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ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

GENERAL EDITOR
KIREET JOSHI

Arguments for the Existence of God

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General Editor: KIREET JOSHI

Author and compiler of this monograph: Chitwan Mittal

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mothersinstitute@gmail.com

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Illumination, Heroism and Harmony

Arguments for the Existence of God

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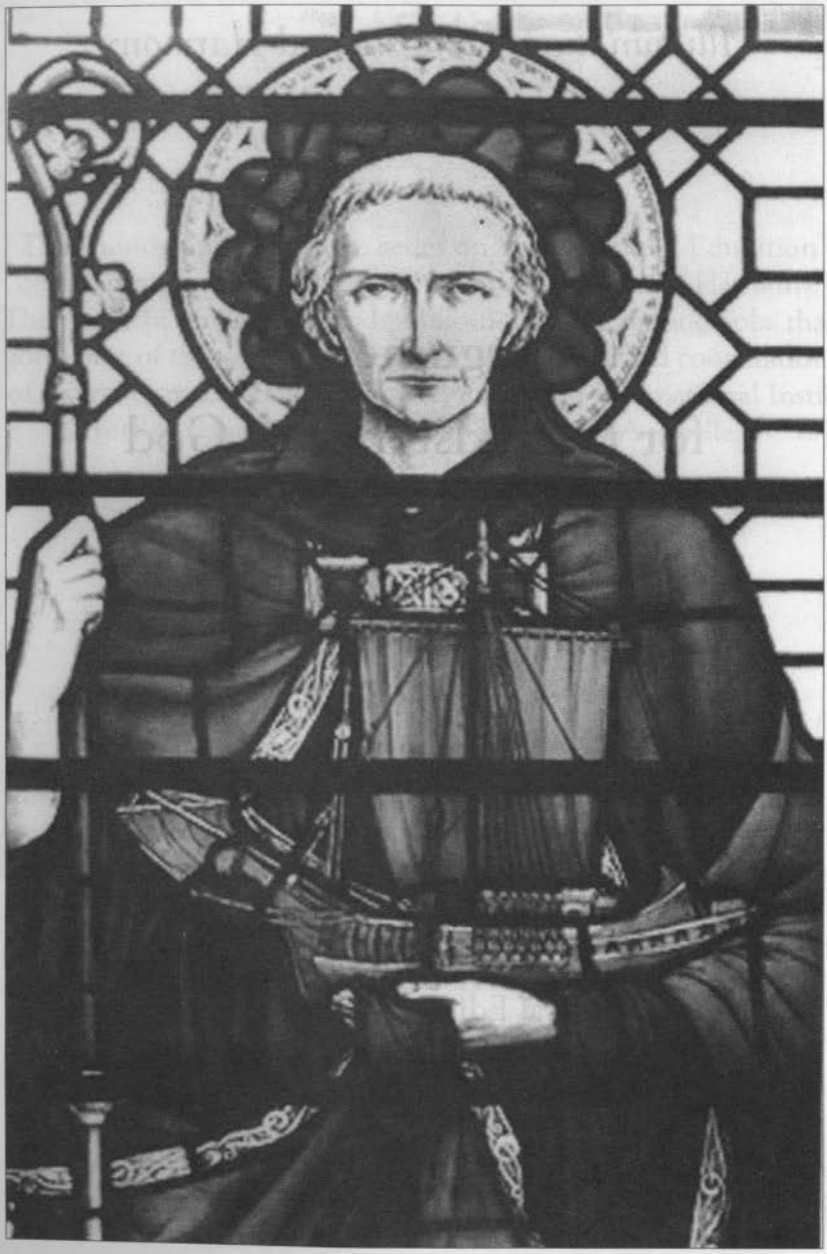

Saint Anselm

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Preface

The task of preparing teaching-learning material for value-oriented education is enormous. There is, first, the idea that value-oriented education should be exploratory rather than prescriptive, and that the teaching-learning material should provide to the learners a growing experience of exploration.

Secondly, it is rightly contended that the proper inspiration to turn to value-orientation is provided by biographies, autobiographical accounts, personal anecdotes, epistles, short poems, stories of humour, stories of human interest, brief passages filled with pregnant meanings, reflective short essays written in well-chiselled language, plays, powerful accounts of historical events, statements of personal experiences of values in actual situations of life, and similar other statements of scientific, philosophical, artistic and literary expression.

Thirdly, we may take into account the contemporary fact that the entire world is moving rapidly towards the synthesis of the East and the West, and in that context, it seems obvious that our teaching-learning material should foster the gradual familiarisation of students with global themes of universal significance as also those that underline the importance of diversity in unity. This implies that the material should bring the students nearer to their cultural heritage, but also to the highest that is available in the cultural experiences of the world at large.

Fourthly, an attempt should be made to select from Indian and world history such examples that could illustrate the theme of the upward progress of humankind. The selected research material could be multi-sided, and it should be presented in such a way that teachers can make use of it in the manner and in the context that they need in specific situations that might obtain or that can be created in respect of the students.

The research teams at the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER) have attempted the creation of the relevant teaching-learning material, and they have decided to present the same in the form of monographs.

It appears that there are three major powers that uplift life to higher and higher normative levels, and the value of these powers, if well illustrated, could be effectively conveyed to the learners for their upliftment. These powers are those of illumination, heroism and harmony.

It may be useful to explore the meanings of these terms — illumination, heroism and harmony — since the aim of these monographs is to provide material for a study of what is sought to be conveyed through these three terms. We offer here exploratory statements in regard to these three terms.

Illumination is that ignition of inner light in which meaning and value of substance and life-movement are seized, understood, comprehended, held, and possessed, stimulating and inspiring guided action and application and creativity culminating in joy, delight, even ecstasy. The width, depth and height of the light and vision determine the degrees of illumination, and when they reach the splendour and glory of synthesis and harmony, illumination ripens into wisdom. Wisdom, too, has varying degrees that can uncover powers of knowledge and action, which reveal unsuspected secrets and unimagined skills of art and craft of creativity and effectiveness.

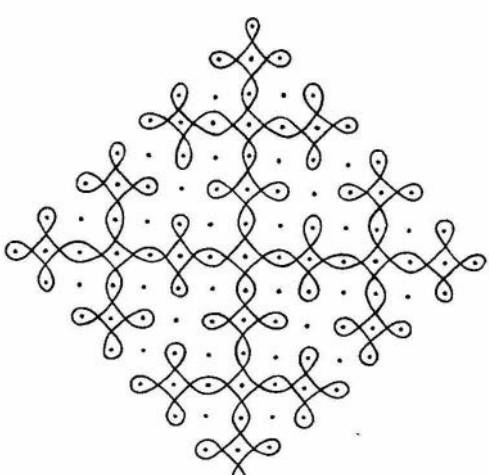
Heroism is, essentially, inspired force and self-giving and sacrifice in the operations of will that is applied to the quest, realisation and triumph of meaning and value against the resistance of limitations and obstacles by means of courage, battle

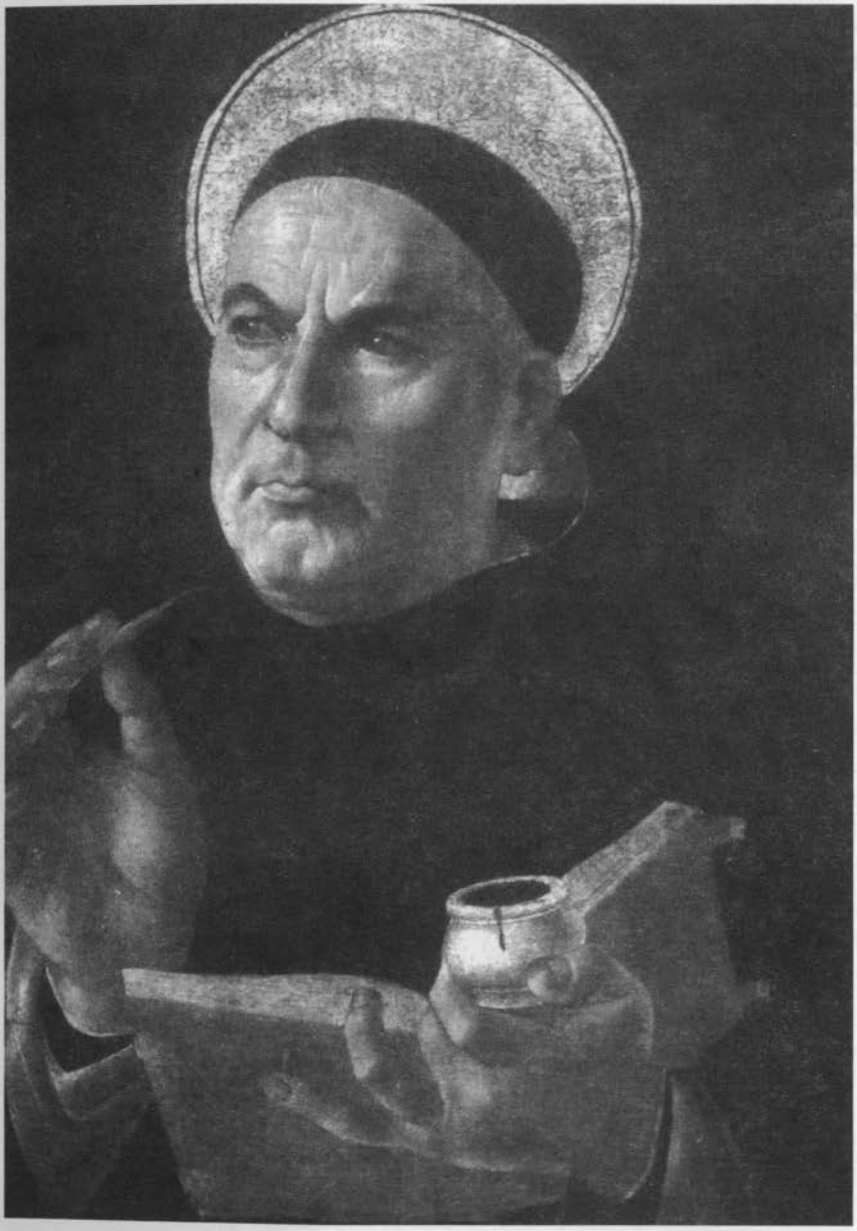
and adventure. There are degrees and heights of heroism determined by the intensity, persistence and vastness of sacrifice. Heroism attains the highest states of greatness and refinement when it is guided by the highest wisdom and inspired by the sense of service to the ends of justice and harmony, as well as when tasks are executed with consummate skill.

Harmony is a progressive state and action of synthesis and equilibrium generated by the creative force of joy and beauty and delight that combines and unites knowledge and peace and stability with will and action and growth and development. Without harmony, there is no perfection, even though there could be maximisation of one or more elements of our nature. When illumination and heroism join and engender relations of mutuality and unity, each is perfected by the other and creativity is endless.

Many students, during their adolescence or as they emerge from adolescence to early years of youth, pass through a period when all they have heard and learnt comes to be questioned. Often they find painfully the absence of a competent guide or mentor who can help them; even books that can be helpful are few, and these students are swayed by influences that tie them down to superficial levels of critical rationality. They are often asked to find proofs and evidence for what they think and feel, but not knowing what constitutes proofs or evidence, begin to flounder. One of the important questions that is often asked at this stage is related to the existence of God. What is the proof that God exists? This question is often asked; but very few teachers or friends undertake any serious journey of critical inquiry with the students in regard to this question. This monograph is an attempt to serve these students and furnish to them some material of thought and reflection by the help of which they can be rescued from superficial thinking. They need to enter into the portals of serious and profound realms of thought and reflection. The question of existence of God is one of the few important questions that has to be confronted, since this question is related centrally to the aim of life.

The value that this monograph aims to nourish is that of illumination. This monograph aims to provide to the students those exercises of thought which open them to the universe of pure, colourless, austere light of reason, and it also aims at guiding them to the vision that lies beyond reason. There is, it is claimed, a realm of experience, and students need to explore the claim that while God's reality can be undeniably established by the light of Reason, there is also a greater light in the effulgence of which God can be, as Sri Ramakrishna told Swami Vivekananda, seen, possessed and known by constant living with Him. It is hoped that this monograph will serve as a friend of the students who are seriously gripped with the question of illumination by which God, who is by definition the highest and the best and the source of all values, can be known and experienced and possessed.





St. Thomas Aquinas

Introductory Note

'Does God exist?' and 'Can the existence of God be rationally proved?'—these questions have occupied the best minds of the East and the West through long ages of history. In India, we find in the different systems of philosophy, these questions and their answers. In the West, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle have been witnessed as gripped by these questions. In the Medieval history of Europe, we find St. Thomas Aquinas proving existence of God by means of what is called the Ontological Argument. Three greatest philosophers of modern Europe, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz formulated their own Ontological Arguments in the context of their own systems of philosophy. Along with the Ontological Argument, the Cosmological Argument and Teleological Argument have flourished both in the East and the West. Immanuel Kant criticised the Ontological Argument but supplied a new argument, the Moral Argument. However, after Kant's refutation of the Ontological Argument, and particularly under the influence of the empiricist philosophy, the questions about the existence of God have become marginalised.

These questions are, however, extremely important. If God really exists, human life will be seen in a totally new light, and this has consequences for the way of life or the direction of life.

In the inspiring life of Swami Vivekananda, we find how as a college student, he was gripped by the question of God's existence, and he was in search, not merely of intellectual proof of God but of experiential proof of God. That is why, when he met Sri Ramakrishna, he did not ask the question whether he believed in God or not, or whether he could provide any intellectual proof. He simply asked the question: "Have you seen God?" and he was seized by Sri Ramakrishna, when the latter told him, "Yes. I see him more vividly than I see you." Since that important encounter between Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna, many young people of India have entered into the debate regarding God's existence and about the intellectual and experiential proof of God.

It is in this context that it seems worthwhile to present in a short monograph an account of the intellectual proofs of the existence of God, particularly as they have been formulated and discussed in the West. This monograph has, however, also added a few pages which summarise the account of the Indian intellectual proofs of the existence of God. This monograph has devoted some space to the original statements of Descartes in regard to the Ontological Argument. The author of this monograph has also presented a critical essay on the Ontological Argument in the form in which it can be intellectually discussed in the contemporary course in philosophy.

Sri Aurobindo, the greatest Indian philosopher of our time, has devoted four chapters in his 'The Life Divine' to the twofold approach to the problem of the existence of God,— rational and experiential, and since these four chapters present the most elaborate and intellectually robust statement of the problem of God's existence and solution, all these four chapters have been placed in the Appendix.

It is not enough to prove the existence of God or that God is Self-Existence or Pure Existence. God is not mere essence, and as Plato had said long ago, the Supreme Good exceeds essence in both power and dignity. The Vedanta has also pointed out long before Plato that God exceeds essence or Pure Existence

(Sat), both as Conscious Force (Cit), and Delight (Ānanda). Sri Aurobindo dwells in these four chapters on the totality of the concept of God as the Pure Existent, Conscious Force and Delight.

Sri Aurobindo's logic of rationality conceives a kind of its completeness in itself, just as one's eye grasps the object of sight undeniably, yet it admits a room for the second eye in terms of empirical possession of the object, provided that empiricality (in the universe of discourse of 'God') is not limited to sense-bound experience, but extends into supra-sensuous and superconscient experience. The double edge of the sharpness of integrality is luminously visible in these four chapters. Idealistic rationality has its own completeness in the field of ideation and its relationship with reality, and yet integrality of our being demands a greater completeness in terms of direct experience.

Sri Aurobindo has stated:

> *"But our nature sees things through two eyes always, for it views them doubly as idea and as fact and therefore every concept is incomplete for us and to a part of our nature almost unreal until it becomes an experience. But the truths which are now in question, are of an order not subject to our normal experience. They are, in their nature, "beyond the perception of the senses but seizable by the perception of the reason". Therefore, some other faculty of experience is necessary by which the demand of our nature can be fulfilled and this can only come, since we are dealing with the supraphysical, by an extension of psychological experience." (The Life Divine, Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol. 18, p. 61)*

Ideative rationality demands undeniably the positing of the Infinite Pure Existence, but integrality of our being demands, equally undeniably, possession of the Infinite in intuition or knowledge by identity. This process ends in double certainty

of God's existence in thought and in actual possession in experience.

These four chapters present this integrality, and in the history of thought, this presentation is not only novel but its intellectual perfection is so stimulating and satisfying that one could confidently invite any student, who contemplates on the existence of God, to study these four chapters.

It is hoped that the readers of this monograph will find the treatment of the problem of the existence of God stimulating and rewarding.

Editor

A Speculative Theory of Religion: Its Data and Aim

A. The Data and the Problem they Raise

Before we turn to a new aspect of our problem, let us look back for a moment on the path we have already traversed. So far we have said nothing about what may be called the Metaphysics of Religion. We have regarded religion as a historic fact, tried to describe its psychical features, indicated its value in the complex life of culture, and considered its essential nature revealed in the course of development. Description, arrangement of materials, and psychological explanation do not carry us beyond the phenomenological sphere: they do not determine the validity of religious beliefs, and the question of their truth is pressed upon us. Preliminary to this question it was necessary to say something on the character of human knowledge, and the principles and methods which it involved. For scepticism on the validity of knowledge must react injuriously upon religion, which makes a claim to know. In this connexion it seemed very desirable to examine the modes of religious knowledge in order to make clear, if possible, the degree of validity which attached to them. The outcome of this inquiry went to confirm our belief in the validity of knowledge; and it also served to show that the modes of religious knowledge could be justified, because they were capable of conveying truth, though not in a perfect or scientific form. At the beginning of our course, and looking

ahead, we described in a general way the problem and method which a Philosophy of Religion should follow in dealing with the abundant materials and the different disciplines of which it must take cognisance. But, at the stage we have now reached, the religious problem assumes a definite and an urgent form which raises a fundamental issue. The general assurance of the validity of knowledge, though most important, does not carry us far enough, and the question of the truth of religious ideas has to be faced. It is not surprising that beliefs which are so largely influenced by emotional needs and practical motives should have their theoretical value doubted; and this doubt must be frankly met and, if possible, dispelled.

The specific nature of the task which lies before us ought to be noted. Our previous discussion did not lead us to claim more than that man, in the religious as well as the scientific sphere, was able to apprehend what was real. He was not shut out from truth by any inherent defect in the organ of knowledge. This, of course, could not guarantee that what was possible was always realised; and there may be error and illusion in religious matters as well as in secular things. What we have done is to justify our position against the assaults of agnosticism and scepticism at the outset; what we have now to do is to consider whether those specific ideas which are put forward by the religious spirit, in the belief that they are essential to its life, can be shown to be true. It is not enough to say that multitudes have believed in them and their value has been proved. We cannot dismiss the suggestion as intrinsically absurd, that mankind, though not condemned to illusion, has in point of fact fallen a victim to continuous illusions in the field of religion.

The demand for some pronouncement on the reality to which religious experience refers is a demand which reflective minds make and cannot help making. The sincerely religious person will not, indeed, put forward such a demand on his own behalf: reasoning did not make him religious, and the inward assurance suffices for him. But this subjective conviction on the part of the individual is not a guarantee for others; and since

religion is essentially a social phenomenon, the need for some rational justification is felt. This want cannot be met in the fashion which finds favour in some quarters at the present day — by the endeavour, namely, to exhibit the function and value of religion in the individual and social life. However interesting and useful such an exposition may be, it stops short of the critical point: it leaves the ontological question in abeyance. At the last the reader is left with the unsatisfactory impression, that the social and personal value of religion does not depend on the degree of truth contained in it, that in religion, as in science, there are such things as useful fictions. Now in the interests of religion it is desirable that the situation should be cleared up by a frank discussion of the problem of truth. No doubt neither the religious individual nor the religious society is likely to take seriously the possibility that its religious experience is purely illusory. As in the case of the external world, so in that of the religious object, the suggestion that it is a fiction of the experient subject is straightway rejected by most people. But though the mind recoils from a scepticism so subversive, simply to say that the object of the religious consciousness is real, does not carry us very far. More is wanted than a mere affirmation of this sort; and when once the reflective spirit has been aroused and is at work, it inevitably presses the further query: What then is the object? To say in a general way that God is means very little, unless we know what you mean by the word God: the term may have the highest spiritual significance or it may have none at all. It may signify the Universe as a whole, or it may denote a personal Being who thinks and loves. In religious experience the difficulty — a difficulty which prompts an appeal to reason in the interests of faith — has always been the varying ways in which the religious object has been represented. At first sight the religious beliefs of mankind resemble a dense and pathless jungle rather than a field well laid out and harmoniously ordered. And though 'the eye by long use' comes to detect the outlines of order in what at the outset seemed a hopeless confusion, nevertheless there remain

the gravest inconsistencies between the different conceptions men have formed of God. In view of the path we have already traversed this fact hardly requires comment or elucidation. The notion of God, we know, has changed with changes in culture and spiritual attainment on man's part: it develops with human development. In the face of these facts we can understand that the question, Is there a God? has seldom thrust itself on human minds in this purely general form. When the problem about God arises, it commonly does so in the form of a doubt whether the traditional conception of God denotes a real being or not. The speculative problem has always its point of practical reference; and man is impelled to think, because he desires to know whether he can go on believing in the manner he has hitherto done.

In our present inquiry the first point to be clear about is our attitude to what we may call the historic representations of the Divine Being. The remarks in a previous chapter about the relation of a Philosophy of Religion to a particular religion hold, of course, in regard to the conception of God in such a religion. A religious philosophy, though in the end it may lend support to a historic idea of the Divine Being, cannot, to begin with, select any historic idea of Deity as setting the special problem it has to solve. If such a philosophy is to rise to the height of its argument, it must base itself on religious experience in its fulness and diversity; and it must regard the phenomena from the genetic or developmental standpoint. Only when we survey the phenomena of the religious consciousness from the genetic point of view, can we understand the similarities and differences between the various ideas of God, and discern the lines of connexion between them. What at first sight seemed a radical opposition is now revealed as the outcomes of a common religious consciousness which has passed through different stages, and has been reflected through the media of diverse levels of spiritual culture. From the stone fetish to the Father of Spirits is a vast distance — indeed they seem wide as the poles asunder; but they are linked together by the desires

and needs of the human mind which work at every point of religious evolution. The forms of the God-idea, therefore, have a unity and a connexion through the active mind which reveals and expresses itself in them. It is not by accident that the spirit of man, reacting on stimuli from the environment, develops an idea of God corresponding to its own self-development. If it be true that man is 'incurably religious,' it is because there is something in him that makes him so. "Man's nature is so constituted that some kind of consciousness of God is inevitable to him, although it may be only a presentiment or a search."[1]

Accordingly the development of the idea of God will serve for a guide to the speculative thinker who is seeking what is central and essential in the notion. There is a continuity and a logic in history which show that human freedom does not mean caprice, and in the course of historic development ideas and values are subjected to a prolonged test. The process of development, we may safely conclude, by which a great conception is defined and purified, formed and sustained, gives us a clue to the significance and value of that idea, even though it cannot be taken finally to decide its truth. A conception, changing yet enduring, like the conception of God, testifies to some large self-fulfilment which the human soul attains through it. A value which persists and maintains itself in the developing life of mankind, can only do so because it is in harmony with the nature of man and of the world in which his lot is cast. If we look then to the evolution of the religious consciousness, what conclusion do we draw in reference to the character which it attributes to the Object? It cannot be doubted that man's religious history shows a gradual, though not by any means a continual or uninterrupted, movement from the natural to the spiritual. The God whom the developed culture of the modern world requires must at least be a spiritual and ethical Being: every lower conception of Deity has in the end failed to satisfy the growing human spirit. Man who is an ethical personality can only bow in worship before a Being in whom he sees his ideal of goodness realised, and who responds to what is highest and

best in himself. There emerges then, as the outcome of man's age-long search for God, the vision of a Reality, ethical, spiritual, and personal, in which the religious needs of humanity are fulfilled. The sympathetic student of religious history, who marks the tendency and the issues, will at the least assent to the words of a recent writer: "The dim and broken image of perfection may well be formed in sympathy and correspondence with a Perfection that is most real."[2] The religious man himself does not doubt that this is true: his whole spiritual life would become empty and meaningless to him, if he knew that his faith went out only to meet the void.

