

I. KARMA AND AUTOMATISM ... ..	7
II. KARMA AND RENUNCIATION ... ..	19
III. KARMA AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS ... ..	30
IV. KARMA AND THE PROCESS OF GROWTH ... ..	37
V. THE STAGES OF KARMA ... ..	46
VI. KARMA AND HARMONY ... ..	61
VII. KARMA AND DUTY ... ..	70
VIII. KARMA AS SACRIFICE ... ..	80
IX. THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF OCCULTISM ... ..	91
X. THE CENTRES IN MAN ... ..	102
XI. THE UNIFICATION OF THE CENTRES ... ..	111

DR. RUPNATHJI (DR. RUPAK NATH)

THE very first effect of the realization of the true nature of the Ego in man, even though arrived at through intellectual discrimination—the first dawning on the mind of the aspirant of the real nature of the I in him as the uncaused spectator of the Prakṛtic drama—has a tendency to create a sense of aversion towards all actions which apparently lead to the emergence of self-consciousness and make it lose itself in phenomenal things. We feel very naturally a shrinking from actions which, so to say, decentralise the I notion by projecting it into the transient forms of the three worlds. We fight shy of all actions which seem to drown the consciousness of the spectator in us. Hence we see Arjuna so perplexed at his Divine Guide exhorting him to fight, while at the same time explaining and holding up, as an ideal to be attained, the exalted state of consciousness appertaining to the silent watcher in man.

The third Chapter of the Gītā gives us, therefore, the *raison d'être* of Karma Yoga—the reason why it must be followed—its utility and place in the evolutionary scheme. The first and the initial mistake into which the aspirant naturally falls is that of confounding Karma with the inner life—the real man. From the standpoint of the illuminated self there is no Karma. For the man who has come to know himself and is content with himself, no

action exists. For him there is nothing to be done so far as he himself is concerned, and hence he has no self-regarding purpose which can be fulfilled by the manifested universe.\* For he lives in the Eternal, while Karma belongs to the plane of phenomena.

It is only when we identify ourselves with our vehicles, when we seek for the expression of our individual life in and through actions, that the mergence of the Ego with the forms and energies contained in the sheaths takes place, with its inevitable consequences and concomitants—pleasures and pains. Really and truly these activities, which we in our ignorance ascribe to the I in us, are due to the great evolutionary forces acting through Prakriti or Nature for us. These forces, of which we shall have to speak more fully presently, are the results of the involution of the life of Ishvara in matter and form for the purpose of the unfoldment of Being and Self-consciousness. In our ignorance we fall into the error of confounding the true actor with the uncaused spectator, and impute to this centre actions which proceed from the divine energy infolded in matter. The divine energy, called sometimes the life waves of the Logos, vitalising matter with the seeds of divine life and potency and subsequently building matter thus differentiated into organisms, impels everything to activity, thereby wooing out the germinal powers of the Divine Centre in man. Viewed thus as activities of the sheaths, as external stimuli, they belong from the stand-point of the developed Ego, not to the Ego but to the external world: just as the food which a man takes and the process of assimilation may be said to be external to and independent of the inner consciousness. Thus regarded, actions are no more to be sought than avoided. Like ripples in a mighty ocean they affect not the true being—they touch not the

\*Gītā III, 17, 18.

innermost sources of life. So the man who is contained in the Self, who, centred in the Self, revels in it, has got no dread of actions.\* He is not affected by these; centred in himself, he is able to sustain his consciousness without the help of the upadhis to reflect himself, and for him truly no action exists.

But the case is different with the baby Ego—the Ego whose inner powers of self-consciousness, existence and bliss are yet dormant. It is still under the dominance of Prakriti; it is still like the foetus within the womb of Nature and requires the nurture of Prakriti in developing its latent powers. As already said the Law of Karma has its justification in such Ego and we do well to let go the absolute standpoint of the emancipated consciousness, and try to understand the functions of Karma as affecting us in the lowly levels in which we normally live, move and have our being.

One of the foremost and, it may be said, the most important functions of Karma lies in drawing out the latent powers in the Divine Seed of the embryonic man by synchronous vibrations from without. It is as though the Divinity without, working through the sheaths of man, were working out the powers of self-conscious existence of the germinal Divinity within. The vibrations from the external world affect the undeveloped bodies of the baby Ego and produce modifications in these by rousing them into responsive vibration. Those vibrations to which the bodies can respond generate similar vibrations in them and, what is more, tend to throw out all constituents in these bodies which stand in the way of response. Thus harmony is gradually established between the external forces and the particular body. The baby Ego—which by the necessities of its being is attached to these bodies, these wombs of growth, and

\*Gîtâ III, 17, 18.

which during the earlier stages of evolution is dependent on these bodies for consciousness and existence—is thus brought into contact with the external stimuli, and the harmonious vibrations generate in it a sense of pleasure. The elements of existence, consciousness and bliss lying involved in these vibrations go to evoke in the Ego the consciousness of existence and bliss, the bodies serving the important function of transmitting or, rather, transmuting these vibrations into proper constituents of growth. The harmonious vibrations thus affect the inner consciousness and produce in it the modification of pleasure. The Ego is in turn roused from its state of absoluteness and unconsciousness to a recognition of the pleasurable and harmonious nature of the vibrations, and in the recognition there is an out-putting of the life of the Ego—a downpouring, so to say, of its inner latent powers.

In this recognition there takes place within the Ego a definite formulation of its own being;—the abstract and apparently unconscious being of the Divine Seed passing into a state of concreteness and becoming. Mathematically speaking, the Ego thus passes from its latent absoluteness into a kinetic state. The life within longs to mingle with the Divine Life without, the pulsations of which it faintly recognises; and in this longing it accentuates the pleasurable vibrations and accelerates and vivifies it with its own life. It fecundates its own womb with its manifesting powers and thereby colours the upadhi with a tinge of its own. The upadhi is thus subjected to the working of two distinct sets of forces. There is the impulse and stimulation from the Divine Life without and there is also the downpouring of the life of the Ego. Thus influenced there is a consequent rearrangement in its constituents which leads to a harmonious adjustment, making the body more suscep-

tible to the stimuli and yet more plastic to the touch of the Ego within. The upadhi thus evolves in the development of the powers of co-ordination and adaptation, developing definite lines of activity and, what is more, evolving special organs and senses later on. So the Upanishad says: "it wanted to see and eyes came; it wanted to hear and the ears came." The higher spirillæ of consciousness, the higher possibilities of vibration with which the constituent atoms of the body were endowed by the action of the sacrifice of Brahmâ or the first life wave—the higher potencies of the spirit lying dormant in matter—are thus roused into activity and manifestation. They open out grander vistas of knowledge and bliss, and bring the Ego into contact with higher planes of being. Thus a vibration from the physical earth element would, under suitable conditions, re-manifest the vibrations of the element water involved in it, and so on till the divinity acting in matter is reached. Herein lies the possibility and guarantee of evolution. Truly evolution is re-finding. We shall have to return to this later.

Thus vibrations of the external world which are harmonious to the organism of the Ego tend in the first place to rouse the Ego from its state of absoluteness and unconsciousness into a recognition of itself as defined and expressed by the vibration—as reflected in and through it. This recognition causes a recognition of its own bliss and being in terms of the lower vibration, and there takes place a downpouring of the life of the Ego. The determination of its being, the concrete formulation of its own blissful nature, caused by the harmonic vibration—even though it be Mayavic in its nature—makes the self in man to recognise itself, and this produces a pleasurable sensation. The predication of its being, thus effected, connects the Ego with the upadhi which causes the

reflection of itself, and the Ego, whose nature is bliss and self-consciousness, pours down its life, vivifying the upādhi and accentuating the vibration. The Ego passes from what we may call the state of non-being into being, from non-existence to existence, and in the process the upādhi, which reflects it and creates in it the sense of existence, gets enriched by the powers of the Ego. The absolute and dimensionless consciousness of the Human Self thus takes upon itself the limitations of matter, and, though it loses in dimension, yet it gains in definition and concreteness. Matter—the limitation of consciousness—however gains in the qualities of the Self, in the increased power of response. The very attachment to the physical body—the mistaking of the reflected image therein for the true Self (due to the same Self acting in matter, to the involution of the same Self regarded as the first and the second life waves)—has thus the two-fold effect of serving as a mirror to the life within, by which the Ego gains in the mediate knowledge of its own nature as reflected in and through the sheaths, as well as of impregnating matter with the seeds of the higher life and consciousness of the Divine Centre. Repeated recognitions of the I, as reflected through pleasurable vibrations of a similar nature, go to build the I-notion on a stable basis, evolving slowly the powers of memory and expectation. Actions are gradually initiated from within, and the general I-notion of the centre is fed, nourished and strengthened.

But the effects of actions on the vehicles of the Ego are still more remarkable. As already said, the vivification of the upādhis by the awakened powers of the Ego helps in building these upādhis and making them more and more susceptible to its touch. Not only does the upādhi gain in the evolution of its latent powers, but every action, even when due to a sense of attachment to the particular body, has the important effect of drawing

the centre of consciousness into matter, and thus impregnating matter with the seeds of higher life and potency. The latent powers of the vehicles, the potencies of higher life involved in the constituent atoms of the vehicle, are brought out into activity and manifestation. The Ego thereby builds its own cosmos, the work which in the macrocosm is done by the self-imposed limitation of the Logos known as the first and second life waves. It takes the matter of its system and stamps upon it its own characteristic mark; it builds for itself the constituents of growth involved in the matter. It impregnates matter with its own life, so that the evolved qualities in the matter may help in feeding its own motion. It vitalises the upadhis with its own life, so as to make them its instruments for the recognition of its own being. The forms thus organized help in the expression of the inner life and re-act upon the inner consciousness, imparting to it the colourings of stability and permanence.

Apart from these results, Karma or action produces other very important effects on the form side of our being. The energies of Nature, which are in essence the outcome of the one Self limiting itself in matter, of the Logoc consciousness losing its powers in circumscribing itself, play ceaselessly upon the upadhis of the Ego. The energies contained in the upadhis are thus worked upon by the Devas acting in the external world. For the Devas are but the energies of Ishvara manifesting as He limits His absolute life and consciousness. The energies in Nature thus act upon the Ego, drawing it out, evoking its latent powers, and building its vehicles. Every activity thus induced in the higher, though as yet unorganized, vehicles of the Ego is productive of results, not only in the increased powers of the Ego, not only in the downpouring of the hitherto latent energies and powers of the Ego and the consequent vivification of the

sheaths with the seeds of life, but also in the re-arrangement of the bodies as regards their constituents. The harmony of the inner life with the outer forces in matter produces in the Ego a sense of pleasure. Identifying itself with these vibrations, the Ego—or rather its centre in the particular vehicle—is drawn outwards, and there is an out-putting of its life. These downpourings of the Egoic life, when consonant with the external energies, tend, if often repeated, to develop distinct lines of activity in the bodies congruous to the outer energies. Sharing thus in the life of the Ego, as well as in the life of the Logos expressing itself as outer energies, the bodies gradually develop what may be called special habits and lines of least resistance, which help in the reproduction of the original stimuli with the least dissipation of energy. Without these lines of activity, these modes of life and consciousness, the Ego would be like a child in a world yet unrealized, unable to express its life in terms of the matter of the plane, and incapable of translating and transmuting the outer vibrations for its development. These lines of activity are thus the result of the interaction of the life of the Ego with the life contained in the sheaths, as well as the life in the outer cosmos, and their harmony and mutual adjustment. Without the harmony with the forces obtaining in the outer world, these lines of least resistance in the sheath would be quite ineffective in expressing the inner life by removing the resistance of forces incongruous to it. The desire for self-realization, which prompts the involution of the inner life into the forms, would then be thwarted. Unless the body thus acted upon by the life forces of the Ego were able to be responsive to external forces, the expression of the Egoic life in the outward planes would not take place; nor could the latent powers in the centre of consciousness be stimulated into activity and manifestation. Similarly,

the mere harmony between the sheath and the external world corresponding to it does not help in expressing the life of the Ego. Like the body of the infant, the sheath, not yet dominated and harmonized by the inner life, is incapable of serving as a mirror to the life within. Unless there is developed in the body the power of answering to the delicate pulsations of the life of the Ego incased in a higher vehicle—unless the body can easily and without much expenditure of energy respond even to the faintest quiver of the inner life without colouring or distorting its expression—it cannot act as a vehicle to the Ego. The body has thus to be built according to the needs of the life within, and brought perfectly under control. The lives in the body must be so trained and subjugated that they may not in the least refract the expression of the life within, and, at the same time, the harmony of the body with the external world must not be disturbed. We have thus a three-fold harmony to effect: the harmony of the outgoing energies of the Ego with the energies in the body as well as with those in the outer world. The involution of the life of the Ego, when congruous to and in harmony with the energies in the body and the cosmic forces, generates what we may call a power of automatic activity in the sheaths. The repetition of pleasurable actions harmonized with the external laws impregnates the bodies with the consciousness of the Ego and thereby induces in them a kind of semi-consciousness. The bodies absorb the life and consciousness of the Ego, and thus there develop in them the germs of consciousness enfolded by the first and the second life waves, whereby they can adjust themselves under definite circumstances in such a way as to harmonize with the nature and character of the life of the Ego, without any direct interference on the part of the Ego. Just as the training of the fingers in writing begins

with determined action and deliberate effort on the part of the physical man, but when repeated leads to a strong physical habit which relieves the man from the task of constant interference and of conscious effort, and the writer can go on writing with his fingers while he may be thinking; so the Ego—by deliberate and at the beginning kâmic efforts having impregnated the forces with its life and thereby having trained and subjugated them—can manage to some extent the affairs of the lower plane to which the particular body may belong with the help of the power of the automatic activity thus induced. The greater the power of automatism developed, the more purified the body, and the better harmonized it is with the external laws of the plane, the more possible becomes the withdrawal of the attention of the inner man. The bodies trained to express the inner life and brought under its control, when harmonized with the laws obtaining in the outer planes and purified of all resisting or tâmasic constituents, are thus made able to work accurately and efficiently, simply under the supervision of the Ego. The Ego—by merely giving the initial impulse, by simply setting the forces in the body in harmony with the outer forces required to produce a definite result—can thus ensure the working out of the desired end, while he himself may be at the same time functioning in the higher planes of being.

Let us take an example to illustrate the workings of this power of automatic activity. Consider the case of the organs of respiration and digestion. These, as the ancient wisdom teaches, were originally voluntary, depending upon the will of man and acting only through his direct interference. Thus a man had to will to breathe before the lungs would act; he had to will, before the stomach would function. There was no solidarity of the physical vehicle, nor was it then a stable organism with

its own laws. As may be imagined, man had to interfere with his physical vehicle at every possible point. He had to be constantly wide awake in the physical plane in order to make these organs work. The phenomenon of deep sighing, when one is engrossed in a super-physical subject, is a relic of the old order of things—the missing link, as it were, in the history of the development of the physical vehicle of man. The sympathetic nervous system of man, with its centres of activity, discloses the workings of the same law as affecting the physical plane. It would not be unreasonable to extend the operations of the truth thus disclosed to all the vehicles of man. Every quality evolved in matter is the result of the involution of life, individual or cosmic. If we then consider the effect of the impregnation of his vehicles by the will of man, and realize how much man has gained by the change effected in the bodies, from the state of pure passivity and dead weight, necessitating the constant interference of the inner consciousness, to the state of automatism and freedom, we shall understand why in the Shastras, *Mokhsa* is spoken of as being easier of attainment in this *Kali Yuga*, the Iron Age, when the physical upadhi has gained its limit of stability, than in the Golden Age itself. (+ Pg. 50)

Thus with the increasing stability and solidarity of the body, built at first by the kâmic activity of the Ego and subsequently harmonized with the external forces, man's physical vehicle becomes more and more of an organism, reliable in its workings and perfect in its power of adaptation.

When through pain we have learnt to take into our consideration the other important factor, viz., the cosmic self and its manifestations—when through suffering our eyes have been opened to the fact that the harmony between the Ego with its outpourings and

the vehicle is not enough, and that the triple harmony between the inner centre of consciousness with the form through which it expresses itself and the vibrations obtaining in the outer macrocosm is indispensable—when gradually this triple harmony between the perishable, the imperishable, and the Supreme *Purushas*\* of the GĪtā has been attained, then the bodies become perfectly automatic. The Ego can now withdraw from actual interference in the workings of the vehicles; for the vehicles, vivified by the life of the Ego, brought under its control, and harmonized with the external forces, can now automatically function in their respective planes, responding to and assimilating harmonious vibrations from without. Such a body allows the Ego to function on the higher planes of being, while serving at the same time as an obedient and intelligent servant, doing what is fit and proper for its master and adjusting itself to the environment without dragging down the inner man along with it.

Thus it is that by action the I-notion is fed and nourished into strength and independence—thus by action existence is realized. Action and the consequent vivification of the bodies with their final automatism is necessary to emancipate the Self from the thralldom of the bodies, and so the GĪtā says—

“Without Karma being done the *Purusha* cannot attain to freedom from action.”†

\*Gītā XV., 16, 17.

†Gītā III., 4.

## CHAPTER II.

## KARMA AND RENUNCIATION.

WE have seen how Karma leads to the vivification of the sheaths by the energies of the Ego, and thus causes them to vibrate synchronously with the activities of the Ego, leading thereby to the automatism of the sheaths. Thus Karma, if rightly performed, assists what we may term the conservation of the energies of the Ego, and thereby allows the Ego to function in other planes, while the bodies in their respective planes are acting out its will. We have seen how harmonic vibrations, called pleasures, tend to inform the lower vehicles with something of the inner powers of the Divine Man within, thereby raising the constituents of the vehicles in evolution and potency. Without this impregnation of the lower forms of matter by the powers of the Ego, automatism cannot come into being. The powers of will, of choice, and of deliberate judgment contained in the Ego impart, by the attachment of the Ego to the bodies, something of their own life to these lower forms, and endow them with something of their characteristic colouring and their high possibilities. That is why the physical brain of a somnambulist displays a kind of adaptation and reasoning—something of the powers of initiating actions, of guiding and controlling the physical vehicle, whereby the somnambulist avoids well known and oft-experienced dangers, even while working in a cataleptic condition. This also accounts for some of the lower phenomena in mesmerism and hypnotism. This involution of the energies of the Ego through pleasure, through harmony, ought well to be borne in mind, as it explains many unknown things and

throws light on many questions hitherto obscure. Karma therefore, and attachment are a necessity for evolution in its earlier stages.

But there is another condition without which the automatism of the sheaths is not feasible. It lies in this—the attachment of the Ego to the sheaths, its dependence upon the vehicles for the purposes of being must be conquered, and the inner life set free from the trammels of form. Otherwise it is impossible for the Ego to withdraw itself from the developed and well-organized vehicle. It is here that the great utility of pain as a factor in evolution is clearly seen. The vehicle if constantly acted upon by the Ego, cannot bear the tremendous strain thus placed upon it. The constituent atoms of the body—the lower lives—if long acted upon by the higher powers of the Ego and thereby strained to response and activity, get paralysed after a certain time, defeating thereby the very object of Karma. They cannot respond to, or assimilate, the higher life downpoured by the Ego; nor can they harmonize with the external energies. *Tamas*, the element of inertia, of resistance to consciousness, in the lower lives, cannot at once pass away, and the higher spirillae cannot be at once roused into activity and manifestation without the danger of breaking up the forms themselves. So after a time, when the ordinary limit of vibration is passed, the extreme tension caused by the downpouring of Egoic life with its higher potential leads to a certain numbness in the atomic consciousness of the body. It loses then the power of receptivity and adaptation and hence cannot respond to the higher powers of consciousness belonging to the Divine Man within. Just as a limb if too much exercised, if too much subjected to a high state of tension, gets paralysed and benumbed; just as “unconscious” metals when strained exhibit the phenomena of fatigue; so, too, the vehicles of

man, if too much exercised, lose their power of response owing to dullness—to the induced *tamas* in the atomic consciousness of the constituent cells. This is why periods of rest, of the withdrawal of the Ego from the upadhis, are necessary for the organic growth of the vehicles. That is why periods of darkness, or *pralaya*, must intervene between periods of activity and manifestation. The sluggish vehicles must be given time to rest and recover, so as to be able to adapt themselves to the higher vibrations. After the bodies have been given sufficient food they must be let alone, in order that they may assimilate properly the food so supplied. So the direct interference of the Ego, its attachment to the body, must be succeeded by intervals of withdrawal of consciousness from the upadhis, whether unconscious, as in the case of ordinary men, or conscious, as in the case of Yogis, when the Ego merely exercises a distant kind of supervision which allows the upadhis to assimilate the food in their own proper way without the energies of the Ego being brought to bear upon them. Withdrawal is thus as much the law of growth as fecundation and vivification.

