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is meant for the service of mankind.

—Swami Sivananda

DEDICATED
TO ALL THOSE WHO LOVE
HINDUISM
AND ITS SUBLIME PHILOSOPHY
AND PRACTISE ITS TEACHINGS

ALL ABOUT HINDUISM

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CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS HINDUISM

Religion comes from the Latin word 'religio' which consists of two words *viz.* 're' (back) and 'ligare' (to bring). That which binds the soul back to God is religion. Religion shows the way for the attainment of God-realisation.

Religion satisfies the deep inward craving in man who is not always content with leading merely an animal existence and wants spiritual consolation, solace and peace. Man cannot live by bread alone. A time comes in the life of many of us when mere worldly prosperity does not satisfy us and we hanker after something more. In the case of many more, trials and tribulations of life turn their attention to spiritual solace.

(Hinduism is the religion of the Hindus. It is the oldest of all living religions. This is not founded by any Prophet like Christianity, Buddhism and Mohammedanism.) Christianity, Buddhism and Mohammedanism owe their origin to the Prophets. Their dates are fixed. But no such date can be fixed for Hinduism.) Hinduism is not born of the teachings of particular Prophets. It is not based on a set of dogmas preached by a particular set of teachers. It is free from religious fanaticism.

Hinduism is also known by the names Sanatana-dharma and Vaidika-dharma. Santana-dharma means eternal religion. Sanatana is so called not only because it is eternal but also because it is protected by God and because it can make us eternal. Vaidika-dharma means the religion of the Vedas. The Vedas are the foundational scriptures of Hinduism. The ancient Rishis and sages of India have expressed their

intuitive spiritual experiences (Aparoksha Anubhuti) in the Upanishads. These experiences are direct and infallible. Hinduism regards the spiritual experiences of the Rishis of yore as its authority. The priceless truths that have been discovered by the Hindu Rishis and sages through millenniums constitute the glory of Hinduism. Therefore Hinduism is a revealed religion.

Hinduism unlike other religions does not dogmatically assert that the final emancipation is possible only through its means and not through any other. It is only a means to an end and all means which will ultimately lead to the end are equally approved.

Hinduism allows absolute freedom to the rational mind of man. Hinduism never demands any undue restraint upon the freedom of human reason, the freedom of thought, feeling and will of man. It allows the widest freedom in matters of faith and worship. Hinduism is a religion of freedom. It allows absolute freedom to the human reason and heart with regard to questions such as nature of God, soul, creation, form of worship and the goal of life. Hinduism does not lie in the acceptance of any particular doctrine, nor in the observance of some particular rituals or form of worship. It does not force anybody to accept any particular dogmas or forms of worship. It allows everybody to reflect, investigate, enquire and cogitate. Hence all sorts of religious faiths, various forms of worship or Sadhana, diverse kinds of rituals and customs have found their honourable places side by side within Hinduism, and are cultured and developed in harmonious relationship with one another.

Hinduism does not condemn those who deny God as the Creator and Ruler of the world, who do not accept the existence of an eternal soul and the state of Moksha or state of liberation. Hinduism does not render the upholders of such views unfit to be recognised as

pious and honourable members of the Hindu religious society.

The religious hospitality of Hinduism is proverbial. Hinduism is extremely catholic and liberal. This is the fundamental feature of Hinduism. Hinduism pays respects to all religions. It does not revile any other religion. It accepts and honours truth wherever it may come from and whatever garb it may put on.

Despite all the differences of metaphysical doctrines, modes of religious discipline and forms of ritualistic practices and social habits prevalent in the Hindu society, there is an essential uniformity in the conception of religion and outlook on life and the world among all sections of Hindus.

Hinduism has within its fold various schools of Vedanta, and Saivism, Saktism, Vaishnavism etc. It has various cults and creeds. It is more a League of Religions than a single religion with a definite creed. It accommodates all types of men. It prescribes spiritual food for everybody according to his qualification and growth. This is the beauty of this magnanimous religion. This is the glory of Hinduism. Hence there is no conflict among the various cults and creeds. The variations are an ornament to Hinduism. They are not defects. Rig Veda declares "Truth is one; sages call it by various names. Ekam Sat Vipra bahudha vadanti". The Upanishads declare that all the paths lead to the same goal, just as cows of variegated colours yield the same white milk. Lord Krishna says in Gita "However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine". All diversities are organised and united in the body of Hinduism.

The philosophy of the Upanishads is lofty, sublime and unique. Even western philosophers have paid their tribute to the ancient seers of the Upanishads.

They have been amazed at the lofty heights scaled by them. Schopenhauer studied the Upanishads and meditated on the thoughts of the Upanishads just before going to bed. He said "The Upanishads are the solace of my life and they will be solace to me after my death also".

The Raja Yoga system of Hinduism is also splendid and unique. The lessons are immensely practical and highly instructive. No system of physical exercise on the surface of the earth can compete with Hatha Yoga. Kundalini Yoga is wonderful. Hence the Americans and Europeans are in search of Hindu Sannyasins and Yogis. They visit the Himalayas frequently in the quest of Yoga teachers. Some are living under Hindu Yogis as disciples and are practising Yoga.

Further, Hinduism prescribes graded series of different Yoga Sadhana to suit students of different states, temperaments and Capacities, of different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life. Hindu Yoga and Vedanta teachers lay great stress on self-restraint, Tapas, renunciation and practical Sadhana, which is best calculated to control the mind and the senses, and unfold the divinity or attain Self-realisation. Hinduism is not a religion of mere theories. It is eminently practical. That is the reason why India is the only glorious land of sages, Rishis, Yogis and saints.

Hindu ethics is superb. Hinduism lays great emphasis on ethical discipline. Yama (self-restraint), Niyama (religious observances or ~~canons~~ ^{canons}) are the foundations of Yoga and Vedanta. Without ethical perfection no spiritual progress or realisation is possible. A Yogic student or aspirant must be strictly ethical. He must be truthful and pure in thought, word and deed. He must possess excellent conduct. He must not

injure any living being in thought, word and deed. He must practise rigidly right thought, right speech and right action.

Religion is practical aspect of philosophy. Philosophy is rational aspect of religion. The philosophy of Hinduism is not arm-chair philosophy. It is not meant for intellectual curiosity and vain discussion. Hindu philosophy is way of life. The philosopher of Hinduism seriously reflects, after hearing the Srutis, does Atma-vichara, constantly meditates and then attains Self-realisation or Atma-Sakshatkara. Moksha is his goal. He attempts to attain Jivanmukti now and here.

Religion is spiritualisation of human life for a Hindu. Religious culture is really the culture of freedom for him. Religion governs all the departments of Hindu life. He must realise the freedom of the soul in every department of life. Religion affords the greatest scope for him for the culture of true freedom. Religion is the only way to him for the realisation of perfect freedom in life.

It is in India alone every man knows something of philosophy. The cowherd who tends the cattle, the peasant who ploughs the fields, the boatman who pulls at his oar sing songs replete with philosophical truths. Even the barber repeats 'OM NAMASIVAYA, SIVOHAM' before he takes up the razor. The Paramahansa Sannyasins, the itinerant monks of Hinduism have disseminated the highest of Vedanta from door to door. In exchange for a handful of rice they have distributed from door to door through religious songs the priceless gems of Hindu religion and philosophy.

These are the greatest and important features of Hinduism.

HINDUISM

SOURCE OF ALL RELIGIONS

I

Silent adorations to Satchidananda Para Brahman, who is the silent witness of all minds, who is the Indweller in all beings, who has projected this world for His own Lila or sport, who is the support for this world, body and mind and all movements, and who is the foundation for all societies and their activities.

India is the sacred land which has given birth to countless sages, Rishis, Yogis, saints and prophets. Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Gauranga, Nanaka, and a host of others were born in India. Buddha is our flesh and blood.

India is proud of Guru Govind Singh and Sivaji. India is proud of king Bhoja and Vikramaditya. India is proud of Sankara and Kabir. India is proud of Kalidas and Valmiki. Krishna, Rama and all Avatars were born in India. How sacred is India! How sublime is India! The dust of Brindavan and Ayodhya, the land trodden by the sacred feet of Krishna and Rama, still purifies the heart of countless people. Even Jesus during the missing period of His life lived in Kashmir and learnt Yoga from the Indian Yogis. Glory to Mother India!

India is the most tolerant country in the world. She has a very expansive heart. She includes all nations in the embrace of her love. Hinduism is as old as the world itself. Hinduism is the Mother of all religions. Hindu scriptures are the oldest in the world.

Hindu culture and Hindu civilization were at their zenith in the days of yore. Greeks and Romans imitated the Hindus and absorbed Hindu thoughts. Even now Hindu culture and Hindu civilization stand foremost in the world. Each and every province of the

country has produced intellectual giants, poets and saints. Even now India abounds in Rishis, philosophers, saints and high intellectuals.

Hindus are very generous, noble, large-hearted, charitable, God-fearing, sympathetic, merciful and hospitable. If they see a hungry man in the street, they will take him to their house, treat him as Atithi Narayan (God in the form of guest), feed him first and then take their food. Nowhere in the world you will hear of such a treatment. You cannot get even a morsel of food free in other countries.

The Western nations are the descendants of the original Hindus or Aryans. They might have forgotten their old connections with the Aryans and Hindu culture. They might have forgotten all about their ancestors. But this cannot be effaced from the annals of history. Mother India the repository of Hindu culture, cannot forget her children beyond the seas. They are always dear to her.

The Hindus had to undergo severe hardships and tortures. They had to face fierce battles and cruelties and yet they live today. Some mysterious power has preserved them. Some invisible force has protected them. Still power will protect them for ever!

Man has forgotten his true divine nature. He has degraded himself through selfishness, passion and greed. He is swayed by the two currents of love and hatred.

This is a world of struggle and strife. This is a relative plane of three Gunas. There is ceaseless fight between good and evil, Devas and Asuras, Sattwa and Tamas.

Therefore, consolidation of the Hindus is an imperative need of the hour. In union lies our strength. At

a time when hostile forces are at work for the destruction of nation, people should abandon all petty differences and unite their minds, hearts and souls for the solidarity and the well-being of the nation.

UNITY IS STRENGTH

II.

O Hindus! You are very weak. You have neither unity nor organization among you. You are scattered like pebbles on the bank of a river. The sub-castes are countless. Sects, cults, creeds are numberless. Their large number in population will not in any way help you. Most of the people are selfish. They have not got the spirit of self-sacrifice and service. This is a most deplorable state. If there is organization, then only there will be strength and security for you or for any nation.

Become true Hindus. Let the flame of true love fire your soul. Stand up. Gird up the loins. The hostile forces are ready to absorb you. Strengthen yourself. Unite. Become an individual body.

O Hindus! you are all scattered like particles of sand or mercury. When you are all united only, you will have proper strength to defend yourself and do good to the country. United you will stand. Divided you will fall. Open your eyes now. Shake off your lethargy, inertia and different nature. There is the clarion call for united action. Do not wait even for a single second. Be up and doing. Stand on your own legs.

O youth! be proud to call yourself a Hindu. Many heroes have sacrificed their lives for the honour of the sacred name "Hindu". Sacrifice your life and everything for the regeneration of Hinduism. There is perfect joy in sacrificing one's life for the sake of religion. Those who sacrifice their lives for the sake of religion will shine as beacon lights of the world. They are very dear to the Lord. They bring glory to the country.

Their names are immortalised in the annals of history. They are the source of inspiration for the future generations. They infuse life and joy in the hearts of people.

Do you remember the story of an old man, his sons and the bundle of sticks? The sons were not able to break the whole bundle but they broke each stick very easily to pieces. Even so if you are united, you can become very strong. You will be invincible. You can work wonders.

Be patient. Preserve and plod on. Do something practical. Herein lies the secret of success. There is no use in making much noise. Everything should be put into practice. Lecture on platform will only create a temporary bubbling of emotion and enthusiasm. This will not help much. Things should take proper shape.

Lead a life of endurance. Bear insults, privations and sufferings. Clean your clothes. Split fuel. Carry water. Do manual labour. Strengthen your body and muscles. Do 'Dand', 'Baithak,' wrestling, Asanas and Pranayama. Swim. Run in open air. Keep a strong and healthy body. Lead a simple and natural life. Preserve Veerya. Be a Brahmachari though married. Learn to control the senses.

Luxury and comfort are a curse. That will weaken you. Walk daily three or four miles. The condition of your younger generation is pitiable. They cannot walk even half a mile. They possess poor health. They suffer from anemia, dyspepsia, constipation, debility etc. In times of danger they cannot protect their women and children. They have become weak, timid and effeminate. Is this not a lamentable state?

Realise your responsibilities. Face troubles, tribulations and trials. Stand adamant. Be bold. Be cheerful. Draw courage and power from within, through regular meditation on the Immortal Self. Sit alone and peep

within for some time. Give up comforts and easy going life. Work hard. Come out victorious and wear the laurels. Great men have all suffered in order to stick to the path of righteousness and to protect the religion. They still live in our hearts. The glorious lives they led are a source of inspiration for us.

Have a burning love for Hinduism. Have a burning love for the word "Hindu". If everybody has this burning love, all Hindus can be easily united. This love is the true cementing love. This love is a tremendous power.

Be prepared to sacrifice everything. Be of one mind. Speak with one voice. Have common aspiration. Act in perfect union. Cultivate immense love for your religion. The flame of love must burn in your hearts steadily. Love one and all. There is no religion greater than love.

Those who want to serve their religion should possess virtuous qualities such as courage, mercy, simplicity, broad tolerance, adaptability, self restraint, cosmic love, equal vision, humility, equanimity of mind, truthfulness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness and honesty. They will have to cultivate these virtues.

They should have knowledge of Karma Yoga. They should study the second and third chapters of Gita again and again. They should not expect any fruits of their actions. They should consecrate all acts unto Lord. They should kill the idea of agency or actorship. They should entertain the Nimitta Bhava. They should feel that God works through them. Then only they will have purification of heart. God is the foundation of society. God is the substratum for the world. No atom can move without Him. In Him we live and move and have our very being.

You may ask: "Why should I practise Karma Yoga and self-restraint? Why should I kill egoism? Why should I develop renunciation and Vairag ? Why should I serve the country ? Why should I control the mind?" ALL these will help you to attain freedom and perfection and to free yourself from pain, sorrow and death.

Those young men, who want to dedicate their lives for the service of religion, can do better service if they remain as Brahmacharins or celibates. They will then have no selfish interests. Fresh flowers should be offered to the Lord. A fresh, vigorous, untainted body and mind should be offered to the Lord.

DIFFERENCES ARE ILLUSORY

III

Can you protect your religion if you bother too much over the question of food and drink ? Can you do any magnanimous work if you bother too much over trifling matters?

All barriers that separate man from man should be ruthlessly broken down. One supreme, self-luminous Atma shines in all beings. The soul of an out-caste and a Brahmin, a dog and an ant, a rogue and a saint, a king and a peasant, is one and the same. External differences are illusory. They are all mental creations, mere idea or Kalpana. Why then there is much vain talk such as: 'I am a superior Brahmin. He is an inferior Brahmin' This is sheer ignorance or vanity. All the Brahmins can sit together and take food. Let them not take food with a non-Brahmin, if they do not like it. If there are ten Brahmins in a 'Dharmashala' or a choultry, there will be ten kitchens. A Brahmin of sub-caste will not eat from the hands of another Brahmin of another sub-caste. What is the meaning of this? How can we expect union from such people? One Brahmin wants to separate himself from another Brahmin. He may say: "I may not take food from

another Brahmin and yet I am a Hindu in spirit". Do you believe this? Can you endorse his statement? It is a meaningless, false argument, just to suit his purpose. This is like the loud rumbling of a hollow drum.

At the present moment Varnashrama system also is in name only. It has to be rebuilt. The grand edifice of Hinduism also is to be properly rebuilt. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras have fallen from their ideals. They are not doing their respective duties. They have forgotten their duties. Hence there is degradation in India

Untouchability is a bane. Untouchability is a curse. How can you call one as an untouchable when everybody is a child of God? One may be a lesser power. One may be a lesser manifestation of the Divine essence. An untouchable is potentially divine. He is a saint of the future. Who was Nandanar? Who was Tiruvalluvar? Who was Rai Das? Are they not adored now? He who identifies with the body, who adores mammon is really an untouchable. He who hoards money, who drinks and gambles, who has a lustful look, is really an untouchable. He who has no knowledge of the Self, who is sunk in worldliness, who is attached to worldly objects, is really untouchable.

Embrace all. Mix with all. See God in every face and in every form. If you do not remove the curse of untouchability, most of our children will be absorbed by others. The Hindu nation will be weakened. You will not go near an untouchable, you will not touch an untouchable but if an untouchable embraces another religion and becomes a Collector, you will bow to him with presents in hand and address him: 'Most honourable Sir, when you want to get a favour from him. Is this not a pitiable state?

EDUCATION AND RE-BUILDING**IV**

Reclaim all your lost brethren. Purify them. This is very very important. Time has changed. That aspect of Dharma—Apath Dharma—certainly allows this. The number of Hindus is going down.

India, the sacred land of Rishis and sages, is still sunk in the mire of ignorance. There is much illiteracy among the masses. Professors, teachers and students should go to villages during holidays and educate the masses. They should organize night schools for them. Maharajas and Zamindars should give them much help and support. Compare India with Europe or America. The number of illiterates is more in India than in any other civilized country.

National schools and colleges for boys and girls and universities must be opened. Boys and girls should get the right type of education. Then only the national spirit can be kept up. The education which makes you tread the path of truth and righteousness, which moulds your character, which helps you to attain freedom, perfection and knowledge of the self and at the same time enables you to eke out an honest living can be called as the true education.

Hindu Sabhas, Seva Dals or Samitis and Physical Culture Institutions should be founded in all parts of the country. They should be properly organized. It is your duty to serve heart and soul through these institutions. You will develop the true spirit. Your heart will be purified quickly.

The most wonderful machine in the world is the physical body. It consists of different systems, organs and parts. If all the systems, organs and parts work in harmony, if all the parts are in sound condition, you can enjoy good health. If a single part or system or organ goes out of order, there is disharmony and you

get disease. A vicious circle is created. Even so the society or the nation consists of different communities and individuals. Every individual should carry out his duty properly. He must be strong and healthy to discharge his duties. Otherwise the society or the nation will become weak and undergo decay and degeneration.

Mere bubbling juvenile enthusiasm will not do. It will not serve any purpose. True love must be ingrained in you. Every nerve and every cell should throb with pure love. If you have not got this spirit, you will have to develop it to a maximum degree through service of humanity. Study again and again the lives of great sages and saints, who gave their lives for religion. Work under a master for some years. Serve him. Honour him. Obey him. Obedience is better than sacrifice. You will imbibe his spirit and virtues. Do not try to become yourself a leader. If everybody wants to become a leader, if everybody wants to command, the movement will die. Learn to serve. Learn to obey. You can do real service to religion and country.

Early marriage is a great social evil. Children beget children. India abounds with weaklings. The number of widows is increasing. Early marriage should be stopped.

The world needs good healthy mothers, healthy strong boys and girls. What do we find in these days in India? India, the land which produced Bhishma, Bhima, Arjuna, Drona, Aswatthama, Kripa, Parasurama and countless other chivalrous warriors, the soil which contained numberless Rajput chiefs of undaunted intrepidity, unparalleled chivalry and matchless strength, abounds now with effeminate weaklings. The laws of health are ignored and neglected. The nation is suffering and dying. The world requires numberless brave, moral Adhyatmic Asoldiers, who are equipped with five virtues, *viz.*, Ahimsa, Satyam, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha. Those who possess health and strength,

those who are endowed with the above virtues, those who have knowledge of the Self, they alone can secure real freedom for all.

Money is wasted in marriages and other ceremonies. Save money and spend it in building the nation. Every pie spent in this direction is really well-spent. Do not become a slave of social customs. These act as stumbling blocks to progress. They tend to weaken the nation.

Use indigenous articles and help the growth of industries. This will lead to our economical independence. Economic independence is indispensable. India can produce sugar, paper, glass, matches, cloth etc.

Widows, orphans and cows also should be protected. Our young graduates should not neglect the industrial and agricultural sides. They should look after their own lands and increase the productive power. There is a great field for work in this direction. They can have independent living. They can make much money and serve the people by supplying good, unadulterated milk and butter which are necessary for keeping up health and strength.

BECOME PRACTICAL VEDANTINS

V

O my beloved Sikh brothers! You are chivalrous and bold. The blood of Guru Govind Singh runs in your veins. You are all endowed with a strong physique and sinewy frame. This is due to the grace of the Lord. You are the Kshatriyas of Hindu nation. Why do you want to separate yourself from the Hindus? This is a serious mistake. You will repent for it after some time. What will you gain by this separation? This will only weaken our nation. You must be really proud in calling yourself Hindus.

O Hindus, O Sikhs, O Maharathis, O Rajputs! Just as the dark unfathomed ocean contains many precious pearls and gems, so also there are many jewels amongst you all; there are many Ranjit Singhs and Sivajis. Many Rana Prataps and Bir Bhairangis. Awaken the dormant faculties. Remember the glory and power of your ancestors. Come forward now. Show your chivalrous nature and undaunted spirit. Work for the consolidation of the Hindus.

O Sadhus, Sannyasins, Yogis and Brahmacharins who have attained success in Sadhana! This is my earnest prayer to you all. You will have to come now from your retreats to serve humanity. You need not take any active part in movement. You can remain like Ramdas. Ramdas gave wise counsels to Sivaji. Sivaji drew inspiration from his Guru. He hoisted the Ghera banner and did all the work. Ramdas's presence was the source of strength to Sivaji. Even so, you can give moral instructions and good counsels to people. You can guide and give them words of encouragement. You can do everything that is best calculated to unite the Hindus. As you have no attachment to anybody, as you are endowed with spiritual powers, you can work wonders. You say that the world is your body. In your discourses you say that the whole world is your sweet home—Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Please show this in action. Kindly put this into practise. Become practical Vedantins.

May the eternal Dharma of Hinduism be preserved for ever! May all Hindus be consolidated by the bond of true love! May all work together for the well-being and solidarity of the country! May all prosper gloriously in the material and spiritual planes !

OM SHANTI ! SHANTI !! SHANTI !!!

WHO IS A HINDU

In a meeting of the Sanatana Dharma Sabha, Lokamanya Tilak said: "A Hindu is he who believes that the Vedas contain self-evident and axiomatic truths".

The Hindu Maha Sabha have given another definition. "A Hindu is one who believes in a religion which has originated in India".

"Those who burn dead are Hindus". This is another definition given by some.

"He who protects the cows and the Brahmins is a Hindu". This is another definition given by some.

Some define "A Hindu is one who regards India as his motherland and the most sacred spot on earth."

Some others define "He who calls and considers himself a Hindu is a Hindu."

Some define "He who accepts the Vedas, the Smritis, the Puranas, and the Tantras as the basis of religion, and the rule of conduct, and believes in one Supreme God (Brahman), in the Law of Karma or retributive justice, and in re-incarnation (punarjanma) is a Hindu."

That part of the great Aryan race which migrated from Central Asia, through the mountain passes into India, settled first in the districts near the river Sindhu, now called the Indus or the other side of the river. The Persians pronounced this word Hindu and named their Aryan brethren Hindus. "Hindu" is only a corrupt form of "Sindhu."

"He who follows the Vedic or Sanatana Dharma is a Hindu." This is the definition by some.

"He who is a follower of the Vedanta is a Hindu". This is another definition given by some others.

“He who has perfect faith in the Law of Karma, law of reincarnation, Avatara, ancestor-worship, Varnashrama-dharma, Vedas, existence of God, he who practises the instructions given in the Vedas with faith and earnestness, he who does Sandhya, Sraddha, Pitru-tarpan, the Pancha Maha Yagna, he who follows the Varna-ashrama Dharmas, he who worships the Avataras and studies the Vedas is a Hindu”. This is the definition given by some highly cultured men. This is the only correct and complete definition.

The Hindu Aryans had spread themselves over the plains of the Ganges. Then the Persians gave the name Hindustan or abode of the Hindus to the whole districts between Punjab and Benares.

The classical name for India which is used in Sanskrit literature is Bharata-varsha or Bharata-khanda, after the name of Bharata who ruled over a large extent of territory in days of yore. Manu's name for the whole central region between the Himalayas and the Vindhya mountains is Aryavarta, abode of the Aryans. Another name for the whole of India is Jambu-dvipa. The Greeks gave the name 'Indu' to the whole of this country. It was on account of this that 'India' became popular as the name of this country throughout Europe.

This name of 'Hindu' was not only of geographical but of national and racial importance.

'Hindu' is not a mere name. The whole history of our nation from the very beginning is bound up with it. All our ideas and ideals are so intimately connected with it that it is difficult to give a simple definition of it. Poets, prophets and Avatars came into the world to sing the praises and glory of this name. Rishis, sages and saints took their birth to compile the Shastras and Darshanas for this nation. Heroes and warriors have fought for its honour and laid down their very lives

for it. Piety, nobility, generosity, philosophy, religious bent of mind, Yoga, religious tolerance, wisdom, devotion, renunciation, self-realisation, Ahimsa, Satyam, purity are associated with the name Hindu.

Therefore, be proud to call yourself a Hindu, my friend.

INDIA AND HINDUS

India is a spiritual country. India never conquered territories or annexed dominions. Military conquest was not her ambition. She wanted her children to have Atma-Swarajya or Absolute Independence. She does not call upon them to rule over others. She wants them to have conquest over internal and external nature. She wants them to possess brilliant divine virtues, moral stamina and inner spiritual strength born of wisdom of the soul. Ahimsa is her weapon to have spiritual conquest and the conquest of the mind of others.

People of India have self-realisation as their goal. They do not care for material prosperity and advancement. They want Yoga or communion with the Lord. They practise Ahimsa, Satyam, Brahmacharya. They wish to enjoy the eternal bliss of the Absolute. They are always ready to renounce worldly possessions in order to possess or realise the inner Atman or Brahman. They will sacrifice anything and everything in order to attain the immortal Atman. They are always spiritual minded.

India is the land of Yogis, Rishis, Sages and Seers. India is the land that has produced many Acharyas or spiritual preceptors like Sri Sankara, Sri Ramanuja, many saints like Kabir, Ramdas, Tukaram, Gauranga Mahaprabhu, many Yogis like Dattatreya, Sadasiva Brahman. Even now she abounds with sages and great souls.

India is the sacred land with several holy rivers and powerful spiritual vibrations. The hoary Himalayas attract the people of the whole world. It is a land peculiarly suitable for divine contemplation and Yogic practices. Every country has its own special attractive features. India is the land of Yogins and sages. This is the special attractive feature of India. That is the reason why people from America, England and all parts of the world come to India for the practice of Yoga.

Glory to India! Glory to Rishis and Sages!!

CHAPTER II.

HINDU SCRIPTURES **HINDU SANSKRIT LITERATURE**

Sanskrit Literature can be classified under six orthodox heads and four secular heads. The six orthodox sections form the authoritative scriptures of the Hindus. The four secular sections embody the later developments in classical Sanskrit Literature.

The six Scriptures are.—

(1) Srutis, (2) Smritis, (3) Itihasas, (4) Puranas, (5) Agamas, and (6) Darshanas.

The four secular writings are :—

(1) Subhashitas, (2) Kavyas, (3) Natakas, and (4) Alankaras.

I. SACRED WRITINGS

1. The Srutis

The Srutis are called the Vedas or the 'Amnaya'. This is the basic foundation of the Hindu Religion. These are direct intuitional revelations and are held to be Apaurusheya or entirely superhuman, without any author in particular. The Veda is the glorious pride of the Hindus, nay, of the whole world! The Veda is the source of the other five sets of scriptures, why, even of the secular and the materialistic. The Veda is the storehouse of Indian Wisdom and is a memorable glory which man can never forget till eternity.

The Veda is divided into four great books : the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda and the Atharva-Veda. The Rigveda is divided into twenty-one sections,

the Yajurveda one hundred and nine sections, the Samaveda one thousand sections and the Atharvaveda fifty sections. In all, the whole Veda is thus divided into one thousand one hundred and eighty parts. Each part has its own Upanishad and so there are 1,180 Upanishads in total.

“The R̥g-Veda”, says Max Muller, “is the most ancient book of the world. The sacred hymns of the Brahmanas stand unparalleled in the literature of the whole world; and their preservation might well be called miraculous.” (History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature).

The Yajurveda is again divided into two parts, the Shukla and the Krishna. The Krishna or the Taittiriya is the older book and the Shukla or the Vajasaneya is a later revelation to sage Yajnavalkya from the resplendent Sun-God.

Each of the four Vedas is divided into four groups : the Mantra-Samhita, the Brahmana, the Aranyaka and the Upanishad, to suit respectively to the Brahmachari, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and the Sannyasin. The Samhitas are metrical poems, comprising prayers, hymns and incantations addressed to various deities, both subjective and objective. The Brahmanas are prose explanations of the method of using the Mantras in the Yajna or the Sacrifice. The Aranyakas are mystical sylvan texts which together with the philosophical Upanishads constitute the Brahma-Kanda of the Holy Vedas, while the Samhitas and the Brahmanas form the Karma-Kanda.

The R̥gveda-Samhita is the grandest book of the Hindus, the oldest and the best. It is the Great Indian Bible, which no Hindu would forget to adore from the core of his heart. Its style, the language and the tone are most beautiful and mysterious. Its immortal Mantras embody the greatest truths of existence and it is perhaps the greatest treasure in all the scriptural literature of the world. Its priest is called the Hotri.

The Yajurveda-Samhita is mostly in prose and is meant to be used by the Adhwaryu (the Yajurvedic priest) for superfluous explanations of the rites in sacrifices supplementing the Rigvedic Mantras.

The Samaveda-Samhita is vastly borrowed from the Rig Vedic-Samhita and is meant to be sung by the Udgatri (the Samavedic priest) in sacrifices. The Atharvaveda-Samhita is meant to be used by the Brahma (the Atharva-Vedic priest) to correct the mis-pronunciations and wrong performances that may accidentally be committed by the other three priests of the sacrifice.

There are two Brahmanas to the Rigveda ; the Aitareya and the Shankhayana. The Shatapatha Brahmana belongs to the Shukla Yajurveda. The Krishna Yajurveda has the Taittiriya and the Maitrayana Brahmanas. The Tandya or Panchavimsa, the Shadvimsa, the Chhandogya, the Adbhuta, the Arsheva and the Upanishad Brahmanas belong to the Samaveda. The Brahmana of the Atharvaveda is called the Gopatha. Each of the Brahmanas has got an Aranvaka. There are as many Upanishads and Brahmanas to each Veda as there are Shakhas or branches (sub-divisions), i.e., 21, 109, 1000, and 50 respectively to the four Vedas.

There are four Upavedas or subsidiary Vedas, viz., the Ayurveda, the Dhanurveda, the Gandharvaveda, and the Arthashastra, forming auxiliaries to the four Vedas respectively. There are six Angas or explanatory limbs to the Vedas, the Shikhsa and Vyakarana of Panini, the Chhandas of Pingalacharya, the Nirukta of Yaska, the Jyotisha of Garga, and the Kalpas (Shrauta, Grihya and Dharma) belonging to the authorship of various Rishis. The Pratishakhyas, Padapathas, Kramapathas, Upalekhas, Anukramanis, Daivatsamhitas, Parishishtas, Prayogas, Paddhatis, Karikas, Khilas and Vyuhas are further elaborations in the rituals of the Kalpa Sutras.

Among the Kalpa-Sutras, the Ashwalayana, Shankh-ayana, and the Shambhavya belong to the Rigveda. The Mashaka, Latvayana, Drahayana, Gobhila and Khadira belong to the Sama Veda. The Katyayana and Paraskara belong to the Shukla Yajur-Veda. The Apasthambha, Hiranyakeshi, Bodhayana, Bharadwaja, Manava, Vaikh-anasa and the Kathaka belong to the Krishna Yajurveda. The Vaitana and the Kaushika belong to the Atharvaveda.

2. The Smritis

There are eighteen main Smritis or Dharmashastras in number. These are the ancient sacred law-codes of the Hindus dealing with the Sanatana-Varnashrama-Dharma. The most important are those of Manu, Yajnavalkya and Parashara. The other fifteen are those of Vishnu, Daksha, Samvarta, Vyasa, Harita, Shatatapa, Vasishtha, Yama, Apastambha, Gautama, Devala, Shankha, Likhita, Ushana, Atri, Shaunaka. The Smritis are next only to the Vedas in authority and importance. They supplement and explain the ritualistic injunctions called 'Vidhis' in the Vedas.

3. The Itihasas

There are four books under this heading; the Valmiki-Ramayana, the Yogavasishtha, the Mahabharata and the Harivamsha. These form the fifth Veda embodying all that is in the Vedas, but only in a simpler manner. These are called the Suhrit-Samhitas or the 'friendly treatises', while the Vedas are called the Prabhu-Samhitas or the 'commanding treatises' with great authority. These works explain the great universal truths in the form of historical narratives, stories and dialogues. These are very interesting volumes and are liked by all, from the inquisitive child to the intellectual scholar.

4. The Puranas

There are eighteen Puranas in main; the Brahma, Padma, Vishnu, Shiva, Bhagavata, Narada, Markandeya, Agni, Bhavishya, Brahmapurana, Linga, Vamana, Varaha, Matsya, Kurma, Garuda, Skanda, and the Brahmanda. Of these six are Satvik Puranas and glorify Vishnu; six are Rajasic and glorify Brahma; six are Tamasic and they glorify Siva. The best among the Puranas are the Bhagavata and the Vishnu. All the Puranas belong to the class of Smriti-Samhitas.

5. The Agamas

These are practical manuals of divine worship in embodied forms. The Agamas include the Tantras, Mantras and the Yantras. These are treatises explaining the external worship of God, in idols, temples, etc. They are divided into three sections: to Vaishnava, the Shaiva and the Shakta Agamas.

The Vaishnava-Agamas are of four kinds: the Vaikhanasa, Pancharatra, Pratihhasara and the Vijnanalahita. The Brahma, Saiva, Kaumara, Vasishtha, Kapila, Goutamiva and the Naradiva are the seven groups of the Pancharatras. Among the existing books on the Agamas, the most famous are the Ishwarasamlita, Ahirbudhnyasamlita, Sanatkumarasamlita, Naradapancharatra, Spandapradipika, and the Mahamravana Tantra. The Naradiya section of the Santi-Parva of the Mahabharata is the earliest source of information about the Pancharatras.

All the Agamas treat of (1) Jnana or Knowledge, (2) Yoga or concentration, (3) Kriya or making, and (4) Charya or doing. They also give elaborate details about ontology and cosmology, Liberation, Devotion, Meditation, Philosophy of Mantras, Mystic Diagrams, charms and spells, Temple-building, Image-making, Domestic Observances, Social Rules and Public Festivals.

6. The Darshanas

These are the intellectual portion of the Hindu Writings, while the first four are intuitional and the fifth emotional. The Darshanas are divided into three pairs of aphoristic compositions which explain the philosophy of the Vedas in a rationalistic method of approach. They are the Nyaya and the Vaisheshika, the Sankhya and the Yoga, the Mimamsa and the Vedanta. Each set of Sutras has got its Bhashya, Vritti, Vartika, Vyakhyana, Tika and Tippani.

Sutra.—Svalpaksharamasandigdham
Saravad Vishwatomukham.
Astobhamanavadyam Cha
Sootram Sootravido Viduh

A Sutra or an aphorism is a short formula with the least possible number of letters, without any ambiguity or doubtful assertion, containing the very essence, embracing all meanings, without any stop or obstruction, and absolutely faultless in nature.

The Sutrakara or the composer of the aphorisms is said to be as happy as one would be while getting the first male son, if he is but able to reduce one letter in his abstruse Sutra of far-fetched words and ideas. The best example of the greatest, the tersest and the most perfect of Sutra literatures are the series of aphorisms called the "Ashtadhyayi" composed by Panini. Panini is the father of all Sutra-Karas, from whom all others seem to have borrowed the method of composition. The Sutras are meant to explain a big volume of knowledge in short assertions suitable to be kept in memory at all times. The Six Vedangas and the six systems of Hindu philosophy form the twelve sets of Sutra literature of the world. In addition to these, there are many unimportant later compositions like the Bhakti Sutras, Narada, Sandilya,

etc., which also wish to assume an equal form with the famous Sūtras mentioned above.

Bhashya.—Sootrartho Varnyate Yatra
Padāḥ Sootranusaribhiḥ
Swapadāni Cha Varnyante
Bhashyam Bhashyavido Viduḥ

A Bhashya is an elaborate exposition, a commentary on the Sūtras, with word by word meaning of the aphoristic precepts, their running translation, together with the individual views of the commentator or the Bhashyakara. The best and the exemplary Bhashya in the whole of Sanskrit literature is the one written by Patañjali on the Vyākaraṇa-Sūtras of Pāṇini. This Bhashya is so very famous and important that it is called the 'Mahābhashya' and its celebrated author is specially called the 'Bhashyakara'. Patañjali is the father of Bhashyakaras, the next important Bhashya is the one on the Mīmāṃsā Sūtras written by Śhābara-Swamin who learnt the art from Patañjali's commentary. The third important Bhashya is written by Sāṅkara on the Brahmasūtras, in close following with the Śhābara-Bhashya. The Bhashyas on the six sets of aphorisms dealing with Indian Philosophy were written by Vātsyāyana, Prāśastapāda, Vijnānabhikṣu, Vyāsa, Śhābara and Sāṅkara respectively. On the Vedānta Sūtras there are about sixteen Bhashyas like those of Rāmanuja, Madhwa, Vallabha, Nimbarka, etc.

Vṛtti.—Sadvṛttih Sannibandhana.

A Vṛtti is a short gloss explaining the aphorisms in a more elaborate way, but not as extensively as a Bhashya. An example is Bodhayana's Vṛtti on the Brahma-Sūtras.

Vartika—Uktanuktaduruktanam
Chinta Yatra Pravartate
Tam Grantham Vartikam Prahuḥ
Vartikajna Vichakṣhanah

A Vartika is a work where a critical study is made of that which is said and left unsaid or imperfectly said in a Bhashya, and the ways of making it perfect by supplying the omissions therein. Examples are the Vartikas of Katyayana on Panini's Sūtras, of Sureswara on Sankara's Upanishad-Bhashyas, and of Kumarila Bhatta on the Shabara Bhashya on the Karma-Mimamsa.

Vyakhyana.—A Vyakhyana is a running explanation in an easier language of what is said in the original, with little elucidations here and there. A Vyakhyana, particularly of a Kavya, deals with eight different modes of dissection of the Sloka, like Pada-Chheda, Vighraha, Sandhi, Alankara, Anuvada, etc. This forms an important aspect in the study of Sanskrit Sahitya Shastra. An Anu-Vyakhyana (like the one written by Sri Madhwa) is a repetition of what is already written, but in greater detail. An Anuvada is merely a running translation or statement of an abstruse text of the original. Tika is only another name for Vyakhyana. The best Vyakhvana is of Vachaspati Misra on the Vyasa-Bhashya and the Sankara-Bhashya.

Tippani.—Tippani is just like a Vritti but is less orthodox than the Vritti. It is an explanation of difficult words or phrases occurring in the original. Examples are Kaiyata's gloss on the Mahabhashya of Patanjali, Nagojibhatta's gloss on Kaiyata's gloss, or Appayya's gloss on Amalananda's gloss on the Bhamati.

II. THE SECULAR WRITINGS

I. The Subhashitas

The Subhashitas are wise sayings, instructions and stories either in poetry or in prose. Examples are Bhartrihari's three centuries of verses, the Subhashita-

Ratna-Bhandagara, and Somadevalhatta's Kathasaritsagara or Kshemendra's Brihatkatha-Manjari. The Panchatantra and the Hitopadesha also belong to this category.

2. The Kavyas

These are highly scholarly compositions in poetry, prose or both. The greatest of poetical Kavyas are those of Kalidasa (the Raghuvamsha), Bharavi (the Kiratarjuniya), Magha (the Sisupalavadha), and Sri Harsha (the Naishadha). The best prose Kavyas in the whole of Sanskrit literature were written by Bhattabana (the Kadambari, the Harshacharita), the great genius in classical Sanskrit. Among those containing both poetry and prose, the Champu-Ramayana and the Champu-Bharata are most famous. These are all wonderful masterpieces which will ever remain to glorify India.

3. The Natakas

These are marvellously scholastic dramas embodying the Rasas of Srngara, Vira, Karuna, Adbhuta, Hasya, Bhayanaka, Bibhatsa, and Raudra. It is told that none can write on the ninth Rasa, namely, Shanti, it is attainable only on Final Liberation. The best dramas are written by Kalidasa (Shakuntala), Bhavabhuti (Uttararama-Charita), and Vishakadatta (Mudrarakshasa).

4. The Alankaras

These are grand rhetorical texts, treating of the science of perfection and beauty of ornamental language, of effective composition with elegance and force, both in poetry and prose. These are the fundamentals of Sanskrit Sahitya, even superior to the Kavyas and the Natakas. The best Alankara-Granthas are those of Mammata (Kavyaprakasha) and Jagannatha (Rasangadhara).

III. CONCLUSION

These constitute the entirety of Sanskrit Literature: sacred and secular. The Sruti is the Root, the Smritis, Itihasas and Puranas are the Trunk, the Agamas and Darshanas are the Branches; the Subhashitas, Kavyas, Natakas and Alankaras are the flowers of the Cultural Tree of India.

2. THE VEDAS—THE BREATH OF GOD

The Vedas are the fountain-head of religion. The Vedas are the ultimate source to which all religious knowledge can be traced. The Hindus have received their religion through revelation, the Vedas. The Vedas are eternal. They are without beginning and end. An ignorant man may say how a book can be without beginning or end. By the Vedas no books are meant. Vedas came out of the breath of the Lord. They are the words of God. Vedas are eternal spiritual truths. Vedas are an embodiment of divine knowledge. The books may be destroyed, but the knowledge cannot be destroyed. Knowledge is eternal. In that sense the Vedas are eternal.