But, it may be asked, does not the religious consciousness affirm something more about the God whom it postulates than that he is an ethical and spiritual Being? In what sense, for example, does the religious mind require its God to be personal? Observe that we are not asking what answer theological thought has given to this problem, and expressed in the form of doctrinal propositions. We are trying to find out the conceptions to which the data of spiritual experience, in its developed form, point. When the question is put thus, the reply, it seems to us, can hardly be doubtful. The God of spiritual religion is conceived after the analogy of the human personality, and is therefore capable of entering into personal relations with men: he is near and also far, present to the world and the soul, yet not identical with either and transcending both. Religious experience is based on the existence of a relation between the subject and the object, and is incompatible with identity; even genuine mysticism, though it is haunted by the thought of the absorption of the soul in God, still asserts a difference between them. Pantheism, though religions sometimes pass into it, is not a true line of religious development; and if the pantheist is logical, he must judge the offices of worship and of prayer to be superfluous or altogether meaningless. This truth deserves to be insisted upon, for we are sometimes told that only an immanent God, a God who has no existence apart from the world and the human souls in which he reveals himself, can satisfy the

'highly reflective' modern mind. The validity of this conception does not fall to be discussed just now. But the reader will remember that it is a theory put forward by speculative thought, and cannot claim to be the philosophical rendering of what is normal and constant in religious experience. Those who, for one reason or another, hold the theory to be true, ought to say it is a rectification, not an interpretation, of the religious consciousness. It will be greatly to the advantage of his work, if the religious philosopher can regard the psychological facts and the general tendency of religious experience with a sympathetic and an unprejudiced eye, seeking first and foremost to read the meaning of his data. For thought to be fruitful must stand in living relation to experience and life: otherwise it is likely to waste its energy in barren speculations. A Philosophy of Religion which is dominated by an interest exclusively speculative, and pays no heed to the actual movement of the religious spirit, may indeed offer to us a metaphysical substitute for the idea of God. But the justification of a substitute lies in its ability to perform the function of that for which it is substituted. And it is certain that neither an Infinite Substance nor an Absolute Idea, even when persuasively commended by philosophy as the truth of the popular notion of Deity, could fulfil the spiritual office of God, or serve to explain and evaluate the data of religious experience. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to conclude that the duty of a speculative theory of religion is merely to interpret faithfully, and draw inferences strictly from the facts of personal and racial religious experience. Though philosophy must not ignore any side of experience, its office is critical as well as interpretative. And there will be room for criticism in religion, for the religious point of view is incomplete. The religious mind occupies itself with a certain aspect of experience, passing over other aspects, while philosophy seeks to embrace experience in all its fulness. Hence postulates made from a partial point of view may require to be modified or supplemented from the point of view of the whole.

At the present time there are special grounds why those who

are sincerely interested in religion should not shrink from facing the problem raised by its data. The spirit of positivism and agnosticism, though it may not assume the form of a deliberate philosophical theory, is an influential element in current thinking; and the idea is common that religion is very much a matter of emotion and sentiment, and cannot stand the test of rational criticism. Religions, it is said, are one and all the product of a pre-scientific age; they figure as survivals in the environment of modern culture, and as such they are doomed to dwindle and die. To use the sarcastic words of Schopenhauer: "Religions are like glowworms, they need the dark in order to shine." It is a fair inference that those who adopt this attitude believe that the more strenuously we apply rational reflexion to the content of religion, the less likely are we to endorse its claims. In which case the best advice a religious philosopher could give to those who love their religion, and desire to hold to it, would be: "Feel warmly towards it and act vigorously on its behalf, but think about it as little as possible!" Even the plain man will realise that there is something dubious in this recommendation; and it in a questionable service to any religion to preach the doctrine, that its sole justification lies in its practical value. For the argument lies to hand, that utility and expediency are a sufficient defence of any idea or institution. But though rational reflexion fail to support the claims of the religious consciousness with logical proof, the exercise of reason is still needed to show us why such an attempt at proof fails. Moreover, though reason comes short of giving anything like demonstration in this field, its work may still be of conspicuous value in the interests of religious faith. I do not mean merely that it may conduct a psychological and an epistemological inquiry into the working of the religious mind. That is useful, but it is not enough. If you do not go beyond such an inquiry, you leave the whole question of ultimate truth unsettled: philosophy is dumb on the final issue, and the individual can decide for himself in response to the appeal of the feelings or by a 'venture of faith.' The real danger is that a religion which ignores the claims of reason,

and moves without its guiding light, is apt to fall into fanaticism and superstition, or to drift into obscurantism. Surely the more excellent way is to exercise our reason on the content of our religion, and to follow its leading so far as we legitimately can; only thus can we hope to bring religion into vital relations with science and philosophy. It is, indeed, well not to expect too much from speculative thought, and there are those who like to remind us that 'our little systems have their day.' But if philosophical reflexion even made it clear that the postulates of the religious consciousness are not antagonistic to those of science and speculative thought, it would have performed a service whose value could not be gainsaid.

The data of religion, by their variety and by their divergences, press upon us the problem of the ultimate truth of religious experience. And it is natural to ask how the study of the data may help us to answer this question. Plainly the facts, to be of service, must be regarded as a connected whole: they must be seen in relation to the general development of religion, and be interpreted in connexion with it. In particular, the facts of religious evolution have to be used to bring out, if possible, the idea of God towards which the religious spirit seems to strive, and in which it finds the fullest satisfaction. Now it is true the study of religious development will not enable us to define accurately a conception of God, which completely and universally satisfies the religious mind. The tendencies at work are too diverse for this. What we do find, is a movement through imperfect and unsatisfying conceptions to conceptions more perfect and satisfying; and so long as religion develops, we shall not be able to say it presents to us an idea of God absolutely final. Nevertheless a study such as we have been considering does show that the line of development in religion is in the direction of a personal and ethical God, a God who enters into personal communion and sustains ethical relations with men. This is without doubt the conception of Deity which best maintains itself in the evolution of religion, and is most fruitful in its working. To investigate the truth of this idea is

therefore a problem which is set to the religious philosopher by the facts of religious experience.

I do not think we are entitled to say more, than that man's spiritual experience shows us the idea of God which on the whole prevails, and in the long run works best. The notion that the evolution of religion is itself a logical movement, a movement which is a continuous, progressive, and certain definition of what God is, will not stand criticism. The facts are far too complicated to fall into this clear-cut scheme, and historic development does not answer the questions it raises in such a convincing fashion.

The demands of the religious spirit, as they have worked themselves out in the historic process, have yielded the notion of an ethical and personal God. Is the nature of reality such that this conception of God can be justified? This is the great and enduring problem of a Philosophy of Religion. In proceeding to treat of this subject I shall begin by examining certain historic attempts which have been made to give rational proof of the existence of God.

B. Proofs of the Existence of God

The importance of the traditional proofs of the existence of God has greatly diminished in modern times. No one, remarks the late Prof. Pfleiderer, now holds it possible to prove the divine existence from an abstract conception of God, or, from an abstract conception of the world, to reach by inference a God who is separate from the world.[3] Nor can it be said that these proofs have ever played a part in producing religious conviction where it did not already exist; their ostensible function has rather been to confirm religious belief than to create it. The proofs themselves do not set out from religious presuppositions, either explicit or implicit. The presuppositions from which they start are quite general and abstract; and the standing difficulty in the argument has always been, that the concrete reality at which they aim contains more than is to be found in the prem-

isses. Those who developed the Theistic Arguments had a clear idea of what they wanted to reach, and they hoped to reach it by logical thinking. The misfortune was that they were not fully conscious of the disparity between the means and the end. The 'proofs' have been a favourite theme of comment and criticism; in truth, the subject has been treated so often by theologians and philosophers that it has been worn threadbare, and it has become well-nigh impossible to say anything new on the topic. There is a consensus of opinion that the arguments are not valid in their present form; but some who admit this believe that they can be reconstructed so as to have weight, though the weight does not amount to demonstration. It will be necessary to refer to these reconstructions, and the whole subject, however familiar, can hardly be passed over here: for it is of historic interest, and shows the way in which thought has come to the aid of faith by offering rational proof that the object of faith is real. The proofs represent modes in which the human mind, through the exercise of reasoning meant to be universal and cogent, sought to justify to itself the truth of its religious conviction. A short discussion and criticism of these proofs will help to define more clearly in our minds the nature of the problem before us. And when we understand where certain solutions have failed, and why they failed, we shall see better the lines on which a solution may be profitably attempted.

The proof which is usually taken first is the Ontological. It is the one which raises the deepest philosophical issues, and, as we shall see, the other proofs implicitly assume its validity. The Ontological Argument has been stated in slightly different ways, but its essential contention is, that the *reality* of God is involved in the *idea* of God. There is something, it is urged, unique in the idea of God, so that it cannot be a mere idea. Anselm (1033-1109) presented this proof in its scholastic form. It runs thus: God is a Being than which a greater cannot be conceived *(id quo majus cogitari nequit)*; but an idea which existed only *in intellectu* would not be so great as one which existed *in re* as well as *in intellectu*; therefore God must be

thought as necessarily existing. This argument has been set forth in a simpler and less artificial form by Descartes. He omits the step which declares that what exists in fact as well as in idea is greater than what exists merely in idea, and affirms that the very notion of God, the most perfect Being, carries existence as necessarily with it as the idea of a triangle carries with it the equality of the sum of its angles to two right angles. In short, reality belongs, and is clearly perceived to belong, to the very notion of God. Descartes is well aware that this line of reasoning will not hold in regard to other objects of thought, but he maintains the idea of God to be unique in the respect that it involves existence. This specific claim in the crux of the argument. A second form of proof was offered by Descartes. In this case the argument asserts that the idea of God, who is infinite and perfect, cannot be formed in man by any finite object, and must be caused by God himself. It is implied here that the idea of the Infinite is positive and cannot be reached *via negationis*. But, even if this were not open to objection, the term Infinite connotes much less than is signified by God. Still, taken simply as a probable argument, the thought is suggestive and not without weight, that man's knowledge of God is due to God himself. He is the sufficient reason of the idea of himself in man.

The reader may have already begun to suspect that the force of these attempted proofs depends a good deal on what you mean by God. And this receives a rather striking confirmation in the case of the thinker who comes after Descartes in the philosophical succession — Spinoza. Spinoza, like Descartes, infers from the idea of God, as the source and sum of all perfection, his existence. But for Spinoza, God, or Substance, is the infinite and all-inclusive Whole, within which fall the parallel differentiations of thought and extension as its corresponding aspects. On this construction of the term God his reality is inevitably involved in his idea. But there is here no transition from the essence as idea to the reality, for the one is bound up with the other. In fact, if God is defined in a purely pantheistic way,

the very notion of a proof of his existence becomes not only superfluous but absurd. To say the essence of God involves his existence is quite true, if we grant Spinoza's presuppositions; but these in effect prejudge the whole question. So far as Spinoza is concerned the important point is not his proof of the existence of God, for this is purely verbal, but the validity of the philosophical conceptions on which his system is based. The same dependence on a philosophical system is seen in the theistic proof of Leibniz. This proof might perhaps more fitly be taken to illustrate a phase of the Cosmological Argument, but since it has interesting points of contact and contrast with Spinoza's proof, I shall briefly refer to it here. Leibniz's argument proceeds on a distinction which he draws in his philosophy between the possible and the actual, the essence and the existence. With Spinoza, on the other hand, all that is possible is actual. Leibniz argues: "If there is a reality in essences or possibilities, or rather in eternal truths, this reality must needs be founded in something existing and actual, and consequently in the existence of the necessary Being in whom essence involves existence, or in whom to be possible is to be actual."[4] Leibniz means by essences, possibilities or tendencies to exist, and these in turn he identifies with eternal truths. The gist of the argument is, that these possibilities must have their ground in something actual, in the existence of a Necessary Being. In the case of a perfect Being what is possible is actual, for there can be nothing to hinder the tendency to exist. In this instance also the cogency of the argument depends on the postulates of a metaphysical system, and the notion of possibility implied in the system. But it is manifest the line of proof which Leibniz endeavours to work out could not give, for its conclusion, a Necessary Being who is separate from the world in which possibilities are realised.

At the hands of Kant the Ontological Proof was subjected to a penetrating criticism, and since Kant's day it has ceased to be put forward seriously in the old form. His criticism proceeds on the principle that existence is no part of the content

of an idea. "Being is evidently not a real predicate, that is, a conception of something that is capable of being added to the conception of a thing. ... I add nothing to my conception, which expresses merely the possibility of the object, by simply placing its object before me in thought, and saying that it *is*. The real contains no more than the possible. A hundred real dollars do not contain a cent more than a hundred possible dollars."[5] Kant has shown conclusively, that it in not possible from the analysis of a conception to deduce from it existence as a predicate. Even when we feel that existence does belong to an idea or combination of ideas, we are not entitled to say that the union of existence and idea is more than a union in idea. It has, however, been objected that, while Kant's reasoning may hold of the idea of a particular thing, — say a sum of money — the idea of God as the absolute Being is in a different position. On this ground Hegel tried to rehabilitate the Ontological Proof. In the Hegelian terminology, the being of a finite object in space and time is discrepant from its notion. "God, on the contrary, expressly has to be what can only be 'thought as existing'; His notion involves being." "Certainly it would be strange if the notion, the very inmost of mind, if even the 'Ego,' or above all, the concrete totality we call God, were not rich enough to include so poor a category as being, the very poorest and most abstract of all."[6] With Hegel, as with Spinoza, if we grant the principles of his system, if we agree that the term God means what he meant by it, then the notion of God involves his being. For with Hegel being does not lie beyond thought: it is its initial and simplest determination as it moves dialectically forward to fully articulated self-consciousness. On this theory reality does not stand over against thought, but is immanent in it. To say, however, that all being falls within the development of mind is a highly disputable proposition, and Hegel's reconstruction of the Ontological Argument shares to the full the weakness of this initial assumption. But even were Hegel's principle sound, it is obvious his line of thought could not lead to a God who transcended the world, and had a being for himself apart from

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the world and the self-conscious spirits in which he realises himself. And the higher religious consciousness demands this.

It is sometimes said in reply to this criticism, that, if what we are obliged to think is not necessarily real, there is an end to all proof and reasoning. And this consideration has weighed with some thinkers, who, in consequence, find themselves unable to accept Kant's condemnation of the Ontological Argument.[7] Beyond doubt, if thought cannot be valid of a reality beyond the thinker, we are plunged into a hopeless scepticism. If we set out from real premisses and think out their implications logically, then our conclusions will hold good of reality. But this is far from proving that the conception of God as a Being with a determinate character — a conception not reached by strict inference from data of experience — implies his existence. There is a sense, however, in which a grain of truth is contained in the Ontological Proof, though the argument neither is nor can be made a proof of God in the religious meaning of the term. If for God we substitute the technical phrase *Ens Realissimum*, or a Being who is the sum of all reality, then it is difficult to suppose that such a conception is a mere idea in the mind. For thought has reference to being, and would be meaningless without it: were there no being there would be no thinking. And if so, there seems to be no sense in saying there is not a sum of reality or a most real Being. There is nothing contradictory in such a notion, and there is no relevant ground for denying its truth. But it is evident when the Ontological Argument in thus reduced to the form in which it begins to be valid, it has become quite useless for any religious purpose. Whenever we begin to quality the concept of being with the attributes which pertain to Deity, we cease to have logical warrant that our connexions in idea are also connexions in fact. The transition from God in idea to God in reality cannot be made in this way. The source of the vitality of the Ontological Argument — of the lingering belief that, after all, there is something in it — must be sought elsewhere than in the cogency of its logic. It lies, as Lotze has pointed out, in the rooted disinclination of the human

spirit to believe that the Supreme Being, who is the Supreme Value, is only a fiction of the mind.[8] The refusal to entertain the thought is not due to convincing argument, but to the demands of inner experience. The Ontological Proof, in its traditional form, represents an artificial way in which men sought to justify to themselves a faith, of the truth of which they felt sure on other grounds.

In its method the second of the Theistic Proofs, the Cosmological, is sounder than the Ontological. It sets out from the world as given, and from the character of the world infers the existence of a God to explain it. This line of thought was at least suggested by Plato in the Timæus, where he says that every created thing must be created by some cause.[9] It is also hinted at by Augustine: "And I beheld the other things below Thee, and I perceived that they neither are absolutely existent nor absolutely non-existent. For they are, since they are from Thee, but are not, because they are not what Thou art. For that truly is which remains unchangeably."[10] The Cosmological Proof has two forms. In the first instance we set out from the contingency of facts within the world: they may either be or not be — so it is said, and there is no element of necessity in them. This contingency, however, must lead up to something which is necessary, and we have to posit a necessary Being as the ground of the contingent. The other form of proof makes use of the principle of causality. In our experienced world effects are always preceded by causes, and these in turn are the effects of other causes. So the chain of causality runs back step by step. But an infinite line of causes is impossible, and there must come a point in the series at which we arrive at a First or Uncaused Cause. This First Cause of all the different series of causes is God.

Kant was no doubt right when he said that this proof could not yield a necessary Being over and above the given series of facts. Moreover, we are not justified in assuming, without evidence, that data within our world are contingent; and even if this were so, it would not follow that the world itself in

its totality is *contingent*. Again, it may be asked, Why is the Unconditioned Being said to be necessary? The necessary, in the current use of the word, is that which is conditioned, in other words determined to be what it is and not something else; and this idea of necessity should not be predicated uncritically of the Unconditioned. Nor is it apparent how a world of contingent facts could be derived from a necessary Being. On the other hand, if we think the line of regress under the notion of effects and causes, there are just as good reasons for saying the series can be prolonged indefinitely as that it must end in a First Cause. Then the causal series in the world are manifold, and it is not legitimate to assume that all the lines converge upon and end in a single Cause. Why not a plurality of First Causes? Finally, there is the objection that the notion of cause is a category by which we connect and organise elements within experience, and ought not to be applied without some reason and explanation to a Being supposed to exist beyond the experienced world. The truth is that, while the principle is sound that we should argue from the facts of experience to a ground of experience, the Cosmological Proof gives effect to this principle in a faulty and one-sided way. It tries to reach a certain goal by setting out from data and using a method which preclude it from reaching the goal. This line of proof, even were it purified of flaws, could not take us beyond the world-system; it could not lead us to God in the theistic sense of the word.

The third of the traditional proofs, the Teleological, is rather an extension, or a special application, of the Cosmological than a separate argument. Like the latter, it infers that a particular aspect or character of the world requires the existence of God to explain it. The Teleological Proof bases itself on the presence of order in the world; this order it takes to be the token of design, and concludes that God must be the source of that design. Of all the Proofs this, to the ordinary mind, is the most simple and striking. The existence of design in nature at first blush seems so transparent, and the need for applying the human analogy of the designer and his material

so obvious. The Teleological Argument is consequently an old one; and Plato has in substance made use of it when he suggested that the principle that mind orders all things was the only one worthy of the world around us and the heavens above us.[11] The natural tendency of thought in this matter is fairly reflected by the words of Bacon: "For while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest upon them and go no farther; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity."[12] And Kant, it is well known, treated the Teleological Proof more tenderly than the others, and said that "it must be always mentioned with respect." But he very pertinently remarked: "All that the argument from design can possibly prove is an *architect* of the world, who is very much limited by the adaptability of the material in which he works." On the evidence it is inadmissible to say that such a Being is supreme, omnipotent, and the creator of the world. The human designer is hampered by an intractable element in the matter which he manipulates, and the way in which he overcomes this intractability is a token of his intelligence and foresight. It is obvious that this conception cannot be consistently applied to a Being supposed to be omnipotent, who cannot therefore be limited by his material in the way that man is. Moreover, while it may well be that so-called matter is incapable of producing order and adaptation, those who argue from design ought not to take this for granted. The physico-theological proof, as it is sometimes called, fails owing to the mechanical and external way in which it deals with order and adaptation in nature, and it has lost much of its former force owing to the growth and influence of the idea of evolution in modern times. I have already referred to the transformation of teleological ideas by the modern principle of development in the previous chapter, and I need not repeat here what was said there. The result has been that the notion of external design has been replaced by that of immanent adaptation, and the complex harmony of parts in organisms is regarded as a continuous development from simpler

forms. It may be well to repeat that the presence of immanent ends in the world does not prove the existence of an intelligence which is above or apart from the world-system. We have already tried to show that this inward finalism is consistent with theism, but it certainly does not point to a theistic conception of the universe as its only possible explanation.

As Kant explained, the three Theistic Proofs are intimately related to one another. The teleological proof leans back on the cosmological, and the cosmological in turn leans back on the ontological. If we follow the natural progress of the human mind in its endeavour to rise by reflexion to the idea of God, we have to reverse the order in which we have taken the proofs. The evidences of design, which he seemed to find in the world around him, led man in the first instance to think of a designer, and this designer he identified with God. Further reflexion served to show that the argument must be extended to embrace the world as a whole, and the world, it was inferred, must have a First Cause who was God. But it is plain that both these arguments imply the principle which is stated explicitly in the Ontological Argument. They presuppose the principle that what we find ourselves obliged to think holds of reality; and this is the nerve of the Ontological Proof. In short, all the arguments involve the validity and trustworthiness of thought. We have already indicated in what sense, and with what qualifications this far-reaching principle is to be understood; and in any case, whatever stress is laid on this principle, the premisses of the traditional proofs are not such that they could yield the existence of God for their logical conclusion.

Two further arguments fall to be mentioned — the Moral Proof and the Historical Proof. Though it is usual to speak of them as proofs, they are not proofs in the true sense of the word, and they do not claim to be so. The first of these, the Moral Argument, seeks to show that in the existence of God we find the best solution to the problems of the moral life. The form which this argument received at the hands of Kant is peculiar, and it is not satisfactory. Kant says it is a demand

of the moral self that the highest Good be realised. But in the highest Good there are two elements, virtue and happiness: the consciousness of duty fulfilled and of desire satisfied. Now, for Kant, virtue and happiness belong to two different worlds, the former to the intelligible and the latter to the phenomenal world. How can the union of these diverse elements demanded by the Supreme Good be assured? Kant replies by the postulate of God as the teleological ground of both worlds: God then guarantees the union of virtue and happiness, and therefore the realisation of the Chief Good. All this is very artificial. It is not a psychological description of the motives which lead men to postulate a God; nor is it consistent with Kant's own premisses that an empirical and sensuous product, which he deems happiness to be, should be raised to a constituent of the Supreme Good. Yet, if we disentangle Kant's argument from the adventitious elements which hamper it, we can present it in a form which is not without force. While not committing ourselves to the Kantian doctrine of a noumenal and a phenomenal world, we are justified in accepting the existence of an ethical and a natural order, a material and a spiritual world. The moral consciousness demands the realisation of its ideal of Good, but this demand presupposes that the natural world is adapted to the ends of the spirit. The possibility of this adaptation is contained in the conception of an ethical God who is ground of both worlds and pledge of their harmony. Though we do not demonstrate God's existence in this way, we at least show how the postulate of his existence solves an urgent ethical problem. Nor can the argument from the moral consciousness be made to yield more than this. The feeling of obligation — the sense of duty — cannot be explained from beneath: no naturalistic theory of evolution can account for the birth of the word ought in the mind of man. The thought therefore lies to hand that it must be explained from above, through man's relation to a Moral Power that governs the world. It is a fact of deepest significance that man, a moral being with a sense of right and wrong, has developed within the universe, and we rightly ask:

What must the character of that universe be which gives birth to such a being? When we postulate a God in answer to this question we are basing our postulate on the demands of the moral consciousness. And this is the legitimate use of the Moral Argument.

The Historical Proof is the name often given to the argument *e consensu gentium*. What we have here is not, of course, a proof, but a suggestion that the only sufficient reason of the widespread consciousness of God in human minds is God himself. The thought conveyed is closely related to the Moral Proof, which finds an explanation of the facts of the moral consciousness in the existence of an ethical Deity.[13] Unfortunately, if we take the argument for what it originally professed to be, an inference from human agreement, the historical evidences do not show us the agreement which is necessary. For to agree that God is, means little unless there is some concord in regard to *what* he is. Now there is a consensus of belief on the part of mankind in some Power above them, but in regard to the nature of this Power beliefs are very confused and conflicting, and they range from gross materialism to refined spiritualism. If we take these ideas as they stand, in their variety and mutual inconsistency, we cannot build any solid argument upon them. On the other hand, if we revise the proof and state it in the light of the idea of development, it assumes a sounder and more hopeful form. The reality of God then becomes a postulate of the developing spiritual experience of humanity. The long upward journey of the race, during which the idea of a spiritual God has gradually taken form and substance in human minds, becomes a meaningless movement if there be no Reality corresponding to the idea. We may add, the argument from history does not depend on a metaphysical theory of the process of development, nor on a speculative conception of the relation of God to man. It rests on an unbiassed view of the development of religion, and it puts the case with studious moderation when it declares, that it is hard to believe that this growing consciousness of God as a spiritual and ethical Being

has not its source and ground in God himself.[14]

When we look back on these well-meant endeavours to demonstrate the existence of God, we can only reiterate the judgment we formed by the way: as proofs they break down. They suggest probabilities, probabilities of greater or less degree; but they carry no conviction to the minds of those who demand cogent logic. Proof means logical connexion or implication, and to infer God from the world and its character is to put more into the conclusion than is contained in the premisses. God in the sense that spiritual religion demands can never be reached by any deductive argument; and there is truth in the trenchant words of the late Professor James: "The attempt to demonstrate by purely intellectual processes the truth of the deliverances of direct religious experience is absolutely hopeless."[15] Unfortunately, it took men a long time to discover this. But though these Proofs are in principle unsound, they are not on that account entirely valueless. For one thing, they testify to the confidence of the human spirit that reason can support the claims of faith, that the God who is necessary to the inner life can also be justified by reflective thinking. The Theistic Proofs are, in their own fashion, a witness to a persisting conviction on man's part that his religion is not a non-rational attitude of mind. The attempt to reach God by rational deduction may be taken as the symptom and expression of a constant tendency of the human spirit, which is central in the religious consciousness. This movement carries the spiritual self beyond its environment, beyond the world, to gain a deeper ground of thought and life in the Being whom it calls God. The religious man, it is true, does not reach this goal by inference from the world or what is in it: he is prompted to take this course by his practical and experimental knowledge that "the world and the desire thereof" cannot satisfy him. The inspiring motive, alike of the arguments for the existence of God and of the Godward movement of the religious spirit, is the sincere conviction that the world is imperfect and needs a deeper Reality to complete it. Both for thought and for spiritual experience the

world proves unsatisfying, and so impels men to go beyond it to find its true explanation and value. The Theistic Proofs, despite their shortcomings, recognise this, and they have worth as the symptom and the symbol of the general movement of the religious mind.