Apart from the fact that the upadhis wear away under excessive strain, the very need of Karma Yoga, of freedom by action, pre-supposes that a certain amount of liberty, of independent activity, must be allowed to the bodies. Otherwise they can never evolve the powers of choice, of automatic activity, of responding to and initiating actions. It would not do to make the vehicles dead and lifeless encumbrances, to reduce them to a state of responseless slavery. That would involve the necessity of constant interference on the part of the Ego in order to make the bodies work. Actions there must be so long as there is variety and manifestation. Inaction there cannot be so long as there is manifoldness in the one

Divine life. We cannot make the bodies totally passive and lifeless. That would only tend to limit the freedom of the Ego by tying it to the dead weight of lifeless and unresponding vehicles—a situation far worse than the stage of Karma and attachment. It would further stand in the way of the conservation of Egoic energies, by compelling the inner consciousness to manifest as physical life in order to keep the body from dissolution. It would thus cause useless dissipation of the higher powers of life and consciousness to compass lower ends. So the Gītā characterizes such forcible control, such reduction into passivity of the powers of the Divine consciousness manifesting as senses and so forth as *tantric* and worthy of an Asura.\* What is required is not to deaden the sensibility of the constituent cells—the lower lives—but to make them harmonious and independent co-workers with both the Ego and the Divine Life manifesting without. We have to make them conscious instruments, with life and volition of their own. Yoga, which is harmony, means the co-ordination of relatively independent factors into an organic whole, the synthesis of apparently conflicting integers with perfect synchrony and unison.

We should further consider in this connection the very important factor of cosmic intelligence working in matter and form, as what the Hindus call Devas. It is here that we generally make the most egregious mistakes, and are apt to fall into the grossest misconceptions. Impelled by Kāma, by the desire of obtaining and retaining things for the personal selves in us, we strive to make the body a mute, lifeless slave, little regarding the forces which vitalize it and connect it with the macrocosm. We try to stifle all independence in the lower lives which go to form our bodies and believe

\*Gītā, XVII., 6.

we have attained to harmony. But the cosmic forces throw out of equilibrium the artificial harmony thus effected between the Ego and its vehicles, and we get pain and misery as our portion. The automatism of the vehicles, which is the end of Karma Yoga, becomes impossible, because of the fact that the vehicles, though reduced to a state of slavery, cannot, owing to the fact of our ignoring the cosmic laws, respond to the outer forces. Nor can such a body initiate actions without direct interference on the part of the Ego. Though we have succeeded in making the body obedient to our will, it cannot vibrate in unison with the cosmic intelligences we have left out of account. Such a body cannot help much in the evolution of the latent powers of the Ego. Such a body is not of much use in freeing the inner consciousness from the trammels of form, even though it be an inert and lifeless instrument in its hands.

This is why pain and suffering come and correct the mistakes made in the work of the building of the body by the desires for attachment and self-assertion. Pain is thus the clearest indication that the vitalizing of the body by the powers of the Ego has been over-done. It shows that the rigidity and isolation of the vehicle so effected are incongruous to the evolution of the Universe taken as a whole. Pain thus comes because of the fact that the desire for too much self-assertion in seeking for the realization of the Self is not consonant with the workings of the universal laws, acting within or without the vehicles. Pain shows that the building of the body is prompted by a limited and personal conception of the Ego in man. Mistaking the Ahankara for the Self—the real I—we build our vehicles with the same narrowness and spirit of exclusion, till pain comes and indicates that the harmony sought to be effected by stamping the narrow notions of self-hood on the vehicles is not the real thing,

but a mere artificial product tainted by the original notion of separateness. Thus by pain the eyes of the Ego are opened to the existence and working of the cosmic laws and forces.

Above all, the utility of pain as a factor in evolution is best exemplified by the effects it has on the Ego and its consciousness. We have seen how pleasure and harmony cause a downpouring of the life of the Ego. We have seen how even in actions done with attachment there is a vivification of the bodies and their consequent harmonization with the life of the Ego. This impregnation tends to connect the centre of consciousness in a particular plane with the proper vehicle. The second condition of automatism lies, however, in the withdrawal of the Ego from active interference with the workings of the vehicles. Desires bind the Ego to the vehicles, and necessarily there is a constant interaction between the two. Attachment induces the Ego to pour out its life in every activity of the body, and consequently the inner consciousness remains always fast bound to the body, thereby tiring it out with the flow of energy. The vehicles must be impregnated with the higher life of the Ego, in order that the Ego may be connected with them and know them as its own instruments. Yet if the bodies are not left alone after such impregnation, if the Ego does not retire and desist from actively identifying itself with its instruments, then the bodies gain nothing by the vivification, and automatism—with its concomitant, the freedom of the Ego—is impossible of attainment. Hence at the earlier stages of action done with attachment, there must be intervening periods of compulsory non-attachment, of the forced withdrawal of consciousness from its sheaths. This purpose is effected by pain. This withdrawal is the more necessary in order to train the bodies to act automatically, by properly assimilating the life

poured down and harmonizing the vibrations imparted with the cosmic vibrations. There must be periods of gestation in order that the harmony between the Ego and its vehicles, as well as that between the vehicles and external forces, may be brought about. Further withdrawal of the consciousness is necessary in order that the sense of identification with the vehicle may be got over. Otherwise there will be always a lapse in the continuous and uniform I-consciousness along with the changes of the vehicle. By pain and disharmony, by imperfection and limitation then, the Ego realizes the true character of the bodies as being not itself but its upadhis—which connect the particular centre of itself in the several planes with the Self and its manifestations without. It knows the vehicles as the Non-I, and at the same time as instruments to bring out and express the life, as the womb, the matrix, to feed and develop the image of itself in the plane. With pleasure there is an expansion in the life of the Ego which unifies the Ego, its reflection in the body, and the body, with the external forces, and as such causes an enrichment of the contents of the I-consciousness appertaining to that plane. With pain, however, there is the withdrawal of the Egoic consciousness from the centre in the body with its surroundings. The centre in the body and the body thus left alone assimilate the life poured down, and harmonize it with the life without. The heterogeneous contents of consciousness—the elements of self-knowledge contained within the field of activity—are thus transmuted into a homogeneous whole around the notions of self-consciousness belonging to the plane. The I-notion of the centre in the particular body unifies the various and conflicting elements contained in the field of consciousness, and thus gains in expansion and harmony while retaining the stamp of the Ego. By assimilation, therefore, the centre in the particular body

is linked with the body and its environment on the one hand, and with the real I on the other. It shares that is, in the life both of the Ego, which is its source, as well as in that of the body and its environment. So while pleasure, with its attraction outward, causes the real I to reflect itself in the various vehicles, creating semi-artificial centres in them, and vitalizing the body with its down-poured life, pain, with its ingoing tendency, withdraws the Ego from the field of consciousness, enabling the centres and the bodies to assimilate the energy and harmonize themselves with the Self in the macrocosm. First, the Self goes forth and contacts the Self without, increasing thereby what may be called the volume of its consciousness; then, the Ego gets indrawn and ends in re-finding itself enriched with the fruit of self-consciousness and wisdom—garnered by its representative centres in the various vehicles. In one case the energy of the Ego, set free by the attractions of the Self without, working in matter and form, is arrested by the resisting mediums, which we call the vehicles. The vehicles, being harmonious and specialized, the whole amount of energy thus started into activity finds its expression and is responded to by them owing to the action of what physical science would call the law of re-action or the law of reversible cycles. In consequence the original I-notion, thus responded to, generates the notion of existence in the centre. In the other case, the energy set free is not responded to by the vehicle, owing to resistance within it or in the extraneous cosmic forces. Thus frustrated in expressing itself through its centre in the particular vehicle, the energy rebounds inwards and is transformed into a destructive energy, which breaks up the attachment of the life to its centre of manifestation in the forms, and destroys the artificial harmony sought to be effected. The energy, thus resisted, goes inwards,

dropping the forms till the life reaches the Self—the real Ego. The initial energy thus comes back to its source, gathering within itself the various centres of reflection with their delicate colourings of experience of wisdom. With harmonious vibrations or pleasures, the Self goes forth, and in the desire for predicating itself creates semi-artificial centres to reflect itself in the terms of the Self acting in the corresponding planes of the macrocosm. Thereby relation is established between the inner and the outer Self and their reflections. The abstract I, the Self, in seeking itself, predicates itself in the proposition—“I *am* that.” It establishes thus the link between itself and the contents of the Non-I, termed “*that*,” which limits its expression. It gathers up by such predication the elements of Self involved in matter and gains in harmony with the Self outside manifesting as matter and form. But through its “nescience,” or avidya, through desire and attachment for the particular form, it cannot consciously extract the elements of growth contained in the form. Though there is always an unconscious, or rather meta-conscious, recognition of itself as manifesting through the form, yet consciously it mistakes the form to be the attractive power instead of realizing the Self which attracts, and hence there is a limitation of its consciousness and a loss in its dimensions. Then pain comes and turns the direction of the outgoing energy inwards. In consequence, a process of destruction takes place, a process of renunciation, if we may so term it. The form which limits the life breaks off and drops, the outgoing energy is forced to traverse the road back to its source along the track by which it came, carrying with it the germinal centres of activity, the pure reflections of the Self, tinged in the bodies with the purest colourings of wisdom. This wisdom is not to be confounded with the colourings of the form *quâ* form; but rather it consists

in the recognition of the same Self as being one with the in-forming life of the form, with all its potentialities of manifestation. The *tattvas* of the form, the elements of *thatness*, are resolved into their unity, as the modifications of the one consciousness which produced them; they return to their real state as the relics of the consciousness of the Self. The in-going energy in its return carries these flavours of the elements, together with the reflections of the Ego, back to their source. Ordinarily, however, the consciousness attached to the outer crusts of the forms thus disintegrating thinks itself lost, and indeed loses hold upon itself, and hence the consequent darkness of non-being which frightens even the bravest of souls. This fear, if analysed, will disclose its cause—nescience and the attachment of the life to the form for the purposes of being. But if we can hold the consciousness firm and unshaken while the forms break and resolve into their higher constituents, if we do not let go our hold on this pure and formless I-consciousness, then we may see that the pain and consequent withdrawal take us back to the real I, the Self in us, enriched with the fruitage of evolution and firm in self-consciousness. But this pre-supposes the notion of the real Self in us. If, however, by calm and dispassionate analysis of the contents of our consciousness, by actions harmonious to the Divine laws, and by an ardent aspiration towards a high spiritual ideal, within or without—if by the steady practice of meditation, we habituate ourselves to the in-going process, then we may consciously utilize the in-drawing nature of pain—of renunciation. Even in the case of ordinary men, though the particular limited consciousness in the physical brain cannot respond to and grasp the I manifesting in the process of the destruction of forms, yet through pain we are really, though unconsciously, building the links between the limited I in a

particular physical vehicle and the formless Ego.

The triple aspect of the Self manifesting cosmically as the Logoi are thus to be recognised in the Ego and its process of evolution. The Self in us realizes itself even in its separated aspect in the self-same threefold manner. In the first place, it realizes itself through the desire for expansion by fecundating matter and form and reflecting itself in these, projecting thinking centres of activity, almost exactly as is done by the first life wave in the cosmos. Then it realizes itself in and through the organism and identifies itself with the life in the sheaths, knowing itself in harmony and bliss and as the cause thereof. It realizes thus its being as the substratum of all harmonious activity, of love and sacrifice—a stage which corresponds to the sacrifice of the life of the Logos manifesting as the second life wave. Then, lastly, it realizes itself even through the darkness of non-being. Hence it is that Karma is necessary for the evolution of the Self; hence it is the consequent effects of pleasure are necessary for the realization of the Self, the one existence—harmonizing myriads of centres and forms into a homogeneous organic whole. This is also why pain and destruction are necessary, in order that the I-notion thus expanded may gain in depth and permanence. The result is that the I knows itself as the Self, the constant and the immutable factor; whether the forms which reflect its light and life remain or perish—and which can embrace pleasure and pain, forms and their negations, in the mighty folds of the one all-embracing, unchanging Self-consciousness. If by harmony and expansion the I knows itself as all-embracing and all-encompassing—if by depth and stability it knows itself as the one immutable existence—then only can it retain its self-consciousness when forms and matter disintegrate, and the non-being of pralaya reigns.

## CHAPTER III.

## KARMA AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

WE have seen how actions done with attachment give rise to pleasure and pain, and lead to the vivification of the sheaths and their automatism. We have seen how by this automatism the sheaths of man gain in the power of consciousness and indirectly help in the conservation of the energy of the Ego, setting it free to function on the higher planes while they may be acting out its will in the lower planes. We have seen that pain causes an indrawing of the life of the Ego, and is, as such, necessary to free the inner consciousness from the trammels of form. We will now consider whether mere renunciation of action can lead to similar results.

Actions there must be so long as there is a manifested universe, with its diversity of life and form. That which is manifested is necessarily subject to the influence of time. Change is the law which governs all manifested things. Further, so long as the difference in consciousness between the Ego and the non-Ego—Purusha and Prakriti—exists, so long there must be interaction between the two, and hence also Karma. So long as the will of Ishvara, which sent forth the universe into being, remains unrealized, and the object of manifestation remains unconsummated, so long must there be change and evolution. Puny man cannot stem the ever-flowing current of evolution. Sink or swim he must go on. In the fast-revolving wheel every particle is in ceaseless motion, save only the centre. So long as we attach ourselves to form and to notions of separated existence, so long must we act; and, therefore, the Gîtâ says: "No

one can remain ever so little without doing action.\* Even the maintenance of the vehicles requires action.

If we only keep in mind and understand the true nature and scope of Karma, or action, as the factor in evolution which leads to the development of being † as the process by which the I-notion, abstract in its nature, is fed and nourished into stability and permanence, then we can see that mere renouncing of action, impossible in entirety, does not help us in attaining the goal. The old saying that the universe exists for the sake of the Self is more true than we usually conceive. The end of evolution is not the evolution of Atman—the universal Spirit—eternal and unchangeable in its nature. The Atman as the *Kutastha*, the homogeneous indwelling force, is everywhere—in life and form, in spirit and matter. It is the one changeless substratum of all things which makes change possible. The Hegelian doctrine of the Unconscious (meaning thereby the All-consciousness) trying to attain self-consciousness is nearer the mark. Manifestation is only possible when the one substance, which is neither *Sat* nor *Asat*, predicates itself, and in that predication passes from the absoluteness of non-being to definition and becoming. The universe exists for the evolution of self-conscious centres in the absolute, one in essence and potentiality with it, and separated only by self-imposed limitations of name and form. This factor of self-consciousness is the hall-mark of evolution. So the *Aitaraya Branyaka* says : “ In unconscious and dead matter like the earth or the stone only the *sat* aspect of the Self is manifested. In the animated vegetable kingdom the manifestation of the Self is more definitely marked. In them it appears as *prana*. In the animal kingdom there is the manifestation of the consciousness aspect of the Self—a fact which is not seen in the vegetable kingdom,

\*Gîtâ, III., 5.

†Gîtâ, VIII., 3.

and hence the animal kingdom is a higher field (vehicle) for the manifestation of Atman. Amongst men, those who have developed wisdom and discrimination, those who can cognise and function in the *lokas* here and hereafter, those who, living in a phenomenal and transitory body, long for the immortality of the Self, they are the highest upadhis for the manifestation of the Self."

Thus the stone, though heated by the rays of the sun, knows it not; while the animals feel. But man not only knows, but can also adjust himself and adapt himself to it. This power of adaptation, of harmonizing oneself consciously with the environment, is the mark of self-consciousness. Thus the One Self gradually becomes specialized and self-conscious by the action of the upadhis, or vehicles, in order that after traversing the whole cycle of evolution, it may return to the source from which it proceeded, enriched with the fruitage of self-consciousness, of self-centred existence and bliss. Instead of the unconsciousness and involuntary unity at the beginning, it develops a self-conscious and gladsome sense of unity and harmony with the Source of its being and all the manifestations thereof. The point, the spark of Atman specialized in man, enlarges its field till it embraces the All, and thus re-becomes the Rootless Root once more. It becomes the Self, the one existence, and though containing in the field of its consciousness the potential power of voluntarily circumscribing itself, if needs be, for manifestation, it is no longer under the thralldom of forms and limitations of consciousness, but still uses them, wielding them if necessary in order that its presence may be felt and cognized in the lower planes of manifestation; thus they become the connecting links between the All-conscious Existence and the centres of semi-consciousness in the lower planes. Hence the I in us, the reflection in the human vehicles of the Divine, learns to manifest

its higher qualities and transcend the limitations of the upadhis, while yet retaining the powers of self-limitation.

As the Sankhya philosophy says: "Prakriti exists for the enjoyment and the freedom of the Purusha." The bodies with their energies, with the potentialities of the Self involved in them, exist for the evolution—the manifestation through definite centres, of the I-consciousness containing within itself the potentialities of semi-conscious existence in bliss. It is the Divine germ, the seed of life and consciousness, and is capable, like the Monad of Leibnitz, of reflecting the universe while remaining the self-same I, though enlarging its field of consciousness and activity as evolution proceeds. As the fire casts off all around thousands of sparks each containing within itself the possibilities of the parent flame, so also the Divine Centre of the universe casts off its sparks into various upadhis, while remaining itself the same, the eternal and undiminishing Purusha. Every spark is itself the flame, though the flame remains ever the same with undiminished glory even though thousands of sparks may go out from it. The Self multiplies itself and casts its seed in the field of Prakriti, while remaining the same self as ever. This process of Divine multiplication, the process by which the Self remains the same even while apparently dividing itself, ought to be well borne in mind, for on its right understanding depends in large measure the correct conception of the nature of Self in us and its higher powers, illustrated, for instance, in the creation of the Manasputras.

Thus the germinal Self, the seed-man, is cast into the womb of Prakriti, and implanted in the soil of the upadhis, in order that its latent Divine powers may manifest with the help of the energies of the same Self involved in matter and form. The various upadhis

reflect this "I" according to their translucency and harmony. Just as the sun's reflection in water is bright or dim, constant or broken, according as the reflecting surface is limpid or turbid, calm or ruffled, so too the manifestations of the "I" in the vehicles. It is only when the sundry reflections, oft-times heterogeneous and conflicting, know themselves to be the self-same I, that self-consciousness comes into existence.

Self-consciousness, or the realization of the "I" in us, in spite of its various centres of activity, can be attained only when the one "I" knows itself in the midst of the diversity of forms and qualities; when by harmony and renunciation it knows itself to be in these bodies and their powers and yet none of these—when it knows the various images of itself in the upadhīs to be itself and yet not wholly itself. Thus self-consciousness depends upon the knowledge and discrimination of its reflecting centres in the various upadhīs as the Srimat Bhagavat says\*—"Just as when the reflection of the sun in water falls upon the wall of a dark room (through an aperture), a person within the room sees the reflection in water by means of the reflection on the wall, and from the reflection in the water he sees the source of the reflection—the sun in the sky—so also from the reflection of the Self in and through the *Bhūtas* (elements), *Indriyas* (senses) and the mind, we can see the source of them—the Self." But in the above illustration, if the wall be so dark as to absorb the image reflected thereon, and if the reflecting water be turbid and disturbed, the person inside the room can never identify the reflections with the sun. If, again, his mind is engrossed in the accidents instead of the essentials of things; if he looks more to, say, colour and motion, instead of the mere fact of reflection; if he cannot distinguish the dimness caused by the dark, absorbing

\*III., 27, 10.

surface of the wall or the vibrating motion imparted by the ruffled surface of the water disturbed by wind, from the essential quality of reflections, then he cannot trace the reflections back to their source—the white, motionless sun up in the sky. To gain, therefore, a correct knowledge of the reflections and their source, we must have the knowledge of the source through the qualities of brightness and steadiness in the images as distinguished from the diversity of form and motion, of colour and vibration, which are due to the influences of the reflecting media. The steadier and brighter the reflection, the greater the chance of our finding out the steady source. The more disturbed and dim the reflection, the greater the danger of our mistaking the source in the cognition of the media of reflection. Hence the essentials of self-consciousness may be summed up as follows:—

(I.) There must be diversity in the accidental attributes of the various images of the Self reflected through the upadhis. Without this diversity in form and colour, the accidents of matter cannot be distinguished from the essence.