Lord Brahma, the Creator, imparted the divine knowledge to the Rishis or Seers. The Rishis disseminated the knowledge. The Vedic Rishis were great realised persons who had direct intuitive perception of Brahman or the Truth. They were inspired writers. They built a simple, grand and perfect system of religion and philosophy from which the founders and teachers of all other religions have drawn their inspiration.

The Vedas are the oldest books in the library of man. The truths contained in all religions are derived from the Vedas and are ultimately traceable to the Vedas. Religion is of divine origin. It was revealed by God to man in the earliest times. It is embodied in the Vedas.

The term 'Veda' comes from the root 'Vid' "to know". The word 'Veda' means knowledge. When it is applied to scripture, it signifies a book of knowledge. The Vedas are the foundational scriptures of the Hindus.

The Vedas are not the utterances of persons. They are not the composition of any human mind. They were never written, never created. They are eternal and impersonal. The date of the Vedas has never been fixed. It can never be fixed.

The Vedas are the eternal Truths revealed by God to the great ancient Rishis of India. The word *Rishi* means a Seer, from *dris* to see. He is the Mantra Drashta, a seer of Mantra or thought. The thought was not his own. The Rishis saw the truths or heard them. Therefore the Vedas are what are heard (Sruti). The Rishi did not write. He did not create it out of his mind. He was the seer of thought which existed already. He was only the spiritual discoverer of the thought. He is not the inventor of the Veda.

The Vedas represent the spiritual experiences of the Rishis of yore. The Rishi is only a medium or an agent to transmit to people the intuitional experiences which he received. The truths of the Vedas are revelations. All the other religions of the world claim their authority as being delivered by special messengers of God to certain persons, but the Vedas do not owe their authority to any one. They are themselves the authority as they are eternal, as they are the Knowledge of the Lord.

The Sruti and the Smriti are the two authoritative sources of Hinduism. The Sruti is the primary authority and the Smriti is the secondary authority. Sruti literally means what is heard and Smriti means what is remembered. /Sruti is revelation, Smriti is tradition. Sruti is direct experience. Great Rishis heard the eternal truths of religion and left a record of them for the benefit of

posterity. These records constitute the Vedas. Hence *Śruti* is primary authority. *Smṛiti* is a recollection of that experience. Hence it is secondary authority.

The Vedas are four : the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharvana Veda. Each Veda consists of four parts, the *Mantras* or hymns, the *Brahmanas* or explanations of *Mantras* or rituals ; the *Aranyaka* and the *Upanishads*.

The *Mantras* are hymns in praise of the Vedic God for attaining material prosperity here and happiness hereafter. The *Brahmanas* guide people to perform sacrificial rites. The *Aranyakas* are the forest books intended for the *Vanaprasthas* or hermits, who prepare themselves for taking *Sanvasa*. They give philosophical interpretations of the rituals.

The *Upanishads* contain the essence or the knowledge portion of the Vedas. The philosophy of the *Upanishads* is sublime, profound, lofty and soul-stirring. The *Upanishads* are the concluding portions of the Vedas or the end of the Vedas. The teaching based on them is called *Vedanta*. They are the gist, the goal of the Vedas. They form the *Jnana Kanda*. The *Upanishads* are the most important portion of the Vedas. They form the very foundation of Hinduism. They speak of the identity of the individual and supreme Soul. They reveal the most subtle and deep spiritual truths. Even the Western scholars have paid their tribute to the Seers of the *Upanishads*. At a time when the Westerners were clad in barks and were sunk in deep ignorance, the *Upanishadic* Seers were enjoying the eternal bliss of the Absolute, and had the highest culture and civilisation.

The different philosophers of India belonging to different schools such as *Advaita*, qualified Monism or *Vishistadvaita*, Dualism, pure Monism, *Bhed abheda* etc. have acknowledged the supreme authority of the *Upanishads*.

They have given their own interpretation, but they have obeyed the authority. They have built their philosophy on the foundation of the Upanishads.

The most important Upanishads are Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Kaushitaki and Svetasvatara. These are supremely authoritative

The division of the Vedas into four parts is to suit the four stages in a man's life. The Mantra portion of the Vedas is useful for the Brahmacharis. The Brahmana portion is suitable for the householders. The Aranyaka is useful for the Vanaprasthas. The Upanishads are useful for the Sannyasis

The subject matter of the whole Veda is divided into (1) **Karma-Kanda** or ritualistic Section. It deals with various sacrifices and rituals. (2) **Upasana-Kanda** or worship section. It deals with various kinds of worship or meditation. (3) **Jnana-Kanda** or Knowledge section. It deals with the highest knowledge of Nirguna Brahman. The Mantras and the Brahmanas constitute Karma-Kanda, the Aranyakas Upasana-Kanda and the Upanishads Jnana-Kanda.

May the fundamental truths of the Vedas be revealed unto you all like the Amalaka fruit in the palm of your hand. May Gayatri, the blessed Mother of the Vedas, impart you the milk of Knowledge, the ancient wisdom of the Upanishads.

SMRITIS

What is revealed is Sruti. Upanishad is a Sruti. What is remembered is Smriti. Bhagavad Gita is a Smriti.

Next in importance to the Sruti are the Smritis or secondary scriptures. The Smriti or Dharma Shashtra is founded on the Sruti. It stands next in authority to the

Sruti. It explains and develops Dharma. It lays down the laws which regulate Hindu national, social, family and individual obligations.

Smriti in a broader sense covers all Hindu Shastras save the Vedas. The works, which are expressly called Smritis are the law books, Dharma Shastras. These also are books written by Sages, but they are not the final authority. If there is anything in a Smriti which contradicts the Sruti, the Smriti is to be rejected. Bhagavad Gita also is a Smriti. So is Mahabharata too.

The Hindu learns how he has to spend his whole life from these Smritis. The duties of Varnashrama and all ceremonies are clearly given in these books. The Smritis prescribe certain acts and prohibit some others for a Hindu according to his birth and stage of life. The object of the Smritis is to purify the heart of man and take him gradually to the supreme abode of immortality and make him perfect and free. The Smritis are based on the teachings of the Vedas.

These Smritis have varied from time to time. The Laws of Manu are intended for the Satya Yuga; those of Yagnavalkya are for the Treta Yuga; those of Sankha and Likhita are for the Dwapara Yuga; and those of Parasara are for the Kali Yuga.

The laws for regulating Hindu Society from time to time are codified in the Smritis. The Smritis have laid down definite rules and laws to guide the individuals and communities in their daily conduct and to regulate their manners and customs. The Smritis have given detailed instructions according to the conditions of the time to all classes of men regarding their duties in life. The laws and rules which are based entirely upon our social position, time and clime must change with the changes in society and changing conditions of time and clime. Then only the progress of the Hindu Society can be ensured.

The injunctions and prohibitions of the Smritis are related to the particular social surroundings. As these surroundings and essential conditions of the Hindu Society changed from time to time, new Smritis had to be compiled by the Sages of different ages and different parts of India.

From time to time a great law-giver would take his birth. He would codify the existing laws and remove those which have become obsolete. He would make some alterations, adaptations, readjustments, additions and subtractions to suit the needs of the time and see that the way of living of the people would be in accordance with the teachings of the Veda. Of such law-givers, Manu, Yagnavalkya, and Parasara are the most celebrated persons. Hindu Society is founded on and governed by the laws made by these three great sages. The Smritis are named after them. We have Manu Smriti or Manava-Dharma Shastra, the Laws of Manu or the Institutes of Manu, Yagnavalkya Smriti and Parasara Smriti. Manu is the great law-giver of the race. He is the oldest law-giver as well. The Yagnavalkya Smriti follows the same general lines as the Manu Smriti and is next in importance to it. Manu Smriti and Yagnavalkya Smriti are universally accepted at the present time as authoritative works all over India. Yagnavalkya Smriti is chiefly consulted in all matters of Hindu Law. Even the Government of India are applying some of these laws.

He who is endowed with a pure heart, through protracted Tapas, Japa, Kirtan and meditation, service of Guru, who has a very clear conscience can be guided by the inner voice in matters of Dharma or duty or moral action. The inner voice that proceeds from a clean heart filled with Sattwa is indeed the voice of God, or Soul or Antaryamin or Inner Ruler. This voice is more than Smriti. It is Smriti of Smritis. Purify your heart and train yourself to hear this inner voice. Keep your ear in tune with the voice.

It is not possible to follow some of the Laws of Manu at the present time. We can follow their spirit and not the letter. Society is advancing. When it advances it outgrows certain laws which were valid and helpful at a particular stage of its growth. Many new things which were not thought out by the old law-givers have come into existence now. It is no use insisting people to follow now those old laws which have become obsolete.

Our present Society has considerably changed. A new Smṛiti to suit the requirements of this age is very necessary. Another sage will place before the Hindus of our days a new suitable code of laws. Time is ripe for a new Smṛiti. Cordial greetings to this Sage.

THE ITIHASAS

The Itihasas (histories) are the two well-known epics (Mahakavyas), the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. They are two very popular and useful Shastras of the Hindus. The Ramayana was written by the Sage Valmiki and the Mahabharata by Vyasa. The Itihasas give us beautiful stories of absorbing interest and importance through which all the fundamental teachings of Hinduism are indelibly impressed on one's mind. The laws of Smritis and the principles of the Vedas are stamped firmly on the minds of the Hindus and the readers through the noble and marvellous deeds of their great national heroes. We get a clear idea of Hinduism from these sublime stories.

The common man cannot comprehend the high abstract philosophy of the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras. Hence the compassionate Sages Valmiki and Vyasa wrote the Itihasas for the benefit of common people. The same philosophy is presented with analogies and parables in a tasteful form to the common run of mankind.

The Ramayana, the Adi-Kavya or the first epic poem, relates the story of Sri Rama, the ideal man. It is the history of the family of the solar race descended from Ikshvaku, in which was born Sri Ramachandra the Avatara of Lord Vishnu and his three brothers. The ideal characters like Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata, Sri Hanuman that we find in Ramayana firmly establish Hindu Dharma in our minds. The story of the birth of Rama and his brothers, education and marriages, the exile of Sri Rama, the carrying off and recovery of Sita, his wife, the destruction of Ravana, the Rakshasa King of Lanka, and the reign of Sri Rama are described in detail in Ramayana. How a man should behave towards his superiors, equals and inferiors, how a king ought to rule his kingdom, how a man should lead his life in this world, how he can obtain his release, freedom and perfection, may be learnt from this excellent epic. The Ramayana gives a vivid picture of Indian life. Even to-day our domestic, social and national ideals are copied from the noble characters in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The great national heroes stand even to-day as beacon lights to guide and inspire the people of the whole world. The life of Rama, Bharata and Lakshmana provides a model of fraternal affection and mutual service. Sri Hanuman stands as an ideal unique Karma Yogi. The life of Sita is regarded as the most perfect example of womanly fidelity, chastity and sweetness.

The Mahabharata gives a description of the Great War, the battle of Kurukshetra, which broke out between the Kauravas and the Pandavas who were cousins and descendants of the lunar race. The Mahabharata is an encyclopedia of Hindu Dharma. It is rightly called the fifth Veda. It contains very noble moral teachings, useful lessons of all kinds, many beautiful stories and episodes, discourses, sermons, parables and dialogues which set forth the principles of morals and metaphysics. The Pandavas obtained victory through the grace of Lord Krishna.

The most important part of Mahabharata is the Bhagavad Gita. It is a marvellous dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield before the commencement of the great war. Bhagawan Sri Krishna became the charioteer of Arjuna. Sri Krishna explained the essentials of Hindu religion to Arjuna. Just as the Upanishads contain the cream of the Vedas, so does the Gita contain the cream of the Upanishads. The Upanishads are the cows. Lord Krishna is the cowherd. Arjuna is the calf. The Gita is the milk. The wise men are those who drink the milk of Gita. The Gita is the most precious jewel of Hindu literature. It is a universal gospel. Gita teaches the Yoga of Synthesis. It ranks high in the religious literature of the world. Arjuna saw before him his dear relatives and teachers in the battlefield. He fainted and refused to fight against them. Then Lord Krishna imparted knowledge of the Self to Arjuna and convinced him that it was his duty to fight regardless of consequences. Afterwards Arjuna gave up his Moha or delusion. All his doubts were cleared. He fought against the Kauravas and achieved victory.

The Mahabharata contains also the immortal discourse of Bhishma on Dharma, which he gave to Yudishtira when he was lying on the bed of arrows. The whole Mahabharata forms an encyclopedia of history, morals and religion unsurpassed by any other epic in the world.

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata tell us clearly about the ancient India, about her people, her customs, her ways of living, her arts, her civilisation and culture, her manufactures. If you read these two books you will come to know how great India once was, and you will be inspired to make her great once more. No other country has produced so many great men, great Teachers, great Yogis, great Seers, great Rishis, great Prophets, great Acharyas, great Kings, great heroes, great statesmen, great patriots and great benefactors as India. The more

you know of India and Hinduism, the more you will honour and love it and the more thankful for the Lord you will be that you were born in India as a Hindu. Glory to India. Glory to Hinduism!! Glory to the Seers of the Upanishads!!! Glory, Glory to Lord Krishna, the author of the Song Divine!!!

The Smritis, the Itihasas, the Puranas, the Agamas and Darshanas are only developments of the Veda. Their ultimate source is the Veda. Their one common aim is to enable man to annihilate his ignorance and attain perfection, freedom, immortality and eternal bliss through knowledge of God or the Eternal. Their purpose is to make man like God and one with Him.

THE PURANAS

Vyasa is the compiler of the Puranas from age to age and for this age he is Krishna Dvaipayana, the son of Parasara. The Puranas are of the same class as the Itihasas. The two together are known as the fifth Veda (Panchamo Vedah).

Puranas were written to popularise the religion of the Vedas. They have five characteristics (Panchalakshanam) viz., that which treats of history, of cosmology, with various symbolical illustration of philosophical principles, secondary creation, genealogy of king's and Manvantaras. The Darshanas are very stiff. They are meant only for the learned few. The Puranas are meant for the masses with inferior intellect. Religion is taught in a very easy and interesting way through these Puranas. Even to this day the Puranas are popular. Children hear the stories from their grand-mothers, Pundits and Purohits hold Kathas in temples, banks of rivers and other important places. Agriculturists, labourers and bazaar people hear the stories.

The aim of the Puranas is to impress on the minds of the masses the teachings of the Vedas, and to generate in them devotion to God through concrete examples, myths, stories, legends, lives of saints, kings and great men, allegories and chronicles of great historical events. The sages made use of these things to illustrate the eternal principles of religion. The Puranas were meant not for the scholars but for the ordinary people, who cannot understand high philosophy and who could not study the Vedas.

They are very interesting to read and are full of information of all kinds.

The Puranas contain the history of remote times. They also give a description of the regions of the universe not visible to the ordinary physical eye

There are eighteen main Puranas and an equal number of subsidiary Puranas (Upa-Puranas). The main Puranas are (1) Vishnu Purana (2) Naradiya Purana (3) Bhagavata Purana (4) Garuda (Suparna) Purana (5) Padma Purana (6) Varaha Purana (7) Brahma Purana (8) Brahmanda Purana (9) Brahma Vaivarta Purana (10) Markandeya Purana (11) Bhavishvat Purana (12) Vamana Purana (13) Matsya Purana (14) Kurma Purana (15) Linga Purana (16) Siva Purana (17) Skanda Purana and (18) Agni Purana

Of these the most popular is the Bhagavata. Next comes Vishnu Purana. A portion of the Markandeya Purana is well-known to all Hindus as Chandi. Worship of God as the Divine Mother is its theme. Chandi is read widely by the Hindus on sacred days and Navaratri—Durga Puja days.

The eighteen Upa-Puranas are: Sanat Kumara, Narasimha, Brihannaradiya, Swarahaasya, Durvasas, Kapila, Vamana, Bhargava, Varuna, Kalika, Samba, Nandi, Surya, Parasara, Vasishta, Devi Bhagavata, Ganesha and Hamsa.

Bhagavata Purana is a chronicle of the various Avatars of Lord Vishnu. There are ten Avatars of Vishnu. The aim of every Avatara is to save the world from some great danger, to destroy the wicked and protect the virtuous. The ten Avatars are (1) Matsya (The Fish) (2) Kurma (The Tortoise) (3) Varaha (The Boar) (4) Narasimha (The Man-lion) (5) Vamana (The Dwarf) (6) Parasurama (Rama with the axe), the destroyer of the Kshatriya race (7) Ramachandra (the hero of Ramayana, the son of Dasaratha, and consort of Sita who killed Ravana, the ten-headed Rakshasa or monster) (8) Sri Krishna, the consort of Radha and Rukmini and Teacher of the Gita (9) Buddha, the Prince ascetic, founder of Buddhism (10) Kalki, the hero on a white horse who is to come at the end of the Kali-Yuga.

The object of the Matsya Avatara was to save Vaivasvata Manu from destruction by a deluge. The object of Kurma Avatara was to enable the world to recover some precious things which were lost in the deluge. The Tortoise gave its back for keeping the churning rod when the Gods and the Asuras churned the ocean of milk. The purpose of Varaha Avatara was to rescue the earth from the waters which had been dragged down by a demon named Hiranyaksha. The purpose of Narasimha Avatara, half lion and half man, was to free the world from the oppression of Hiranyakasipu, a demon, the father of Bhakta Prahlada. The object of Vamana Avatara was to restore the power of the Gods which had been eclipsed by the penance and devotion of King Bali. The object of Parasurama Avatara was to deliver the country from the oppression of the Kshatriya rulers. Parasurama destroyed the Kshatriya race twenty-one times. The object of Rama Avatara was to destroy the wicked Ravana. The object of Sri Krishna Avatara was to destroy Kamsa and other demons, to deliver His wonderful message of Gita, and to become the centre of the Bhakti Schools of India. The object of Buddha Avatara is to prohibit animal sacrifices. The

object of the Kalki Avatara is for the destruction of the wicked and the re-establishment of virtue.

Lord Siva has ^{form - not in cave} incarnated himself in the form of Dakshinamurty to impart knowledge to the four Kumaras. He has taken human form to initiate Sambhander, Manickavasagar, Pattinathar. He has appeared in flesh and blood to help his devotees and relieve their sufferings. The divine lilas of Lord Siva are recorded in the Tamil Puranas like Siva Purana, Periya Purana, Siva Prakrimam, Tiruvilayadal Purana.

Neophytes or beginners in the spiritual path are puzzled when they go through Siva Purana, Vishnu Purana. In Siva Purana, Lord Siva is highly eulogised and an inferior position is given to Lord Vishnu. Sometimes Vishnu is belittled. In Vishnu Purana Lord Hari is highly eulogised and an inferior status is given to Lord Siva. Sometimes Lord Siva is belittled. This is only to increase the faith of the devotees to their particular Ishta Devata. Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu are one.

Study of Puranas, listening to sacred recitals of scriptures, describing and expounding of the transcendent Lilas of the Blessed Lord, these form an important part of Sadhana of the Lord's devotees. It is most pleasing to the Lord. Sravana is a part of Navavidha Bhakti, Kathas and Upanyasas open the springs of devotion in the hearts of hearers and develop Prem Bhakti, which confers Immortality on the Jiva

The language of the Vedas is archaic and the subtle philosophy of Vedanta and Upanishads is extremely difficult to grasp and assimilate, hence the Puranas are of special value as they present philosophical truth and precious teachings in an easier manner. They give ready access into the mysteries of life and key to bliss. Imbibe their teachings. Start a new life of Dharmanishtha and Adhyatmic Sadhana from this very day.

THE AGAMAS.

Another class of popular scriptures are the Agamas. The Agamas do not derive their authority from the Vedas, but they are not antagonistic to them. They are all Vedic in spirit and character. That is the reason why they are regarded as authoritative. The Vaishnava Agamas or Pancharatra Agamas glorify God as Vishnu. The Saiva Agamas glorify God as Siva and have given rise to an important school of philosophy known as Saiva Siddhantha which prevails in South India particularly in the districts of Tinnevely and Madura. The Sakta Agamas or Tantras glorify God as the Mother of the world under one of the many names of Devi.

The Agamas are theological treatises and manuals of worship. The three chief sects of Hinduism viz., Saivism, Saktism, and Vaishnavism, base their doctrines and dogmas on their respective Agamas. The Saivas recognise twenty-eight Agamas of which the Chief is Kamika. The Agamas are also the basis of Kashmir Saivism which is called the Pratyabhijna System. The later works of Pratyabhijna system show a distinct leaning to Advaitism. The Southern Saivism which is known as Saiva Siddhanta, and the Kashmir Saivism regard these Agamas as their authority besides the Vedas. Each Agama has Upagamas. Of these, only fragmentary texts of twenty are extant. Lord Siva is the central God in the Saiva Agamas. They are suitable to this age (Kali Yuga). They are open to all castes and both the sexes.

There is another group of Shastras known as the Tantras. They belong to the Sakta cult. They glorify Sakti as the World-Mother. They dwell on the Sakti (energy) aspect of God and prescribe numerous courses of ritualistic worship of the Divine Mother in various forms. There are seventy-seven Agamas. These are very much like the Puranas in some respects. The texts are usually in the form of dialogues between Siva and Parvathi.

In some of these Siva answers the questions put by Parvathi; in others Parvathi answers, Siva questioning. Mahanirvana, Kularnava Kulasara, Prapanchasara, Tantraraja, Rudra Yamala, Brahma Yamala, Vishnu Yamala and Todala Tantra are the important works. The Agamas teach several occult practices some of which confer powers while the others bestow knowledge and freedom. Sakti is the creative power of Lord Siva. Saktism is really a supplement to Saivism.

Lord Vishnu is the Supreme Lord in the Pancharatra Agamas. The Vaishnavas regard the Pancharatra Agamas to be authoritative. They believe that these Agamas were revealed by Lord Vishnu Himself. Narada Pancharatra says "Everything from Brahma to a blade of grass is Lord Krishna" This corresponds to the Upanishadic declaration "All is Brahman-Sarvam Kalvidam Brahma". There are two-hundred and fifteen texts. Ishwara, Paushkara, Parama, Sattwata, Brihad-Brahma, and Guanamritasara Samhitas are the important ones.

THE SIX SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY.

(Shad Darshanas).

I

The Shad Darshanas or the Shat Shastras are (1) The Nyaya founded by Gautama Rishi (2) The Vaisheshika by Kanada Rishi (3) The Sankhya by Kapila Muni (4) The Yoga by Patanjali Maha Rishi (5) The Purva Mimamsa by Jaimini (6) The Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta by Badarayana or Vyasa.

The six schools of philosophy are the six instruments of true teaching or the six demonstrations of Truth. The six Darshanas grew directly out of the Vedas. The Darshana literature is philosophical. Darsana means literally 'sight' or 'vision'. Darsana means a system of

philosophy. Each Darsana has a way of looking into the Truth, or a stand-point. The Darshanas are based on the Vedas. The six schools are divided into three groups (1) The Nyaya and the Vaisheshika (2) The Sankhya and the Yoga (3) The Mimamsa and the Vedanta.

Each school has developed, systematised and correlated the various parts of the Veda in its own way. Each system has its Sutrakara i.e. the one great Rishi, who systematised the doctrines of the School and put them in short aphorisms or Sutras.

Gautama Rishi systematised the principles of Nyaya or the Indian logic. Kanada composed the Vaisheshika Sutras. Kapila Muni founded the Sankhya system. Patanjali Maha Rishi is the first systematiser of the Raja Yoga school. He composed his Yoga-sutras. Yoga-darshana of Patanjali is a celebrated text book on Raja Yoga. Jaimini, disciple of Vyasa composed the Sutras of the Mimamsa school which is based on the ritual sections of the Veda. Badarayana composed his famous Brahma-Sutras which contain the teachings of the Upanishads. The different schools of Vedanta have built their philosophy on the foundation of these Sutras.

No student of Hinduism ought to be satisfied without acquiring a clear and accurate knowledge of the principal distinguishing characteristics of the six philosophical schools. The more advanced scholar should study the original Sutras in which the doctrines of each school are enunciated. Study of the six schools of philosophy will sharpen the intellect and give you vast knowledge. You will have a clear and comprehensive understanding of the Truth. Each system is a step or rung in the spiritual ladder.

Vaisheshika is the supplement of Nyaya. Yoga is the supplement of Sankhya. Vedanta is the amplification and fulfilment of Sankhya. Study of grammar or Vyakarana,

Nyaya and Sankhya is necessary to understand Vedanta. Vaisesika is not very much in honour now. Nyaya is popular. The Sankhya is not a living faith. The Yoga is practised by a few in its practical form. Vedanta is very popular. The Nyaya and the Vaisheshika will give you an analysis of the world of experience. Sankhya will provide you deep knowledge on Hindu psychology. Kapila Muni was the father of psychology. Yoga will help you to cultivate concentration and one-pointedness of mind and enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Those who have studied carefully the Upanishads will find that the revelations of Sruti are in harmony with the conclusions of philosophy.

The Sutras are terse and laconic. The Rishis have condensed their thoughts in the aphorisms. It is very difficult to understand them without the help of commentaries by great sages or Rishis. Hence there arose many commentators or Bhashya-karas. There are glosses, notes, and later commentaries on this original commentary.

Some of the doctrines of Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sankhya and Yoga are opposed to the teaching of the Vedas. These systems are only superficially based on the Vedas.

The Nyaya and Vaisesika schools rely too much on human reason though they accept the Vedas as the supreme authority. Human intellect is frail and finite. It has got its limitations. It functions within time, space and causation. Its findings cannot be infallible. It cannot solve transcendental matters. Vedas only are infallible and authoritative. They contain the revelations or direct intuitional experiences of Seers and Rishis. These experiences will tally with the experiences of those who have attained knowledge of the Self or Brahma-Gyana.

Vedanta is the most satisfactory system of philosophy. It has been evolved out of the Upanishads. It has superseded all other schools. The Mimamsa School has laid great stress on rituals or Karma Kanda. According to the Mimamsa School, Karma or ritual is all in all in the Veda. Upasana and Jnana are only accessories to Karma. This view is refuted by the Vedanta school. According to Vedanta, Self-realisation or Jnana is the foremost thing; ritual and worship are accessories. Karma will take one to heaven which is only an impermanent place of refined sensual enjoyment. Karma cannot destroy the cycle of births and deaths and cannot give eternal bliss and immortality.

During the time of Sankaracharya, all the six Schools of philosophy flourished. Therefore he had to refute the other systems in order to establish his Kevala Advaita. But nowadays Sankhya, Vaseshika etc. are in name only. Even now the Hindu preachers, Sannyasins and Mandaleshwars try to establish Advaita Vedanta by refuting the other Systems. It is a mistake. They will have to refute at the present moment Materialism, Agnosticism, Atheism and science and then establish Advaita Vedanta.

II

Darshanas are Schools of Philosophy based on the Vedas. The Agamas are theological. The Darshana literature is philosophical. Philosophy has six divisions, Shaddarshanani, the six Darshanas or ways of seeing things, usually called the six systems or six different Schools of thought.

Purva Mimamsa, Uttara Mimamsa (Vedanta), Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya and Vaisheshika are the six Darshanas. The sages Jaimini, Vyasa, Kapila, Patanjali, Gautama and Kanada are the founders of these six systems respectively. Each of these is written in a peculiar style, in

aphorisms or Sutras. These terse, laconic Sutras require explanation and these naturally gave rise to a vast number of commentaries, notes and glosses.

The Darshanas are meant for the erudite scholars who are endowed with acute acumen, good understanding, power of reasoning and subtle intellect. The Puranas, Itihasas and Agamas are meant for the masses. The Darshanas appeal to the intellect, while the Puranas, Itihasas etc., appeal to the heart.

The six Schools of thought are like the six different roads, which lead to one city. You may go to Bombay by train or aeroplane or motor bus or any other vehicle. Even so, you can reach the goal of life through Yoga or Vedanta or any other path. The methods or ways of approach to the Goal, are different to suit people of different temperament, capacity and mental calibre. But they all have one aim, *viz.* removal of ignorance and its effects *viz.* pain and suffering and the attainment of freedom, perfection, immortality and eternal bliss by union of the individual soul (Jivatma) with the Supreme Soul (Param-atma) through knowledge.

The Purva Mimamsa deals with the Karma-Kanda of the Vedas and the Uttara Mimamsa with the Jnana-Kanda. Uttara Mimamsa is also known as Vedanta Darsana or Brahma Sutras. This is the corner-stone of Hinduism. Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya, Sri Madhvacharya, Sri Nimbarkacharya, Sri Vallabhacharya and other Acharyas wrote illuminating commentaries on the Brahma-Sutras and built their system of philosophy. Yoga is a supplement of Sankhya. Vedanta is amplification of Sankhya. Nyaya sharpens the intellect and enables the aspirants to grasp Vedanta. Vaisheshika is a supplement of Nyaya. Vedanta Darshana has superseded all other Darshanas.

The Sankhya explains in detail the nature of Purusha and Prakriti. The Nyaya and the Vaisheshika arrange

all the things of the world into a certain kinds or categories (Padarthas). They explain how God has made all this material world out of atoms and molecules. They show the way to attain knowledge of God. The Yoga system shows the ways to discipline the mind and the senses, to concentrate, meditate and enter into Nirvikalpa Samadhi or superconscious state. The Vedanta philosophy explains in detail the nature of Brahman or the Eternal and shows that the individual soul is, in essence, identical with the Supreme Self. It gives methods to remove Avidya or the veil of ignorance and to merge oneself in the ocean of Bliss or Brahman.

The Nyaya calls ignorance Mithya Jnanam, false knowledge. The Sankhya styles it Aviveka, non-discrimination between the real and the unreal. The Vedanta names it Avidya, nescience. Each philosophy aims at its eradication by knowledge or jnanam. Then one attains eternal bliss or immortality.

By study of Nyaya and Vaisheshika one learns to utilise his intellect to find out fallacies and to know the material constitution of the world. By study of Sankhya, he understands the course of evolution. By study and practice of Yoga, he practises self-restraint and obtains mastery over mind and senses. By practice of Vedanta he reaches the highest rung of the ladder of spirituality or the pinnacle of divine glory, oneness with the Supreme Being by the destruction of ignorance or Avidya.

PURVA MIMAMSA PHILOSOPHY

I

Adorations to Sri Jaimini, the founder of Purva Mimamsa System, the disciple of Sri Vyasa Bhagawan.

Purva Mimamsa is an enquiry into the former portion of the Vedas or Karma-Mimamsa, an enquiry into the ritual of the Vedas or that portion of the Vedas which

concerns with the Mantras and Brahmanas only. The Purva Mimamsa is so called because it is earlier (purva) than the Uttara Mimamsa, not so much in the chronological as in the logical sense.

Mimamsa is not a branch of any philosophical system. It is rather a system of Vedic interpretation. Its philosophical discussions amount to a kind of critical commentary on the Brahmana or ritual portion of the Veda. It interprets the Vedas in the literal sense. The central problem of Purva Mimamsa is ritual. Jaimini has systematised the rules of Mimamsa and established their validity in his work. The rules of Mimamsa are very important for the interpretation of the Hindu law.

Jaimini was the opponent of rationalism and theism. The Veda was practically the only God for him. The eternal Veda needs no other basis to rest on. There is no divine revealer. It is authoritative. It is the only source of our knowledge of Dharma. God was not necessary for him and his system. He said that Veda is itself authority. His first aphorism "Athato Dharma yjnasa" states the whole aim and object of his System, viz. a desire to know Dharma or duty which consists in the performance of the rites and sacrifices prescribed by the Veda. Dharma itself bestows the rewards. The aim of Purva Mimamsa is to investigate into the nature of Dharma.

The Mimamsa Sutas of Jaimini give a detailed description of the different sacrifices and their purposes, the doctrine of Apurva and also some philosophical propositions. There are twelve chapters.

Jaimini accepts the three Pramanas of perception (Pratyaksha), inference (Anumana) and authoritative testimony (Sabda or Veda).

Sabara is the author of the chief commentary on the work of Jaimini. Kumarila was the Guru of Bhavabhuti.

He commented on the Sutra and the Bhasya. He proved the eternal character of the Vedas and the efficiency of Vedic ceremonials. Prabhakara is the pupil of Kumarila. He wrote his commentary Brhati on the Bhasya of Sabara.

A real self survives after the annihilation of the body. The performer of a sacrifice goes to heaven. The Veda promises rewards to the sacrificer to be enjoyed in another world.

Jaimini holds that there is a perpetual connection between a word and its sense and that sound is eternal.

II

The self is distinct from the body, the senses and the intellect. The Soul is the experiencer or enjoyer. The body is the abode of experiences. The senses are the instruments of experience. The soul perceives when it is in union with the mind. The soul experiences internally pleasure and pain and externally objects such as trees, rivers, plants etc.

The Self is not the senses, because it persists even when the senses are injured or destroyed. The body is made up of matter. The perceiver is distinct from the body. The soul directs the body. The body is a servant of the soul. There is some being which synthesises the various sense-data. That being or entity is the soul. The soul is all-pervading and imperishable. Souls are countless.

According to Prabhakara there are eight categories viz. substance (Dravya) quality (Guna), action (Karma), generality (Samanya), inherence (Paratantrata), force, (Sakti), similarity (Sadrsya) and number (Samkhya).

Dharma is enjoined by the Vedas. Its practice leads to happiness. If the Smriti does not agree with the

Sruti, the former is to be ignored. The practice by virtuous men or custom comes next to the *Smritis*. A Hindu should lead his life in accordance with the rules of the *Vedas*. A Hindu must perform *Nitya-karmas* like *Sandhya* etc., and *Naimittika Karmas* during proper occasions to get salvation. These are unconditional duties. If he fails to do these, he incurs the sin of omission (*Pratyavaya dosha*). He performs *Kamya-karmas* to attain special ends. If he avoids prohibited actions (*Nisiddha karmas*), he will avoid hell.

If he performs the unconditional duties, he will attain salvation.

Some later *Mimamsakas* maintain that all works ought to be performed as an offering to God or Supreme Being. Then they become the cause or means of emancipation.

If works or sacrifices are done in a mechanical way without feeling, *Sraddha* (faith) and devotion, they cannot help one to attain salvation. One may perform any number of sacrifices, and yet there may not be any change in the heart if they are performed without the right spirit or right mental attitude and right will. What is really wanted is not the ceremonial sacrifice but the sacrifice of selfishness, egoism and *Raga-dwesha* (likes and dislikes).

III.

Apurva is *Adrishta*. *Apurva* is the link or necessary connection between work and its fruit or result. It is a positive unseen force created by an act which leads to the attainment of the fruit of action. This is the view of *Jaimini*.

Apurva cannot act unless it is moved by God or the supreme Being. He who makes the *Apurva* to function is God.

IV

Jaimini does not believe in Moksha. He believes in the existence of Swarga (heaven) attainable through Karma or sacrifice.

He showed the way to attain happiness in Swarga or heaven, but he did not tell anything about the problem of the final emancipation. But the later writers like Prabhakara and Kumarila could not avoid this problem of final salvation as it engaged the attention of the thinkers of other schools. Prabhakara says that the absolute cessation of the body caused by the total disappearance of Dharma and Adharma, whose operation is the cause of rebirth, is ultimate release or liberation. Man abandons prohibited acts and the deeds which lead to happiness in heaven. He does the necessary expiations for exhausting the previously accumulated Karmas. He practises self-restraint and disciplines himself. He develops virtuous qualities. He frees himself from rebirths by a true knowledge of the soul. One cannot attain release by mere knowledge. Exhaustion of Karmas only can bring about release. Knowledge prevents further accumulation of virtue and vice. Karma by itself cannot lead to the attainment of the final emancipation. Raga-dwesha (likes and dislikes) which leads to the performance of actions must be destroyed if one wants to attain Moksha. Moksha is the cessation of pleasure and pain. It is not a state of bliss as the attributeless soul cannot have even bliss. It is simply the natural form of the Soul.

The view of Kumarila comes very near to the view of Advaita Vedantins. Moksha is a positive state for him. It is the realisation of the Atman. He is of opinion that knowledge is not sufficient for salvation. He thinks that the final emancipation can be attained through Karma combined with Jnana.

The Purva Mimamsa has a number of deities. The offerings may be made to them. The practice of Vedic Dharma is not in need of any Supreme Being or God. Vedic religion does not require the assistance of God. The eternal self-existent Veda serves all the purposes of Jaimini and Purva Mimamsakas. Jaimini does not so much deny God as ignore Him. The fruits or rewards of sacrifices are not dispensed by any beneficent God. Apurva bestows the reward for the sacrificer. Kumarila maintains that the Veda is composed by God, and is Brahman in the form of sounds. Other thinkers criticised severely that the unconscious or non-intelligent Apurva cannot bestow the rewards. The Mimamsa System could not satisfy the intelligent, thoughtful men. Hence the later Mimamsakas slowly introduced God.

They declared that if sacrifices are performed in honour of the Supreme Being, it will lead to the achievement of the Supreme Good

V.

The Purva Mimamsa system of philosophy is unsatisfactory and incomplete. It does not deal with the problems of ultimate Reality and its relation to soul and matter. There is no philosophical view of the world. The central feature is the performance of the sacrifices. This is the most essential or fundamental thing. "Perform sacrifices and enjoy in heaven". This is the sum and substance of Jaimini's teaching. This is his Moksha or the final goal. This cannot give satisfaction to the thinkers who know that the enjoyment in heaven is transitory, imperfect, sensual and worldly.

To sum up: According to Jaimini, performance of the actions that are enjoined in the Vedas is the Sadhana or means for attaining Moksha. Karma Kanda is the chief Kanda of the Vedas. The cause of bondage is the performance of Nishiddha Karmas or prohibited actions.

Jiva is Jada-chetana, combination of insentieny and intelligence. Jivas are countless. Jiva is doer and enjoyer. He is all-pervading. Jaimini supports Akhyati Vada. He does not believe in the creation of the world. He believes in grades of happiness in heaven and Sadachara or right conduct (Satyam Vada : speak the truth). Dharma chara (do Dharma or Duty).

SANKHYA PHILOSOPHY

I

Introduction.

Obeisance to Sri Kapila Muni, the founder of the Sankhya System of philosophy, the son of Lord Brahma or the Avatar of Vishnu.

The Sankhya system is generally studied next to Nyaya. It is a beautiful system of philosophy. Even the Western philosophers have great admiration for this system. It is more categorically dualistic. It denies that anything can be produced out of nothing. It assumes the reality of Purusha and the Prakriti, the knowing Self and the objects known.

The word 'Sankhya' is derived from Sankhya or number. The system gives an analytical enumeration of the principles of the universe. Hence the name is quite appropriate. 'Sankhya' is used in the sense of philosophical reflection also.

The enquiry into this system of philosophy is to find out the means for eradicating the three sorts of pain, viz , Adhyatmic (e. g., fever and other diseases), Adhidaivic (thunder, cold, heat, rain etc.) and Adhubhautic (pain from animals, scorpion etc) and the disease of rebirths. Pain is an embarrassment. It stands in the way of doing Yoga Sadhana and attaining Moksha or release. Kapila Muni imparted a knowledge of the twenty-five principles which

annihilates the pain. According to Sankhya philosophy, he who knows the twenty-five principles attains liberation. The final cessation of the three kinds of pain is the final goal of life.

In the Sankhya system, there is no analytical enquiry into the universe as actually existing arranged under topics and categories. There is a synthetical system starting from an original primordial Tattva called Prakriti, that which evolves or produces or brings forth (Prakaroti) everything else.

The effect truly exists beforehand in its cause. This is one of the central features of the Sankhya system of philosophy. Cause is a substance in which the effect subsists in a latent form. Just as the whole tree exists in a latent or dormant state in the seed, so also the whole world exists in a latent state in Prakriti or the Avyaktam (unevolved), Avyakritam (undifferentiated). The effect is of the same nature as the cause. The effect or product is not different from the material of which it is composed.

Perception (pratyaksha), inference (anumana) and right affirmation (apta vakya) are the three Pramanas or proofs in the Sankhya system. The word 'apta' means 'fit', 'right'. It is applied to the Vedas or Inspired teachers. The Naiyavikas have four kinds of proofs *viz.* perception, inference, comparison and verbal authority. The Mimamsakas recognised six kinds of proofs.

The Sankhya system is called Nir-Ishwara Sankhya. It is atheistical. The Sankhyas do not accept Ishwara or God. The creation produced by Prakriti has an existence of its own independent of all connection with the particular Purusha to which it is united. So the Sankhyas say that there is no need for an intelligent Creator of the world or even of any superintending power. This is a mistake. Prakriti is always under the control of the Lord. It cannot do anything by itself. The Lord gazes at Prakriti.

Then alone she is put in motion and she begins to create. Prakriti is non-intelligent. An intelligent Creator alone can have a thought-out plan for the universe. Prakriti is only a helper (Sahakari). This is the theory of Vedanta.

The Sankhya adopts the theory of evolution and involution. The cause and effect are the undeveloped and developed states of one and the same substance. There is no such thing as total destruction. In destruction the effect is involved into its cause. That is all.

Sankhya gives a description of fourfold categories based on their respective productive efficiency, viz. (1) Productive (Prakriti), (2) Productive and Produced (Prakriti-Vikriti), (3) Produced (Vikriti) (4) Neither productive nor produced (Anubhayarupa). This classification includes all the twenty-five Principles or Tattwas. Prakriti or Nature, or Pradhana (chief) is purely productive. It is the root of all. It is no production. It is creative force, evolver, producer. Seven principles, the great or intellectual one (Buddhi) egoism and the five Tanmatras or subtle rudiments etc. are productions and productive. Buddhi is productive as Ahankara is evolved out of it. It is produced also as it itself is evolved out of Prakriti. Egoism is a production as it is derived from intellect. It is productive as it gives origin to the five subtle rudiments or Tanmatras. The subtle rudiments are derived from egoism. Hence they are productions. They give origin to the five elements. Hence they are productive. Sixteen are productions only. They are the ten organs, the mind and the five elements. They are unproductive, because none of these can give birth to a substance essentially different from them. The Purusha or Spirit or Soul is neither a production nor productive. It is without attributes.