C. Experience and its relation to God

The foregoing discussion of a well-worn theme has at least helped to bring out some of the difficulties which beset our investigation, and to show the direction in which an attempt to solve the problem is most likely to succeed. The ontological value of religion centres in the reality and character of God; and if we are to treat this momentous subject fruitfully, it must be on a broader basis and by methods more flexible than we have just been considering. There need be no longer a question of strict proof, for in this instance the conditions which are necessary to a logical demonstration are absent. But we may hope to present converging lines of evidence which, by their cumulative effect, justify a theistic conclusion.

There are two lines of approach to the idea of God which suggest themselves. These lines may be termed the Cosmological and the Moral and Religious. In the former case we proceed from the nature of the universe as it is known to us in experience; and in the latter we set out from the facts of moral and religious experience which are manifested collectively in history, and also are revealed in personal lives. The one argument is mainly concerned with what is commonly termed outer experience, the other with inner experience: in the first case we have more to do with facts, in the second with values. But the one argument cannot be ultimately separated from the other; indeed the only hopeful method is to make them supplement and complete one another, so that each may strengthen what is weak in the other and both unite to give weight to the conclusion. The tendency to use only one argument, or to lay almost exclusive stress on one line of evidence, has weakened the

conclusions of many conscientious workers in this department of thought. For instance, men have often supposed they could arrive at a true idea of God by a metaphysical interpretation of the world, taken to mean external things and human minds in their mutual relations. The consequence has been that, with the eye fixed only on the metaphysical problem, they have set up a metaphysical abstraction in the place of God. The late Prof. H Sidgwick, in a paper on *Theism*, has made the just remark, that there is a difference between the God reached by metaphysics and the God required by the Christian religion. And I think we may generalise and say, that the religious consciousness always postulates more in its object than metaphysics can justify. But if metaphysics tends to yield a formal and abstract Being in place of a living and spiritual God, those who work at the problem purely from the side of inner or religious experience encounter difficulties and dangers of another kind. They are apt to make a free and uncritical use of the principle of analogy, without stopping to ask whether their use of the principle is valid or not. In your anxiety to do justice to the claims of spiritual consciousness, you may make demands on the universe without considering whether the nature of reality is such that it can satisfy them. This neglect of metaphysical issues must seriously affect the stability of results which have been reached by a onesided method. A theory of religion, or a theology, which is consistently anti-metaphysical, leaves us at the last in doubt whether the Being postulated in response to human needs is not ideal rather than real. Hence a speculative theory of religion will seek ultimately to connect these lines of argument, the metaphysical and the religious, and if possible to harmonise their results. Such a task will, no doubt, involve criticism and modification of both in the interests of unity. For convenience' sake it will be necessary to follow out each line by itself in the first instance, and then to bring them, if possible, into a vital and harmonious relation with one another.

The scope of the inquiry and the method to be followed in the two arguments may here be briefly indicated. In the first

or metaphysical inquiry, we set out from the world regarded as a system of experienced objects and experient subjects. From this common basis of facts every philosophy must set out, however it may finally interpret and explain them. The question then arises, What do these facts imply? The attempt to answer this question means an endeavour to work back from what is presented in experience in order to discover what is presupposed by it. This regressive movement will not be one of strict inference, as was ostensibly the case with the Theistic Proofs. Reflexion or speculative thinking must be allowed a freedom of operation while it braces itself to the task of thinking out constructively a sufficient Ground of experience. This thinking takes cognisance of what is given, but also goes beyond it, in order to unfold its deeper meaning. In this way speculation will try to make plain, if it can, the ground or sufficient reason of what is given. Now to develop this conception of a World-Ground implies that we accord to thought the right of speculative construction. Such construction corresponds on a higher level to the work of the man of science, who thinks out a theory in order to connect and unify his data. To some, however, this may seem to allow speculation a dangerous latitude, and it is usual in these days to proclaim the futility of the *a priori* way of philosophising. Yet the scheme of investigation here suggested has nothing in common with the method of those who develop a speculative system, and then try to make the facts of experience correspond with it. This mode of speculation is out of fashion just now, and there is a general recognition that a philosophy of experience must grow out of experience itself. At the same time any metaphysics worthy of the name must rethink experienced facts; and in doing this it is only carrying out and completing the work of the sciences. For even the physical sciences go beyond the phenomenal aspect of things, and seek to reach and exhibit the principles and relations on which phenomena depend. Such results, however, are necessarily provisional, and the metaphysician sets himself to trace the data of experience back to their first principles, and so to

find a broad and sure foundation for them. There will always be a tentative element about such work, for it does not admit of the same kind of verification as a scientific theory. Still a venture of thought is inevitable, if man is to satisfy his rational nature and gain a deeper insight into things. And there is, at all events, the kind of test possible which is implied in the degree of consistency with which a speculative theory can be applied to concrete experience, and in the coherency of the world-view it unfolds. This, then, is a metaphysical inquiry carried out from the standpoint of the metaphysician, and in the nature of the case it cannot give us a philosophy of religion. But it will at least show us how far metaphysical thinking can bring us towards our goal.

The other line of inquiry keeps the religious experience, which is a specific aspect of general experience, definitely in view, and sets itself to show the relation to God which is presupposed by that experience. The development of religion, as a psychological phenomenon and as a historic movement, is a process so characteristic, that it requires consideration and explanation on any theory of the nature of the universe. A philosophy which does not leave room for, nor give an explanation of, the growth of the religious consciousness, cannot seriously claim to be true. I have already referred in this chapter to the objections against an attempt to solve the religious problem by a purely naturalistic theory. The theory which regards religion as the mere product of an interaction between man and his environment, as a natural relationship giving birth to material hopes and fears, is a theory which in the long run will not work. It is not without a certain plausibility when used to interpret the lowest forms and expressions of religion, but it ceases to be plausible when applied to religion in its higher and spiritual stages. How a religious consciousness generated by purely natural causes should by and by react against the natural order, and finally proclaim the inadequacy of the world to its deepest needs, is quite inexplicable. For why should it thus ignore the "rock from which it was hewn and the pit from which it was

digged"? A religious soul which persistently turns to a goal in the spiritual and supramundane sphere cannot have its sufficient reason in material interests and sensuous instincts. The spirit that 'denies the world' cannot be 'of the world.'

But if the naturalistic theory of the genesis and growth of moral and religious experience proves to be inadequate, we are perforce led to ask whether this development is not to be explained from above rather than from below. In other words, should a process which issues in spiritual values and ideals not be referred to a Source which is spiritual? If it be true that the significance of a process of development is not to be found in its beginning but in its outcome, there is much to be said for the method which seeks a 'sufficient reason' of spiritual development in a supreme and spiritual Ground of experience.

I think we are justified in pressing this consideration on those who are sceptical of the reality of the object of religious faith. Granted that the idea of God is an illusion, can you, on these premisses, give an adequate theory of the origin and development of moral and spiritual experience? Now it is not enough to reply, as some are inclined to do, that religious beliefs are the outcome of imagination acting under the stimulus of hopes and fears. In particular cases this may sometimes be true, but it does not explain the persistent movement of the religious consciousness towards a Divine Object in which it can find satisfaction. That movement has never ceased in human history; though mankind revises and changes its religious ideas, it does not abandon religion, but seeks to express its religious faith in some more adequate form. Why then this continuous and enduring religious experience? It is not sufficient to refer us to human nature, and to tell us man is 'incurably religious.' Neither psychological nor historical explanations of this experience are ultimate, for they point back to some deeper ground in the nature of things. In this instance a Source or Ground is needed which will explain that spiritual nature of man and the characteristic spiritual development which issues from it.

A noteworthy feature of the developed religious conscious-

ness is that it finds the Supreme Reality and the Supreme Value in an Object which transcends the world. And if the evolution of religion cannot be explained as the result of mundane conditions, the alternative is to trace it to its ultimate Source in a living relation between human spirits and a supramundane Spirit. On this theory the religious experience which leads man to find his final good beyond the world, would have its ultimate Ground in a transcendent and spiritual God.

It is right to remind the reader that, though we speak of explaining the religious experience by reference to a transcendent Source, we do not and cannot mean explanation in the scientific sense of the term. For this, we know, signifies the establishment of rational implication and connexion between parts. God could only explain mundane experience in this way, if his Being were bound up with that experience in the manner that a system is with its elements. The note of a transcendent Being is, that it cannot thus be co-ordinated with the parts of the world, nor can its activity be rationally deduced.[16] Hence a transcendent God 'explains' experience because he is its Sufficient Ground; but we cannot argue from the Ground to the dependent experience, nor can we show how the experience issues from the Ground.

This twofold regress on the Ground of reality and the Ground of the religious consciousness will help us to do justice to both these sides of experience. But it will bring us at the last face to face with the cardinal problem of religious philosophy — the problem how to reconcile the idea of God which in the outcome of scientific and speculative thinking with the idea of God which is postulated to explain religions experience. As a recent worker in this field has put it: we have to establish the Being of God "in such a manner as to meet the legitimate demands of modern science and philosophy," and to expound the "spirituality of this Being" so as "to afford evidence of the essential truth of humanity's religious experience."[17] It would be too much to expect a complete success in this difficult undertaking. Even to show that the two lines of evidence do not run steadily apart

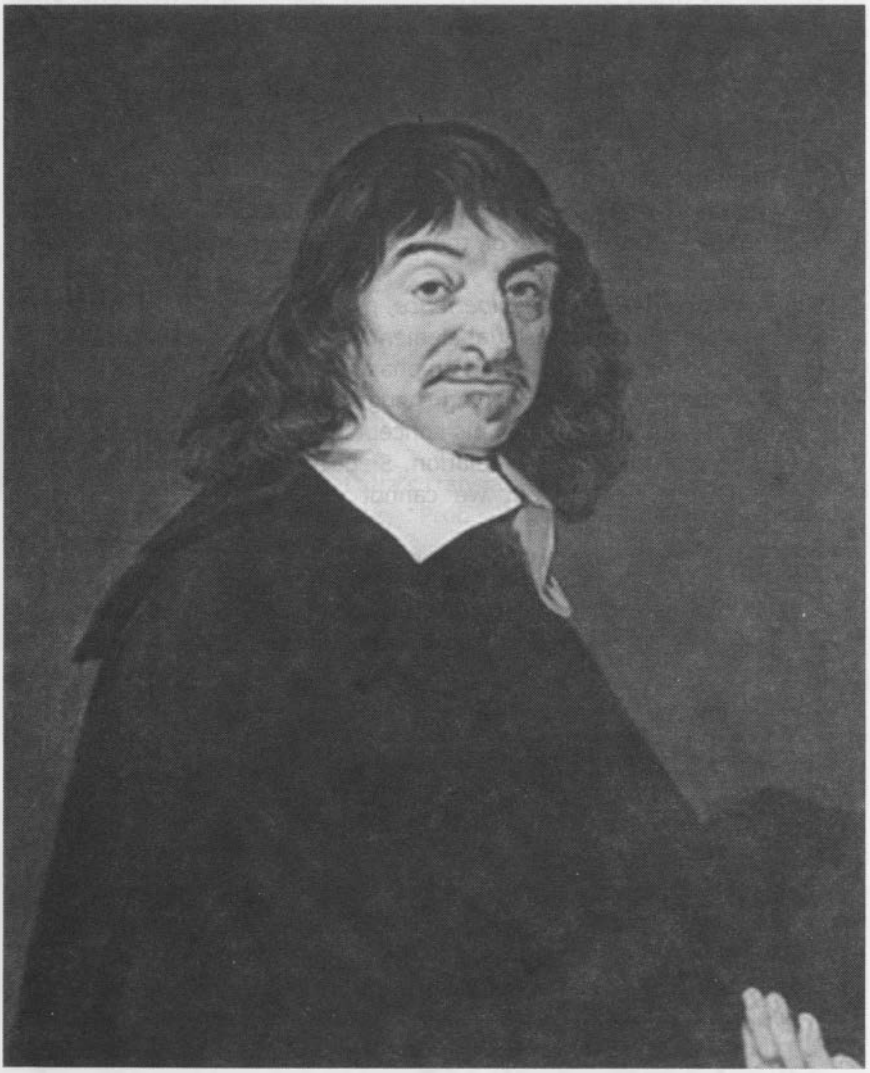
but converge on a common goal is to have achieved something. For it means that science and faith are drawn a little closer to one another. A philosophy which achieves this much has not failed, even though it cannot comprehend all 'the deep things of God.'

Text from Galloway's *The Philosophy of Religion,* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), pp. 371-401.

Notes and References

1. Pfleiderer's Gifford Lectures on *The Philosophy and Development of Religion*, vol. i. p. 196.
2. G. S. Stratton, *Psychology of the Religious Life*, 1911, p. 367.
3. *Op. cit.,* vol. i. p. 137.
4. *Monadology*, sec. 44, Latta's translation.
5. *Transcendental Dialectic,* Prof. Watson's translation, pp. 208-209.
6. *Logic of Hegel,* Wallace's tr., 2nd ed., pp. 108-109. The validity of the Theistic Proofs was a subject in which Hegel was interested, and he has written at some length on them in the Appendix to his *Phil. der Religion.*
7. So A. Dorner, *Religionsphilosophie*, p. 202. Cp. also Webb, *Problems in the Relations of God and Man,* 1911, p. 186. Mr. Webb thinks Kant has not finally discredited the Ontological Proof, "if we understand it not as having to do with a particular case in which we are compelled to believe in the reality of the object of a conception, but as the assertion that the existence of knowledge implies an ultimate union of thought with reality." The writer, it may be noted, does not say "ultimate identity." The late Prof. Pfleiderer endeavoured to reconstruct the Ontological Argument by postulating God as the ground of the co-ordination and correspondence of thought and reality. But even though we accepted the fact of such a 'correspondence,' the theistic inference is not necessary. E. von Hartmann argues from the same premisses to a very different conclusion.

8. *Microcosmus*, Eng. tr., vol. ii. p. 671. Cp. also *Religionsphilosophie*, pp. 9-10.
9. *Tim.* p. 27 ff.
10. *Confessions*, Bk. vii. cap. xi.
11. Philebus, p. 28 E:
12. *Vid.* his essay on Atheism.
13. The Historical Proof was put forward in substance by Descartes, as the reader will remember, though in a metaphysical rather than in a historical form.
14. It was the same motive which lent vitality to the Ontological Proof — the demand of the spiritual consciousness that the Supreme Value be real.
15. *Varieties of Religious Experience,* p. 435.
16. The presence of a residual element in experience, which cannot be co-ordinated, has been emphasised by the late Professor J. J. Gourd. This is the leading thought of his *Phil. de la Religion* (1911), and determines his conception and working out of the theory of the religious relation. Siebeck (*Religionsphilosophie,* p. 331 ff.) points out we cannot deduce the activity of a transcendent Being.
17. Ladd, *Phil. of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 68.



René Descartes

Proofs of the Existence of God and of the Human Soul

I do not know whether I ought to touch upon my first meditations here, for they are so metaphysical and out of the ordinary that they might not be interesting to most people. Nevertheless, in order to show whether my fundamental notions are sufficiently sound, I find myself more or less constrained to speak of them. I had noticed for a long time that in practice it is sometimes necessary to follow opinions which we know to be very uncertain, just as though they were indubitable, as I stated before; but inasmuch as I desired to devote myself wholly to the search for truth, I thought that I should take a course precisely contrary, and reject as absolutely false anything of which I could have the least doubt, in order to see whether anything would be left after this procedure which could be called wholly certain. Thus, as our senses deceive us at times, I was ready to suppose that nothing was at all the way our senses represented them to be. As there are men who make mistakes in reasoning even on the simplest topics in geometry, I judged that I was as liable to error as any other, and rejected as false all the reasoning which I had previously accepted as valid demonstration. Finally, as the same precepts which we have when awake may come to us when asleep without their being true, I decided to suppose that nothing that had ever entered my mind was more real than the illusions of my dreams. But I soon noticed that

while I thus wished to think everything false, it was necessarily true that I who thought so was something. Since this truth, *I think, therefore I am,* was so firm and assured that all the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics were unable to shake it, I judged that I could safely accept it as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.

I then examined closely what I was, and saw that I could imagine that I had no body, and that there was no world nor any place that I occupied, but that I could not imagine for a moment that I did not exist. On the contrary, from the very fact that I doubted the truth of other things, it followed very evidently and very certainly that I existed. On the other hand, if I had ceased to think while all the rest of what I had ever imagined remained true, I would have had no reason to believe that I existed; therefore I concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature was only to think, and which, to exist, has no need of space nor of any material thing. Thus it follows that this ego, this soul, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body and is easier to know than the latter, and that even if the body were not, the soul would not cease to be all that it now is.

Next I considered in general what is required of a proposition for it to be true and certain, for since I had just discovered one to be such, I thought I ought also to know of what that certitude consisted. I saw that there was nothing at all in this statement, "I think, therefore I am," to assure me that I was saying the truth, unless it was that I saw very clearly that to think one must exist. So I judged that I could accept as a general rule that the things which we conceive very clearly and very distinctly are always true, but that there may well be some difficulty in deciding which are those which we conceive distinctly.

After that I reflected upon the fact that I doubted, and that, in consequence, my spirit was not wholly perfect, for I saw clearly that it was a greater perfection to know than to doubt. I decided to ascertain from what source I have learned to think

of something more perfect than myself, and it appeared evident that it must have been from some nature which was in fact more perfect. As for my ideas about many other things outside of me, as the sky, earth, light, heat, and thousands of other things, I was not so much troubled to discover where they came from, because I found nothing in them superior to my own nature. If they really existed, I could believe that whatever perfection they possessed might be derived from my own nature; if they did not exist, I could believe that they were derived from nothingness, that is, that they were derived from my own defects. But this could not be the explanation of my idea of a being more perfect than my own. To derive it from nothingness was manifestly impossible, and it is no less repugnant to good sense to assume what is more perfect comes from and depends on the less perfect than it is to assume that something comes from nothing, so that I could not assume that it came from myself. Thus the only hypothesis left was that this idea was put in my mind by a nature that was really more perfect than I was, which had all the perfections that I could imagine, and which was, in a word, God. To this I added that since I knew some perfections which I did not possess, I was not the only being in existence (I will here use freely, if you will pardon me, the terms of the schools), and that it followed of necessity that there was someone else more perfect upon whom I depended and from whom I had acquired all that I possessed. For if I had been alone and independent of anything else, so that I had bestowed upon myself all that limited quantity of value which I shared with the perfect Being, I would have been able to get from myself, in the same way, all the surplus which I recognise as lacking in me, and so would have been myself infinite, eternal, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, and, in sum, I would possess all the perfections that I could discover in God.

For, following the reasoning which I have just explained, to know the nature of God as far as I was capable of such knowledge, I had only to consider each quality of which I had an idea,

and decide whether it was or was not a perfection to possess it. I would then be certain that none of those which had some imperfection was in him, but that all the others were. I saw that doubt, inconstancy, sorrow and similar things could not be part of God's nature, since I would be happy to be without them myself. In addition, I had ideas of many sensible and corporeal entities, for although I might suppose that I was dreaming and that all that I saw or imagined was false, I could not at any rate deny that the ideas were truly in my consciousness. Since I had already recognised very clearly that intelligent nature is distinct from corporeal nature, I considered that composition is an evidence of dependency and that dependency is manifestly a defect. From this I judged that it could not be a perfection in God to be composed of these two natures, and that consequently he was not so composed. But if there were in the world bodies, or even intelligences or other natures that were not wholly perfect, their being must depend on God's power in such a way that they could not subsist without him for a single moment.

At this point I wished to seek for other truths, and proposed for consideration the object of the geometricians. This I conceived as a continuous body, or a space infinitely extended in length, breadth, and height or depth; divisible into various parts which can have different shapes and sizes and can be moved or transposed in any way: all of which is presumed by geometricians to be true of their object, I went through some of their simplest demonstrations and noticed that the great certainty which everyone attributes to them is only based on the fact that they are evidently conceived, following the rule previously established. I noticed also that there was nothing at all in them to assure me of the existence of their object; it was clear, for example, that if we posit a triangle, its three angles must be equal to two right angles, but there was nothing in that to assure me that there was a single triangle in the world. When I turned back to my idea of a perfect Being, on the other hand, I discovered that existence was included in that

idea in the same way that the idea of a triangle contains the equality of its angles to two right angles, or that the idea of a sphere includes the equidistance of all its parts from its centre. Perhaps, in fact, the existence of the perfect Being is even more evident. Consequently, it is at least as certain that God, who is this perfect Being, exists, as any theorem of geometry could possibly be.

What makes many people feel that it is difficult to know of the existence of God, or even of the nature of their own souls, is that they never consider things higher than corporeal objects. They are so accustomed never to think of anything without picturing it — a method of thinking suitable only for material objects — that everything which is not picturable seems to them unintelligible. This is also manifest in the fact that even philosophers hold it as a maxim in the schools that there is nothing in the understanding which was not first in the senses, a location where it is clearly evident that the ideas of God and of the soul have never been. It seems to me that those who wish to use imagery to understand these matters are doing precisely the same thing that they would be doing if they tried to use their eyes to hear sounds or smell odours. There is even this difference: that the sense of sight gives us no less certainty of the truth of objects than do those of smell and hearing, while neither our imagery nor our senses could assure us of anything without the co-operation of our understanding.

Finally, if there are still some men who are not sufficiently persuaded of the existence of God and of their souls by the reasons which I have given, I want them to understand that all the other things of which they might think themselves more certain, such as their having a body, or the existence of stars and of an earth, and other such things, are less certain. For even though we have a moral assurance of these things, such that it seems we cannot doubt them without extravagance, yet without being unreasonable we cannot deny that, as far as metaphysical certainty goes, there is sufficient room for doubt. For we can imagine, when asleep, that we have another body

and see other stars and another earth without there being any such. How could one know that the thoughts which come to us in dreams are false rather than the others, since they are often no less vivid and detailed? Let the best minds study this question as long as they wish, I do not believe they can find any reason good enough to remove this doubt unless they presuppose the existence of God. The very principle which I took as a rule to start with, namely, that all those things which we conceived very clearly and very distinctly are true, is known to be true only because God exists, and because he is a perfect Being, and because everything in us comes from him. From this it follows that our ideas or notions, being real things which come from God insofar as they are clear and distinct, cannot to that extent fail to be true. Consequently, though we often have ideas which contain falsity, they can only be those ideas which contain some confusion and obscurity, in which respect they participate in nothingness. That is to say, they are confused in us only because we are not wholly perfect. It is evident that it is not less repugnant to good sense to assume that falsity or imperfection as such is derived from God, as that truth or perfection is derived from nothingness. But if we did not know that all reality and truth within us came from a perfect and infinite Being, however clear and distinct our ideas might be, we would have no reason to be certain that they were endowed with the perfection of being true.

After the knowledge of God and the soul has thus made us certain of our rule, it is easy to see that the dreams which we have when asleep do not in any way cast doubt upon the truth of our waking thoughts. For if it happened that we had some very distinct idea, even while sleeping, as for example when a geometrician dreams of some new proof, his sleep does not keep the proof from being good. As for the most common error of dreams, which is to picture various objects in the same way as our external senses represent them to us, it does not matter if this gives us a reason to distrust the truth of the impressions we receive from the senses, because we can also be mistaken

in them frequently without being asleep, as when jaundiced persons see everything yellow, or as the stars and other distant objects appear much smaller than they really are. For in truth, whether we are asleep or awake, we should never allow ourselves to be convinced except on the evidence of our reason. Note that I say of our *reason,* and not of our imagination or of our senses; for even though we see the sun very clearly, we must not judge thereby that its size is such as we see it, and we can well imagine distinctly the head of a lion mounted on the body of a goat, without concluding that a chimera exists in this world. For reason does not insist that all we see or visualise in this way is true, but it does insist that all our ideas or notions must have some foundation in truth, for it would not be possible that God, who is all-perfect and wholly truthful, would otherwise have given them to us. Since our reasonings are never as evident or as complete in sleep as in waking life, although sometimes our imaginations are then as lively and detailed as when awake, or even more so, and since reason tells us also that all our thoughts cannot be true, as we are not wholly perfect; whatever of truth is to be found in our ideas will inevitably occur in those which we have when awake rather than in our dreams.