(II.) There must be the unity of perception having for its base the notion of an I which remains constant and unchanging, and of which the secondary images in the upadhis are but projections in time and space. To know this permanent substratum of all forms—the thread soul—which strings not only all states of consciousness together, but which makes possible the projections of phenomenal centres of activity and modes of consciousness—to know this Self,\* bodies and phenomenal centres are necessary. The nuclei of the bodies reflect this “I”

According to the Srimad Bhagavat, XI., 3, 36, “This Self is the one Sat, Reality, in the midst of the Swapna, Jagrat and Shushupti states of consciousness, and vitalized by which the bodies, the Indriyas, the Pranas, and the mind perform their respective functions . . . . the Self which according to its *Kriya Shakti* (power of activity or will) is termed the Sutra (thread), according to its *gnana shakti*, the *Mahat* (cosmic ideation) and which manifests as the I, as the *Ahamkara* in *Jiva* vehicles.”

in diverse fashions, so that when in the ascending arc of evolution the conflicting and diverse I-notions are synthesized through *Kriya Shakti*, the higher unity manifests itself to the consciousness. Karma is the process whereby these reflections are cast into the wombs of the forms and develop their inner nature, their higher potentialities, and become finally harmonized with the inner life of the Self in man, as well as with the outer life of the Self as Ishvara, in all their various manifestations.

## CHAPTER IV.

## KARMA AND THE PROCESS OF GROWTH.

BEFORE we enter further into the question as to how the automatism of the sheaths becomes possible, it will not be amiss to consider the relation between the inner life, the Self and its centres, and the various upadhis in which it functions. We have seen that the Self, in virtue of its power of manifestation, reflects itself in the various upadhis, developing in them artificial centres which form, so to say, at one and the same time the nucleus of the upadhis as well as the representatives of the Self in the respective planes. Thus the Self in the cosmos reflects itself in the four-fold planes of *Jagrata*, *Swapna*, *Shushupti*, and *Turiya*, and projects centres in each of these, known in the Vedânta philosophy as the *Vivat*, the *Taijasa*, the *Hiranyagarbha*, and the fourth, the unmanifested. In the Vaishnava philosophy these four cosmic manifestations, these logoi of the solar system, are respectively called Brahmâ, Vishnu, Siva, and Maha Vishnu. The Self in man is a spark from the eternal flame, the Self in the cosmos, and has got the same Divine powers of manifesting itself and creating semi-phenomenal centres in the vehicles in which it may function. Thus it develops in the upadhis semi-automatic reflections of itself. In the Vedânta philosophy these reflections of the Self in man in the *Sthula* (gross physical), *Shukhsma* (lower mental) and *Karana* (causal and Buddhic) upadhis are respectively termed the *Vaiswanara*, the *Taijasa*, and the *Prajna*. If we can grasp the true meaning of the doctrine of Vach\* (manifestation)

\*Literally—Vach = speech, word, logos.

which underlies all occultism, we shall see the same truth clothed in a different language. Thus the one Vach, the centre of manifestation in a cosmos, the Ishvara, we may say, of a system, manifests itself in four different ways. In the gross plane of physical life of concrete objectivity, the Vach, this Voice of the Silence, manifests itself as the *Vaikhari*, the sound which is subject to changes identifying itself with its earthly tabernacle, "smiling when bathing in the sunlight of physical life, singing within the chrysalis of flesh and matter, and weeping within the castle of illusion, the rigid physical body."\* Identified with the physical body, the physical Ego thinks itself subjected to its changes, living with its life and dying with its death. This centre of the Self in man, the representative of the one-I in the "Hall of Ignorance," is also called the *Nada*, the discordant sound. The centre in the next upadhi, the *Shukhsma*, is called technically the *Madhyama Vach*, the centre of manifestation which lies midway between the causal and the physical, called by H. P. B. the astral or the paradigmatic man. With this centre the Self contacts the astral plane, the plane of extreme response to the cosmic forces—the plane where the Soul looks for the blossoms of life, lending its ear to the world's turmoil,† responding to the roaring voice of the great illusion generated by the lower mind, feeling happy or otherwise as it contacts harmonious or discordant forces in this vale of twilight, the "Hall," as H. P. B. calls it, "of Learning." This centre is also called the *Bindu*, the luminous point in the sea of astral light; and also the *Taijasa*, roll of resplendent light. The centre in the Karana plane is variously termed the *Prajna*, the seed of self-consciousness, that which measures and unifies the manifestations through the lower centres and from which these lower centres emanate and to which they

\*Voice of the Silence, page 15.

†Voice of the Silence, page 16.

return.\* It is the centre in man which extends its silver thread and rushes onward, and, beholding its image in the waves of space, whispers "this is I."† The centre in the causal body, the "Hall of Wisdom," is the centre of individuality, the thread soul in man which unifies the physical and astral life and which is the storehouse of the evolution of the lower planes. This centre is termed in the Vedânta philosophy the *Pashyanti Vach*, the centre which sees, corresponding to the Purusha in the Sâṅkhya philosophy. It is also called the *Shakti*, the source of all energy, the one centre of force. All mantra and initiation proper begin with and are based upon the potentiality of this centre—the individual. So also H. P. B. speaks of this "Hall of Wisdom," as the hall in which the disciple is given his spiritual or second birth. Beyond this lies the plane of the light of *Ishvara*—the light which catches the reflection of the Centre in the cosmos and impresses the same upon the various upadhis—the plane which is usually termed the *Turiya*, or the Fourth, of measureless and limitless Brahman. The life, or *Vach*, in this plane is called also the *Para*—that which lies beyond the individual in us—and the *Kala*—the manifestation of the pure life of the Logos. It is the one source of all Jivas, just as the rays of the sun are the cause of all reflections of the sun in everything, the one life of *Ishvara*—which upholds and maintains the universe of manifestation, called in the *Gîtâ* the *Daivi Prakriti* or the *Para Shakti* of *Ishvara*.‡ Beyond the light is the Centre, towards which the whole universe moves—the Centre without any circumference, the Cause of being and non-being, the Existence, the *Akshara*, the fount of omniscience, indestructible—that which is neither *Sat* nor *Asat*.§

\*Mandukya Upanishad, II.

†Voice of the Silence, page 17.

‡Gîtâ VII., 5.

§Gîtâ XI., 37.

What then are the centres in man? They are the reflections in the respective nuclei of the upadhi, of the one Self. If we study the workings of the impregnation of matter by Divine Energy, sometimes spoken of as the life waves, we shall see how, from the projection of the Self into the limits of objectivity called matter, certain qualities are imparted to matter developing into what are called tattvas. Each tattva has got for its ensouled life a tanmatra, or a modification of the Divine consciousness. In each tattva, therefore, we have the Divine consciousness as the central life, while the idea of resistance forms the outer wall. Each modification of the consciousness of the Logos, when externalized would be objective to Him as a tattva. Thus arose the primary sub-divisions of the non-Ego viewed as matter. But the tattvas themselves could not help in the manifestation of the Self—they could not of themselves co-mingle so as to form proper upadhis for the expression of the Logos in His aspect as the Cosmic Centre. So the Srimat-Bhagavata says\*—“the Mahat tattva and other things could not mix together and then Ishvara, clothing Himself with Time, Karma (of the previous cosmos) and the Gunas, entered into the seven elements; these then became stirred and united with each other and formed a lifeless egg.” Then the Bhagavata goes on to describe how the Devas entered into the egg, differentiating the various senses and the organs of activity, but the egg still remained lifeless till the I, the *Ksherajna*, the knower of the field, entered. So also, we read in the Aitereya Upanishad, how the Self creates a man-like Purusha form into which the Devas entered and thus formed its senses and organs, and how at last the Supreme Purusha Himself entered and located Himself in three places. These three “places of its manifestation”† are “Swapna” places, places which show

\*Srimat-Bhagavata, III., 26.

†Aitereya Upanishad, I., 2, 12.

out the Self almost in a dreamy state of manifestation, being dominated and coloured by the actions of the three upadhis. These three places are the centres of the three upadhis of the Self in man, and are directly the projections in the bodies of the three centres of cosmic manifestation referred to above, being connected with them in ties of super-physical heredity. Just as the gross physical body is the basis for the manifestation of the life of the Ego in the physical plane, and is yet at the same time the Karmic child of the physical parents, so too the three centres of manifestation have for their base the Karmic projections of the three centres in the cosmic field. They are, so far as their form and potentialities are concerned, the Karmic representatives in man of the centres in the outer world. Just as the One Self in the Cosmos manifests Itself in the different planes of being and activity through these cosmic reflections of Itself, so too the Self in man is helped in its functioning in the corresponding planes of being by these centres. They are the storehouse of the evolution of man in each of these planes, the atomic cells, which, subdividing under the influence of the forces of the plane, develop as the *layas*—the *laya* centres, round which cluster the constituent cells suited to the Guna and Karma, the centres which when going into obscurity project other centres—their progeny—for the manifestation of the life.

We should bear in mind, further, that these *laya*-centres—the points for the manifestation of the consciousness of the Self in man, are the projections—or, better, reflections—of the great cosmic centres, and thus share with them the potentialities of life and evolution. They thus represent in man, the microcosm, the manifested *logoi* of the macrocosm in a potential form. How true is the expression that God created man after His own Image! Just as these cosmic centres are the roots from

which emanate all kinds of energies, so too the centres in man are the repositories of all causes and actions. As from the cosmic I and its modifications of consciousness emanate, according to the three-fold *Gunās*, the mind, with its powers of perception and conception, the *Indriyas* and the various states of matter, so also the modifications of the consciousness of these centres create—or, rather, modify—according to their own needs the cosmic forces. Each centre thus represents germinally the corresponding cosmic centre and shares in its life and powers of manifestation. Karma, in one of its aspects, is the process whereby these germinal centres in man develop in harmony with the cosmic ones, evolving their powers by building themselves and the corresponding bodies on the cosmic lines.

What is the process of development? Turning to the *Aitareya Upanishad*, we read—

“This (the phenomenal Self in the body) exists in the Purusha like unto a seed. This seed, gathered from all parts of His body, the Purusha holds within Himself and when it comes into contact with the female (womb) it is its first birth.

“It becomes then of the same nature as the female like unto her own limbs, hence it does not give her pain. She also feeds and nourishes the seed Purusha which has entered her womb . . . this is its second birth.”\*

The above quotations throw a flood of light on the process of the evolution in the centres in man. It shows how the reflected centre in man, containing within itself all the potentialities of being and becoming which “the root Purusha has gathered from all parts of His body,” has to pass through a period of gestation within the wombs of the *upadhīs*. The powers of the generating centre, the potentialities of the modifications of its con-

\**Aitareya Upanishad*, II., 1.

sciousness, the powers of the Indriyas and the mind and the organs of the body are all reflected in a germinal form in the projected centre in man. The human centre is thus furnished by its own heredity with the higher powers of its sire, including the powers of adaptation and correlation. But the image is still a mere germ, and the possibilities of its being, high as they are, can only manifest into actuality by the kindly and, we may say, motherly nurture of the well-organized forms we call upadhis. The next point to note in this connection is that the germinal centre must be harmonized with the upadhi, so as to be "like unto her own limbs." The upadhi represents in form the improvements effected by the inner life in previous stages. It is the sum-total of the evolution in the powers of adaptation and correlation of harmony with the external forces. All the cosmic forces are there in their corresponding centres ready to help in the manifestation of the germinal human Self within. Hence the necessity of well-organized vehicles. Hence the debt, the enormous obligation, which humanity owes to the various classes of Pitris for furnishing man with stable upadhis for the evolution of his being. The bodies of a highly-evolved spiritual man are stable and organic, self-adjusting and capable of complex action. This is so because of the harmony of the inner man with the potentialities of the body as well as with the cosmic forces. Such bodies are not mere veils of dead matter which shut out the life, but are translucent upadhis expressing the life in terms of the matter and forces of the corresponding planes without in any way limiting or colouring it.

It is only when the germinal human Self within an upadhi harmonizes itself with its vehicle, while at the same time colouring the vehicle with the tinge of its own individuality—it is only when the centre develops its

powers of being by the triple harmony between itself, its upadhis, and the cosmic forces by which it is enriched, it is then only that it becomes free from the thralldom imposed upon it, and its limitations drop away. So the Aitereya Upanishad says—

“(After coming out of the womb) it takes the place of its father in the ceremonies.”

This is its third birth. It becomes then the true representative in the microcosm of the Self outside which projected it into being. Developed and nurtured into harmony and strength through the medium of the vehicles, assimilating at first through the kindly intervention of the upadhis the forces obtaining in the external universe and gradually developing its corresponding powers, harmonizing thus its body in the corresponding planes with the cosmic powers related to it, it comes out of the matrix of form as the true Jnanin, the true Initiate, representing and showing forth its father in heaven, the cosmic centre of the corresponding plane. Thus harmonized, the consciousness is linked with its source, the projecting Self, while the form thus vitalized and tuned to harmonious response becomes automatic and self-adjusting in its activities.

To effect this harmony, the Ego has to vitalize the centres of activity in the form, the centres which as we have seen represent and symbolize the cosmic forces. The Ego thus casts out from within itself sparks of being containing within themselves the higher potentialities, and thus re-establishes in his own cosmos the harmonious relation which exists between the cosmic centre and its various manifestations and energies. But this process of vitalization in order to be harmonious with the cosmic lives must not deviate from the order and sequence in manifestation of the corresponding forces in the macrocosm. Nor must the Ego disturb the characteristic

workings of these forces by depriving them of all independence. That would not help in establishing real harmony, and hence no automatism would be possible. Thus the astral chakrams, which are the centres in man of the cosmic forces, corresponding to the tattvas, can only manifest as living and circling centres of energy if they are harmonized with their sources in the macrocosm. Though they have to be vitalized by the inner life, though they have to be impregnated with the energy of the Ego in order that the relation between the Ego and themselves may be established, yet unless the cosmic forces are taken into account any artificial stimulation of these centres would tend to destroy the body instead of helping its automatism.

Thus by karma are the centres in man vitalized and then reduced to harmony with the cosmic forces and their centres, evolving thereby the automatism of the bodies in their corresponding planes. By karma, the centre of activity is wooed out into activity and thus vitalizes the relics of the Divine consciousness working in matter. By karma the upadhis are thus subjected to the action of two sets of forces—those of the inner Ego, and those of the outer Self in the corresponding plane—and are thus built and organized, developing the powers of Self-adjusting activity and automatism. By karma the centre of consciousness in man is made stable and constant and finally harmonized with the corresponding centre of the Logos-consciousness in the universe.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE STAGES OF KARMA.

HAVING understood some of the main principles underlying karma, or action, let us now consider the various stages of evolution by karma, illustrating the working out in life of the principles.

The first stages of karma are chiefly concerned with the evolution of the vehicles of the centre of consciousness, and the harmonising of these with the centre within and the forces without. The bodies of men pass through three distinct stages of evolution, characterised in the Gītā as the stages of *Moha*, or nescience, of *Pravritti*, or desires and activity, and of *Prakasha*, or manifestation.\* When the lives which go to form a body are in the state of *tamas*, or inertia, when they display no other qualities but that of inertia or resistance to consciousness, then the body is in the first stage. The body is inchoate and undeveloped; it has not then developed the powers of responding to the stimulations of the forces without. Being unorganized, it can neither help in expressing the life within nor in transmuting the outer vibrations. It is then merely the limit of objectivity to the inner consciousness, the resisting medium which forces the inner consciousness to remain inside the strong shell of matter. Stimulated neither from the outer world nor from the higher ones, the body in this stage is drowsy and indifferent. Such a body cannot aid in the evolution of self-consciousness in the centre. Yet it is a necessary

\*Bhagavat Gītā, XIV., 22.

stage. Without the help of tamas—the quality of resistance to consciousness—the energies would be frittered away. Tamas throws the consciousness back upon itself, and is thus, if wisely utilized, a means for evolving stability. Like the foetus within the womb, the centre within grows in stability by the action of this quality of resistance, and the notion of an I, stable and rigid, may be, rigid in its nature, is developed in consequence, though the growth is an unconscious one.

At this stage the manifestations of life are due to the forces from without. All stimulations come from external Nature, and the inner consciousness is simply a passive recipient of the effects produced—the *Bhakta*, the enjoyer, instead of being the spectator. External forces hammer on the sheaths, and the result is but a faint pulsation of life in the centre of consciousness. Sensations, and violent sensations, are required to stimulate the drowsy centre into manifestation, to woo it out into activity. The form, too, the vehicle, is also undeveloped, and no harmony is established between the centre and its upadhi. Hence the process of growth at this stage lies in the vivification of the sheaths by the cosmic energies, which, when harmonious, serve to stir up the drowsy consciousness of the Ego. All actions at this stage must therefore proceed from without. External forces compel the bodies and the consciousness within to adjust themselves. In the physical plane the lower appetites of the body are utilized in rousing the consciousness. Identified with the vehicle, the centre grows unconsciously with the food conveyed to it, like the foetus within the womb. The laws of Nature appear to have a compelling force, and the consciousness passes through the vicissitudes of life in a dreamy sort of way. The more rigid the vehicles, the more stable the notions of existence generated in the centre, now under the domination of form,

the more complete the identification between the centre and its upadhī, the more rapid the growth. The upadhī is thus the mother of the conscious centre at this stage, and so the *śruti* says: "Oh waters, place us in food, so that we may see the Supreme Good." "Oh waters, cherish us with the essence (Rasa) which is the best production of the Good, like unto a loving mother." And so also the Aitereya Upanishad, already quoted, says: "It becomes of the same nature with the mother in the same manner as her own members. And she (in her turn) nourishes the seed of the Puruṣa, which has entered within her womb." Complete identification with the form side is necessary for the growth of the centre and its individualization. The Law of Growth at this stage is absolute obedience and perfect submission to the forces of Nature manifesting in and through the upadhīs. By obedience only is assimilation possible; and without assimilation the centre can never gain knowledge of the Laws of Being. It has to be in unison with the form side and harmonic with its Laws ere it can gain the necessary strength, balance and adjustment to fight its own battles. It has to assimilate, by harmony and obedience, the food supplied by the form side ere it can cope with the sun and the shower, the frost and the snow, outside the matrix of form. It can develop in its baby stage its latent powers only with the help of harmonious forces toned and softened down by the *tāmasic* element in the upadhī. The identification with the form, and the consequent nescience, protects the nascent centre from the tremendous strains of the outside forces. Like the seedling, it cannot without the kindly intervention of forms retain its own centre amidst the warring elements outside. So H. P. B. spoke of matter as the "vehicle of Becoming;" so is the centre nourished into strength and independence by the form side of Nature, which, by

furnishing the life within with lines of least resistance, help in drawing out the life, and at the same time transmutes the outside forces in a way which is consonant with growth. The evolution of form—which must always precede the evolution of life—serves the important purpose of building proper bodies, which can thus cherish and develop the centres of being.