Prakriti and Purusha are Anadi or beginningless. They are Ananta or infinite. Non-discrimination between the two is the cause for birth and death. Discrimination

between Prakriti and Purusha gives salvation or Mukti. Both the Purusha and Prakriti are Sat or real. The term 'Sankhya' means 'Vichara'. Purusha is Asanga or unattached. He is consciousness, all-pervading, eternal. Prakriti is doer and enjoyer. Prakriti is meant for the enjoyment of the Purusha. Souls are countless. Sankhyas do not believe in Ishwara.

II

Prakriti

There cannot be any production of something out of nothing. That which is not cannot be developed into that which is. The production of what does not already exist potentially is impossible like a horn on a man, because there must of necessity be a material out of which a product is developed and because everything cannot occur everywhere at all times, and because anything possible must be produced from something competent to produce it.

Crude matter is without form. Mahat or intellect is its first form. Intellect is the matter of egoism. Egoism is a form of intellect. It is the matter of which the senses and the rudimental elements are formed. The senses are forms of egoism. The gross elements are forms of the Tanmatras or the rudimental elements.

Prakriti means that which is primary, that which precedes what is made. It comes from 'pra' and 'kri' "to make". It resembles the Vedantic Maya. It is the one root of the Universe. It is mere dead matter which is equipped with certain potentialities due to the Gunas. It is destitute of intelligence. It is a string of three strands. The three Gunas form the three strands.

Akasa (ether) has the property of sound, which is the Vishaya or object of ear. Vayu (air) has the property of touch which is the Vishaya for the skin. Tejas or fire

has the property of form or colour which is the Vishaya for the eye. Apas (water) has the property of taste which is the Vishaya for the tongue. Prithivi (earth) has the property of odour which is the Vishaya for the nose. Each of these elements after the first has also the property of the preceding besides its own.

Pradhana or Prakriti, is eternal, all-pervading, immovable. It is one. It is independent. It depends only on the activity of its own constituent Gunas. Prakriti does not create for itself. All objects are for the enjoyment of the spirit or Soul. It creates only when it comes into union with Purusha, like a crystal vase with a flower. Pradhana is imperceptible from its subtlety. It must therefore be inferred from its effects. All objects are common objects of observation for all souls. Prakriti is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe.

That which does not exist cannot be brought into existence by an agent. It would be useless to grind ground-nut, unless the oil existed in it. The same force applied to sand or orange would not express ground-nut oil. The manifestation of the oil is a proof that it was contained in the ground-nut and consequently a proof of the existence of the source from which it is derived.

Intellect, egoism, the five subtle rudiments or Tanmatras are the effect of Prakriti. Having observed the effects, the cause (Prakriti) is inferred.

Prakriti has no cause, but is the cause of all effects. It is called Pradhana or chief because all effects are found on it, it is the root of the universe and all objects. Prakriti is independent and uncaused, while the products are caused and dependent. It is the basis of all objective existence. Agency belongs to the Ahamkara or egoism or 'I-maker', which is itself a product of Prakriti, but not to the Purusha or the Soul Who is always a silent witness.

This creation from intellect down to the elements is brought about by the modifications of Prakriti. This work is done for the emancipation of each soul. As it is the function of milk to nourish the calf, so it is the function of Prakriti to liberate the Soul.

III.

Gunas

According to the Sankhya philosophy, nature is composed of three Gunas or forces called Sattva (purity, light, harmony), Rajas (passion, activity, motion) and Tamas (inertia, darkness, inertness, inactivity). Sattva is equilibrium. When Sattva prevails, there is peace or tranquillity. Rajas is activity which is expressed as Raga-dvesha, likes or dislikes, love or hatred, attraction

There are three Gunas in every man. Sometimes Sattwa prevails in him. Then he is calm and tranquil. He reflects and meditates. At other times Rajas prevails in him and he does various sorts of worldly activities. He is passionate and active. Sometimes Tamas prevails. He becomes lazy, dull, inactive and careless. Tamas generates delusion. Again, one of these Gunas is generally predominant in different men. A Sattwic man is virtuous. He leads a pure and pious life. A Rajasic man is passionate and active. A Tamasic man is dull and inactive.

Guna means a cord. The Gunas bind the soul with a triple bond. These Gunas are not the Nyaya Gunas. They are the actual substances or ingredients, of which Prakriti is constituted. They make up the whole world evolved out of Prakriti. They are not conjoined in equal quantities, but in varying proportions, one or the other being in excess. Just as Satchidananda is the Vedantic trinity so also the Gunas are the Sankhyan trinity.

Sattwa makes a man divine and noble, Rajas makes him thoroughly human and selfish; Tamas makes him bestial and ignorant

When Sattwa is predominant, it overpowers Rajas and Tamas. When Rajas is dominant, it overpowers Sattwa and Tamas; when Tamas is predominant, it overpowers Rajas and Sattwa.

The three Gunas are never separate. They support one another. They intermingle with one another. They are intimately related as the flame, the oil and the wick of a lamp. They form the very substance of Prakriti. All objects are composed of the three Gunas. The Gunas act on one another. Then there is evolution or manifestation. Destruction is only non-manifestation. The Gunas are the objects. Purusha is the witness subject. Prakriti evolves under the influence of Purusha. Mahat, or the great (Intellect), the cause of the whole world is the first product of the evolution of Prakriti. Ahankara arises after Buddhi. Agency belongs to Ahankara. It is the principle that creates individuality. Mind is born of Ahankara. It carries out the orders of the will through the organs of action (Karma Indriyas). It reflects and doubts (sankalpa-vikalpa). It synthesises the sense-data into percepts. Mind takes part in both perception and action. There is no separate Prana Tattva in the Sankhya system. Vedanata system has separate Prana Tattva. In Sankhya system mind with the organs produces the five vital airs by their action. Prana is a modification of the senses. It does not subsist in their absence.

There is much Sattwa in a sage or saint; there is much Rajas in a soldier, politician, and businessman.

IV

Intellect

Just as the head-man of a village collects the taxes from the villagers and pays them to the governor of the district, just as the local governor pays the amount to the minister and the minister receives it for the use of the king, so also the mind receives the ideas from the external organs, transfers them to egoism and egoism delivers them to intellect, which is the General Superintendent and takes charge of them for the use of the Sovereign Soul.

Intellect is the instrument or organ which is the medium between other organs and soul. All ideas derived from sensation, reflection or consciousness are deposited in the chief or great instrument, intellect, before they can be made known to soul for whose use and advantage alone they have assembled. They convey impressions or ideas with the properties or effects of pleasure, pain and indifference accordingly, as they are influenced by the qualities of Sattwa (purity), Rajas (passion) and Tamas (darkness).

Intellect or Buddhi is the most important of all the products of Prakriti. The senses present their objects to the intellect. Intellect exhibits them to Purusha. Intellect discriminates the difference between Purusha and Prakriti. Intellect is the Prime Minister of Purusha. It brings for Purusha the fruition of all that is to be experienced. It appears to be intelligent on account of the reflection of Purusha, which is very near to it, though it is really non-conscious.

V

World

The world is evolved with its different elements when the equilibrium in Prakriti is disturbed. During

dissolution of the world the products return by a reverse movement into the preceding stage of development and ultimately into Prakriti. Earth merges in its cause water, water in fire, fire in air, air in Akasa and Akasa in Ahamkara, Ahamkar in Mahat and Mahat in Prakriti. This is the process of involution. There is no end for Samsara or play of Prakriti. This cycle of evolution and involution has neither beginning nor end.

The countless Purushas exert on Prakriti a mechanical force, which distracts the equipoise of Prakriti and produces a movement. Then the evolution of the universe starts.

Prakriti is the root of the universe. From this Prakriti emanates Buddhi or Mahat. From this Buddhi proceeds Ahamkara or the principle of egoism. From egoism emanate the ten senses and the mind and the five subtle Tanmatras of sound, smell, taste, colour and touch. From these Tanmatras proceed the five gross elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether.

VI.

Knowledge

Before you engage in any matter, you first observe or consider, then you reflect and then determine : "This must be done by me", and then you proceed to act. This ascertainment that "Such act is to be done by me" is the determination of intellect (Adhyavasaya). Intellect is an instrument which receives the ideas or images conveyed through the organs of sense and the mind, constructs them into a conclusive idea and presents it to the Soul. Its function is determination (Dischaya). Mind is both an organ of sensation and action. The senses receive simple impressions from without. The mind co-operates with the senses and then the impressions are perceived. Mind ponders, intellect determines, egoism is conscious.

Egoism is the self-asserting principle. It is the 'I-maker' 'I did this', 'I want this', 'I know this', 'I ate this' etc.

Intellect, egoism, mind and the eye see a form at once, in one instant and come immediately to the conclusion "This is a jar". The same three with the tongue at once relish taste; with the nose smell and so with the ear and skin. The function is also occasionally gradual. A man going along a road sees an object at a distance. A doubt arises in his mind whether it is a post or a man. He then sees a bird sitting on it. Then the doubt is removed by the reflection of the mind. The intellect makes a determination that it is a post only. Then the egoism says "I am certain it is a post only". In this way the functions of the mind, intellect, egoism and the eye are gradual also. There is leisure for the eye to see, for the mind to reflect or consider, for egoism to apply and for intellect to conclude. There is another example. The ear hears the twang of a bowstring; mind reflects that this must be for the shooting of an arrow; egoism says "It is aimed at me", and intellect determines "I must run at once."

The intellect, the mind and egoism are the door-keepers. The five senses of perception or *Janana Indriyas* are the gates. Intellect is the instrument or organ which is the medium between the senses and soul.

An object excites the senses. The mind arranges the sense-impressions into a percept. Egoism refers it to the Self. Intellect forms the concept. It converts the precept into a concept and presents it to the *Purusha*. Then there is knowledge of the object

VII.

Purusha

The *Purusha* or the Soul is beyond *Prakriti*. It is eternally separate from it. It is without attributes and

omnipresent. It is not the doer. It is the witness. The Purusha is like a crystal without any colour. It appears to be coloured by the different colours which are placed before it. It is not material. It is not the result of combination. Hence it is immortal. The Purushas or souls are infinite in number.

Souls exist eternally separate from each other and from the Prakriti. Each soul retains its individuality. It remains unchanged through all transmigrations. Each soul is a witness of the act of a separate creation without taking part in the act. It is a looker-on uniting itself with unintelligent Prakriti as a lame man mounted on a blind man's shoulders in order to behold the phenomena of creation, which Prakriti herself is not able to observe.

Intelligence cannot belong to intellect, because it is material and is the effect of Prakriti which is non-intelligent. If intelligence is absent in the cause it cannot manifest itself in the effects. Therefore there must be a distinct principle of intelligence and this principle is Purusha or Soul. Just as chair and bench are for the use of another, so also this body, senses, mind are for the use of the soul which is immaterial, as it is destitute of attributes, as it is beyond the Gunas. The Purusha is the witness of the Gunas. Hence He is not affected by pleasure, pain and delusion which are the attributes of the three Gunas respectively. There must be a supervisor over and above the Pradhana or Prakriti. The supervisor is Purusha or the Soul.

Prakriti and its products are objects of enjoyment. There must exist an enjoyer who must be an intelligent principle. This intelligent enjoyer is Purusha or the Soul.

Purusha or soul is witness (Sakshi), solitary (**Kaivalyam**), spectator (**Drashtu**), by-stander (**Madhyastha**), passive and indifferent (**Udasina**).

The insentient body seems sentient on account of union with the Soul and the Soul appears as the agent. Just as a pot with cold water appears to be cold, with hot water seems to be hot, so intellect and the rest seems to be sentient on account of union with the Soul. This mutual transfer of properties is like that of fire and iron or of the sun and water.

The different souls are fundamentally identical in nature. The knower is Purusha. The known is Prakriti. The knower is the subject or the silent witness. The known is the visible object. There is no movement for the Purusha. It does not go anywhere when it attains freedom or release. There are many Purushas. If the Purusha were one, all should become free if any one attained release. Release is not merging in the Absolute but isolation from Prakriti.

Purusha is without beginning or end. He is without qualities. He is subtle and omnipresent. He is beyond mind, intellect and the senses. He is beyond time, space and causality. He is the eternal seer. He is perfect and immutable. He is pure consciousness (Chidrupa).

The characteristics of Prakriti and Purusha are contrary in nature. Purusha is consciousness, while Prakriti is non-consciousness. Purusha is inactive (Akarta), while Prakriti is active.

Purusha is destitute of the Gunas, while Prakriti is characterised by the three Gunas. Purusha is the subject, while Prakriti is the object. Purusha is unchanging while Prakriti is changing.

VIII

Jiva

The Jiva is the Self in union with the senses. It is limited by the body. It is endowed with egoism. The

reflection of Purusha in Buddhi or intellect appears as the ego or the empirical Soul. It is associated with ignorance and Karma. It is subject to pleasure and pain, action and its fruits and rotates in the cycle of births and deaths.

The Jiva must realise the perfection of the Purusha. He must attain to the status of Purusha. Every Jiva has in him the Higher Purusha. He must become conscious of the real nature of the Higher Purusha. Freedom or perfection is a return into one's true Self. It is the removal of an illusion which conceals your true nature.

IX RELEASE.

Prakriti's performances are solely for the benefit and enjoyment of the Soul. Mother Prakriti takes hold of the hand of the Soul and shows him the whole show of the universe and makes him enjoy everything, which this world can give and lastly helps him in his liberation. The object of the Sankhya system is to effect the liberation of Purusha or soul from the fetters which bind it on account of its union with Prakriti. This is done by conveying the Prama or correct knowledge of the twenty-four constituent principles of creation and rightly discriminating the Soul from them. Its Pramanas or means of obtaining the correct measure of existing things are three viz. Pratyaksha or perception by the senses, Anumana (inference) and Apta Vachana (trustworthy testimony).

When the separation of the soul from the body takes place by destruction of the effects of virtue, vice and the rest and Prakriti ceases to act in respect to it, then there is the final and absolute emancipation or the final beatitude.

When the fruits of acts cease and body both gross and subtle dissolves, nature does not exist in respect of the individual soul. The soul attains the state called **Kaivalyam**. It is freed from the three kinds of pain.

When one attains perfect knowledge, virtue and vice become destitute of causal energy but the body continues for some time on account of the previous impulse, just as after the action of the potter has stopped, the wheel continues to revolve owing to the momentum given to it.

In truth the soul is neither bound nor released nor migrates, but nature alone in relation to various beings is bound, is released and migrates.

As a dancing girl, having exhibited herself to the spectators of the stage, stops dancing, so also Nature ceases to function when she has made herself manifest to the Purusha or soul. Nothing is more modest than Prakriti, when she becomes conscious that she has been seen by the Purusha. She does not again expose herself to the gaze of the Purusha or the soul.

The union of soul with nature or Prakriti is like the association of a lame man with a blind man. A lame man and a blind man were deserted by their fellow-travellers in a forest. They agreed to divide between them the duties of walking and of seeing. The lame man mounted himself on the shoulders of the blind man and directed the blind man. The blind man was able to pursue his route by the directions of his friend. Even so, the soul is like the lame man. The faculty of seeing is in the Soul, not that of moving. The faculty of moving but not of seeing is in Prakriti. The Prakriti is like the blind man. The lame man and the blind man separated when they reached their destination. Even so, Prakriti, having effected the liberation of the soul ceases to act. The soul obtains Kaivalya or the final beatitude. Consequently, their respective purposes being effected, the connection between them terminates. The soul attains liberation by knowledge of Prakriti.

If pain is natural to the Purusha, if the Purusha is not naturally free from the action of the Gunas, no salvation from rebirths is possible.

The linga-deha or subtle body which migrates from one gross body to another in successive births is composed of intellect, egoism, mind, the five organs of knowledge, the five organs of action, and the five Tanmatras. The impressions of actions done in various births are imbedded in the subtle body. The conjunction of the Linga with the gross, physical body constitutes birth, separation of the Linga from the gross physical body is death. This linga-deha is destroyed by the knowledge of the Purusha.

Bondage belongs to Prakriti, but is attributed to Purusha. Purusha is eternally free. Union of Purusha with Prakriti due to non-discrimination is bondage; the failure to discriminate between Purusha and Prakriti is the cause of Samsara or bondage, disunion of Purusha and Prakriti due to discrimination is emancipation.

YOGA PHILOSOPHY

I

Prostrations to Sri Patanjali Maha Rishi, the exponent of the Raja Yoga system of philosophy, the first systematiser of the Yoga school, whose Yoga Sutra is the basic text.

Yoga comes from the root 'Yuj' which means 'to join'. Yoga is restraint of the activities of the mind. Yoga is union of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

Hiranyagarbha is the founder of the Yoga System. The Yoga founded by Patanjali Maharishi is a branch or supplement of the Sankhya. It has its own charm for students of mystic temperament and contemplative type. It claims greater orthodoxy than the Sankhya proper by directly acknowledging the existence of a Supreme Being.

Yoga is a method of strict discipline. It imposes restrictions on diet, sleep, company, behaviour, speech and thought. It should be practised under the careful supervision of an expert and illumined Yogi.

Yoga is a methodical effort to control mind and attain perfection. Yoga helps to attain the super-conscious state or Nirvikalpa Samadhi; heightens the power of concentration and arrests the wanderings and vagaries of the mind. The practice of Yoga removes restlessness of body and mind. It removes the impurities of the mind also and steadies it. The aim of Yoga is to teach the means by which the individual soul may attain complete union with the Supreme Soul. This fusion or blending of the individual soul with the Supreme Purusha is effected by controlling the Vrittis or thoughts of the mind. This is a state which is as clear as crystal since the mind is not coloured by contact with worldly objects.

(Patanjali's Yoga is Ashtanga Yoga or Raja Yoga. Karma Yoga is the Yoga of liberation by selfless service. Bhakti Yoga is the Yoga of attaining God-realisation through devotion to God. Jnana Yoga is the Yoga of attaining Self-realisation through wisdom or knowledge of Brahman. Raja Yoga deals with the discipline of the mind and its psychic powers. Hatha Yoga treats of the methods of bodily control and regulation of breath.

The culmination of Hatha Yoga is Raja Yoga. A progressive Sadhana in Hatha Yoga leads to the accomplishment of Raja Yoga. Hatha Yoga is a ladder to ascend to the stage or summit of Raja Yoga. When the movement of breath is stopped by means of Kumbhaka, the mind becomes supportless. Purification of the body and control of breath is the direct aim of Hatha Yoga. The Shad Karmas or six acts of purification of the body are Dhauti (cleansing of the stomach),

Bhastī (natural form of enema), Netī (cleansing of the nostrils), Trataka (unwinkingly gazing at some object), Nauli (churning of belly) and Kapala Bhati (removal of the phlegm through a certain kind of Pranayama). The body is rendered healthy, light, strong and steady by the practice of Asanas and Mudras.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is the oldest text-book of the Yoga school. It has four chapters. The first chapter 'Samadhi Pada' deals with the nature and aim of Samadhi. The second chapter 'Sadhana Pada' explains the means of attaining this end. The third chapter gives a description of the supernatural powers or Siddhis that can be achieved through the Yoga practices (Vibhuti Pada). The fourth chapter describes about the nature of salvation (Kaivalya Pada).

Kapila's system is Nirswara Sankhya, as there is no Ishwar. The system of Patanjali is Saeswara Sankhya, because there is Ishwar or Special Purusha, who is untouched by afflictions, works, desires, etc. Patanjali built his system on the background of the metaphysics of the Sankhya. Patanjali accepts the twenty-five principles. The individual soul in the Yoga has greater freedom. He can attain salvation with the help of God. The Sankhya maintains that knowledge is the means of salvation. The Yoga holds that concentration, meditation and Samadhi will lead to Kaivalya or Independence.

Patanjali accepts the metaphysical view of the Sankhya system, but lays great emphasis upon the practical side of self-discipline for the realisation of the absolute unity of the Purusha or true Self. The Yoga system holds that the yogic process consists in the suppression of the diversities of mental functions and the concentration of the mental energy on the self-luminous Purusha. Sankhya is a system of metaphysics.

[Yoga is a system of practical discipline. The former lays emphasis upon investigation and reasoning and the latter upon the concentration of the will-power.

II

When all the modifications of the mind are controlled, the Seer, the Purusha rests in his own Self. Patanjali speaks of this in his Yoga-sutras as "Swarupa Avasthanam". For the attainment of Samadhi or union with the Divine, the practices of Yama, Niyama are an indispensable necessity.

It is not possible to attain perfection in meditation and Samadhi without the observance of the practices of Yama-Niyama. You cannot have concentration of mind without removing falsehood, deceit, cruelty, lust, etc. Without concentration of mind, meditation and Samadhi cannot be attained. Aspirants who desire to attain God-realisation should practise the eight limbs of Yoga.

Raja Yoga is known by the name Ashtanga Yoga or the Yoga with eight limbs. The eight limbs are: 1. Yama (restraint), 2. Niyama (religious observances), 3. Asana (posture), 4. Pranavama (control of breath), 5. Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), 6. Dharana (concentration), 7. Dhvana (contemplation) and 8. Samadhi (superconscious state). The first five of these form the external limbs of yoga (bahiranga). The last three form the internal limbs of yoga (antaranga).

The Yogic student should practise Yama and observe Niyama side by side.

The practice of Yama,=Niyama, is ethical discipline. It prepares the Yogic student for the real practice of Yoga. The yogic student should practice Ahimsa or non-violence, truthfulness, continence, non-stealing and non-acceptance of gifts, which are conducive to luxurious

living. The chief of them is Ahimsa. All other virtues are rooted in Ahimsa. Ahimsa is abstinence from malice towards all living beings in every way and at all times. Ahimsa is not merely non-violence, but non-hatred. The Yamas or restraints are the great universal vows (Mahavratam), not limited by caste, place or country, time and circumstances. They must be practised by all. There are no exceptions to these principles. Not even self-defence can justify murder for one who is practising Ahimsa. He should not kill even his enemy.

Asana is steady, pleasant posture. Asana or posture is a physical help to concentration. Regulation of breath leads to tranquillity and steadiness of mind, and good health. When one obtains mastery over the Asana, he is free from the disturbance of the pairs of opposites. Pratyahara is introversion. It is withdrawal of the senses from their objects. Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara are accessories to Yoga.

Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are the three consecutive stages of the same process of mental concentration and are thus parts of an organic whole. Dharana is effort to fix the mind steadily upon an object. Dhyana is continuous and unbroken fixity of the mind upon the object. Samadhi is fixity of the mind upon the object with such intensity of concentration as to become the object itself. The mind is wholly merged in and identified with the object upon which it is fixed.

Dhyana or meditation culminates in Samadhi. Samadhi is the goal of Yoga discipline. Body and mind become dead to all external impressions. The connection with the outer world is broken. The object of meditation is Samadhi.

There are kinds or degrees of concentration or Samadhi viz Samprajnata or conscious and Asampraj-

nata or superconscious. In Samprajnata, there are definite objects of concentration for resting. The mind remains conscious of the object. Savitarka (with deliberation), Nirvitarka (without deliberation), Savichara (with reflection), Nirvichara (without reflection), Sananda (with joy), Sasmita (with the sense of personality) as forms of Samprajnata Samadhi. In Samprajnata Samadhi, there is a clear consciousness of the object meditated upon as distinct from the subject. In Asamprajnata, this distinction vanishes.

In Samadhi the Yogi enters into Supreme Silence which is untouched by the ceaseless noises of the outer world. The mind ceases its functioning. The senses are absorbed in the mind.

III

According to Patanjali, Avidya (ignorance), Asmita (egoism), Raga-dwesha (desire, aversion, or likes and dislikes), Abhinivesa (clinging to mundane life) are the five great Kleshas or afflictions that assail the mind. These are alleviated by means of certain yogic practices, but not uprooted. They remain hidden in the form of seed. They sprout out again the moment they find an opportunity and favourable surroundings. But Nirvikalpa Samadhi destroys even the seeds of these evils.

Avidya is the main cause of all our troubles. Egoism is the immediate result of ignorance. It fills us with desires and aversions and veils the spiritual vision. The practice of Yoga Samadhi uproots Avidya.

Tapas (austerity), Swadhyaya (reading and understanding of scriptures,) Ishwara Pranidhana (worship of God and surrendering the fruit to the Lord), constitute **Kriya Yoga**. Kriya Yoga purifies the mind, attenuates or thins out the five afflictions and leads to Samadhi.

Abhyasa or practise and Vairagya help in steadying and controlling the mind. The mind should be withdrawn again and again and brought back to the centre whenever it goes out towards sensual objects. This is Abhvasa Yoga. Mind is a bundle of Trishnas (cravings). Practice of Vairagya (dispassion, non-attachment) will destroy all Trishnas. Vairagya turns the mind away from the objects. It does not allow the mind to go outwards (Bahirmukhi action of the mind) but promotes its Antarmukhi action (inward going).

Practice becomes fixed and steady, when pursued for a long time without any break and with perfect devotion

On the destruction of the impurities through the practice of the eight limbs or accessories of Yoga arises the light of wisdom leading to the discriminative knowledge

When Sattva increases, you will have cheerfulness of mind, one-pointedness of mind conquest of the senses and fitness for the realisation of Atma.

Ksipta, Mudha, Viksipta, Ekagra and Niruddha are the five mental planes according to the Raja Yoga School of Patanjali. The Ksipta plane is that wherein the mind wanders amongst various sensual objects. The mind is filled with Rajas. The Mudha plane is that wherein the mind is in a state of sleep and impotence on account of Tamas. The Viksipta plane is that wherein Sattva preponderates and the mind oscillates between meditation and objectivity. The rays of the mind are slowly collected and gathered. The Ekagra plane is that wherein the mind is one-pointed. There is deep meditation. Sattwa is free from Rajas and Tamas. The Niruddha plane is that wherein the mind is under perfect control. All the Vrittis of the mind are annihilated.

A Vritti is a whirlpool or thought-wave in the mind-lake. Every Vritti or mental modification leaves behind a Samskara or impression or latent tendency. This Samskara may manifest itself as a conscious state when the occasion arises. Similar Vrittis strengthen similar dispositions. When all the Vrittis are arrested, the mind is in a balanced state (Samapathi).

Disease, langour, doubt, carelessness, laziness, worldliness, erroneous perception, failure to attain concentration and instability in it when attained are the obstacles to concentration

Cultivation of friendliness (Maitra) towards equals, Karuna towards inferiors, cheerfulness (Mudita) towards superiors, indifference (Upeksha) towards wicked people or with regard to things pleasant and painful, good and bad, produce tranquility of mind (Ehitta Prasadanam).

The supernatural powers are really obstacles to Samadhi or freedom. Samyama or concentration, meditation and Samadhi are one and the same that gives a knowledge of supersensuous objects. Siddhis are by-products of concentration

Pratyaksha (perception), Anumana (inference) and Sabdhya or Aptavakya (scripture or authoritative testimony) are the three means of knowledge (Pramanas).

IV

One can attain Samadhi through devotion to God. Devotion to God gives freedom. By Ishwarapranidhana, the yogic student obtains the grace of God.

God of Patanjali is a Special Purusha or particular Soul unaffected by afflictions, works, fruition, and vehicles. In Him is the highest limit of the seed of omniscience. He, being unconditioned by time, is the Teacher of even the ancients. He is ever free.

The Sacred syllable OM is the symbol of God. Repetition of OM and meditation on OM should be practised. This will remove all obstacles and will lead to the attainment of God-realisation.

V

The goal of life is the absolute separation of Purusha from Prakriti. Freedom in the Yoga is Kaivalya or absolute independence. The soul is freed from the fetters of Prakriti. The Purusha is in his true form or Swarupa. When the soul realises that it is absolutely independent and that it does not depend on anything else in this world, Kaivalya or Isolation comes in. The soul has removed the Avidya through discriminative knowledge (Vivekakhyati). The five kleshas or afflictions are burnt by the fire of knowledge. The Self is not touched by the conditions of Chitta. The Gunas retire to rest and the Self abides in its own divine essence. Even if one becomes a Mukta (liberated) the Prakriti and its modifications exist for others.

NYAYA PHILOSOPHY

I

Salutations to Rishi Gautama, the founder of the Nyaya System of philosophy.

The Nyaya or Hindu logic has been founded by Gautama Rishi, who is also known by the names Aksapada and Dirghatapas. The word Nyaya signifies 'going into a subject' i.e. investigating it analytically. In this sense of 'analysis' the word Nyaya is exactly opposed to 'Sankhya', "synthesis". The Nyaya and the Vaiseshika are the analytic types of philosophy. Nyaya is not merely formal logic, but a complete epistemology. It contains discussions on psychology, logic metaphysics and theology.

The Nyaya is called sometimes Tarka-vidya or the science of debate, Vadavidya or the science of discussion. Tarka is the special feature of the Nyaya.

The purpose of the Nyaya is a critical examination of the objects of knowledge by means of the canons of logical proof. The Nyaya system deals critically with metaphysical problems. Ordinary people think that the Nyaya is chiefly concerned with logic. Logic is merely a part of a single topic.

The Nyaya is intended to furnish a correct method of philosophical enquiry into all the objects and subjects of human knowledge, including the process of reasoning and laws of thought. The evidence of the senses is submitted to a critical enquiry. The Nyaya gives a description of the mechanism of knowledge in detail. The Nyaya and the Vaisheshika explore the significance of time, space, cause, matter, mind, soul and knowledge for experience and give the results in the form of a theory of the universe. The Nyaya and the Vaisheshika are regarded as parts of one whole. The Vaisheshika is a supplement to the Nyaya. They are allied systems. They both believe in a Personal God, plurality of souls, and atomic universe. Further, they use many arguments in common.

Nyaya is the basis of all Sanskrit studies. It is one of the four limbs of the Veda. It is an introduction to all systematic philosophy. It is the preliminary course for a student of Sanskrit. You cannot understand the Brahma-Sutras of Sri Vyasa without a knowledge of Nyaya. The study of Nyaya develops the power of reasoning or arguing. It renders the intellect, sharp and subtle. You cannot make Vedantic enquiry without a sharp and subtle intellect. The Kathopanishad says "Dri-hyate Twagraya buddya sukshmayaya sukshma-darshibhi"—'It (Atman) is seen by subtle seers through their sharp and subtle intellect.'

Nyaya Sutra by Gautama is the first work on Nyaya philosophy. This is the most famous book. Numerous commentaries have been written on this book by various authors viz. Nyaya-Bhasya by Vatsyayana, Nyayalankara by Sri Kantha, Nyaya-Manjari by Jayantha, Nyaya bodhini by Govardhana, Nyaya-Vartikatatparyatika by Vachaspati Misra etc.

II

Supreme felicity is attained by the knowledge about the true nature of sixteen categories viz. means of right knowledge (pramana), object of right knowledge (prameya), doubt (samsaya), purpose (prayojana), familiar instance (drishtanta), established tenet (Siddhanta), members (avayava), argumentation (tarka), ascertainment (nirṇaya), discussion (vada), wrangling (jalpa), cavil (vitanda), fallacy (hetvabhāsa), quibble (chala), futility (jati) and occasion for rebuke (nigraha-sthana).

There is first the state of Samsaya or doubt about the point to be discussed. Next comes the Prayojana or motive for discussing it. Next follows a Drishtanta or example which leads to the Siddhanta or established conclusion. Then comes the objector with his Avayava or argument split up into five members. Next follows the Tarka or refutation and the Nirṇaya or ascertainment of the true state of the case. A further Vada or controversy takes place which leads to jalpa or mere wrangling. This is followed by Vitanda or cavilling, Hetvabhāsa or fallacious reasoning and Nigraha-sthana, the putting an end to all discussion by a demonstration of the objector's incapacity for argument.

Pain, birth, activity, faults, misapprehension—on the successive annihilation of these in the reverse order, there follows release (apavarga). Misapprehension (mityajñana), faults (dosha), activity (pravṛtti), birth (jarma)

and pain (dukha), constitute the world. Release (Moksha) is supreme felicity marked by perfect tranquillity and freedom from defilement. One can remove misapprehension or false knowledge by the true knowledge of the sixteen categories. When he attains the true knowledge, his faults viz. affection (raga), aversion (dwesha) and stupidity (Moha) vanish. He is freed from activity and the consequent transmigration and pains.

False notion or false knowledge is at the root of all misery and pain. From Mitya Jnana or false notion comes the fault of like and dislike, from Raga, Dwesha proceeds Karma or action—virtuous or vicious,—which forces a man to pass through repeated births for the sake of its reward or punishment. From these births proceed misery and pain. It is the aim of philosophy to eradicate the false notion or Mitya Gyana which is at the root of all miseries and pains.

Aversion includes anger, envy, malice, hatred. Attachment includes lust, greed, avidity, covetousness. Stupidity includes suspicion, conceit, carelessness, misapprehension. Stupidity generates dislike and attachment. You must put an end to the chain, which begins with false knowledge or erroneous notions and ends with pain, if you wish to attain release. If false knowledge vanishes, faults or doshas will disappear. If faults vanish, there cannot be any activity. Hence, there is no chance for re-birth. Stoppage of birth means destruction of pain.

III.

Perception (Pratyaksha), inference (Anumana), comparison (Upamana), word or verbal testimony (Sabdha) these are the means of right knowledge. Sabdha includes Vedic revelation. Pratyaksha is perception by the senses.

Soul, body, senses, objects of senses, intellect, mind, activity, fault, transmigration, fruit, pain and release are the objects of right knowledge

The members of a syllogism are : Pratipna (proposition—stated hypothetically), Hetu (reason), Udharana example (major premiss), Upanaya (application of the reason, minor premiss), Nigamana (conclusion), i.e. the proposition restated as proved

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|---|-------------|--|
| 1 | Proposition | This hill is fiery |
| 2 | Reason | Because it is smoking |
| 3 | Example | Whatever is smoking is fiery
as a kitchen |
| 4 | Application | So this hill is smoking. |
| 5 | Conclusion | Therefore this hill is fiery |

‘Vvapti’ means pervasion, ‘Vyapaka’ means pervader, Vyapya’ means that which is pervaded These terms are employed in making a universal affirmation For example, “Wherever there is smoke there is fire The Indian logic says that there is an invariably pervading concomitance of fire with smoke Fire is therefore called the pervader, and smoke the peveded The argument would be briefly stated by a Naiyayika “The mountain has invariably fire-pervaded smoke, therefore it has fire”

All knowledge implies four conditions (1) The subject or the Pramata, the cogniser (2) The object or the Prameya (3) The resulting state of cognition or the Pramiti and (4) The means of knowledge or the Pramana

In normal perception there are (1) the object of perception, (2) the external medium such as light, (3) the sense-organ through which the object is perceived (4) the mind. It is the mind that really sees The organ of sight cannot function without the help of the mind.

(5) The Self. If the light is dim you cannot see clearly. If there is disease in the eyes, then the perception will be faulty. If the mind is engaged somewhere else, then also you cannot see.

Another important topic of Nyaya is Prameya *i.e.* the subjects of Prama, or the subjects about which right knowledge is to be obtained. These are twelve, *viz.*

1. Soul (Atman) 2. Body (sarira) 3. Senses (Buddhi)
4. Objects of senses (artha). 5. Intellect (Buddhi).
6. Mind (manas). 7. Activity (Pravritthi). 8. Fault (Dosha). 9. Transmigration (pretya-bhava) 10. Fruit (Phala). 11. Pain (Dukha). 12. Salvation (Apavarga)

IV

The Nyaya says that the actions of man produce their fruits under the control of God. God supervises the work of Adrsta. The intelligent principle of Adrsta which governs the fate of man acts under the direction of God. God does not alter the course of Adrsta, but renders possible its operation. God is the bestower of the fruits of actions of human beings. God is a special Soul Who is endowed with Omnipotence and Omniscience, by which He guides and regulates the world.

God is a Personal being. He is endowed with Satchitananda (existence, knowledge and bliss), equanimity. He is free from Mityajana (false knowledge), Adharma, Pramada (carelessness). He has Jnana, Ichha (desire) and Prayatna (volitional effort). God is one creator, who is endowed with Nitya Jnana Ichha-Kriya Guna. He is Vibhu (All-pervading).

V

The Soul is a real being. It is an eternal entity. Desire, aversion, volition, pleasure, pain, intelligence and cognition are its qualities or marks. The object

of the notion of 'I' is the soul. No cognition or recollection is possible without a soul. The eye cannot see objects, the ear cannot hear sounds without a soul. There should be an agent to use the instruments (senses). That agent is the soul. Even when the object is seen and the eyes are both destroyed, the knowledge that 'I have seen' remains. This knowledge is not a quality of either the objects or the senses. The mind is not the soul. It is only instrument of the soul, by means of which it thinks. The self is the subject. The soul exists even when the body perishes, the senses are cut off and the mind is controlled. There are infinite number of souls.

VI

The universe is a composite of eternal, unalterable, causeless atoms, which exist independently of our thoughts. The physical conceptions of the Nyaya are almost the same as those of Vaisheshika. The universe is the modification of the Paramanus (atoms) of Prithivi, Apas, Tejas, Vayu and Akasa. The Nyaya admits nine Dravyas, viz. the five elements, Kala, Dik, mind and Atma.

VII

Apavarga or release is the absolute deliverance from pain. A soul which is no longer subject to transmigration is freed from all pains. Transmigration which consists in the soul's leaving one body and taking another is the cause of its undergoing pleasure and pain. The soul attains release as soon as there is an end to the body, and consequently to pleasure and pain.

Moksha or salvation is freedom from pain. It is cessation of pain. It is not the enjoyment of positive pleasure. It is not annihilation of the self. It is destruction of bondage. Release from 21 kinds of pain or Sukh is Moksha. In the state of release there is no connection of mind with Atma. Atma is destitute of desire,

effort, Dharma, Adharma, hatred, Samskaras etc. in the state of Mukti as there is no mind. The Moksha of the Naiyayikas is a word without meaning. It is a state of painless, passionless existence like a stone without sensation and interest.

VIII.

To Sum up:—This world has been begun by combination of atoms. It has Samyoga (conjunction) and Viyoga (disassociation). The cause of the world is Paramanus and the nine including Ishwar. Ishwar is Nitya Gyana who has Iccha-Kriya Gunas. He is Vibhu (all-pervading). Jiva is doer and enjoyer. He has fourteen Gunas beginning with Janana. Jivas are endless. Cause for bondage is Ajnana. Twenty-one kind of pains constitute bondage. Moksha is destruction of all kind of pain. Knowledge of Atma that is distinct from others is Moksha Sadhana. Gautama advocates Arambhavada and Anyatakhyati. This is Gautama's Nyaya philosophy in a nut-shell.

VAISESIKA PHILOSOPHY

I

Silent adorations to Kanada Rishi, the founder of Vaisesika system of philosophy.

Rishi Kanada is also known by the names Aulukya or Kasyapa. There are 370 Sutras in Vaisesika system.

The Aphorisms of Kanada (atom-eater) is called the Vaisesika philosophy, because the principal subject treated therein is Visesa, one of the six Padarthas enumerated by the author.

The Vaisesika system takes its name from Visesa or Particularity. The Vaisesika and the Nyaya agree in their essential principles, such as the nature and qualities of the Self and the atomic theory of the universe.

THIS is a supplement of the Nyaya. The Vaisesika, has for its chief objective the analysis of experience. It begins by arranging its enquiries under seven Padarthas or categories, i.e. enumeration of certain general properties or attributes that may be predicated of existing things. It formulates general conceptions, which apply to things, known, whether by the senses or by inference or by authority.

There are ten chapters in this book. The first chapter deals with the entire group of Padarthas or Predicables, in the second book Rishi Kanada has ascertained substance, in the third chapter he has given a description of the soul and the inner sense; in the fourth chapter he has discussed the body and its constituents; in the fifth chapter he has established Karma or action; in the sixth chapter he has considered Dharma according to Sruti, in the seventh chapter he has established Attribute and Samavaya (co-inherence or combination); in the eighth chapter he has ascertained the manifestation of knowledge, its source and so on, in the ninth chapter he has established particular or concrete understanding; and in the tenth chapter he has established the differences of the attributes of the soul.

There is enumeration of Padarthas in the beginning. Then there is definition. Then comes examination or demonstration.

This system is chiefly concerned with the determination of the Padarthas and yet Kanada opens the subject with an enquiry into Dharma, because Dharma is at the root of the knowledge of the essence of the Padarthas. The second Sutra gives a beautiful definition of Dharma, which is very often quoted by writers or lecturers. The first Sutra is. "Yathobhyudayanāḥ Sreyasasidhisa Dharma"—Dharma is that which exalts and bestows the supreme good or Moksha (cessation of pain).

II

Padartha means literally the meaning of a word. A Padartha is an object which can be thought (Artha) and named (Pada). All things which exist, which can be perceived and named, all objects of experience are Padarthas. The first three categories of substance, quality and action have a real objective existence. The other three generality, particularity and inherence are logical categories. They are products of intellectual discrimination.

Compound substances are dependent and transitory. Simple substances are eternal and independent.

The Padarthas of Vaisesika are the following:—

(1) Substance (Dravya), (2) Quality or property (Guna), (3) Action (Karma), (4) Generality of properties (Samanva), (5) Particularity (Visesha), (6) Co-inherence or perpetual intimate relation (Samavaya), (7) Non-existence or negation of existence (Abhava). Kanada enumerated only six categories, the seventh was added by later writers.

Mind is a Dravya or eternal substance. It is not pervading everywhere like the Soul. It is atomic. It can admit only one thought at a time.

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, time, space, soul and mind are the substances. The first four of these nine and the last (mind) are held to be atomic. The first four are both eternal and non-eternal, non-eternal in their various compounds, eternal in their ultimate atoms to which they must be traced back.

