classes accordingly, in a just, living, and elastic system; the “labour”, the work of the community, must be divided amongst these classes

appropriately (**चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः** says the Gîtâ, by **गुण** and **कर्म**, not mere **जन्म**), and equally appropriate remuneration provided (surplus *honour* to one class, surplus *power* to another, surplus *wealth* to a third, and healthy and sufficient food, clothing and housing to all); and the domestic life, the dietary and sex-relations, and the population-question, and the education and training and disciplining of the individual — these must be looked after and adjusted and elevated first and foremost of all. And then the rest, the solutions of all the other problems that vex modern man, will follow of themselves. And the at present equally disturbed conditions of the superphysical worlds, (which are inseparably interconnected with the physical, in an endless chain of cause and effect), will also readjust themselves as soon as things here begin to be mended; and jîvas of different temperaments and qualifications will begin to take to themselves bodies in families that, differentiated by due “cultivation” and “breeding”, have become specially fitted to give scope for the manifestation [Page 24] of those temperaments and qualifications; and then only, the bitternesses and rivalries (at present rampant because everybody wants everything in the absence of a recognized assignment of appropriate remunerations) having ceased, there will come about the true and the much-longed-for millennium.

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥—Gîtâ.

But have you not said that love and war are the only two interests of life? Do you now hope to abolish war by some Utopian and impossible reorganization of society?

The answer to this query must at once be that hopes of an *everlasting* peace and an unchecked progress are vain. Under modern materialistic conditions, the “progress” of the last fifty years of the civilized nineteenth century A.D. and since, has been naturally marked by a big war almost every alternate year, Crimean, American North against South, Russo-Turkish, Franco-Prussian, Anglo-Afghan, Anglo-Burman, Chino-Japanese, Chinese Legation, Hispano-American, Greeco-Turkish, Anglo-Boer, Russo-Japanese, Turko-Balkan, Turko-Italian, and now the Greatest War of all — to say nothing of the incessant minor fightings and harryings going on, on various Asiatic frontiers, in Africa, and amongst the South American Republics. But even with other conditions, we may not expect to abolish war altogether. [Page 25]

Science and Philosophy unite in telling us that the worlds and their inhabitants swing ceaselessly between birth on the one hand and death on the other, between evolution and dissolution, between joy and sorrow. The Primal Error, **अविद्या** of Individualized and Separate Life, **अहंकार**, the subjective counterpart of what objectively becomes **तृष्णा** and **बुभुक्षा**, the hunger and thirst of the body, the deepest and acutest need thereof, necessarily involves, as the next outgrowth, both love and hate, cooperation and competition, *alliance for existence* as well as struggle for existence, for self-preservation in body, and in progeny. (cf **अविद्याऽस्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः पञ्चक्लेशाः ॥** Yoga Sûtrâs, and the Gîtâ comments thereon **ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः**, etc.) **राग** and **द्वेष** are indeed inseparable, so much so that Krshna declares that **कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ।** “Aversion arises in the vicinity of