Text from Descartes' *Discourse on Method,*
translated by J. Lafleur
(New York: The Library of Liberal Arts, second edition, 1956),
pp. 20-26.

Leibniz

Is the Ontological Argument for the existence of God successful?

I

Introduction

Religion as a phenomenon of human consciousness is perhaps one of the most fascinating subjects for all historians. Right from the time when human beings began to think reflectively, there seems to have arisen a concept or belief in some kind of an invisible reality, a reality greater than a human being and even greater than our universe. It has been expressed in various ways in different parts of the world and in different cultures of the world. But there seems to be little doubt that the quest of man for God is a perennial quest, and even in periods of scepticism, people have been obliged to be preoccupied with the examination of the notion of God and with the affirmation or denial of the existence of God. Religions have been largely formulated around some conception of 'God', although it is true that religions like Buddhism and Jainism are atheistic in character. But even these atheistic religions affirm the reality of supra-physical entities and supra-physical states of consciousness far above the states of the body, life, and mind. In other words, these atheistic religions, too, have been guided by the discovery of what may be called divine states of consciousness, even though they might have rejected what is normally called 'God' in many other religions.

Philosophy of religion is concerned not only with the determination of the meaning and significance of history of religions, but its primary concern has been that of a critical examination of the religious belief in God, in soul of man and in the concept of beliefs of immortality. In fact, even though many religious people may be inclined to accept the beliefs in God, soul and immortality on the basis of faith or on the basis of dogmas or on the basis of authority of revelations, there have been attempts throughout history to evaluate these concepts from the point of view of reason and to enquire whether what is normally held by many religious people on the basis of faith can also be grounded in rational thought. Many thinkers have rejected the claims of faith, or dogma, or the truth of revelations, but there have also been profound thinkers who have endeavoured to reflect critically on these important religious beliefs and have advanced rational arguments in defence of these beliefs.

Thus the arguments for the existence of God have come to constitute a very important subject in philosophy of religion. The Ontological Argument for the existence of God is perhaps the most important among all the arguments, such as the Cosmological, Teleological, Moral, or Historical, since it is supposed to be implicitly assumed by all the other arguments.[1] This reinforces the importance of the Ontological Argument, and in this paper I have, impartially (as much as is possible), first of all, expounded it as formulated by various philosophers. Next, I have tried to evaluate it in the light of the criticisms which have been advanced against this argument.

II

The Ontological Argument has been a subject of intense philosophical interest. In its refined form, it was presented by Anselm (1033-1109 C.E.). But this formulation contains Platonism[2] and as it is known, Platonism has a close connection with Parmenides. It is interesting to observe that Parmenides attempted to prove that thought and reality are intimately re-

lated, and that reality in its essential nature is eternal and self-existent. His formulation on this subject is as follows:

> "Thou canst not know what is not — that is impossible — nor utter it. For it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be. How, then, can what *is* be going to be in the future? Or how could it come into being? If it came into being, it is not; not is it if it is going to be in the future. Thus is *becoming* extinguished and *passing away* not to be heard of. The thing that can be thought and that for the sake of which the thought exists is the same; for you cannot find thought without something that is, as to which it is uttered".[3]

This statement of Parmenides appears to be present in various formulations of the Ontological Argument.

Anselm's argument was criticised by some of his contemporaries, and most of the great modern philosophers like Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant have also put forward theistic arguments. Spinoza formulated the Ontological Argument within the system of his own metaphysics. After Kant had apparently refuted the ontological argument, Hegel (1770-1831 C.E.) re-established it within the framework of his own metaphysical system. However, Kant's criticism of the Ontological Argument came to be reformulated in a new way by Bertrand Russell in the context of his theory of descriptions. Most of the contemporary philosophers have come to think that the ontological argument is not successful, although thinkers like Norman Malcolm (1911-1990 C.E.) and Charles Hartshorne (1897-2000 C.E.) have tried to resurrect the ontological argument. John Hick (1904-1989 C.E.) in his book, *The Arguments for the Existence of God*, has presented a critical statement of the Ontological Argument, which is quite instructive. Despite the fact that the ontological argument does not seem to have satisfied contemporary philosophers I feel that there is something valuable in the Ontological Argument along with other arguments, and that

they deserve to be revisited and even reformulated in the light of their intrinsic merits and in the light of the criticisms which have been levelled against them.

The Ontological Argument

It is a psychological fact that in the human mind there is a concept called the concept of God.

Now, the argument is that this concept of God is a unique concept. It is such a concept that that concept carries with it the assertion that God must be existing in actual objective reality. It is different from a statement such as: *there is a golden mountain.* In this statement there is nothing peculiar such that a golden mountain must exist objectively. That there is a concept of a golden mountain is granted. And there is no doubt that there can be an idea of the golden mountain but it does not follow that the golden mountain must exist outside the idea.

The question thus arises as to what then is different about the concept of God. The Ontological Argument claims that the concept of God is a unique concept. It maintains that the idea of God is somewhat different from all other ideas in the world in that it carries with it the necessity of *thinking* that God must be existing in objective reality.

III

Classical Elucidations

1. Anselm (1033-1109 C.E.)

Anselm presents his proof in its scholastic form. He says that the concept of God is of a Being whom he describes as something than which nothing greater can be thought. And it follows, that an idea which exists only in the intellect *(in intellectu)* would not be as great as one which existed in real *(in re)* as well as in the intellect, therefore God must necessarily

exist.

Anselm was satisfied with the idea of greatness as a description of God. But this argument left some questions unanswered such as the nature of this great Being. And thereafter the Ontological Argument was taken up by successive rationalist philosophers who attempted to make modifications in an attempt to make the argument more conclusive.

2. Descartes (1596-1650 C.E.)

Descartes is usually considered the founder of modern philosophy and might be called one of the most prominent rationalist philosophers. He described God as a Perfect being. And, if we are to state his argument in a simple form, it would run as follows:

Perfection means that which lacks no attribute of perfection.

Existence is one of the perfections.
Therefore perfection cannot lack existence.
Therefore perfection must have existence.
Therefore Perfection must exist.

In other words, Descartes asserts explicitly that '"existence is a perfection', i.e. a desirable attribute, which is more excellent to have than to lack; and he summarises his argument as that 'it is in truth necessary for me to assert that God exists after having presupposed that He possesses every sort of perfection, since existence is one of these'".[4] In short, the argument maintains that the very notion of God involves His existence.

He also offered a second form of the same argument according to which the idea of God, who is infinite and perfect, cannot be formed in man by any finite object, and must therefore be caused by God himself. He is the reason of the idea of Himself in man.

But here again, the sceptic might raise the objection that much of the force of these proofs depends upon what is meant

by God. However, these two are essentially what are considered the best elucidations of the classical form of the ontological argument but the essence of the argument, we must remember, is that the psychological fact from which it starts is that there is in the human mind a concept of God and then the argument is that the reality of God is involved in the idea of God.

3. Spinoza (1632-77 C.E.)

The great rationalist movement that started off with Descartes was followed by two other famous philosophers who succeeded him: Spinoza and Leibniz. Descartes had already established that apart from the idea of God, and existence of God there is another realm where doubt is not possible and that is the field of mathematics. So by the time that Spinoza came into the field, mathematical methods, particularly those of geometry, had come to be regarded as a subject that could examine statements to such an extent that conclusions were bound to be correct. Therefore he wrote his famous book, *Ethics* in which the entire method of exposition was geometrical. And as in geometry one starts with definitions and axioms, curiously enough, Spinoza's book began with a definition, a definition of substance. He described substance to be that which exists by itself and which can be conceived through itself. And having thus given this definition he proceeds to say that God is a substance. And not only is He a substance but He is the only substance which can be conceived through itself and which exists in itself. So since God is substance and since according to his definition substance is that which exists in itself and can be conceived through itself, God exists.

To sum up then, "for Spinoza, God or Substance is the all-inclusive Whole within which fall the parallel differentiations of thought and extensions as its corresponding aspect,"[5] says Galloway in his book titled, *The Philosophy of Religion*. His philosophy is described as 'logical monism', and essentially the world as a whole is a single substance which is God. Thus the totality of the world is nothing but God; God was the only

Spinoza

reality that the mind can conceive of and in that respect he has been known as the God-intoxicated philosopher.

The critic might say to this proof, as has Galloway, "that as far as Spinoza is concerned, the important point is not his proof of existence of God, for this is purely verbal, but the validity of philosophical conceptions on which his system is based".[6]

4. Leibniz (1646-1716 C.E.)

The same dependence on the philosophical system is true even for Leibniz, as we shall see in the extract of his argument from Russell's book on the *History of Western Philosophy.* He wrote out a proof in which he defines God as the most perfect Being, i.e. as the subject of all perfections, and a perfection is defined as a "simple quality which is positive and absolute, and expresses without any limits whatever it does express".[7] Leibniz easily proves that no two perfections, as above defined, can be incompatible. He concludes: "There is, therefore, or there can be conceived, a subject of all perfections, or most perfect being. Whence it follows also that He exists, for existence is among the number of the perfections".[8]

IV

Criticisms

Now I would like to proceed to the criticisms of the classical elucidations of the ontological argument. They were subjected to criticism by Kant and other empiricist philosophers, and for long it has been believed that he had successfully completed the task of demolishing the purely intellectual proofs for the existence of God.

1. Kant (1724-1804 C.E.)

Kant declared that all the elucidations of the ontological arguments consider 'existence' as a predicate when actually according to him it is not so.

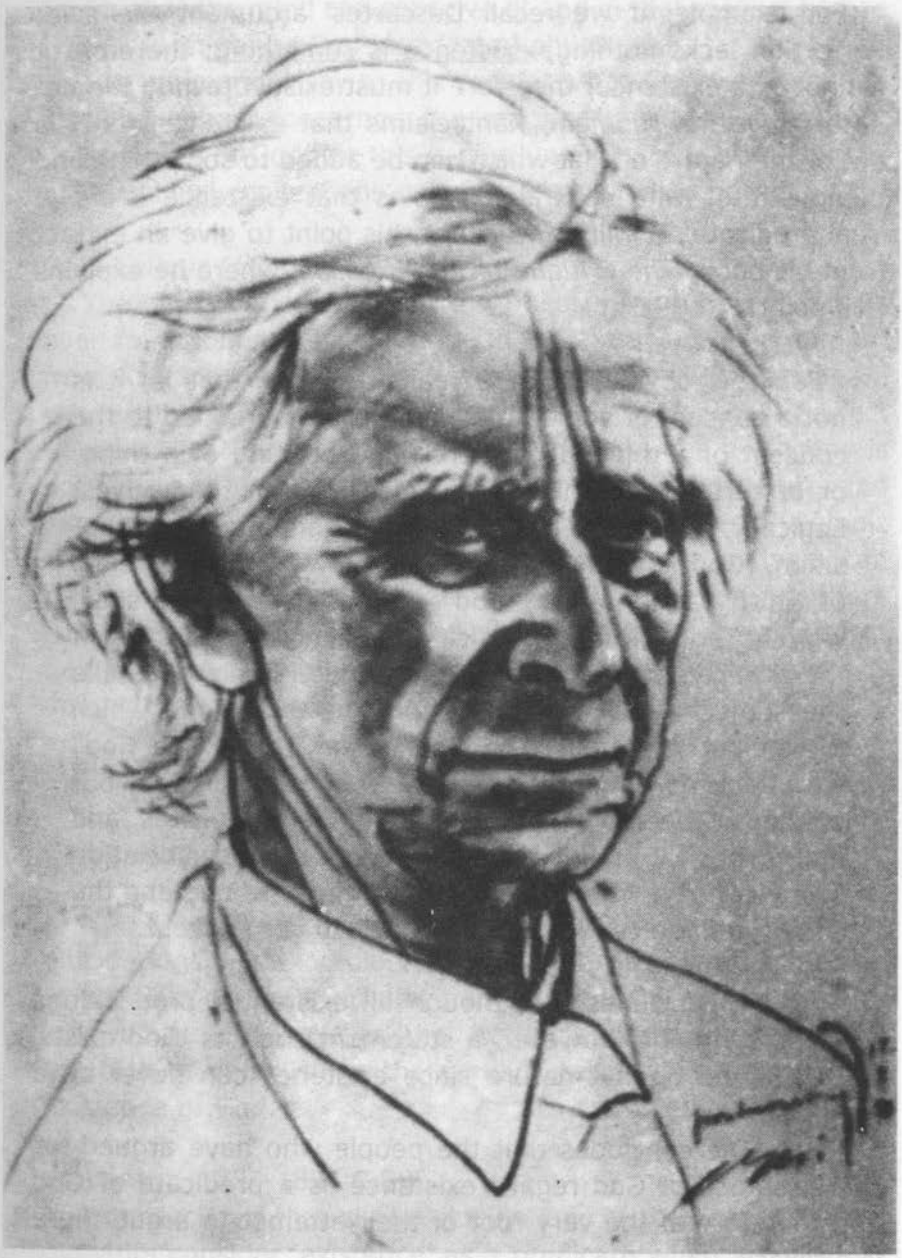
For example, if we recall Descartes' argument, he said: Perfection lacks nothing; existence is something; therefore it cannot lack existence; therefore it must exist. Drawing the debate into a new domain, Kant claims that existence firstly is not of the nature of that which can be added to something and demonstrates with several examples that existence is *not* a 'real predicate'. It will be worth at this point to give an extract from his book, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, where he explains this point:

> "'*Being*' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing in themselves. Logically, it is merely a copula of a judgement. The proposition, 'God is omnipotent', contains two concepts, each of which has its object- God and omnipotent. The small word 'is' adds no new predicate, but only serves to posit the predicate *in its relation* to the subject. If, now, we take the subject (God) with all its predicates (among which is omnipotence), and say 'God is', or 'There is a God', we attach no new predicate to the concept of God, but only posit the subject in itself with all its predicates, and indeed posit it as being an *object* that stands in relation to my *concept*. The content of both must be one and the same; nothing can have been added to the concept."[9]

Thus he concludes that though all existential propositions must be synthetic, however, a statement such as 'God exists' can never be of that nature since existence can never be a predicate.

Finally, he concludes that the people who have argued for the existence of God regard existence as a predicate of God and therefore at the very root of their attempt to argue there is a fallacy.

But the question that arises and which he has not answered



Bertrand Russell

is: what then is existence?

Next, I would like to consider Bertrand Russell's objection to the Ontological Argument which is very similar to that of Kant but presented in a new logical form.

2. Bertrand Russell (1872-1970 C.E.)

According to Bertrand Russell, there is no such thing as existence apart from the object. He suggests that to point to an object is itself to point to its existence. Thus we need not say to the child at the zoo, "Look, here is a lion and see that it exists." The object and its existence don't need to be stated separately. In a sense, the argument is almost like that of Kant who stated that existence is not a predicate. For Russell, object and existence are not two different things. He further insists that not only are they not two separate things but that truly speaking, there is no such thing as existence. There are only objects. One can describe God, and has thus to provide an instance in which that description is instantiated.

And here is how he enunciates his argument.

For him many statements in logic are very puzzling. For example, statements such as 'unicorns do not exist'. Now if a child is to ask, 'who is it that does not exist?' the reply would be 'it is the unicorn'. He grappled for an explanation of such statements, and in that attempt he formulated his theory of descriptions. Even so, he concludes that the word 'existence' or 'is' is logically not admissible. The words 'is' or 'existence' do not refer to anything by themselves. This, then, is basically a sophisticated way of saying that object and existence are not two different things. According to him, our ordinary language leads to some paradoxes such as the sentence, "unicorns are those that do not exist", which can be removed if we admit that wherever the word 'existence' occurs, it ought to be reduced in the terms of the logic of descriptions. According to Russell, the word 'existence' has been misused throughout the history of the world, and, it has created muddle-headedness in the world.

Against this background Russell argues that all statements that are made must be logical. And in his famous theory of descriptions he states that for any statement to be logical (in which the word existence is to occur) it must be descriptive. To indicate existence we have to describe and then we have to give an instance of it. Thus, according to this theory, existence can be asserted only of descriptions.[10] Where there is no description there is no logical statement about the existing object. Thus a statement which merely says, 'God exists' is according to him not a logical statement.

Here is how he enunciates his theory of descriptions: He takes the statement, 'Scott was the author of *Waverly'*. Now to express this statement in a logical form, by the logic of description, he says that, "'One, and only one man wrote *Waverly*, and that man was Scott.' Or, more fully: 'There is an entity *c* such that the statement *"x wrote Waverly"* is true if x is c and false otherwise; moreover *c* is Scott'".[11]

But the question that needs to be raised is: How does one express the self-existent infinite reality? Russell's answer is that when one speaks of infinite self-existent reality, it is nonsense, since it does not fit into the system of logic that he has proposed. But we may further observe that since his logic is applicable only to finite objects, and since the object of which we speak in the context of the concept of God, is infinite and self-existent, there should be a logic appropriate to this situation, so that the kind of reality that we want to express can be properly expressed. This is where we find the weakness of Russell's attempt to refute the ontological argument.

The thrust of my argument is if one is creating a system of logic one must remember that a system of logic is a system which must provide a framework for all systems of thought, not merely one's own system of thought. In the rationalist system of thought, talking of self-existent entities makes sense. So if one is making a system of logic then one needs to provide room for it.

Logic is a normative science which examines how people

think when they aim at validity of thought. As a scientist Russell should say that there are many ways in which people think thought is valid. And when they think of self-existent entities, the rationalists think they are making sense. He must then devise a system by which one can express it. One might reject this logic oneself and say that "my logic does not accept this statement". However, one must provide a tool by which it can be expressed.

Russell however uses the word logic to mean his logic. As if his logic is the only logic in the world.

V

Reflections

The Ontological Argument involves such fundamental concepts as perfection, deity, existence and necessity. It is an *a priori* argument, proceeding from the idea of God as infinite perfection to His existence. The other arguments which are *a posteriori* attempt to show that there is a divine designer or that there is a prime mover behind all the movements of the universe, but they leave open the question as to what extent such a being possesses the moral attributes of deity. On the other hand, the Ontological Argument attempts to show the existence of a being so perfect that nothing greater can be conceived.

It is, however, contended by most philosophers such as John Hick that the Ontological Argument fails most definitely. He says in his book, *The Arguments for the Existence of God* that "whilst the ontological proof is thus the one which, if it succeeded, would succeed most definitively, and the one whose conclusion, if established, would be most worth establishing, it is also the one which in the opinion of most philosophers, most definitely fails".[12] It would then, perhaps be profitable to consider at some depth the precise point or ground on which it fails, if indeed it really fails.

It has been suggested that the ontological argument, in the formulation of Anselm, has two forms. In the first form, it is found in 'Proslogion II' (address of the soul to God), and in the other form it is found in 'Proslogion III'.

It is rightly contended that the argument in Proslogion II is vulnerable to the criticisms levelled against it by Kant and Russell. But the situation is different in regard to the argument formulated in Proslogion III.

The argument, which is contained in Proslogion III, states that it is greater to have necessary existence than not to have it; and that than which no greater can be conceived has necessary existence and therefore necessarily exists. Anselm's formulation in this connection is as follows:

> "'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' cannot be conceived to be, except as without a beginning. However, whatever can be conceived to be and actually is not can be conceived to be through a beginning. Therefore, it is not the case that 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' can be conceived to exist and yet does not exist. Therefore, if it can be conceived to be, it necessarily is."[13]

The essence of the argument is that there is a distinction between events that may or may not occur and 'That than which nothing greater can be conceived'. The former are contingent and dependent, but the latter is not contingent and dependent but is on the contrary self-existence. And the very concept of the self-existent carries with it the idea that it exists beyond the idea in actuality, ontologically. The concept of self-existence implies existence without beginning or end, since it has to depend on nothing else than itself to be in existence and therefore independent of anything that might or might not occur. Eternal existence is therefore conceptually undeniable and it *necessarily* carries with it undeniable ontology beyond the state of concept or conceiving.

It may however be argued that one can conceive of things existing eternally, which in fact do not. Moreover, it may be urged that a thing can exist eternally without being the cause of its own existence and that it may simply have no cause. However, based on rationalist thought, it appears that if something exists eternally it follows that it was not caused, since eternity cannot be placed in the chain of causal connections.

When one says that it may simply have no cause, it is another way of saying that it is the cause of its own existence. Hence, what is contended is only verbally different from the idea that philosophers like Spinoza speak of when they define Reality or Substance *sui generic*, that which is caused by itself.

The Ontological Argument has been forcefully articulated in the 20th century by Norman Malcolm. He contends that Anselm has proved that the notion of contingent existence or of contingent non-existence cannot have any application to God. That than which nothing greater can be conceived cannot be contingent existence or non-existence; it can be self-existence, infinite and eternal, having no beginning.

He further elucidates that "God's existence is either impossible or necessary. It can be the former only if the concept of such a being is self-contradictory or in some way logically absurd. Assuming that this is not so, it follows that He necessarily exists".[14]

While examining this argument, John Hick points out that the logical necessity and the logical impossibility of God's existence are both hypothetical necessities, and that it is this aspect that is missed by Malcolm. John Hick argues in effect: it is logically impossible for God, as an eternal being, to cease to exist, *if* he exists eternally; and it is logically impossible for such a being to come into existence, *if* He does not exist.

But we need to ask the question if Hick is fair in his argument, when we consider that the whole burden of the Ontological Argument is that God cannot but be conceived as one without beginning and therefore eternal. His hypothetical phrase: *if* He exists eternally, is inconsistent with what Reason can conceive

of That than which nothing greater can be conceived.

My contention is that the hypothetical phrase "if he exists eternally" can be justified only if we take the position of an empiricist, who does not accept that reason can conceive of That than which nothing greater can be conceived, and thereby reason conceives that That objectively exists. But if Hick is criticising the Ontological Argument, he should, in fairness, argue against the Ontological Argument, not from an external point of view but within the framework of the implications of the Ontological Argument.

Fundamentally, the Ontological Argument purports to be a rational argument, an argument that proceeds from the reason. But, at the very outset, we have to admit and clarify an ambiguity regarding the meaning of Reason. For Reason may mean what rationalists mean it to be, or it may mean what empiricists believe it to be. The controversy regarding the Ontological Argument appears to have its origin in the fact that these two meanings of Reason have not been kept distinct from each other.[15] Both the senses of Reason must have a place in regard to the proof of existence of God, and the resultant argument cannot but be complex, on the condition that this argument admits the validity of the Ontological Argument in terms of the meaning of Reason as understood by rationalists.

Thus we need to study more clearly the rationalists' position in regard to the meaning of Reason. The rationalist position in regard to the nature of thought is that reason has its own perceptions of Reality and that therefore if its perceptions, particularly of consistency and comprehensiveness, are reflected in any process of ratiocination, the conclusions will hold good of reality. For if thought cannot be followed to a reality beyond the thinker we are plunged into hopeless scepticism. In other words, reason, according to the rationalist, consists of innate ideas, and these innate ideas are perceptions, not of senses, but of the processes of ideation itself. In other words, an activity of conceiving is an activity of explicating the perceptions involved in the process of ideation. And the process of ideation

is the process of the operation of innate ideas which are involved in the acts of conceiving. Among these innate ideas, it is contended, there is one supreme idea, the idea of the Reality than which nothing greater can be conceived.

In fact, there are three propositions which seem to be involved in the rationalist concept of Reason. It needs to be noted that these propositions emerge from my understanding of rationalism and may not be found in other accounts of rationalism:

1. There is a Reality, which transcends the act of reasoning or ideation, but which is caught or reflected in the activities of conceiving or reasoning.
2. That Reality is such than which nothing greater can be conceived; and
3. That Reality is infinite, eternal and self-existent.

According to rationalism, the very definition of Reason implies explication of these three propositions, and it is perceived that to deny these three propositions is to deny reason or rationality. It is obvious that if reason is defined in the way the rationalists have defined, the Ontological Argument follows automatically, and its validity is also involved inherently in the very concept of rationality.

In the light of the above, the Ontological Argument need not be stated in the form in which existence needs to be stated as a predicate. For indeed, existence is not a predicate. Existence, or rather self-existence is the same as Reality or God, and to perceive self-existence as an undeniable self-existence is to affirm the undeniable reality of Reality that lies beyond thought and, that which subsists ontologically. In that sense, the Ontological Argument is not an argument; it is simply an undeniable statement of the ontological perception of the Reason. Existence that is the greatest, existence that is superior to phenomena of qualities and forms which fluctuate and which are contingent, is the one thing that can be conceived. As Sri Aurobindo points out in *the Life Divine,* "existence without quantity, without quality,

without form is not only conceivable, but it is the one thing we can conceive behind these phenomena".[16] This simple statement, we may say, is the crux and essence of the Ontological Argument and this is undeniable, as far as reason understood in the rationalist tradition is concerned.