There are seventeen qualities inherent in the nine substances *viz* colour (Rupa), taste (Rasa), smell (Gandha), touch (Sparsha), numbers (Sankhya), measures (Parimanani), separateness (Prithaktvam) or individuality, conjunction and disjunction (Samyoga-vibhagam).

priority and posterity (Paratva-aparatve), intellection or understanding (Buddhayah), pleasure, pain (Sukha-dukha), desire, aversion (Ichchha-dweshha) and volitions (Prayatnah)

Seven others are said to be implied *viz.* gravity, fluidity, viscosity, faculty, merit, demerit and sound, making twenty-four in all. Sixteen of these qualities belong to material substances. The other eight *viz.* understanding, volition, desire, aversion, pleasure and pain, merit and demerit, are the properties of the Soul.

The third category Karma (action) consists of five kinds of acts *viz.* elevation or throwing upwards, depression or throwing downwards, contraction, expansion and motion.

The fourth category Samanya, generality of properties is twofold *viz.* higher and lower generality, that of genus and of species.

The fifth category Vishesha 'particularity' belongs to the nine eternal substances of the first category, all of which have an eternal ultimate difference distinguishing each from the other. Therefore, the system is called Vaisesika.

The sixth category 'Samavaya', co-inherence, is of only one kind. It is the co-inherence between a substance and its qualities, between a genus or species and its individuals, between any object and the general idea connected with it and is thought to be a real entity.

There are four kinds of Abhava *viz.* antecedent non-existence, cessation of existence, mutual non-existence (*e.g.* jar in cloth), absolute non-existence (horn of a hare).

Earth possesses colour, taste, smell and touch. Water possesses colour, taste and touch and is fluid.

and viscid. Fire possesses colour and touch. Air possesses touch. These characteristics are not found in ether.

III

Pleasure and pain result from the contact of soul, sense, mind and object

From pleasure arises desire. From pleasure derived from the enjoyment of garlands, sandal paste, women and other objects, Raga or desire is produced successively for pleasure of a similar kind or for the means of attaining it. From pain caused by snakes, scorpions, thorns and the like aversion arises with regard to such pain or with regard to its source.

Desire (Raga), aversion (Dwesha) and infatuation (Moha) are called faults (Doshas), as they are incentives to activity which serves to bind the doer to this world. Gautama also says "Faults have for their characteristic incitement to activity or worldly occupation (Nyaya Sutras I. 1. 18).

A very powerful impression is produced by constant or habitual experience of objects through the influence of which a sad lover who does not win his mistress sees his beloved in every object. He who has been bitten by a snake beholds snakes everywhere on account of a strong impression regarding that.

Conjunction of soul with body, sense and life produced by Dharma and Adharma is called birth; disjunction of body and mind produced by them is called death.

The soul and the mind are not objects of perception.

The authoritativeness of the Veda follows from its being the word of God.

IV

Kanada does not openly refer to God in his Sūtras. His belief was that the formation of the world was the result of Adrishta, the Unseen force of Karmas or acts. He traces the primal activities of the atoms and souls to the principle of Adrishta. The followers of Kanada introduce God as the efficient cause of the world. The atoms are the material cause of the universe.

The unthinking atoms have no power and the intelligence to run this universe in an orderly manner. Surely the activities of the atoms are regulated by an omniscient and omnipotent God. Inference and scriptures compel us to admit God. What is that intelligence, which makes the Adrishta to operate? That intelligence is God. The five elements are effects. They must be preceded by some one who has a knowledge of them. That 'some one' is God. There must be an author for the Vedas. The contents of the Vedas are destitute of error. The author is free from deceit. He must be an omniscient being.

The souls are destitute of intelligence in the state of dissolution. Hence they cannot control the activities of the atoms. There is no source of motion within the atoms. Therefore, there must be a first Mover of the atom. That First Mover is the Creator or God.

V

The body is subtle in Pralaya and gross in creation. The time, place and circumstances of birth, family, the span of life are all determined by the Adrishta. The soul is absolutely free from all connections with qualities in the state of Moksha or release. It regains its independence.

The individual souls are eternal, manifold, eternally separate from each other and distinct from the body,

senses and mind, and yet capable of apprehension, volition, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, merit and demerit. They are infinite, ubiquitous or omnipresent and diffused everywhere throughout space. A man's soul is as much in New York as in Bombay, although it can only apprehend and feel and act where the body is.

VI

In the Vaisesika system the formation of the world is supposed to be effected by the aggregation of atoms. These atoms are countless and eternal. They are eternally aggregated, disintegrated and re-disintegrated by the power of Adrishta. An atom is defined as "something existing, having no cause, and eternal". It is less than the least, invisible, indivisible, intangible, imperceptible by the senses. Each atom has a Visesha or eternal essence of its own. The combination of these atoms is first into an aggregate of two (Dvyanu, dyad). Three of them, again combine into a particle, called Trasarenu (Triad), which like a mote in a sunbeam has just sufficient magnitude to be perceptible.

There are four classes of Paramanus viz., paramanus of earth, water, fire and air. The individual atoms combine with others and again disintegrate after some time.

The Vaisesika cosmogony is dualistic in the sense of assuming the existence of eternal atoms side by side with eternal souls, or with the Supreme Soul of the universe. It has not decided positively the exact relation between the Soul and matter.

VII

Moksha consists in the non-existence of conjunction with the body, when there is, at the same time, i.e. potential body existing and consequently rebirth cannot take place.

Intuitive knowledge of the Self destroys false knowledge. Consequently, attraction, aversion, stupidity or Moha and other faults vanish. Then activity also disappears. Then birth due to action does not take place. Consequently, pain connected with birth also disappears.

Knowledge of Padarthas is the means of attaining the Supreme good. The Supreme good results from the knowledge produced by a particular Dharma of the essence of the Padarthas (substance), attribute, action, genus, species and combination, by means of their resemblances and differences.

VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

Prostrations and adorations to Sri Vyasa, the founder of Uttara Mimamsa or the Vedanta system of Philosophy, Avatara of Lord Vishnu, son of Sri Parasara Rishi

Uttara Mimamsa or the Vedanta philosophy of Vyasa or Badarayana is placed last of the six orthodox systems, but really it ought to stand first.

The Uttara Mimamsa conforms closely to the doctrines propounded in the Upanishads.

The term "Vedanta" means literally "the end of the Veda". It contains the doctrines set forth in the closing chapters of the Vedas. The closing chapters of the Vedas are the Upanishads. The Upanishads really form the essence of the Vedas.

Sri Vyasa wrote the Brahma Sutras or the Vedanta Sutras which explain the doctrine of Brahman. Brahma-Sutras are also known by the name Sariraka Sutras, because it deals with the embodiment of the Supreme Nirguna Brahman. Brahma Sutra is one of the three books of Prasthanatraya, the three

authoritative books on Hinduism. Sri Vyasa has systematised the principles of Vedanta and removed the apparent contradictions in the doctrines. The **Brahma Sutras** are 555 in number. Sri Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha, Bhaskara, Yadavaprakasa, Kesva, Nilakantha, Baladeva and Vijnana Bhikshu are the chief commentators on **Brahma-Sutras**. All have commented in their own way and built their own philosophy. The most reputed teacher of this school of philosophy was Sri Sankaracharya. Vedanta offers many parallels to the idealism of Plato.

Sri Vyasa has criticised the doctrines of the **Vaiseshika**-system and the **Sankhya** system. The several schools of Buddhism and the **Bhagavata** doctrines are also discussed.

There are four chapters, viz. **Samanvaya**, **Avirodha**, **Sadhana**, **Phala**. In the first chapter an account of the nature of Brahman, its relation to the world and the individual soul is given. In the second chapter, the rival theories, viz. **Sankhya**, **Yoga**, **Vaiseshika**, etc. are criticised. Suitable answers are given to the objections levelled against this view. In the third chapter the means of attaining **Brahma-Vidya** are treated. In the fourth chapter there is a description of the fruits of **Brahma Vidya**. There is also a description how the individual soul reaches Brahman through the **Devavana** or the path of **Devas**, whence there is no return. The characteristics of the **Jivanmukta** or liberated soul are also discussed in this chapter. Each chapter has four parts (**Padas**). The **Sutras** in each part form **Adhikaranas** or topics.

The following are the celebrated formulae of Vedanta. '**Ekam Evadvitiam**'. One without a second'. Brahman only exists truly; the world is false. The individual soul is only Brahman and no other. All this

is indeed Brahman, from Him the world proceeds, into Him it is dissolved, in Him it breathes. "Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma" "Brahman is Truth, Knowledge and Infinity" "Brahmavit Brahmaiva Bhavati". The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. "Santam Sivam, Adwaitam" Peace, Auspiciousness and Non-duality. "Ayam Atma Santa". This Atma is Silence "Asango Ayam Purusha". This Purusha is unattached. "Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma" All indeed is Brahman "Santam, Ajaram, Amritam, Abhayam, Param." This Brahman is Peace, without old age, Immortal, fearless and Supreme

The first five Sutras of the first chapter are very important. The first Sutra is, "Athato Brahma Jijnasa". Now, therefore, the enquiry into Brahman. The first aphorism states the object of the whole system in one word, *viz* Brahma-Jijnasa, the desire of knowing Brahman. The second Sutra is "Janmadyasva vatah". Brahman is the Supreme Being from whom proceed the origin, sustenance and dissolution of the world. The third Sutra is "Sastra Yonitvat". The Scriptures alone are the means of right Knowledge. The Omniscience of Brahman follows from Its being the source of the Scriptures. The fourth Sutra is "Tat Tu Samanvayat". But that Brahman is to be known only from the Scriptures and not independently by any other means is established, because it is the main purpose of all Vedanta texts. The fifth Sutra is 'Ikshater na Asabdam'. On account of thinking Pradhana is not the first cause. Pradhana is not based on the scriptures. The last Sutra of the fourth chapter is "Anavritti Sabdat, Anavritti Sabdat". There is no return for the released souls on account of scriptural declaration to that effect.

Brahman after creating the element enters them. He is the golden person in the Sun. He is the light of the soul. He is ever pure. He is Sat-Chit-Ananda,

one without a second. He is Bhuma (Infinite) Unconditioned) He dwells in the heart of man. He is the source of everything.

Brahman is the material cause as well as the instrumental cause of the universe. Brahman and the universe are not different, just as the jar is not different from clay. Brahman develops itself into the universe for its own lila or sporting without undergoing the least change and without ceasing to be itself.

Brahman is without parts, without qualities, without action and emotion, beginningless, endless and immutable. He has no consciousness, such as is denoted by 'I' and 'Thou'. He is the only Reality. Brahman is to the external world what yarn is to cloth, what earth is to jar, what gold is to a ring.

Brahman is Paramarthik Satta (Absolute Reality). World is Vyavaharik Satta (Relative reality). Dream object is Pratibhasika Satta (Apparent Reality).

Maya is the Sakti (Power) of God. It is the Karana Sarira (Casual body) of God. It hides the real and makes the unreal appear as real. It is neither Sat nor Asat nor Sat-Asat. It is anirvachaniya (indescribable). Maya has two powers, viz. the power of veiling or Avarana Sakti and the power of projecting (Vikshepa Sakti). You have forgotten your essential Divine nature on account of the veiling power of Maya. This universe is projected owing to the Vikshepa Sakti of Maya.

Avidya is the Casual body of Jiva or the individual Soul. The Jiva identifies himself with the body, mind and the senses on account of Avidya. He has the erroneous notion that the body is the Soul just as one has the wrong notion that the rope is the serpent in the twilight. The moment the individual soul is freed from the self-imposed ignorance by a proper under-

standing of the Truth through the Vedanta philosophy, Vichara (enquiry), reflection and meditation on the Supreme Brahman, all the illusion disappears. The identity of the Jivatma and of the entire phenomenal world with the Supreme Soul or Brahman is re-established. The Jiva attains Immortality and Eternal Bliss. He merges himself in Brahman or the Ocean of Bliss.

The individual soul is enclosed with five sheaths (Koshas), which are like the sheaths of an onion. The five sheaths are Annamaya Kosha (food sheath) Pranamaya Kosha (vital sheath), Manomaya Kosha (mental sheath), Vijnanamaya Kosha (intellectual sheath) and Anandamaya Kosha (the blissful sheath). The first two sheaths constitute his physical body. The next three sheaths form his subtle body. The last sheath forms his causal body. The individual soul should transcend all his sheaths through meditation and become one with the Supreme Soul which is beyond the five Koshas. Then only he will attain liberation or freedom.

There are three states of Consciousness for the individual soul, viz waking state, dreaming state and deep sleep. Turiya or the fourth state is the Superconscious State. Turiya is Brahman. Turiya is the silent witness of the three states. The individual should transcend the first three states and identify himself with the Turiya or the fourth state. Then only he can attain oneness with the Supreme Soul.

Badarayana believes in Jivanmukti or liberation while living.

May you all understand the truths of Vedanta philosophy! May you all realise the bliss of oneness! May you all become Jivanmuktas while living!

THE VEDANGAS

{The Vedangas or limbs of Vedas are six in number. They are Shiksha, Kalpa, Vyakarna, Niruktam, Chhandah and Jyotish. Without knowledge of Vyakarana you cannot understand the Vedas.

Shiksha is a knowledge of phonetics. Shiksha deals with pronunciation and accent. The text of the Vedas is arranged in various forms or Pathas. The Pada-patha gives each word its separate form. The Krama-patha connects the words in pairs.

Kalpa is the method of ritual. The Granta Sutras which explain the ritual of sacrifices belong to Kalpa. The Shulva Sutras which treat of the measurements which are necessary for laying out the sacrificial area also belong to Kalpa. They supplement the Granta Sutras. The Grihya Sutras which concern domestic life and the Dharma Sutras which deal with customs and laws also belong to Kalpa.

Vyakarana is Sanskrit grammar. Panini's books are most famous.

Niruktam is philology or etymology. Chhandah is metre dealing with prosody. Jyotish is astrology. It includes astronomy also. It deals with the movements of the heavenly bodies, planets, etc. and their influence on human affairs.

OTHER SCRIPTURES

{The Tevaram and the Tiruvachakam, which are the hymns of the Saiva saints of South India, the Divya-Prabandham of the Alvar saints of South India, the Songs of Kabir, the Abhangas of Tukaram, the Ramayana of Tulsī Das which are the outpourings of **great** realised souls are wonderful scriptures. They contain the essence of the Vedas.

CHAPTER III

SANATANA DHARMA

DHARMA

The word 'Dharma' is derived from the root 'Dhr' 'to hold' and its etymological meaning is 'that which holds' this world, or the people of the world, or the whole creation from the microcosm to the macrocosm. It is the eternal Divine Law of the Lord. The secret of Dharma is very profound and subtle. The entire creation is held together and sustained by the All-powerful Law of God. Practice of Dharma, therefore, means to recognise these laws and abide by them.

Maha Rishi Jaimini defines Dharma as that which is enjoined by the Vedas and is not ultimately productive of suffering.

That which leads to the attainment of Abhyudaya (prosperity in this world and the next) and Nihisreyasa (total cessation of pain and attainment of eternal divine bliss) is Dharma. This is the definition of Dharma by Rishi Kanada in his Vaisesika Sutras.

Dharma is that which leads you to the path of perfection and glory. Dharma is that which helps you to have direct communion with the Lord. Dharma is that which makes you divine. (Dharma is the ascending stairway unto God. Self-realisation is the highest Dharma. Dharma is the heart of Hindu ethics. God is the centre of Dharma.)

(Dharma is the principle of righteousness. It is the principle of holiness. It is also the principle of unity.

It is the cementer and sustainer of social life. If you transgress it, it will kill you. If you protect it, it will protect you. It is your sole companion after death. It is the sole refuge of humanity.

{ Bhishma said in his instructions to Yudhishtira that whatever creates conflict is Adharma and whatever puts an end to conflict and brings about unity and harmony is Dharma.

Dharma means Achara or the regulation of daily life. Achara is the Supreme Dharma. It is the basis of Tapas or austerity. It leads to wealth, beauty, longevity and continuity of lineage. { Evil conduct and immorality will lead to ill-fame, sorrow, disease and premature death. Dharma has its root in morality and the controller of Dharma is God himself.

Of the four grand objects of human aspiration—Purusharthas, viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha, 'Dharma' is given the foremost rank in the scriptures. Dharma alone is the gateway to Moksha, to Immortality, Infinite Bliss, Supreme Peace and Highest Knowledge. Dharma alone is the primary Purushartha. Through the practice of Dharma alone you can ever hope to achieve the crowning glory of all human endeavours, viz. Moksha, which is the best and the highest of all desirable things.

The four Vedas, the Smṛiti texts, the behaviour of those who have entered into their Spirit and act according to their injunctions, the conduct of holy men and satisfaction of one's own Self—these are the bases of Dharma.

In the matter of Dharma, the Vedas are the only authority. You cannot know the truth about Dharma through any other source of knowledge than the Vedas. Reason cannot be the authority in the matter of Dharma.

Among the scriptures of the world the Vedas are the oldest. This is supported by all leading scholars and antiquarians of the entire civilized world. They all declare with one voice that of all books so far written in any human language, the Rig Veda Samhita is undoubtedly the oldest. No antiquarian has been able to fix the date when the Rig Veda Samhita was composed or came to light.

That which is Dharma is verily the Truth. Therefore, whosoever speaks the truth is said to speak Dharma, and whosoever speaks Dharma is said to speak the truth. One and the same thing becomes both.

Dharma can be classified under two heads: (1) The general or universal Dharma and (2) The specific or personal Dharma. Contentment, forgiveness, self-restraint, non-stealing, purity, control of senses, discrimination between right and wrong, between the real and the unreal, spiritual knowledge, truthfulness and absence of anger come under the general or universal Dharma. These are the tenfold characteristics of Dharma according to Manu.

The Mahabharata enumerates the performance of Sraddha or offering oblations to the forefathers, religious austerity, truth, restraint of anger, satisfaction with one's own wife, purity, learning, absence of envy, knowledge of the Self and forbearance as the fundamentals of Dharma.

It is said in Padma Purana that Dharma proceeds from continence, truthfulness, austerity, charity, self-control, forbearance, purity, non-violence, serenity and non-thieving and that one should recognise Dharma by these ten factors.

According to Padma Puran, bestowing gifts on deserving persons, fixing one's thoughts on Lord Krishna,

adoration of one's parents, offering a portion of the daily meal to all creatures, and giving a morsel of food to a cow are the six characteristics of Dharma.

According to Matsva-Purana, freedom from malice, absence of covetousness, control of the senses, austerity, celibacy, compassion, truthfulness, forbearance, fortitude, constitute the fundamentals of Sanatana Dharma.

All other religions also lay stress on Dharma. Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism and Islam are all remarkably alive to its value. Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Kant, Swedenberg and Spinoza are all striking examples in the interesting history of Western philosophy for the high pedestal on which they have placed morality, duty and righteousness and adored them as the only means to the attainment of the goal of life. Each religion lays greater stress on certain aspects of Dharma.

Just as the doctor prescribes different medicines for different people according to their constitution and nature of disease, so also Hinduism prescribes different duties for different people. Rules for women are different from the rules of men. The rules for different castes vary. But non-violence, truth, non-stealing, cleanliness, control of the senses, are the duties common to all men.

Dharma depends upon time, circumstances, age, degree of evolution and the community to which one belongs. The Dharma of this century is different from that of the tenth century.

What is Dharma in one set of circumstances becomes Adharma in another set of circumstances. That is the reason why it is said that Dharma is extremely profound and subtle. Lord Krishna says in Gita "Let the scriptures be the authority in determining what ought

to be done or what ought not to be done". (Chap. XVI 24). The truth of Dharma lies hidden. Srutis and Smritis are many. The way of Dharma open to all is that which a great realised soul has traversed.

Dharma includes all external deeds as well as thoughts and other mental practices which tend to elevate the character of a man. Dharma comes from the Divine and leads you to the Divine.

Practice of Dharma leads to the perfect realisation of essential unity, or the final end, the highest good, namely, Moksha. The practitioner experiences peace, joy, strength and tranquility within himself. His life becomes thoroughly disciplined. His powers and capacities are exceedingly intensified. He realises that there is one underlying homogenous essence, a living truth, behind these names and forms. He is transmuted into divinity. His whole nature gets transformed. He becomes one with the Eternal. He beholds Brahman above, Brahman below, Brahman to the right, Brahman to the left, Brahman in front, Brahman at the back, Brahman within and Brahman without and Brahman pervading the whole world.

Dharma assumes various kinds: Sanatana Dharma (Eternal Law); Samanya Dharma (ordinary duty); Visesha Dharma (special duty), Varnashrama Dharma (duties of Caste and Order); Swadharma (one's own duty); Yuga Dharma (duty of the Age); Kula Dharma (Duty of Kula); Manava Dharma (duty of man); Purusha Dharma (duty of male); Sthiri Dharma (duty of female); Raja Dharma (duty of King); Praja Dharma (duty of subjects); Pravriti Dharma (duty of outgoing life); Nivriti Dharma (duty of renunciation).

There are conditions under which Dharma may change its usual course. Apad-dharma is such a deviation from the usual practice. This is allowed only in times of extreme distress or calamity.

Follow your Dharma with zeal and enthusiasm. Discharge your duties faithfully. Develop all the virtues which constitute Dharma. Never deviate an inch from the path of righteousness. Stick to Dharma with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul. You will soon attain immortality, eternal bliss, supreme peace, perennial joy, absolute freedom and perfection. Glory to Dharma, the Supreme Light that leads you to the kingdom of eternal bliss and everlasting peace.

SANATANA DHARMA

Sanatana Dharma means the Eternal/religion, the Ancient Law. This is based on the Vedas/ This is the oldest of living religions. Hinduism is known by the name Sanatana Dharma. What the Vedas alone declare to be the means of attaining the summum bonum or the final emancipation is the Sanatana Dharma or Hindu Dharma.

Hinduism stands unrivalled in the depth and grandeur of its philosophy'. Its ethical teachings are lofty, unique and sublime. It is highly flexible and adapted to every human need. It is a perfect religion by itself. It is not in need of anything from any other religion. No other religion has produced so many great Yogis, great Saints, great Prophets, great Acharyas, great patriots, great statesmen, great warriors, great kings, great Pativratas. The more you know of it, the more you will honour and love it. The more you study it, the more it will enlighten you and satisfy your heart.

The religious history of the world tells us that from time immemorial India has been the home of great sages, Seers and Rishis. All the grand religious ideals that have moulded the characters of men, the loftiest tenets of ethics and morality that have raised human beings to a magnanimous height of divine splendour and all the sublime truths of spirituality that have made men divine and have

moulded the spiritual ideals of nations and saviours of mankind first arose in India. It was India that gave birth to great spiritual giants like Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Sadasiva Brahman, Sri Ramanuja, Jnana Dev, Dattatreya and Avatras like Lord Krishna, Lord Rama etc. The spiritual horizon of India has always been illumined with the glory of the Self-effulgent Sun of wisdom of the Upanishads. Whenever there was any upheaval in any part of the world, the origin of this could be traced to the wave of spirituality caused by the birth of a great soul, a special manifestation of Divinity in some part of India.

Hindus have had a culture, civilisation and religion millenniums older than those of any other country or people. God did speak to the world through India's Rishis, Yogins, Mahatmas, Alvars, Prophets, Acharyas, Sannyasins and saints. Their teachings and Puranas are really inspired. God is the one Light and Truth from whom emanate the teachings of all faiths.

India is the home and abode of religions. It occupies the proud first place in religious devotion and godliness. England is famous for coal and iron, America for its dollars; Italy for sculptural works; but India is famous for its religious devotion, Yogis and saints. Dollar-hunting and trade is the goal of America. Supremacy over other nations is the goal of England. The goal of India is Self-realisation or attainment of God-consciousness, through renunciation. (The history of India is a history of religion. Its social code and regulations are founded upon religion. Minus its Yoga, religion and its regulation, India will not be what it has been for millenniums. Some Hindus are still not aware of the distinguishing features of Sanatana Dharma. If every Hindu knew and understood what is Hinduism, the Hindus of today would all be gods on this earth.)

(The foundation of Sanatana Dharma is Sruti; Smritis are the walls; the Puranas and the Itihases are the

buttresses or supports.) In ancient times the Srutis were learnt by heart. The teacher sang them to his pupils and the pupils sang them after him. They were not written in a book form. All the sects, all the philosophical systems appeal to the Sruti as the final authority. The Smriti stands next in authority to the Shruti. Smriti is Dharma Shastra. It consists of four great works written by sages. It deals with laws and regulations for the carrying on of individual, family, social and national life. They are Manu Smriti or Manava Dharma Sastram written by Manu, the great Hindu Law-giver, Yagnavalkya Smriti written by the great sage Yagnavalkya; Shankha and Likhita Smriti and Parashara Smriti. Manu Smriti is the most important Smriti.

The Puranas consist of histories, stories and allegories. They are meant for the masses, for the use of the less learned men who could not study and understand the Vedas. They contain the essence of the Vedas. They are very interesting. There are eighteen Puranas. They were written by the great sage, Sri Veda Vyasa.

The Itihasa comprises two great poems or epics—Ramayana and Maha Bharata. Itihasa and Puranas are known as the fifth Veda. Ramayana is the history of Lord Rama, the son of King Dasaratha and of his wife Sita and of his brothers Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughana. Mahabharata is the history of the Kurus and the Pandavas. It contains countless object lessons, noble moral teachings and wonderful moral stories. The lofty discourse of Bhishma on Dharma and Bhagawad Gita are contained in Maha Bharata, the unprecedented epic in the world.

Every religion has a generic form or Samanyarupa and a specific form or Visesharupa. The general form remains eternally the same. It is never changed by any circumstance whatsoever. It is not affected at all

by changes of time, place, surroundings and individual differences. This aspect of religion is called Sanatana or eternal. That which changes according to the change of time, place and surrounding circumstances is the external aspect or ritual of Dharma.

‘In Satyuga or golden age there was a different set of Dharmas or laws; in Treta they changed into another form; in Dwapara the Dharmas were different from the Dharmas of other Yugas; in Kali Yuga they assumed another form. Man is undergoing change. His nature gets transformed through experiences. Hence his external form of Dharmas also should change.

That which is achieved through contemplation in Satyuga, through sacrifices in Treta Yuga, and through the worship of Lord Hari in Dwapara Yuga may be attained through Kirtan or loud chanting of Lord Vishnu’s name in Kali Yuga or iron age.

In the Satyuga the mind of men was generally pure. They had no distraction of the mind. There were neither cinemas nor hotels nor dancing halls. Hence meditation was easy and natural for them. That is the reason why contemplation has been prescribed for men of Satyuga. In the Treta Yuga materials for the performance of Yagnas or sacrifices were easily available. The people had active tendencies. Therefore it was easy for them to perform Agnihotra, Jyotistoma, Darsa-paurnimas and other Yagnas. That is the reason why Yagna has been described as the external form of Sanatana Dharma in that age. In the Dwapara Yuga there was the manifestation of Avatars and men could easily have direct worship of God. Hence worship was prescribed as the principal form of Sadhana in that age. In the Kali Yuga there are many distractions for the mind. People lack in Brahmacharya, strength of will and power of enquiry or rational investigation. It is very difficult

to procure materials for the performance of sacrifices. Therefore Hari Kirtan or loud chanting of the Divine name and selfless service of humanity have been recommended as the principal form of Sadhana.

May you all be endowed with the knowledge of Sanatana Dharma! May you all endeavour to protect the eternal Dharma! May the secrets of Sanatana Dharma be revealed unto you all like amalaka fruit in the palm of your hand through the grace of the Lord !!! May the blessings of Rishis be upon you all. Glory to the Vedas and Sanatana Dharma! Glory to Brahman, the source for all Vedas and Sanatana Dharma.

VARNASHRAMA

The four Varnas or castes are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. The four Ashrams or orders of life are Brahmacharya, Grahastha, Vanaprastha and Sanuyasa.

Lord Krishna says in Gita: "The four castes were emanated by Me according to qualities and actions (Guna Karma)."

(Hinduism is built on Varnashrama Dharma. The structure of the Hindu society is based on Varnashrama Dharma. Observance of Varnashrama Dharma helps one's growth and self-evolution. It is very indispensable. If the rules are violated the nation will soon perish

In the West and in the whole world also there is Varnashrama though it is not rigidly observed there. In a broad sense a Sattvic man who is pious and virtuous and leads the divine life is a Brahmin; a Rajasic man with heroic quality is a Kshatriya; a Rajasic man with business tendencies is a Vaishya; a Tamasic man is a Sudra.

Hitler and Mussolini are Kshatriyas. Ford is a Vaishya.

The orthodox Hindus have become great extremists in the name of Varnashrama Dharma. The Brahmins have claimed superiority and treated the other three classes with contempt. This is the cause for the development of Anti-Brahmin movement. This is the reason why Brahmins are

not able to get employment in places where there are non-Brahmin officers. Instead of creating love between different castes, the Varnashrama affair has created discord, disharmony, fights and quarrels.

{There is nothing wrong in Varnashrama. It is arrogance and haughtiness in men that has brought troubles. Man or the little Jiva is imperfect. He is full of Doshas or defects. He is simply waiting for claiming superiority over others. The Kshatriya thinks that the Vaishya or Sudra is inferior to him. The Vaishya thinks that the Sudra is inferior to him. A rich Sudra thinks that he is superior to a poor Brahmin or poor Kshatriya or Vaishya.

Even when Prasad is distributed in a temple or a religious society it is given first to Brahmins or rich persons. God will certainly not be displeased if the Prasad is distributed to a poor Sudra first occasionally. There is no harm in doing like this. The Varnashrama structure will not tumble at once.

{Anything that helps to unite all and develop pure, divine love and universal brotherhood is Dharma. Anything that creates discord, split, disharmony and foments hatred is Adharma.

So many Varnashram conferences have come and gone. So many Pandits have shouted at the top of their voice on Varnashrama Dharma. And yet man's heart has not expanded even a bit. It is all Touchism, Kitchenism, Brahminism only. A Brahmin Pandit still remains a Brahmin Pandit within the four walls of his room. He cannot allow a non-Brahmin to use his own tumbler for drinking water. He cannot share even his water with non-Brahmins. He cannot take food in a plate even in another Brahmin's house, even in his seventy-fifth year. When will he realize the Vedantic Oneness which he is preaching day and night?

How long will he cook food for himself and eat food in his own plate and drink water in his own tumbler?

{Varnashrama pertains to body alone but not to the pure, all-pervading immortal soul or Atma. Attain knowledge of self and become an Ati-Varnashrami like Lord Dattatreya. Hear what he says,

**"Mahatadi Jegat Sarvam nakinchit pratibhatime,
Brahmaiva Kevalam Sarvam Katham Varnashrama
Stutih."**

The whole world from Mahat downwards does not shine in Me. Everything is Brahman only. Where then is Varnashrama ?)

May you all have comprehensive understanding of Varnashram and Varnashrama Dharma ! May you all develop universal love and brotherhood ! May all barriers which are made by man for his own self-aggrandisement and self-assertion, which create discord, disunion be broken asunder !!!

VARNASHRAMA DHARMA

I.

Silent adorations to the Lord, the embodiment of Dharma, the controller and protector of Dharma and the fountain-head of Dharma.

The aim of Varnashrama Dharma is to promote the development of the universal, eternal Dharma. If you defend Dharma, it will defend you, if you destroy it, it will destroy you. Therefore, never destroy your Dharma. This principle holds true of the individual as much as of the nation. It is Dharma alone which keeps a nation alive. Dharma is the very soul of man. Dharma is the very soul of a nation also.

What is Dharma ? Dharma is so called because it holds ; Dharma alone holds the people, etc. English language is not perfect. There is no proper equivalent word in English for the Sanskrit term Dharma. It is very difficult to define Dharma. Dharma is generally defined as 'Righteousness' or 'duty'. That which elevates one is Dharma. This is another definition. Rishi Kanad, the founder of Vaisheshik system of philosophy has given the best definition of Dharma, "Yatho bhyudaya nisreva sa sidhi sa dharma—That which conduces to welfare in this life and to the final emancipation in the next is Dharma".

The rules of Dharma have been laid down for regulating the worldly affairs of men. Dharma brings as its consequence happiness both in this world and in the next. Dharma

is the means of preserving one's self. Dharma is the first and foremost Purushartha.

(The duties of the castes are Varna Dharma. The four castes are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. The duties of the stages in life are Ashrama Dharma. The four Ashramas are Brahmacharya, Gr hastha, Vanaprastha and Saunvasa. The principle of Varnashrama Dharma is one of the fundamental principles of Hinduism.

Lord Krishna says in Gita. 'The four castes were emanated by Me by the different distribution of qualities and actions. Know Me to be the author of them, though the actionless and inexhaustible' Chap. IV-13.

Human society is like a huge machine. The individuals and communities are like its parts. If the parts are weak and broken the machine will not work. A machine is nothing without its parts. The human body also can work efficiently if its parts and organs are in sound and strong condition. If there is pain in any part of the body, if there is disease in any organ or part of the body, this human machine will go out of order. It will not perform its usual function or work.

So is the case with the human society. [Every individual should perform his duties efficiently. The underlying principle in caste system or Varna Dharma is division of labour. The Hindu Rishis and sages formed an ideal scheme of society and an ideal way of individual life, which is known by the name Varnashrama Dharma. Some Western philosophers have made a division of three classes viz philosophers, warriors and masses. Philosophers correspond to the Brahmins, warriors to Kshatriyas and the masses to Vaishyas and Sudras. This system is indispensable to keep the society in a state of perfect harmony and order.

This division is according to the Guna and Karma. Each class contributes its best to the common weal or world-solidarity. There is no question of higher and lower here.

There are three qualities of Gunas viz Sattwa (purity), Rajas (passion) and Tamas (inertia). Sattwa is white; Rajas is red; Tamas is black. These three qualities are found in man in varying proportions. Sattwa preponderates

in some persons. These are Brahmanas. They are wise persons or thinkers. They are the priests, ministers or philosophers who guide kings or Rulers. In some Rajas is predominant. These are Kshatriyas. They are warriors or men of action. They fight with the enemies or invaders and defend the country. In some Tamas is predominant. They are Vaisyas or traders. They do business and agriculture and amass wealth. Sudras are the servants. None of these qualities are highly developed in them. They serve the other three castes. Guna (quality) and Karma (kind of work) determine the caste of a man. This is supported by Lord Krishna in Gita also.)

{Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness and also uprightness, knowledge, realisation, belief in God are the duties of the Brahmanas, born of (their own) nature. Prowess, splendour, firmness, dexterity and also not flying from battle, generosity and lordliness are the duties of the Kshatriyas, born of (their own) nature. Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the duties of the Vaishyas, born of (their own) nature; and action consisting of service is the duty of the Sudras, born of (their own) nature.

Varnashrama system is peculiar to Hindus. It is a characteristic feature of Hinduism. It is prevalent throughout the whole world according to Guna-karma, though there is no distinct denomination of this kind. Varna is no more the colour of the skin, but the colour of one's character or quality.

Peace and order will prevail in society only if and when all people do their respective duties efficiently. The abolition of castes and Ashramas will cut at the very root of social duties. How can the nation hope to live when Varnashrama Dharma is not rigidly practised?

{Rishis studied human nature carefully. They came to the conclusion that all men are not equally fit for all kinds of work. Hence they found it necessary to allocate different kinds of duties to different classes of people according to their aptitude, capacity or quality. The Brahmanas were in charge of spiritual and intellectual affairs. The work of political administration and defence was given to the Kshatriyas.

The Vaishyas were entrusted with the duty of supplying food for the nation and administering its economic welfare. The Sudras did menial work. The Rishis felt all these needs of the Hindu nation and started the system of castes and Ashramas.

(This division of labour began in Vedic times. The Vedas taught that the Brahmana was the brain of the society, the Kshatriya its arms, the Vaishya its stomach and the Sudra its feet.

In Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda, there is reference to the division of Hindu Society into the four classes. It is described there that the Brahmanas came out of the face of the Lord, the Creator, Kshatriyas from His arms, Vaishyas from His thighs and the Sudras from His feet

(The caste system is indeed a splendid thing. It is quite flawless. But the defect came in from somewhere else. The upper classes gradually neglected their duties. The test of ability and character slowly vanished. Birth became the chief consideration in determining castes. All castes fell from their ideals and forgot all about their duties. Brahmins became selfish and claimed superiority over others by mere birth without possessing due qualifications. The Kshatriyas lost their chivalry and spirit of sacrifice. The Vaishyas became very greedy. They do not earn wealth by honest means. They do not look after the economic welfare of the people. They do not give charity. They also lost the spirit of sacrifice. Sudras gave up service. They have become officers. They wish that others should serve them. The greed and pride of man has created discord and disharmony. There is fight now between Brahmins and non-Brahmins.)

There was a quarrel between the senses, the mind and the Prana as to who is superior. There was a quarrel amongst the different organs and the stomach. If the hands quarrel with the stomach, the entire body will suffer. When Prana departed from the body, all the organs suffered. The head or stomach cannot claim its superiority over the feet and hands. The hands and feet are as much important as the stomach or head. If there is quarrel between the different castes as to who is superior, then the entire social fabric will suffer. There will be disharmony, rupture and discord.

A scavenger or a barber is as much important as the Dewan or Minister for the running of the society. The social edifice is built on the law of spiritual economics. It has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority.

A Bishmun is no Brahmin if he is not endowed with purity, good character, if he leads a life of dissipation and immorality. A Sudra is a Brahmin if he leads a virtuous and pious life. What a great Soul was Vidura! What a noble, candid, straightforward student was Satyakama Jabala of Chandogya Upanishad! Caste is a question of character. Conduct and character count and not lineage alone. If one is Brahmin by birth and at the same time if he possesses the virtues of a Brahmin, it is extremely good, because certain virtuous qualifications only determine the birth of a Brahmin.

(Untouchability is certainly a serious blot on Hinduism. This is the work of priests or Purohits on account of arrogant assumption of superiority. It is a heinous crime against humanity. He who is selfish, proud, arrogant, deceitful, he who outrages other women, he who robs other men's property, he who drinks and gambles, he who leads a life of immorality is really an outcaste or an untouchable. There is no religious sanction for keeping the Harijans as outcastes. This taint should be removed from Hinduism if it is to be recognised as a glorious religion.

The Hindus have survived many a foreign conquest on account of their caste system. But they have developed class jealousies and hatreds in the name of the caste system. They have not got the spirit of co-operation. That is the reason why they are weak and disunited to-day. They have become sectarians in the name of caste system. Hence they are attacked now by the followers of other religions.

At the present moment Varnashrama system has to be rebuilt properly. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras, who have fallen from their ideals must do their respective duties properly. They must be educated on right lines. They must raise themselves to their original lofty level. The sectarian spirit must die. They should develop a new understanding heart of love and devotion, with a spirit of co-operation, sacrifice, and service.

May the eternal Dharma of Hinduism be preserved for ever! May all Hindus be consolidated by the bond of true love!!!

ASHRAMA DHARMA

II.

(There are four Ashramas or stages in life, viz. Brahmacharya or the period of studentship, Grahastha or the stage of householder, Vanaprastha or the stage of a forest dweller or hermit, and Sannyasa or the life of renunciation or asceticism. Each stage has its own duties. These stages help the evolution of man. The four Ashramas take the man to perfection by successive stages. The practice of the four Ashramas regulates the life from the beginning to the end. The first two Ashramas pertain to Pravritti Marga or the path of work, the two later stages the life of Vanaprastha and that of the Sannyas are the stages of withdrawal from the world. They pertain to Nivriti Marga or the path of renunciation.)

Life is very systematically and orderly arranged in Sanatana Dharma. There is opportunity for the development of the different sides of the human activity. Due occupations and training are assigned to each period of life. Life is a great school in which the powers, capacities and faculties of man are to be evolved gradually.)

Every man should pass through the different Ashrams regularly. He should not enter any stage of life prematurely. He can enter the next stage only when each has been completed. In nature, evolution is gradual. It is not revolutionary.

At the present moment the Ashramas cannot be exactly lived according to the details of the ancient rules as the conditions have been changed very much, but they may be revived in their spirit to the great improvement of modern life. In these stages no one should do the duty of another. The student or Brahmachari should not do the duties of a householder, a recluse or a Sannyasi. The householder must not perform the duties of a Brahmachari, Vanaprastha or Sannyasi. A Sannyasi should not seek again the joys of the householder.

The students of schools and colleges should lead a life of purity and simple living. The householder should lead the life of an ideal Grihastha. He should earn money by honest means and spend one-tenth of his income in charity. He should practise self-restraint, mercy, tolerance, non-injury, truthfulness, moderation in everything. Those who find it difficult to lead the life of the third and fourth Ashrama should gradually withdraw themselves from worldly life and practise selfless service, study and meditation.

The first stage (Brahmacharya) is the period of study and discipline. The student should not indulge in any pleasures. He stays in the house of his preceptor and studies the Vedas and the sciences. This is the period of probation. The teachers in ancient India usually lived in forest hermitages. These hermitages are the Gurukuls or forest universities. The student begs his food. The children of the rich and the poor live together. The student regards his teacher as his spiritual father and serves him with faith, devotion and reverence.

The life of the student begins with the Upanayana ceremony, his second birth. He must be hardy and simple in his habits. He rises early, bathes, does Sandhya and Gayatri Japa. He studies scriptures. He takes simple food in moderation and takes plenty of exercise. He sleeps on a hard mat and does not use soft beds and pillows. He is humble and obedient. He serves and respects elders. He attempts to be chaste in thought, word and deed.

He ever engages himself in doing services to his preceptor. He refrains from wine, meat, perfumes, garlands, tasty and savoury dishes, women, acids, spices and from injury to sentient creatures, from lust, anger, greed, dancing, singing, and playing on musical instruments, from dice-playing, gossip, slander and untruth. He sleeps alone.

Lord Manu says in his Smriti: "Having studied the Vedas or two Vedas, or even one Veda in due order, without breaking celibacy, let him dwell in the householder order. When the householder sees wrinkles in his skin and whiteness in his hair and the son of his son, then let him retire to the forest. Having passed the third portion of life in the forests, let him, having abandoned attachments, wander as an ascetic, the

fourth portion of life". } In rare and exceptional cases a student is allowed to become a Sannyasi, his debts to the world having been fully paid in a previous birth. Nowadays young Sannyasins without qualification are found in abundance. This is contrary to the ancient rules and causes much trouble.