Desire". (अभितः जायते) . To draw nearer to one is to draw further away from others, in the regions of the limited. And no nation has, so far in history, found it possible to make an alliance with one except with reference to at least possible war against another. Civilized, and uncivilized, man is always essaying to abolish pains and discomforts and enhance pleasures and multiply luxuries. By a metaphysical, and therefore physical, law of the Nature of the Supreme, his efforts are being always frustrated. Every new discovery or invention looks at the first blush like "the Philosophers' Stone" that will turn all baser [Page 26] metals into gold, promises to be the very "Elixir of Life" that will confer eternal youth and life immortal on the physical body. Later experience sadly proves that if there *are* some gains, there are equally clearly, and quite as many, corresponding pains. If on a level plain we wish to raise a tall tower, we may do so at any given spot. But a corresponding deep depression will have to be made in some other spot on the plain, to provide the material with which to build the tower. Evolution is differentiation. The general "low standard of life," the uniform "dull level" of feeling, of an agricultural and pastoral community, when differentiated out into the complexities of a "mechanical" civilization, breaks up into a "very high standard of life" — for a comparative few, and a "very much lower one" — for the comparative many. The miseries of the miners, the mill-workers, the factory-hands, the engine-stokers, the sweated wage-earners; the endless new diseases born of the conditions of life in overcrowded cities; the lead-poisoning, the phosphorus-corroding, the gas-and-soot-and-smoke-asphyxiating, and the destructive action of dazzling lights and maddening noises and ever-rushing electricity on the nervous system; the crushing effect on the mind and its vehicle, the body, of the simultaneous application of the extreme sense-stimulations and temptations of crowded cities and of the social and legal penal restraints — all these are the well-known price that have to be paid [Page 27] by the many for the luxuries of a few, which few also are, at bottom, far from happy, and, indeed, apart from the pleasure of pride, are most restlessly unhappy by their own confession; though the pleasure of pride is great, no doubt, for it has in it the "taste," the

रस, of अहंकार "egoism"; which "egoism" is the primal root-appetite for individualized and separate being, and includes the other main appetites of hunger and sex, and, in Purānic symbology, is appropriately presided over by Bhava-Rudra as deity; so that the रस of अहंकार is the basis of all other रस's , and gives rise, (a) in the sāt̥tvika form, to the magnanimous grandeurs of uttermost self-contenance and self-sacrifice of the body for the sake of divine joys, (b) in the rājasa form, to the self-respect of wedded life and good citizenship, for the satisfaction of this world, and (c) in the tām̥asa form, to the arrogant gloatings of rape and murder for lust and food and plunder, which are inseparable from the hell of War and the over-materialistic life — all three being, alas ! inextricably mixed up with each other, in every soul, each prevailing over the others by turns.

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।

रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥—(Gītā).

The effort, then, to annihilate pain and perpetuate pleasure, has always been and ever must continue to be futile — in terms of matter as well as in terms of [Page 28] psyche. In the language of the philosophers and psychologists, the two are *relative* to each other. Even if it were possible for every human being to become a multi-millionaire, for every nation to become possessed of the "largest" army, the "strongest" navy the "richest" commerce, the "broadest" territory, the "most numerous" population — contradiction in terms, "every" and "superlative"! — as soon as this pious end was attained, every body and every nation would cease to feel any pleasure in the fact — because pleasure is being more than another, being

better off than before, is the co-efficient of वृद्धि , and, per contra, because, as the Persian saying is, “marg-i-amboh jashne dârad”, “the death of a large host is a festivity”, and pain, which is being less than another and worse off than before, loses its sting and ceases to be pain when the *comparison* vanishes.

What is to be done, then? On the one hand we are asked to believe that war is horrible; on the other that it is inevitable! [Page 29] What is to be done? The answer is plain. The effort must ever continue to be made to reduce sorrows and increase the general happiness.

मृत्युना सह योद्धव्यं यावद्बुद्धिबलोदयम् ।

We must war against war and death while mind and strength last. Even to continue to live in the fleshly body is to make such effort. Only it ought to be made with due recognition of inevitable and fundamental facts. So it will be saner, soberer, perhaps more effective. If the troupe of actors enacted their parts in the drama with consciousness of the fact that they were “playing”, some intense sorrows would be saved — if also perhaps some correspondingly intense joys be lost. In any case the angel-heroes ought to “recognize”, ought to “know better”, even if the “rogue heroes” are prevented from doing so by the conditions of their part!

And so, while recognizing that war is not to be abolished outright without abolishing peace and law also, we may yet, after this present terrible climax of all wars, hope and strive for at least a *long spell* of peace, if a great reactionary *change of spirit* does come over mankind and sympathies replace the antipathies that have brought about this universal conflict.