If we consider for a moment the nature of the relation of our self-consciousness in the physical plane with the physical upadhi, the helpful influence of the tāmasic quality will be apparent. With most of us the idea of “I” is dependent upon the physical vehicle. The stability of the physical body in its general structure and shape, which remain constant from birth to death, generates in the physical centre of consciousness the notion of stability and permanence. The physical body, with its heredity and associations, rigid as they are, helps in evolving in our physical consciousness the idea of a permanent “I,” so far as the earth-life is concerned. But the case is different as regards the consciousness in the astral and mental bodies. These are still undeveloped in average humanity, and in consequence the manifestations of the centres of the Self through these bodies are variable and inconstant. So, too, the nature of the self-consciousness manifesting in these bodies is affected, the tāmasic and unorganized bodies with the quality of resistance predominating in them throw back the centre upon itself. In order to help, therefore, the manifestation of the inner life the bodies must, in the first place, evolve the power of response. This at the earlier stages is done by the workings of *Prakṛiti*, and hence the principle of Karma at this stage is, as the *Gîtâ* says, “Actions are done by the compelling force of the gunas of *Prakṛiti*.”\*

The characteristic of tamas is the ascription to the

\**Gîtâ*, III., 4.

centre of consciousness of the qualities of the vehicle. Thus in the tāmasic state of physical existence the body is taken to be the real Ego. There is perfect identification between the centre and its vehicle, an identification which, as we have seen, is productive of the notion of stability in the Ego. The Self and its reflections have the inherent quality of shining, and the resistance which a vehicle in the tāmasic stage offers to the light of consciousness is productive of other important results. Just as the rigidity and resistance of the form helps in the evolution of the notion of stability in the conscious centre, so also do the elements of consciousness, existence and bliss, in the centre, evoke in the constituent cells of the body similar qualities. By resistance and identification the sheaths come to share in the life of the conscious centre within. Thus, while from the standpoint of the conscious centre there is limitation and loss, there is a corresponding gain on the side of the atoms and cells of the body, due to the reflected life of the centre. The centre of consciousness thus does in its own cosmos what is done in the outer cosmos by the first Life-wave of the Logos, and by energizing matter with its own life it lays the foundation-stone of its own evolution. The germinal centre of consciousness is incapable of realizing its own existence without the help of forms. That which appears as resistance, if viewed from the outside, means also the self-predication of the life viewed from within. In this predication, this self-limitation of consciousness for the purposes of manifestation, we find the workings of tamas or the guna of resistance. The tiny spark of fire, if not protected from the blast, is sure to die out; but if it is slowly fed into a flame, the very blast will help its manifestation instead of putting it out. Our notions of existence, our self-consciousness, thus depend a good deal upon the form by which it is limited. So we find in the

Srimat Bhagavata\* that the first creation of Brahma, the Third Logos, is the tāmasic creation producing successively *tama*, or the non-manifestation of the inner life; *moha*, or the ascription of the Self to the form which limits it; *maha moha*, or the desire for separated existence; *tamishra*, or the feeling of anger when the separated life is thwarted in its manifestation; and *andhatamishra*, or the identification of the consciousness with the form, so as to be lost when the form drops. These stages of the involution of the life fecundate matter with the powers of the Self, without which it cannot at later stages serve the Self as vehicles for the manifestation of life, and without which therefore there can be no evolution. So also the *Swetaswetara Upanishad* says: "The dweller in the body evolves under the dominion of *moha* (identification with the body) . . . and by evolving forms suited to its Karma (state of evolution) and fecundating matter, gains in the evolution of itself, and is born."†

The influences from the external world, falling upon the upadhis of the centres of consciousness, vivify the body from outside, while the germinal centre is also seeking for expression from within. By the harmony of the inner life with its body, by the obedience of the centre of consciousness to the vibrations in and through the sheaths, the dormant powers of adjustment and adaptation are roused in the Divine fragment of the body, and the Ego comes to be related to the body. The previous stages of evolution of the constituent cells of the physical body of man in the animal, vegetable and mineral stages have already developed in them the powers of sentiency and reponse. As regards the type also it is more or less constant, though unorganized. Being subjected to the powers of the Ego from within, and the forces of the external world from without, the body develops along

\*Bhagavata, III., 12.

†Swetaswetara Upanishad, V. 2.

particular lines of activity and response. Thus the sound vibrations from the external world, impinging upon the rudimentary body, awake into response the corresponding sluggish constituents, and the powers of responding to sound vibrations contained in particular cells being roused into activity, there is a consequent harmony between the sheath and the external cosmos. The centre of consciousness in its tāmasic state, identifying itself with the body, is made to reflect itself in the sense of harmony thus produced. There is thus a reflection of the centre, though constrained, and in the limitation of consciousness the Ego pours out its life. This down-pouring of life within rigid bounds imposed by the body serves to connect the centre with the harmonious vibrations in the sheath, and, through it, with the vibrations in the external world. At the same time the very rigidity of the attachment of the Ego to the vehicle prevents useless dissipation of the energies of the Ego by making them work in definite channels harmonious to the laws of the external world. Thus is the centre "placed in food" by the mother side of form.

The development in the human foetus and the workings of the pre-natal consciousness illustrate the utility of tamas as a factor in evolution. Without this stage of obedience to external laws, transmitted through the beneficial energy of the sheaths, the nascent centre of consciousness, as yet unable to contain itself and ignorant of its true nature, cannot develop the true sense of the proportions of things, the knowledge of the laws of being and becoming. The state of tamas, of the identification of the centre with a stable body, even though it be rigid, is a necessary one, evolving as it does the sense of definiteness with the help of the definite rigid lines of activity and manifestation. Freedom does not lie with particular forces, but rather depends on the utilizing of

all experience for the development of the centre of consciousness. It depends on the tact—the power of adjustment in putting under contribution every function of Nature for the evolution of self-conscious existence. Laws exist and are immutable so long as the consciousness, working in their planes, is unable to learn the lessons which the laws are intended to convey. That lesson can only be learnt at the earlier stages of evolution by the compelling force in Nature rigidly laying down definite lines of activity. Obedience is the law of growth in the tamas stage, and hence the *Gîtâ* says, “All beings follow Prakriti; what shall restraint avail?”\*

The harmony thus established between the Ego, its sheath, and external nature, further helps in the evolution of the senses and organs being dormant in the sheaths. The definite lines of activity induced in the sheaths by the action of external forces on one hand, and the Ego on the other, bring about gradually the evolution of the special senses and organs. The light vibrations, carried inwards by the sheath, arouse in the Ego the dormant powers of sight, and between the two there is a re-adjustment in the constituent cells in the body producing gradually definite senses, which can connect the inner power of consciousness with the cosmic powers contained in the impinging vibrations.

The evolution of the senses and the specific functions in the *upâdhi* brings us into the *râjasic* stage of evolution with its characteristic of expansion. The harmonious lines of activity bring the centre of consciousness into contact with the external forces, evolving in it the corresponding powers. The centre pours out its life into the harmonious sensations produced by the senses. While the stability of the vehicles produces in the centre the notions of stability and permanence, the senses help

\**Gîtâ* III., 28.

in the evolution of the powers of expansion. Thus fixed with the notion of stability, the centre gradually enlarges its circumference with the help of the outgoing tendencies manifesting as the senses. Just as the characteristic effect produced by *tamas*, or resistance to consciousness, is the throwing back of the centre upon itself and the consequent awakening of the idea of "I"—just as the identification of the consciousness with the form limiting and confining it within rigid bounds is productive of a rigid and definite "I" notion, so the characteristic quality of *rajas* is the pouring out of the life of the centre with the idea of "mine-ness." The Ego pours out its life through the pleasurable vibrations of the senses, actuated by the desire of getting and possessing things. It stamps everything with which it comes in contact with this idea of "mine-ness." It expands under the stimulation of the senses and embraces within the idea of being a heterogeneous mass of sensations. As through *tamas* the Ego establishes its relation with the various states of matter, so through *rajas*, relations are established between the Ego and its powers.

By the help of the outgoing tendencies in the senses and the organs, the Ego gradually establishes its relation with the centre of the cosmos, as manifesting through these forms of sensation and perception.

What are the senses and the other organs? It will not be amiss to consider their genesis in the cosmic planes, in order to better understand their functions in the life of the centre of consciousness in man. From the manifested Logos, or, the Cosmic Ahankara, enveloped in the veil of memory of the previous Kalpas—called technically *Chitta* and *Mahatattwa*—spring three lines of manifestation according to the preponderance of one or other of the three *gunas* in *Mahatattwa*. As the Srimat Bhagavata says: "This Ahankara is the substratum of

all effects, all causes, and all acting beings. From this Ahankara as coloured by the Sattva guna proceed the mind and the presiding gods of the senses and the various states of matter. From the action of Rajas, come the senses and the organs of action; and from tamas, come the various elements."\* The relics of Divine consciousness—in its desire for manifestation—produce the tattvas, or elements, in the various kinds of matter. The identification of the cosmic "I," with the contents of its ideation, produces modifications of its consciousness, called tanmâtras. These tanmâtras, or modifications of consciousness, when externalized by the element of tamas or resistance—when reflected outwards—produce successively the great elements known as Akasha, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. Like the thoughts of the hypnotizer becoming externalized to the consciousness of the hypnotized person, the action of Prakriti acting through tamas externalizes the modifications of the Logocic consciousness. And to us in the lower planes, these appear as objective and even limiting. The tanmâtras, when under the dominion of Rajas—the quality of action, of expression—manifest as the senses; just as by the will of the mesmerizer clairvoyance can be induced in the subject. The senses thus are the media of expression of the outgoing life, the instruments which express the life in terms of external vibration, as well as help in transmuting the external vibrations and sending them inwards to the perceiving Ego. The tanmâtras, when most luminous and manifesting under the play of Sattva Guna, appear as various modes of consciousness, such as sound, light etc. The reflections of the cosmic "I" in these modes are the great Devas—the Spiritual Intelligences—who help in reflecting the outward vibrations carried through the senses to the perceiving Ego in terms of con-

\*Bhagavata, III., 5, 29.

consciousness. Without them, the material vibrations could never produce mental modifications; material vibrations would always remain material vibrations, and the function of translating these into terms of the mind, as mental modes, is the great function of the Devas in the microcosm. Without them, sensation even would not be possible. It is their tāmasic envelopes which are to us matter, or rather the elements. Akasha is thus the limit of manifestation to the Deva-consciousness, manifesting as the organ of hearing and as the consciousness of sound. It is Their life which vitalizes Akasha, the organ of hearing and the consciousness of sound. It is They who connect and unify these three manifestations in one connected series.

The centre of consciousness would ever remain in its tāmasic state of non-manifestation if it had not these ready-made channels to connect it with the external world. But for the Devas thus transmuting the elements of consciousness contained in the vibrations, the centre would have ever remained in its dormant state. The desire for manifestation would be powerless to bring it into touch with the external world. No relation could be established, no connecting link formed, between the centre and senses and the external vibrations, without the agency of Intelligences who, by vitalizing matter and the sheaths affect the elements and senses in such a way as to be harmonious with the mental modes. The external world would never have appeared in the field of consciousness of the centre but for the kindly agency of these Spiritual Intelligences, who define the lines of manifestation in a given cosmos, and lay down the lines of least resistance along which the centre can best evolve. They are the presiding Intelligences in the external forces, as also in the sensorium, and it is through them that these two are harmonized with one another and also with the

inner man. It is when they enter the stable structure as the senses, that the centre is wooed out into manifestation and relation with the cosmic centre acting through the various forms and forces of the plane. The senses are thus the relics of the Divine consciousness which help to evolve the Divine centre within by harmonious vibrations.

As in the cosmic planes the Self—manifesting as Ishvara — projects Himself in ten different centres through the power known in Yoga as *Kriyamukti*, so also is the reflection of the same Self in man to develop its powers of being, in and through the ten centres of manifestation in him. The ten powers of consciousness of *Ishvara* in their successive order of manifestation are :—\* the *Kshetragna*, corresponding to the abstract Self in man; the *Ahankara*, corresponding to the limited I in manifestation; *Brahmā*, corresponding to the principle of *Buddhi* or apperception; *Manas*, the mind of man. Then follow the centres corresponding to the senses in man. The correspondence of the sense centres with the tattvas, the elements and their presiding intelligences, should be well borne in mind, for the whole question of the automatism of the sheaths depends upon such knowledge.

We will now consider the question of the development of the centre of consciousness and its sheaths with the help of the senses. We should bear in mind the important truth that the tattvas and the senses are really modifications of the Divine consciousness, that the ensouling life of these apparent states of matter and their functions is the life of the Logos sacrificing Himself for the purpose of manifestation. There is thus a substratum of consciousness in every state of matter. The response of the senses to external vibrations rouses, as we have seen, the dormant powers of the reflection of the Self in man. There is a consequent modification in its consciousness,

\*Bhagavata VII., 12-24.

a definite formulation of its being and a predication of its immeasurable Ananda or feeling of bliss. The centre, thus drawn out of its absoluteness and nescience, pours out its life along the track created by the harmony between the upadhi or vehicle and the external vibrations. In consequence, the relics of Divine consciousness in matter are taken into and assimilated by the centre, developing thereby its corresponding powers. Thus each sense activity increases the manifestation in the Ego of its Divine properties, though such increase is not cognized by the limited intelligence. Further, each sense helps in the unification of consciousness by classifying and extracting the essence from the various forms. Take the example of sight: with the help of sight, the modification of Divine consciousness manifesting as Tejas (brightness, luminosity) is abstracted from all other characteristics of matter. Take the case of smell, with its corresponding tattva, Earth. The Divine powers of consciousness enfolded in the Earth tattva, are thus given in the Srimat-Bhagavata: "The manifestation of Brahmā through definite forms, the power of becoming the substratum of all energies, the power of stability without the help of other principles, and the power of manifesting the Jivas and their Gunas."\* What these powers are it is very difficult for ordinary men to grasp and understand. So it must suffice if we just consider that the latest discoveries of science, as regards protoplasm, show that human, vegetable and animal protoplasm, though similar in all other respects, differ only in smell when burnt. The necessity for the fall of spirit into matter, the meaning of the oft-repeated expression to the effect that Moksha is easier of attainment in this Kali Yuga, with its rigid forms, these and other truths, if well pondered over, may disclose the nature and character of the power of Divine

\*Bhagavata III., 26-44.

consciousness under the modification of smell. It is thus through the senses that the nascent centre of consciousness is helped in the evolution of its powers by the food of consciousness involved in matter and conveyed to the Ego by means of the outgoing activities called the senses. It is by the action of the Devas who preside over the powers of the senses and their corresponding tastes that the Ego can develop, through assimilation of the mental food contained in the vibrations from the external world.

As the image-man thus develops its powers of co-ordination with the prototypes of the great cosmic Devas, and as the centre grows in strength and power by the food supplied by the senses, it develops a strong feeling of its own existence as the I. This development of the centre of consciousness with specialized powers produces in it a sense of Ahankara, or the separated I notion. It then tries to impose its own will upon the senses and other organs of activity; it then asserts its supremacy over the very agencies which conduce to its growth. Actuated by this hunger for growth by the strong desire of knowing itself as separate from the eternal world, fed by the ideas of separation which underlie all sense-activity, it thinks itself to be alone and isolated. Hardened by the forcible passion for personal stature, for individual growth, it falls into the heresy of separateness and dominates over the intelligences underlying sensation and mentality. Such a state of things frustrates the very purpose of evolution—the automatism of the sheaths and the freedom of the centre of consciousness—for the separated I notion implies the bondage of the centre of consciousness to a particular body, and is thus antagonistic to freedom. The third condition of automatism, as we have seen, is the withdrawal of consciousness from the well-organized vehicle. The mistake underlying Ahankara consists in confounding the one all-pervading Self with the notion

of spatial separation. It confuses the freedom of the centre with the separateness of the circumscribing line. The Self is one; but in manifestation it is the many, and we fall into the most egregious blunders when we try to import into the manifested I-notion in us the qualities of the unmanifested Self. Ahankara imagines the reflection of the Self to be the real Self, instead of being a merely phenomenal image thereof; and the result is war and strife, pain and suffering, which break asunder the rigid artificial and separated I-notion. As already said, the manifestation of the life of the centre in the tāmasic state may be expressed by the proposition, "I am the body." The life at the Râjasic stage may be summed up in the proposition, "The body is mine." All future progress therefore lies in the expansion of the connotation of the term "Mine"—in the adaptation of the centre of mine-ness to the centre in the macrocosm; or, in other words, the evolution henceforth lies in harmonizing the centre and its well-vitalized vehicles with the cosmic forces. Sacrifice is thus the law of growth of the centre at this stage, and so the Gîtâ says, "All actions are for sacrifice, otherwise there is bondage."\*

\*Gîtâ, III., 9.

## CHAPTER VI.

## KARMA AND HARMONY.

WITH the dawning on the human mind of the necessity of sacrifice as a factor in evolution begins the Sattvic stage—the stage of harmony and consequent freedom. Instead of asserting the notion of its limited existence over the cosmic powers and their corresponding centres in man, the Ego now pours out its life with the object of harmonizing itself with the external forces. There is therefore a consequent readjustment in the bodies. By the assertion of its own authority over the activities of the body the Ego has gained in the power of relating the bodies to the external forces. It has thereby developed the links which connect its powers with the cosmic ones. Its vehicles are thus built, organized and brought under the control of the Ego and rendered obedient to the inner life. Connection is established between the powers of the Ego and the lines of least resistance evolved in the body with the help of cosmic powers. By action prompted by the desire of individual existence the basis of self-knowledge and self-consciousness is laid. By desire the life of the Ego is brought down to the lower planes, thus forming connecting links between the line and the lower forms. Thus are bridged the gaps—the neutral barriers—between the several states of consciousness. The theosophical description of the Lower Manas, as the Râjasic outputting of the human monad, is at once suggestive of the important function which it has in connecting the Ego with the

lower planes. Similarly the outputting of the life through desire, the involution of the consciousness of man under the influence of Rājas, not only impregnates matter with life and evolves the hidden potentialities, but it is also an important factor in unifying life and form, spirit and matter. The fine substratum of Egoic life when drawn into matter, pervades uniformly the various qualities of matter, and thus acts as a wire to connect the modifications of the Divine consciousness which ensoul matter with the centre of human consciousness. The life thus down-poured forms a constant and invariable substratum running through the heterogenous mass of forms and tattvas, synthesizing them into the likeness of the homogenous nature of the Ego. Desires thus are the first foreshadowing of the one life in contradistinction to the various forms. The various vibrations of the physical plane affecting the sensorium produce a vague sense, an instinctive perception through being transmuted by the relics of the Divine consciousness acting as the indriyas, or senses. This vague ideation is called in the *Sankhya* philosophy *Alochana*. The Sattvic energy, manifesting as the presiding Deva, takes this vague feeling and stamps it with the characteristic mark of *Abhimana*, or my-ness. The vibration, thus transmuted and specialized, is taken up by the centre of consciousness and is further specialized by its colouring. This definition, imparted to the conflicting percepts, makes their assimilation into wisdom possible. The life of the Lower Manas furnishes them with a common ground wherefrom alone wisdom can arise. The functions of memory, of discrimination, all imply the presence of a common substratum in the I-sense, in the ascription of the I to the external facts, various as they are in their nature. A physical analogy to this process is furnished by the function of digestion. The food we take is first subjected to a process of disintegration by mastication,

as well as by the secretions of the mouth and stomach. Then, in the intestines, a downpouring from the liver plays upon it and separates the essential from the non-essential parts, helping thereby the assimilation of the food and the building of the body.