After the end of his student career, he gives a present to his preceptor according to his ability and returns home to enter the household life. The preceptor gives the final instruction and sends the student home. The teacher delivers a convocation address to the students at the conclusion of their studentship. "Speak the truth Do your duty. Never swerve from the study of the Veda. Do not cut off the thread of the offspring after giving the preceptor the fee he desires. Never swerve away from Truth. Never swerve from duty. Never neglect your welfare. Never neglect your prosperity. Never neglect the study and the teaching of the Vedas.

"Never swerve from the duties to the gods and the forefathers. Regard your mother as a God (Matru devo bhava). Regard your father as a God (Pitru devo bhava). Regard your teacher as a God (Acharya devo bhava) Regard your guest as a God (Athiti devo bhava). Let only those actions that are free from blemishes be done, and not others Only those that are good acts to us should be performed by thee and not others."

"You should remove the fatigue of Brahmanas who are superior to you by serving them with seats, etc. Gift should be given with faith, in plenty, with modesty and sympathy. If there be any doubt regarding rites or conduct, then look up to the lives of great men and follow their examples. This is the injunction. This is the teaching This is the secret of the Vedas. This is God's word of command. This should be observed. Thus is this to be meditated upon".

The second stage is that of the Grihastha (householder). The household stage is entered at marriage, when the student has completed his studentship and is ready to take up the duties and responsibilities of household life. Of all the Ashramas, this is the most important, because it supports all the others. As all creatures live supported by the air, so the other Orders exist supported by the householder. As

all streams and rivers flow to rest in the ocean, so all the Ashramas flow to rest in the householder. The Grihastha is the very heart of Aryan life. Everything depends on him.

Marriage is a sacrament for a Hindu. The wife is his partner in life. She is his Ardhangani. He cannot do any religious ritual without her. She stands by his left side when he performs any religious performance. Husband and wife keep Rama and Sita as their ideal. A householder should earn money by honest means and distribute it in the proper manner. He should spend one-tenth of his income in charity. He should enjoy sensual pleasures within the limits of the moral law. A householder is permitted to enjoy conjugal happiness on any one of ten nights in a month.

He should perform the Pancha Maha Yagnas. The five Yagnas are :

1. *Deva Yagna*—offering oblations unto Devatas with recitation of Vedic Mantras.
2. *Rishi Yagna*—consists of study of Vedas and teaching of Vedas to students and offering of oblations to Rishis.
3. *Putru Yagna*—consists of Tarpan or oblations to departed souls and Shradha or annual religious rites performed for departed souls.
4. *Bhuta Yagna*—distribution of food to cows, crows and animals.
5. *Athiti Yagna*—giving food to guests and honouring them.

Hospitality is one of his chief duties. He must ever feed first his guests, Brahmanas, his relatives and then he and his wife should eat.

When the householder sees that his sons are able to bear the burden of his duties, when his grandsons are around him the time has come for him and his wife to retire from the world and spend their time in study and meditation.

The next stage is that of the Vanaprastha. Brahmacharya is a preparation for the life of the householder. Even so, Vanaprastha is a preparation for the final stage of

Sannyasa. After discharging all the duties of an householder, he should retire to the forest along with his wife or a solitary country place and begin to meditate in solitude on higher spiritual things. He is now free from social bonds and the responsibilities of life. He has ample time for study of scriptures. His wife may go with him or remain with her sons.

In extraordinary cases, however, some of the stages may be omitted. Suka was a born Sannyasin. Sankara took Sannyasa without entering the stage of a householder.

The next stage is that of a Sannyasin. When a man becomes a Sannyasin, he renounces all possessions, all distinctions of caste, all rites and ceremonies and all attachments to any particular country, nation or religion. He lives alone and spends his time in meditation. He lives on alms. He rejoices in his own Self. He is quite indifferent to sensual pleasures. He is free from likes and dislikes, desires, egoism, lust, anger, greed, pride. He has equal vision and balanced mind. He loves all. He roams about happily and disseminates Brahma-Gyana or knowledge of the Self. He is the same in honour and dishonour, praise and censure, success and failure. He is now Ativarnashrami i.e. above Varna and Ashrama. He is quite a free man. He is not bound by any social customs and conventions.

Sannyasi is an ideal man. He has attained perfection and freedom. He is Brahman himself. He is a Jivan-mukta or a liberated sage. Glory to such exalted personages, who are living Gods on earth !!!

SAMANYA DHARMA

(Samanya Dharma is the general Dharma or law for all men. Varnashrama Dharmas are special Dharmas which are to be practised by particular castes and by men in particular stages of life. The Samanya Dharmas must be practised by all irrespective of distinctions of Varna and Ashrama, creed or colour. Goodness is not the property of any one class, creed, sect or community. Every man should possess this virtue.

(The Vishnu Samhita enumerates forgiveness, truthfulness, control of the mind, purity, practice of charity, control of the senses, non-violence, service of the Guru, visiting places of pilgrimage, compassion, simplicity, absence of greed, worship of the gods and the Brahmins and absence of malice as the ingredients of Samanya Dharma, the general law for all men.

Patanjali Maha Rushi, the exponent of Raja Yoga philosophy recommends that ten virtues should be practised by all men. They are Ahimsa (non-violence), Satyam (Truthfulness), Brahmacharya (celibacy in thought, word and deed), Asteyam (non-stealing) and Aparigraha (non-covetousness). These constitute Yama or self-restraint. The other five virtues are : Saucha (internal and external purity), Santosh (contentment), Tapas (austerity), Swadhyaya (study of scriptures or recitation of Mantra) and Iswara Pranidhana (consecration of the fruits of all work to the Lord). These constitute Niyama (religious observance.)

The Gita enumerates the following virtues as Daivi Sampat or divine qualities: fearlessness, cleanness of life, steadfastness in the Yoga of wisdom, alms-giving, self-restraint, sacrifice, study of the scripture, austerity, straightforwardness; harmlessness, truth, absence of wrath, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion to living beings, uncovetousness, mildness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of envy and pride. All these virtues are manifestations of the four fundamental virtues (1) Non-violence (2) Truth (3) Purity (4) Self-control. All the above virtues come under the above four cardinal virtues. The virtues that are enumerated under the Noble-eightfold Path of Buddhism, the virtues prescribed by Lord Jesus in his "Sermon on the Mount" also come under the above fundamental virtues

The development of the divine qualities is indispensable for the attainment of Self-realisation Brahman or the Eternal is purity. The Eternal cannot be attained without the attainment of purity. Brahman is Truth. The Eternal cannot be attained without practicing truth. Brahman is fearlessness. The Eternal cannot be attained unless you

become absolutely fearless. Attachment to the body causes fear and Dehadhyasa. If only, you become fearless then the identification with the body will vanish.

You have rendered the heart harder than flint, steel or diamond through greed, miserliness, harshness, rudeness. You can soften it only through the practice of mercy, sympathy, charity, generosity, magnanimity, harmlessness, mildness, disinterested action, untiring service of poor. You have made the heart crooked and narrow through hypocrisy, untruthfulness, back-biting, tale-bearing. You can expand it through the practice of straightforwardness, truthfulness, cleanness of life, alms-giving, uncovetousness. You have rendered the heart impure through lust. You can purify it through the practice of celibacy in thought, word and deed.

Ahimsa is the most important virtue. That is the reason why Patanjali Maha Rishi has placed it first in Yama. Practice of Ahimsa must be in thought, word and deed. Practice of Ahimsa is not impotence or cowardice or weakness. It is the highest type of heroism. The practice demands immense patience, forbearance and endurance, infinite inner spiritual strength and gigantic will-power. Ahimsa is a modification or expression of truth only. Satyam and Ahimsa always go together. He who is established in Ahimsa can move the whole world. In his presence all hostilities vanish. Lion and cow, cobra and mongoose live together peacefully. Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism lay great stress on Ahimsa. Lord Jesus also has emphasized much on Ahimsa in his Sermon on the Mount. He says: "If any one beats you on one cheek, show him the other cheek also". He who is firmly established in Ahimsa can hope to attain Self-realisation. He who practises Ahimsa develops cosmic love to a maximum degree. Such a man only can attain Self-restraint. Retaliation, tooth for tooth, blow for blow is the maxim, doctrine or principle of an Asura or a man of diabolic nature. This belongs to the beastly nature. To return good for evil is divine. Constant vigilance and alertness are needed in the practice of Ahimsa. If you are careless even a bit, you will be carried away by the force of previous wrong Samskaras and impulses and will become a victim of Himsa, despite your good intentions.

If you injure any other creature, you really injure yourself, because the whole world is nothing but your own Self. This is Hindu ethics. Vedanta is based on this ethics. Practice of Ahimsa eventually leads to realisation of oneness or unity of Self.

Satyam or Truth.—Brahman is Sat or Existence Absolute. Truth must be observed in thought, word and deed. If you are established in truth, all other virtues will cling to you by themselves. Harischandra sacrificed everything for the sake of truth. He lives still in our hearts. Yudhishthira was also devoted to truth. There is no virtue higher than truth. Practice of truth and Ahimsa constitute the crown and glory of ethical life. The preceptor says in his convocation address to the students "Satyam vada. Speak the truth". The world is rooted in truth. Dharma is rooted in truth. All religions are rooted in truth. Honesty, justice, straightforwardness, sincerity are only modifications or expressions of truth.

Purity comprises both external purity and internal purity. Purity implies both purity of body and purity of mind. Purity of body is only preliminary to the purity of mind. The restriction in diet is best calculated to make the mind pure. Food exercises a direct influence on the mind. Sattwic food makes the mind pure. Purity of food leads to purity of mind. Mind is only made up of the fine essence of food. As the food is, so is the mind. This body is the temple of God. It should be kept clean by daily bathing and clean dress. Cleanliness is a part of godliness. You must be pure in thought, word and deed. Your heart must be as pure as crystal or the Himalayan snow. Then only the divine light will descend. Purity comprises such virtues as frankness, innocence, straightforwardness and absence of all evil thoughts. He who is endowed with purity will find it easy to tread the spiritual path.

You must have perfect self-control or self-mastery. Self-control implies both the control of the body and control of the mind. Self-control does not mean self-torture; you must lead a well-regulated and disciplined life. You must keep all the senses under your perfect control. The senses are like turbulent and wild horses. This body is like a chariot.

Mind is the reins. Intellect is the driver. The Atman is the Lord of the chariot. If the senses are not kept under proper control, they will throw this chariot into a deep abyss. You will come to ruin. He who keeps the reins firm, and drives this chariot intelligently by controlling the horses (senses) will reach the destination (Moksha or the abode of Eternal bliss) safely. Self-control implies self-sacrifice, annihilation of egoism, patience, endurance, forbearance, humility. Overcome Raga or attachment by Vairagya or dispassion. Dispassion will dawn in your mind if you look into the defects of sensual life such as birth, death, disease, old age, pain, sorrow etc. (Mitya drishti and dosha drishti). Overcome anger and hatred by Kshama or forgiveness, love and selfless service. Overcome evil by good. Return good for evil. Overcome lust by the practice of Brahmacharya and regular japa and meditation. Conquer greed by charity, generosity and disinterested actions. Conquer pride by humility, delusion by discrimination and enquiry. Overcome jealousy by magnanimity, Atmabhav, nobility. Conquer egoism by self-sacrifice, self-surrender, self-abnegation and meditation on the Non-dual, Eternal, self-luminous Brahman thy innermost Self, the Inner Ruler, Immortal.

May you all attain eternal bliss and immortality through the practice of the cardinal virtues or Samanya Dharma.



CHAPTER IV

BASIC HINDU RELIGIOUS IDEAS

LAW OF KARMA

Karma means not only action, but also the result of an action. The consequence of an action is really not a separate thing. It is a part of the action and cannot be divided from it. Breathing, thinking, talking, seeing, hearing, eating, are all Karmas. Thinking is mental Karma. Karma is the sum-total of our acts, both in the present life and in the preceding births.

Any deed, any thought that causes an effect is called a Karma. The Law of Karma means the law of causation. Wherever there is a cause, there an effect must be produced. A seed is a cause for the tree, which is the effect. The tree produces seeds and becomes the cause for the seeds.

The Law of Karma is one of the fundamental doctrines not only in Hinduism, but also in Buddhism and Jainism. As a man sows, so he shall reap. This is Law of Karma. If you do an evil action you must suffer for it. If you do a good action, you must get happiness. There is no power on this earth which can stop the actions from yielding their fruits. Every thought, every word, every deed are, as it were, weighed in the scales of eternal, divine Justice. The Law of Karma is inexorable.

Things do not happen in this universe by accident or chance in a disorderly manner. They happen in regular succession. They follow each other in a regular order. There is a certain definite connection between what is being done now by you, and what will happen in the future.

You are the master of your own fate. You are the architect of your own fortune. You are responsible for what you suffer. You are responsible for your present state. If you are unhappy, it has been your own making. If you are miserable, it has also been your own making. Every action bears a fruit sooner or later. A virtuous action produces pleasure as its effect. An evil deed causes pain.

Desire produces Karma. You work and exert to acquire the objects of your desire. Karma produces its fruits as pain or pleasure. You will have to take births after births to reap the fruits of your Karmas. This is Law of Karma.

Man is threefold in his nature. He consists of Ichchha (desire, feeling), Jnana (knowing) and Kriya (willing). These three fashion his Karma. He knows objects like chair, tree. He feels joy and sorrow. He wills to do this or not to do that.

• If you put a seed in the earth, it sends up a little stem. Then leaves come out of the stem. Then come flowers and fruits. There are seeds again in the fruits. Mango seed only produces mango tree. If you sow rice, you cannot expect a crop of wheat. The same sort of seed produces the same kind of plant. A human being alone is born from the womb of a woman; a horse from a horse, a dog from a dog. Similarly, if you sow the seed of an evil action, you will reap a harvest of pain and suffering. If you sow the seed of a virtuous action, you will reap a harvest of pleasure. This is Law of Karma.

Whatever you sow by your actions come back to you. If you make others happy through service, charity and kind acts, you sow happiness like a seed and it will give you the fruit of happiness. If you make others unhappy through harsh words, insult, ill-treatment, cruel acts, oppression etc. you sow unhappiness like a seed and it will give you the fruit of pain, suffering, misery and unhappiness. This is the immutable Law of Karma.

Your actions in the past are responsible for your present condition. Your present actions will shape or mould your future. There is nothing chaotic or capricious in this world. You become good by your good actions and bad by your evil actions.

If you entertain evil thoughts, you must suffer the consequences. You will be in difficulties. You will be surrounded by unfavourable circumstances. You will blame your surroundings and circumstances. Understand the law and live wisely. Entertain noble thoughts. You will be happy always.

Behind the action there are desire and thought. A desire for an object arises in the mind. Then you think how to get it. Then you exert to possess it. Desire, thought and action always go together. They are the three threads, as it were, that are twisted into the cord of Karma.

You sow an action and reap a habit. You sow a habit and reap a character. You sow a character and reap your destiny. Hence destiny is your own make up. You have built it. You can undo it by entertaining noble thoughts, and doing virtuous actions and changing your mode of thinking. Now you are thinking that you are the body, Mr so and so. Now start the anti-current of thought. Think that you are all-pervading immortal Brahman. Brahman you will become. This is an immutable Law.

Every action produces a threefold effect. It gives you an appropriate reward or fruit. It also affects your character. It leaves behind an impression in your mind. This impression will urge you to repeat the act again. The impression will assume the form of a thought-wave in the mind on account of a stimulus either external or internal. An action produces an effect in the world also.

Conduct or behaviour reveals your character. Conduct moulds your character. Cultivation of good conduct needs rigorous discipline and constant vigilance. You will have to watch every thought, word and action. You must be extremely careful when you conduct yourself with others. With all your good intentions you will be carried away by the force of your previous wrong impressions, instincts and impulses. Even highly educated people lack in behaviour. Good behaviour indicates that you have a refined or polished, disciplined mind, real good spiritual culture. The practice of Japa, Pranayama and Mouna or vow of silence will help you to control the impulses etc.

Thought moulds your character. If you entertain noble thoughts, you will develop a noble character; if you entertain evil thoughts, you will develop a base character. This is the immutable Law of nature. Therefore, you can deliberately shape your character by cultivating sublime thoughts. Thought materialises and becomes an action. If you allow the mind to dwell on good, elevating thoughts, you will do naturally good and laudable actions.

A boatman without oars, rudder and sails is carried away helplessly by the winds and currents, but a clever boatman with oars, sails and rudder, ably directs the boat in any direction he likes and reaches the other shore safely. Even so he who knows the Laws of nature, the law of thought, the Law of Karma, the law of cause and effect can sail fearlessly in this ocean of Samsara and reach the other shore of fearlessness and immortality quite safely. He will utilise the helping forces to his best advantage and neutralise the opposing forces skilfully with the help of the knowledge of the laws. Knowledge is a torch-light. Hence knowledge is absolutely indispensable. Ignorance is the greatest sin. An ignorant man becomes a victim or a slave of nature.

Karma is of three kinds, *viz.* Sanchita (accumulated works), Prarabdha (fructifying works) and Kriyamana or Agami (current works). Sanchita is all the accumulated Karmas of the past. Part of it is seen in the character of man, in his tendencies and aptitudes, capacities, inclinations and desires, etc. Tendencies come from this. Prarabdha is that portion of the past Karma which is responsible for the present body. That portion of the Sanchita Karma which influences human life in the present incarnation is called Prarabdha. It is ripe for reaping. It cannot be avoided or changed. It is only exhausted by being experienced. You pay your past debts. Prarabdha Karma is that which has begun and is actually bearing fruit. It is selected out of the mass of the Sanchita Karma. Kriyamana is that Karma which is now being made for the future. It is also called Agami or Vartamana.

In Vedantic literature there is a beautiful analogy. The Bowman has already sent an arrow; it has left his hands. He cannot recall it. He is about to shoot another arrow. The bundle of arrows on the quiver on his back is the Sanchita; the arrow he has shot is Prarabdha and the arrow which he is about to shoot from his bow is Agami. Of these he has perfect control over the Sanchita and Agami, but he must surely work out his Prarabdha. The past which has begun to take effect he has to experience.

There is another beautiful analogy also. The granary represents the Sanchita Karma ; that portion taken from the granary and put in the shop for sale corresponds to Prarabdha ; that which is sold daily represents Agami.

The whole lot of Sanchit Karma is destroyed by attaining knowledge of Brahman or the Eternal. It can be greatly modified by entertaining lofty, divine thoughts and doing virtuous actions. Agami Karma can be destroyed by expiatory rites or Prayaschitta and by removing the idea of agency through Nimitta bhav (instrument in the hands of God) Sakshi bhav (silent witness of the actions of the senses and of the mind).

You have no Bhog-svatantara, but you have Karma svatantara. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says "Karmanyaeva adbhikaraste ma bhaleshu kadachana. Thy business is with the action only, never with its fruits". Janaka and others attained to perfection by action. You can change your character, your thoughts and desires. Man's will is ever free. Through selfishness his will has become impure. He can render his will pure, strong and dynamic by getting rid of his base desires and likes and dislikes. Every soul is like a husbandman who has got a plot of land. The acreage, the nature of the soil, the conditions of weather are all pre-determined. But the husbandman is quite at liberty to till the earth, manure it and get good crops or to allow it to remain as a waste land.

What you are now at present is the result of what you thought and did in the past. What you shall be in the future will be the result of what you think and do now. You find an environment which is best suited to the tendencies you acquired in a former life. You can create better conditions for the future. You can make your Karma what you choose. You can rise to a very high state of perfection. You can become an Indra, you may become a perfect Yogi. You can change your character, thoughts and actions. Therefore Bhishma and Vashishta have placed Purushartha or exertion above destiny.

Selfish Karma leads you to rebirth and that rebirth generates new Karma while working off the old. Get rid of Karma if you wish to get rid of the miseries of rebirth.

Selfless work will not bind you. They will purify your heart and lead to the descent of the divine light and grace. Understand the Law of Karma and Law of cause and effect. Think rightly. Act nobly. Meditate regularly and attain eternal bliss and immortality.

REBIRTH

I.

The doctrine of re-incarnation or transmigration of souls is a fundamental tenet of Hinduism. You will not cease to exist after death. Before this birth you have passed through countless lives. Lord Krishna says in Gita, "O, Arjuna, both you and I have had many births before this, only I know them all, while you do not. Birth is inevitably followed by death and death by rebirth. As a man, casting off worn-out garments taketh new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-out bodies, entereth into others that are new".

The Sanskrit term "Samsara" is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Sri' which means passing. The prefix 'Sam' means intensely. The individual soul passes repeatedly through this world and other subtle higher worlds. This repeated passing of souls (samsriti) is what is really meant by the term "Samsara". This Samsara exists in order that the individual soul may learn to realise himself.

The word "re-incarnation" literally means embodiment again, coming again into a physical body. The individual soul takes again a fleshly covering. The word "Transmigration" means passing from one place to another—passing into a new body.

Upanishads also declare, "Just as a caterpillar which has come to the top of a blade of grass draws itself over to a new blade, so also does the soul draw itself over to a new body after it has put aside its old body". (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad IV, 11) "Just as a goldsmith, having taken a piece of gold, makes another form, new and more beautiful, so also verily the Atma, having cast off this body and having put away Avidya or ignorance, makes another new and more beautiful form". (Brihad. Upanishads). "Like corn, does a mortal ripen; like corn, does he spring to life again". (Kathopanishad).

The doctrine of rebirth is a corollary to the Law of Karma. The differences of disposition that are found between one individual and another must be due to their respective past actions. Past action implies past birth. Further, all your Karmas cannot certainly bear fruit in this life. Therefore, there must be another birth for enjoying the remaining actions. Each soul has a series of births and deaths. Births and deaths will continue till you attain Knowledge of the Imperishable.)

(Good Karma leads to incarnation into higher spheres, bad Karmas into lower.) By virtue is obtained ascent to higher planes; by vice, descent to the lower; from wisdom results beatitude; and bondage from the reverse. So long as Karmas, whether good or bad, are not exhausted, men do not attain Moksha or the final emancipation even in hundreds of Kalpas. (Both good and bad Karmas bind tight the Jiva in their chains. One is a chain of gold, the other is that of iron. Moksha cannot be attained by man, so long as Knowledge of the Eternal is not attained.)

The soul migrates with the astral body or Sūkshma sarira or Linga Deha. This astral body is made up of 19 tattwas or principles viz; five organs of action, five organs of knowledge, five Pranas, mind, intellect, chitta (sub-conscious) and Ahankara or egoism. This subtle body carries with it all sorts of Samskaras or impressions and Vasanas or tendencies of the individual soul. The subtle body moves towards heaven. When the fruits of good Karmas have been exhausted, it gathers for itself a new physical body and reincarnates on this earth-plane.

Those whose conduct has been good attain good births; and those whose conduct has been evil are thrown into sinful wombs or lower births.

When a man who has practised meditation and worship dies, he first goes to light then from light to day, from day to the bright half of the moon, from the bright half of the moon to the six months when the sun goes to the north, from that to the year, from the year to the sun, from the sun to the moon, from the moon to the lightning. When he comes to the sphere of lightning, he meets a person who is not

human. That person leads him to the Karya Brahman or Hiranagarbha. This is the way of the Devas or Devayana.

He who has done works of public utility and alms, first goes to the smoke when he dies, from smoke to night, from night to the dark half of the moon, from the dark half of the moon to the six months when the sun goes to the south and from that he goes to the region of the forefathers, from the world of the forefathers to the ether, from the ether to the moon. He lives there so long as his good works will allow. When the effect of the good works has been exhausted, he comes back to this earth by the same route. He first becomes ether, and then air, and then smoke and then must, then cloud and then falls upon the earth as rain drops. Then he gets into food which is eaten up by man and finally becomes his child.

He passes through the various existences of the mineral kingdom and of the plant and of the animal realms—the Udbhijjah (born of seed) the Swedajah (born of sweat), Andajah (born of eggs), before coming into Jareyujah (viviparous or placental origin)

Man contains within himself infinite possibilities. The magazine of power and wisdom is within him. He has to unfold the divinity within. This is the object of living and dying.

The chains that tie you to this wheel of Samsara or Bhava-chakra or round of births and deaths are your desires. So long as you desire objects of this world, you must come back to this world in order to possess and enjoy them. But when all your desires for the mundane objects cease, then the chains are broken, and you are free. You need not take any more births. You attain Moksha or the final emancipation.

You wander in this Samsara as you think that you are different from the Lord. If you unite yourself with Him through meditation and Yoga you will obtain immortality and eternal bliss. Cut the bonds of Karma through knowledge of the Eternal and enjoy the Supreme peace of Atma, thy innermost Self and Inner Ruler. You will be freed from the round of births and deaths. Freed from sin, freed from passion, you will become a Jivanmukta or liberated sage. You will see the Self in the self and see the Self as all.

II.

A new-born child manifests marks of joy, fear and grief. This is inexplicable unless we suppose that the child perceiving] certain things in this life remembers the corresponding things of the past life. The things which used to excite joy, fear and grief in the past life, continue to do so in this life. The memory of the past proves the previous birth as well as the existence of the soul.

A child, just born, drinks the breast of his mother through the remembrance that he did so in the previous life, as a means, of satisfying hunger. The child's desire for milk in this life is caused by the remembrance of his experience in the previous life. This proves that the child's soul, though it has abandoned a previous body and has taken a new one, remembers the experiences of the previous body.

You do not come into the world in total forgetfulness and in utter darkness. You are born with certain memories and habits acquired in the previous birth. Desires take their origin from previous experiences. We find that none is born without desire. Every being is born with some desires, which are associated with the things enjoyed by him in the past life. The desire proves the existence of his soul in the previous lives.

III

PRAY FOR YOUR RE-BIRTH IN INDIA

Mr. Fua Tongvoo, a Japanese Student of Yoga, is regularly sending me his daily spiritual diary for review, and his mantra note-book also. He is full of dispassion. He thirsts for doing rigorous Yoga Sadhana in seclusion to attain Self-realisation.

(Mr. William Atkinson, Durham, England, is full of Hindu ideas and beliefs.) He also was sending to me spiritual diary for review and mantra notebook. (His Ishta Deva was Lord Siva. He was writing 'OM Nama Siveva' and doing japa of this mantra.) He asked me to send Gerrua or orange-coloured cloth. He wanted to wear holy thread or yagnopavita. He asked me to send elementary books on Sanskrit, as he wished to study Sanskrit. He practised regularly yoga asans and yogic kriyas. He wished to wear Tilak.

Mr Nixon, M. A. (Cantab.), who was a Professor in Lucknow University, has taken Sannyasa. He stays in Uttara Brindavan near Almora. His present name is Sri Krishna Prem. He does kirtan beautifully, wears Tilak. He delivers beautiful lectures in Hindi also. He knows Sanskrit. He is an erudite Scholar. He is unsurpassed in his deep reverence and devotion to Guru.

Mr Alexander, I.M.S., who was an eminent Surgeon in the Medical College Lucknow has also taken Sanvasa. He stays in Uttara Brindavan.

(The members of the Ladies' Section of the Divine Life Society, Riga, Latvia, are full of Hindu thoughts. They repeat 'OM Namo Baghawathe Vasudevaya'. They have intense devotion to Lord Krishna.) They keep His picture in their meditation room. They practise Yoga Asanas and kriyas. They wish to come to India to practise Yoga.

(Rev. Victor Seplevenko, Sofia, Bulgaria, has Lord Siva as his Ishta Devata. He writes 'OM Nama Sivaya' mantra. He does japa of this mantra. He meditates on Lord Siva's form.) He was sending me his spiritual diary and mantra note-book regularly. Sri Sivarama Krishna Iyer, Divine Life Society, Trichinopoly, is showing to the public his mantra note-book as a specimen and exhorting the people to practise mantra writing. He is telling to the people "A Westerner is very keen in writing 'OM Nama Sivaya' mantra. Why not you also practise this method? He is setting an example to you. In truth you should set an example to the Westerners."

(Mr Boris Sacharow, a Russian Student of Yoga is essentially a Hindu.) He knows Sanskrit. He knows all Hatha Yogic Kriyas. (He recites Kali mantra and worships Mother Kali.)

§ A study of the lives, habits and ways of these people conclusively proves that there is rebirth. (All these persons have lived in India in their previous birth. They were positively Hindus in their last incarnation. Thoughts and Samskaras (impressions) never die. They cling to the sub-conscious mind and the Linga-Sairia (astral body). They follow the soul from birth to birth till he gets liberation or Moksha. They are destroyed or fried *in toto* by Brahma-gyana or knowledge of the Eternal.

If you are endowed with spiritual Samskaras obtained through the practice of yoga in last birth, you will be placed in congenial surroundings with spiritual vibrations like Rikhiresh and other Himalayan retreats on the banks of Ganges in the company of Rishis, Seers, Sages and Yogis. You will continue your yoga course vigorously and attain the summum bonum or the final beatitude. How elevating is Ganges! How inspiring is Himalayas! Sacred India is the only land which abounds with Rishis and Yogis. It is the only land where people have dispassion, discrimination, renunciation and Self-realisation alone as the goal and where every atom vibrates with "Sivoham". Pray to the Lord again and again to give you birth in India on the banks of Ganges. Blessed indeed is that man who is born in India, and who is practising Yoga on the banks of Ganges. Glory to Ganges! Glory to Holy India, the Sacred Bharata Varsha.

AVATARA

Avatara is the descent of God on earth for the ascent of man. Lord Krishna says "Though unborn, the Imperishable Self and also the Lord of all beings, brooding over nature, which is Mine own, yet I am born through My own Power. Whenever there is decay of righteousness, then I Myself come forth, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age" (Chap. IV, 6, 7, 8).

The Bhagawatas had their own scriptures called the Pancharatna Agamas which expounded the cult of Vasudeva and which were therefore looked upon by them as being equal to the Upanishads. Their religion was based on God's Grace to erring humanity. It therefore greatly emphasised the doctrine of Avatara or incarnation and popularised the immortal stories which were afterwards collected together in the Vishnu Purana, Hari Vamsa and the Bhagavata Purana. If you study these books you will clearly know about the Glory of Lord Krishna.

You can attain God-realisation through worship of Avataras like Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. Many have already attained God-realisation: Tukka Ram, Ram Das,

Sur Das, Mira Bai, Tulsidas have seen God face to face. Their powerful writings bespeak of their high spiritual attainments.

There are Poorna Avatars or full incarnations, Amsa avatars (partial incarnations), Avesh Avatars, etc. Lord Krishna has sixteen rays. He is a Poorna Avatara. He did not take birth like human beings and die. He made his appearance and disappeared. He still exists. There are His *nitva lilas* in *Go-Loka* or Celestial *Brindavan*. The body of Avatars is made of *Sudha sattva*. Avatars have *Divya* or *aprakritic* bodies. Their bodies are not made up of human flesh.

It is only the ignorant, deluded souls who speak against the doctrine of Avatara, who say that Lord Krishna was a human being only. They have not studied properly the holy scriptures. They are tamasic persons with little understanding. They cavil and carp. Lord Krishna says, "The evil-doing, the deluded, the vilest men, they come not to Me, they whose wisdom is destroyed by illusion, who have embraced the nature of demons. "Such is their fate."

Friends! Worship Lord Rama or Lord Krishna at all times with all your heart and with all your mind. Glorify Him in your heart. He will soon reveal Himself to you and you will feel His Presence. You will attain immortality and eternal bliss. Glory to Avatars! Glory to Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, the Avatars of Lord Vishnu! May their blessings be upon you all !!!

CHAPTER V

HINDU RITUALS

SANDHYOPASANA.

Sandhyopasana is the daily religious practice of the Hindus whose investiture with the holy thread has been performed. The Arghyapradana to the Sun and the meditation and recitation of Gayatri form the heart of the ceremony. Sandhyavandan must be performed at the proper Sandhya. Then only the performer can derive much merit. Sandhya is the meeting point of two periods of time. There is a special manifestation of force at Sandhyas. This force disappears when the Sandhya is past. Every Brahmachari, every householder must perform it every day. If he fails to perform it, there is Pratyavaya-dosha or the sin of omission. He loses his Brahma-tejas. Upasana includes worship, meditation and the daily Sandhya. Sandhya should be performed by all followers of the Sanatana Dharma.

The important features of this ceremony are - (1) Achamana or sipping of water with recitation of mantras Achuthaya namaha, Anantaya namaha, Govindaya namaha and Marjana or sprinkling water on the body. This purifies the mind and the body. (2) Pranayama or control of breath. This will steady the wandering mind. (3) Aghamarshana. This is the expiation of sins of many births. (4) Worship of Sun God or Surya-Arghya (oblations of water to Sun God.) and Upasthana. (5) Silent recitation of Gayatri.

Sandhya is a Nitya Karma or an action that is to be done daily. Sandhya is an obligatory duty to be performed daily for self-purification and self-improvement. He who does Sandhya daily has Brahma-tejas or lustre in his face.

The first part up to Arghya consists of hymns addressed to water and its benefits. The sprinkling of water on the face and head and touching the organs of perception with wetted fingers (the mouth, nose, eyes, ears, chest, shoulders, head etc.) are meant to stimulate the nerve centres and wake up the dormant powers of the body.

The Arghya drives the demons who obstruct the path of the rising sun. Esoterically lust, anger and greed are the demons who obstruct the intellect from rising up. The intellect also is the Sun.

The second part of Sandhya consists of pranayama and japa of Gayatri. The third part of Sandhya is the Suryopasthanam. It is a prayer for forgiveness, mercy and grace. The prayer is, "Let me not go down to the earthly house. Have mercy O Lord! My strength was very weak O Lord! I did wrong actions. Have mercy, O Lord!" These are Vedic hymns addressed to the Sun in the morning, noon and evening. The sun is the intellect in man. Ignorance is the night. Knowledge is the light. When you rise up from the darkness of ignorance, when the eye of intuition is opened through the grace of Gayatri, the Blessed Mother of the Vedas, you attain eternal bliss, supreme Peace and immortality.

It is that Divine light which dispels delusion and the darkness of ignorance. It is that adorable splendour with which the world is glowing. It is that holy lustre which graciously fills the heart of a devotee with eternal bliss. It is this Supreme light which the aspirant craves from God through the Gayatri Mantra. He begs of God that knowledge for his realisation.

Our young college students who are under the influence of wrong Samskaras and wrong education and evil company have forgotten all about the glory and high efficacy of Sandhya. They are not doing Sandhya. Sandhya has no meaning for them. They have become Godless men. They want laboratory tests, scientific proofs for the usefulness of Sandhya, before they begin to do Sandhya. It must be supported by the statements of western scientists. The words of ancient Rishis will not appeal to them. What a great degraded state!

O young students! Do not ruin yourself by neglecting Sandhya. Regular performance of Sandhya will give you success in life and material and spiritual prosperity, good health and long life, purity of heart and help you to attain God-realisation. Do it from now at least. Yet there is hope for you. Wake up. Be sincere.

SANDHYOPASANA-VIDHI

{ Sandhyopasana literally means "Worship at the junction time." It is a prayer and worship offered to the Lord at the junction (Sandhi) of the night and morning, forenoon and afternoon and in the junction of evening and night. Properly understood, the whole Sandhya is an earnest prayer addressed to the Lord to forgive all one's sins, committed during one's routine, daily activities and to bestow illumination and Grace.

Man naturally wants to realise the Truth. He wants to know the secret of the creation. In this connection, Scriptures emphatically declare, "Only at the moment, when all doubts are cleared, ignorance is destroyed, hypocrisy and cruelty is rent asunder and when a man sees Him in the Abode of his heart, the Real and Ultimate Truth is revealed."

Sandhya-vijnana or the Science of Sandhya is an exact science to attain success in the realm of Truth. One need not have any kind of superstition to learn this Divine Science. One need not prove its greatness. Its greatness, its Glory is open truth. Even the materialistic Society of to-day agrees with the Truth of Sandhya-vijnana. In Scriptures it is laid, "Brahmanhood is the tree, Sandhya is its root, Vedas are its branches, religious acts are its leaves. Therefore take care of its root, i.e., Sandhya." Now the Glory of Sandhya is very clear. Sandhya is absolutely necessary for a man, who is treading the path of Truth. Moreover a Brahmin should perform his regular Sandhya, "*Aharaha Sandhyamupaseeta*" i.e., Brahmin should perform regularly his daily Sandhya at any cost.

According to the Hindu Shastras a Brahmin a Kshatriya or a Vaisya will get hell, if he doesn't perform three times Sandhya-upasana (Traikalika Sandhya) daily. It is for the purpose of Sandhya only, the law of Yajnopaveeta-Samsakara is laid down in Manusmriti, "Brahmin in his eighth year, Kshatriya in his eleventh year, Vaisya in his twelfth year is fit to be given Yajnopaveeta." Because only after this particular Samsakara he is supposed to be worthy to worship Sandhya and take to Vedic rites. He

should keep himself pure internally and externally. He can nicely understand the sacred glory of this Divine Science. A man who performs his daily Sandhya, according to the prescribed rules at the appointed time as laid down in the Scriptures, attains purity, success in his every effort. He becomes powerful as well as calm.

If you want to learn this Science, you must be careful about your diet. Take regular and light Sattvic food. Man is much influenced by his diet. See the difference between a small lion and a big elephant. You will be able to improve yourself according to your diet. Idleness is due to variety of rich diet only. Therefore be strict in your daily diet. You will be ever active and strong.

Now comes the moulding of character. Practise the virtues Ahimsa, Satyam, Brahmacharya, Asteya, Aparigraha, Saucha, Santosha, Tapas, Swadhyaya, Ishwar-pranidhana (Non-injury, celibacy, non-stealing, non-acceptance, purity, contentment, penance, study and surrender unto the Lord). Be strict in your Sandhya. Let there be rain or wind. Even if the Pralaya comes, don't leave it half-done. Many people say that they haven't got time to perform Sandhya. They have to attend several functions. This is due to their weakness and lack of good Samskaras. They do not know the glory of this Divine Science. If they see, one of their friends, sitting on the banks of the river and performing Sandhya, they will begin to shout or they will play some sort of mischief. But these poor creatures do not know, what secret is hidden behind this Sandhya. The secret of secrets, is hidden in this sacred performance. That is why ancient Rishis say, "One who doesn't perform daily Sandhya, is a real animal."

A man who performs Sandhya, doesn't care about his sitting pose. He sits in any posture. This is not much beneficial. He should daily sit in a perfect posture, Padmasan or Sukhasan facing to the particular direction. As far as possible, he must finish his Sandhya in one sitting. He must have perfect mastery over Asan. Then he will have concentration in his Sandhya.

You must do your Sandhya with faith and devotion. Mere repetition will not bring much good. Pray from the core of your heart to the Lord to forgive your sins. Sandhya is a combination of Japa, Upasana, Swadhyaya, meditation, concentration, asan, pranayama, etc. Regular Sandhya cuts the chain of old Samskaras and changes everybody's old situation entirely. It brings purity, Atma-bhav, devotion and sincerity.

Now take strict resolve from this very moment, to be regular in your daily Sandhya, even under many distractions and obstacles. Begin it from this very moment. Don't delay. Reduce your daily activities. Talk little. Do not nux much. You will get plenty of time for your Sandhya. Here I am giving the method of Sandhya. It will be immensely beneficial to you all. Get up at 4 a.m., eat Sattvic meal, speak truth, observe Brahmacharya, etc. May you follow the rules of Sandhya! May you realise the glory of Sandhya-vijnana and be free from all tribulations and torments.

TRAIKALIKA SANDHYA

Get up in the early morning. Answer the calls of nature. Clean yourself nicely. Take bath. Wear a clean cloth. In cold season you can have other upper clothes too. Sit comfortably either on Siddhasan, or Padmasan or Sukhasan. Sit on a Kushasan. Face the east. Meditate on your Ishtam. Chant the following Names.

(१) केशवाय नमः (२) नारायणाय नमः (३) माधवाय नमः (४) गोविन्दाय नमः (५) विष्णवे नमः (६) मधुसूदनाय नमः (७) त्रिविक्रमाय नमः (८) वामनाय नमः (९) श्रीधराय नमः (१०) हृषीकेशाय नमः (११) पद्मनाभाय नमः (१२) दामोदराय नमः.

1. Kesavaya Namah. 2. Narayanaya Namah. 3. Madhavaya Namah. 4. Govindaya Namah. 5. Vishnave Namah. 6. Madhusudanaya Namah. 7. Trivikramaya Namah. 8. Vamanaya Namah. 9. Sridharaya Namah. 10. Hrishikesaya Namah. 11. Padmanabhaya Namah. 12. Damoderaya Namah.

Do Achamanam (*the act of sipping a little water from the palm of the hand by way of purification before religious ceremonies*). Sprinkle the water with your right fingers, on your face and body, repeat this Mantra —

अपवित्रः पवित्रो वा सर्वावस्थांगतोऽपि वा

यः स्मरेत् पुण्डरीकाक्षं स बाह्याभ्यन्तरः शुचिः ॥२॥

Apavitrah pavitro va sarvavasthangetopi va
Yah smaretpundareekaksham sa Bahyabhyantarah
suchih (u)

After this take little water and read the Sankalpa as follows —

ॐ : अद्यैतस्य ब्रह्मणोऽद्वि द्वितीय परार्धे श्रोश्वैतवाराह
कल्पे वैवस्वत मन्वंतरे अष्टाविंशतितमं जम्बुद्वीपे भरतखण्डे
कालियुगे कलिप्रथमे चरणे भारतवर्षे कुमारिकाखण्डे आर्य्या-
वर्तैकदेशान्तर्गते पुण्यक्षेत्रे अमुकदेशे अमुकसंवत्सरे अमुकायने
अमुकऋतो अमुकमासे अमुकपक्षे अमुकतिथौ अमुकवासरे
अमुक गोत्रोत्पन्नः अमुकशर्माहं प्रातः सन्ध्योपासनं करिष्ये,
(मध्याह्ने) मध्याह्न सन्ध्योपासनं करिष्ये, (सायं) सायं
सन्ध्योपासनं करिष्ये (इतिवदेत्) । ३॥

Om Advaitasya Brahmanohni dwiteeva parardhhe
Sriswetavarahakalpe Vaivaswata Manwantare Ashtavimsatitame
Janibudweepe Bharatakhande kalyuge kaliprathamam-
charane bharatavarshhe Kumarikakhande Aryavarteika-
desantaragate punyakshetre amukadese amukasamvats are
amukayane amukaritou amukamase amukapakshe
amukatithou amukavasare amukagotrotpannah amukasarna-
ham Pratahsandhyopasanam karishye) in the mid-day say
(Madhyahnasandhyopasanam karishye) In the evening say
(Sayam sandhyopasanam karishye) (m).