If the “superior” races — undoubtedly superior in material science and all the resources of the physical life, but, unfortunately for mankind, not equally superior in spiritual wisdom — would agree to sink their sense of material superiority underneath true spiritual humility, would cease from exploiting the “inferior” races, however much the latter deserve it for their sins, would give them their rights while taking their own just dues, would not only live, but also let live, as is the very spirit of Manu’s Scheme, and would wash and purify their [Page 30] hearts with tears of deep repentance and earnest prayer, and make great public vows to work for the good of all rather than of each self, to organize the whole human race as Manu did, and subserviently thereto reorganize the whole domestic, social, industrial and political life of each nation, on the basis of the laws and facts of *Adhyâtma-ridyâ*, Spiritual Psychology; and would *reduce* their *over-high* standard of individual physical living, and assign appropriate remuneration for each kind of work, giving surplus honour to the man of life-illuminating thought, surplus power to the man of life-protecting action, surplus wealth to the man of life-enriching industry and art, and assuring healthy food and clothing and housing to *all*, the unskilled labourer as well as the three others; then they would surely find their standards of *spiritual* living and their levels of *inner* happiness as well as their standards of communal *physical* living, *i.e.*, *national* possessions, upraised very high, automatically, and their international as well as class and individual jealousies and hatreds and bitternesses and haughtinesses replaced by sympathy and helpfulness and affection, and a new civilization would grow up which would outshine all previous ones in poetry and beauty and peacefulness of life — if not in the splendours of mechanical restlessness and the transports of alternating triumphs and defeats — a civilization which would embody the poet’s dream of a Federation of the World. [Page 31]

But this is possible only if the “ideals” and “motives” of life are revised radically and made to accord with the sage counsels of the Upanishats:

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ।
 एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥
 यस्मिन्सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।
 तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः ॥

“Enjoy the good things of life, the blessings that the gods, the individualized nature-forces, have provided. But enjoy them with aloofness, with detachment, with readiness to resign at a moment’s notice; and ever maintain consciousness of the Unity and Universality of the Self. Only so can Spiritual Joy be found in the life of matter; otherwise, the fetters of misery”. The leaders, the upper classes of the nations, have to set the example of living as the Upanishat counsels, in but not as *of* the world, an example of true regeneracy, **द्विजता**, to the proletariat — if a long era of peaceful happiness for mankind is desired.

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

“As the superiors behave, so will the inferiors”. There is the same reason to hope, judging from the more thoughtful writings in western books and periodicals, that such a change of spirit, change of heart, change of ideals, is coming on the nations, and [Page 32] may be completed by this War. After its surfeit and exhaustion of evil emotions and forces, the better mind of humanity may have a better chance of reconstruction along more permanently peaceful lines. Different pieces of metal, if they are to be welded together, have all to be heated strongly first. Providence is perhaps employing this method to effect the welding together of the great nations. In this hope we live.

And even if this hope be not realized soon, but be deferred to a distant future, then for the near future too we may take some consolation for the sharp agonies and the massive distresses of the combatants and their countries. There is little to fear that this war will be prosecuted so relentlessly on both sides, to the proverbial “last drop of blood of the last man”, as to wipe out European civilization and make it “reel back into the beast”. The probability is that peace will be agreed upon before very long. And, then, with all its vast destruction of life and property, its lusts of murder and rapine, and their evil consequences, the war cannot but have some good after-effects also, in the births of the next generations. The intense longings and yearnings of betrothed lovers, and married pairs, and parents and children, and brothers and sisters, and dearly beloved friends, so cruelly separated by the war, and the patriotically ardent and heroic or religious-minded and resigned self-sacrifices of thousands upon thousands, cannot but have the [Page 33] most beautiful consequences for these souls, in the subtler *post mortem* worlds, and, again, in their next births here.