So, too, the senses with their powers serve in the first instance in reducing the mass of percepts to various groups, similar in nature to the subconscious activity. The Kâmic nature then dissolves the product, and resolves them again into groups harmonious to its activity; and then the product is subjected again to a further unifying process by the downpouring of the life of the personal Ego, the *Ahankara* acting in *kâma-manas*, which extracts from the mass those elements which conduce best to the expression of its life. This is why H. P. B. describes the liver as the organ of the physical body which corresponds to the *kâma-manas* in man.\*

Thus we find that by actions done with desire there is a consequent development of the unity of life. Just as the unity of the physical *upadhi* is helpful in inducing a sense of its own unity in the centre of consciousness, so too the unity and persistence of desires help in evolving the unity of the centre, and at the same time taking it a little higher up. By *Kama* we are led to use the lower vehicles even to the extent of subjecting them to unpleasant things. Actuated by the strong desire for things, we make the body work even to the extent of fatiguing it. The higher matter of the astral plane serves the purpose of expressing the life better than the gross physical body full of inertia; and because of this, as well as because of the unity of desires, the centre is more active when attached to *Kâma*. These desires, outgoing as they are and limiting in their tendency, yet offer a better vehicle for the manifestation of life. Each desire

\*S. D., Vol. III.

is thus a force beneficial to the Ego at a certain stage of evolution, expressing as it does a definite line of activity, and pointing to a unity in the midst of the diversity and chaos of sense objects. It is thus a step in the manifestation of the one life if it can be made ingoing, and hence the Hindus consider it to be a Deva—a conscious entity, the result of the involution of the life of the Logos in matter, bridging the gap between the consciousness of the mind and the apparent unconsciousness of matter. Actions done with desire thus help in connecting the Thinker in man with the food contained in matter along the lines of least resistance represented by the Devas of the astral plane. Such actions also help in vitalizing the vehicles with the seeds of Egoic life as well as harmonize them with the forces in the external world. And hence the Gītā says, “Do thou action always, for action is better than inaction.”\*

Thus by actions “done with desire” we find that the centre in man is surrounded by nutritive elements, which are transmitted inwards by the action of conscious agencies underlying the senses, desires and even the powers of the mind. Each of these agencies contributes its characteristic colouring to the mental food, and renders its assimilation by the centre possible. This process of assimilation is generally unconscious at the beginning, owing to the emergence and identification of the centre with passing phenomena. The centre thus engrossed cannot consciously understand the gradual disintegrating process. But it is possible for one properly equipped to mark every stage of this process. So the Srimat Bhagavata says: “Just as the wise goldsmith can find out and eliminate the particles of gold lying hidden in ores and stones, so also the wise man can attain to the Self lying hidden in the body by the application of the

\*Gītā, III., 8.

fires of wisdom and analysis."\* The relics of the consciousness of the Self can be found everywhere if only our eyes are turned towards it. This is why *Light on the Path* says, "Learn from sensation and observe it, because only so can you commence the science of self-knowledge and plant your foot on the first step of the ladder." True it is that in the plane of rigid matter, the physical plane, the powers of the Self are all hidden, and only the flavour of the Self, its smell—*tattva*—remains; but just as from the fragrance wafted by the passing wind we can infer the flowering blossoms, so too in the midst of varying desires we can discover even here the traces of the Self by the flavour of Life. As it is, even in actions done with desire, not only is the centre fed and helped towards manifestation, but the very agencies which transmit the vibrations are also strengthened. They impart their colourings to the ingoing vibration, and are in turn fed and nourished by their proper food contained in the vibrations. The senses and desires gain in definition by the individual tinge imparted to the vibrations by the centre of consciousness in man—a fact which we can easily trace if we analyse the character of sensations and desires in man and animals, as well as in the vegetable kingdom. In the vegetable kingdom there are sensations, but they are massive in their nature; and the desires of animals have not the same persistence, the same one-pointedness, which we find in man. Such specialization of desires connects them easily with the corresponding forces in the macrocosm. There is thus established a regular cycle of activity between man and the cosmic forces.

In the first stages, when the centre of consciousness in man is still undeveloped, when it is identified with its senses and desires, it seeks to assert itself over its powers

and their corresponding intelligences. Unable to know its own nature as separated from these, though related with them when in manifestation; unable to function alone in its own plane, the centre dominates over its senses, and seeks to find the guarantee of its own existence by asserting its life and imposing its law upon them. He makes the senses work in order that his own existence may be realized. He dominates them and makes them work out his will, and seeks to deprive them of all independent activity. By this Râjasic self-assertion, however, the relation between the Ego and its instruments is established, and they are coloured by the idea of mine-ness which actuates the activities. As already seen, such a procedure does not help in freeing the centre of consciousness. The instruments, thus deprived of all power of initiating actions, become logs and restrain the activity of the Ego. The senses, thus deprived of all qualities of activity, become paralysed and tâmasic, confining the Ego within their limitations. It is only when the centre of consciousness recognises these senses as the relics of the Divine consciousness helping in the manifestation of the inner life, only when the Ego realizes its true relation with the intelligences which preside over all sense and mental activities, and wisely utilizes them as instruments for its growth, that the freedom of the consciousness is possible. The very name *Indriyas* implies their Divine origin, for it means the relics, the signs, the traces of the involution of the Divine life. Hence *Light on the Path* says: "Seek it by testing all experience, by utilizing the senses in order to understand the growth and meaning of individuality . . . . seek it by study of the laws of being, of the laws of Nature, the laws of the Supernatural." The senses *per se* do not lead to bondage any more than the laws of the physical body are impediments to the development of consciousness. Laws exist,

and it would be a useless frittering away of energy if we strove to fight against them or to turn them out of their definite lines. They are not external and coercive forces, intended for the stifling of self-consciousness, but are really the expressions of the stages of involution of the Divine life and the lines of least resistance which, once understood, help in the adjustment of the human centre with its source in the cosmic planes. Growth is only possible if there is harmony between them and the energies of man. Take, for example, the physical laws of health. They are not limiting in their nature, but only help to express the laws of the physical plane. The physical body can evolve, not by fighting against these laws and setting them at naught, but only by harmonizing the body with them, by understanding their nature and workings, and through implicit obedience and conscious and voluntary adjustment. Once these laws are understood and the body adjusted to their workings, then the body gains in the power of responding and adapting itself to its environments without requiring the constant intervention of man. Thus, by harmony with the external laws, by the adjustment of the powers of the body with the cosmic power, energy is conserved and the man set free. Similarly, by adjusting the senses, the desires and the powers of the mind harmoniously with their presiding intelligences in the cosmic planes, at first through purposive actions, harmony is established between the centre of consciousness and the external world. By this harmony, by actions done with the object of sacrificing to the Devas, the centre of consciousness develops its own independence along with the power of relation with the cosmic centre. And so the Gîtâ says, "The Devas will cherish you, and you also cherish the Devas in return, and thus by mutual nourishment attain the Supreme good."\*

\*Gîtâ, II., 11.

Thus fed by sacrifice, by actions done with the object of harmony, knowing however dimly the nature of the centre of consciousness as being not the body nor its energies, the Ego gets its proper food. Devoid of Kâma and the spirit of self-assertion, no longer identified with the vehicle, but using it as an instrument, the Ego does not colour the vibrations of the external world with its own colour, and in consequence the senses and the powers of the mind, with their presiding intelligences, extract out of the vibrations their proper food, and in return help in building the body along cosmic lines. Physical vibrations are thus disintegrated, and manifest the hidden vibrations of the astral and mental characters as the vibrations proceed inward. The physical shell is absorbed by the lives in the physical body setting free the higher; the astral intelligences take of this their proper food, and the mental powers are sustained by the mental elements involved in the vibrations. The harmony established between the forces acting in the body and the corresponding intelligences in the external world ensures the absorption of the proper food. Trained by the actions of the Ego, and purified of Kâma by the spirit of sacrifice which prompts all Egoic activities, the entities in the bodies are also made pure and free from self-assertion. This guarantees proper assimilation and prevents over-absorption. Thus purified of Kâma, of all desire for self-assertion, the energies of the Devas in the body are harmonized with their intelligent sources outside and react in turn, harmonizing the body with the body of the cosmic centre of the corresponding plane. Thus physical vibrations purified of all animal tinge—the desire for physical life—feed the physical body in harmony with the physical laws. The physical body thus fed with harmonious vibrations, each containing the reflection of the Ego, partakes also in some measure of

the life and consciousness of the centre, and gains thus an increase in the manifestation of self-consciousness, and hence in the power of initiating actions and automatic response. By the help of the *Kriyashakti* of the Ego its life is reflected in every individual cell composing the body, and the expansion of being produced by Karma evolves the consciousness of the cells to a higher stage, a fact which underlies all Yajna, or sacrifice.

So also in the case of the astral and mental bodies. Each of these is harmonized with the forces of the corresponding plane, and each gains in the evolution of its constituent cells. The elements of physical consciousness, the powers of response, are taken into the physical body. The elements of sentiency involved in the physical vibrations go to feed and evolve the cells of the astral body, while the elements of mentality are taken in by the mental cells. The residuum of self-consciousness involved in every vibration go to feed and develop the self-consciousness of the centre, and, thus fed, thus feeding and harmonizing the lower bodies, the centre gains in self-conscious existence so far as its own life is concerned, and in freedom so far as the bodies are concerned. So the *Gîtâ* says, "Those who take what remains after sacrifice are freed from all sins."\*

\**Gîtâ*, II., 13.

## CHAPTER VII.

## KARMA AND DUTY.

THE harmonizing of the inner tattvas with the outer, the co-ordination of the inner centres of energy with their outer correspondences, leads in the first place to a knowledge of these Divine energies. So the *Sruti* says:—"When the Ego becomes self-conscious in a Deva (becomes harmonized with the Deva) then it becomes of the same Rupa as the Deva himself." In consequence of the harmony of the Egoic activities with the activities of the cosmic intelligences, the vehicle containing these energies becomes harmonized and helps in the manifestation of the centre of the Self. So it is said, "the man devoid of Karma and the sense of sorrow sees the glory of the Self through the quiescent and harmonious state of the mind and the Indriyas."\* By harmony and sacrifice the centre in the body is helped in its manifestation. In the Yoga philosophy this harmony is effected by reducing the senses, with their centres and the mind, to their cosmic sources. With the resolution of each of our sense activities, by transcending through harmony the limitation imposed on the consciousness by every sense, the corresponding power, technically known as the Siddhi, is gained by the Ego. Each law of nature when understood by harmony and obedience becomes a source of power, and can be so utilized by man.

At the first stages of human evolution this process of harmonizing the inner with the outer is generally

\*Kathapanished II., 20.

accomplished by means of particular desires. Thus in the Vedic times men went through sacrifices with the object of attaining to life in Swarga or Heaven. In modern days, however, we have lost sight of the Devas, and hence do not try to harmonize ourselves with them. But none the less we are constantly led to harmonize ourselves, though unconsciously, with particular Devas, by following particular lines of research in science and philosophy. Even now, Yajnas or sacrifices can be, and generally are, done with specific motives. There is, however, one great defect in all actions done from desire. The inner life becomes affected by the subtle tinges of desire, and in consequence gets coloured in its expressions. The life thus poured out has therefore a tendency to lose itself in the forms which subserve the particular desire. Though the cells and other constituent parts of the form thus vitalized gain in increased power and in the manifestation of their potential energy, there is yet generated in the Egoic consciousness a tendency towards subdivision of the life and towards its crystallization along definite lines. Thus, though powers may be gained by harmonizing particular parts of our nature with the corresponding cosmic forces, the division in self-consciousness retards the development of the perfect automatism of the body. The many Devas when separated, when regarded as distinct entities and unrelated to their source—the Cosmic Centre, however much they may help in manifesting the Ego along definite lines, hide the real centre from view.\* Hence the necessity of unifying the sense activities and other powers of the Ego into a harmonious whole.

The attachment to particular lines of activity which show out the centre of consciousness more clearly than others, the feeling of desire, of attachment to particular

\*Bhagavata IV., 31-46.

functions of the centre of consciousness must, therefore, be conquered. Unless the centre of consciousness can function outside a particular upadhi or vehicle, that upadhi cannot be rendered automatic and the centre set free. The upadhi will constantly drag down the Ego and the Ego will constantly colour the vehicle. Hence withdrawal is, as we have already seen, a necessary condition helping in the conservation of energy. Hence desirelessness and non-attachment of the centre as regards the form must precede perfect automatism and harmony.

The conditions of growth, therefore, are summed up in the GĪtā as the doing of actions with the idea of duty. Thus the GĪtā says:—"Therefore always do thou actions as duty and with non-attachment, for by doing actions with non-attachment the Purusha attains to the supreme."\* Duty is the first recognition through the activity of Rajas of the one life in us, of the centre of consciousness viewed as separate from its surroundings and yet having obligations as regards the non-I. It is sacrifice, yet it still keeps the notion of a distinct separate I. In place of regarding the non-I simply as an instrument of growth, the Ego dimly recognises its own relation with the non-I. It is the first outputting of the true impersonal life of the Self, and the first stage in overcoming the craving for an unrelated individual existence. It implies the recognition of the claims of other individuals, whether men or other entities. Thus though separative, setting the I against the non-I there is in it a dim sense of unity which manifests in the idea of giving up things for the evolution and sustenance of others. There is self-assertion in duty; there is self-accentuation in it, but along with that there is a desire for relating the I with the non-I.

If we analyse the idea of duty, we find in it the following elements:—In the first place, duty relates to an

\*Gītā, III., 19.

individual, it implies a distinct centre of consciousness and the relation of the centre with its actions. The centre thus is not the Absolute Self, but rather a particular form of its manifestation. Actions there must be in order that notions of duty should exist. When there are no actions in the physical, astral, or the mental planes, there can be no duty. Hence the Gîtâ says :—

“For the man who revels in the Self, who is content in the Self and satisfied in it, for him there is nothing to be done and no duty therefore.”\*

He who has attained to the stage of spectatorship, he whose centre of consciousness does not require the help of Karma to manifest itself and who, therefore, is unrelated to every form of manifestation, he can gain nothing, so far as he himself is concerned, by any actions. Duty, therefore, connotes the individual, though related to forms. Along with this element of self-relation in duty, there is a corresponding recognition of other individuals. The centre of consciousness, sufficiently developed by actions done through Kâma to know itself, recognises by and through the very fact of self-knowledge, the existence of other individuals. The third element in duty is an underlying spirit of union, a deep, though undefined, sense of something which runs through the separated individuals and connects them together into a harmonious whole. The sense of obligation in duty arises from the recognition of this unity of life, called variously the “Dictates of Practical Reason,” or Moral Governor of the World, of Conscience, or of Utility. The sanctioning element in duty lies thus in the sense of unity variously perceived by men. As the individual centre develops its inner powers, it becomes more and more harmonized to the cosmic centre of a particular plane; and thus it nears the stage when it will regard

\*Gîtâ, III., 17.

itself as a mere vehicle, an instrument in the hands of the Divine Centre to work out Its Will. The dim perception of the unity of the individual centre with the cosmic one, leads to the recognition of other individual manifestations of the parent source, and the spirit of unity is but the echo of the silent voice, the life of the cosmic centre.

Duty is thus the law of harmonizing individuals in their manifestations. The same principle which harmonizes the elements of desire and physical existence, by relating these with the cosmic manifestations, holds good in duty also. Just as desires, self-seeking as they may be, are harmonized by the recognition by man of their cosmic sources, just as owing to such harmony the attachment of the inner consciousness to these desire-activities drops away and they are rendered automatic in their actions, and set free the inner consciousness from the trammels imposed by them, so it is in the evolution of the idea of duty. In the first stages of growth people regard duty as being personal. The separative element in duty preponderates over the synthetic element, thereby helping the differentiation of the centre from the relatively phenomenal bodies which are used as instruments. This recognition of separation differentiates duty from desire which implies identification. Unless the vehicles are, even though dimly, regarded as instruments and so controlled, there can be no actions done as duty. This separative tendency feeds the body of Egoism and hence in the earlier stages duty wears the garb of offensive self-assertion. Thus we see people fighting with each other with a view of forcing their own ideas of duty upon others. They seek to impose upon others the circumstances of their own individual existence and its laws. This implies the bondage of the centre of consciousness to particular lines of its manifestation, and the crystalliz-

ation of the idea of duty is a far more dangerous enemy than the crystallization of desires.

The imposition of the will upon the sheaths helps, however, in eradicating the tinges of desire from the upadhis, and vivifies them with the higher elements of will, helping in their automatism.

But renunciation, we have seen, is another condition needed to bring about perfect automatism. The very desire of imposing its will upon the sheaths and other individuals defeats the object of Karma. Hence we find knight-errants in religion wandering about and fighting with people with the sole object of compelling them to share in their own ideals of duty and religion. They pine away if they are not given opportunities for the exercise of their dominating idea of duty, tilting at wind-mills when there are no real opponents. Hence the law of non-attachment holds good in this plane also. Otherwise duties, even when perfectly done, would involve the consciousness into a higher and limiting form of bondage. Hence non-attachment is laid down in the Gîtâ as an essential element in the proper discharge of duties.\*

Just as desires are harmonized by actions done with Kâma when related to the cosmic lines, so also duty is the training of the outputting of individual will into unison with the Will of the Divine. The individual is no longer under the dominance of desires, but, on the contrary, wields his vehicles with their powers for the purposes of deliberate manifestation of his own life. This deliberate outputting of human energy is called the Will. Individual and separated wills are harmonized by the third element we have found in duty—the Divine Unity. By the recognition of the one Divine Will, which nothing can thwart, and by deliberately adjusting our individual wills to harmony therewith, we gain in the power of

\*Gîtâ, III., 19.

autonomy in the domain of the will. The clearer the recognition by the heart of man of a Divine purpose running through and governing all manifestation, the easier the adaptation of individual will to its source. The purer the vehicles and the more freed from lower personal desires, the better the manifestations of harmony. But we are apt to be dominated by the colourings of our own individual life. The centre of consciousness is coloured in its manifestation by the higher forms of attachment to individual life in manifestation. And in consequence our knowledge of the Divine Will and its laws of manifestation is liable to errors of a serious kind. Simple religiousness is no guarantee against the higher forms of delusion, which consist in externalizing our individual wills and calling them Divine. Puritanism and other forms of rigidity in our conceptions distort as much our clear vision of the Divine Centre as lower forms of desire. Hence the only corrective to such forms of mental delusion lies in the recognition of the Divine element in other individuals; in regarding the manifested life in the Universe as being the reflection of one and the same Divine life. Altruism, therefore, helps us in clearing our ideas of duty from personal colourings. The recognition of other individuals in various stages of evolution with their manifold duties is the best preventive against the self-limiting tendency which underlies duty. The underlying sense of Ahankara, the spirit of self-assertion and separateness, which is the result of the attachment of the individual centre to its mental forms, must be eradicated by means of the idea of the unity of individuals so far as their inner life is concerned. However much the individuals may differ in their notions of duty, in the expressions of their individual life through duty, yet they all meet in the life of the Divine from which they have emanated. Hence duty must be done, not with a view

of imposing our own will upon others, but so as to adapt ourselves and harmonize our wills with the needs of other individuals. The knowledge of the unity of Divine life manifesting in different individuals as mineral, vegetable, animal, man and Deva, along with the recognition of the law of evolution, moderates in us the spirit of self-assertion. It harmonizes our individual will with the Divine will—the increasing purpose which runs through the ages. We act thenceforth, not with the idea of our individual duty alone, but we learn also to consider the needs of humanity in general. In philanthropy, in altruism rightly comprehended, we find the law of manifestation of the unity of life, and in deliberately adjusting our out-going activities to the planes of desire and duty to the Divine life in all forms, we see the process of harmony, the law of growth, by which we can reach to the life beyond the individuality. So the Gîtâ says :—“Thou oughtest to act having in view the evolution of the lokas.”\* Duty becomes then a sacrifice; no longer is there in it the desire for individual growth, the spirit of separateness. Finding the higher unity of the Divine life, and seeing its various reflections in the individuals, man no longer acts for the sake of anything which the three worlds can produce. The very fact of the realization of the unity of life, as pervading all individuals, shows out the soul's stage of growth. He is then a self-conscious entity, independent of the forms of the three worlds. He has transcended the limits of individuality, and can help much in the Karma of the lower planes. Instead of regarding Karma as a means for the evolution of his own being, he then continues to act in order that the evolution of the Divine reflection in other men may go on. Knowing that ordinary men follow the really wise and imitate them in their actions,

\*Gîtâ, III., 20.

he acts with the sole object of giving humanity an ideal and furnishing it with a living example of Karma done as sacrifice. He disturbs not lower men in their duties by leading a life of inaction; but he acts and works apparently as those do who work for happiness and ambition.

Through duty the desire for growth is harmonized with the laws of the universe by recognising the claims of other units of life. It is the outcome of the sense of the solidarity of life in manifestation. Being founded on the notion of individualized life, it bears generally a sombre look. The element of pain, of sternness, of giving up something a little unwillingly, is the result of the notion of separateness as regards the "I" in us. Limited by the form of Ahankara, though dimly feeling a vague sense of unity and solidarity, the sanctioning force is also viewed as being external. Hence, too, the notions of a ruler and moral governor, which the idea of duty necessarily implies.

The case is different in actions done for the love of humanity. They are the results of the vitalization of the centre of consciousness in the Buddhic plane. The faint pulsations of the life in the Buddhic plane, the dim awakenings of the centre of ananda, make themselves felt by the consciousness of the lower planes, producing in our normal consciousness the sense of an all-embracing unity of life. The well-developed centre of consciousness is thus gradually helped in overcoming the limitations of the separated "I" as manifesting through intellect. It goes out of its hitherto imprisoning shell, and dimly feels the living presence of an "I" which transcends the limitations of the causal body. The intellectual harmony, the sense of unity arrived at through keen analysis, is gradually supplemented by a more real sense of unity—the unity of life. Hence all actions which had hitherto

as their motive the evolution of self-consciousness through the harmonizing of the vehicles with their cosmic correspondences cease henceforth to have any such individual motives. Hitherto all sacrifices were made with the object of gain, though it be the gaining of harmony with cosmic powers. Kâma held sway in them so long as the centre of consciousness regarded itself as separate and individualized. So long as the "I" is sharply demarcated off from the universe, so long must it necessarily be imperfect. Perfection lies only in the unmanifested life; in manifestation there must necessarily be limitation and its consequence, imperfection. Even the Sâmkhya Purusha, the "I" regarded as the spectator, is an imperfect manifestation of the All life, excluding, as it does, the vehicles and the consciousness of the Divine centre which works through it. Hence is it that the Sankhya can but regard the "non-I" as unconscious, though by an anomaly producing things in quite a conscious way.