Then take little more water Chant the following
Vinyoga Mantra and offer the water on the earth:—

ॐ : पृथ्वीति मन्त्रस्य मेरुपृष्ठ ऋषिः सुतलं छन्दः कूर्मो
देवता आसने विनियोगः ॥४॥

Om Prithweeti mantrasya meruprishtha Rishih sutalam chandah Koormo Devata asane viniyogah) (iv)

After this performance, repeat the following Mantra and sprinkle little water on your Asan:—

ॐ : पृथिव त्वया धृता लोका देवि त्वं विष्णुना धृता ॥

त्वं च धारय मां देवि पवित्रं कुरु चासनम् ॥५॥

Om Prithwi twaya dhrita loka Devi twam Vishnuuna dhrita, Twam cha dharaya mam Devi pavitram kuruchasanam (v)

Chant Gayatri with Om Tie your Choti (tuft of hair). Read the following Mantra.—

ब्रह्मनामसहस्रेण शिवनामशतेन च ।

विष्णुनामसहस्रैस्तु शिखाबन्धं करोम्याहम् ॥६॥

Brahmanamasahasrena Sivanamasatena cha,
Vishnumamasahasraistu shikhabandham karomyaham.

(vi).

Face to the North or east Do Achamanam and wash the hands.

Again do Achamanam, repeating this Mantra --

ॐ : ऋतञ्चसत्यञ्चाभीद्धात्पसोऽध्यजायत ततो रात्र्यजायत

ततः समुद्रोऽर्णवः ॥ समुद्रादर्णवाद्धि संवत्सरोऽजायत ॥

अहोरात्राणि विदधद्विश्वस्य मिषतो वशी ॥ सूर्याचन्द्रमसौ

धाता यथा पूर्वमकल्पयत् ॥ दिवश्चपृथिवीं चान्तरिक्षमथो

स्वः ॥७॥

Om Ritancha satyanchabhiddhattapasodhvjayata tato ratryajavata tatah samudornavah Samudradarnavaadedhi samvatsarjayata. Ahoratram vidadhat visvasva mishato vasi Sooryachandramasou dhatazvathaaupoorvamakalpavat. Divancha prithuveem chantarikshamatho swah (vi).

Again repeat Gayatri. Sprinkle the water around yourself.

Take four times water in the hand. Chant the following Mantras respectively and offer the water on the earth

ॐ :कारस्य ब्रह्मा ऋषिर्गायत्रीच्छन्दोऽग्निर्देवता शुक्लवर्णः
सर्वकर्मरम्भे विनियोगः ॥१॥

ॐ : सप्तव्याहृतीनां प्रजापतिर्ऋषिर्गायत्र्युष्णिगनुष्टुब्बहृती
पङ्क्तित्रिष्टुब्जगत्यश्छन्दांस्यग्निवाय्वादित्य बृहस्पतिवरुणोद्
विश्वेदेवा देवता अनादिष्ट प्रायश्चित्ते प्राणायामे विनियोगः ॥२॥

ॐ : गायत्र्या विश्वामित्रर्ऋषिर्गायत्रीछन्दः सविता देवता
अग्निर्मुखमुपनवे प्राणायामे विनियोगः ॥३॥

ॐ : शिरसः प्रजापतिर्ऋषिर्लिपदा गायत्रीछन्दो ब्रह्माग्नि-
र्वायुः सूर्यो देवता यजुः प्राणायामे विनियोगः ॥४॥

1. Omkarasya Brahma Rishirgayatriecchandognurdevata
suklo varnah sarvakarmarambhe vimivogah. (I)

2. Omsaptavyahritenam prajapatirrishirgayatryushnuga-
nushtubhbrihatee panktiritstutub jagetva schandamsvagnivav-
vadyabrihaspativarunendraviswedeva devata anadishitapraya-
chitte pranayame vimivogah (II)

3. Omgavatrvaa viswamitrarishirgayatriebendah savita
devata agnur mukhamupanayane pranayame vimivogah. (III)

4. Omsirasah prajapatirishistipada Gavatriecchando
brahmaagnirvayuh sooryo devata yajuh pranaye vimivogah.
(IV).

After doing this meditate on the respective Rishis of
the above Mantras Sit in steady posture Be calm Then
do these prescribed Pranayamas —

1 Do Purak (Inbale) Meditate on Nabhichakra
Try to bring out the image of Sri Vishnu with His Divine
Form. Chant thrice this Pranayama Mantra. Gavatri
with its Shivas —

ॐ भूः, ॐः भुवः, ॐः सुवः, ॐः महः, ॐः जनः,
ॐः तपः, ॐः सत्यम् । ॐः तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यम् भर्गो देवस्य
धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥ ॐः आपोऽयोतीरसोऽमृतं
ब्रह्मभूभुवः स्वरास ॥६॥

Om Bhuh, Om Bhuvah, Om Swah, Om Sahah, Om Janah, Om Tapah, Om Satvam, Om Tatsaviturvarenyam bhargo devasya dheemahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayat. Om Apoj-yotirasonritam Brahmabhaorbhuvah swarom (IX).

2 Do Kumbhak (restrain) Meditate on the red-coloured Brahma with four hands in your heart. Chant the above mentioned Pranayama mantras three times as before.

3 Do Rechak (Exhale) Meditate on the white-coloured and three-eyed Lord Siva in your forehead. Again chant the same Pranayama mantra as before. Do it nine times.

Take water and chant the following Vinyoga Mantra. It is to be chanted only in the morning ---

ॐ सूर्यश्चमेति ब्रह्माक्षपिः प्रकृतश्च्छन्दः : सूर्यो देवता
अपामुपस्पर्शने विनियोगः ॥१०॥

Om Sooryaschameti brhma akshapi prakritischandah soorvo devata apamupasarsane Vinyogah (X)

Chanting the above mantra, do Achamanam thrice, repeating the following Mantras ---

ॐ सूर्यश्चमा मन्युश्च मन्युपतयश्च मन्युकृतेभ्यः पापे-
भ्यो रक्षतां यद्रात्र्या पापमकार्षं मनसा वाचा हस्ताभ्यां
पद्भ्यामुदरेण शिरसा रात्रिस्तदवलुम्पतु यत्किञ्चिद् दुरितं
मयि, इदमहममृतयोनी सूर्ये ज्योतिषि जुहोमि स्वाहा ॥११॥

Om Sooryaschama manyuscha manyupatayascha manvukritabhyah paapebhyo rakshantam yadratrya paapamakaarsham manasaa vaachaa hastabhyam padbhyamu-darena sishna ratristadavalumpatu vatkinchidduritam mayi. Idamahamamritayonou soorye jyotishi juhomi swahah (XI.)

This mantra is to be chanted in the morning only. For mid-day and evening it is given below ---

MID-DAY SANDHYOPASANA

At mid-day, facing the sun, chant this Vinyoga Mantra:—

ॐ आपः पुनन्त्विति विष्णुर्नृशिरनुष्टुप्छन्दः आपो
देवता अपामुपस्पर्शने विनियोगः ॥१२॥

Om Apah punantviti vishnurishiranushtupchandah apo devata apo devata apamupasarsane vinyogah. (XII.)

Again repeat this Mantra:—

ॐ: आपः पुनन्तु पृथिवीं पृथिवी पूता पुनातुमां॥ पुनन्तु
ब्रह्मणस्पतिर्ब्रह्मपूता पुनातु माम् ॥ यदुच्छिष्टमभोज्यं च
यद्वा दुश्चरितंमम सर्वं पुनन्तु मामापोऽसतां च प्रति ब्रह्म
स्वाहा ॥१३॥

Om Apah punantu prithiveem prithivee poota punatu
mam punantu brahmanaspatirbrahma pootapunatu mam
Yaducchushtamabhojyam cha yadwa duscharitam manna
sarvam punantu mamaposatam chapratigrahgum Swaha
(XIII.)

Do Achamanam Do the Sandhya, as in the morning,
excluding mantras No (X) and (XI).

EVENING SANDHYOPASANAM

In the evening do your Sandhya as in the morning ex-
cluding mantras No. X and XI. Only repeat the Viniyoga
Mantras as follows:—

ॐ: अग्निश्चमेति रुद्रश्चपिः प्रकृतिश्छन्दोऽग्निर्देवता अपामु-
पस्पृशंने विनियोगः ॥१४॥

Om Agnischameti rudrarishih prakritischandognirdevata
apamupasparsane viniyogah. (XIV.)

After performance, chanting the following Mantra, do
Achamanam:—

ॐ: अग्निश्चमा मन्युश्च मन्युपतयश्च मन्युकृतेभ्यः
पापेभ्यो रक्षन्तां यदद्वा पापमकाशम् ॥ मनसा वाचा
हस्ताभ्यां पद्भ्यामुदरेण शिरसा अहस्तदवलुम्पतु यत्किञ्चिद्
दुरितं मयि । इदमहं माममृतयोनी सत्ये ज्योतिषि जुहोमि
स्वाहा ॥१५॥

Om Agnischamaa manyuscha manyupatayascha
manyukritebhyah paapebhyo rakshantam yadahna paapa-
makaarsham. Manasaa vachaa has taabhyam padbhyamudar-
ena sisua ahastadavalumpatu yatkinchidudarintam mayi.
Idamaham mamamritayonou satye jyotishi juhomi swaha.
(XV.)

Again chant this viniyoga Mantra.

ॐ: अन्तरश्चरसीति तिरश्चीन ऋषिरनुष्टुप्छन्दः आपो
देवता अपामुपस्पर्शने विनियोगः ॥१६॥

Om Antascharaseeti tirascheena rishiranushtupchandah
apo devata apamupasparsane vinivogah (XVI)

Do Achamanam thrice, wash your hands Then chant:

ॐ: अन्तरश्चरसि भूतेषु गुहायां विश्वतोमुखः । त्वं यज्ञ-
स्त्वं वषट्कार आपोज्योती रसोऽमृतं ब्रह्मभूभुवः स्वरोम् ॥१७॥

Om Antascharasi Bhooteshu guhavam viswatomukhah.
Twam vajnastwam vashatkar aapo jyotirasomritam
brahmabhoorbhuvah swarom (XVII)

Now stand up. Chant Gayatri and give three Arghyas (offering of water) to the Lord Sun. Repeating this Viniyoga Mantra, meditate on Lord Sun and Perform Upasthan — The performance of Upstham is as follows:—

ॐ: उद्वयमित्यस्य हिरण्यस्तूप ऋषिरनुष्टुप्छन्दः सूर्यो
देवता सूर्योपस्थानं विनियोगः ॥१॥

ॐ: उद्वयन्तमसस्परिस्वः पश्यन्त उत्तरम् ॥ देवं देवत्रा
सूर्यमगन्म ज्योति रुतमम् ॥१॥

ॐ: उदुत्यमित्यस्य प्रस्कण्व ऋषिर्गायत्रीछन्दः सूर्यो
देवता सूर्योपस्थाने विनियोगः ॥२॥

ॐ: उदुत्यं जातवेदसं देवं वहन्ति केतवः ॥ दशो वशवाय
सूर्यम् ॥२॥

ॐ: चित्रमित्यस्य कौत्स ऋषिलिष्टुप्छन्दः सूर्योदेवता
सूर्योपस्थाने विनियोगः ॥३॥

ॐ: चित्रन्देवानामुदगादनीकश्चक्ष मित्रस्यवरुणस्याग्नेः ॥
आप्राद्यावापृथिवीऽअन्तरिक्षं, सूर्यआत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च
॥३॥

ॐ: तच्चक्षुरित्यक्षरातीतपुरउच्छिषच्छन्दोदध्यंगार्थवर्णकृषिः
सूर्यो देवता सूर्योपस्थाने विनियोगः ॥४॥

ॐ: तच्चक्षुर्देवहितपुरस्ताच्छुक्रमुच्चरत् पश्येमशरदः शतश्रो
वेम शरदः शत शृणुयाम शरदः शतं प्रब्रवाम शरदः
शतमदीनाः स्याम शरदः शतमभूयश्च शरदः शतात् ॥४॥

Om Udwayamityasva huranyastooparishuranushtupchandahh
sooryo devata sooryopasthane vinivogah (I)

Om Udwayantamasaspariswah pasyanta-uttaram Devam
devatrasoorvamaganmajyotiruttamam. (I)

Om Uduyamityasva praskanva rishirgayatrichandah sooryo
devata sooryopasthane vinivogah. (II)

Om Uduvam jaatavedasam devam vahanti ketavah. Drishe
viswava soorvam (II)

Om Chitramitvasya koutsa rishistrishtupchandah sooryo
devata sooryopasthane vinivogah (III)

Om Chitradevanamudagadaneekanchakshurmitrasavarun-
asyaagneh. Apraadvaawaaprihivee-antarikshagumsoor-
yaatmaajagatastasthushaseha (III)

Om Tachchakshurityaksharaateetapura-ushnikchando
dadhyangatharvanarishih sooryo devata sooryopasthane
vinivogah. (IV)

Om Tachchakshurdevahitam purastachchukramuchcharat.
Pasyemasaradah satanjeevema saradah satam srinuyaamasa
radah satam prabravama saradah satamadeenaah syama
saradah satanubhooyascha saradah satat (IV)

According to the above mentioned performance of
Upasathana, sit down as usual Chant this Mantra, and do
anganyasa as described below.—

ॐ: हृदयाय नमः । ॐ: भूः शिरसे स्वाहा । ॐ: भुवः
शिखाय वीषट् ॥ ॐ: स्वः कवचाय हुब् । ॐ: भूर्भुवः
स्वः नेत्राभ्यां वीषट् । ॐ: भूर्भुवः स्वः अस्त्राय फट् ॥१६॥

Om Hridayaaya namah. Om Bhcoh sirase swaha. Om
bhuvah shikhaeyei voushat. Om swah kavachaaya hum.
Om Bhoorbhuvah swah netrabhyam voushat. Om Bhoorbhuy-
avh swah astriaaya phat. (XIX)

Do these performances respectively —

(Touch the heart), (Touch the head), (Touch the Shukha),
(Touch both the arms), (Touch the eyes), (Snap the fingers)

Again chant these Mantras—

ॐ: कारस्य ब्रह्मा ऋषिर्गायत्री छन्दोऽग्निर्देवता शुक्लोवर्ण
जपे विनियोगः ॥१॥

ॐ: त्रिव्याहृतीनां प्रजापतिर्ऋषिर्गायत्र्युष्णिगनुष्टुप्छन्दः
स्यग्निर्वायवदित्या देवता जपे विनियोगः ॥२॥

ॐ: गायत्र्या विश्वामित्र ऋषिर्गायत्रीछन्दः सविता देवताऽ
ग्निर्मुखमुपनयने जपे विनियोगः ॥३॥

Omkarasva Brahma rishirgavatri chandognirdevata
suklovarnah jape vinivogah (I)

Omtrivvyahritiebaam prajaapati rishirgayatryushnigenush
tupchandaamsvagnirvaayavaditvaa devataah jape vinivogah,
(II)

Om Gavatrya viswamitra rishirgai vatrichlandah s.vita
devataagnirmukhamupanavane jape vinivogah (III)

Repeat this Sloka, then meditate on Gayatri, folding
your hands —

ॐ. श्वेतवर्णा समुद्दिष्टा कौशेयवसना तथा ।

श्वेतैर्विलेपनः पुष्पैरलंकारैश्च भूषिता ॥१॥

आदित्य मण्डलस्था च ब्रह्मलोक गताऽथवा ।

अक्षसूत्र धरा देवी पद्मासनगता शुभा ॥२॥

Om Swetavarnaa samuddishtha kouseyavasanaa tathaa
Swetairvilepanai pushpairalankaraishe bhooshita (i)
Adityamandalastha cha Brahmlokegataathavaa.

Akshasootradharra devee Padmasanagatra subha (ii)

After meditation, take a little water in the hand. Recite
the following Viniyoga Mantras and offer the water to the
earth.—

ॐ: तेजोसीति देवीऋषयः—शुक्रं दैवतं गायत्रीछन्दो
गायत्र्यावाहने विनियोगः ॥२॥

Om Tejoseeti devec rishayah sukrani daivatam gayatri-
chhando gavatryaavaahane vimyogah (XXII).

Now recite this Mantra for Gayatri Avahana —

ॐ: तेजोसि शुक्रमस्यमृतमसि धामनामासि । प्रियं देवाना-
मनाधृष्टंदेवयजनमसि ॥२३॥

O Tejosi sukramasvamritamasi dhaananaamaasi
Privam devanaamanaadhrishtam devavajanamasi (XXIII)

Then do Upasthana with this Mantra —

ॐ: गायत्र्यस्येकपदीद्विपदीत्रिपदी चतुष्पद्यपदसि नहि
पद्यसे नमस्ते तुरीयाय दर्शनाय पदाय परोरजसे सावदो
माप्रापत् ॥२४॥

(तत गायत्रो जपेत्)

Om Gavatryasvekapadeedwipadeetripadee chatushi-
padvapedasi nahi padvase namaste tureevaava darsanarva
padaaya parorajase saavado-maapraapat (Then do Japa)
(XXIV).

Now sit nicely Begin the Japa of Gayatri One who
does Japa at Sandhya times with faith and devotion will be
purified like Mother Ganges He will get all Divine Airwaves
Gayatri is given below.—

ॐ: भूभुवः स्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो
या नः प्रचोदयात् ॥२५॥

Om Bhoorbhuvah swah tat saviturvarenyam bhargo
devasya dheemahi dhiyo vo nah prachodayat (XXV)

After finishing the Japa say, (Devi mamaaparaadham
kshamaswa swasthanam gachcha, देविममापराधं क्षमस्व
स्वस्थानं गच्छ) and do Pradakshina. Thus finish the daily
Sandhya Vidhi. Then perform Gayatri Japa as much as you

can. This is the most important part of Sandhya. You can do Japa of your Ishta Mantra also. If you want, you can read Aditya-Hridayam, Vishnu-sahasranama, Gita, Devi-Stotras and other religious Scriptures. Vedadhyayana and Swadhyaya of any religious book can be done with Sandhya. After finishing Sandhya, repeat this Sloka and dedicate all performance to the Almighty God without a tinge of egotism.

कायेनवाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्बाबुध्यात्मना वाप्रकृतिस्वभावात् !

करोमि यद्यत् सकलम् परस्मै नारायणायेति समर्पयामि । २६॥

Kayena vacha manasendriyairvabudhyatmana va prakriti swabhavat Karomi yadyat sakalam parasmai narayanayati samarpayami (1XXVI)

This Sandhya-vidhi will not take more than ten or fifteen minutes. If at all you do it slowly, it may take half an hour. Devote half an hour in this religious Sandhya Karma. Take it as your compulsory duty of the day. It is more important than your eating or talking. It will purify your mind. It will give you peace of mind. It will give you good health. If you become habituated, you will feel more joy, more pleasure, more divine illumination. Sandhya will bring Divine Splendour to you. You can lessen your social activities, evening walks, morning sleep. Go to bed at 10 p.m. and get up at 4 a.m. Give up unnecessary talk then you will have plenty of time for your Sadhana and prayer. Finish it before sunrise. See how comfortably and peacefully you can do the daily activities.

Sandhya will make you Immortal. I have given you the substance of Sandhya. You can easily get it by heart. Do it with intense sincerity. God will bless you. He will come to protect you at your distress. Sandhya is a Swadhyaya. Sandhya is Upasana. Sandhya is meditation. Sandhya is concentration. Feel it practically. Taste the sweetness of this Divine Nectar. If all people sit at a time for their daily Sandhya, in every place, in every river, in every room and everywhere the atmosphere will be undoubtedly changed with this Divine Vibration. There will be no sin, no misery,

no impurity, no evil traits. All will become free from worldly clutches.

May God give you the mind to perform daily Sandhya at any cost. May the Divine Science named as Sandhya Vijnana bestow purity, immense joy and Immortality on you !

THE TEN SCRIPTURAL SAMSKARAS

The rites that pertain to the stages of life of man are called Samskaras. The Samskaras are purificatory rites which sanctify the life of the Hindu. They give a spiritual touch to the important events in the life of the individual from conception to creation. They mark the important stages of a man's life. Just as the outline of a picture is lighted up slowly with the filling in of many colours, so also is Brahmanya with scriptural Samskaras. There are the Samskaras of childhood, of boyhood, of manhood, and of old age and death.

There are fifty-two Samskaras. Among these, ten are important. The ten principal and generally recognised Samskaras are—Garbhadhanam, Punsavanam, Simantonayanam, Jatakarma, Namakaranam, Annaprashanam, Chudakaranam, Upanayanam, Samavartanam and Vivahah. Of these ten, only some are now practised. Some of the Samskaras pertain to infantile life and early childhood. Some are ceremonies which may be performed daily or on special occasions. The whole life of the Hindu is thus protected from conception to cremation, from the cradle to the grave.

The Garbhadhanam sanctifies the creative act. The husband prays fervently from the core of his heart that a child may be conceived. He repeats sacred mantras during Ritu Santi ceremony or nuptials. The new child is conceived amidst the vibration of mantras. Good impressions are impressed in the brain cells of the embryo. For a real Hindu who is endowed with pure intellect and right understanding the sexual union is not for the sake of mere enjoyment. He utilises the divine creative, vital energy for the formation of a human body. Husband and wife should be cheerful and pious when they have intercourse. When their minds are perturbed or agitated, when there is anger

and hatred, they should avoid copulation. They should study holy scriptures. If they have the image of Arjuna, they will have a chivalrous and wise son. If they have the image of Lord Buddha they will bring forth a son with mercy and other good virtues. If they have the image of Dhanwantri they will get a son who will turn out to be a reputed Ayurvedic Doctor. If they think of Surya or Sun God they will bring forth a lustrous son with splendour and effulgence.

In the third month the Pumsavanam is performed with Mantras. The food sheath and the vital sheath of the child are formed. The Simantonayanam is performed at the seventh month with recitation of Veda Mantras. This protects the mother from evil influences and bestows health to the child. These three Samskaras protect the mother and the child. The body of the child develops nicely. The harmonious vibrations set up by the recitation of Mantras and the performance of the ceremony help in shaping the body of the child beautifully.

The next Samskara, the ceremony performed immediately after the birth of the child is the Jata Karma. The father welcomes his new-born child. He prays for its long life, intelligence and well-being, and feeds it with honey and butter.

Then comes Nana Karana or the naming ceremony. The new-born child is given a name on the tenth, eleventh or twelfth day with recitation of Mantras.

The Annaprashana comes in the sixth month when the child is given solid food for the first time. Mantras are recited and oblations are offered to the various Deities.

The Chudakaranam, the tonsure or shaving of the head is performed in the first or third year.

The Karnavedha or ear-boring ceremony is performed at the fifth or seventh year, or end of the first year, or with the Chudakaranam. The body of the child is protected and harmonised by these ceremonies. Any hereditary defect that arises from defect of Semen and embryo is removed.

Vidyarambha also is another Samskara. Alphabet is taught to the child. This is also known by the name Aksharabhyasa. These Samskaras pertain to the child stage of life.

The most important ceremony which marks the beginning of the next stage of life, the stage of youth is Upanayana. Upanayana is a very important Samskara. It is a landmark in the life of the child. It is his second or spiritual birth. The word "Upanayana" means "bringing near". The boy is brought near his Guru, Spiritual Teacher. The preceptor invests him with the sacred thread, Yagnopavitam, and initiates him by giving him the Gavatri Mantra and gives him a staff. This is the beginning of Brahmacharya Ashram during which Brahmacharya, perfect or entire celibacy is enjoined. He is to begin the life of study. The initiation makes him a Dvija, twice-born. The father and mother gave birth to him from mutual desire. This is his physical birth. Initiation into Gavatri Mantra is his another true birth. According to Yagnavalkya, the Upanayana ceremony is performed at the eighth year for a Brahmin, eleventh for a Kshatriya and twelfth for a Vaishya. Manu gives the age at the fifth year for a Brahmana, the sixth for a Kshatriya and the eighth for a Vaishya.

The boy wears a Kaupina and a small yellow cloth, and a girdle of Munja Grass. The Acharya puts on him a deer skin. The new yellow cloth represents the new body. Yellow colour is a symbol of spirituality. Wearing of Kaupina indicates that the boy should lead a pure life of perfect celibacy. The girdle is wound round thrice. This indicates that the boy has to study the Samhitās, the Brahmanas, and the Upanishads. The deer skin represents the ascetic life he should lead.

The sacred thread or Yagnopavitam consists of three threads knotted together. He who wears the thread should have a triple control, over his mind, speech and body—thought, word and action. The holy thread signifies the various triads which exist in the world, viz., Sat-chit-Ananda; creation; preservation, destruction; the three states; waking state, dreaming and deep sleep; the three qualities, Sattwa, Rajas, Tamas; the Trimurti Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, etc.

The staff signifies that the student should have control over his thoughts, words and actions. He who practises control over his thoughts, words and actions and he who practises Brahmacharya in thought, word and deed attains perfection.

Then comes the end of the Student Stage, the Samavartana. The student having completed the Vedas and the Vratas, presents his preceptor with a gift and obtains permission to take the formal bath which marks the close of his student career. He returns home and performs the Samavartanam, the returning ceremony. He is now ready to marry and enter the second stage or Grihasta Ashram, the life of a householder.

Vivaha is marriage or entry into the second Ashrama. The life of the householder begins. Now he takes up his duties as man and pays his debts by sacrifice, by study and by procreating children. The bridegroom tells the bride "I take your hand for good fortune." They walk round the sacred fire hand-in-hand. The bride sacrifices grains in the fire and prays "May my husband live long. May my relations increase."

There are two more stages, *viz*, Vanaprashta and Sannyasa with their rites. Man withdraws himself from all worldly activities, retires into the forest and prepares himself for taking Sannyasa. This is the life of a Vanaprashta.

A Sannyasi renounces the world and leads a life of study and meditation by living on alms.

Pretakarman is funeral rite. When a man dies the funeral ceremonies are performed by his son and heir.

PHILOSOPHY OF IDOL WORSHIP

Idol is a support for the neophyte. It is a prop of his spiritual childhood. A form or image (Pratima) is necessary for worship in the beginning. It is an external symbol (Pratika) of God for worship. It is a reminder of God. The material image calls up the mental idea. Steadiness of mind is obtained by image worship. The worshipper will have to associate the ideas of infinity, omnipotence, omniscience, purity, perfection, freedom, holiness, truth, omnipresence. It is not possible for all to fix the mind on the Absolute or the Infinite. A concrete form is necessary for the vast majority for practising concentration. To behold God everywhere and to practise the presence of God is not possible for the ordinary man.

The image of Vishnu and of his Avataras, and the images of Shakti and Siva are the popular idols that are worshipped both in temples and in the houses. The idols in the temples of Tirupathi, Pandharpur, Palani, Kathirgama, etc., are powerful Deities. They are Pratyaksha Devatas. They grant boons to the devotee, cure their ailments, and give darshan. Wonderful lilas are associated with these Deities. There is no polytheism in Hinduism. Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, Sakti are different aspects of one Lord.

{ Salagrama is the symbol of Vishnu. The Lingam is the symbol of the great pillar of Fire which is the manifestation of Lord Siva. The four-armed Lord Hanu signifies the protecting support of the Deity. The four instruments in His hands represent the four Purusharthas, viz., Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha.

{ The idol is only a symbol of the Divine. A devotee does not behold therein a block of stone or a mass of metal. It is an emblem of God for him. He visualises the Indwelling Presence in the Murti or Image. All the Saiva Navanats or Saints of South India attained God-realisation through worship of Lingam, the image of Lord Siva. For a devotee the image is a mass of Chaitanya or consciousness. He draws inspiration from the image. The image guides him. It talks to him. It assumes human form to help him in a variety of ways. The image of Lord Siva in the temple at Madurai in South India helped the fuel-cutter and the old woman. The image in the temple at Tirupathi assumed human form and gave witness in the court to help his devotees. There are marvels and mysteries. Only the devotees understand these.

{ There is no reference to worship of idols in the Vedas. The Puranas and the Agamas give description of idol-worship both in the houses and in the temples. Idol-worship is not peculiar to Hinduism. Christians worship the Cross. They have the image of the Cross in their mind. The Mohamamedans keep the image of Kaaba stone when they kneel and do prayers. The people of the whole world save a few Yogis and Vedantins are all worshippers of idols. They keep some image or other in the mind.

(Idoltry is only the beginning of religion. Certainly it is not its end. The same Hindu Scriptures which prescribe idol-worship for beginners speak of meditation on the Infinite or the Absolute, contemplation of the significance of "Tat Twam Asi" Mahavakya for advanced aspirants. The sage beholds the whole world as his own Self. He sees Brahman everywhere.)

There are different grades of worship. The first is the worship of idols. The next is recitation of Mantras and offering of prayers. Mental worship is superior to worship with the flowers. Meditation on the Absolute or the attributeless Nirguna Brahman is the best of all.

The supreme State is Self-realisation or Brahma-Sakshatkata. The second in rank is meditation. The yogi practises Sadhana or unceasing meditation on the Supreme Self. The third is the worship of symbols. The fourth is the performance of rituals and pilgrimages to holy places. The Shastras and Gurus are like kind mothers. They take hold of the hands of the aspirants, take them step by step, stage by stage, till they are established in Nirvikalp a Samadhi or Superconscious State. They prescribe gross forms of Sadhana or spiritual practices for the neophytes or beginners, with gross mind, and give lessons on abstract meditation for the advanced aspirants who are endowed with pure, subtle and sharp intellect.

The same man who burns incense, scented sticks and camphor before the idol says: "The Sun does not shine there, nor the moon, nor the stars nor the lightning. How then could the little fire shine there? All shine after Him. His effulgence alone illumines the whole world."

Each marks a stage of progress. The human soul makes different kinds of attempts to grasp and realise the Infinite or the Absolute according to his strength, degree of evolution. He soars higher and higher, gathers more and more strength and eventually merges himself in the Supreme and attains oneness or identity.

If you shake hands with a man he is highly pleased. You have touched only a small part of his body and yet he is highly pleased. He smiles and welcomes you. Even so the Lord is highly pleased by worshipping an idol.

An idol is a part of the body of the Lord. The whole world is his Body, Virat Form. The devotion goes to the Lord. The worshipper superimposes on the image the Lord and all His attributes. He recites Purusha Sukta Mantras. "I worship the Lord with thousand heads, thousand eyes, thousand feet." He feels and thinks that the Lord is seated in his heart and pervades everywhere

(A thousand-rupee note is only a piece of paper, but it carries a great value when it bears the stamp of the King or Emperor. Even so the image in a temple though it is made of stone, wood or metal is precious for a devotee as it bears the mark of his Lord, as it stands for something which he holds holy and eternal.) A flag is only a small piece of painted cloth but it stands for a soldier for something that he holds very dear. He is prepared to give up his life in defending his flag. Similarly the image is very dear to a devotee. It speaks to him in its own languages of devotion. Just as the flag arouses martial valour in the soldier, so also the image arouses devotion in the devotee. The Lord is superimposed on the image and the image generates divine thoughts in the worshipper

The mental image also is a form of idol. The difference is not one of kind, but only one of degree. All worshippers, however intellectual they may be, generate a form in the mind and make the mind dwell on that image. Hinduism leads the aspirants gradually from material images to mental images and from the diverse mental images to the one Personal God and from the personal God to the Impersonal Absolute or Transcendental Nirguna Brahman.

When you worship an image you do not say "This image has come from Jeypore. It was brought by Prabhu Singh. Its weight is 50 lbs. It is made of white marble. It has cost me Rs. 500." You superimpose all the attributes of the Lord on the image and pray "O Antaryamin (Inner Ruler). You are all-pervading; you are omnipotent, omniscient, all-merciful. You are the source for every thing. You are self-existent. You are Sat-chitananda. You are eternal, unchanging. You are the life of my life, soul of my soul! Give me light and knowledge! Let me dwell in Thee

for ever." When your devotion and meditation become intense and deep, you do not see the stone image. You behold the Lord only, who is Chaitanya.

The devotee repeats the Purusha Sukta when he worships. He says "'Lord,' with thousand heads, thousand eyes, thousand hands and thousand feet". He thinks of the mighty Virat Purusha

Those who have not understood the philosophy and significance of idol worship will clearly have now at least a clear understanding of worship of Pratima or idol. Their eyes will be opened now. Ignorant persons only who have not studied Shastras and who have not associated with Yogis, Sages and Bhaktas raise unnecessary arguments against idol worship

Every other religion lays certain fixed dogmas and attempts to force people to follow them. It has only one kind of drug to treat several diseases. It gives only one kind of food for all and for all conditions. It places before the followers only one coat. It must fit Albert, Atkinson, Alluwallia, Antony, Abdul Rahman. The Hindus know that the images, crosses and crescents are simply so many symbols to fix the mind in the beginning for developing concentration, so many concrete pegs to hang their spiritual ideas and convictions on. The symbol is not necessary for every one. It is not compulsory in Hinduism. It is not needed for an advanced Yogi or sage. Symbol is like the slate which is useful for a boy of the first standard. Those who are not in need of it have no right to say that it is wrong. If they say that it is wrong they only betray their ignorance.

Glory to the Hindu Rishis (and the Hindu Scriptures) who take the aspirants from the lower to the higher form of worship, stage by stage, step by step and ultimately help them to rest in the attributeless, all-pervading, formless, timeless, spaceless Brahman or the Infinite and the Unconditional Brahma of the Upanishads.

PUJA OR WORSHIP

In Puja an image or picture representing some divine form is used as the object of worship. The image is adored.

Worship is the expression of devotion, reverence and love to the Lord, of keen yearning to be united with Him, of spiritual thirsting to hold conscious communion with Him. The devotee prays to the Lord for granting him intense devotion and removing the veil of ignorance. He pines for His benign grace. He constantly remembers His name. He repeats His mantra. He sings His praise. He does Kirtan. He hears and recites His Lilas. He lives in His Dhama in the company of His devotees. He meditates on His form, His nature, His attributes and Lilas. He visualises the form of the Lord with closed eyes and enjoys supreme peace and bliss.

Worship of the Lord purifies the heart, generates harmonious vibrations, steadies the mind, purifies and ennobles the emotions, harmonises the five sheaths, and eventually leads to communion, fellowship or God-realisation.

The devotee selects sometimes his Kuladeva or Kuladevi, family Deva or Devi, for his worship. Sometimes the Devata is chosen for him by his Guru or Spiritual Preceptor. Sometimes he himself chooses that Devata which most appeals to him. This form is his Ishta Devata.

The presence of the Deity is invoked (Avahana). Then a seat (Asana) is offered. The feet are washed (Padya). Then Arghyam or offering of water is given. Arghyam is offering hospitality. Then comes Snanam or bathing. Then the image is dressed (Vastram). Then comes the investiture with the sacred thread (Yagnopavita). Then Sandal Paste is offered. Then comes offering of flowers. They are the symbols of the heart-flowers of devotion, love and reverence. Then incense is burnt (Dhupam). Then a lamp is lit and waved before the Deity (Deepam). Then food is offered (Naivedyam). Then betel is offered (tambulam). Then camphor is burnt (Nirajanam). Then Swarnapushpam (gift of Gold or money) is offered. In the end the Deity is bidden farewell to (Visarjana). In these external forms of worship the inner love finds expression.

The **worship** consists in treating the Deity like an honoured guest of the highest class. A Hindu goes to the temple with flowers and fruits to pay homage to the King of Kings. In **big temples** the Deity is treated as the King of Kings.

Eight services are held in a day. The King of Kings is roused from sleep with music early in the morning. Then He is dressed in royal robes after the ceremonial bath. He is adorned with precious ornaments and beautiful flowers. Lights are waved before Him. Various kinds of food (Bhogh) are offered at regular intervals. The King holds His daily court, gives Darshan to His devotees, hears their complaints and bestows on them His benign grace. During festivals He goes out in State with all the regal pomp that befits the King of Kings, when the annual function, the royal wedding takes place with great éclat and splendour.

You may worship Lord Siva or Lord Hari, Lord Ganesh or Lord Subramanna or Lord Dattatreya, or any one of the Avatars, Lord Rama or Lord Krishna, Saraswati or Lakshmi, Gayatri or Kali, Durga or Chandi. There is no polytheism in Hinduism. All are aspects of one Ishwara or Lord. Under whatever name and form it is Ishwara who is adored. Worship goes to the Indweller, the Lord in the form. It is ignorance to think that one form is superior to another. All forms are one and the same. Siva, Vishnu, Gayatri, Rama, Krishna, Devi, Brahman, are one. All are adoring the same Ishwara. The differences are only differences of names due to differences in the worshippers, but not in the object of adoration. It is only out of ignorance that different religionists and different sects fight and quarrel amongst themselves.

May you all be free from sectarian spirit ! May you all recognise and realise the one Indwelling Presence or Essence in all forms ! May you all be united by the bond of pure love or Suddha prem ! May Lord Bless you all with peace, power, devotion and wisdom !

PANCHA MAHA YAGNAS

There are the five great daily sacrifices that are to be performed by every householder. They are—

1. *Brahma Yagnah* called also VedaYagnah, sacrifice to Brahman or the Vedas or the Rishis
2. *Devayagnah*, sacrifice to Devas.
3. *Putri Yagnah*, sacrifice to Pitris.

4. *Manushya Yagna*, sacrifice to men.

5. *Bhuta Yagna*, sacrifice to Bhutas.

The performance of these five Yagnas is conducive to the spiritual evolution or growth of a man. He gradually learns that he is not a separate entity or isolated creature or isolated unit, but is a part of a great whole. He obtains knowledge by studying the sacred scriptures written by Great Rishis. He gets help from his friends, relatives and fellow-beings. His parents gave him physical body. His body is nourished by the milk of cows, grains, vegetables and fruits. The five elements help him. He cannot live without oxygen and water. The Devas and the Pitris bless him. Therefore, he owes a five-fold debt to nature. He must pay back his debt by performing these five sacrifices daily. Further numerous insects are killed by him unconsciously during walking, sweeping, cutting, grinding, cooking, etc. This sin is removed by performance of these sacrifices.

The Rishis, the Pitris, the Devas, the Bhutas and guests expect help from the householders. Hence they should perform these five sacrifices daily. Teaching and study of scriptures is the Brahma Yagna, Tarpana or offering of water to the ancestors and Sraddha is the Pitri Yagna; Homa or oblations into the fire is the Deva Yagna; Bali (food) is the Bhuta Yagna, and hospitality to guests is Manushya Yagna or Atithi Yagna.

Every man should study daily the sacred scriptures. He should share the knowledge with others. This is Brahma Yagna or Rishi Yagna. By so doing he pays the debt to Rishis.

Lord Krishna says in Bhagawat Gita "Having in ancient times emanated mankind together with sacrifice, the Lord of Creation said 'By this shall ye propagate; be this to you be-giver of desires. With this nourish ye the shining ones and may the shining ones nourish ye, thus nourishing one another, ye shall reap the highest good. For, nourished by sacrifice, the shining ones shall bestow on you the enjoyments you desire. A thief verily is he who enjoyeth what is given by them without returning them anything. The righteous who eat the remains of the sacrifice, are freed from all sins; but the unrighteous, who cook for their own sake, they verily

eat sin." Chap. III 10, 11, 12, 13. Manu says "Let a man ever engage in the study of the Vedas and in the rites of the Devas; engaging in the rites of the Vedas, he supports the movable and immovable kingdoms." These sacrifices turn the wheel of life in accordance with the divine wheel and thus help the evolution of man and the worlds.

Feeding the poor also is Manushya Yagna. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving shelter to the homeless, comforting the distressed are all forms of Manushya Yagna. Any kind of service to the suffering humanity is Manushya Yagna. Distribution of food to cows, dogs, birds, fish, etc., is Bhuta Yagna.

By daily doing such acts of kindness and sympathy man develops mercy. Hatred vanishes. His hard egoistic heart is gradually softened. He cultivates cosmic love. His heart expands. He has a wider outlook on life. He tries to feel his oneness with all beings. His old feeling of separateness on account of selfishness and egoism is gradually thinned and eventually eradicated. He learns that he can only be happy by making others happy, by serving others, by helping others, by removing the sufferings of others, by sharing what he has with others. The five great daily sacrifices teach man his relations with his superiors, his equals and his inferiors.

Man has no separate individual existence. He is connected with the world. He is like a bead in the rosary. His whole life must be a life of sacrifice and duties. Then only he will have rapid evolution. Then only he will realise the supreme bliss of the eternal. Then only he will free himself from the round of births and deaths and attain immortality.

SRADDHA

Performance of Sraddha in honour of the manes or Pitris or forefathers is indispensable. Sraddha must be performed with faith, devotion and reverence. The son who does not perform Sraddha and Tarpana is an ungrateful son. He goes to hell. The sacred scriptures declare "He who does not perform Sraddha takes his next birth in the lowest caste. He leads a miserable life and suffers from poverty."

Śraddha is the name of the ceremonies performed by relatives to help the Jīva who has cast off his physical body in death. A Jīva who has cast off his physical sheath is called a Preta. The part of the Śraddha performed to help him at this stage is called the Preta Kriya.