But this account of the Reason does not appeal to a part of our nature. It has been rightly said by Sri Aurobindo that "our nature sees things with two eyes always",[17] through the eye of idea and through the eye of fact. And what is seen through the eye of idea seems to be so abstract and unreal to the other eye that it does not regard its imperativeness as binding on its own imperativeness to see and experience facts. The empiricist's view of reason, therefore, has a different approach to the understanding of reason. It is the approach of experience and the approach of demonstrating truths, not through conceivability but through experience, through correspondence of the idea with the fact, through verifiability, through direct demonstration or acquaintance.

It is the demand of the empirical reason that obliges us to look for means by which the proof of God's existence can be demonstrated in experience. But it must be made clear that even though this demand ought to be satisfied, it would be wrong to insist that there is no such thing as reason in us which corresponds to the rationalist idea of it. Empiricists may not accept the imperativeness of the rationalists' idea, but at the same time, they cannot insist that their (empiricists') idea of reason is so imperative that it is solely imperative.

Impartially speaking, we should grant both these accounts for arriving at a satisfying proof of God's existence, not only the affirmation of the truth that lies behind the Ontological Argument but also the truth that lies behind the empirical demand for demonstration in experience. But how shall we prove the existence of God in the narrow terms in which empiricism normally conducts its own processes of experience? Normally, empiricists refuse to go beyond the narrow groove of sense-experience. But if we define God as infinite, as an eternal

self-existence, whose presence is supra-sensuous, he can be proved only through an experience that transcends the realm of knowledge which is governed by the senses. Usually, empiricists refuse to accept that there is any realm of knowledge beyond the realm of the senses. How, then, shall we convince them that their contention is untenable?

This can be done, in my view, in two ways. Firstly, it can be pointed out that this statement that the senses are the only means of knowledge can be entertained only if one has entered into the other means of knowledge, into supra-sensuous fields of knowledge[18] and proved that those realms of knowledge are hallucinatory. We can be confident, based upon the experience of many, that once we begin to investigate into the supra-sensuous experiences, it will be impossible to declare all of them to be hallucinatory. The second method is to show that the empiricists' demand to prove the existence of God, who is by definition supra-sensuous,[19] through sense experience is illogical. For if God is *supra-physical*, would it be logical to demand a *physical* proof of His existence?

If, therefore, we are now free to take into account the supra-physical experiences of many mystics, we shall have a good ground to conclude that God exists experientially, as a matter of ontological fact. Thus a satisfying proof of God's existence is to combine both the Ontological Argument and the argument from the direct experience of God. Such a complex argument has been developed by Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine* and needs to be studied in depth.

To conclude, therefore, I believe that the Ontological Argument as developed by the rationalists is an undeniable statement of the ontological perception of Pure Reason. And, if we are impartially to accept the truth behind the reason as described by the rationalists then we must accept that reason cannot deny the existence of God, of a being who is self-existent, beyond all forms, quantity or quality and that which alone reason can truly conceive.

Notes and References

1. For further reference see Galloway, G. (1920) *The Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons) p. 382 and Hick, J. (1970) *Arguments for the Existence of God* (London: Macmillan), pp.68-69.
2. And this will be clear with the following quotation by Parmenides.
3. Quoted in Russell, B. (2002), *History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Routledge) pp. 66-67.
4. Quoted in Hick, J. (1970), *op. cit.,* p. 79.
5. Galloway, G. (1920), *op. cit.,* p. 383.
6. Ibid.
7. *Vide* Russell, R. (2002), *op. cit.*, p 567.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 567-578.
9. *Vide* Kant, I. (1973), *Critique of Pure Reason* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.) Translated by Norman Kemp Smith, pp. 504-505.
10. *Vide* Russell, B. (2002), op. cit., p. 785.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Vide* Hick, J. (1970), op. cit., p.69.
13. Quoted in Hick, J. (1970), *op. cit.,* pp. 87-88.
14. Quoted in Hick, J. (1970), *op. cit.* , p. 92.
15. It is instructive to note that most of the criticisms of the Ontological Argument presented by rationalists such as Anselm, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz have been largely criticised by empiricists or on grounds that support empiricism partially or fully.
16. *Vide* Sri Aurobindo, (1996), *The Life Divine* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust) p. 75.
17. *Vide* Sri Aurobindo, (1996), *op. cit.,* p. 61. I am giving an extract from where the quote is taken because it is important to see the context in which it is stated: "The complete use of pure reason brings us finally from physical to metaphysical knowledge. But the concepts of metaphysical knowledge do not in themselves fully satisfy the demand of our integral being. They are indeed entirely satisfactory to the pure reason itself, because they are

the very stuff of its own existence. But our nature sees things through two eyes always, for it views them doubly as idea and as fact and therefore every concept is incomplete for us and to a part of our nature almost unreal until it becomes experience."

18. These supra-sensuous fields are the fields or ideas, imaginations, supra-physical visions, mystical voices, and experiences of the categorical imperative, presence of God, presence of invisible God, and other experiences of relationship with the divine reality.

19. God is normally conceived to be an invisible reality and he is not normally available to the experience of the senses. It is from this point of view that it can be stated that God is by definition supra-sensuous. But if it is found to be not easily acceptable, one can simply say that God is normally, not by definition, but in normal understanding is supposed to be invisible and can be contacted through supra-sensuous experience.

Addendum — The Two Points of View

I am attaching here the main details of my discussion with my course tutor for a course on the Philosophy of Religion, for which this paper was originally written, as an addendum. I do recognise that this text is of considerable length but am attaching it for the reader whose interest may have been aroused by the paper on the Ontological Argument. This discussion highlights the stark differences between the two schools of thought: empiricism and rationalism and explains how difficult it is to try and understand one point of view entirely from the foundations of the other.

My tutor and I have both been engaged in a debate between these two points of view. He read the paper on the Ontological Argument and made the following comment to me: "I enjoyed this essay enormously. You write well and engage very competently with some extremely demanding ideas. Your decision to look only at the Ontological Argument is entirely justified by the rigour with which you examine it." However, he was concerned about some points on which he disagreed and we undertook a discussion of these points, the text of which is included herewith. (Some portion of the debate was finally included as part of the main text of the paper and the reader may thus find some overlap).

I have placed sections of the paper that were under debate in quotation marks followed by the discussion with numbers to show the chronological order of the debate as it took place via emails and responses were inserted in between prior remarks.

Finally, I would like to add that I do not believe that this age old debate is going to be resolved here. And readers who come with a strong empiricist background without an open mind to other possibilities might have to agree to disagree eventually with the conclusions of the paper on the Ontological Argument.

The Defence of Rationalism

Tutor (1):
I do, however, have some concerns about your central argument. Your defence of the Ontological Argument is that its validity is a presupposition of rationalism. This defence seems to me to be doubly problematic. First, I don't think it is a presupposition of rationalism — you would have to show this with reference to the work of rationalist philosophers. The fact that some rationalist philosophers defend the Ontological Argument does not make it a presupposition of their method of inquiry. Second, and more importantly, it isn't much of a defence, since the great majority of philosophers now reject rationalism.

Chitwan (2):
I don't think that the second point is more important at all. Because most philosophers reject rationalism doesn't mean that they do so rightly.

Tutor (3):
No, it doesn't. But it does mean that defending the Ontological Argument with reference to the principles of rationalism will not be persuasive to your readers. For your defence of the Ontological Argument to work, you must also provide a defence of rationalism.

Chitwan (4):
Please tell me which philosopher has given a defence of rationalism... I shall like to read it. I have presented the views of most of the prominent rationalists including Spinoza, Leibniz, and Descartes. I have expounded them and analysed them. I don't know what more I can say about it, except pure reason is pure reason. Ultimately the reader may accept if he likes or not.

Chitwan (2):
Just because a large number of them are empiricists and do not give too much value to reason, it does not hold true, according to me, that they are right.

Tutor (3):
Empiricists accord extremely high value to reason. Their position is that knowledge requires both reason and experience; reason alone is not enough.

Chitwan (4):
What is the meaning of reason you are speaking of here? Empiricists have a view of reason, but a reason that is grounded in experience. The reason I talk of and which the rationalists speak of is of a different nature as I have noted in footnote 16.

For empiricists knowledge and reason are based on experience and reason is rooted in experience and does not go beyond experience. However, for rationalists experience alone is not the judge. Experiences are often deceptive. And for them Reason is final judge. For rationalism, reason goes beyond experience. 'Reason' may be the same word used in both rationalism and empiricism but it does not mean the same thing to both.

Tutor (3):
It is a presupposition of rationalism that knowledge of the world can be established by the exercise of pure reason. But it does not follow from this that the world includes God, or that the Ontological Argument is successful.

Chitwan (4):
Please see my note below our debate on the three propositions.

Regarding the assumption of the ontological argument in other arguments

> "The Ontological Argument for the existence of God is perhaps the most important among all the arguments, such as the cosmological, teleological, moral, or historical, since it is supposed to be implicitly assumed by all the other arguments."
>
> (Quotation from my paper on the Ontological Argument for the existence of God)

Tutor (1):
The Ontological Argument is not presupposed or assumed by all the other arguments. Kant thought (mistakenly, in my view) that the cosmological argument depends on it, but no-one has suggested that any of the other arguments depend on it. Nor do I see any reason for regarding the Ontological Argument as the most important. It is much less persuasive to most people than, say, the design argument.

Chitwan (2):
I am quite certain that the other arguments take the Ontological Argument as their basis, since it is the Ontological Argument that states that there is in the human mind a concept of God. The other arguments seem to reach back to this very concept.

Tutor (3):
No. The concept of God assumed by the Ontological Argument is not the same as the concepts of God assumed by the other arguments.

Chitwan (4):
That is true to some extent. I will just state the following: According to the Cosmological Argument, God is the first cause. According to the Teleological Argument, God is the designer and a good designer, according to the Ontological Argument,

He is a perfect being. A perfect being includes the idea of first cause and that of the good designer. So you might say that the concept of God in the Ontological argument is larger and it includes the concept of God in other arguments. God who is perfect is also the first cause and He is also a designer. But He is more because the other two don't assume that he is absolutely perfect.

Chitwan (2):
Galloway states about the Ontological Argument, "it is the one which raises the deepest philosophical issues, and as we shall see, the other proofs implicitly assume its validity".[1]

And Hick states similarly, and I shall give his quotation in full here:

> "Indeed this was the ground of Kant's contention that the cosmological and teleological arguments both presuppose the ontological and cannot succeed if it fails: only the latter professes to link the idea of necessary and unconditional reality with that of perfection. For given that the cosmological argument has shown that there is a necessary being, we can still ask what sort of a being this is. What reason have we for thinking it to be God, the infinite sum of perfections? Kant supplies a reason: 'The necessary being can be determined in one way only, that is, by one way out of each possible pair of opposed predicates. It must therefore be completely determined through its own concept. Now there is only one possible concept which determines a thing completely a priori, namely, the concept of ens realissimum. The concept of the ens realissimum is therefore the only concept through which a necessary being can be thought'. But this reason uses the conclusion of the ontological argument: that the idea of a supreme being, or ens realissimum necessarily entails the existence of such a being. Only if this conclusion is true can the cosmological argument amount to a

proof of God's existence; but if that conclusion is true God's existence is already proved and the cosmological argument is entirely unnecessary. Thus the cosmological argument presupposes the ontological argument, and is rendered otiose by it".[2]

John Hick

I will happy to know what you think of this.

Tutor (3):
I have already acknowledged that Kant thinks the Cosmological Argument is dependent on the Ontological. Whether or not he is right depends on which version of the Cosmological Argument you have in mind. Moreover, Kant clearly doesn't think that his own axiological argument depends on the Ontological Argument, since he believes the former is successful and the latter unsuccessful. There are many Christian apologists today who reject the Ontological Argument outright but find the other arguments persuasive.

Chitwan (4):
There are many people who differ from it. The question is whether it is right or wrong. Kant when he said that the Ontological Argument is assumed by Cosmological and Teleological had not formulated his Axiological Argument yet. My contention was only this that it is assumed by Cosmological and the Teleological arguments. I did not argue that the Ontological Argument is assumed even by the Axiological Argument.

The Quibbling on Words

> "It is a psychological fact that in the human mind there is a concept called the concept of God."
>
> (Quotation from my paper on the Ontological Argument for the existence of God)

Tutor (1):
Arguably, concepts are linguistic entities, not psychological ones. It would be more correct to say that it is a linguistic fact that in the English language there is a concept marked by the word 'God'.

Chitwan (2):
I disagree. It is not merely a linguistic fact since even linguistics has a certain basis in psychology. Without thought there would be no language, not the other way round.

Tutor (3):
Perhaps, but our disagreement is about the nature of concepts. A concept, as I understand it, is the meaning of a word, or the rules governing the use of a word.

Chitwan (4):
This I understand is the empirical point of view but rationalism goes beyond concepts and beyond words. There are many concepts for which we have not yet found words... what happens to them??

This is the difference between rationalism and nominalism. According to rationalism, a concept is prior to the word whereas other people give primacy to word. According to these, there cannot be meaning without words. However, according to rationalism, a word is simply a coin to fit in into a concept that already exists. You are taking the position of an empiricist, according to which experience is the starting point.

As I understand it, the concept is innate; it is already there in our mind. Innate ideas are the stuff of the reason; they are not derived from experience. They might become the explicit stuff of the experience, like the experience of essence for example. What is meant by essence is never experienced. The universal is never experienced. One can never see all the cows. It is never experienced. This is a popular debate and it cannot be resolved here merely by taking one stand or the other.

The Argument of Kant

> "Thus he concludes that though all existential propositions must be synthetic, however, a statement such as 'God exists' can never be of that nature since existence can never be a predicate."
>
> (Quotation from my paper on the Ontological Argument for the existence of God)

Tutor (1):
I think there is a misunderstanding here. Kant certainly maintained that the proposition 'God exists' is synthetic. What it asserts is that there is an object which stands in relation to the concept of God.

Chitwan (2):
Yes you are right and I may have not written quite clearly. It is synthetic but the point that I would like to make is that in order to make the statement 'God exists' intelligible or true, existence must be a predicate. Since, however, according to Kant, existence is not a predicate, the statement 'God exists' cannot in its meaning be defended as a synthetic statement.

Tutor (3):
Those who accept Kant's argument do not think that the statement 'God exists' is meaningless. They think it means 'Something possesses the attributes of God', which is clearly a synthetic proposition.

Chitwan (4):
Yes, but the statement omits the reference to the word 'exists'.

The Argument against Russell

> "But the question that needs to be raised is: How does one express the self-existent infinite reality? Russell's answer is that when one speaks of infinite self-existent reality, it is nonsense, since it does not fit into the system of logic that he has proposed. But we may further observe that since his logic is applicable only to finite objects, and since the object of which we speak in the context of the concept of God, is infinite and self-existent, there should be a logic appropriate to this situation, so that the kind of reality that we want to express can be properly expressed. This is where we find the weakness of Russell's attempt to refute the ontological argument."
>
> (Quotation from my paper on the Ontological Argument for the existence of God)

Tutor (1):
Your argument is circular here. Russell says that it makes no sense to talk of self-existent entities; your reply that he must be wrong because, if he was right, it wouldn't make sense to talk of self-existent entities!

Chitwan (2):
No I do not think that my argument is circular. I do not think that Russell may necessarily reject self-existence entities. The logical apparatus that he provides is quite appropriate for talking sensibly of self-existing entities. My argument is that his logical apparatus is not appropriate for talking sensibly of infinite and eternal self-existent. My plea to Russell would be that logically at least there should be a way of expressing an infinite self-existent reality. Since he has not furnished that required logical apparatus, his logical theory can be regarded to some extent defective.

Tutor (3):
Two points here. First, Russell certainly does hold that the phrase 'self-existent entity' is unintelligible. Second, he provides a strong argument for this view. It does not constitute a counter-argument for you to say 'Oh, but surely it must make sense to talk about self-existent entities'!

Chitwan (4):
As per my understanding, according to Russell self-existent entities are intelligible. His whole philosophy is based on simples. He might not have used the word self-existent entities. Could you tell me where he says that self-existent entities are unintelligible? I would like to read it.

My only point in this argument is that if one is creating a system of logic one must remember that a system of logic is a system which must provide a framework for all systems of thought, not merely one's own system of thought. In the rationalist system of thought, talking of self-existent entities makes sense. So if one is making a system of logic then one needs to provide room for it.

Logic is a science of expressing how people think. As a scientist Russell should say that there are many ways in which people think thought is valid. When they think of self-existent entities the rationalists think they are making sense. He must then devise a system by which one can express it. One might reject this logic themselves and say that "my logic does not accept this statement". However, one must provide a tool by which it can be expressed.

Russell however uses the word logic to mean his logic. As if his logic is the only logic in the world.

The Concept of Self-Existent and Eternal Entities

> "Eternal existence is therefore conceptually undeniable and it necessarily carries with it undeniable ontology beyond the state of concept or conceiving."
>
> (Quotation from my paper on the Ontological Argument for the existence of God)

Tutor (1):
The idea of eternal existence doesn't seem to help here. I can certainly conceive of things existing eternally which do not, in fact, exist eternally. Moreover, a thing can exist eternally without being the cause of its own existence. It may simply have no cause.

Chitwan (2):
I can certainly understand the confusion that can exist in regard to the idea of eternal existence. But, frankly, if something exists eternally, it follows that it was not caused, since eternity cannot be placed in the chain of causal connections. I do not understand how a thing can exist eternally without being the cause of its own existence. When you say that it may simply have no cause, it is another way of saying that it is the cause of its own existence. Hence, the idea that you are presenting is only verbally different from the idea that the philosophers like Spinoza speak of when they define Reality or Substance as *sui generic*, that which is caused by itself.

Tutor (3):
On the contrary, the difference is a crucial one. Saying something has no cause is not equivalent to saying that it caused itself. Persons can be the cause of their own movements, though rocks cannot. Neither persons nor rocks can be the cause of their own existence. But there is nothing conceptually diffi-

cult about the thought of a person or a rock that has always existed.

Chitwan (4):
Are the movements the causes of their own existence? Are persons causes of themselves?

I cannot conceive this. You can imagine certainly but you cannot conceive.

Chitwan (2):
The conception of things existing eternally implies the concept of things which do not depend for their existence on something else. That which does not need to depend upon something else for its existence should therefore be conceived to be, in fact, existing eternally.

Tutor (3):
Again, the two ideas are quite separate. I can imagine eternal things which depend for their existence on other eternal things, and temporary things which do not depend for their existence on anything.

Chitwan (4):
Can you give me some example? Again, one can of course imagine but one cannot conceive.

The Criticism of Hick

> "His hypothetical phrase: *if* He exists eternally, is inconsistent with what Reason can conceive of That than which nothing greater can be conceived."
>
> (Quotation from my paper on
> the Ontological Argument for the existence of God)

Tutor (1):
I don't see the inconsistency. This criticism of Hick needs to be elaborated.

Chitwan (2):
My contention is that the hypothetical phrase "*if* he exists eternally" can be justified only if we take the position of an empiricist, who does not accept that reason can conceive of That than which nothing greater can be conceived, and thereby reason conceives that That objectively exists. But if Hick is criticising the Ontological Argument, he should, in fairness, argue against the Ontological Argument, not from an external point of view but within the framework of the implications of the ontological argument.

The Presuppositions of Rationalism

1. "There is a Reality, which transcends the act of reasoning or ideation, but which is caught or reflected in the activities of conceiving or reasoning.
2. That Reality is such than which nothing greater can be conceived; and
3. That Reality is infinite, eternal and self-existent."

(Quotation from my paper on
the Ontological Argument for the existence of God)

Tutor (1):
I don't recognise this as an account of rationalism. Where does it come from? Do all rationalists share these premises?

Chitwan (2):
I do agree that I should have written this paragraph in a different manner. I do not think that one can get an account of rationalism in the form in which I have attempted to formulate.

I should have clarified that the way in which I understand rationalism. I find that these three propositions emerge from my understanding of rationalism. I am quite sure that most of the rationalists might dispute the way in which I have explicated what I think is the truth in rationalism, and that account that I have given may not be shared by rationalists.

To my understanding, rationalism maintains that there are in human consciousness innate ideas, that these innate ideas are the very stuff of reason, and these ideas are at the source of the affirmation of the objectivity of the truth, of the validity of universality, of a distinction between appearance and reality, and of the distinction between essence and manifestation.

Tutor (3):
This sounds OK, as does proposition (1) above. But I can't see how you move from this to propositions (2) and (3).

Chitwan (4):
After proposition one, the Ontological Argument takes over to explicate 2 and 3. Even the Ontological Argument presupposes the rationalistic position that reason consists of innate ideas and that one of these innate ideas is the starting point of the Ontological Argument, namely, that God is a being than which no greater can be conceived.

Notes and References

1. Galloway, G. (1920) *The Philosophy of Religion,* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), p. 382.
2. Hick, J. (1970) *The Arguments for the Existence of God,* (London: Macmillan), pp.68-69.

A Synoptic Note on the Arguments for the Existence of God

(Indian and Western)

Both in the East and in the West, philosophers have attempted to formulate rationalistic proofs of existence of God. These proofs are manly three: (a) Ontological; (b) Cosmological; and (c) Teleological. Hajime Nakamura (1911-1999 C.E.) has, in his book, *Comparative History of Ideas* (1992, Motilal Banarsidas Publishers Pvt. Ltd.) pointed out that the earliest teleological argument or what Kant has called "physico-theological proof" was formulated by Plato (427–347 B.C.E.), who, in his Laws stated the proof of existence of gods as follows:

> "In the first place, the earth and the sun, and the stars and the universe, and the fair order of the seasons, and the division of them into years and months, furnish proof of their (gods') existence."[1]

The Indian teleological argument formulated by Śaṅkara (788-820 C.E.?) has been highlighted by Nakamura by citing the following from Śaṅkara's *Brahma-sūtrabhāṣya*:

> "When the matter is considered with the help of examples only, it is seen that in the world of non-intelligent objects without being guided by an intelligence brings forth from it-

self the products which serve to further given aims of man. For example, houses, palaces, beds, seats, pleasure-gardens and the like are (only) contrived in life by intelligent artists in due time for the purpose of obtaining pleasure and averting pain. Exactly the same it is with this whole world. For when one sees, how, for example, the earth serves the end of the enjoyment of the fruit of the manifold works, and how, again, the body within and without by possessing a given arrangement of parts suitable to the different species and determined in detail that it may form the place of the enjoyment of the fruit of the manifold works, — so that even highly skilled artists full of insight are unable to comprehend it through their understanding, — how should this arrangement proceed from the non-intelligent original-matter (or the Sāṃkhyas)? For lumps of earth, stones and the like are in no wise capable of this? Clay also, for example, is formed as experience teaches, to different shapes (only) so long as it is guided by the potter, and exactly in the same way must matter be guided by another intelligent power. He, therefore, who relies on the material cause only as clay, etc., cannot rightly maintain, that he possess the primordial cause; but no objection meets him who, besides it (the clay), relies on the potter, etc., as well. For when this is assumed there is no contradiction, and at the same time the scripture, which teaches an intelligent power as cause, is thereby respected. So that, as the arrangement (of the Kosmos) would become impossible, we may not have recourse to a non-intelligent power as the cause of the world."[2]

Śaṅkara's Cosmological Argument has also similarly been highlighted by Nakamura by citing the following from *Brahmasūtra*: "But (there is) no origin of 'the Existent,' on account of the impossibility."[3] Śaṅkara continues:

"After anyone has been taught from the scripture, that also ether (or space) and air have originated, although we cannot

conceive their coming into being, he might come to think that the Brahman also originated from something, for when he perceives how from the ether and the like, which are still only modifications, yet other modifications arise, he might conclude that the ether also sprang into being from the Brahman, as if from a mere modification. The present sūtra 'But (there is) *no origin*' etc., serves to remove this doubt; its meaning is: but one must not think that the Brahman, whose essence is Being (*sad-ātmaka*), could have originated from anything else; why? '*owing to impossibility*!' For Brahman is pure Being. As such it can (*firstly*) not have sprung from pure Being, because (between the two) there is no superiority, so that they cannot be related (to each other) as original and modified;— but also (*secondly*) not from differentiated Being, because experience contradicts this; for we see that from homogeneity differences arise, for example, vessels from clay, but not that homogeneity arises from differences;—further (*thirdly*) also not from non-Being, for this is essenceless (*nirātmaka*); and because the scripture overthrows it, when it says:[4] 'How should the Existent come from the non-Existent?' and because it does not admit a producer of the Brahman, when it is said: 'Cause is He, Master of the Sense's Lord, He has no Lord, and no Progenitor.'[5] For ether and wind on the contrary an origin is shown, but there is none such for the Brahman, that is the difference. And because it is seen how, from modifications, other modifications, arise, there is no necessity for the Brahman also to be a modification. For were this so, then we should come to no primordial nature (*mūlaprakṛti*) but should have a *regressus in infinitum (anavasthā)*. What is assumed as the primordial nature, — just that is our Brahman; there is thus perfect agreement."[6]

The Cosmological Argument was rooted in Aristotle's (384–322 B.C.E.) famous book, Metaphysics. Aristotle made a distinction between an imperfect and a more perfect, and he argued that both of them tend to support a position of a reality of most perfect. The

world is imperfect, and it tends towards the most perfect, who makes movement possible in the world. Aristotle also spoke of four kinds of causes, material cause, efficient cause, formal cause and final cause. The final cause, he argued, must exist in order to have a causal series in the world, and it is the final cause which explains all causations in the world. In the middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas inferred prime movement from motion and towards efficient or secondary causes to a first cause and towards contingent existence to a necessary Being.

