

## SECTION III.

*Kriyā*—ACTION.

## CHAPTER I.

THE RELATION OF ACTION TO KNOWLEDGE

*i.e.* THE VEDAS.

Action as the fruit of cognition and desire.—Right action possible only after right knowledge and right desire, *i.e.*, after mastery of the four *Vedas*, *Rk*, *Yajuh*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva*, corresponding to cognition, desire, action and their summation, respectively.—The fourfold sub-division of each *Veda*, into *Mantra*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Upaniṣat* and *Tantra*, by the same correspondence.—The study of all the four *Vedas* necessary for perfect accomplishment of the four stages of life and the achievement of *mokṣha*.—The fourfold path to *mokṣha*.—The four *āshramas*, governed by the same correspondence.—Their inner significance.

The brief exposition of the nature of *ichchhā* or desire, and *jñāna* or cognition, in the previous section was a partial exposition of the constitution of the *Pranava*. The fruit, the result, of that constitution is *kriyā* or action, to be explained now. (It should be remembered, however that this description of action as the fruit of the constitution of the *Pranava* does not mean

that it falls outside that constitution. The fruit is also within it as the last and completing constituent.)

The triplet of *jñāna*, *ichchhā* and *kriyā*, cognition, desire and action, is all included in the *Pranava*, the AUM. *Jñāna* is *Ātmā*, the Self; *ichchhā*, the expression of the Negation<sup>1</sup>;

<sup>1</sup>This statement, *viz.*, that desire corresponds to Negation, is, at first sight, apt to be very puzzling; desire seems to be something so positive, indeed the root of all positive action. The full significance of the statement will unravel in the course of the book itself, naturally, especially in the chapter on the *Sāma-Veda*. But, in the meanwhile, it may perhaps be helpful to point out that negation hides affirmation within it. The closing paragraphs of the last chapter have an important bearing on this point. When the World-process is summed up in the words 'I-This-Not,' it is described as the eternal and changeless realisation of the Self by Itself in one single act of consciousness, as being 'nothing else than Itself'. In this act of consciousness, the 'else' is denied, negated, is declared to be nothing, but even in the moment of so denying it a false possibility of existence, a pseudo-existence, is given to it, is affirmed of it. Hence Negation becomes the *Shakti*, the Energy, of *affirmation-negation* in the successive procession of the world, from the standpoint of the limited 'else'. And this is the very nature and essence of desire; it affirms and denies; it craves and suffers surfeit; it loves and

while *kriyā*, the modifications or operations of consciousness which appear as doings, actions, movements, should be regarded as equivalent to the whole of *Samsāra*, the World-process. All manifestation takes place only when the actor projects action.

These three, together with the fourth which is their summation, their unity, make the 'four noble truths' of *Brahman*. All these four are declared to be *Brahman*. The four

hates; it is desire and aversion. Because the aspect of it, which is dominant or uppermost, which is so to say final, is the negative one, because in the Logion and in actual world-fact, Negation is the real relation of the Self to the Not-Self, therefore, in this book, desire is said everywhere to correspond to and to be of the nature of Negation. The discussion of the value of Negation or the negative is perennial in modern logic; though the standpoint is very different yet still if the reader has followed it in any good treatise, *e.g.*, Sigwart's *Logic*, Vol I., ch. iv., and has revolved in mind all the bearings of Spinoza's celebrated saying, 'omnis determinatio est negatio,' he will have prepared his way to the very comprehensive significance given to the Negation here. The continual freshness of the subject is illustrated, for instance, by such a recent article as that on "Contradiction and Reality" by Bernard Bosanquet in *Mind* for January, 1906. For a fuller discussion of the nature of the Negation see *The Science of Peace*, CHS. xi-xii.