Cremation is the best way of destroying a dead body. This is highly beneficial for the departed soul. If the body is not burnt, the Jīva is linked to the earth. The soul hovers round or hangs about the dead body on account of Moha or attachment to the physical body. His journey to the celestial regions is interfered with. The vibrations set up by the recitation of Mantras and the offerings and oblations of water bring solace and comfort to the departed soul. The Sapindikarana ceremonies help the Jīva to pass from Pretaloka to Pitriloka. He is then enrolled among the Pitris or the ancestors. The son walks three times round the dead body of his father before fire is set to the pyre and sprinkles water once reciting the mantra "Go away, withdraw and depart from here." The bones are collected on the next day and thrown into a river. Those who can afford take them to Benares or Hardwar and throw them in the Ganges.

Brahma is the paternal grandfather of all. Kasyapa and the other Prajapatis are also Pitris as they are the original progenitors. There are two classes of Pitris, viz., the "celestial pitris" who are the Lords of the Pitruloka and the "Human Pitris" who go there after death. Pitruloka or the abode of the Pitris is also called by the name Bhuvarkaloka. The word Pitris primarily means the immediate ancestors, viz., father, mother, etc. Śraddha proper is performed for the three generations of Pitris or to all Pitris.

Gifts to deserving Brahmanas for the benefit of the Pitris in the proper time and place and with faith are known as Śraddha. Śraddha gives satisfaction to the Pitris. By the offering of the sixteen Śraddhas the son helps his father to dwell in joy with the Pitris. Hence the son should perform the Sapindikarana rites for his father. Performance of Śraddha and Tarpan relieves the hunger and thirst of the departed soul during his journey to the Pitriloka.

The Jiva obtains the "Ativahika body" immediately after death, which is made up of fire, air and ether. Later on it may have Yatanadeha for suffering the tortures of hell if it has done great sins on the earth-plane or a celestial body for enjoying the pleasures of heaven if it has done virtuous actions while living in the world. In Yatanadeha, the air element preponderates while in the celestial body the element of fire is dominant. It takes one year for the Jiva to reach the Pitriloka.

Three cakes are offered to his father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Two Brahmins are fed first. Seven generations can mutually influence each other by the giving and receiving of food.

Those who go to hell are extremely oppressed by hunger and thirst. Performance of Sraddha and offerings of rice and oblations to them relieve their sufferings. Hence performance of Sraddha is indispensable. Those who dwell in heaven also get satisfaction, strength and nourishment.

PITRUPAKSHA AND MAHALAYA AMAVASYA

The dark fortnight of the month of Asvayuj is known as the Pitrupaksha or the fortnight of the month specially sanctified for offering oblations to the departed ancestors. And the last day, the day of the new-moon is considered as the most important day in the year for performing obsequies and like rites.

Now, ordinarily the orthodox Hindus offer oblation of water, i.e., Tarpana arghya to the departed every new-moon day. The prescribed rites are also performed every year on the anniversary of the day of death. This is the Shraddha ceremony. What then is the special import of these observances particularly during the Asvayuj Krishna Paksha? The reason is that such ceremonies done during this fortnight have a very special effect and reach the Pitrus immediately and directly due to a boon from Lord Yama. The occasion for the boon arose as follows.

The renowned hero of the Mahabharatha, Danavira Karna, when he left the mortal coil, ascended to the higher worlds and reached the region of the heroes. There the fruit

of his extraordinary charity while upon earth came to him multiplied thousandfold but it came to him in the form of immense piles of gold and silver. Karna had done limitless charity of wealth but had neglected to do Annadana. Thus he found himself in the midst of wealth and plenty, but with no food to appease him. He prayed to Lord Yama. The Great Ruler responded to Karna's prayer and granted him a respite for fourteen days to return to the earth plane once again and make up for his former neglect. Karna came down from the Mrityu Loka and for fourteen days he fed the Brahmans and the poor and made offerings of water, etc. He performed the prescribed rites also on the last day. On his return once again to the higher world the effect of Karna's observances during this fortnight removed all his wants there. The time of this occurrence was the dark fortnight of Asuj.

Due to the grace of Lord Yama it came to be so ordained that such rites done at this particular period acquired the following unique merits. Offerings made at this time reached all departed souls whether they were kins directly in the line of the offerer or not. Even those who died without progeny received these oblations given in this Pitrupaksha Amavasya day. All those who had failed to do deeds of charity and Annadana and were thus denied these comforts in the Pitrloka benefited by these ceremonies. Those deceased whose date of death is not known and consequently the annual Shraddha cannot be done, they also get these oblations of Pitrupaksha. Souls whose life was cut off by violent, accidental, or unnatural death and therefore offerings cannot reach them in the ordinary course to them too the Pitrupaksha offerings reach directly. All these the boon of Lord Yama made possible from the time the great Karna performed the Asvayuj Paksha rites. The Hindus now observe this Paksha with great faith, with strict regulation, taking thrice bath, with partial fasting, etc. On the New-moon day, Sarvapitru Amavasya the full rites are done and plenty of charity given.

{ The day of Mahalaya Amavasya is a day of great significance and importance to all Hindus. It is the annual festival for propitiating the spirits of our ancestors, with

devout prayers for peace. The Hindu Itihāsas say that on the Mahalaya Amavasya there is a conjunction of the Sun and Moon, the sun enters the sign Virgo (Kanya). On this day the departed Manes (our ancestors) leave their abode in the world of Yama and come down to the world of mortals and occupy the houses of their descendants.

The fortnight preceding the New Moon is specially consecrated for the propitiation of such departed spirits. The ceremonies performed in honour of the Manes, or ancestors during each day of this fortnight are considered to be equal to those performed at Gāyā. The principle in all such rites is the worship of the departed souls and the satisfaction of their wishes so that they might be in peace during the rest of the year.

NAVARATHRI

Religious observances, traditional worship and Vratas at times have more than one significance. Apart from being the adoration of the Divine, they are commemorative of stirring bygone events, allegoric when interpreted from the occult standpoint and are significant pointers guiding to the Jiva on his path to Realisation.

Outwardly, the nine days' worship of Devi or the Mother is in the nature of a Vijaya-Utsava. These nine days' triumph are offered to the Mother for her successful struggle with the formidable demons led by Shumbha and Nishumbha. But to the spiritual aspirant in his life of Sadhana, the particular division of the Navarathri into sets of three days to adore different aspects of the Supreme Goddess has got a very sublime, yet thoroughly practical truth to reveal. In its cosmic aspect it epitomises the stages of the evolution of Man into God, from Jivahood to Sivahood. In its individual import it shows the course that his spiritual Sadhana should take.

Now, the central purpose of existence is to recognise your eternal identity with the Supreme Spirit. It is to grow into the image of the Divine. The Supreme One embodies the highest perfection. It is spotless purity, Niranjana. To recognise your identity with That, to attain union with That, is verily to grow into the very likeness of the Divine.

The Sadhak has, therefore, as the initial step to get rid of the countless impurities, and the undivine elements that have come to cling to him in his embodied state. Then he has to acquire lofty virtues, auspicious Divine qualities. Thus purified and rendered full of Sattwa, Knowledge flashes upon him like the brilliant rays of the sun upon the crystal waters of a perfectly calm lake.

This process of Sadhan implies resolute will, determined effort and arduous struggle. In other words, strength, infinite Sakti, is the prime necessity. It is the Divine Mother, Supreme Sakti of Brahman that has to operate through the aspirant. Then consider how on the first three days Mother is adored as Power, Force—Durga the Terrible. You pray to Mother Durga to destroy all your impurities, your vices, your defects. She is to fight with and annihilate the baser animal qualities in the Sadhak, the lower Asura in his nature. Also, She is the Power that protects your Sadhana from its many dangers and pitfalls. Thus the first three days, marking the first stage of destruction of Mala (impurities) and determined effort and struggle to root out the evil Vasanas in your mind, are set apart for the worship of the Destructive Aspect of the Mother.

Once you have accomplished your task on the negative side, that of breaking down the impure Vasanas, propensities and old habits, the next step is to build up a sublime spiritual personality, to acquire positive qualities in place of the eliminated Asuric qualities. The Divine qualities—Devi Sampath—that Lord Krishna enumerates in the Gita, have to be acquired. The Sadhak must cultivate and develop all the auspicious qualities. He has to pile up immense spiritual wealth to enable him to pay the price for the rare gem of divine wisdom (Gyanaratna). If this development of the opposite qualities (Pratipaksha Bhavana) is not undertaken in right earnest, the old Asuric nature will raise its head again and again. Hence, this stage is as important in an aspirant's career as the previous one. The essential difference is: the former is a ruthless, determined annihilation of the filthy, egoistic lower self; the latter is an orderly, steady, calm and serene effort to develop purity. This pleasant side of the aspirant's Sadhana is depicted by the worship of Mother

Lakshmi. She bestows on Her devotees the inexhaustible wealth or *Devi Sampath*. Lakshmi is the *Sampath-Dayini* aspect of Brahman. She is Purity Itself. Thus worship of Goddess Lakshmi is performed during the second set of three days.

Once the aspirant succeeds in routing out the evil propensities and in developing *Satwic*, pure, Divine qualities, he becomes an *Adhikari*. He is ready now to receive the Light of Supreme Wisdom. He is fit to obtain Divine Knowledge. At this stage comes the devout worship of *Sri Saraswathi*, who is Divine Knowledge personified, the Embodiment of *Brahmajnana*. The sound of Her Celestial *Veena* awakens the notes of the Sublime *Mahavakyas* and the *Pranava*. She bestows the Knowledge of the Supreme *Nada* and then gives full *Atmagyan* as represented by Her pure dazzling snow-white apparel. To propitiate *Sri Saraswathi* the Giver of *Gyana* is therefore the third stage.

The tenth day—*Vijaya Dasami*—marks the triumphant ovation of the *Jiva* at having attained *Jivanmukthi* through the descent of Knowledge by the Grace of Goddess *Saraswathi*. The *Jiva* rests in His own Supreme Self of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute). This day celebrates the victory, the achievement of the Goal. The Banner of Victory flies aloft. Lo! I am He! I am He!!

Chidananda Rupa Sivoham, Sivoham ; Chidananda Rupa Sivoham, Sivoham.

This arrangement has also a special significance in the aspirant's spiritual evolution. It marks the stages of evolution which are indispensable for every *Sadhak*, through which every one should pass. One naturally leads to the other and to short-circuit this would inevitably result in a miserable failure. Nowadays many ignorant *Sadhaks* aim straight at the appropriation of Knowledge without the preliminaries of purification and acquisition of *Devi Sampath*, and complain that they are not progressing in the Path. How can they? Knowledge will not descend till the impurities are washed out, and Purity is developed. The *Satwic* plant can grow on no impure soil.

Follow this arrangement, your efforts will be attended with sure success. This is your path :

नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय No other path is known for salvation. Destroy one evil quality, develop the opposite virtue. By this process you would soon bring yourself up to that Perfection which would culminate in that identity with Brahman which is your Goal. Then all Knowledge will be yours ; your Will shall be Omniscient, Omnipotent, you will feel your Omnipresence. You will see yourself in all. You will be a Jivannuktha. You shall achieve eternal victory over the wheel of birth and death, over the Demon, Samsara. No more of pain, no more of misery, no more of birth, no more of death for you. Victory, Victory be yours

Glorv unto the Divine Mother ! Let Her take you, step by step, to the top of the spiritual ladder and unite you with the Lord !

CHAPTER VI

HINDU ETHICS

Morality or Ethics is the Science of Conduct. Ethics is the study of what is right or good in conduct. Ethical science shows the way in which human beings should behave towards each other as well as towards other creatures. It contains systematised principles on which a man should act. Ethics is right conduct or *Sadachara*. Without ethics you cannot have progress in the spiritual path. Ethics is the foundation of Yoga. Ethics is the corner stone of Vedanta. Ethics is the strong pillar on which the edifice of Bhakti Yoga rests. Ethics is the gateway to God-realisation.

{ Every religion has its ethics. Sermon on the Mount by Lord Jesus and the Ten Commandments contain ethical teachings for the uplift of man. The Noble Eightfold path of Lord Buddha is the essence of ethics. Yama, Nivama of Patanjali Maharishi constitute ethics. Manu Smriti, Yagnavalkya Smriti and Parasara Smriti contain the code of conduct for man. The three kinds of austerity of Gita are nothing but ethics.

Undeveloped persons cannot think for themselves. Hence rules of conduct have been laid down by great sages or Seers like Lord Manu, Sage Yagnavalkya.

Ethics is a relative science. What is good for one man may not be good for another man. What is good at one time and at one place may not be good at another time and at another place. Ethics is relative to the man himself and to his surroundings.

{ Practice of ethics will help you to live in harmony with your neighbours, friends, your own family members, fellow-beings and other people. It will confer on you lasting happiness and Moksha. It will purify your heart. It will keep your conscience ever clean. A moral man who follows strictly the principles of ethics will not deviate even a fraction of

an inch from the path of Dharma or righteousness. Yudhis-thira had earned an undying reputation for his practice of ethics. He was an embodiment of Dharma. Hence he still lives in our hearts.

We have human morality, family morality, social morality, national morality, professional morality. A doctor has his professional ethics. He should not divulge to others the secrets of his patients. It is his duty to take all precautionary hygienic measures to stop the spread of an epidemic disease and direct his earnest attention towards public health and hygiene.

Atma or Self is one. There is one common consciousness in all beings. One life vibrates in all beings. Life is common in animals, birds and human beings. Existence is common. This is the emphatic declaration of the Upanishads or Srutis. This primary truth of Religion is the foundation of Ethics or morality or science of right conduct.

Good conduct is the root of material and spiritual prosperity. Conduct increases fame. It is good conduct which prolongs life and destroys all calamities and evils, and brings eternal happiness. It is good conduct that begets virtue. Therefore develop good conduct.

Metaphysics rests on morality. Morality has Vedanta as its basis. The Upanishad says: "Thy neighbour is in truth thy very Self and what separates you from him is mere illusion".

Do not do any act which does not bring good to others or that act for which you will feel ashamed. Do that act which brings good to others, and which is praiseworthy. This is a brief description of what right conduct is. Good conduct (Achara) is the highest Dharma. It is the root of all Tapas or austerities. Righteousness, Truth and good works, power and prosperity all originate from conduct. All that which is free from any motive of injury to any being is surely morality. Moral precepts have been made to free the creatures from all injuries.

(The ethics of Western philosophers is superficial. Their ethics is mere surface ethics. But the ethics of Hindus is

subtle, sublime and profound. All religions have taught ethical precepts such as : "Do not kill ; do not injure others ; love your neighbour as yourself", but they have not given the reason. The basis of Hindu ethics is this : "There is one All-pervading Atman. It is the innermost soul of all beings. This is the common, pure consciousness. If you injure your neighbour you really injure yourself." This is the basic metaphysical truth that underlies all Hindu ethical codes.)

A Western philanthropist donates big sums to social Institutions. He regards this as some kind of social service only. That is all. He has not got the Bhav or mental attitude that the whole world is a manifestation of the Lord and that he is serving the Lord. He has not got the Bhav that the Lord is working through his instruments or senses, that every act is an offering unto the Lord, and that every deed is a Yogic activity.

A Westerner invites his friends for a dinner. Dinner is arranged for fifty persons. If another extra man comes, he cannot get even half a loaf of bread. The butler measures the stomachs of those who attend the dinner party and prepares food accordingly. A dinner party is a mere jolly gathering for a Westerner with drink and dance. Whereas in India dinner is prepared for five hundred persons even when two hundred persons are invited. Feeding is worship of Narayana or Lord for a Hindu. It is Athithi Yagna or sacred sacrifice. A Hindu regards every creature as the Lord.

A Hindu believes that if he feeds a single sage or a Mahatma, he is feeding the whole world because he has realised that a realised sage is identical with the whole Virat or Brahman, and he is one with all beings of the entire universe. Hindu ethics is based on the sublime philosophy of Vedanta, which propounds the doctrine of oneness of life and unity of consciousness. Ethics or morality and doing good to others is the manifestation of this oneness. A Hindu distributes food to the crows, dogs, cows and fishes first before he takes his food. He tries to recognise the one Atma that is hidden in all these forms. He endeavours to become one with the

Universal Being He knows that in loving others he loves himself, in injuring others he injures himself. (Through the practice of cosmic love he feels that all bodies are his, all hands are his, all feet are his, that the whole world is his home (Vasudeva Kudumbakam) Gradually he becomes one with the soul of the universe, and one with the Over-soul also Hindu ethics leads eventually to Self-realisation Ethics is a means to Yoga.

Do not leave the path of morality even if your life is in danger Do not leave righteousness for the sake of some material gain. Consult the Shastras and Mahatmas whenever you are in doubt Build up your character. Grow. Evolve. Keep up your ideal always before your mind. Stick to Sadhachara or right conduct Practise it. You will soon attain eternal bliss and immortality.

FOUNDATION OF ETHICS

The mark of Dharma is Achara or good conduct Achara is the mark of the good From Achara is Dharma born Dharma enhances life Man attains prosperity, fame, here and hereafter through the practice of Dharma. Achara is the highest Dharma. It is the root of all Tapas. That which brings well-being to man is Dharma. Dharma supports this world. The people are upheld by Dharma That which secures preservation of beings is Dharma Dharma leads to eternal happiness and immortality.

(Morality is the gateway to religion. He who leads a moral or virtuous life attains freedom, perfection or Moksha)

What is the criterion by which we judge an action to be right or wrong, good or bad? "Right" and "wrong" refer to the moral standard as law "Good and bad" refer to it as End Lord Krishna says in Gita: 'Let the scriptures be thy authority, in determining what ought to be done, or what ought not to be done. Knowing what hath been declared by the ordinances of the scriptures, thou oughtest to work in this world'. Chap. XVI—24 The Smritis written by Yagnavalkya, Manu, distinctly prescribe the rules of conduct. As you have not got the power nor the time to think of the

moral principles and rules given in the scriptures, you can get the moral precepts or instructions from the sages and saints and follow them to the very letter.

"Right and wrong" and "good and bad" are relative terms. The words "right" and "good" refer to the moral standard, as law. You will have to adjust your conduct according to this standard. That which is in accordance with a rule is right. That which is worthy of achievement is good. (Religion gives us the ultimate data upon which ethical science may be built.)

Man wills to obtain his objects of desires. Willing results in action. This is called conduct. The will that is expressed becomes conduct. Man has various sorts of desires. Sometimes there is conflict of desires. That desire which obtains victory is termed Will. Conduct is behaviour. Character is the aggregate of peculiar qualities which constitute personal individuality. The inner disposition which makes the will possible is called character. External behaviour is not always a sure guide in judging the character of a man.

The first thing you learn from religion is the unity of all selves. One Atman or Self abides in all beings. Universal love is the expression of the unity. Universal brotherhood has its basis in the unity of Self. All human relations exist because of this unity. (Yagnavalkya said to his wife Maitreyi: "Behold, my dear. Not indeed for the love of the husband is the husband dear; for the love of the self is the husband dear. And so with wife, sons, property, friends, worlds and even the Devas themselves. All are dear because the one Self is in all. If you injure another man, you injure yourself. If you help another person you help yourself. There is one life, one consciousness in all beings. This is the foundation of right conduct. This is the foundation of ethics.")

Why is charity right? Because it is in conformity with the law. "Do charity." Why is stealing wrong? Because it is against the law "Thou shalt not steal". Why is it good to help a man when he is in trouble and difficulties? Because it will refine and ennoble your character. It will instil mercy in your heart. The cultivation of the virtues will help you to realise the Supreme Self. Why is it bad to kill any being? The end is unworthy. It will corrupt your character. It will reduce you to the level of a brute.

{ You must obey the laws or rules of conduct. The rules are given for you by the law-givers for your own betterment and spiritual uplift. The law-givers are great sages who had direct God-realisation. }

ETHICAL DISCIPLINE

{ The very root and the core of all moral discipline is mental purification through refraining from all evil action and the active practise of virtue. Do good at all times. Ahimsa, Satyam and Brahmacharya symbolise these three processes of avoiding sin, sticking to virtue and self-purification. }

All harm arises out of man's egoism. Ego manifests as ambition, desire and lust. Under their influence man indulges in hatred, love, flattery, pride, unscrupulousness, hypocrisy and delusion. You must proceed along the path of virtue. Be determined never to swerve an inch from Dharma. The mind has to be carefully trained and the will should be developed and strengthened. Therefore much importance has been laid by the ancients upon Yama, Niyama and Shad Sampat. The mind and will must be exercised and disciplined through deliberate acts of self-denial and self-sacrifice in every-day life. Ethical culture therefore demands moral vigilance and right exertion. The development of a sensitive conscience and positive admiration for the goodness and nobility plays a great part in finishing ethical development.

{ To eradicate egoism arising out of Deha-Abhimana, think constantly on the foulness and perishability of the body and the pains arising out of the senses. Reject them as evil and mentally rise above them. Dwell upon that which is desirable, elevating and Divine. }

Improper action, thoughtless action without discrimination gives rise to all misery. To get freedom from misery, the noble path of virtue Sadachara is to be followed. Rigidly observe Truth and purity in your thoughts, speech, actions, in your inner motive and general conduct. Be loving, tolerant and charitable in your opinion of Man and things, in your dealings with others.

In every sphere the individual should strive to adhere to these qualities and to manifest them. Thus this ideal is to be practised between parents and children, elder and youngsters, teacher and pupil, friend and friend, Guru and disciple, leader and follower, subject and ruler, nation and nation.

To stick to Sadachara is difficult no doubt. Mockery, misunderstanding and persecution will have to be faced. Therefore the cultivation of forbearance, meekness of spirit, calm endurance and spirit of forgiveness are of great importance. Uphold virtue at any cost; for its sake bear any calumny. Return good for evil.

PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT AND WRONG

I

Right and wrong, Dharma and Adharma are relative terms. It is very difficult to define these terms precisely. Even sages are bewildered sometimes in finding out what is right and what is wrong in some special circumstances. That is the reason why Lord Krishna says in the Gita: "What is action, what is inaction? Even the wise are herein perplexed. Therefore I will declare to thee the action by knowing which thou shalt be liberated from evil. It is needful to discriminate action, to discriminate unlawful action, and to discriminate inaction; mysterious is the path of action. He who seeth inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is harmonious, even while performing all actions". (Ch. IV—16, 17, 18).

I shall try to explain the terms 'right' and 'wrong'. Rishi Kanada, author of Vaisesika philosophy says in the opening Sutra: "That which brings Nisreya and Abhyudaya (supreme bliss and exaltation) is Dharma. That which elevates you and brings you nearer to God is right. That which brings you down and takes you away from God is wrong. That which is done in strict accordance with the injunctions of the Shastras is right and that which is done against the injunctions of Shastras is wrong." This is one way of defining these terms. To work in accordance with the Divine Will is right; to work in opposition to the Divine Will is wrong.

(It is very difficult to find out by the man in the street what exactly the Divine Will is in certain actions. That is the reason why wise sages declare that people should resort to Shastras and learned Pundits and realised persons for consultation. A pure man who has done Nishkamya Karma-Yoga for several years and who is doing worship of Ishwara for a long time can readily find out the Divine Will when he wants to do certain actions. He can hear the inner shrill, silent voice. Ordinary people should not attempt to hear this Divine Voice, the Voice of the Silence—They may mistake the voice of the impure mind for the voice of God. The lower instinctive mind will delude them

That work which gives elevation, joy and peace to the mind is right; that which brings depression, pain and restlessness to the mind is wrong. This is an easy way to find out right and wrong. Selfishness clouds understanding. Therefore, if a man has got even a tinge of selfishness he cannot detect what is right and wrong. A very pure, subtle, sharp intellect is needed for this purpose. The Gita describes the nature of Sattwic, Rajasic and Tamasic in Ch. XVIII—30, 31, 32, as follows: "That which knoweth energy and abstinence, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation, that Reason is pure, O Partha. That by which one understandeth away Right and Wrong, and also what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, that Reason, O Partha, is passionate. That which is enwrapped in darkness, thinketh wrong to be Right, and seeth all things subverted, that Reason, O Partha, is of darkness".)

Various other definitions are given by wise men to help the students in the path of righteousness. In the Bible it is said: "Do unto others as you would be done by". This is a very good maxim. The whole gist of Sadachara or right conduct is here. If one practises this very carefully he will not commit any wrong act. "Ahimsa Paramo Dharma - Non-injuring in thought, word and deed is the highest of all virtues". If one is well-established in Ahimsa, in thought, word and deed, he can never do any wrong action. That is the reason why Patanjali Maharishi has given Ahimsa great prominence in his Raja-Yoga Philosophy. Ahimsa comes

first in the practice of Yama or self-restraint. To give pleasure to others is right ; to spread misery and pain to others is wrong. One can follow this in his daily conduct towards others and can evolve in his spiritual path. Do not perform any act that brings to you shame and fear. You will be quite safe if you follow this rule. Stick to any rule that appeals to your reason and conscience and follow it with faith and attention. You will evolve and reach the abode of eternal happiness.

Now I shall talk to you on another important point. I have already pointed out in the beginning of this chapter that "right" and "wrong" are relative terms. They vary according to time, special circumstances, Varna and Ashrama. Morality is a changing and relative term. That passionate man who molests his legally married wife frequently to gratify his passion is more immoral than a man who visits the house of his sister of ill-fame once in six months. That man who dwells constantly on immoral thoughts is the most immoral man. Do you clearly note the subtle difference now ? To kill an enemy is right for a Kshatriya king. A Brahmin or a Sannyasin should not kill anybody even for protecting himself during times of danger. They should practise strict forbearance and forgiveness. To speak an untruth to save the life of a Mahatma or one's Guru who has been unjustly charged by the unjust officer of a state is right. Untruth has become a truth in this particular case. To speak a truth which brings harm to many is untruth only. To kill a dacoit who murders the wayfarers daily is Ahimsa only. Himsa becomes Ahimsa under certain circumstances.*

(There are special Dharmas during critical, dangerous circumstances. They are called Apath-Dharma. Rishi Viswamitra took forbidden meat from a Chandala when there was a severe famine and offered this in his sacrifice to the Devas. Ushashti, a learned sage, took the Uccishtha beans from the hands of an elephant-driver when he was suffering from acute hunger and when he was not able to get food from any one. Performance of one's own duties brings happiness, quick evolution and freedom.

II

Everybody speaks "This is right", "That is wrong", "You are right", "He is wrong", but he cannot tell you exactly what he means by "right" and "wrong".

"Right" and "Wrong" are relative terms. "Right" and "Wrong" are always relative to the surrounding circumstances. What is right in one situation is not right in another.

(Different are the Dharmas of men in Satya Yuga; different in Treta and Dvapara; different again are the Dharmas of men in Kali Yuga. The Dharma changes according to the changes of the cycles.)

That which helps you in your spiritual evolution is right; that which obstructs and hinders your spiritual evolution is wrong. That which leads to unity of self is right; that which leads to separation is wrong. That which is in accordance with the injunctions of the holy scriptures is right; that which is not in accordance with the sacred lore is wrong. To work in accordance with the Divine Will is right; to work in disharmony with the Divine Will is wrong. To do good to others, to serve and help others, to give joy to others is right; to give pain to others, to injure others is wrong.

(Forgiveness or Kshama befits an ascetic or Sannyasi who leads the life of Nivritti Marga or renunciation. It cannot befit a ruler. The ruler may forgive one who has injured him, but he cannot forgive one who has done the greatest harm to the public.

Do not do to another what is not good for yourself. Do not do any act which injures another and makes you feel ashamed for it. Do as you would be done by. Do unto others as you wish others should do unto you. This is the secret of Dharma. This is the secret essence of Karma Yoga. This will lead you to the attainment of eternal bliss.)

By doing wrong actions you taint your character. By doing virtuous actions you develop a noble character. Without character man falls down to the level of a brute. A man of character is honoured, trusted and adored everywhere. Therefore, develop a good character when you are young. Learn how to eradicate vices and how to cultivate virtues

in the garden of your heart. Vices and evil habits are the weeds. Virtues are priceless fruits and flowers. Learn the Yogic method of "Pratipaksha Bhavana" or cultivation of the opposites. Purity or celibacy, forgiveness, generosity, humility, selflessness are the opposites of lust, anger, greed, pride and selfishness. Become a skilful Yogic gardener. Plant good flowers in the garden of your heart and enthrone the Lord in the centre of the heart-garden, and meditate on Him. You will enjoy eternal bliss and immortality.

CHAPTER VII

HINDU PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is the rational aspect of religion. It is an integral part of religion in India. It is a rational enquiry into the nature of Truth, or Reality. It gives clear solution for the profound, subtle problems of life. It shows the way to get rid of pain and death and attain immortality and eternal bliss.

Certain philosophical questions arise in the mind of man. What is this Samsara? Has it any purpose? Is the world real or mere appearance? Is there any Creator or Governor of this Universe? If there is a Creator, what is His nature? What is the relation between man and the Creator? Is there any way to escape from the round of births and deaths? Is there any such thing as Impersonal Absolute? If so, what is its essential nature? How did man come into bondage? What is his essential nature? Is he a part of the Supreme Soul, or is he identical with it? What is the difference between Personal God and the Impersonal Absolute? What is the source for this world? What is matter? What is mind? What is individual Soul? What is the goal of life? The search for a solution of these problems is philosophy. Philosophy solves beautifully all these problems.

The idea of death has ever been the strongest motive-power of religion and religious life. Man is afraid of death. Man does not want to die. He wants to live for ever. This is the starting point of philosophy. Philosophy enquires and investigates. It boldly proclaims, O Men! do not be afraid of death. There is an immortal abode. That is Brahman. That is your own Atma, that dwells in the chamber of your heart. Purify your heart and meditate on this pure immortal, changeless Self. You will attain immortality."

A clear understanding of man's relation to God is a matter of momentous importance to students of philosophy and all aspirants. Philosophers, prophets, saints, sages,

thinkers, Acharyas and great religious leaders of the world have tried to explain the relation of man to God and the Universe. Various schools of philosophy and different kinds of religious beliefs have come into existence on account of various explanations given by different philosophers.

Philosophy will take you to the gates of the realm of eternal bliss, but it cannot allow you to enter that realm. Intuition or realisation is necessary for entering into that holy land of everlasting joy and ineffable glory.

Hindu philosophy is not mere speculation or guess work. It is lofty, sublime, unique and systematic. It is based on mystic spiritual experience or Aparoksha Anubhuti. The Seers, Sages and Rishis who had direct, intuitive perception of the Truth are the founders of the different philosophical systems in India. The different schools of philosophy are all based on the *Srutis* or the *Vedas*.

The six systems of Indian philosophy or the Shad-Dharshanas are the six orthodox Systems of philosophy. They are the six ways of looking at the Truth. They are Purva Mimamsa of Jaimini, Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta by Maha Rishi Vyasa, Sankhya by Kapila Muni, Yoga by Patanjali Maha Rishi, Vaisheshika by Rishi Kanada and Nyaya or Indian logic by Rishi Gautama. Purva Mimamsa treats of Karma Kanda, Sankhya deals with the study of Prakriti and Purusha. Yoga deals with the control of Vrittis or thought waves and contemplation. The Nyaya is considered as a prerequisite for all philosophical enquiry.

The orthodox systems of philosophy believe in the authority of the Vedas. The heterodox systems of philosophy do not believe in the authority of the Vedas. The six heterodox systems of philosophy are:

1. Materialistic school of Charvaka.
2. Nihilism of the Madhyamikas (Buddhistic).
3. The school of Idealism of Yogachara (Buddhistic).
4. That of Presentationists by Sautrantika (Buddhistic).
5. School of Representationists by Vaibhashikas (Buddhistic).
6. The system of the Jainas.

The Sutras or aphorisms of Vyasa are the basis of the Vedanta philosophy. These Sutras have been variously explained by different commentators. From these interpretations have arisen three important systems of philosophy, *viz.*, *Dwaita*, *Visishtadwaita* and *Adwaita*. The Vedanta Schools base their doctrines on the Upanishads.

The Upanishads, the Vedanta Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita are regarded as the authoritative scriptures. They are called Prastanatriya Granthas. Each System of philosophy treats of three main problems, *viz.*, God, the World and Soul.

There are several schools of philosophy, *viz.*, *Kevala Adwaita* philosophy of Sri Sankaracharya, the philosophy of qualified Monism or *Visishtadwaita* by Sri Ramanujacharya, the *Dwaita* philosophy by Sri Madhavacharya, the *Bhedabheda* philosophy of Sri Nimbarkacharya, the pure Monistic philosophy of Sri Vallabhacharya, the *Achintya Bheda-bheda* philosophy of Sri Chaitanya and the *Siddhanta* philosophy of Mey Kandar. The several schools of philosophy are only different attempts at discovering Truth.

The three main schools of metaphysical thoughts are dualism (*Dwaita*), qualified monism (*Visishtadwaita*) and the monism (*Adwaita*). They are all stages on the way to the ultimate Truth and Para Brahman. They are rungs in the ladder of Yoga. They are not at all contradictory. On the contrary they are complimentary to one another. These stages are harmoniously arranged in a graded series of spiritual experiences. Dualism, qualified monism, pure monism—all these culminate eventually in the *Adwaita* Vedantic realisation of the Absolute or the transcendental *Tirgunatita Ananta Brahman*.

Madhava said: "Man is the servant of God" and established his '*Dwaita*' philosophy. Ramanuja said, "Man is a ray or spark of God" and established his '*Visishtadwaita*' philosophy. Sankara said, "Man is identical with Brahman or the eternal soul" and established his '*Kevala Adwaita*' philosophy. People have different temperaments and different capacities. So different schools of philosophy are also necessary. The highest rung is '*Adwaita*' philosophy. A dualist or qualified monist eventually becomes a *Kevala Adwaitin*.

A Jnani merges himself in Brahman. He wishes to become identical with Brahman. He wants to become the sugarcandy itself. A Visishtadwaitin wants to become like Lord Narayana and enjoy the divine. He does not wish to merge himself or become identical with the Lord. He wishes to remain as a spark. Adwaitin wants to serve the Lord as a servant. He wishes to play with the Lord. He wishes to taste the sugarcandy.

HINDU PHILOSOPHERS

Philosophy has its root in the practical needs of man. Man wants to know about transcendental matters when he is in a reflective state. There is an urge within him to know about the secret of death, secret of immortality, the nature of the Soul, Creator and the world. Philosophy helps him to know all these things. Philosophy is the self-expression of the growing spirit of man. The philosophers are its voice. Great creative thinkers and philosophers appear in all ages. They elevate and inspire the people.

Vedanta Sutra of Sri Vyasa has been interpreted by different Acharyas belonging to distinctly different Cults. These Acharyas became founders of Sects and great System-builders. The followers of these schools sought to prove their orthodoxy by interpreting the Vedanta-Sutras in accordance with their own tenets, showing their claim to be based on, and regularly evolved from, ancient tradition. Different commentators of the Vedanta-Sutras have formed different views on the true nature of Brahman; but they all base their theories on the supreme authority of Sruti. To reject any one of these views is to reject Sruti itself.

Sri Sankara, Sri Ramanuja and Sri Madhwa are the most illustrious commentators of Vedanta-Sutras. These commentators have tried to establish theories of their own such as Advaita Vada (unqualified non-dualism or uncompromising or rigorous monism), Vishishtadwaita Vada (differentiated or qualified monism) and Dwaita Vada (strict or rigorous dualism). Sankaracharya had in view, while preparing his commentary the purpose of chiefly combating the baneful effects which blind ritualism had brought to bear upon Hinduism.

Nimbarkacharya reconciles all the different views regarding the Lord taken up by Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa and others and proves that their views are all true with reference to the particular aspect of Brahman dealt with by them, each in his own way. Sankara has taken Him in His transcendental aspect, while Ramanuja has taken Him in His immanent aspect principally; but Nimbarka has adjusted the different views taken by the different commentators

Sri Sankara was the exponent of Kevala Adwaita philosophy, Sri Ramanuja of Vishishtadwaita philosophy, Sri Madhwacharya of Dwaita philosophy, Sri Vallabhacharya of Suddhadwaita philosophy and Sri Nimbarkacharya of Dwaitadwaita philosophy. All were great souls. We cannot say that Sri Sankara was greater than Sri Ramanuja or Sri Vallabha was greater than Nimbarka. All were Avatara Purushas. They incarnated in this earth to complete a definite mission, to preach and propagate certain doctrines which were necessary to help the growth of certain type of people who flourished at a certain period, who were in a certain stage of evolution. All schools of philosophy are necessary. Each philosophy is best suited to a certain type of people. The different conceptions of Brahman are but different approaches to the Reality. It is extremely difficult, rather impossible for the Finite Soul to get all at once a clear conception of the illimitable or Infinite Soul and more so to express it in adequate terms. All cannot grasp the highest Kevala Adwaita philosophy of Sri Sankara all at once. The mind has to be disciplined properly before it is rendered as a fit instrument to grasp the tenets of Sri Sankara's Adwaita Vedanta.

Salutations and adorations to all Acharyas! Glory to the Acharyas! May their blessings be upon us all!

ADWAITA PHILOSOPHY

The Adwaita philosophy of Sri Sankaracharya is lofty, sublime and unique. It is a system of bold philosophy and logical subtlety. It is highly interesting, inspiring and elevating. No other philosophy can stand before it in boldness, depth and subtle thinking. Sankara's philosophy is complete and perfect.

Sri Sankara was a mighty, marvellous genius. He was a master of logic. He was a profound thinker of the first rank. He was a sage of the highest realisation. He was an Avatara of Lord Siva. His philosophy has brought solace, peace and illumination to countless persons in the East and the West. The Western thinkers bow their heads at the lotus feet of Sri Sankara. His philosophy has soothed the sorrows and afflictions of the most forlorn persons and brought hope, joy, wisdom, perfection, freedom, calmness to many. His system of philosophy commands the admiration of the whole world. Glory to Sankara!

(The first systematic exponent of the Advaita is Gaudapada, who lived in the beginning of the eighth Century A.D. Gaudapada is Parama Guru (Preceptor's preceptor) of Sri Sankara. Govinda was the disciple of Gaudapada. He became the preceptor of Sankara. Gaudapada has given the central teaching of Advaita Vedanta in his celebrated Mandukya Karika. But it was Sankara who gave the final beautiful form of Advaita philosophy and gave perfection and finishing touch to it.) Go through carefully Sri Sankara's commentaries on the principal Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Baghawad Gita. You will clearly understand his Advaita philosophy. The commentary on Vedanta Sutras by Sankara is known as Sareerika Bhashya.

The teachings of Sankara can be summed up in half a verse: (" Brahman Satyam Jegat Mitya Jeevo Brahmainanaparah. Brahman (Absolute) is alone real; this world is unreal; and the Jiva or the individual Soul is non-different from Brahman".) This is the quintessence of his philosophy.

Sankara's Supreme Brahman is Impersonal, Nirguna without the Gunas or attributes, Nirakara (formless) and Nirvisesha (without special characteristics,) immutable, eternal, Akarta (non-agent). He is above all needs and desires. He is always the witnessing subject. He can never become an object as He is beyond the reach of the senses. Brahman is non-dual, one without a second. He has no other beside Him. He is destitute of difference, either external or internal. Brahman cannot be described because description implies distinction. Brahman cannot be distinguished from

any other than He. In Brahman there is not the distinction of substance and attribute. Sat-Chit-Ananda constitute the very essence or Swaroopa of Brahman and not its attributes.

The Adwaita taught by Sri Sankara is a rigorous absolute one. According to Sri Sankara whatever is, is Brahman. Brahman itself is absolutely homogeneous. All difference and plurality are illusory.

This Atman is self-evident. It is not established (Svatah-siddha). It is not possible to deny this Atman, because it is the very essence of one who denies it. Atman is the basis of all kinds of knowledge, presuppositions and proofs. Self is within, Self without, Self before and Self behind, Self on the right hand, Self on the left, Self above and Self below.

Brahman is not an object as it is Adrishya, beyond the reach of the eyes. Hence the Upanishads declare "Neti, neti" 'not this, not thus, not that'. This does not mean, that Brahman is a negative concept or a metaphysical abstraction or a nonentity or a void. It is not another. It is all-full, infinite, changeless, self-existent, self-delight, self-knowledge, self-bliss. It is Swaroopa, Essence. It is the essence of the Knower. It is Seer (Drishta) Turiya, silent Witness (Sakshi).

The Nirguna Brahman of Sankara is impersonal. It becomes a personal God or Saguna Brahman only through its association with Maya.

Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman are not two Brahman. Nirguna Brahman is not the contrast, antithesis or opposite of Saguna Brahman. The same Nirguna Brahman appears as Saguna Brahman for the pious worship of devotees. It is the same Truth from two different points of view. Nirguna Brahman is the higher Brahman from the transcendental view-point (Paramarthika); the Saguna Brahman is the lower Brahman from the relative view-point (Vyavaharika).

To Sankara this world is only relatively real (Vyavahric Satta). He advocated Vivarta Vada or theory of appearance or super-imposition (Adhyasa). Just as snake is superimposed on

the rope in the twilight, this world and body are superimposed on Brahman or the Supreme Self. If you get knowledge of the rope the illusion of snake in the rope will vanish. Even so if you get knowledge of Brahman or the Imperishable, the illusion of body and the world will disappear. In Vivarta Vada the cause produces the effect without undergoing any change in itself. Snake is only an appearance on the rope. The rope has not transformed itself into a snake, like milk into curd. Brahman is immutable and eternal. Therefore it cannot change itself into the world. Brahman becomes the cause of the world through Mava, which is His inscrutable mysterious power or Sakti.

When you come to know that it is only a rope, your fear disappears. You do not run away from it. Even so, when you realise the eternal, immutable Brahman, you are not affected by the phenomena or the names and forms of this world. When Avidya or the veil of ignorance is destroyed through knowledge of the Eternal, when Mitya Jnana or false knowledge is removed by real knowledge of the Imperishable or the Living Reality you shine in your true, pristine, divine splendour and glory.

The world is not an illusion according to Sankara. The world is relatively real for him (Vvavaharic satta), while Brahman is absolutely real (Paramartha satta). The world is the product of Mava or Avidya. The Unchanging Brahman appears as the changing world through Mava. Mava is a mysterious indescribable power of the Lord, which hides the real and manifests the unreal. Maya is not real, because it vanishes when you attain knowledge of the Eternal. It is not unreal also, because it exists till knowledge dawns in you. The superimposition of the world on Brahman is due to Avidya or ignorance.