Saint Anselm (1033-1109 C.E.) formulated the Ontological Argument for the existence of God. This argument was further refined by Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 C.E.), and it was reformulated by Descartes (1596-1650 C.E.), Spinoza (1632-77 C.E.) and Leibniz (1646-1716 C.E.), — the three greatest rationalists philosophers of the commencement of the modern period. The essence of the Ontological Argument was that reason is a pure conception and conception necessarily refers to existence which has no defect. In other words, the only thing that can be conceived is existence without quantity, quality or form. The Absolute is the only conceivable Reality. According to the Ontological Argument, to think is to think of God. The highest thought or the purest thought conceives the purest Existence, and purest and the perfect existence is undesirable to rational thought.

In India, the ontological proof was, it is suggested, implied in the thought of Bhartṛhari in his famous *Vākyapadīya*. Bhartṛhari asserted that we cannot deny the existence of *bhāva*, being, or *ens, summum genus* of all concepts and that being is the Absolute.

It has also been suggested that Śaṅkara set forth the psychological or introspective proof of the existence of the Absolute. The existence of the Brahman is demonstrated by the fact that it is the Self of all. Everyone assumes the existence of himself, and Śaṅkara took the next step: *And the self is Brahman.*

It must be pointed out that Indian philosophy accepts *śruti* or verbal testimony as a *pramāṇ* or authority for a valid conclusion. This position is often misunderstood, and it needs to be clarified that *śruti* should be regarded as a demonstrative proof resulting

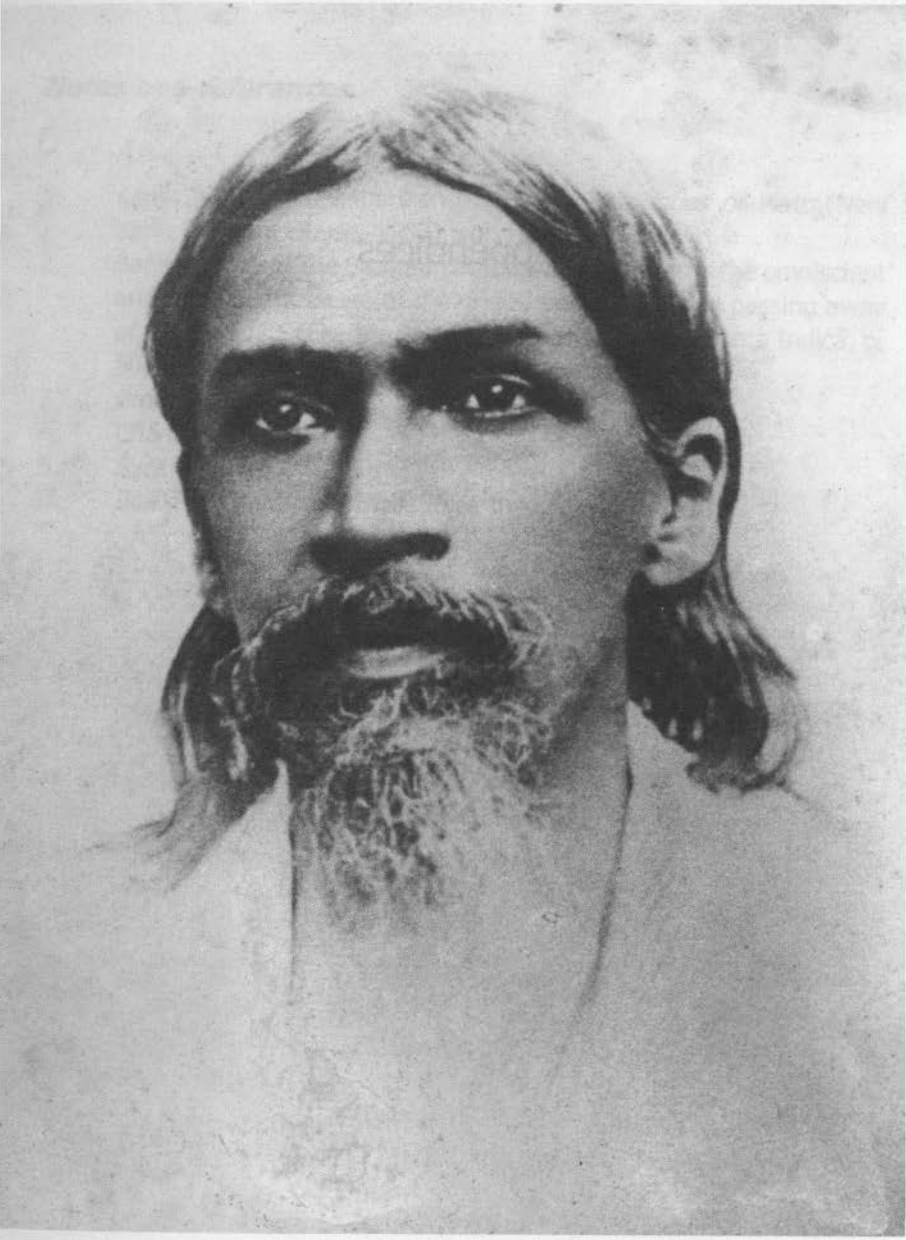
from experience. But the word experience is not to be confined to sensuous experience or experience that is available at the normal ordinary level of human existence. According to Indian philosophers, experiences have many levels, and the highest experience has been attained recorded in the Vedas and the Upanishads, which are regarded as *śruti* or records of highest experience. In other words, *śruti* may be regarded not as a rational process of inference, but as evidence, the authenticity of which is contained within the experience itself, just as evidence of light is contained in the light itself. We find in the writings of Śaṅkara and others a tacit acceptance of *śruti*, because śruti is the record of self-luminous experience. In India, therefore, we find double proof of existence of God,—the proof by inference and proof contained in evidence of self-luminous experience. It is this double proof, which is missed by many who try to see in the so-called argument for the existence of God only inferential steps by implication. According to Indian philosophers, God can be proved inferentially as also by self-luminous experience.

(This essay is expository; it is not critical. A deeper question is not whether God's existence can be proved, but what God is, and whether God in His fullness and integrality can be rationally and experientially established. This is the question of what the Upanishads describe, as that of the "Brahmavidyā", and the highest concept of God that was arrived at by the Upanishads is that the Sachchidananda (God as Pure Existent, God as Conscious Force and God as Delight). The best and perfect intellectual statement of Sachchidananda is to be found in four chapters of Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus "The Life Divine". These four chapters have been appended to this monograph. The epistemological validity of the contentions in these chapters can be better appreciated, if the readers study two more chapters of "The Life Divine", namely, "Methods of Vedantic Knowledge" and "Knowledge by Identity and Separative Knowledge".)

Notes and references

1. *Laws*, X. 886, Jowett's translation, *The Dialogues of Plato* (New York: Random House, 1937), vol. II, p. 628.
2. Śaṅkara defines the Brahman as follows: "Brahman is the omniscient and omnipotent cause of the origin, persistence and passing away of the world." Śaṅkara's *Brahma-sūtrabhāṣya,* Bibliotheca Indica, p. 90, 1. 3. Cf. Deussen, *System of the Vedânta*, p. 123.
3. *Brahmasūtra* II, 3, 9.
4. *Chānd. Up.* II, 2, 2.
5. *Śvet. Up.* II, 9.
6. *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya,* Bibliotheca Indica, pp. 627-628.

Appendices



Sri Aurobindo

Appendix I

The Pure Existent

One indivisible that is pure existence.

Chhandogya Upanishad.*

When we withdraw our gaze from its egoistic preoccupation with limited and fleeting interests and look upon the world with dispassionate and curious eyes that search only for the Truth, our first result is the perception of a boundless energy of infinite existence, infinite movement, infinite activity pouring itself out in limitless Space, in eternal Time, an existence that surpasses infinitely our ego or any ego or any collectivity of egos, in whose balance the grandiose products of aeons are but the dust of a moment and in whose incalculable sum numberless myriads count only as a petty swarm. We instinctively act and feel and weave our life thoughts as if this stupendous world movement were at work around us as centre and for our benefit, for our help or harm, or as if the justification of our egoistic cravings, emotions, ideas, standards were its proper business even as they are our own chief concern. When we begin to see, we perceive that it exists for itself, not for us, has its own gigantic aims, its own complex and boundless idea, its own vast desire or delight that it seeks to fulfil, its own immense and formidable standards which look down as if with an indulgent and ironic smile at the pettiness of ours. And yet let us not swing over to the other extreme and form too positive an idea of our own insignificance. That too would be an act of ignorance and the shutting of our eyes to the great facts of the universe.

For this boundless Movement does not regard us as unimportant to it. Science reveals to us how minute is the care, how cunning the

* VI. 2. 1.

device, how intense the absorption it bestows upon the smallest of its works even as on the largest. This mighty energy is an equal and impartial mother, *samam brahma,* in the great term of the Gita, and its intensity and force of movement is the same in the formation and upholding of a system of suns and the organisation of the life of an ant-hill. It is the illusion of size, of quantity that induces us to look on the one as great, the other as petty. If we look, on the contrary, not at mass of quantity but force of quality, we shall say that the ant is greater than the solar system it inhabits and man greater than all inanimate Nature put together. But this again is the illusion of quality. When we go behind and examine only the intensity of the movement of which quality and quantity are aspects, we realise that this Brahman dwells equally in all existences. Equally partaken of by all in its being, we are tempted to say, equally distributed to all in its energy. But this too is an illusion of quantity. Brahman dwells in all, indivisible, yet as if divided and distributed. If we look again with an observing perception not dominated by intellectual concepts, but informed by intuition and culminating in knowledge by identity, we shall see that the consciousness of this infinite Energy is other than our mental consciousness, that it is indivisible and gives, not an equal part of itself, but its whole self at one and the same time to the solar system and to the ant-hill. To Brahman there are no whole and parts, but each thing is all itself and benefits by the whole of Brahman. Quality and quantity differ, the self is equal. The form and manner and result of the force of action vary infinitely, but the eternal, primal, infinite energy is the same in all. The force of strength that goes to make the strong man is no whit greater than the force of weakness that goes to make the weak. The energy spent is as great in repression as in expression, in negation as in affirmation, in silence as in sound.

Therefore the first reckoning we have to mend is that between this infinite Movement, this energy of existence which is the world and ourselves. At present we keep a false account. We are infinitely important to the All, but to us the All is negligible; we alone are important to ourselves. This is the sign of the original ignorance which is the root of the ego, that it can only think with itself as centre

as if it were the All, and of that which is not itself accepts only so much as it is mentally disposed to acknowledge or as it is forced to recognise by the shocks of its environment. Even when it begins to philosophise, does it not assert that the world only exists in and by its consciousness? Its own state of consciousness or mental standards are to it the test of reality; all outside its orbit or view tends to become false or non-existent. This mental self-sufficiency of man creates a system of false accountantship which prevents us from drawing the right and full value from life. There is a sense in which these pretensions of the human mind and ego repose on a truth, but this truth only emerges when the mind has learned its ignorance and the ego has submitted to the All and lost in it its separate self-assertion. To recognise that we, or rather the results and appearances we call ourselves, are only a partial movement of this infinite Movement and that it is that infinite which we have to know, to be consciously and to fulfil faithfully, is the commencement of true living. To recognise that in our true selves we are one with the total movement and not minor or subordinate is the other side of the account, and its expression in the manner of our being, thought, emotion and action is necessary to the culmination of a true or divine living.

But to settle the account we have to know what is this All, this infinite and omnipotent energy. And here we come to a fresh complication. For it is asserted to us by the pure reason and it seems to be asserted to us by Vedanta that as we are subordinate and an aspect of this Movement, so the movement is subordinate and an aspect of something other than itself, of a great timeless, spaceless Stability, *sthāṇu*, which is immutable, inexhaustible and unexpended, not acting though containing all this action, not energy, but pure existence. Those who see only this world-energy can declare indeed that there is no such thing: our idea of an eternal stability, an immutable pure existence is a fiction of our intellectual conceptions starting from a false idea of the stable: for there is nothing that is stable; all is movement and our conception of the stable is only an artifice of our mental consciousness by which we secure a standpoint for dealing practically with the movement. It is easy

to show that this is true in the movement itself. There is nothing there that is stable. All that appears to be stationary is only a block of movement, a formulation of energy at work which so affects our consciousness that it seems to be still, somewhat as the earth seems to us to be still, somewhat as a train in which we are travelling seems to be still in the midst of a rushing landscape. But is it equally true that underlying this movement, supporting it, there is nothing that is moveless and immutable? Is it true that existence consists only in the action of energy? Or is it not rather that energy is an output of Existence?

We see at once that if such an Existence is, it must be, like the Energy, infinite. Neither reason nor experience nor intuition nor imagination bears witness to us of the possibility of a final terminus. All end and beginning presuppose something beyond the end or beginning. An absolute end, an absolute beginning is not only a contradiction in terms, but a contradiction of the essence of things, a violence, a fiction. Infinity imposes itself upon the appearances of the finite by its ineffugable self-existence.

But this is infinity with regard to Time and Space, an eternal duration, interminable extension. The pure Reason goes farther and looking in its own colourless and austere light at Time and Space points out that these two are categories of our consciousness, conditions under which we arrange our perception of phenomenon. When we look at existence in itself, Time and Space disappear. If there is any extension, it is not a spatial but a psychological extension; if there is any duration, it is not a temporal but a psychological duration; and it is then easy to see that this extension and duration are only symbols which represent to the mind something not translatable into intellectual terms, an eternity which seems to us the same all-containing ever-new moment, an infinity which seems to us the same all-containing all-pervading point without magnitude. And this conflict of terms, so violent, yet accurately expressive of something we do perceive, shows that mind and speech have passed beyond their natural limits and are striving to express a Reality in which their own conventions and necessary oppositions disappear into an ineffable identity.

But is this a true record? May it not be that Time and Space so disappear merely because the existence we are regarding is a fiction of the intellect, a fantastic Nihil created by speech, which we strive to erect into a conceptual reality? We regard again that Existence-in-itself and we say, No. There is something behind the phenomenon not only infinite but indefinable. Of no phenomenon, of no totality of phenomena can we say that absolutely it is. Even if we reduce all phenomena to one fundamental, universal irreducible phenomenon of movement or energy, we get only an indefinable phenomenon. The very conception of movement carries with it the potentiality of repose and betrays itself as an activity of some existence; the very idea of energy in action carries with it the idea of energy abstaining from action; and an absolute energy not in action is simply and purely absolute existence. We have only these two alternatives, either an indefinable pure existence or an indefinable energy in action and, if the latter alone is true, without any stable base or cause, then the energy is a result and phenomenon generated by the action, the movement which alone is. We have then no Existence, or we have the Nihil of the Buddhists with existence as only an attribute of an eternal phenomenon, of Action, of Karma, of Movement. This, asserts the pure reason, leaves my perceptions unsatisfied, contradicts my fundamental seeing, and therefore cannot be. For it brings us to a last abruptly ceasing stair of an ascent which leaves the whole staircase without support, suspended in the Void.

If this indefinable, infinite, timeless, spaceless Existence is, it is necessarily a pure absolute. It cannot be summed up in any quantity or quantities, it cannot be composed of any quality or combination of qualities. It is not an aggregate of forms or a formal substratum of forms. If all forms, quantities, qualities were to disappear, this would remain. Existence without quantity, without quality, without form is not only conceivable, but it is the one thing we can conceive behind these phenomena. Necessarily, when we say it is without them, we mean that it exceeds them, that it is something into which they pass in such a way as to cease to be what we call form, quality, quantity and out of which they emerge as form,

quality and quantity in the movement. They do not pass away into one form, one quality, one quantity which is the basis of all the rest, — for there is none such, — but into something which cannot be defined by any of these terms. So all things that are conditions and appearances of the movement pass into That from which they have come and there, so far as they exist, become something that can no longer be described by the terms that are appropriate to them in the movement. Therefore we say that the pure existence is an Absolute and in itself unknowable by our thought although we can go back to it in a supreme identity that transcends the terms of knowledge. The movement, on the contrary, is the field of the relative and yet by the very definition of the relative all things in the movement contain, are contained in and are the Absolute. The relation of the phenomena of Nature to the fundamental ether which is contained in them, constitutes them, contains them and yet is so different from them that entering into it they cease to be what they now are, is the illustration given by the Vedanta as most nearly representing this identity in difference between the Absolute and the relative.

Necessarily, when we speak of things passing into that from which they have come, we are using the language of our temporal consciousness and must guard ourselves against its illusions. The emergence of the movement from the Immutable is an eternal phenomenon and it is only because we cannot conceive it in that beginningless, endless, ever-new moment which is the eternity of the Timeless that our notions and perceptions are compelled to place it in a temporal eternity of successive duration to which are attached the ideas of an always recurrent beginning, middle and end.

But all this, it may be said, is valid only so long as we accept the concepts of pure reason and remain subject to them. But the concepts of reason have no obligatory force. We must judge of existence not by what we mentally conceive, but by what we see to exist. And the purest, freest form of insight into existence as it is shows us nothing but movement. Two things alone exist, movement in Space, movement in Time, the former objective, the latter subjective. Extension is real, duration is real, Space and Time are

real. Even if we can go behind extension in Space and perceive it as a psychological phenomenon, as an attempt of the mind to make existence manageable by distributing the indivisible whole in a conceptual Space, yet we cannot go behind the movement of succession and change in Time. For that is the very stuff of our consciousness. We are and the world is a movement that continually progresses and increases by the inclusion of all the successions of the past in a present which represents itself to us as the beginning of all the successions of the future, — a beginning, a present that always eludes us because it is not, for it has perished before it is born. What is, is the eternal, indivisible succession of Time carrying on its stream a progressive movement of consciousness also indivisible.* Duration then, eternally successive movement and change in Time, is the sole absolute. Becoming is the only being.

In reality, this opposition of actual insight into being to the conceptual fictions of the pure Reason is fallacious. If indeed intuition in this matter were really opposed to intelligence, we could not confidently support a merely conceptual reasoning against fundamental insight. But this appeal to intuitive experience is incomplete. It is valid only so far as it proceeds and it errs by stopping short of the integral experience. So long as the intuition fixes itself only upon that which we become, we see ourselves as a continual progression of movement and change in consciousness in the eternal succession of Time. We are the river, the flame of the Buddhist illustration. But there is a supreme experience and supreme intuition by which we go back behind our surface self and find that this becoming, change, succession are only a mode of our being and that there is that in us which is not involved at all in the becoming. Not only can we have the intuition of this that is stable and eternal in us, not only can we have the glimpse of it in experience behind the

* Indivisible in the totality of the movement. Each moment of Time or Consciousness may be considered as separate from its predecessor and successor, each successive action of Energy as a new quantum or new creation; but this does not abrogate continuity without which there would be no duration of Time or coherence of consciousness. A man's steps as he walks or runs or leaps are separate, but there is something that takes the steps and makes the movement continuous.

veil of continually fleeting becomings, but we can draw back into it and live in it entirely, so effecting an entire change in our external life, and in our attitude, and in our action upon the movement of the world. And this stability in which we can so live is precisely that which the pure Reason has already given us, although it can be arrived at without reasoning at all, without knowing previously what it is, — it is pure existence, eternal, infinite, indefinable, not affected by the succession of Time, not involved in the extension of Space, beyond form, quantity, quality, — Self only and absolute.

The pure existent is then a fact and no mere concept; it is the fundamental reality. But, let us hasten to add, the movement, the energy, the becoming are also a fact, also a reality. The supreme intuition and its corresponding experience may correct the other, may go beyond, may suspend, but do not abolish it. We have therefore two fundamental facts of pure existence and of world-existence, a fact of Being, a fact of Becoming. To deny one or the other is easy; to recognise the facts of consciousness and find out their relation is the true and fruitful wisdom.

Stability and movement, we must remember, are only our psychological representations of the Absolute, even as are oneness and multitude. The Absolute is beyond stability and movement as it is beyond unity and multiplicity. But it takes its eternal poise in the one and the stable and whirls round itself infinitely, inconceivably, securely in the moving and multitudinous. World-existence is the ecstatic dance of Shiva which multiplies the body of the God numberlessly to the view: it leaves that white existence precisely where and what it was, ever is and ever will be; its sole absolute object is the joy of the dancing.

But as we cannot describe or think out the Absolute in itself, beyond stability and movement, beyond unity and multitude, — nor is that at all our business, — we must accept the double fact, admit both Shiva and Kali and seek to know what is this measureless Movement in Time and Space with regard to that timeless and spaceless pure Existence, one and stable, to which measure and measurelessness are inapplicable. We have seen what pure Reason, intuition and experience have to say about pure Existence,

about Sat; what have they to say about Force, about Movement, about Shakti?

And the first thing we have to ask ourselves is whether that Force is simply force, simply an unintelligent energy of movement or whether the consciousness which seems to emerge out of it in this material world we live in, is not merely one of its phenomenal results but rather its own true and secret nature. In Vedantic terms, is Force simply Prakriti, only a movement of action and process, or is Prakriti really power of Chit, in its nature force of creative self-conscience? On this essential problem all the rest hinges.

Appendix II

Conscious Force

They beheld the self-force of the Divine Being deep hidden by its own conscious modes of working.

Swetaswatara Upanishad.*

This is he that is awake in those who sleep.

Katha Upanishad. †

All phenomenal existence resolves itself into Force, into a movement of energy that assumes more or less material, more or less gross or subtle forms for self-presentation to its own experience. In the ancient images by which human thought attempted to make this origin and law of being intelligible and real to itself, this infinite existence of Force was figured as a sea, initially at rest and therefore free from forms, but the first disturbance, the first initiation of movement necessitates the creation of forms and is the seed of a universe.

Matter is the presentation of force which is most easily intelligible to our intelligence, moulded as it is by contacts in Matter to which a mind involved in material brain gives the response. The elementary

* I. 3.
† II. 2. 8.

state of material Force is, in the view of the old Indian physicists, a condition of pure material extension in Space of which the peculiar property is vibration typified to us by the phenomenon of sound. But vibration in this state of ether is not sufficient to create forms. There must first be some obstruction in the flow of the Force ocean, some contraction and expansion, some interplay of vibrations, some impinging of force upon force so as to create a beginning of fixed relations and mutual effects. Material Force modifying its first ethereal status assumes a second, called in the old language the aerial, of which the special property is contact between force and force, contact that is the basis of all material relations. Still we have not as yet real forms but only varying forces. A sustaining principle is needed. This is provided by a third self-modification of the primitive Force of which the principle of light, electricity, fire and heat is for us the characteristic manifestation. Even then, we can have forms of force preserving their own character and peculiar action, but not stable forms of Matter. A fourth state characterised by diffusion and a first medium of permanent attractions and repulsions, termed picturesquely water or the liquid state, and a fifth of cohesion, termed earth or the solid state, complete the necessary elements.

All forms of Matter of which we are aware, all physical things even to the most subtle, are built up by the combination of these five elements. Upon them also depends all our sensible experience; for by reception of vibration comes the sense of sound; by contact of things in a world of vibrations of Force the sense of touch; by the action of light in the forms hatched, outlined, sustained by the force of light and fire and heat the sense of sight; by the fourth element the sense of taste; by the fifth the sense of smell. All is essentially response to vibratory contacts between force and force. In this way the ancient thinkers bridged the gulf between pure Force and its final modifications and satisfied the difficulty which prevents the ordinary human mind from understanding how all these forms which are to his senses so real, solid and durable can be in truth only temporary phenomena and a thing like pure energy, to the senses non-existent, intangible and almost incredible, can be the one permanent cosmic reality.

The problem of consciousness is not solved by this theory; for it does not explain how the contact of vibrations of Force should give rise to conscious sensations. The Sankhyas or analytic thinkers posited therefore behind these five elements two principles which they called Mahat and Ahankara, principles which are really non-material; for the first is nothing but the vast cosmic principle of Force and the other the divisional principle of Ego-formation. Nevertheless, these two principles, as also the principle of intelligence, become active in consciousness not by virtue of Force itself, but by virtue of an inactive Conscious-Soul or souls in which its activities are reflected and by that reflection assume the hue of consciousness.