*Veḍas* are these four truths. The *Rḡ-Veḍa* is devoted to cognition; the *Yajur-Veḍa* to action; the *Sāma-Veḍa* to desire; the seed and the unity of these is the subject of the *Atharva-Veḍa*. Each of the *Veḍas*, again, is sub-divided in accordance with this trinity into: the *Mantra*, connected with cognition; the *Brāhmaṇa*, with action; the *Upaniṣhat*, with desire; and, finally, the *Tantra*, also called the *Upa-veḍa*, which is the seed and unity, the summation, of these. Each of these four, *Mantra*, etc., is further sub-divided fourfold, and so on endlessly. The *Mantra* part is also called the *Samhitā*. That which 'brings together' all things is *Samhitā*. 'Knows,' hence *Veḍa* (from the root *viḍ*, to know). *Veḍa* is knowledge connected with *Brahman* and hence of all things whatsoever. Therefore is the *Veḍa* said to be the manifest form of *Brahman*. Therefore too is it said that the knower of the *Veḍa* becometh *Brahman*. That whereby is known, *ṛkṣhaṭē*, the *ṭaṭṭva*, the essential truth, of *Brahman* is the *Rḡ-Veḍa-Samhitā*. That whereby is made, brought about, in sacrifices, *yajataē*, the manifestation of that *ṭaṭṭva*, is the *Yajur-Veḍa-Samhitā*. That whereby are balanced *sāmyaṭē*, brought together, connected, by desire, the other two, *viz.*, cognition and action, that is the *Sāma-Veḍa-Samhitā*. That whereby the fruit of these three is obtained,

aryate, is the *Atharva-Veda-Samhitā*.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of these four *Samhitā*-parts is the setting forth of all knowledge about cognition, action, desire and their fruit.

<sup>1</sup> These derivations are archaic and only partly recognised by modern Samskr̥t grammar. In current Samskr̥t, ṛch means to eulogise, and ṛchch, to 'reach,' to go, to obtain, to faint, to enter into trance, to take shape (anew), to command, etc. Yaj is to offer up, to sacrifice. Sāma to conciliate, to harmonise. Atharva is variously derived; a+ṭhurva, to 'not injure' (to negate the corruption of the primal purity of the Self); aṭha=arṭha, to pray, to intend, to will, +r, to move or ṛchch, i.e., to work by will, etc. By current tradition the *Atharva-Veda* is regarded as the reverse of what the derivation would imply, viz. as 'impure,' 'injurious,' etc. The reason may be that because it was the completion and the highest of the *Vedas*, and imparted knowledge which would be the most 'dangerous,' if it fell into evil hands and was misused, therefore it was enveloped in such a tradition, and guarded like the secrets of the army and navy departments of modern governments. The special form that was given to the tradition might be due to the psychological condition—like that of grown-up children—of earlier humanity. The etymology of the name of Vishvāmitra, the seer of the *Gāyatrī* is similar. Apparently the word means 'the non-friend of the world'; really 'the great friend of it'.

By *Rk*, *Yajuh*, *Sāma* and *Atharva*, all four together, is Brahman to be obtained. Each singly is useless. Not by knowledge alone is Brahman found; nor by action alone; nor by desire alone. Fourfold is the truth of Brahman. Cognition, desire and action are all equally necessary means to mokṣha, liberation, deliverance from pain and sorrow and limitations. All and each is dependent on and supported by all and each. This is what is meant by statements like this, viz., 'By the knowledge of a single atom may knowledge of Brahman be obtained.' From the point of view of relativity all are small and all are great. Each atom is Brahman, because cognition, desire and action are present everywhere and in each atom. To see and hear and fully know one atom is therefore to know Brahman.<sup>1</sup> But by such *knowledge* alone the transcendental state of Brahman is not wholly attained.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Tennyson's pretty little poetical address to the "Flower in the crannied wall". It is well recognised at the present day that *complete* knowledge about any one thing implies literal omniscience; but the reason for this is supposed to be that everything is connected in some way or other with everything else. But in this work, and in the scheme of metaphysic it propounds, the *additional* reason is given that everything also *contains* everything else.