The basic idea underlying all impulses of Love and Philanthropy is the realization, even though dim and hazy, of the presence of the Life in what has hitherto been regarded as the "non-I." With the dawning of the Buddhic life the "non-I"—the limit of objectivity—is seen as being the result of the workings of the same life which manifests as the "I" in us. Hence in actions done as sacrifice, in all acts of philanthropy and love, there is less of I-reference in consciousness. The motive does not concern itself so much with the separated "I" as with the dimly-sensed All. The evolution of being, which such actions produce, is that of the oneness of life, though yet veiled in translucent forms, and the seeds of true Sannyasa, the real renunciation, are thereby sown.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## KARMA AS SACRIFICE.

WE have seen that the growth achieved by the earlier stages of Karma is, after all, somewhat negative in character, and tends, even in the case of Karma done as duty, to an accentuation of the separative I-sense.

Hence the necessity for actions done as *Yajna*, or sacrifice. By sacrifice only is the crystallizing tendency in duty counteracted, and the developed centre harmonized to the One Life from which it proceeds. Sacrifice is the law of harmonizing the centre with the Cosmic Source. Sacrifice fulfils at one and the same time all the conditions under which automatism of the bodies becomes possible. Sacrifice, thus is action, it is the result of the deliberate outputtings of life from the centre with the object of harmony. It thus shares with Karma the quality of being out-going in its nature. But while actions in the previous stages are due to the unconscious will for the realization of existence, sacrifice means the conscious and deliberate outputting of life for the purpose of evolving the Unity of Life, inside as well as outside the centre. By duty done with non-attachment the I-notion is fed and strengthened, and, so far as its own existence is concerned, it does not require the aid of Karma to ensure and guarantee its existence. So the Gītā says: "He has no purpose which can be fulfilled by the universe."\*

But actions there must be, so long as there is a manifested universe; so long as the purpose of the Divine is still unrealized. The actions of Prakriti cease

\*Gītā III., 18.

not, though the individual may by right discrimination and dispassion have indrawn himself to a point where forms cease to exercise any influence over him. Hence actions done in consonance with the Divine purpose are necessary for further evolution. So the Aitereya Upanishad says: "This Self of Him (the Father, the Root Purusha) is made to take his place in the sacrifices;—this is his third birth." The purposes of Ishvara in the midst of manifestation are to be fulfilled by the well developed centre. Man has to take the place of his originating sire in the sacrifices. With the dawning of the idea of sacrifice there is seen a marked change in the centre in its relation to the non-Ego. The vivification by the centre of the bodies in the previous stages of Karma and duty is due to the desire for existence—the will to experience. True, there is a conception of the non-Ego, but it is a mere non-Ego—the negation of the I, and the limit of its activity. In the Sankhya Yoga, too, the outputtings of discrimination are solely due to the desire of self-preservation—in order to keep intact the consciousness of the centre. The unity of life seen is the unity *in the centre*; and the harmony sought is the harmonious reduction of everything for the purposes of growth. The centre puts to contribution every part of its nature; it utilizes every force, consciously or otherwise, in order that it may grow. Karma taints everything even up to Buddhi—the faculty of apperception.

Even with these limitations the practice of control, of renunciation, has the important effect of stilling the jarring and discordant voices in the upadhis. Though negative and separative, the indrawing of consciousness—when not hardened by the spirit of self-assertion—helps in producing an artificial stillness and silence, in which the higher voice of the cosmic unity speaks in inaudible whispers. The harmony, though temporary, makes the

consciousness passive, and there it may perchance receive and feel the dim pulsations of the Divine Life of Unity.

But it is Karma as sacrifice which is the method whereby is harmonized the centre of consciousness to the conditions of Being in the cosmic centre. Sacrifice involves the notion of a centre which is separate from its Source, though seeking union with it. Instead of pouring out its life in order that the surroundings may be brought under its control, it consciously harmonizes itself with the external forces, perceiving dimly the one-ness of life which pervades them all. It recognises that the down-pouring of its life, in order to be helpful in evolving automatism, must be in consonance with the cosmic lines of activity. Instead of putting under contribution the cosmic laws, it gives out its life knowing that by life only life can evolve. Desireless, without the tinge of self-assertion, it pours out its life for the purpose of evolving the harmony it dimly feels. Stable in its own existence as a centre, it gives instead of taking, harmonizing things by its magic touch, and building for itself the higher centre in the Buddhic plane.

All *Yajnas*, or sacrifices, are thus due to the dim realization of the one-ness of life and the desire for establishing harmony. Actions which lead to bondage are utilized in expanding the consciousness and relating it to the cosmic forces inside and outside the sheaths. Dimly realizing the life of the Buddhic plane, with its undercurrent of unity in the midst of diversity, the centre of consciousness gladly turns the wheel of manifestation. This wheel, in the language of the Upanishads, represents the Self in manifestation. The nave of the wheel is the centre, while the spokes and the rim are likened to the *Indriyas* and matter respectively. Just as the rim of the wheel is held together by the spokes, and the spokes in their turn are established in the nave, so, too, the limit-

ations of the Self appearing as matter are held together by the relics of consciousness, the Devas and the senses. So, too, these relics of consciousness and its limitations are held together and established in the nave (the Jiva). The one life of the Self is the life which holds the wheel together and controls its revolutions. In the cosmic planes, too, evolution is symbolized by the imagery of the wheel, Ishvara being the centre of all activities. The solidarity of the wheel, therefore, should be maintained to help evolution. The interdependence of the parts and the organic unity of the whole ought to be well borne in mind.

Knowing the interdependence of life, and realizing the law that life proceeds from life, as form does from form, man, at this stage, pours out his life in sacrifice for the evolution of beings. He had previously grown by appropriating things from others; his centre has been developed by the contributions made by the forms of Divine consciousness appearing as the objects of sense, as the senses, and the mind. The man now begins to give back to each of these their proper food in return. Thus, knowing the nature of the debt which he owes to the animal creation and to the Bhutas, or elements, and, desirous of harmonizing himself with these, he makes sacrifices. He knows that, but for the animal kingdom and the evolution effected in it, the constituent cells of his physical body would not have developed the power of response to external stimuli. He realizes that, but for the consciousness acting through the cells, he could not have come into touch with and developed the corresponding power of sensations and perception of the external forces. He sees how, in the animal and lower kingdoms, the cells gain their power of response; how the suffering in the animal world rough-hews these lower lives, and evolves in them the powers of adaptation and

response, without which his evolution as a conscious centre would be impossible of attainment. Conscious of the enormous sacrifice of the Divine consciousness in evolving matter which goes to form his upadhis, and realising the necessity of animal evolution as a necessary link in the evolution of the Cosmos, he deliberately practises the virtues of compassion and kindness towards the lower creation. Such acts help in inducing in the animal monads the higher feelings of love, kindness and gratitude—a fact observable in the case of domesticated animals. The animals and the very elements thus gain, by the sacrifice of the higher life of man, in mentality, and even in a dim sense of individual existence; for even so-called “dead” matter is vitalized, as researches in psychometry would go to prove, by the higher life of man; the differentiation of the animal-group souls is also helped by his kindly influence. In the second place, such actions go to evolve the physical cells of the body of the man himself, and by purifying these lower lives of their animal out-going tendencies, which resist the free energy of the Self, they make the physical body a better instrument for the manifestation of the higher life even down here. Thus by sacrifice the resistance to evolution in the outer world, as well as in the sheaths is removed; and the life of *love* goes to harmonize the inner man with the outer world. Links are established between centres of consciousness in the Buddhic plane and the lower lives in the physical, by evolving in these lower the higher potentialities of life. The tendency towards absorption which rules the life in the physical body, the spirit of resistance to consciousness and the tendency to transform it into the lower potentials of kama and sensation is transmuted by the buddhic life of the centre. Purified of kama, while retaining the power of response to proper external stimuli, the animal instincts as well as the limited

consciousness manifesting through the elements, remain as lines of least resistance which automatically respond to outer forces and function in their own plane without the intervention of the centre. The elements of choice, of surrender, in sacrifice endow these lower eyes with similar qualities and induce in them the power of self-initiating activity.

By sacrifice to humanity the centre evolves the power of harmony and adaptation to all human beings. Understanding the utility and importance of the laws of physical heredity and the transmission of qualities, realizing the extent of the obligations he owes to his physical progenitors in furnishing him with a proper vehicle, man learns to hold his physical life sacred. The physical body thus built with sacrifice he regards as a sacred thing, existing only for the purpose of manifesting the divinity in the lower planes. He knows the extent and character of the mutual interchange of life among men, and he acts with consideration and love. He knows that all his acts affect his fellows, that his thoughts and emotions have influence over his brothers for good or for evil, and, realizing his solidarity of life, he tries to create a healthier atmosphere around him in all his social relations, and sacrifices his individual life for the good of his fellows. In all his dealings with men, in his social, political and religious life, all his acts tend to produce harmony, elevating all who come into touch with his life. With such a harmonized physical body he helps in the building of similar higher bodies for the better expression of the Self which he now feels as harmony. In fact, he recognises the physical body as not being his only, but rather as a link in the whole chain of manifestation of the Self. It is not his to pollute or degrade; it is not his for the purpose of creating a barrier between himself and his brother men. Such a physical body is no longer

opaque, absorbing the Life of the Divine, but has become a thin, translucent veil, which shows the working of the Self, with its light a little subdued for mortal eyes to see. Such a body takes in the animal instincts and, transmuting them, pours them back as spiritual life. Such a man takes everything human, the nobleness of man as well as his weaknesses, and infuses into these something of the higher life of unity which is his. There is nothing ignoble which he does not transmute into divinity and in all his relations in life this quality of harmony and bliss is poured out, stilling into harmony and bliss everything around, and soothing for the time being at least the thirst after separate existence which prompts men to activity. Karma, the law of evolution of beings, becomes thus in his hands a beneficent power. Harmonized with all, he extracts out of his human life and the life of the humanity around him the substratum of divinity involved in all, and thus becomes divine.

By the sacrifice to the Pitris, the Ego harmonizes some of its activities which are higher than the physical. The Pitris help in the evolution of man by furnishing him with bases or models of the higher bodies. By sacrificing to them, by spiritualizing these bodies, man aids them and creates facilities for the turning out of better bodies in future. By sacrificing to the Devas the powers of consciousness in him are harmonized to their sources in the macrocosm. Each modification of the consciousness of the Self produces, according to its quality, a triple series of effects. The Sattvic elements, the elements of the consciousness of harmony, produce powers of consciousness known cosmically as the Great Gods. The Râjasic elements manifest as the consciousness underlying the senses and sense activities, while the Tamasic produce the tattvas. Each modification of the Self is thus a power of consciousness having a specific

organism for its manifestation, as well as a specific form of matter as its limiting envelope. By sacrifice to the Devas, therefore, the centre is harmonized to the tattvas and their presiding intelligences. By harmony only can we transcend the limitations of consciousness, and each limitation once surmounted becomes a *Siddhi*—a power or faculty. The man thus gives back to the Devas their characteristic contributions, coloured and harmonized by the sense of unity.

With the sacrifice to the Rishis—the sacrifice of knowledge—man establishes relations between himself and the eternal sources of Wisdom, the Great Teachers of humanity. He studies, he cultivates his intellect, and he meditates over the higher problems of life, not for any increase of his own knowledge, but in order that he may be an instrument, however low, in the hands of the Rishis for the evolution of humanity. The Karma in the intellect, the idea of separation which is so useful in the Sankhya form of Yoga—the tendency to be a mere spectator—is neutralized by the sacrifice of knowledge. Recognising the immense debt which humanity owes to its Teachers, he sacrifices his intellect by using it for the service, not of his own separated life, but of the united life of humanity, and thus becomes a link in the chain of its teachers, a representative in the physical planes of the Lords of Compassion—a channel for the re-manifestation of the eternal Vedas, for the guidance of humanity along the proper track.

To sum up. Under the dominion of kama the centre vivifies everything with its own life. It loses itself in forms in order that connection may be established between itself and the outer world. It is thus fed and nourished in the knowledge of its separated life through the intervention of forms. Then by actions without desires the centre develops in self-knowledge by

learning to restrain itself in the midst of desires. Next, actions with the idea of duty go to feed the I-notion of the centre by relating everything to itself and in-drawing itself. Finally, by the sacrifice of actions we get the positive element in harmony. The relation established by kama is a compulsory one, in which the Ego has little choice. Desireless activities produce a negative state—a state of separation. By sacrifice, however, there is re-establishment of harmony on a higher basis—the basis of unity. The stability of consciousness gained through the practice of dispassion and duty is not lost in the expansion produced by sacrifice, while the bodies gain in an increased power of work and adaptation.

Trained in definite sacrifices, and evolving the sense of the unity of all life, the consciousness withdraws itself from the various functions of the mind and the senses. The harmonizing of the inner functions with the outer forces must, however, be accomplished in the order of the involution of the Divine Life which produced them. The process is thus summed up in the *Srimad Bhagavata*, and forms the key-note of higher sacrifice:—"Conquering the ascription of 'I' and 'mine,' the outlets of the body—the senses—are to be harmonized or unified and then surrendered (to their cosmic types) in the order of their involution. Thus physical breath is to be merged in Vayu and so forth. . . . Then the organs of speech are to be merged in Agni, the hands with their dexterity in Indra, motion with the feet in Vishnu, and the sexual functions, with the power of procreation, in Prajapati. . . . Then the senses are to be surrendered—the ear, with sound, is to be merged in Dik, or space; the skin, with touch, in Vayu; the eyes, with sight, in Fire; the tongue, with taste, in Varuna; and the nose, with smell, in Earth."\*

\*Bhagavata, VII., 12-24.

What, then, is the effect of such harmonious surrender of the very things which we regard as our possessions, and in and through which ordinary men have the guarantee of their being? The surrender of each of these powers means the conscious and voluntary killing out of the sense of attachment of the centre to its instruments. The activities of these bind man to definite lines, and the ascription of *mine-ness* only sets the fetters of ignorance all the closer upon him. By harmonizing therefore the senses and other functions to their sources we help in their free activity. Just as the adjustment of the physical body to the law of gravitation helps the physical man to work in the physical plane without frittering away his energies, and just as the body so trained to harmony works automatically, adjusting itself to the outer laws, and thereby frees the consciousness, so, too, the sacrifice of the personal tinge—the colourings of *kama* and self-assertion—in the senses and higher functions of man establishes harmony with their cosmic sources, and allows these powers to act automatically in response to proper external stimuli. The reduction of all these remnants of the Divine consciousness to their cosmic types, by the sacrifice of *kama* and the desire for personal stature, sets free the centre; while the unity which underlies such surrender opens the eyes of the centre to the unity from which all these powers emanate. The ignorant man, full of the sense of the separated I in him, and unconscious of the laws of its manifestation in and through the senses, thinks he has attained to unity and harmony by domination and control. He thinks he is the real actor, and tries to maintain the unity of consciousness by sacrificing the powers of consciousness to himself. In consequence wisdom—the real understanding of the forces about him—is impossible of attainment. He meddles with everything, he wants to stamp his own

mark on everything, and necessarily there follows dissipation of energy. He is really dominated by the gunas of Prakriti. But the wise man, perceiving the unity of life and knowing the genesis, nature and potentialities of every power around him, harmonizes his centre with these, and thus, though he sees the many, he is really free. So the Gītā says: "The knower of the many should not disturb the foolish, those who do not know the nature of the many—those who, dominated by the gunas of Prakriti, identify themselves with the gunas and Karma."\* It is the foolish man, who is dominated by Egoism, who wants to do everything himself. The wise and the harmonized have simply to set definite forces working in order to gain definite ends. The wise "gives self to non-self and being to non-being"; he recognises the forces around him, and reduces the corresponding powers in himself to absolute harmony with the outer forces. Incapable of tears, devoid of personal desire, and merely exercising his functions for the good of all, his eyes see correctly the Divine unity which, as the cause of the tanmatras, lies behind sight.

\*Gītā III., 29.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF OCCULTISM.

WE have seen how by Karma centres of activity are evolved in man, and are then harmonized with the external forces and the corresponding centres in the cosmic planes. We have seen that Karma is the law of the projection of centres of being, and its various stages are intimately connected with the evolution of the centres. A centre is thus the reflection of the Self, carried forth by the Light of the Logos and mirrored in an upadhi. Such projections from the Central Flame are really the basis on which the universe of name and form is built. This image of the Logos is the nucleus round which the modifications of His consciousness gather. Just as the modifications of a man's consciousness are all held together by the latent and subconscious I-relation; just as the various forms of activity in various planes of our being have for them one substratum, the image of the I in them, so too in the cosmic planes. This I-notion is the basis in which all actions, all causes, and all agents inhere.\* The reflection of the Self, therefore, is the only substratum on which the whole universe is built and evolved. It is this which connects forms and energies; it is this which makes their manifestations possible. Sharing in its life, everything else lives, moves, and has its being. In the evolution of matter in the cosmic planes, this I-notion of the Logos is modified and externalized. The description in the Samat Bhagavata (III., 12) of the Creation by Brahma

\*Bhagavad Gitâ, III., 5, 29.

illustrates how this I-notion, modified by the cosmic memory, projects into being all things, all forms, which exist.

The projected centres from the Logos differ in their nature and characteristics according to the character of the Divine *Shakti* or energy utilized. So it is said \* that the *Virat Purusha*, the Purusha which broods over the cosmic Egg of manifestation, projected His Being in a threefold manner. Under the influence of *Kriya Shakti*, or the powers of manifestation and activity, the Self projected itself in ten different centres which have their correspondence in the ten centres of activity in man. Then under the influence of *Gnana Shakti*—the pure powers of consciousness—the Self manifested as the One Self, the One Life and Consciousness, which resides in the heart of everything as the one basis. Under the influence of *Atma Shakti*—the power of the Self—it revealed itself in three ways and became the *Adhi Yajna*, the centre of manifestation which co-ordinates all differentiated selves, all separate I's in manifestation, The reflection of this centre in man is the Spiritual Man, otherwise called the Spirit or the Human Monad, eternal and undying, changeless and everlasting, spoken of in the *Māndūkya Upanishad* as the seed of consciousness, *Prâgna*. Then comes the centre in the plane of the mind, or the *suksma* plane, the centre which in man is the *taijasha*—or the resplendent centre—the image and reflection of the cosmic manifestation called *Adhi Daiva*. This cosmic centre is the centre of all Deva manifestations, of all energies, whether regarded as cosmic intelligences or regarded as the intelligences of the sense-centres in man, the intelligences whose activities are symbolized in the astral chakrams. Then comes the concrete manifested centre, the reflection of the cosmic

\*Srimat Bhagavata, III, 6, 6.

centre, known as the *Adhi Bhuta*, the centre from which the modification and externalization of consciousness in terms of matter and its presiding intelligences proceed. These threefold manifestations of the cosmic centre are described as the three places of manifestation of the Self in the Upanishads,\* in three planes of consciousness. So also does the Swetasvetara Upanishad speak of the supreme Brahman thus: "The supreme Brahman manifests. In Him are the three (centres) which are the indestructible (centres) and the well-established centres for the manifestation of the phenomenal worlds. Knowing that (unmanifested existence) which intervenes between (these) the knowers of Brahman become free from the matrix of forms. When the aspirant attains this threefold Brahman he becomes free."† So also in the same upanishad we find the Brahman thus described: "He who is the ordainer of all things, who differentiates the one seed (the one centre) into myriads of forms."‡ In the sacred sruti Vishnu, the all-pervading life, is spoken of as "enveloping this universe all through and fixing his places of manifestation in three ways." So also He is called the *Trivikrama*, one who is triple in the manifestation of His powers.

The centres are thus the three Eternal Laya points of manifestation. The projection of laya centres in the case of a globe passing into obscurity, as illustrated in the Secret Doctrine,§ helps us in realizing the projection of individual laya centres by the cosmic Logos. Thus the cosmic centre of the lowest plane, the *Vaishwanara*, projects its centres and such projections are the nuclei of the corresponding centres in man. So the *Sruti* says: "Their flame is the *Vaishwanara*. He who knows the

\*Aitereya, II., 3, 12.