Such is the explanation of things offered by the school of Indian philosophy which comes nearest to the modern materialistic ideas and which carried the idea of a mechanical or unconscious Force in Nature as far as was possible to a seriously reflective Indian mind. Whatever its defects, its main idea was so indisputable that it came to be generally accepted. However the phenomenon of consciousness may be explained, whether Nature be an inert impulse or a conscious principle, it is certainly Force; the principle of things is a formative movement of energies, all forms are born of meeting and mutual adaptation between unshaped forces, all sensation and action is a response of something in a form of Force to the contacts of other forms of Force. This is the world as we experience it and from this experience we must always start.

Physical analysis of Matter by modern Science has come to the same general conclusion, even if a few last doubts still linger. Intuition and experience confirm this concord of Science and Philosophy. Pure reason finds in it the satisfaction of its own essential conceptions. For even in the view of the world as essentially an act of consciousness, an act is implied and in the act movement of Force, play of Energy. This also, when we examine from within our own experience, proves to be the fundamental nature of the world. All our activities are the play of the triple force of the old philosophies, knowledge-force, desire-force, action-force, and all these prove to be really three streams of one original and identical Power, Adya Shakti. Even our states of rest are only equable state

or equilibrium of the play of her movement.

Movement of Force being admitted as the whole nature of the Cosmos, two questions arise. And first, how did this movement come to take place at all in the bosom of existence? If we suppose it to be not only eternal but the very essence of all existence, the question does not arise. But we have negatived this theory. We are aware of an existence which is not compelled by the movement. How then does this movement alien to its eternal repose come to take place in it? by what cause? by what possibility? by what mysterious impulsion?

The answer most approved by the ancient Indian mind was that Force is inherent in Existence. Shiva and Kali, Brahman and Shakti are one and not two who are separable. Force inherent in existence may be at rest or it may be in motion, but when it is at rest, it exists none the less and is not abolished, diminished or in any way essentially altered. This reply is so entirely rational and in accordance with the nature of things that we need not hesitate to accept it. For it is impossible, because contradictory of reason, to suppose that Force is a thing alien to the one and infinite existence and entered into it from outside or was non-existent and arose in it at some point in Time. Even the Illusionist theory must admit that Maya, the power of self-illusion in Brahman, is potentially eternal in eternal Being and then the sole question is its manifestation or non-manifestation. The Sankhya also asserts the eternal coexistence of Prakriti and Purusha, Nature and Conscious-Soul, and the alternative states of rest or equilibrium of Prakriti and movement or disturbance of equilibrium.

But since Force is thus inherent in existence and it is the nature of Force to have this double or alternative potentiality of rest and movement, that is to say, of self-concentration in Force and self-diffusion in Force, the question of the how of the movement, its possibility, initiating impulsion or impelling cause does not arise. For we can easily, then, conceive that this potentiality must translate itself either as an alternative rhythm of rest and movement succeeding each other in Time or else as an eternal self-concentration of Force in immutable existence with a superficial play of movement, change

and formation like the rising and falling of waves on the surface of the ocean. And this superficial play — we are necessarily speaking in inadequate images — may be either coeval with the self-concentration and itself also eternal or it may begin and end in Time and be resumed by a sort of constant rhythm; it is then not eternal in continuity but eternal in recurrence.

The problem of the how thus eliminated, there presents itself the question of the why. Why should this possibility of a play of movement of Force translate itself at all? why should not Force of existence remain eternally concentrated in itself, infinite, free from all variation and formation? This question also does not arise if we assume Existence to be non-conscious and consciousness only a development of material energy which we wrongly suppose to be immaterial. For then we can say simply that this rhythm is the nature of Force in existence and there is absolutely no reason to seek for a why, a cause, an initial motive or a final purpose for that which is in its nature eternally self-existent. We cannot put that question to eternal self-existence and ask it either why it exists or how it came into existence; neither can we put it to self-force of existence and its inherent nature of impulsion to movement. All that we can then inquire into is its manner of self-manifestation, its principles of movement and formation, its process of evolution. Both Existence and Force being inert, — inert status and inert impulsion, — both of them unconscious and unintelligent, there cannot be any purpose or final goal in evolution or any original cause or intention.

But if we suppose or find Existence to be conscious Being, the problem arises. We may indeed suppose a conscious Being which is subject to its nature of Force, compelled by it and without option as to whether it shall manifest in the universe or remain unmanifest. Such is the cosmic God of the Tantriks and the Mayavadins who is subject to Shakti or Maya, Purusha involved in Maya or controlled by Shakti. But it is obvious that such a God is not the supreme infinite Existence with which we have started. Admittedly, it is only a formulation of Brahman in the cosmos by the Brahman which is itself logically anterior to Shakti or Maya and takes her back into its transcendental being when she ceases from her works. In a

conscious existence which is absolute, independent of its formations, not determined by its works, we must suppose an inherent freedom to manifest or not to manifest the potentiality of movement. A Brahman compelled by Prakriti is not Brahman, but an inert Infinite with an active content in it more powerful than the continent, a conscious hold of Force of whom his Force is master. If we say that it is compelled by itself as Force, by its own nature, we do not get rid of the contradiction, the evasion of our first postulate. We have got back to an Existence which is really nothing but Force, Force at rest or in movement, absolute Force perhaps, but not absolute Being.

It is then necessary to examine into the relation between Force and Consciousness. But what do we mean by the latter term? Ordinarily we mean by it our first obvious idea of a mental waking consciousness such as is possessed by the human being during the major part of his bodily existence, when he is not asleep, stunned or otherwise deprived of his physical and superficial methods of sensation. In this sense it is plain enough that consciousness is the exception and not the rule in the order of the material universe. We ourselves do not always possess it. But this vulgar and shallow idea of the nature of consciousness, though it still colours our ordinary thought and associations, must now definitely disappear out of philosophical thinking. For we know that there is something in us which is conscious when we sleep, when we are stunned or drugged or in a swoon, in all apparently unconscious states of our physical being. Not only so, but we may now be sure that the old thinkers were right when they declared that even in our waking state what we call then our consciousness is only a small selection from our entire conscious being. It is a superficies, it is not even the whole of our mentality. Behind it, much vaster than it, there is a subliminal or subconscient mind which is the greater part of ourselves and contains heights and profundities which no man has yet measured or fathomed. This knowledge gives us a starting-point for the true science of Force and its workings; it delivers us definitely from circumscription by the material and from the illusion of the obvious.

Materialism indeed insists that, whatever the extension of consciousness, it is a material phenomenon inseparable from our physical organs and not their utiliser but their result. This orthodox contention, however, is no longer able to hold the field against the tide of increasing knowledge. Its explanations are becoming more and more inadequate and strained. It is becoming always clearer that not only does the capacity of our total consciousness far exceed that of our organs, the senses, the nerves, the brain, but that even for our ordinary thought and consciousness these organs are only their habitual instruments and not their generators. Consciousness uses the brain which its upward strivings have produced, brain has not produced nor does it use the consciousness. There are even abnormal instances which go to prove that our organs are not entirely indispensable instruments, — that the heart-beats are not absolutely essential to life, any more than is breathing, nor the organised brain-cells to thought. Our physical organism no more causes or explains thought and consciousness than the construction of an engine causes or explains the motive-power of steam or electricity. The force is anterior, not the physical instrument.

Momentous logical consequences follow. In the first place we may ask whether, since even mental consciousness exists where we see inanimation and inertia, it is not possible that even in material objects a universal subconscient mind is present although unable to act or communicate itself to its surfaces for want of organs. Is the material state an emptiness of consciousness, or is it not rather only a sleep of consciousness — even though from the point of view of evolution an original and not an intermediate sleep? And by sleep the human example teaches us that we mean not a suspension of consciousness, but its gathering inward away from conscious physical response to the impacts of external things. And is not this what all existence is that has not yet developed means of outward communication with the external physical world? Is there not a Conscious Soul, a Purusha who wakes for ever even in all that sleeps?

We may go farther. When we speak of subconscious mind, we should mean by the phrase a thing not different from the outer

mentality, but only acting below the surface, unknown to the waking man, in the same sense if perhaps with a deeper plunge and a larger scope. But the phenomena of the subliminal self far exceed the limits of any such definition. It includes an action not only immensely superior in capacity, but quite different in kind from what we know as mentality in our waking self. We have therefore a right to suppose that there is a superconscient in us as well as a subconscient, a range of conscious faculties and therefore an organisation of consciousness which rise high above that psychological stratum to which we give the name of mentality. And since the subliminal self in us thus rises in superconscience above mentality, may it not also sink in subconscience below mentality? Are there not in us and in the world forms of consciousness which are submental, to which we can give the name of vital and physical consciousness? If so, we must suppose in the plant and the metal also a force to which we can give the name of consciousness although it is not the human or animal mentality for which we have hitherto preserved the monopoly of that description.

Not only is this probable but, if we will consider things dispassionately, it is certain. In ourselves there is such a vital consciousness which acts in the cells of the body and the automatic vital functions so that we go through purposeful movements and obey attractions and repulsions to which our mind is a stranger. In animals this vital consciousness is an even more important factor. In plants it is intuitively evident. The seekings and shrinkings of the plant, its pleasure and pain, its sleep and its wakefulness and all that strange life whose truth an Indian scientist has brought to light by rigidly scientific methods, are all movements of consciousness, but, as far as we can see, not of mentality. There is then a sub-mental, a vital consciousness which has precisely the same initial reactions as the mental, but is different in the constitution of its self-experience, even as that which is superconscient is in the constitution of its self-experience different from the mental being.

Does the range of what we can call consciousness cease with the plant, with that in which we recognise the existence of a sub-animal life? If so, we must then suppose that there is a force of life and

consciousness originally alien to Matter which has yet entered into and occupied Matter, — perhaps from another world.* For whence, otherwise, can it have come? The ancient thinkers believed in the existence of such other worlds, which perhaps sustain life and consciousness in ours or even call it out by their pressure, but do not create it by their entry. Nothing can evolve out of Matter which is not therein already contained.

But there is no reason to suppose that the gamut of life and consciousness fails and stops short in that which seems to us purely material. The development of recent research and thought seems to point to a sort of obscure beginning of life and perhaps a sort of inert or suppressed consciousness in the metal and in the earth and in other "inanimate" forms, or at least the first stuff of what becomes consciousness in us may be there. Only while in the plant we can dimly recognise and conceive the thing that I have called vital consciousness, the consciousness of Matter, of the inert form, is difficult indeed for us to understand or imagine, and what we find it difficult to understand or imagine we consider it our right to deny. Nevertheless, when one has pursued consciousness so far into the depths, it becomes incredible that there should be this sudden gulf in Nature. Thought has a right to suppose a unity where that unity is confessed by all other classes of phenomena and in one class only, not denied, but merely more concealed than in others. And if we suppose the unity to be unbroken, we then arrive at the existence of consciousness in all forms of the Force which is at work in the world. Even if there be no conscient or superconscient Purusha inhabiting all forms, yet is there in those forms a conscious force of being of which even their outer parts overtly or inertly partake.

Necessarily, in such a view, the word consciousness changes its meaning. It is no longer synonymous with mentality but indicates a self-aware force of existence of which mentality is a middle term; below mentality it sinks into vital and material movements which

* The curious speculation is now current that Life entered earth not from another world, but from another planet. To the thinker that would explain nothing. The essential question is how Life comes into Matter at all and not how it enters into the matter of a particular planet.

are for us subconscient; above, it rises into the supramental which is for us the superconscient. But in all it is one and the same thing organising itself differently. This is, once more, the Indian conception of Chit which, as energy, creates the worlds. Essentially, we arrive at that unity which materialistic Science perceives from the other end when it asserts that Mind cannot be another force than Matter, but must be merely development and outcome of material energy. Indian thought at its deepest affirms on the other hand that Mind and Matter are rather different grades of the same energy, different organisations of one conscious Force of Existence.

But what right have we to assume consciousness as the just description for this Force? For consciousness implies some kind of intelligence, purposefulness, self-knowledge, even though they may not take the forms habitual to our mentality. Even from this point of view everything supports rather than contradicts the idea of a universal conscious Force. We see, for instance, in the animal, operations of a perfect purposefulness and an exact, indeed a scientifically minute knowledge which are quite beyond the capacities of the animal mentality and which man himself can only acquire by long culture and education and even then uses with a much less sure rapidity. We are entitled to see in this general fact the proof of a conscious Force at work in the animal and the insect which is more intelligent, more purposeful, more aware of its intention, its ends, its means, its conditions than the highest mentality yet manifested in any individual form on earth. And in the operations of inanimate Nature we find the same pervading characteristic of a supreme hidden intelligence, "hidden in the modes of its own workings".

The only argument against a conscious and intelligent source for this purposeful work, this work of intelligence, of selection, adaptation and seeking is that large element in Nature's operations to which we give the name of waste. But obviously this is an objection based on the limitations of our human intellect which seeks to impose its own particular rationality, good enough for limited human ends, on the general operations of the World-Force. We see only part of Nature's purpose and all that does not subserve that part

we call waste. Yet even our own human action is full of an apparent waste, so appearing from the individual point of view, which yet, we may be sure, subserves well enough the large and universal purpose of things. That part of her intention which we can detect, Nature gets done surely enough in spite of, perhaps really by virtue of her apparent waste. We may well trust to her in the rest which we do not yet detect.

For the rest, it is impossible to ignore the drive of set purpose, the guidance of apparent blind tendency, the sure eventual or immediate coming to the target sought, which characterise the operations of World-Force in the animal, in the plant, in inanimate things. So long as Matter was Alpha and Omega to the scientific mind, the reluctance to admit intelligence as the mother of intelligence was an honest scruple. But now it is no more than an outworn paradox to affirm the emergence of human consciousness, intelligence and mastery out of an unintelligent, blindly driving unconsciousness in which no form or substance of them previously existed. Man's consciousness can be nothing else than a form of Nature's consciousness. It is there in other involved forms below Mind, it emerges in Mind, it shall ascend into yet superior forms beyond Mind. For the Force that builds the worlds is a conscious Force, the Existence which manifests itself in them is conscious Being and a perfect emergence of its potentialities in form is the sole object which we can rationally conceive for its manifestation of this world of forms.

Appendix III

Delight of Existence: The Problem

For who could live or breathe if there were not this delight of existence as the ether in which we dwell?

From Delight all these beings are born, by Delight they exist and grow, to Delight they return.

Taittiriya Upanishad.*

But even if we accept this pure Existence, this Brahman, this Sat as the absolute beginning, end and continent of things and in Brahman an inherent self-consciousness inseparable from its being and throwing itself out as a force of movement of consciousness which is creative of forces, forms and worlds, we have yet no answer to the question "Why should Brahman, perfect, absolute, infinite, needing nothing, desiring nothing, at all throw out force of consciousness to create in itself these worlds of forms?" For we have put aside the solution that it is compelled by its own nature of Force to create, obliged by its own potentiality of movement and formation to move into forms. It is true that it has this potentiality, but it is not limited, bound or compelled by it; it is free. If, then, being free to move or remain eternally still, to throw itself into forms or retain the potentiality of form in itself, it indulges its power of movement and formation, it can be only for one reason, for delight.

This primary, ultimate and eternal Existence, as seen by the Vedantins, is not merely bare existence, or a conscious existence

* II. 7; III. 6.

whose consciousness is crude force or power; it is a conscious existence the very term of whose being, the very term of whose consciousness is bliss. As in absolute existence there can be no nothingness, no night of inconscience, no deficiency, that is to say, no failure of Force, — for if there were any of these things, it would not be absolute, — so also there can be no suffering, no negation of delight. Absoluteness of conscious existence is illimitable bliss of conscious existence; the two are only different phrases for the same thing. All illimitableness, all infinity, all absoluteness is pure delight. Even our relative humanity has this experience that all dissatisfaction means a limit, an obstacle, — satisfaction comes by realisation of something withheld, by the surpassing of the limit, the overcoming of the obstacle. This is because our original being is the absolute in full possession of its infinite and illimitable self-consciousness and self-power; a self-possession whose other name is self-delight. And in proportion as the relative touches upon that self-possession, it moves towards satisfaction, touches delight.

The self-delight of Brahman is not limited, however, by the still and motionless possession of its absolute self-being. Just as its force of consciousness is capable of throwing itself into forms infinitely and with an endless variation, so also its self-delight is capable of movement, of variation, of revelling in that infinite flux and mutability of itself represented by numberless teeming universes. To loose forth and enjoy this infinite movement and variation of its self-delight is the object of its extensive or creative play of Force.

In other words, that which has thrown itself out into forms is a triune Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, Sachchidananda, whose consciousness is in its nature a creative or rather a self-expressive Force capable of infinite variation in phenomenon and form of its self-conscious being and endlessly enjoying the delight of that variation. It follows that all things that exist are what they are as terms of that existence, terms of that conscious force, terms of that delight of being. Just as we find all things to be mutable forms of one immutable being, finite results of one infinite force, so we shall find that all things are variable self-expression of one invariable and all-embracing delight of self-existence. In everything that is, dwells

the conscious force and it exists and is what it is by virtue of that conscious force; so also in everything that is there is the delight of existence and it exists and is what it is by virtue of that delight.

This ancient Vedantic theory of cosmic origin is immediately confronted in the human mind by two powerful contradictions, the emotional and sensational consciousness of pain and the ethical problem of evil. For if the world be an expression of Sachchidananda, not only of existence that is conscious-force, — for that can easily be admitted, — but of existence that is also infinite self-delight, how are we to account for the universal presence of grief, of suffering, of pain? For this world appears to us rather as a world of suffering than as a world of the delight of existence. Certainly, that view of the world is an exaggeration, an error of perspective. If we regard it dispassionately and with a sole view to accurate and unemotional appreciation, we shall find that the sum of the pleasure of existence far exceeds the sum of the pain of existence, — appearances and individual cases to the contrary notwithstanding, — and that the active or passive, surface or underlying pleasure of existence is the normal state of nature, pain a contrary occurrence temporarily suspending or overlaying that normal state. But for that very reason the lesser sum of pain affects us more intensely and often looms larger than the greater sum of pleasure; precisely because the latter is normal, we do not treasure it, hardly even observe it unless it intensifies into some acuter form of itself, into a wave of happiness, a crest of joy or ecstasy. It is these things that we call delight and seek and the normal satisfaction of existence which is always there regardless of event and particular cause or object, affects us as something neutral which is neither pleasure nor pain. It is there, a great practical fact, for without it there would not be the universal and overpowering instinct of self-preservation, but it is not what we seek and therefore we do not enter it into our balance of emotional and sensational profit and loss. In that balance we enter only positive pleasures on one side and discomfort and pain on the other; pain affects us more intensely because it is abnormal to our being, contrary to our natural tendency and is experienced as an outrage on our existence, an offence and external attack on

what we are and seek to be.

Nevertheless the abnormality of pain or its greater or lesser sum does not affect the philosophical issue; greater or less, its mere presence constitutes the whole problem. All being Sachchidananda, how can pain and suffering at all exist? This, the real problem, is often farther confused by a false issue starting from the idea of a personal extracosmic God and a partial issue, the ethical difficulty.

Sachchidananda, it may be reasoned, is God, is a conscious Being who is the author of existence; how then can God have created a world in which He inflicts suffering on His creatures, sanctions pain, permits evil? God being All-Good, who created pain and evil? If we say that pain is a trial and an ordeal, we do not solve the moral problem, we arrive at an immoral or non-moral God, — an excellent world-mechanist perhaps, a cunning psychologist, but not a God of Good and of Love whom we can worship, only a God of Might to whose law we must submit or whose caprice we may hope to propitiate. For one who invents torture as a means of test or ordeal, stands convicted either of deliberate cruelty or of moral insensibility and, if a moral being at all, is inferior to the highest instinct of his own creatures. And if to escape this moral difficulty, we say that pain is an inevitable result and natural punishment of moral evil, — an explanation which will not even square with the facts of life unless we admit the theory of Karma and rebirth by which the soul suffers now for antenatal sins in other bodies, — we still do not escape the very root of the ethical problem, — who created or why or whence was created that moral evil which entails the punishment of pain and suffering? And seeing that moral evil is in reality a form of mental disease or ignorance, who or what created this law or inevitable connection which punishes a mental disease or act of ignorance by a recoil so terrible, by tortures often so extreme and monstrous? The inexorable law of Karma is irreconcilable with a supreme moral and personal Deity, and therefore the clear logic of Buddha denied the existence of any free and all-governing personal God; all personality he declared to be a creation of ignorance and subject to Karma.

In truth, the difficulty thus sharply presented arises only if we

assume the existence of an extracosmic personal God, not Himself the universe, one who has created good and evil, pain and suffering for His creatures, but Himself stands above and unaffected by them, watching, ruling, doing His will with a suffering and struggling world or, if not doing His will, if allowing the world to be driven by an inexorable law, unhelped by Him or inefficiently helped, then not God, not omnipotent, not all-good and all-loving. On no theory of an extracosmic moral God, can evil and suffering be explained,— the creation of evil and suffering, — except by an unsatisfactory subterfuge which avoids the question at issue instead of answering it or a plain or implied Manicheanism which practically annuls the Godhead in attempting to justify its ways or excuse its works. But such a God is not the Vedantic Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda of the Vedanta is one existence without a second; all that is, is He. If then evil and suffering exist, it is He that bears the evil and suffering in the creature in whom He has embodied Himself. The problem then changes entirely. The question is no longer how came God to create for His creatures a suffering and evil of which He is Himself incapable and therefore immune, but how came the sole and infinite Existence-Consciousness-Bliss to admit into itself that which is not bliss, that which seems to be its positive negation.

Half of the moral difficulty — that difficulty in its one unanswerable form disappears. It no longer arises, can no longer be put. Cruelty to others, I remaining immune or even participating in their sufferings by subsequent repentance or belated pity, is one thing; self-infliction of suffering, I being the sole existence, is quite another. Still the ethical difficulty may be brought back in a modified form; All-Delight being necessarily all-good and all-love, how can evil and suffering exist in Sachchidananda, since he is not mechanical existence, but free and conscious being, free to condemn and reject evil and suffering? We have to recognise that the issue so stated is also a false issue because it applies the terms of a partial statement as if they were applicable to the whole. For the ideas of good and of love which we thus bring into the concept of the All-Delight spring from a dualistic and divisional conception of things; they are based entirely on the relations between creature and creature, yet we

persist in applying them to a problem which starts, on the contrary, from the assumption of One who is all. We have to see first how the problem appears or how it can be solved in its original purity, on the basis of unity in difference; only then can we safely deal with its parts and its developments, such as the relations between creature and creature on the basis of division and duality.

We have to recognise, if we thus view the whole, not limiting ourselves to the human difficulty and the human standpoint, that we do not live in an ethical world. The attempt of human thought to force an ethical meaning into the whole of Nature is one of those acts of wilful and obstinate self-confusion, one of those pathetic attempts of the human being to read himself, his limited habitual human self into all things and judge them from the standpoint he has personally evolved, which most effectively prevent him from arriving at real knowledge and complete sight. Material Nature is not ethical; the law which governs it is a co-ordination of fixed habits which take no cognisance of good and evil, but only of force that creates, force that arranges and preserves, force that disturbs and destroys impartially, non-ethically, according to the secret Will in it, according to the mute satisfaction of that Will in its own self-formations and self-dissolutions. Animal or vital Nature is also non-ethical, although as it progresses it manifests the crude material out of which the higher animal evolves the ethical impulse. We do not blame the tiger because it slays and devours its prey any more than we blame the storm because it destroys or the fire because it tortures and kills; neither does the conscious-force in the storm, the fire or the tiger blame or condemn itself. Blame and condemnation, or rather self-blame and self-condemnation, are the beginning of true ethics. When we blame others without applying the same law to ourselves, we are not speaking with a true ethical judgment, but only applying the language ethics has evolved for us to an emotional impulse of recoil from or dislike of that which displeases or hurts us.

This recoil or dislike is the primary origin of ethics, but is not itself ethical. The fear of the deer for the tiger, the rage of the strong creature against its assailant is a vital recoil of the individual

delight of existence from that which threatens it. In the progress of the mentality it refines itself into repugnance, dislike, disapproval. Disapproval of that which threatens and hurts us, approval of that which flatters and satisfies refine into the conception of good and evil to oneself, to the community, to others than ourselves, to other communities than ours, and finally into the general approval of good, the general disapproval of evil.

But, throughout, the fundamental nature of the thing remains the same. Man desires self-expression, self-development, in other words, the progressing play in himself of the conscious-force of existence; that is his fundamental delight. Whatever hurts that self-expression, self-development, satisfaction of his progressing self, is for him evil; whatever helps, confirms, raises, aggrandises, ennobles it is his good. Only, his conception of the self-development changes, becomes higher and wider, begins to exceed his limited personality, to embrace others, to embrace all in its scope.