For Brahman is the transcendental and infinite totality of all things, great and small, (and such mere knowledge can therefore amount to only a third of Brahman, and not to a full realisation of the whole of It); for that full realisation of It which is meant by mokṣha, all three, knowledge, desire and action, are necessary. He who has the power of knowledge, of desire and of action, he alone is the knower of *Veda*, he is the finder, winner and possessor of Brahman.

Hence the unavoidable necessity of studying *all* the four *Vedas*.

After completing the study of all the *Vedas*, and finishing the stage of brahmacharya or celibate studentship, the human being should enter on the life of the gr̥hasṭha or householder. The rule is that the household should be undertaken only after completing brahmacharya (which means, literally, the *practice* or the pursuit of Brahman). Unperfected in the practice of Brahman the man may not enter the household life. Till he knows the whole truth of Brahman, the whole of the *Veda*, he cannot perform rightly the work of the world in the shape of the householder's life.<sup>1</sup> Triple is the work of the world—

<sup>1</sup>In modern days, Kingsley has urged that men should pass a certain examination before being permitted to take up the married life. It is

cognition, and desire, and action based on these two. Where all this triplet appears in due and balanced exercise, that is the genuine household life. So long, therefore, as the man does not know the whole secret of this triplet and of their mutual connexion and summation, so long is he unworthy to take up the work of the household. After gārhasṭhya, the household life, comes vānaprastha, the forest life, and finally sannyāsa, the life of renunciation.

In the course of the household life all actions should be performed, in accordance with the law of necessity, even as Brahman carries on the whole work of Samsāra within Itself. In that life there should be no such ideas entertained of illusive separateness as that 'this is thine,' 'this is mine,' 'he is mine,' 'this is another's,' etc. The welcoming of all and the accomplishment of everything, by means of cognition, desire and action,—such is the high duty of the householder. For charity, for self-sacrifice, and for the perfecting of the Brahman-state within oneself, is the householder's life to be undertaken. The fruit and moral of all the study of all the *Vedas* is but this: Cast interesting, in this connexion, to note how completely this theory and practice of life would solve the matrimonial questions now vexing the western world. (Note sent by Mr. E. H. Bellairs.) We may very well add, 'and the eastern,' at this day.

out the *svārtha*, the self-seeking, the selfishness, that is ingrained in the heart of every individual organism; also pass beyond *parārtha*, the other-seeking or altruism that also harbours, though in a different way, the sense of otherness and separateness; perform only the *paramārtha*, the highest end, *necessary* duty.<sup>1</sup> Egoism and altruism both belong to *bandhana*, bondage; *paramārtha*, duty, alone is the true refuge of all who crave *mokṣha*, freedom. Having accomplished *brahmacharya* and known the eternal Brahman, having understood all this world, above and below, high and low, to be triple in nature, and

<sup>1</sup> A fundamental difference between eastern and western ethics may be noted here, as due to the different views of the divine nature severally entertained. The western view of God as extra-cosmic, as apart from His world, leaves each spirit as eternally separate from every other spirit; hence there are always 'others,' and love to, and service of, all these others, altruism, is the highest conceivable ideal. The eastern view of God as inter-cosmic, informing, immanent in, His world, makes each spirit identical in essence with 'Himself' and with all others; hence, when all is truly seen, there are no 'others,' but only one all-pervading Self; altruism vanishes as well as egoism, and the living of the One Self in all its parts, the performance of necessary action, is the 'highest end'. (A. B.)

then having donned the household life, let the man serve all the world with all his power as his set duty. Guests, casual comers, worthy *brahmacharis*, *yaṭīs*, hermits of pure ways, *sannyāsīs* who have renounced the worldly life, forest-dwellers, and other householders too, should be supported by him with all his resources. They should all be welcomed and honored by the householder who has attained to the state of Brahman, who is *mukṭa*, who is established in the supreme peace that is the heart of Brahman. This is the only worthy *āshrama*, this is the refuge, the resting-place and support, of all beings. *Brāhmaṇas*, *yogīs*, great-souled *jīvanmukṭas*, Mahā-Viṣṇu himself, the ruler of our world-system, all are householders bearing assiduously the burden of the world, ever engaged in all duties, yet ever free from all *karma*, self-established, equable-souled, ever beholding themselves as the One Self in all things.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is the ideal aristocracy where the lords and nobles, as representing the divine monarchy, live only to turn the wheel of Duty, '*noblesse oblige*.' It is the ideal democracy also, for the essential and ultimate equality of all *jīvas* and the necessity of each working for all according to his qualifications is also perfectly recognised and insisted on herein.