†Swetasvetara Upanishad, I., 7 and 9.

‡Ibid, I., 6, 12.

§S.D., Vol. I., page 176.

*Purusha Vaishwanara*, which manifests through man, he enjoys everything.”

The three laya centres in man are thus the reflections of the cosmic laya centres and should be distinguished from the centres of activity and manifestation. These latter are the points through which manifest the modifications of the Logoic consciousness, due to the desire for externalization. These centres of activity are formed by the projection of the Self-consciousness of the Logos in terms of the limits of resistance which we call matter. The ensouling life is a reflection of the Central I, but the triad of the ensouled consciousness is external. It seeks to express itself in terms of the resisting sphere wall and the life is related to it. The life manifests through such relation as energies, and hence such projections are called rājasic. The threefold centres, on the contrary, have in their essence no such outgoing tendency. They are laya points which resolve into latency all external and rājasic manifestations. They simply co-ordinate and unify the various outgoing manifestations of the Self. Like the centre of gravity of a mass, these centres represent the central points which hold together the various manifestations of life—the attributes of matter. Each of these laya centres is the centre of manifestation in a given upadhi, and is in essence a point of pure consciousness, itself remaining constant and unmodified, though entering into relations with every form of manifestation of the plane and becoming their sole substratum. Metaphysically, it can be likened to the pure I-notion of a plane, the I which merely sees and by seeing connects together the various modifications of its consciousness. The threefold projections of the cosmic centre of a plane are illustrated in the Upanishads by the analogy of a wheel. The tāmasic projections—the projections in which the consciousness

identifies itself with its limits—tend to the externalization of life and produce the limits of activity, the limits of resistance called *tattvas*. These are likened to the periphery of the wheel. The rājasic or outgoing life, the manifestations of the inner life in motion, through the identification of the consciousness with the desire to produce, is likened to the spokes which connect and hold together the central nave and the outer periphery. The centre of the wheel, which remains motionless, the mathematical point which really holds together the whole framework, is likened to the individual reflections of the cosmic centre, the real I in man. The relation of the centre with the periphery, its modification in *tamas*, is what we know as matter. The relation of the centre with its modification, the spokes, is what we know as the *indriyas*, or senses, and their presiding intelligences. The root meaning of the word *Vaishvanara* (as the ensouling and central life of all manifestations, though itself changeless, as the flame which transmutes everything while itself remaining the same), would, if pondered over, give us some idea as to what a *laya* centre means.

We have seen that Karma Yoga leads to the evolution of this centre by relating it to the forces and the forms of a given plane. The centre projects its sparks all around, thereby bridging the gulf between the I and not-I and growing in its self-knowledge by the modifications of consciousness underlying the forces and forms of the plane. Later on, it harmonizes itself with its cosmic parent and becomes a self-conscious representative of the cosmic flame. It harmonizes itself with its bodies and its energies, making these latter automatic in their activities by harmonizing them with their cosmic prototypes.

But the evolution of the distinct centres and their harmony with the cosmic manifestations of the Self are

not enough. The centres thus evolved are distinct and separate points of consciousness unrelated to each other. Like Herbertian cells, they exclude each other and are not co-ordinated for the purposes of a larger life which comprehends them all. Fed by Karma, by proper activities related to their special planes of manifestation, there is a tendency in these centres towards exclusiveness. Very often we find incongruity between the life of the astral man and the mental centre. The observations of Oliver Wendel Holmes as to there being three Johns and three Thomases taking part in a discussion between John and Thomas is most apposite when applied to the various centres of man. Man acts with different motives of knowledge and consequently feeds the different centres of activity, forming water-tight compartments within himself which make it difficult for the one life to show itself forth. Not only is this apparent in the case of the conflict, seen in the conscience of the physical man, but the same fact reveals itself if we study, analyse and compare the states of consciousness, manifesting in waking and in sleep. The sober, austere man of the physical life, harmonized to his physical surroundings, becomes a different being in his astral life. The vaunted austerities of the physical plane touch not the astral man, and our loftiest thought as physical man very often does not affect the centre in the causal plane. Very few of us suspect the presence of the "Mr. Hyde" in us. We are lulled into a sense of false security when we believe that the evolution of the physical man in us and its harmony with the surroundings are enough for the purposes of the real knowledge of the Self. The practice of austerities may help us in mortifying the flesh and may gain for us an increased control over the outgoing tendencies in our physical life. It may help in benumbing the astral centres; but beyond that it cannot help.

And the seeds of evil in our higher life germinate luxuriantly after the thaw. Like tiny rivulets in a tropical climate, they apparently dry up for a time but only to re-appear in mighty, sweeping torrents, which carry everything before them, demolishing the artificial barriers erected by men. Truly what shall restraint avail?\*

The harmony between the different centres and the cosmic forces of the corresponding planes, does not help in the evolution of the One Life and Consciousness. Although harmonized, they remain distinct and separate centres unrelated to each other. The manifoldness of the centres of the Self in man and their harmony with the myriads of sub-centres belonging to each plane, make a tendency towards diversity. The harmony of the senses with the corresponding Devas, hides the real truth of the unity of all life. The dangers of the lower siddhis, or powers, which are produced by the harmony of the centres in man in the astral and mental planes with the corresponding cosmic powers, are too well-known to be dwelt on here. Desire for such siddhis serves to fetter the consciousness more effectually than the attachment of the life of a particular vehicle. The harmonizing of the centre with the cosmic powers, if done without the knowledge of a larger life synthesizing the various powers of manifestation, serves only to hide away from the view the All Life, which is our goal. So the Bhagavata says: "Fascinated by the victuals and various mantras in the vedas and attached to various rites, worshipping manifold devas, they cannot know the supreme Purusha."† So also the Gîtâ says: "The worshipper of the Devas attains the Devas, the worshipper of the Pitris attains the Pitris and my worshippers reach me."

\*Gîtâ, II., 33.

†Bhagavata, IV., 31, 37.

The vitalization by the centre of a plane of the tattvas of the plane, and the harmony thus produced, though they aid in the building of the upadhīs, cannot produce automatism of the life centres. The bodies thus harmonized can respond to the vibrations of the plane, but in that response, the I-notion, the centre, is also affected. The second condition of automatism, viz., renunciation, the recognition by the Life that its centres of activity are also outside itself, can only come when the unity of Life and consciousness pervading all the planes and manifesting through the various laya centres is recognised. So long as the Life is attached to these distinct modes of manifestation, it cannot indraw itself into its own unmanifested and changeless nature.

Above all, the insufficiency of Karma Yoga is best illustrated by the fact that, in spite of the development and harmony of centres of being, the gaps between the various states are not bridged. Thus there is a gap between the waking and the *Swapna* states. Karma has reference to the external, to the non-Ego. It is outgoing, and the consciousness is turned outwards towards the forms, the contents of the field. The harmony which Karma Yoga produces is related to the forms and forces lying in the plane of manifestation of a centre. Karma means an outpouring of the inner Life which, by vitalizing the contents of its field, harmonizes the activities of the centre with the forces and forms contained within its limit of activity, technically called the field. The energy poured out for the sake of manifestation, helps in reducing the varied contents of the field of consciousness into a sort of homogeneity. The centre thus expands and, expanding, enfolds the non-I within itself, and the various stages of Karma Yoga express a gradient in which the essential unity of life is more and more manifested. But the very nature of Karma, as external

unfolding of inner powers, cannot aid much in the realization of the centre when regarded as unmanifested. Karma thus deals with the *expression* of the life rather than with the Life itself. It has its bearings on the modes of manifestation of the consciousness rather than on the intrinsic nature of the consciousness itself. In one word we may characterize Karma as the law of the Self in motion. It is dynamic and not static, it is concerned with the ripples of Life rather than with the Life itself. The evolution of the centres of consciousness in the several planes, as effected by Karma Yoga, is therefore the evolution of the powers of being. The expansion of consciousness is thus on the surface rather than in depth. We have thus seen how by Karma the centre develops in relation with the tenfold powers of the ten centres, within and without. It sees itself directly with the help of its powers, it measures its existence in terms of the out-going centres and their activities. Sacrifice and devotion, as coming under Karma Yoga, have in them the same element of externality. The Devas, and even Ishvara, are regarded as being external, and the unity of the human Monad with these is more a unity of expression, of life-activities, than of being. The element of *outsideness*, of externality, runs through Karma in all stages, and the union sought in Karma Yoga is the union of life with Life, rather than of being with Being.

Of the two difficulties of self-knowledge, mentioned in the Srimat Bhagavata, viz.,\* the attractions of the outer and the *laya* in nescience, the first is removed by Karma done as sacrifice. The attraction of the outer world of the senses and the mind can only be got rid of by harmonizing and unifying the contents of consciousness with the knowing centre. Karma, by establishing the centre in relation with the forces and forms of the plane,

\*Bhagavata, IV., 24r 59.

prevents the dissipation of energy which invariably follows the attachment of the life to any form. The bodies and the contents of consciousness, thus refused to harmony with the centre within and the cosmic powers without, prevent the frittering away of energy, and the automatism produced helps in establishing the I-notion of the centre, while the harmony of the sheaths with the outer forces produces conservation of energy and ultimately frees the centre from the colourings of the upadhi. In Sankhya Yoga, too, the centre comes to know itself by separating itself from the phenomena of life. But both in the case of harmony through sacrifice and the knowledge of the centre through discrimination, the I is known through the not-I. The Sankhya Spectator sees the not-I as being such, and the seeing implies an underlying duality. In the harmony through sacrifice, too, there is a latent and sub-conscious duality. The trend of consciousness in both the cases is towards the external. The evolution of the centres is thus not enough for the purposes of self-knowledge. The centres must have, as the *sine qua non* of manifestation, a circumscribing limit and however harmonized it may be with the contents of its field of manifestation, it cannot transcend the initial limitation with the help of any powers belonging to the plane. A virtuous man, or one given to high thinking, does unconsciously build his astral and causal centres, but he is building only unconsciously. Though perfectly harmonized with his surroundings, he cannot function consciously on those planes. He may remember his astral life, but he knows it only as a projection of the physical, as a continuation of the same, and subject to the limitations of the physical plane of consciousness. His consciousness in the astral plane cannot grasp the new laws of being. It is consciousness and not self-consciousness. He is con-

scious so long as the familiar vibrations of his earth-life create response in him and no further. The fact is that he is conscious because of the help of the *rupa devas*, fed and vitalized by him in his physical life. He sees so long as he is related to them. And his existence is measured, not by the self in him, but by the qualitative and quantitative effects on his astral sheath produced by familiar vibrations. In a word he lives and moves and has his being, not because of the resplendent Self in him, but because of the kindly nurture of the forces of the astral plane. His life is one of dependence and it is always a revelation.

The tendency towards dissipation of energy is prevented by the evolution of the centre. The life identifying itself with the formal centre, and established in it, preserves its self-consciousness by relating every phenomenon to itself and by harmonizing itself with its environments. The world of forms—the diversity in *rupa*—is thus synthesized in the centre technically called the *nama*, the name, the individual. This *nama* is, as we have seen, a form of *vach*, the Word made flesh, the manifestation or rather the reflection of the One Self.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE CENTRES IN MAN.

THE evolution of such centres in the various planes, however helpful in developing a sort of self-consciousness, cannot avail much in overcoming the second difficulty in self-knowledge, viz., the *laya* in nescience. The centre, as known through Karma Yoga, is only formal in its nature. It expresses the One Life in relation to the outer forms and forces. The centre is realized, not in its own essential nature, but as a point which manifests the powers of the Self in the plane. Taking a concrete example in the life of the physical plane, the I in us is not known in its essence, but only as a convenient centre which unifies manifestation and which forms the ground-work on which the varying phenomena of life and consciousness are based. The I, vaguely felt, is used as a help for the outward expression of the life and not as the very life itself. It is felt more as a result than as the one-enduring and permanent cause. In sensation, in emotion, and in thought, it is seen only as the result of a relation, and our knowledge of its inner nature depends upon its relation with outward things. In one word, we do not realize its essence, but rather know it through the help of, and as coloured by, the forces and forms which come within its limit of objectivity—its plane of manifestation. Even in intellectual discrimination this outwardness of view is maintained. As a result, our notions of being, our ideas of these centres in us rise and fall with the changes in

its field. Thus by Karma, the centre expanding and harmonizing itself with the non-Ego, grows in the evolution of its powers; yet the elements of nutriment which it gathers are tinged with the subtle colourings of form. Even in the sacrifice of its life there is this tinge of outwardness of form. Life it knows and realizes only in terms of form. The growth is therefore an unconscious one. So the *Gita*,\* while enumerating the various kinds of *Yajnas*, speaks of them as being due to Karma and therefore inferior. They touch the outer fringes of life, the life as manifesting through name and form only.

The attachment of the life to form-centres, the identification of consciousness with the outgoing life of the centres, produce the emergence of self-consciousness. Measuring its life by sensations, knowing itself in and through the forms of the plane, whether in expansion as in Karma Yoga, or in separation as in the Sankhya, the centre loses hold upon itself as soon as the forms drop. The outwardness of view stands in the way of the realization of its inner nature. The consciousness thus attached to the life in forms, cannot bridge the gulf of ignorance, the critical state which intervenes between two planes of manifestation. Hence the nature, condition, and possibilities of the centres of manifestation are to be fully realized, and the attachment of the life to Name and Form conquered, ere the One Self, which is the substratum of all manifestations, can be realized.

These centres are the three reflections in man of the triple Self, manifesting in the cosmos as the *Adhironuta*—the centre from which emanate all transient personalities and elements; the *Adhidaiva*—the centre which forms the substratum for the manifestation of all

\*Gītā, III., 32.

intelligent energies and forces, and the *Adhiyajna*—the centre which is the root of all self-conscious entities.\* Just as the physical I-notion is the substratum for the manifestation of all physical energies, the thread-soul which strings together the phenomena of the physical plane, so are the centres, the projections of the One Self, which make manifestation in the corresponding plane possible. They are referred to as the three *Matras* of the one *Pranava*, the threefold manifestations of the One Life. To the ordinary man, the I seems to be one, and it is so regarded from the standpoint of abstract knowledge, but as H.P.B. says, referring to the possibilities of the manifestations of the Self: "Having said so much the statement still will and must appear incomprehensible, if not absurd, to many. Firstly, to all those who are unfamiliar with the doctrine of the manifold nature and various aspects of the human Monad: and secondly, to those who view the septenary division of the human entity from a too materialistic standpoint."† The Self is one as regards its *Gnamashakti*, i.e., regarded as the one consciousness, but as already shown from the *Srimat Bhagavata*, it manifests as the ten centres of activity as well as the three in showing forth the powers of the Self. From the absolute standpoint there is no change nor evolution. The Life is the same in the mineral as in the man. But if we look to the nature and character of the expressing Life, we have to recognise the manifestations of the One in Three. Occultism thus requires the knowledge of the different centres of the manifesting Life; and the knowledge of the Form as well as the Name is necessary. So the upanishad says‡:—"Crossing death through the knowledge of the non-Self (*Avidya*) and attaining to immortality and bliss through *Vidya*." It is

\*Gītā, VIII., 3.

†S.D., vol. III., page 366.

‡Ishopanished, 11.

only when the consciousness recognises the manifesting centres as necessary for evolution, and later on, for sacrifice that the third great obstacle which faces the candidate for initiation, viz., the desire for formless life, is removed.

The evolution of Nama in the centres of being, of the threefold *Matras* (measures) of the manifesting Self, forms the theme of the fourth chapter of the *Gita*. The knowledge of these centres and their potentialities is necessary for true occultism. As in the case of the evolution of the sheaths, the evolution of the centres has definite stages. In the earlier stages the consciousness identifies itself with these centres. Thinking them to be the real I, the man feeds them into activity by the harmonious vibrations of the corresponding planes. The outputtings of life thus produced harmonize the centres with the forces of the plane, and by relation to these forces of the external world the centre gains in stability and unity. With increase of knowledge, man comes to realize dimly that the Rājasic outputtings of its powers are not essential to the true Life of the centre as the unchanging substratum of all manifestations. He comes to realize that, just as from a burning flame thousands of sparks emanate, all in essence identical with the parent flame, so too, from the centre of consciousness radiate the reflections of itself, which, falling in the various upadhis, reflect the centre in them, serving thereby to connect the Ego and the non-Ego with each other. As already seen, the centre then comes to know itself in the first place as an individual, and later on it realizes its connection with the cosmic manifestations of the corresponding plane.

But the harmony of the centre in man with the corresponding centre in the cosmic planes is not enough. The attachment of the Life to the formal centre must be

conquered, and the knowledge of its relation with the centres of the higher plane, as well as with the One Manifesting Life must be gained. The consciousness mistakes these reflections of itself to be the real Life. Just as the reflection of the sun shows forth some of the qualities of its source, so too the centres show forth the qualities of the Self. Thus arises the mistake of identifying the formal life of the centres with the life of the Self. In the earlier stages, the knowledge of the centre is formal. We know the I, not as it is in essence, as a centre of pure consciousness, simply, but only in its relation with its reflections in upadhis, as the synthesis of manifestations. As a consequence, as soon as the reflecting media drop, the centre, unable to realize itself, believes itself to be lost, producing thereby a lapse of self-consciousness. The harmony with the cosmic manifestations of the Self cannot help much; for there is a limit in the manifestation of the cosmic centre too. So the upanishad says \*:—"He who meditates on the first Matra, the A of the Pranava, he gets the knowledge of that and comes back to the earth. . . . He who meditates on the U, the second Matra, he goes to intermediate planes and goes to Somaloka. There he realizes the glory and again comes back . . . The three Matras (considered as separate) come within the dominion of death. But if the outer, the inner and the middle (centres) are well-built (harmonized with their cosmic sources) and unified in their actions and harmonized with each other, then the Gnanin is not disturbed (in his self-knowledge)." The evolution of the centres and their harmony with their cosmic sources do not avail much in true self-knowledge. The centres are to be rendered automatic in their actions by realizing the one unmanifesting Life which strings them together like

\*Prasna Upanishad, V., 3.

so many beads or pearls. As in the case of the bodies, the automatism of the centres and the consequent freedom of the informing Life are possible when a higher Life is perceived—the Life “who is the one ordainer of all actionless things, who multiplies the one seed, the one centre.”\*

The centres are not only to be known as regards their fields of activity, as the one source of energy which develops its hidden powers by the exhaustion caused by Karma, as the organizing Life which holds together and manifests the various energies contained in the plane of Being, as the projections of the First Logos, and as the relics of the cosmic *Ahamkara*, the Rudra of the Vedas, but also their innermost Life is to be realized. The analogy of the I-consciousness in man serves as an illustration of this point. As already said, the I in us is for most people a vague something which stands in the background as a convenient string to knit together the various states of consciousness—a peg on which to hang our mentality. The modes of consciousness, the passing forms of emotions and cognitions are regarded as the essentials of Life; and the I is a mere abstraction, which is seen or felt only when there is a change in our mental life. Thus by Hume and his followers of the Empirical School, the I is viewed as a mere product of the ever-vanishing and transient states of consciousness—the product of memory. With the Intuitionist School, however, the Ego is the substratum of all mental activities, and is an independent something necessary for the organic life of the mind. With the Sankhya—as well as to some extent with Kant—the Ego, the Purusha, is viewed as unrelated to the phenomena, as the principle of transcendental apperception, as the calm spectator. So too we see that in Karma Yoga, the I is seen, but

\*Swetasweta Upanishad, VI., 12.

only in relation to the non-I, as being fed by the forces, and vitalizing in turn the matter of the plane. The real nature of the Ego, its absolute nature, is secondary in importance. In the Sankhya form of yoga, it is seen in relation, not with forms, not as regards its outgoing activities, but still as being the centre of manifestation, having the mere function of sight.