In other words, ethics is a stage in evolution. That which is common to all stages is the urge of Sachchidananda towards self-expression. This urge is at first non-ethical, then infra-ethical in the animal, then in the intelligent animal even anti-ethical for it permits us to approve hurt done to others which we disapprove when done to ourselves. In this respect man even now is only half-ethical. And just as all below us is infra-ethical, so there may be that above us whither we shall eventually arrive, which is supra-ethical, has no need of ethics. The ethical impulse and attitude, so all-important to humanity, is a means by which it struggles out of the lower harmony and universality based upon inconscience and broken up by Life into individual discords towards a higher harmony and universality based upon conscient oneness with all existences. Arriving at that goal, this means will no longer be necessary or even possible, since the qualities and oppositions on which it depends will naturally dissolve and disappear in the final reconciliation.

If, then, the ethical standpoint applies only to a temporary though all-important passage from one universality to another, we cannot apply it to the total solution of the problem of the universe, but can only admit it as one element in that solution. To do otherwise is to

run into the peril of falsifying all the facts of the universe, all the meaning of the evolution behind and beyond us in order to suit a temporary outlook and a half-evolved view of the utility of things. The world has three layers, infra-ethical, ethical and supra-ethical. We have to find that which is common to all; for only so can we resolve the problem.

That which is common to all is, we have seen, the satisfaction of conscious-force of existence developing itself into forms and seeking in that development its delight. From that satisfaction or delight of self-existence it evidently began; for it is that which is normal to it, to which it clings, which it makes its base; but it seeks new forms of itself and in the passage to higher forms there intervenes the phenomenon of pain and suffering which seems to contradict the fundamental nature of its being. This and this alone is the root-problem.

How shall we solve it? Shall we say that Sachchidananda is not the beginning and end of things, but the beginning and end is Nihil, an impartial void, itself nothing but containing all potentialities of existence or non-existence, consciousness or non-consciousness, delight or undelight? We may accept this answer if we choose; but although we seek thereby to explain everything, we have really explained nothing, we have only included everything. A Nothing which is full of all potentialities is the most complete opposition of terms and things possible and we have therefore only explained a minor contradiction by a major, by driving the self-contradiction of things to their maximum. Nihil is the void, where there can be no potentialities; an impartial indeterminate of all potentialities is Chaos, and all that we have done is to put Chaos into the Void without explaining how it got there. Let us return, then, to our original conception of Sachchidananda and see whether on that foundation a completer solution is not possible.

We must first make it clear to ourselves that just as when we speak of universal consciousness we mean something different from, more essential and wider than the waking mental consciousness of the human being, so also when we speak of universal delight of existence we mean something different from, more essential and

wider than the ordinary emotional and sensational pleasure of the individual human creature. Pleasure, joy and delight, as man uses the words, are limited and occasional movements which depend on certain habitual causes and emerge, like their opposites pain and grief which are equally limited and occasional movements, from a background other than themselves. Delight of being is universal, illimitable and self-existent, not dependent on particular causes, the background of all backgrounds, from which pleasure, pain and other more neutral experiences emerge. When delight of being seeks to realise itself as delight of becoming, it moves in the movement of force and itself takes different forms of movement of which pleasure and pain are positive and negative currents. Subconscient in Matter, superconscient beyond Mind this delight seeks in Mind and Life to realise itself by emergence in the becoming, in the increasing self-consciousness of the movement. Its first phenomena are dual and impure, move between the poles of pleasure and pain, but it aims at its self-revelation in the purity of a supreme delight of being which is self-existent and independent of objects and causes. Just as Sachchidananda moves towards the realisation of the universal existence in the individual and of the form-exceeding consciousness in the form of body and mind, so it moves towards the realisation of universal, self-existent and objectless delight in the flux of particular experiences and objects. Those objects we now seek as stimulating causes of a transient pleasure and satisfaction; free, possessed of self, we shall not seek but shall possess them as reflectors rather than causes of a delight which eternally exists.

In the egoistic human being, the mental person emergent out of the dim shell of matter, delight of existence is neutral, semi-latent, still in the shadow of the subconscious, hardly more than a concealed soil of plenty covered by desire with a luxuriant growth of poisonous weeds and hardly less poisonous flowers, the pains and pleasures of our egoistic existence. When the divine conscious-force working secretly in us has devoured these growths of desire, when in the image of the Rig Veda the fire of God has burnt up the shoots of earth, that which is concealed at the roots of these pains and pleasures, their cause and secret being, the sap of delight in

them, will emerge in new forms not of desire, but of self-existent satisfaction which will replace mortal pleasure by the Immortal's ecstasy. And this transformation is possible because these growths of sensation and emotion are in their essential being, the pains no less than the pleasures, that delight of existence which they seek but fail to reveal, — fail because of division, ignorance of self and egoism.

Appendix IV

Delight of Existence: The Solution

> The name of That is the Delight; as the Delight we must worship and seek after It.
>
> Kena Upanishad.*

In this conception of an inalienable underlying delight of existence of which all outward or surface sensations are a positive, negative or neutral play, waves and foamings of that infinite deep, we arrive at the true solution of the problem we are examining. The self of things is an infinite indivisible existence; of that existence the essential nature or power is an infinite imperishable force of self-conscious being; and of that self-consciousness the essential nature or knowledge of itself is, again, an infinite inalienable delight of being. In formlessness and in all forms, in the eternal awareness of infinite and indivisible being and in the multiform appearances of finite division this self-existence preserves perpetually its self-delight. As in the apparent inconscience of Matter our soul, growing out of its bondage to its own superficial habit and particular mode of self-conscious existence, discovers that infinite Conscious-Force constant, immobile, brooding, so in the apparent non-sensation of Matter it comes to discover and attune itself to an infinite conscious Delight imperturbable, ecstatic, all-embracing. This delight is its own delight, this self is its own self in all; but to our ordinary view of self and things which awakes and moves only upon surfaces, it remains hidden, profound, subconscious. And as it

* IV. 6.

is within all forms, so it is within all experiences whether pleasant, painful or neutral. There too hidden, profound, subconscious, it is that which enables and compels things to remain in existence. It is the reason of that clinging to existence, that overmastering will-to-be, translated vitally as the instinct of self-preservation, physically as the imperishability of matter, mentally as the sense of immortality which attends the formed existence through all its phases of self-development and of which even the occasional impulse of self-destruction is only a reverse form, an attraction to other state of being and a consequent recoil from present state of being. Delight is existence, Delight is the secret of creation, Delight is the root of birth, Delight is the cause of remaining in existence, Delight is the end of birth and that into which creation ceases. "From Ananda," says the Upanishad, "all existences are born, by Ananda they remain in being and increase, to Ananda they depart."

As we look at these three aspects of essential Being, one in reality, triune to our mental view, separable only in appearance, in the phenomena of the divided consciousness, we are able to put in their right place the divergent formulae of the old philosophies so that they unite and become one, ceasing from their agelong controversy. For if we regard world-existence only in its appearances and only in its relation to pure, infinite, indivisible, immutable Existence, we are entitled to regard it, describe it and realise it as Maya. Maya in its original sense meant a comprehending and containing consciousness capable of embracing, measuring and limiting and therefore formative; it is that which outlines, measures out, moulds forms in the formless, psychologises and seems to make knowable the Unknowable, geometrises and seems to make measurable the limitless. Later the word came from its original sense of knowledge, skill, intelligence to acquire a pejorative sense of cunning, fraud or illusion, and it is in the figure of an enchantment or illusion that it is used by the philosophical systems.

World is Maya. World is not unreal in the sense that it has no sort of existence; for even if it were only a dream of the Self, still it would exist in It as a dream, real to It in the present even while ultimately unreal. Nor ought we to say that world is unreal in the sense that it

has no kind of eternal existence; for although particular worlds and particular forms may or do dissolve physically and return mentally from the consciousness of manifestation into the non-manifestation, yet Form in itself, World in itself are eternal. From the non-manifestation they return inevitably into manifestation; they have an eternal recurrence if not an eternal persistence, an eternal immutability in sum and foundation along with an eternal mutability in aspect and apparition. Nor have we any surety that there ever was or ever will be a period in Time when no form of universe, no play of being is represented to itself in the eternal Conscious-Being, but only an intuitive perception that the world that we know can and does appear from That and return into It perpetually.

Still world is Maya because it is not the essential truth of infinite existence, but only a creation of self-conscious being, — not a creation in the void, not a creation in nothing and out of nothing, but in the eternal Truth and out of the eternal Truth of that Self-being; its continent, origin and substance are the essential, real Existence, its forms are mutable formations of That to Its own conscious perception, determined by Its own creative conscious-force. They are capable of manifestation, capable of non-manifestation, capable of other-manifestation. We may, if we choose, call them therefore illusions of the infinite consciousness thus audaciously flinging back a shadow of our mental sense of subjection to error and incapacity upon that which, being greater than Mind, is beyond subjection to falsehood and illusion. But seeing that the essence and substance of Existence is not a lie and that all errors and deformations of our divided consciousness represent some truth of the indivisible self-conscious Existence, we can only say that the world is not essential truth of That, but phenomenal truth of Its free multiplicity and infinite superficial mutability and not truth of Its fundamental and immutable Unity.

If, on the other hand, we look at world-existence in relation to consciousness only and to force of consciousness, we may regard, describe and realise it as a movement of Force obeying some secret will or else some necessity imposed on it by the very existence of the Consciousness that possesses or regards it. It is then the

play of Prakriti, the executive Force, to satisfy Purusha, the regarding and enjoying Conscious-Being or it is the play of Purusha reflected in the movements of Force and with them identifying himself. World, then, is the play of the Mother of things moved to cast Herself for ever into infinite forms and avid of eternally outpouring experiences.

Again if we look at World-Existence rather in its relation to the self-delight of eternally existent being, we may regard, describe and realise it as Lila, the play, the child's joy, the poet's joy, the actor's joy, the mechanician's joy of the Soul of things eternally young, perpetually inexhaustible, creating and re-creating Himself in Himself for the sheer bliss of that self-creation, of that self-representation, — Himself the play, Himself the player, Himself the playground. These three generalisations of the play of existence in its relation to the eternal and stable, the immutable Sachchidananda, starting from the three conceptions of Maya, Prakriti and Lila and representing themselves in our philosophical systems as mutually contradictory philosophies, are in reality perfectly consistent with each other, complementary and necessary in their totality to an integral view of life and the world. The world of which we are a part is in its most obvious view a movement of Force; but that Force, when we penetrate its appearances, proves to be a constant and yet always mutable rhythm of creative consciousness casting up, projecting in itself phenomenal truths of its own infinite and eternal being; and this rhythm is in its essence, cause and purpose a play of the infinite delight of being ever busy with its own innumerable self-representations. This triple or triune view must be the starting-point for all our understanding of the universe.

Since, then, eternal and immutable delight of being moving out into infinite and variable delight of becoming is the root of the whole matter, we have to conceive one indivisible conscious Being behind all our experiences supporting them by its inalienable delight and effecting by its movement the varlations of pleasure, pain and neutral indifference in our sensational existence. That is our real self; the mental being subject to the triple vibration can only be a representation of our real self put in front for the purposes of

that sensational experience of things which is the first rhythm of our divided consciousness in its response and reaction to the multiple contacts of the universe. It is an imperfect response, a tangled and discordant rhythm preparing and preluding the full and unified play of the conscious Being in us; it is not the true and perfect symphony that may be ours if we can once enter into sympathy with the One in all variations and attune ourselves to the absolute and universal diapason.

If this view be right, then certain consequences inevitably impose themselves. In the first place, since in our depths we ourselves are that One, since in the reality of our being we are the indivisible All-Consciousness and therefore the inalienable All-Bliss, the disposition of our sensational experience in the three vibrations of pain, pleasure and indifference can only be a superficial arrangement created by that limited part of ourselves which is uppermost in our waking consciousness. Behind there must be something in us, — much vaster, profounder, truer than the superficial consciousness, — which takes delight impartially in all experiences; it is that delight which secretly supports the superficial mental being and enables it to persevere through all labours, sufferings and ordeals in the agitated movement of the Becoming. That which we call ourselves is only a trembling ray on the surface; behind is all the vast subconscient, the vast superconscient profiting by all these surface experiences and imposing them on its external self which it exposes as a sort of sensitive covering to the contacts of the world; itself veiled, it receives these contacts and assimilates them into the values of a truer, a profounder, a mastering and creative experience. Out of its depths it returns them to the surface in forms of strength, character, knowledge, impulsion whose roots are mysterious to us because our mind moves and quivers on the surface and has not learned to concentrate itself and live in the depths.

In our ordinary life this truth is hidden from us or only dimly glimpsed at times or imperfectly held and conceived. But if we learn to live within, we infallibly awaken to this presence within us which is our more real self, a presence profound, calm, joyous and puissant of which the world is not the master — a presence which, if

it is not the Lord Himself, is the radiation of the Lord within. We are aware of it within supporting and helping the apparent and superficial self and smiling at its pleasures and pains as at the error and passion of a little child. And if we can go back into ourselves and identify ourselves, not with our superficial experience, but with that radiant penumbra of the Divine, we can live in that attitude towards the contacts of the world and, standing back in our entire consciousness from the pleasures and pains of the body, vital being and mind, possess them as experiences whose nature being superficial does not touch or impose itself on our core and real being. In the entirely expressive Sanskrit terms, there is an *ānandamaya* behind the *manomaya*, a vast Bliss-Self behind the limited mental self, and the latter is only a shadowy image and disturbed reflection of the former. The truth of ourselves lies within and not on the surface.

Again this triple vibration of pleasure, pain, indifference, being superficial, being an arrangement and result of our imperfect evolution, can have in it no absoluteness, no necessity. There is no real obligation on us to return to a particular contact, a particular response of pleasure, pain or neutral reaction, there is only an obligation of habit. We feel pleasure or pain in a particular contact because that is the habit our nature has formed, because that is the constant relation the recipient has established with the contact. It is within our competence to return quite the opposite response, pleasure where we used to have pain, pain where we used to have pleasure. It is equally within our competence to accustom the superficial being to return instead of the mechanical reactions of pleasure, pain and indifference that free reply of inalienable delight which is the constant experience of the true and vast Bliss-Self within us. And this is a greater conquest, a still deeper and more complete self-possession than a glad and detached reception in the depths of the habitual reactions on the surface. For it is no longer a mere acceptance without subjection, a free acquiescence in imperfect values of experience, but enables us to convert imperfect into perfect, false into true values, — the constant but veritable delight of the Spirit in things taking the place of the dualities experienced

by the mental being.

In the things of the mind this pure habitual relativity of the reactions of pleasure and pain is not difficult to perceive. The nervous being in us, indeed, is accustomed to a certain fixedness, a false impression of absoluteness in these things. To it victory, success, honour, good fortune of all kinds are pleasant things in themselves, absolutely, and must produce joy as sugar must taste sweet; defeat, failure, disappointment, disgrace, evil fortune of all kinds are unpleasant things in themselves, absolutely, and must produce grief as wormwood must taste bitter. To vary these responses is to it a departure from fact, abnormal and morbid; for the nervous being is a thing enslaved to habit and in itself the means devised by Nature for fixing constancy of reaction, sameness of experience, the settled scheme of man's relations to life. The mental being on the other hand is free, for it is the means she has devised for flexibility and variation, for change and progress; it is subject only so long as it chooses to remain subject, to dwell in one mental habit rather than in another or so long as it allows itself to be dominated by its nervous instrument. It is not bound to be grieved by defeat, disgrace, loss: it can meet these things and all things with a perfect indifference; it can even meet them with a perfect gladness. Therefore man finds that the more he refuses to be dominated by his nerves and body, the more he draws back from implication of himself in his physical and vital parts, the greater is his freedom. He becomes the master of his own responses to the world's contacts, no longer the slave of external touches.

In regard to physical pleasure and pain, it is more difficult to apply the universal truth; for this is the very domain of the nerves and the body, the centre and seat of that in us whose nature is to be dominated by external contact and external pressure. Even here, however, we have glimpses of the truth. We see it in the fact that according to the habit the same physical contact can be either pleasurable or painful, not only to different individuals, but to the same individual under different conditions or at different stages of his development. We see it in the fact that men in periods of great excitement or high exaltation remain physically indifferent to

pain or unconscious of pain under contacts which ordinarily would inflict severe torture or suffering. In many cases it is only when the nerves are able to reassert themselves and remind the mentality of its habitual obligation to suffer that the sense of suffering returns. But this return to the habitual obligation is not inevitable; it is only habitual. We see that in the phenomena of hypnosis not only can the hypnotised subject be successfully forbidden to feel the pain of a wound or puncture when in the abnormal state, but can be prevented with equal success from returning to his habitual reaction of suffering when he is awakened. The reason of this phenomenon is perfectly simple; it is because the hypnotiser suspends the habitual waking consciousness which is the slave of nervous habits and is able to appeal to the subliminal mental being in the depths, the inner mental being who is master, if he wills, of the nerves and the body. But this freedom which is effected by hypnosis abnormally, rapidly, without true possession, by an alien will, may equally be won normally, gradually, with true possession, by one's own will so as to effect partially or completely a victory of the mental being over the habitual nervous reactions of the body.

Pain of mind and body is a device of Nature, that is to say, of Force in her works, meant to subserve a definite transitional end in her upward evolution. The world is from the point of view of the individual a play and complex shock of multitudinous forces. In the midst of this complex play the individual stands as a limited constructed being with a limited amount of force exposed to numberless shocks which may wound, maim, break up or disintegrate the construction which he calls himself. Pain is in the nature of a nervous and physical recoil from a dangerous or harmful contact; it is a part of what the Upanishad calls *jugupsā*, the shrinking of the limited being from that which is not himself and not sympathetic or in harmony with himself, its impulse of self-defence against "others". It is, from this point of view, an indication by Nature of that which has to be avoided or, if not successfully avoided, has to be remedied. It does not come into being in the purely physical world so long as life does not enter into it; for till then mechanical methods are sufficient. Its office begins when life with its frailty and

imperfect possession of Matter enters on the scene; it grows with the growth of Mind in life. Its office continues so long as Mind is bound in the life and body which it is using, dependent upon them for its knowledge and means of action, subjected to their limitations and to the egoistic impulses and aims which are born of those limitations. But if and when Mind in man becomes capable of being free, unegoistic, in harmony with all other beings and with the play of the universal forces, the use and office of suffering diminishes, its *raison d'être* must finally cease to be and it can only continue as an atavism of Nature, a habit that has survived its use, a persistence of the lower in the as yet imperfect organisation of the higher. Its eventual elimination must be an essential point in the destined conquest of the soul over subjection to Matter and egoistic limitation in Mind.

This elimination is possible because pain and pleasure themselves are currents, one imperfect, the other perverse, but still currents of the delight of existence. The reason for this imperfection and this perversion is the self-division of the being in his consciousness by measuring and limiting Maya and in consequence an egoistic and piecemeal instead of a universal reception of contacts by the individual. For the universal soul all things and all contacts of things carry in them an essence of delight best described by the Sanskrit aesthetic term, *rasa*, which means at once sap or essence of a thing and its taste. It is because we do not seek the essence of the thing in its contact with us, but look only to the manner in which it affects our desires and fears, our cravings and shrinkings that grief and pain, imperfect and transient pleasure or indifference, that is to say, blank inability to seize the essence, are the forms taken by the Rasa. If we could be entirely disinterested in mind and heart and impose that detachment on the nervous being, the progressive elimination of these imperfect and perverse forms of Rasa would be possible and the true essential taste of the inalienable delight of existence in all its variations would be within our reach. We attain to something of this capacity for variable but universal delight in the aesthetic reception of things as represented by Art and Poetry, so that we enjoy there the Rasa or taste of the sorrowful, the terrible,

even the horrible or repellent;* and the reason is because we are detached, disinterested, not thinking of ourselves or of self-defence (*jugupsā*), but only of the thing and its essence. Certainly, this aesthetic reception of contacts is not a precise image or reflection of the pure delight which is supramental and supra-aesthetic; for the latter would eliminate sorrow, terror, horror and disgust with their cause while the former admits them: but it represents partially and imperfectly one stage of the progressive delight of the universal Soul in things in its manifestation and it admits us in one part of our nature to that detachment from egoistic sensation and that universal attitude through which the one Soul sees harmony and beauty where we divided beings experience rather chaos and discord. The full liberation can come to us only by a similar liberation in all our parts, the universal aesthesis, the universal standpoint of knowledge, the universal detachment from all things and yet sympathy with all in our nervous and emotional being.

Since the nature of suffering is a failure of the conscious-force in us to meet the shocks of existence and a consequent shrinking and contraction and its root is an inequality of that receptive and possessing force due to our self-limitation by egoism consequent on the ignorance of our true Self, of Sachchidananda, the elimination of suffering must first proceed by the substitution of *titikṣā*, the facing, enduring and conquest of all shocks of existence for *jugupsā*, the shrinking and contraction: by this endurance and conquest we proceed to an equality which may be either an equal indifference to all contacts or an equal gladness in all contacts; and this equality again must find a firm foundation in the substitution of the Sachchidananda consciousness which is All-Bliss for the ego-consciousness which enjoys and suffers. The Sachchidananda consciousness may be transcendent of the universe and aloof from it, and to this state of distant Bliss the path is equal indifference; it is the path of the ascetic. Or the Sachchidananda consciousness may be at once transcendent and universal; and to this state of

* So termed in Sanskrit Rhetoric, the *karuṇa, bhayānaka* and *bībhatsa* Rasas.

present and all-embracing Bliss the path is surrender and loss of the ego in the universal and possession of an all-pervading equal delight; it is the path of the ancient Vedic sages. But neutrality to the imperfect touches of pleasure and the perverse touches of pain is the first direct and natural result of the soul's self-discipline and the conversion to equal delight can, usually, come only afterwards. The direct transformation of the triple vibration into Ananda is possible, but less easy to the human being.

Such then is the view of the universe which arises out of the integral Vedantic affirmation. An infinite, indivisible existence all-blissful in its pure self-consciousness moves out of its fundamental purity into the varied play of Force that is consciousness, into the movement of Prakriti which is the play of Maya. The delight of its existence is at first self-gathered, absorbed, subconscious in the basis of the physical universe; then emergent in a great mass of neutral movement which is not yet what we call sensation; then further emergent with the growth of mind and ego in the triple vibration of pain, pleasure and indifference originating from the limitation of the force of consciousness in the form and from its exposure to shocks of the universal Force which it finds alien to it and out of harmony with its own measure and standard; finally, the conscious emergence of the full Sachchidananda in its creations by universality, by equality, by self-possession and conquest of Nature. This is the course and movement of the world.

If it then be asked why the One Existence should take delight in such a movement, the answer lies in the fact that all possibilities are inherent in Its infinity and that the delight of existence — in its mutable becoming, not in its immutable being, — lies precisely in the variable realisation of its possibilities. And the possibility worked out here in the universe of which we are a part, begins from the concealment of Sachchidananda in that which seems to be its own opposite and its self-finding even amid the terms of that opposite. Infinite being loses itself in the appearance of non-being and emerges in the appearance of a finite Soul; infinite consciousness loses itself in the appearance of a vast indeterminate inconscience and emerges in the appearance of a superficial limited conscious-

ness; infinite self-sustaining Force loses itself in the appearance of a chaos of atoms and emerges in the appearance of the insecure balance of a world; infinite Delight loses itself in the appearance of an insensible Matter and emerges in the appearance of a discordant rhythm of varied pain, pleasure and neutral feeling, love, hatred and indifference; infinite unity loses itself in the appearance of a chaos of multiplicity and emerges in a discord of forces and beings which seek to recover unity by possessing, dissolving and devouring each other. In this creation the real Sachchidananda has to emerge. Man, the individual, has to become and to live as a universal being; his limited mental consciousness has to widen to the superconscient unity in which each embraces all; his narrow heart has to learn the infinite embrace and replace its lusts and discords by universal love and his restricted vital being to become equal to the whole shock of the universe upon it and capable of universal delight; his very physical being has to know itself as no separate entity but as one with and sustaining in itself the whole flow of the indivisible Force that is all things; his whole nature has to reproduce in the individual the unity, the harmony, the oneness-in-all of the supreme Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

Through all this play the secret reality is always one and the same delight of existence, — the same in the delight of the subconscious sleep before the emergence of the individual, in the delight of the struggle and all the varieties, vicissitudes, perversions, conversions, reversions of the effort to find itself amid the mazes of the half-conscious dream of which the individual is the centre, and in the delight of the eternal superconscient self-possession into which the individual must wake and there become one with the indivisible Sachchidananda. This is the play of the One, the Lord, the All as it reveals itself to our liberated and enlightened knowledge from the conceptive standpoint of this material universe.

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Many students, during their adolescence or as they emerge from adolescence to early years of youth, pass through a period when all they have heard and learnt comes to be questioned. Often they find painfully the absence of a competent guide or mentor who can help them; even books that can be helpful are few, and these students are swayed by influences that tie them down to superficial levels of critical rationality. They are often asked to find proofs and evidence for what they think and feel, but not knowing what constitutes proofs or evidence, begin to flounder.

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