आचार्यो ब्रह्मलोकेशः प्राजापत्ये पिता प्रभुः ।
 अतिथिस्त्विन्द्रलोकेशो देवलोकस्य चर्त्विजः ॥
 जामयोऽप्सरसां लोके वैश्वदेवस्य बान्धवाः ।
 संबन्धिनो ह्यपां लोके पृथिव्यां मातृमातुलौ ॥
 आकाशेशास्तु विज्ञेया बालवृद्धकृशातुराः ।
 एभिर्जितैश्च जयति सर्वान् लोकानिमान् गृही ॥

—*Manu*, IV., 181—184.

“The teacher is lord of the Brahma-loka and can give entrance into it, love and service of the father leads to Prajâpati’s heaven, of the guest to Indra’s, of the sacrificing priest to the Devas’, of the sisters and the daughters to the region of the apsarâs, of kinsfolk to that of the Vaishvadevas, of relatives by marriage to the world of (Varuna, the lord of the) waters, of the mother and the maternal uncle to this earth, and of the aged, the feeble and the sick to the regions of Âkâsa (ruled by the Sun)”. That is to say, as Spirit has for co-efficient Matter, and soul finds expression in body, generally, so, more particularly, special moods of mind manifest in special modes of matter, perception in the afferent nerves and the sensories, volition in the afferent ones and the muscles, emotion in the ganglia and the glands, and again, by further subdivision, [Page 34] vision in the eyeball, audition in the ear, and so forth; and as different individual tastes and temperaments, even here on this earth, gravitate to corresponding appropriate “worlds” for their satisfaction (while remaining in touch with each other also); e.g., to the “world” of the home, or the club, or the theater, the music-hall, the art-gallery, the “world” of the mountain-climbers, or the sculptors, or the gardeners, the scientific associations, the bankers, the shippers; or as even within a single homestead the place for the full manifestation of the parental-filial affection in the nursery, for the fraternal-social the drawing-room, for the conjugal the bedroom, even so, on a larger scale, in the subtler worlds are there subdivisions corresponding to the “characters” of souls. And the tremendous stress of the war forces into development fine characters as well as foul; and these fine characters have their appropriate place in the heaven-worlds and again on this earth, after rebirth.

The heroic courage, the martial prowess, the mechanical invention, the scientific acumen, the military and naval and aerial skill, the magnificent manhood and womanhood, developed here and matured in the subtler worlds (side by side, no doubt, with cruel ruthlessness and abnormal criminality and devilry of all kinds) will all add to the richness, the intensity, the poetry (and also the dangerousness) of human life in the succeeding generations. And [Page 35] literature and science of all kinds (psychic science a fair share, let us hope) should also receive a great stimulus.

In respect of literature, it has been said that modern warfare offers no scope for the operation of the poetic faculty. This is scarcely so. Rather it may be said that for the time, scientific faculty has perhaps outrun the poetic faculty — because the general interest in the former has overpowered interest in the latter. Given the necessary chance, the latter will again overtake the former before long, and the human race may evolve a greater Epic out of this war than the *Mahâbhârata* or the *Iliad*, even though perhaps it may be written in prose and not in verse. The tremendous manoeuvres of iron-clad ocean-leviathans, the swift flights of the giant airships, the rush of the lighter aeroplanes, the thunders of mammoth cannon, the vast operations of millions of soldiers stretching in line upon line over hundreds, even thousands of miles, the sheets of liquid fire, the hurricanes of shrieking shells and smaller missiles, the clouds of stifling gas

— all wielded by human beings; the gathering to the main theaters of war, of soldiers of almost all the main etheric types and races from vast distances and all the continents; and the thousand individual deeds of astonishing valour, miraculous endurance of pain, and extreme self-sacrifice, throwing past classical episodes into the shade; the financial throes of half [Page 36] the human race; the sympathetic agitations and disturbances and minor conflicts on all the other continents and all the seas; — all these, with their deep-lying biological, psychological and moral causes in the past, and their consequences in the future, are material worthy of the high poetic genius and the deep historical and philosophical insight of as great a Kavi-Rshi as Vyâsa himself. Such an epic might well sum up within itself the essence of all past literature and be the illuminative scripture of many generations to come, pending the arrival of that happy time — indicated in the *Mahâbhârata* in the description of the Uttara-Kurus — when there are no more castes or classes, or sovereign or subject, for faculties have been perfected and none need be dependent on another, and lawlessness has vanished, and therefore every one is a law unto himself, and wisdom is at flow and error is at ebb, and heaven is nearly reached on earth.