The word āshrama means 'that wherein people rest, or are rested on,' āshriyanṭē asmin. Because of this, and because of cognition, desire, action, and their mutual relation (being the four 'resting-places' or aspects of consciousness which are the essence and the whole of life), these four stages are called āshramas. Studentship is related to cognition, the household-life to action, the forest-stage to desire; renunciation is the summation.<sup>1</sup>

The duties of all these āshramas should be discharged perfectly by man; and they cannot be so discharged without mastery of all the four *Vedas*. Hence the reiterated injunction that they should be studied in their totality in the first stage. In the household, the feeling of selfishness, mamatā, 'mineness,' is transcended gradually. The object that is at first exclusively appropriated to the use of oneself, becomes, in consequence of the espousal of a wife, appropriated to that of two; and yet again, when children appear, to that of three, four, five, and so on. Thus gradually the man comes to realise the whole world as himself; and this, because, in fact, all are one. He who has seen

<sup>1</sup> From another standpoint the four stages may be classed into two groups, the first two (as preparation and accomplishment) making up the pravṛtti half of life, and the second two (again as preparation and achievement) of the nivṛtti half.

and known Brahman during brahmacharya, he, because of that fact, feels a family relationship and an equal mood of love towards all beings, and acts accordingly. Having discharged the duties of the household the man passes into the forest-life, of the nature of desire. The consciousness belonging to that stage is this: Whatever I have done, or am doing, or shall do, is all necessary and not dependent on any capricious will of mine, thine, or another's. This is the natural result of the Negation which corresponds to desire and the forest-life. In sannయాसा even this disappears. That wherein all previous karma is 'well destroyed,' samyak nasyaṭi<sup>1</sup>, is sannయాसा. The consciousness belonging to this stage is: There is no necessity and no contingency; nothing belongs to others or to us, to all or to any one; whatever is, is the Trinity only. Acquisition of knowledge in brahmacharya; practice thereof in gārhasthya; certainty in vānaprastha; realisation

<sup>1</sup> The etymologies reproduced in this summary are all taken from the original text, *verbatim*, thus, the word in the text is nasyaṭi and not nashyaṭi nor nyasyaṭi; they are not all in accordance with modern Samskr̥t grammar and should be assumed to be archaic. Paṇḍit Dhanarāja maintained that they are all perfectly justified by the older and truer and far more comprehensive grammar.

in sannyāsa—such is the distinction between them,

But, verily, there is no difference  
 Of student, and of dweller in the house,  
 And anchorite, and roamer of the earth.  
 The Self hath neither caste, nor staged life.  
 Nor brāhmaṇa am I, nor kṣhāṭṭriya,  
 Nor am I vaiśya, and not shūdra too,  
 Not student, and not honored patriarch,  
 Nor forest eremite, nor wanderer  
 Without possessions or in heaven or earth,  
 I own and owe no duties and no rights,  
 I am what these subserve as humble means,  
 I am the Free, through and from all these  
 bonds,  
 I am the Self, Self-Conscious Formlessness.  
 And all this panorama of the world,  
 Broad-spread and ever-moving, seemingly,  
 Is but one vast rock-bound necessity <sup>1</sup>,  
 Is very Brahmaṇ, Being-Wisdom-Bliss  
 One changeless whole, Tri-unity of AUM.

---

<sup>1</sup> See *The science of Peace*, pp. 138, et seq.