It is thus necessary to know the real nature of these centres of being. We have seen that they are the projections of the three cosmic centres of manifestation. Just as the laws of physical heredity are the expressions of the limits imposed on the manifesting Life and express only an aspect of the real man—the causal Ego—so too the identity of the centres with the cosmic types expresses only the aspect of the Life as related to Karma. They impose the conditions of the harmonious manifestations of the Life in the plane. They represent the points *in position*, and explain the laws of their interaction with outer-things. Just as the birth of the real man in a physical body, having definite environment, defines his activity in the physical plane, so too the heredity of the centre, traced from the cosmic centre of the corresponding plane, lays down the laws of its manifestation. It touches not the real life, but is concerned only with the life in manifestation. The higher heredity of the centre is therefore to be traced in order to know its hidden potentialities. Now these centres emanate from, and are essentially connected with, the principle of cosmic Ahankara, called in the Hindu Shastras the Rudra Principle. Essentially considered, these centres are the seeds of Egoism, which is the substratum of all activities, all knowledge and being. In the Shastras, this principle is referred to as the one seed from which emanates the universe of Name and Form, the seed in which is garnered the fruitage of evolution. Just as the results of

evolution, the quintessence of all experience of Life and Form, is preserved in the I-notion in us, just as the Ego in us is the central point which holds together the various experiences of life transmuted as memory, so too the Rudra principle is the centre in which the essence of all evolution in Name and Form is garnered up. The ashes with which Shiva is symbolised, represent the finest modifications of experience, the roots of memory and Maya. As the Lokas roll up in Pralaya, the names and forms perish and are indrawn into the centre, remaining as its memory, the abstract memory which defines only the lines of manifestation. It is this centre in the cosmos which is referred to as the spider indrawing its web at the time of Pralaya,\* holding within Himself the possibilities of all future manifestation, the Ishvara of the Ishvaras, the Deva of the Devas. The memory of previous evolution, the wisdom resulting from it, remain in Him as the Siddhis, the powers of Maya which He wields. The Life of the Self in matter is due to the Life of Brahmâ; the Life which holds together the organism is the Life of Vishnu; while the Life of the Centre is the Life of Shiva. These centres are the reflections of the Shankarsana principle in man, the image of the Purusha, who is referred to in the Purusha-Sukta of the Rig Veda† as having thousands of heads, thousands of eyes, and so forth. It is the principle by which the one seed, which holds together all manifestations, is multiplied in every upadhi.

These centres are the images in the threefold upadhis of the one soundless sound, the manifested vach already referred to. It is significant in this connection to note the characteristics of the occult principle, called sound. The Bhagavata‡ thus characterizes "sound" as

\*Svetaswetara Upanishad, VI., 10.

†Rig Veda Mandala, X., 90.

‡III., 26, 33.

being the substratum of Prana, the Indriyas (sense-centres) and Manas. It is also described as that "which unifies the Self regarded as the spectator and the Self regarded as the objective manifestations."\* It is thus that principle which connects the life, the absolute consciousness and being, with the phenomenal manifestations; it is that which synthesizes the threefold manifestations of the Self in matter, in form, and in individuality.

As already seen, these centres in man develop in their powers of co-relation by Karma. The energies contained in these seeds of life manifest themselves, and the centres are thereby connected with the forces of the respective planes. The One Life thus becomes differentiated through *Atma-shakti* into the three, each having distinctive characteristics of its own according to the conditions of manifestation and the qualities of the upadhis. The remarks made by H.P.B., as regards the seven principles in the Secret Doctrine, vol. III., throw a flood of light on the question of these manifold centres in man. She says:—"The seven principles are, of course, the manifestation of one indivisible Spirit, but only at the end of the Manvantara, and when they come to be reunited on the plane of the One Reality does the unity appear; during the Pilgrim's journey the reflection of that one indivisible Flame, the aspects of the One Eternal Spirit have each the power of action on one of the manifested planes of existence—the gradual differentiations from the one unmanifested plane—on that plane namely to which it properly belongs."† Each of these centres, taking them as threefold, has thus the power of independent activity in the plane to which it belongs.

\*Ibid, II., 5, 22.

†S.D., vol. III., page 374.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE UNIFICATION OF THE CENTRES.

WE will now consider in detail the question of the independent activity of these centres. In their nature, as we have seen, they are the reflections of the Cosmic I and share with it its powers. Just as the reflection of the sun falling upon a piece of glass and thence reflected back on to a dark surface has the light-giving power of its source, so too the reflections of this Cosmic I in the three upadhis have the power of independent activity. The knowledge of this inscrutable power of the Self to multiply itself while remaining the same, the mysterious power by which every reflection of itself appears to be real and tangible, is called occultism. On the right understanding of this inscrutable power, on our capacity for grasping intuitively the potentialities of the Self in us, depends our higher evolution through the gateway of Initiations. Each Initiation confers on man the occult knowledge and powers of multiplying the Self on one plane of the cosmos. Meanwhile some illustrations may be adduced to show this mysterious working of the centres in man. Thus Sanat Kumara is said to be at one and the same time acting in three different ways, animating *Pradhmana*, the son of Krishna, during the Mâhâbharata period, imparting spiritual instruction to the King Dhritarashtra, while remaining himself on his own plane in Jana Loka. The astral remains of the Lord Gautama, acting as a vehicle of the Monad of Shri Shankaracharya, alluded to in Vol. III. of the "Secret Doctrine," is another illustration to the point. As H. P. B. says:—"It follows that the purified Egoistical principle, the astral and personal Self of an adept, though

forming in reality one integral whole with its Highest Self, may nevertheless, for the purpose of universal mercy and benevolence, so separate itself from its divine Monad, as to lead on this plane of illusion and temporary being a distinct independent conscious life of its own under a borrowed illusive shape."\* Even in the case of mediums in spiritualistic seances, the appearance of the astral double in another and very often distant place from that in which the medium's physical body lies is another point to consider in this connection. As H.P.B. puts it: such and higher cases are "again based on that mysterious transference of the Divine expersonality, merged in the impersonal individuality, now in its full trinitarian form of the Monad, as Atma, Buddhi, Manas, to a new body, whether visible or subjective."†

Such are the mysterious facts which the annals of occultism record, facts which we must weigh and consider, in order to arrive at a clear comprehension of the subject. The nature of the centres ought to be clearly grasped before we can even intuitively understand the truths of occultism. Let us therefore try to understand more fully the centres. It is significant that these are sometimes spoken of as the knots in the heart of the string of the One Life, which disappear only when the supreme is seen. We can conceive man in manifestation to be a fine thread of the Divine Life and Light, having in it three knots corresponding to the triune manifestations in the external cosmos. These centres may also be likened to three sparks projected from a flame and held together by the invisible thread of Life. Now we may view these knots of the manifesting Life from two standpoints. From the standpoint of the upadhi these centres are connected with the centres of the Divine Life in the external world. From the stand-

\*S.D., vol. III., page 375.

†S.D., vol. III., page 377.

point of the One Life they are mere phenomenal self-limitations of itself. The character of the manifestation depends upon the limitations of the form side. In Karma Yoga, these human centres are harmonized to their cosmic sources. The result is that the form side of the Life develops in harmony and adaptability in its capacity of activity and its power of responding to the outer forces.

But automatism requires that the Life manifesting through the upadhi shall be free. The Life manifesting through the centres must know itself as separate from the conditions of manifestation peculiar to the plane in question. Not only is the centre to develop its latent powers by harmony with the powers of the plane, but it must know itself as the Life, the one unconditioned Life, ever constant and unchanging. The development of the astral chakrams may serve as an analogy of the process of development of the centres. We know that these chakrams are represented as wheels with the centre of Life as the nave. This centre is represented by a sacred mantram and expresses a modification of the Divine self-consciousness. The petals of the lotus—under which figure the chakrams are usually symbolized—each symbolize a power, which is gained by the harmony of the Life with the Deva, who represents the power in question. The lotus chakrams are ordinarily represented as lotus buds pointing downwards, indicating the direction towards which the Life is flowing. As man develops in self-consciousness and power, the lotuses unfold and are then seen as quivering circles of flame, vibrating in unison with external powers. But this is not all. All these chakrams are disjointed and discrete. All these *siddhis* are as yet not co-ordinated and unified. Hence the third stage of development is the awakening of the same fire, the Fiery Serpent—*Kundalini*—which is the

Life that runs through the centres of these lotuses and unifies them, co-ordinating them into one harmonious whole. When this is done, the astral man is free. These centres of activity can then automatically respond to the outer forces, and initiate actions without the intervention of the astral Ego.

The analogy of the chakrams helps in the right understanding of the threefold centres in man. The centres have to be harmonized and raised into activity by Karma and then they have to be unified. An analysis of the contents of our I-consciousness will go to show that the notion of the I in us is, to a large extent, dependent on the upadhi in which it functions. There is no identity in essence between the I in the physical and the I in the astral, for example. Even in the case of aspirants after the true Life, what is often attempted is forcible carrying onwards of the physical I-notion into the higher planes of life. We project, we image the physical I in the higher planes; and however much we may try, we cannot keep our I from absorption in ignorance in the critical states. We mistakenly regard the I as being the result of forms; we identify the pure I with its coloured reflection in external existence, in activity. Our knowledge of the I is really the result of the logical proposition, *I am that*. We know the I by the image it casts on the non-I, and yet with this blurred, distorted notion, we try to be awake in the higher planes. The forms of the physical, in which we mistake the I, cannot pass through the critical states, and in consequence the consciousness, losing its upadhi, is itself lost innescience. The life in the astral plane, in dreams, of an ordinary man is merely the continuation of the physical, and is conditioned by the laws of the physical. The consciousness, passive in its activities, cannot know anything of the astral forces, save through oft experienced

physical forms of vibrations. When, however, with the development of man in mentality and reasoning, the astral life becomes more regulated; when man, dimly sensing the conditions of manifestation in the Shukra planes, practises the necessary virtues, then the astral body becomes organic and the centre of consciousness begins to grow.

This growth, however, is in unconsciousness, there is no unbroken memory connecting the two stages, nor is there any identity in the nature of the centres. It is only when the centres are unified that the conscious life of the centres begins, and these can be unified and harmonized only by the help of a consciousness which can embrace these within its folds. The life is freed only when it sees the various centres and their individual life to be in itself, when it sees these centres to be as much phenomenal as the bodies themselves.

The three centres of the One Life of the Divine are thus described in the Srimat Bhagavata.\* "He, the Param Atma, the Life who manifests Himself in the caves (the various chakras), having entered the cave along with Nada (soundless sound) and Prana, and having attained to a finer Manamaya form, gradually becomes materialized, centralized successively as the Matra (the measure), the Swara (the sound), and the Varna (colour)." This gradual materialization of the centres of manifestation is also referred to in the Shastras, and is described as the emanation of the cosmic centres from the One Life. Thus from Shankarshana, the cosmic Life and basis of the abstract I, emanate the centres Pradyumna and Aniruddha, representing the Divine centres manifesting through Buddhi and Manas respectively.

Now occultism is the knowledge of the manifestations of the One, the knowledge which explains the

\*Srimat Bhagavata, XI., 12, 11.

process as to how the One manifests as the many though remaining still the One. Therefore, the bridging of the gulf, formed by the *laya* states which differentiate these centres, the unification of the threefold manifestations of the Self into one, is necessary in occultism. The knowledge of the centres as isolated, or even a vague conception of the oneness of Life as manifesting through these, is not sufficient for the purposes of occultism, the knowledge which makes man Divine. The potentialities of the One manifesting as the many ought to be clearly known ere the centres in man can be properly utilized. The nature and potentiality of the centres must be realized and the One Life permeating these must be fully grasped ere the centres can be made automatic and the One Life free.

But this bridging of the gulf is only possible when there is an expansion of consciousness in the lower. It is only when there dawns on the mind a conception of the higher centre, when we come to perceive a higher I in us which can comprehend within itself the lower life—the lower I in the physical—it is only when the lower life itself appears to be an image or reflection of the higher that it is possible for us to let go our hold upon the lower. Thus when we come to recognise, even dimly, a higher Life outside the senses and the mind and perceive that Life to be the real one, then we practise *Sanyama*, discipline and restraint of the lower, and thereby try to resolve the lower life into the higher. The recognition of the I above desires and mentality, and the resolution of the lower personality and its life into that higher, are thus the two conditions requisite for linking the centres of consciousness. So the *Gītā*\* refers to *Sanyama* or restraint, as the means by which the consciousness can be kept awake in that state which is the night of all beings. So also the *Bhagavata* says:

\**Gītā*, II., 69.

“So long as the idea of manyness does not cease and is not resolved into unity by the action of a penetrating intellect, so long does he really sleep, though apparently awake.”\* Thus the conditions for the linking of the centres are : Firstly, an expansion of consciousness by the action of the higher centre permeating the lower and resolving the lower into itself, and secondly, the establishment of unity in the life of the lower and the development of its power of adjusting itself to the higher.

This expansion of consciousness and permeation of the lower by the all-embracing life of the higher is what is known as initiation. Temporary glimpses of the life of the higher may come now and then while we are leading the life of the world ; intellectual discrimination and self-introspection may now and then help indirectly in this process ; but the permanent expansion of consciousness can only be attained when the life of the Guru raises up and ennobles our I-notion in the lower planes. It is only when we come in contact with these Mighty Beings, when there is a downpouring of their all-comprehending Life, that the life in us can transcend the limitations of the centre in the physical plane. The soul, disgusted in some measure with life in the phenomenal planes, pants after the reality but by itself it cannot transcend the limitations. Identifying itself with the centre in the physical plane, though nourishing unconsciously by proper actions the germs of life in the higher planes, it cannot let go its hold upon itself, upon the I-notion of the physical plane. It needs to know the I which has hitherto formed the centre of its being, as phenomenal and mayavic, and that is not possible unless it is lifted up for a time at least and shown the life in the higher. Man is to die to his old self and yet to live, and this is not possible unless

\* Bhagavata XI., 13-30.

he comes to live in the higher. He must plant his feet in the higher ere he can let go the lower life, which hitherto was the only life he could consciously function in. The centre, the I-notion, forms the substratum which links together all actions, feelings and thoughts of the plane, and that being so, all outputtings of energy have reference to this centre. The will, which physical man exerts, has for its centre and substratum the I-notion of the physical plane. Hence we see that even when we strive to drop the physical Ego and go beyond it, all our exertions, being subtly coloured by the physical I-notion, fail to take us higher up, and the only effect produced is the dropping of the physical upadhi and the lapse of the consciousness in the neutral state which intervenes between the physical and the higher planes. True, by analysis of our states of consciousness, by calm introspection, the consciousness can function in the higher planes and we may for the time being forget the physical I. But the higher life thus realized is dependent upon the particular form of thought with the help of which we carry on the process of analysis; the life is dependent upon the form and is coloured by it. There is more of the knowledge of the particular form with which we analyse ourselves than of the I proper in us. There is consciousness, but not *self*-consciousness; and the knowledge we bring down is the knowledge of the particular form and not of the life in ourselves. Philosophical problems may thus be solved by deep thinking and analysis, higher and more abstract conceptions may thus dawn upon the mind, fragments of the Divine music can thus be brought down into the lower physical brain; but such knowledge, such perceptions of the higher, do not bring us nearer to the higher centre. On the contrary, all such experiences centre round the lower I-notion and thus serve to

accentuate the Egoism of the lower. It breeds Ahankara, and the physical I-notion becomes hedged in with a thicker barrier of selfhood. That is why the brain-learning of the Pharisees and the Scribes cannot help much in the real knowledge of the higher centres. Moreover the process is quite the reverse of the real one used in occultism. It implies the reduction of the higher into the lower, instead of the elevation of the lower into the higher. It implies the projection of the lower notions into the higher planes of being, instead of the attuning and harmonizing the lower with the life of the higher. The consciousness engrossed in forms does not find its centre; attached to particular forms it recognises not the Self manifesting in the higher planes. Thus not only is the knowledge coloured by the particular form, but it is also uncoordinated and is lost in the outer circumference. That is why Hume could not catch the Ego in his analysis of consciousness. Instead of being connected with the centre, the consciousness subtly coloured by the lower I is lost in the field of manifestation. This test, the recognition of the centre of consciousness in the higher planes, differentiates the real occult knowledge from the knowledge gained by psychics and mediums. The One is the knowledge of the centres as related to the fields of activity, while the other is merely the distorted, coloured and broken reflection of the contents of the higher fields of consciousness into the lower mind. The resolution of the lower into the higher centre, as against the assertion of the lower over the higher, is thus the keynote of that occult knowledge which leads to the freedom of the life from the thralldom of name and form. This process of unification is hinted at in the Bhagavata.\* “ Then, lastly, the element Earth is to be resolved and indrawn into Water, Water into

\*Bhagavata, VII., 12, 26.

Fire, Fire into Air, Air into Akasha, Akasha into Ahankara, Ahankara into Mahat, Mahat into Prakriti, and lastly, Prakriti into the Supreme Self." Thus the resolution of the tattvas removes the manyness of the reflections, and promotes the realization of the unity. As each tattva is resolved into its higher source, the modification of the Divine consciousness which produced the tattva comes to be realized as a modification; and the wisdom resulting becomes a power or a Siddhi which the consciousness can use for re-manifesting itself in the lower planes. Thus, for example, with the resolution of the earth tattva and the resultant wisdom, the consciousness gains the power of producing earthly forms at will, while the limitations imposed upon it by the tattva drop away. It can no longer be bound by the limitations of rigid physical forms; the forms become flimsy veils projected out of the life itself by the modifications of its consciousness. Rigid physical forms cannot delude the initiate any longer; he sees through them and perceives the life as playing through these forms directly without the intervention of outward expressions. Thus one step in the ladder of Being is surmounted and the consciousness is nearer to the unity by one stage.

The resolution of the tattvas requires, however, as a precedent condition, the realization of the unity of life to a certain extent. It is only when the consciousness knows itself to be one, and independent of forms, that it can maintain its hold upon itself when the lower forms are transmuted into higher. Unless the attachment of life to these forms is conquered, unless the consciousness knows itself as being unaffected by the forms and modes of manifestation, there is sure to be a lapse in its manifestation when the form drops. Thus the attachment to the physical vehicle is the cause of the lapse of self-consciousness when passing from the waking to the

dream stage. Therefore the linking together of the centres of consciousness must precede the resolution of the tattvas.

So we have now to consider the question of the resolution and linking together of the centres into the One Life. As already said, this can only be done when the lower centre is made to expand so as to merge in the higher. The knowledge of the Divine Centres and their reflections in man, and the realization of the Life of the higher centres can only come, as we have already seen, through the mercy of the Lords of Compassion; those Mighty Lords who having attained to the knowledge of the Divine, sacrifice the bliss of Nirvāna in order to be the connecting links between Man and the Supreme. Hence the Gītā says\*: "Learn thou this by prostrations, by questionings and by worship. The wise, the seers of the tattvas, the essence of things, will instruct thee in this wisdom."

What are the requisites which draw one to the teachers of humanity? Let us try to understand what is meant by the conditions which the sloka quoted above refers to. As to the first—prostration—people generally form rather strange conceptions; with some it is merely the physical act or the lip-reverence paid to religious teachers. The prostration referred to, however, is not the physical act, nor the intellectual admiration which we feel for one who is greater than ourselves; nor is it the reluctant and tardy recognition of the spiritual superiority of any one arrived at through deliberate reasoning. It is the spontaneous surrender of the soul to the One, whom the heart recognises as the Teacher. It is the gladsome sacrifice of everything that the Man has, everything which he holds dear, not for the sake of obtaining anything in return. It is the motiveless, yet

\*Bhagavad Gītā, IV., 34.

voluntary laying of the heart at the feet of One in whom the soul recognises intuitively its Teacher, its Master, its Lord and Love.

The last vestige of mineness in things, in the bodies and their powers, nay, even in the centre of consciousness itself is removed and washed away by the fire of Love, of devotion and service which the teacher enkindles in the heart. The tiny Life in the centre recognises its parent source, the One Divinity clothed in a translucent body in order to attract its love; it responds to the supreme attraction and yearns to pour itself out in reverence and love, in sacrifice and self-surrender. Like a powerful magnet, affecting everything near it and infusing into everything its own life, the Master pours forth His life transmuting, for the time being at least, everything low and ignoble into the high and the exalted. The strong attachment which He arouses in the mind sweeps away all barriers of the Life and all limitations of Self-consciousness. The thin veil of Ahankara which encloses the Life and makes it manifest as the centre, falls off, and the Life, set free, mingles consciously for a moment with its source. The consciousness enlarges its field and feels itself for the time being to be One with its Divine source.

Thus is accomplished a stage of the Yoga of the Sannyasin, the ecstasy of the Saint—the entering into the Joy of the Lord.