Such may be our more immediate hopes. But over and above the consolation of all such temporal hopes is the consolation of the Eternal Assurance, to those who have caught a glimpse, however faint and passing, of the changeless at the heart of the changeful, the assurance that all possible experiences of pain and pleasure, and all possible worlds in which such experiences are set, are all within the Consciousness of the Living Spirit, and not that Spirit in them. From that standpoint, however overwhelming [Page 37] externally, at the moment, the vast agony of this war, it is in reality but a passing irritation in the earth's (*i.e.*, our own), aeonic consciousness, less than a ripple on the ocean's surface. Or, better still, we may regard it as a deliberately planned small scene in the Endless Drama, wherein Avatâras are the most highly-evolved and most deeply differentiated and distinguished (and therefore seemingly most acutely ahankârika, though at heart ahankâra-less because knowingly make-believe) actors, whose sole business is to make the life of the more homogeneous-minded mass more interesting, and to relieve the tedium and monotony of their daily round by filling it with extraordinary thrills and sensations, pangs and ecstasies, making pretext of the world's need for adjustments of the consequences of great national and racial crimes and misdemeanours, and incidentally expiating their own grand sins in a grand way, newly to point a moral and adorn a tale!

The *Purânas* leave no room for doubt on these points. All the Avatâras and their inevitable counter-Avatâras, the Angel-heroes and the rogue-heroes, are selected out of the same band of jiva-actors by the great Stage-Manager and *Primus inter pares*, Vishnu among his *pârshadas*, all brothers and step-brothers and first cousins; and they begin the play by deliberately sinning against and offending and then cursing and dooming each other whenever they get cloyed with the age-long joys of heaven and begin to crave for the [Page 38] faster life of this grosser world and its more bitter and hot and pungent tastes of *rajas* and *tamas*, as a change. Hiranyâksha and Hiranyakasipu and Râvana and S'is'upâla were the grandest and most imposing figures of their day — with the single exception of their own chief, Varâha, Narasimha, Râma, Krshna. They are all mere names now; and perhaps because their stories were fading or were not so well known to the newer nations of the west, this new scene has been planned by Providence, first rehearsed in heaven and then acted out on earth, in order to bring home to men anew the lessons of war and peace, love and hate, pravrtti and nivrtti, frantic pursuit and calm renunciation, as a preparation towards the Great Peace.

दृष्ट्वात्मनि जये व्यग्रान् नृपान् हसति भूरियम् ।
 अहो मां विजिगीषन्ति भृत्यो क्रीडनका नृपाः ॥
 यां विसृज्यैव मनबस्तत्सुताश्च कुरुद्वह ।
 गता यथागतं युद्धे तां मां जेष्यन्त्यबुद्धयः ॥
 मत्कृते पितृपुत्राणां भ्रातृणां चापि विग्रहः ।
 जायते ह्यसतां राज्ये ममताबद्धचेतसाम् ॥
 ममैवेयं मही कृत्स्ना न ते मूढेतिवादिनः ।
 स्पर्धमाना मिथो व्रन्ति म्रियन्ते मत्कृते नृपाः ॥
 पृथुः पुरुरवा गाधिर्नहुषो भरतोऽर्जुनः ।
 मान्धाता सगरो रामः खट्वाङ्गो धुन्धुहा रघुः ॥
 तृणबिन्दुर्ययातिश्च शर्यातिः शन्तनुर्गयः ।
 भगीरथः कुवल्याश्वः ककुत्स्थो नैषधो नृगः ॥

[Page 39]

हिरण्यकशिपुर्वृत्रो रावणो लोकरावणः ।
 नमुचिः शम्बरो भौमो हिरण्याक्षोऽथ तारकः ॥
 अन्ये च बहवो दैत्या राजानो ये महेश्वराः ।
 सर्वे सर्वविदः शूराः सर्वे सर्वजितोऽजिताः ॥
 ममतां मय्यवर्तन्त कृत्वोच्चैर्मर्त्यधर्मिणः ।
 कथावशेषाः कालेन ह्यकृतार्थाः कृता विभो ॥
 कथा इमास्ते कथिता महीयसां विताय लोकेषु यशः
 परेयुषाम् ।
 विज्ञानवैराग्यविवक्षया विभो वचो विभूर्तीर्न तु
 पारमार्थ्यम् ॥
 यस्तूत्तमश्लोक गुणानुवादः सङ्गीयतेऽभीक्षणममङ्गलन्नः ।
 तमेव नित्यं शृणुयादभीक्षणं कृष्णेऽमलां भक्तिमभीप्समानः ॥

—*Bhāgavata*, XII, iii.

दुरधिगमात्मतत्त्वनिगमाय तवात्ततनोः
 चरितमहामृताब्धिपरिवर्त्तपरिश्रमणाः ।
 न परिलषन्ति केचिदपवर्गमपीश्वर ते
 चरणसरोजहंसकुलसंगविसृष्टगृहाः ॥—*Ibid.* X, lxxxvii.

“The earth beholds men fighting for her sake and cries: Aho! these witless puppets of death are struggling to wrest me from each other and make me their own, me whom the Manus themselves with their sons have left behind! Alas! that for my sake father and son, brother and brother, should grow selfish, greedy, vicious and slay each other. The maddened ones say unto each other: This whole [Page 40] Earth is mine, mine only; and then they both die, and I am neither’s. Prthu the Paternal, from whom I draw my name of Prthvî, who was my first lord and master and brought to birth from me my hidden treasures of food-grains, fruits and mineral wealth abundant, Purûravâ the Beautiful, Nahusha the Proud, Bharata the magnificent, Kâtavîrya Arjuna the Warrior, Mândhâtâ the Mighty, Râma the Noble, Yayâti the Luxurious, Kakutstha the Imperial, Bhagîratha the Beneficent, Shantanu the Healer, Nrga the Generous; Hiranyakasipu the Hard, Hiranyâksha the Tremendous, Vrtra the Grand, Shambara the Magician, Râvana the world-shaker — all great kings of the Âryas, the Daityas, the Râkshasas; and countless other restless ones who thought themselves sovereigns of high degree, omniscient, omnipotent, all-conquering — they all projected ‘mine’-ness on to me with clinging, forgetting their frail mortal make; and all have been devoured by time before their unfulfillable wishes could be fulfilled.

“Thus laughs the Earth, scornful and sad, over the error of the “great ones”, that are but as worms upon her surface if they cling to her and look not up Above. And I have called their stories to thy mind only to lead it to renunciation and the Wisdom of the Spirit wherein alone is Peace. Where high converse is held of Him whose every name and every act of glorious fame is Holy Writ, by the very sound of which all ills [Page 41] shall fall away, there only is the permanent abode of Love, Wisdom and Peace.

“Only in order that the Truth of thine own essence, Âtman! might be known of men who see not inwards easily, hast Thou put on these many glorious Forms behind which they might recognize Thy Radiance with lesser dazzlement. Yet, O Beautiful Magician! such is the overpowering fascination of these Forms themselves that even the seers find their gaze enthralled and chained by the red lotuses that spring up and float upon the Spatial waters whenever Thy White Swan-footsteps fall with mystic majesty, and have almost forgot their primal quest for Liberation! Thou only, Spirit of the Universe! canst release us from the bonds of Thine own Mâyâ!”

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सर्वस्तरतु दुर्गाणि सर्वो भद्राणि पश्यतु ।

सर्वः सद्बुद्धिमाप्नोतु सर्वत्र नन्दतु ॥

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