To Sankara the Jiva or the individual soul is only relatively real. Its individuality lasts only so long as it is subject to unreal Upadhis or limiting conditions due to Avidya. The Jiva identifies itself with the body, mind and the senses when he is deluded by Avidya or ignorance. He thinks he acts and enjoys on account of Avidya. In reality he is not different from Brahman or the Absolute. The Upanishads

declare emphatically "Tat Twam Asi" Thou art That. Just as the bubble becomes one with the ocean, when it bursts, just as the pot either becomes one with the Universal ether, when the pot is broken, so also the Jiva or the empirical Self becomes one with Brahman when he gets knowledge of Brahman. When knowledge dawns in him through annihilation of Avidya he is freed from his individuality and finitude and realises his essential Satchitananda nature. He merges himself in the ocean of bliss. The river of life joins the ocean of existence. This is the Truth

The release from Samsara means according to Sankara the absolute merging of the individual soul in Brahman due to dismissal of the erroneous notion that the Soul is distinct from Brahman. According to Sankara, Karma and Bhakti are means to Jnana, which is Moksha.

VISISTADWAITA PHILOSOPHY

I

(Sri Ramanujacharya was born in Sriperumbudur in the year 1037 A.D. He built his celebrated system of philosophy known as Visishtadwaita or qualified monism. Ramanuja's philosophy is an Adwaita or non-dualism with a qualification or Vishesha. It admits plurality. Sri Ramanuja's Brahman or Lord Narayana subsists in a plurality of forms as souls (Chit) and matter (achit). Hence it is called Visishtadwaita or qualified non-dualism. Visishtadwaita philosophy is Vaishnavism.† The Sampradaya of Ramanuja's cult or creed is Sri Sampradaya. His followers are Vaishnavites. Ramanuja systematised the philosophy of Vaishnavism. Ramanuja's religion is called Sri Vaishnavism, because Sri or the Goddess Lakshmi is made to have an important function to perform in it.)

Sri Sankara's philosophy is too high, subtle and abstract for the vast majority of persons. But Sri Ramanuja's philosophy is suitable for those in whom the devotional element preponderates. (In Sri Ramanuja's system of philosophy the Lord (Narayana) has two inseparable Prakaras or modes, viz., the world and the souls. These are related to Him as the body is related to the Soul. They have no existence apart from Him. They inhere in Him as attributes in a

substance. Matter and souls constitute the body of the Lord. The Lord is their indweller. He is the controlling reality. Matter and the souls are the subordinate elements. They are termed Viseshanas, attributes. God is the Viseshya or that which is qualified.)

(The Visishtadwaita is so-called because it inculcates the Adwaita or oneness of God with Visesha or attributes. It is, therefore, qualified monism. God alone exists. All else that is seen is His manifestations or attributes. God or Lord Narayana of Sri Ramanuja is a complex organic whole, Vishista. It is one. Hence the name Visishtadwaita.)

According to Sri Sankara the manifestation is unreal and temporary. It is a result of Avidya or Ignorance. According to Sri Ramanuja, the attributes are real and permanent. But they are subject to the control of the One Brahman. God can be one despite the existence of attributes, because they cannot exist alone, they are not independent entities. They are Prakaras or the modes, Sesha or the accessories and Niyamya or the controlled of the One Brahman.

(The Visishtadwaita system is an ancient one. It was expounded by Bodhayana in his Vrithi, written about 400 B.C. It is the same as that expounded by Ramanuja. Ramanuja followed Bodhayana in his interpretation of the Brahma-Sutras.

The Bhakti school worshipped the Personal God. They developed devotion to Vasudeva or Narayana. Those who worshipped the Personal God were called as Baghavatas. They had their own scriptures called the Pancharatra Agamas, which were regarded by them as being equal to the Upanishads. The Bhakti movement was further strengthened in South India by the work of the twelve Alwar Saints. The hymns composed by the Alwar Saints were called collectively by the name Nalayira Prabandham, a series of four thousand.

Then came the Vaishnava Acharyas Natha Muni, Yamunacharya and Ramanujacharya. They were great scholars. They gave a philosophical basis and colouring to their beliefs and practices. The Alvars solely relied on Bhakti, but these Acharyas combined Jnana and Karma with it for the realisation of God. They regarded Jnana and

Karma as means for realising God. Their object was to reconcile the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita with the Tamil Prabbanda. They interpreted the Tamil Prabbanda in terms of the Upanishads and Gita. Therefore, they were called by the name Ubhaya-Vedantins. Ramanuja accepts the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Tamil works of Alwars also as the source of authority for his philosophy. Therefore, his system is known as Ubhaya-Vedanta.

Natha Muni, raised the Prabbanda to the level of the Vedas. Yamunacharya laid the foundations on which Ramanuja, his successor, built his philosophy.

Ramanuja wrote the commentaries on Brahma-Sutras known as the Sri Bhashya. He wrote commentary on the Baghawad Gita also. He wrote also three other books Vedanta Sara, Vedartha Sangraha and Vedanta Deepa. These are the chief texts of the Visishtadwaita system of philosophy.)

Ramanuja accepts perception, inference and scripture as valid sources of knowledge. The Vedas and the Smritis are the sole and independent authority for the knowledge of Brahman. He adopts the theories of Satkarya Vada and Parinama Vada.

II

According to Ramanuja, whatever is, is Brahman; but Brahman is not of a homogeneous nature. It contains within itself elements of plurality on account of which it truly manifests itself in a diversified world. (Ramanuja's Brahman, is essentially a Personal God, the All-powerful and All-wise Ruler of a real world, permeated and animated by his spirit. There is thus no room for the distinction between Param Nirgunam and an Aparam Saguna Brahman, between Brahman and Ishwara. Ramanuja's Brahman is Savisesha Brahman, i.e., Brahman with attributes.)

The Lord is interpenetrating. He is the essence of the Soul. He is the Antaryamin or the Inner Ruler. He is one with the Soul. He is all-pervading (Vibhu). He is the Supreme Being. He is full of auspicious attributes. He is of the nature, Satyam (Truth), Jnanam (Intelligence) and Anandam (bliss). Matter and Soul depend on Him.

He is the Adhara or support for this world and all souls. He is not the Impersonal Absolute, but He is a Personal God with the qualities of Omnipotence, omniscience and infinite love. God is Saguna. When the Vedic texts declare that He is Nirguna, it means that there are no base or lower qualities such as sorrow, pain, mortality, change, old age in Him. God is the Governor or Controller (Niyantri or Niyanta or Seshin) of the world. Jiva or soul is Sesha or Niyamya (one who is being controlled). (Ramanuja identifies God with Narayana. He dwells in Vaikunta with His Sakti or consort Lakshmi. Lakshmi is the Goddess of wealth. She is the divine Mother. She pleads with Her husband on behalf of man. She introduces the devotee to Her Lord and obtains for him salvation. Lakshmi occupies a pre-eminent place in Vaishnavism.)

The Lord is immanent. He is also transcendent. He is unchanging. The entire universe is latent in Him during Pralaya. The world is projected during creation but this does not touch His essence. Ramanuja's Brahman has internal difference (svagata bheda). It is a synthetic whole, with souls and matter as his modes (chitachut visista). Para, Vyuh, Vibhava (avatars), Archas (idols) and Antaryami are the five forms of the Lord.

III

The world with its variety of material forms of existence and individual souls is not unreal Mava, but a real part of Brahman's nature. It is the body of the Lord. Matter is real. It is achit or non-conscious substance. It undergoes a real Parinama or evolution. Matter exists in a subtle state as the Prakara of God during Pralaya. Hence it is eternal, but ever dependent. It is controlled by the will of God. It is neither good nor bad. It becomes a source of pleasure or of pain according to the nature of the Karma of souls. It forms the object of experience for the souls.

Prakriti has three Gunas of Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, but Suddha tattva has only Sattva. It is pure matter. Suddha tattva is the substance which constitutes the body of God, and is called His nitva-vibhuti. The manifested world is His lila-vibhuti.

IV

The soul is a higher prakara of God than matter because, it is a conscious entity. It is of the essence of God. According to Ramanuja, God, Soul and Nature are three eternal entities. The soul is self-conscious, unchanging, partless and atomic (*anu*). The souls are infinite in number. The individual soul of Ramanuja is really individual. It is absolutely real and eternally distinct from God. It has indeed sprung from Brahman and is never outside Brahman; but nevertheless it enjoys a separate personal existence and will remain a personality forever.

According to Ramanuja, there are three classes of souls *viz.*, Nitya (eternal), Mukta (free) and Baddha (bound). The eternal Jivas have never been in bondage. They are eternally free. They live with God in Vaikunta. The freed (Mukta) souls were once subject to Samsara, but have attained salvation now and live with God. The bound souls are caught up in the meshes of Samsara and are striving to be released. They wander from life to life till they are redeemed.

Man or the individual soul is a particle of which God is the whole. Individual soul is like a spark of that mass of fire. The whole pomegranate-fruit represents the Brahman of Ramanuja. Each seed corresponds to the individual soul.

When the individual soul is immersed in worldliness or Samsara, its knowledge is contracted (*sankucheta*). It gets body according to its past Karma and goes from birth to death and from death to birth till it attains Moksha or the final emancipation. When it attains Moksha its knowledge expands (*vikasa*). It knows everything. Every action that contracts the heart of the soul is bad, and every action that expands the heart of the soul is good. This is the statement of Ramanuja. (The soul is marching on in this Samsara expanding or contracting through its good and evil actions till it attains the final emancipation through the grace of Lord Nārāyaṇa. The grace descends on those souls who are pure and are struggling for the divine grace.)

V

According to Ramanuja Moksha only means the soul's passing from the troubles of mundane life into a kind of

heaven or paradise (Vaikunta) where it will remain forever in undisturbed personal bliss in the presence of God. The liberated soul attains to the nature of God. He never becomes identical with Him. He lives in fellowship with the Lord either serving Him or meditating on Him. He never loses his individuality. There is no such thing as Jivanmukta according to Ramanuja. Salvation comes when the soul leaves the body.

(The final emancipation can be obtained only through Bhakti and grace of the Lord. The grace of the Lord comes through devotion and Prapathi or absolute self-surrender. Karma and Jnana are only means to Bhakti.)

DWAITA PHILOSOPHY

(Sri Madhwacharya evolved a dualistic system of philosophy out of the Prastanatriya viz, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita and the Brahma-Sutras. It is an unqualified dualism. This system was developed in the twelfth century. Madhwa was born in 1199 A.D. in a village near Udipi.

His Vaishnavism is called Sad-Vaishnavism in order to distinguish it from the Sri Vaishnavism of Ramanujacharya. Madhwa makes an absolute distinction between God, animate and inanimate objects. God is the only independent reality. The animate and inanimate objects are dependent realities. Madhwa's vedanta is the doctrine of absolute differences. It is an Atyanta-bheda-darsana. He insists on five great distinctions (Pancha-bhedah), (1) the distinction between God and the individual soul, (2) the distinction between God and matter, (3) the distinction between the individual soul and matter, (4) the distinction between one soul and another, (5) the distinction between one material thing and another. Madhwa's philosophy is a philosophy of distinction.*)

You can clearly grasp his philosophy if you study his commentary on the Brahma-Sutras and Anu vakhyana, his commentaries on the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita and his glosses on the Mahabharata. (Bharatatatparya and the Baghavat Purana.

*Every follower of the Madhwa School should have a firm belief in the Pancha-bheda.

(Sri Madhva's philosophy has many points in common with those of Ramanuja. In Sri Madhva's system of philosophy, Hari is the Supreme Being. The world is real. Difference is true. All the jivas are dependent on Hari, the Lord. There are grades of superiority and inferiority among the individual souls. The individual soul enjoys its innate bliss. This is Moksha or the final emancipation, Bhakti without faults is the means of attaining Moksha.) Perception, inference and the scriptures are the three Pramanas or ways of knowledge. Hari is knowable only through the Vedas. Worship of Lord Krishna as taught in the Bhagawat Purana is the centre of his religion.

According to Madhva, Padartha is of two kinds—dependent (Svatantra) and dependent (Paratantra) God, the Supreme Being, is the only independent reality. The dependent beings are of two varieties, positive and negative. Conscious souls (Achetana) and unconscious entities like matter and time (Achetana) are the two varieties of the positive Unconscious entity is either eternal like the Vedas, eternal and non-eternal like Prakriti, time and space are non-eternal like the products of Prakriti.

(God, the soul and the world are all eternal entities fundamentally different from one another. Of these God alone is an independent reality (Svatantra) The soul and the world are dependent realities. God rules them. He lives in Vaikunta along with Lakshmi, His consort. She is His Sakti or energy.) She is the personification of His power or creative energy. He manifests Himself through various Vyuhas or forms and Avatars. He is also the Antaryamin or the Inner Controller of all souls.

(The Supreme Being is Vishnu or Narayana. He is the Personal first cause. He is the Intelligent Governor of the world. He and His consort Lakshmi are real. Brahma and Vayu are two of his sons.) You can know His nature through a study of the Vedas. He is present in the sacred images. He creates, maintains and destroys the world. Lakshmi can put on various forms without a material body. She is co-eternal with Vishnu and all-pervading. She beholds the glory of Her Lord through eternity. She is

Nityamukta, i.e., eternally free from Samsara. She is not affected by sorrow and pain. She is intelligent. Prakriti Vishnu is greater than Lakshmi in subtlety and extent of qualities. God is the efficient but not the material cause of the world, because Prakriti which is the world-stuff is different from Him.

God is free from Doshas or faults. He is endowed with all auspicious qualities. He is omnipresent or all-pervading and independent. He is beyond time and space. He is greater than Lakshmi. There is no other who is greater than Lakshmi. She is the foremost of the dependents.

The world is not an illusion according to Madhwa. It is not also a transformation of God like curd and milk. Madhwa does not admit that the world is the body of God. (The distinction between God and the world is absolute and unqualified. Hence the system of Madhwa is called Dvaita or dualism. Prakriti is the material cause of the world. It evolves into the visible world. All the objects, bodies and organs of the souls are all made out of Prakriti. God energises Prakriti through Lakshmi. Then there is creation.)

Mahat, Ahamkara (egoism), Buddhi, mind, ten senses, five sense objects and the five great elements are the modifications of Prakriti. These exist in the primordial Prakriti in subtle forms before their evolution.

The three aspects of Prakriti are presided over by the three aspects of Lakshmi, Sri Bhū and Durgā. Avidyā is a form of Prakriti. It obscures the spiritual powers of the individual soul. It forms a veil which hides the Supreme from the vision of the individual soul.

The entire universe is filled with Jivas or individual souls. No two Jivas are alike in character. They are different from God and from matter. They are all of atomic size. They are essentially different from one another. There are different grades amongst them even in their enjoyment of bliss after salvation. There is plurality of Jivas. Every atom of space is filled up with Jivas. Madhwa says in his Tattvanirnaya, "Infinite are the souls dwelling in an atom of space". He regards the distinction between Brahman

and Jiva as real. Though the jiva is limited in size, it pervades the body owing to its quality of intelligence. The jivas are active agents, but they depend on the guidance of the Lord. The Lord impels the jivas to action in accordance with their previous conduct. They are eternal and by nature blissful. But the connection with material bodies due to their past karma makes them suffer pain and undergo transmigration. So long as they are not freed from their impurities, they wander about in the Samsara. They pass from birth to death and from death to birth. When their impurities are removed, they attain salvation. The natural bliss of the soul becomes manifest at the time of Moksha or salvation.

Madhwa accepts Ramanuja's classification of souls into Nitya (like Lakshmi), Mukta (the gods, men, Rishis, sages and fathers) and Baddha. The third group consists of two classes: (i) those who are eligible for Moksha (Mukti-yogya) and (ii) those who are not so eligible. Of those who are not eligible for salvation, there are two classes: (a) those who are bound to the cycle of samsara forever (nitya-sansarins) and (b) those whose destiny is hell, the region of blinding darkness (tamo-yogya). Some are pre-ordained for the final emancipation by their inherent aptitude. Some others are eternally destined either to wander in samsara without end or to go to the world of darkness. The Sattvika souls go to heaven; the Rajasa souls revolve in samsara; the Tamasa souls fall into hell.

{ Bhakti is the means to salvation. Souls attain salvation through the grace of God. That grace comes on the devotee only through the mediator Vayu, the son of Vishnu. God cannot be approached directly. Vayu is the mediator. The grace of the Lord is in proportion to the intensity of devotion. Worship of God is the indispensable preliminary condition for obtaining the grace of God. The soul is saved by the knowledge that it is dependent on God and is under His control. Correct knowledge results in the love of God. Bhakti is the result of knowledge of the greatness of God. Good moral life is a preliminary for Moksha. The devotee attains direct intuitive realisation of God through meditation and divine grace. Then he is freed from the round of births and deaths. }

The soul does not attain equality with God. It is entitled only to serve Him.

Even in heaven there is essential differences among the Jivas. The classes of souls in the realm of bliss are various. There are different grades also. The liberated souls are not all equal but there is no discord among them, because they all know Brahman and have no faults.

The worship of Vishnu consists in : (1) Ankana, marking the body with His symbols, (2) Namakarana, giving the names of the Lord to children, (3) Bhajana, singing His glories. Sri Madhwa had laid much stress on the constant practice of remembrance of God (Smarana). He says "Form a strong habit of remembering God. Then only it will be easy for you to remember at the moment of death". He pointed out that when the Lord incarnated, no Prakrita Deha or material body is put on by Him. He has prescribed a rigorous kind of fasting to his followers.

Renunciation, devotion and direct cognition of the Lord through meditation lead to the attainment of salvation. The aspirant should equip himself with the study of Vedas, control of the senses, dispassion and perfect self-surrender, if he wants to have vision of the Lord. These are some of the important teachings of Sri Madhwacharya, the renowned exponent of the Dualistic School of Philosophy.

DWAITADWAITA PHILOSOPHY

I. INTRODUCTION.

(This is also known by the name Bhedabheda School of philosophy or dualistic monism. This system was evolved by Sri Nimbharkacharya. Nimbarka was a Telugu Brahmin of the Vaishnava faith. He lived some time after Ramanuja and prior to Madhwa about the eleventh century A.D. He is regarded as the incarnation of the Sun.)

He wrote a short commentary on the Brahma-Sutras called Vedanta parijata saurbha as well as Dasasloki. His commentary develops the theory of the transformation (parinama) of Brahman.

Nimbarka's view was largely influenced by the teachings of Bhaskara, who flourished in the first half of the ninth century and who interpreted the Vedanta system from the view-point of Dwaitadwaita or dualistic non-dualism. This doctrine was not a new discovery of Bhaskara. It was upheld by the ancient teacher Audulomi to which Sri Vyasa himself refers in his Vedanta Sutas.

Nimbarka holds that the relation of God to the Soul and the world is one of identity in difference. The soul and the world are different from God because they are endowed with qualities different from those of God. They are not different from God at the same time because God is Omnipresent and they depend entirely on Him.

Nimbarka's philosophy admits Brahman as the Supreme Reality without a second. The world and the Jivas are only partial manifestations of His Power (Sakti).

Jiva and Brahman are self-conscious. Jiva is limited. Brahman is Infinite. Brahman is independent reality. Jiva and Prakriti are dependent realities. Jiva is the enjoyer (Bokta) The world is the enjoyed (bhogya). Brahman is the Supreme Controller (Niyanta).

The God, Jiva and the world are not absolutely distinct. If the Supreme Being is absolutely distinct from the individual-soul and the world, it cannot be omnipresent. It will be as limited as the individual soul or the world. It cannot therefore be regarded as their Governor. Nimbarka says that both difference and non-difference are real. The soul and the world are different from Brahman as they are endowed with natures and qualities different from those of Brahman. They are not different, as they cannot exist by themselves and depend absolutely on Brahman. Such a relation exists between the Sun and its rays, the fire and its sparks. The souls and matter are distinct from God, but they are closely connected with Him as waves with water or coils of a rope with the rope itself. They are both distinct and non-distinct from Brahman.

II. GOD

In this School Brahman is regarded as both the efficient and material cause of the world. Brahman is both Nirguna and Saguna as it is not exhausted in the creation, but also transcends it.

The ultimate Reality exists in four forms. In its primary form It is the Unconditioned, Immutable, Supreme Brahman. In its second form It is Ishwara, the Lord of the Universe. In the third form It is called Jiva or the individual soul. In its fourth form It is manifested as the universe of names and forms. The phenomenal universe is a part of Brahman. It has no existence separate from and independent of Brahman. The relation between the world and Brahman is also one of Bhedabheda. The universe is not different from Brahman.

Nimbarka identifies the Supreme Brahman with Krishna. He is endowed with all auspicious qualities. He is free from egoism, ignorance, passion and attachment. He has the four forms (Vyuhas) viz. Vasudeva, Pradyumna, Sankarshana and Anurudha. He also manifests Himself as the Avatars. He is the material and the efficient cause of the universe. His powers of Chit and Achit in their subtle forms manifest. Hence He is the material cause. He causes the union of the individual souls with their respective Karmas and their fruits. He provides them the proper instruments for their experience. Hence He is the efficient cause.

Brahman does not want raw materials in order to create the universe. Also he does not need hands or any other instruments. He is omnipotent. He simply wills and the whole world comes into being. His Sat Sankalpa objectifies or materialises as this universe. Just as a spider spins a cobweb out of itself, so also Brahman has evolved the universe out of Itself. This is the declaration of the Upanishads. In thus evolving the universe, Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the universe. As Brahman is all-powerful, it is perfectly within His power to be so evolved, and, at the same time to remain beyond such evolution. This is supported by the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras. Brahman has transformed Himself into this world without His Noumenal aspect being affected. This is due to the inscrutable creative power inherent in the nature of Brahman.

The Supreme Being is absolutely free from all defects. He is full of all auspicious qualities. He has a divine body. He is full of beauty, love, sweetness and charm.

III. SOUL

The individual soul is a part of the Supreme Soul. It is identical with or the same as the Supreme Soul also. Just

as a wave is both different from the ocean,—being only a part of the ocean—and identical with it,—both being water,—so also is the individual soul both different from,—being a part of the Supreme Soul—and identical with the Supreme Soul,—both being of the nature of Chaitanya (consciousness) (The relation between the Individual soul or Jiva and the Supreme Soul, or Brahman, is one of formal difference and essential identity. There is no difference between Jiva and Brahman in kind. The difference is only in degree.)

A strong wind perturbs the sea and a wave is formed. The wave is different from the ocean, though it is a part of it. The wind passes away and the wave subsides. Now it cannot be distinguished from the sea. Even so, the mind is agitated by desires and cravings. It runs towards the objects along with the senses and becomes conscious of a distinctive individuality. the ego or the finite self, beholds the relative world with its phenomena and gets experiences. When the mind becomes calm and serene by eradication of desires, it ceases to function and all the Vrittis or waves subside. The phenomenal world vanishes and the finite self realises the Infinite Self or Brahman.

The Jiva is of the form of knowledge (Jnanaswarupa though not in the sense of Sankara. It is knowledge. I) is the possessor of knowledge also, just as the sun is light and the source of light also. The relation of soul to its attribute is like that of the Dharman (the qualified) to the Dharma (the attribute) It is one of difference and non-difference (Bheda-abheda). It is minute (Anu). Though Jiva is atomic in size, it experiences the pleasures and pains throughout the body owing to its omnipresent quality of knowledge. It is everlasting. Births and deaths concern the body but not the Self.

The individual soul is the agent of activity (Karta). It has no independent knowledge or activity. It continues to exist in deep sleep and the final state of emancipation. The number of individual souls is infinite. They are all sustained and governed by God. Ananda or bliss belongs to the individual soul in all its states.

Jivas are of two classes: (1) Jivas who have knowledge of the all-pervading indwelling spirit, who have realised that the appearances are non-separate from Brahman. They are called liberated souls (Mukta). They are free from ignorance. (2) Jivas who only behold the appearances but have no knowledge of the all-pervading indwelling spirit, the support of these names and forms. They are called bound souls (baddha).

The Jiva is different from Brahman with reference to the phenomenal aspect or the body-idea. It is identical with or the same as Brahman with reference to the noumenal aspect as the indivisible whole. This is what is called Bhedabheda.

The individual souls and the world are not self-sufficient. They are guided by the Lord. In Pralaya or dissolution, these two merge in the Lord in subtle form.

Souls are infinite in number and are atomic in size. Each soul is a ray of Brahman individualised.

IV. WORLD

The world is not unreal or illusory but is a true manifestation or Parinama of Brahman. It may, however, be said to be unreal only in the sense that the present state of its existence is not self-sufficient and it has no separate existence from Brahman. The world is identical with, as well as different from Brahman, just as a wave or bubble is the same as, and at the same time, different from water.

There are three principal Tattwas: (1) Aprakrita, which is not derived from the primordial Prakriti, which is the stuff of the divine body of the Lord, which is similar to Suddha-sattva of Ramanuja and which is the basis of the Nitya-vibhuti of Ishwara, (2) Prakriti with its three Gunas, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, and (3) Kala or time. These three Tattwas or principles are also eternal like the individual soul.

The world is not an illusion for Nimbarka, as it is a manifestation (Parinama) of what is contained subtly in God.

According to Nimbarka the Sakti of Brahman is the material cause of the world. The changes of Sakti do not affect the integrity of Brahman. The body of Brahman of Ramanuja is the Sakti of Nimbarka.

V. EMANCIPATION

(Salvation is attained by real knowledge (Jnana) and true devotion (Bhakti). Real knowledge reveals the true nature of the all-pervading Brahman. True devotion leads to total self-surrender to the Lord. The individual soul retains his individuality with reference to divine enjoyment (Bhoga-samyatvam), but his will is subservient to or merged in that of Brahman. The individuality of the soul is not dissolved even in the state of Moksha or the final emancipation. Even in the state of release, the individual soul is different from, as well as identical with Brahman. This is identity with difference, Bheda-abheda.)

Brahman is revealed to the liberated soul in His pristine glory, but not in the form of a deity. The soul realises himself now as an inseparable part of Brahman. He no longer realises that he is separate or distinct individual, which he felt in bondage. He is released from his previous state of bondage. He abides now in the glory of his own true Self which is Brahman Itself. He is in full awareness or consciousness of being one with the Lord. He will not return to the world. He is freed from the round of births and deaths. As He is in union with Brahman, he attains the same status as that of Brahman, but he has no power over creation, preservation and dissolution of the world.

Avidya is beginningless. The purity of the individual soul is obscured by its Karma, which is the result of Avidya. Thus Avidya can be put to an end to by the grace of the Lord.

Prapathi or complete surrender to God is the way to release. God showers His grace on His devotees who make complete self-surrender. The grace of God lifts up the devotees to have Brahma Shakshatkara. The Lord generates devotion in them which results in God-realisation. Karma is the means for acquiring Brahma Jnana. In Nimbarka, Krishna and Radha take the places of Narayana and Lakshmi.

Radha is not simply the chief of the Gopis but is the eternal Consort of Lord Krishna.

Bhakti involves a knowledge of Brahman, the nature of the Jiva, the fruit of grace of the Lord or Mukti, the nature of the impediments to God-realisation such as the wrong identification of the Soul with the body, the senses and the mind.

SUDDHA ADWAITA PHILOSOPHY

I

The philosophy of Sri Vallabhacharya is *Suddha Adwaita* or pure monism, because he does not admit *Maya* like Sankara and believes that the whole world of matter and souls is real and only a subtle form of God. Those who bring *Maya* for the explanation of the world are not pure *Adwaitins*, because they admit a second to Brahman. Vallabha holds that Brahman can create the world without any connection with such a principle as *Maya*, but Sankara traces the universe to Brahman through the power of *Maya*. Hence the philosophy of Vallabha is called Pure monism or *Suddha Adwaita*. He expounded this system in his *Anu Bhashya*, his commentary on the *Brahma-Sutras*. He called it *Suddha Adwaita* or pure monism as against Sankara's *Keval Adwaita* and Ramanuja's qualified monism. Vallabha, (1401 A.D.) is a Telugu Brahmin of South India. He migrated to the north and developed the views of Vishnuswami who belonged to the thirteenth century. His system of thought is known by the name *Brahmavada*.

Vallabha says that the entire universe is real and is subtly Brahman. The individual souls and the world are, in essence, one with Brahman.

Jiva, Kala or time and Prakriti or *Maya* are eternal existences. They have no separate existence apart from Brahman.

Vallabha was a great Sanskrit scholar. He settled at first at Mittra and then at Bonares. He preached with great zeal the Vaishnavite cult and philosophy. He was the founder of the great Vaishnavite Mutt of Rajasthan and Gujerat. His followers are found in great numbers in Nathiwara.

Vallabha accepts the authority not only of the Upanishads, the Bhagawad-Gita and the Brahma-Sutras, but also of the Bhagavata Purana. The important works of Vallabha are Vyasa Sutra Bhashya (Anu bhashya), Jaimini Sutra Bhashya, Bhagawata Tika Subodhini, Pushti Pravaha Maryada, Siddhanta Rahasya. All these books are in Sanskrit. He has written many books in Brij Bhasha also. The scriptures are the final authority for Vallabha.

Vallabha's religion is a religion addressed to the worship of Vishnu in the form of Krishna. It was derived chiefly like the System of Chaitanya from the Vaishnava philosophy propounded by Ramanuja. It is centred round the conception of a Personal and Beneficent God, Who is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Lord Krishna is the highest Brahman. His body consists of Sat-chit-ananda. He is called Purushottama.

His followers worship Bala Krishna. They have Vatsalya bhava. Vallabha lays great stress on Pushti (grace) and bhakti. Maha Pushti is the highest grace or Anugraha, which helps the aspirants to attain God-realisation. Things come out of the Akshara (Sat-chit-ananda) like sparks from fire. These are his salient teachings.)

II

According to Vallabha God is the Absolute or the Purushottama. He is perfect. He is Sat-chit-ananda. He is infinite, eternal, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. He has all the auspicious qualities also. He is the source for this universe and all souls. God is personified as Krishna when He possesses the qualities of wisdom and action. He is the Creator of the world. The Sruti texts which say that He has no attributes, mean only that he has not the ordinary qualities. He creates the world by the mere force of His Will. He appears in various forms to please His devotees.

God is Real. There is no other Reality besides Him. He is the only Being. He is the first cause and the only cause. God is the efficient as well as the material cause of the universe.

III

The Jivas are not effects. They are Amsas or parts of God. They issue from Him spontaneously as sparks fly

from fire. A soul is atomic, but it pervades the whole body by its intelligence, just as a lamp, though confined only to a part of a room, illuminates the whole room. The soul is one with Brahman. It constitutes a part of Brahman. It is as real and eternal as Brahman.

Jegat is the world of nature. It is not illusory. It is real. It is God Himself in one form. But the Samsara is illusory. This is created by the soul around its "I-ness" and "Mine-ness". The separation from God on account of egoism makes the soul forget his original true, divine nature. Samsara is a product of the soul's imagination and action, which play round his 'I-ness' and 'Mine-ness'. On account of his selfishness, he puts himself in wrong relations with other souls and with the objective universe. He creates a web of his own and gets himself entangled in it. This is an illusion, because the web has no reality. This Samsara, the world of false relations, created by the soul is alone Maya. Samsara or Maya rises because the soul, which is not apart from God, tries to set himself up as an independent reality or entity in his own right. The self which is something apart from God is illusory. His body is illusory and his world also is illusory. All this is Samsara. It is very different from the world of nature.

There are three kinds of souls: (1) the pure (Suddha) Jivas. The divine qualities (Aisvarya) are not obscured in these souls by ignorance; (2) the worldly Jivas (Samsarin). These souls are caught in the net or clutches of Avidya. They experience births and deaths on account of their connection with gross and subtle bodies. (3) Mukta Jivas (liberated souls). These souls are freed from the bonds of Samsara through Vidya. When the soul attains the final emancipation, it recovers its suppressed qualities and becomes one with God or Brahman. The world appears as Brahman to one who has realised the Truth or Brahman.

The way of life and salvation preached by Vallabha is called Pushti Marga. The soul of man has become weak and lean on account of sin. It is therefore in dire need of

the grace of God for its uplift and emancipation. God's grace gives Pushti (nourishment, Poshana and strength). Hence the name Pushti Marga or the Way of Grace.

There is another classification of souls, viz., Pushti souls, Maryada souls and Pravahika souls. All these are different from one another in their origin, nature and final end. They all issue from God with their differences.

The Pushti souls are the highest, as they issue from the Ananda Kaya, the bliss-body of God. These souls are the Amsas of His body. God is the Amsa or the whole. These are the souls of grace. They have the divine seed in them which bears fruit in the end. They ultimately reach the goal through the grace of the Lord. They have communion and fellowship with Lord Krishna. They develop Bhakti through the grace of the Lord. The Bhakti is the means and the end in itself.

The Maryada souls are generated from the Vach, the Word of God. They are governed by law, not by grace. They perform their ritualistic duties at first with selfish interests. Later on they develop Nishkamya Bhav and do their ritualistic routine without any self-interest. This purifies their mind. They reach the Akshara which is a kind of vestibule to the abode of God. Afterwards they attain the supreme abode of God.

The Pravahika souls issue from the mind of God. These are the Samsaric Jivas. They are the Samsaric Jivas. They are souls neither of grace nor of law. They are in continuous motion (Pravaha).

These three kinds of souls have further sub-divisions and cross-divisions into Pushti-Pushti, Pushti-Maryada, Pushti-Pravaha, Maryadha-Pushti, Pravaha-Pushti, Maryada-Pravaha, Pravaha-Maryada, Pravaha-Pravaha.

Brahman is the whole. The Jiva or the individual soul is part; but there is no real difference between Brahman and the individual soul, because the individual soul is of identical essence with Brahman. Brahman is the fire. The individual soul is the spark. According to Ramanuja, the parts are really different from the whole.

The individual soul is not Brahman, screened by the veil of Avidya. It is itself Brahman with the attribute bliss being obscured or suppressed. The soul is both a doer and an enjoyer. It is atomic in size, but it pervades the whole body by its quality of intelligence, just as sandalwood pervades even the places where it does not exist by its sweet fragrance.

IV

Ananda or bliss is suppressed or obscured in the individual soul. Ananda and consciousness are suppressed or obscured in matter or the inanimate world. The inanimate universe is filled with Brahman. Creation is manifestation of Brahman. The universe is the effect of Brahman. The universe is as eternal and real as Brahman Himself. The world is not an illusory appearance. It is not different from Brahman in essence. Creation and destruction are due to the Sakti of Brahman.

Brahman is the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe. Brahman manifests himself of His own Will as the universe and the individual souls, but He does not undergo any change in his essential nature. He is the creator of the world. He is also the world itself.

V

The individual soul can attain the final emancipation only through the grace of God. Bhakti is the chief means of salvation. Jnana is useful. Maha-pushti or the highest grace removes great obstacles and helps in the attainment of God. The Bhakti generated by special grace is known as Pushti Bhakti.

This Pushti-Bhakti is of four kinds : (1) Pravaha Pushti Bhakti (2) Maryada Pushti Bhakti (3) Pushti-Pushti Bhakti (4) Suddha-Pushti-bhakti. Pravaha Bhakti is the path of those who while leading worldly life perform works which will lead to the attainment of God-realisation. Worldly life is compared to the flow of a river (Pravaha). In Pushti-bhakti the devotees lead a life of self-restraint. They hear discourses about the Lord. They do Kirtan and sing His name. They do Japa of Mantra. The third is the path of those who are rendered fit to attain knowledge, which is

useful for worship through the grace of the Lord. They know all about the ways of God. They depend upon their own efforts to obtain knowledge.

In *Suddha-Pushti Bhakti* the devotees do *Kirtans* and sing Lord's name. They praise God. They develop a strong passion for doing these. This kind of devotion is generated by the Lord Himself. The Lord's grace descends on the devotees. Then they develop a liking for God. This liking grows into *Prema Bhakti*. The devotees acquire knowledge about God. Then they get attachment to God (*Asakti*). Then they develop a strong passion for attaining God. This is the ripe condition of love and *Asakti*. It is called *Vyasana*. This strong passion *Vyasana* leads to the attainment of the highest bliss, the *summum bonum* or the end.

The supreme goal is not *Mukti* or emancipation. The highest goal is eternal service of Lord Krishna and participation in His sports in the celestial *Brindavana*. Those who have developed *Vyasana* or the strong passion reject with scorn the four kinds of *Mukti*. They choose with intense delight the eternal service of Sri Krishna. The *Bhaktas* assume the forms of cows, birds, trees and rivers and enjoy the company of Sri Krishna, which bestows infinite joy. These sports are similar to those which Sri Krishna did in *Vraja* and *Brindavana*. Some of the devotees become *Gopas* and *Gopis* and join the sports in the celestial *Brindavan*. The *Matyada Bhaktas* attain *Savujya Mukti*. They become one with Sri Krishna. The *Pushti Bhaktas* reject *Mukti* and take part in the sports or *Lilas* of Sri Krishna.

When love for Sri Krishna becomes intense, the devotee sees Lord Krishna everywhere. Hence everything becomes an object of love for him. He identifies himself with everything. The *Gopis* had this experience. They saw Krishna everywhere. They saw themselves also as Krishna. This is *Para Bhakti* or supreme devotion, which becomes akin to the knowledge or *Brahmajnana* of *Vedantins* or *Jnanis*. The inner and outer world is full of Krishna or *Purushottama* for such devotees. The fruit of this devotion is admission to the eternal sports or *Lilas* of Sri Krishna.

The liberated souls are of different kinds. Some have freed themselves like Sanaka. Some dwell in the city of God, and attain salvation through the grace of the Lord. Some others develop perfect love and become the associates of God.

When the soul attains bliss and the inanimate world, both consciousness and bliss, the difference between Brahman and these vanishes.

ACHINTYA BHEDABHEDA PHILOSOPHY

I

{ Sri Chaitanya or Lord Gouranga is the greatest Vaishnava teacher of the North (fifteenth century). He gave a new form to the Vaishnava faith. He was born in 1486 A.D.

Chaitanya had a very large heart. He accepted converts from Islam freely. His disciple Haridas was a Moslem fakir. Nitvananda spread far and wide the Chaitanya movement. Rup and Sanatan who descended from a prince of Karnat and settled in Bengal and their nephew Jiva Goswami were great Sanskrit scholars and were the fathers of Chaitanya movement. Jiva Goswami and Baladeva furnished the philosophical basis for the sect. The philosophical classics of the School are Jiva's Satsandarbhya and his own commentary on it, Sarva Samvadini and Baladeva's Govindabhashya on the Brahma-Sutras. Baladeva's Prameyasaritnavali is also another popular book. Jiva and Baladeva were greatly influenced by the views of Ramanuja and Madhwa. They admit God, Souls, Maya or Prakriti, Suddha Sattwa and Kala or Time.

The world and souls depend on God though they are separate and distinct from Him. They are neither one with God nor different from Him. There is an incomprehensible difference—non-difference (Achintya Bhedabheda).

The ultimate Reality is Vishnu. He is the God of love and grace. He is one without a second. He is Sat Chit Ananda. He is Nirguna in the sense that He is free from the qualities of Maya. He is Saguna as He is endowed with the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience. He is the material and the efficient cause of the world. He is the

source, support and end of this universe. He is the efficient cause through His higher energy (Para Sakti). He is the material cause through his other energies, Aparā-Sakti and Adya-Sakti. The Avatāras are one with the Supreme. They are not parts like the individual souls. God assumes infinite forms, of which the chief is that of Krishna. Rādhā, is the essence of the delight-giving power of Lord Krishna (Hladini). Lord is the ruler of all souls. He is omnipresent or all-pervading.)

The soul is of atomic size. The souls are created by the Tātastha Sakti or Jiva-Sakti of the Lord. Lord's Svarupa-Sakti supports His Jiva-Sakti. The Saktis have no independent existence. They depend upon God. God and His powers are either identical or different. Lord creates the universe from the great principle of Mahat. He manifests the Vedas and communicates them to Brahman. The work of creating other stages of creation is given to Brahman. The souls and matter are the manifestations of God's energy according to Jiva Goswami and Baladeva. Maya is set in vibration by the mere gazing of the Lord.

The soul is bound by the power of Maya. Maya makes him forget his real, essential, divine nature. He can have God-realisation through spiritual love or Prema to Lord Krishna. Bhakti overcomes the force of Karma. Bhakti is the way to the final emancipation. Through Bhakti the soul attains to a status of equality with God, but he is never absorbed in Him. He is freed from the round of births and deaths.

Brahman is abstract. Bhagawan is the creator of the world. He is concrete. Jivanmukti through the intuition of Brahman is of no use for the love of Bhagawan.

Veneration for the preceptor is a fundamental feature. Study of the Vedas, the Bhagavata Purana, etc., is inculcated. Practice of ethics, development of ethical virtues such as mercy towards all creatures, humility, purity of heart, freedom from mundane desires and serenity, truthfulness are essential. The distinctions of caste have to be ignored. Any one can obtain the grace of the Lord.

II

Chaitanya insisted on the unity of the God-head which underlies the multitude of idols of popular worship. He taught that God can be realised only by means of ardent and all-absorbing love. He wrote to a royal minister who had asked if there was any path of salvation for a man leading an active life: "As an immoral woman constantly thinks of her illicit lover while living in the midst of her family, so do thou silently and ceaselessly meditate on Hari while doing your worldly activities."

According to Chaitanya, ardour is born from the culture of Bhakti; when ardour deepens it is called love (Prem). When love grows, it is successively called Sneha Pranaya, Anurag, Bhav, Mahabhav, just as we have successively cane-seed, sugarcane juice, molasses, sugar and fine sugarcandy. In different devotees Rati assumes different forms, viz., the Santa, the Dasya, the Sakhya, the Vatsalya and the Madhurya.

The following qualities make a Vaishnava. He is compassionate, truthful, saintly, innocent, charitable, gentle, pure, spiteless, humble, serene, tender, friendly, silent. He is a universal benefactor. He solely depends upon Lord Krishna. He is desireless. He is abstemious in diet, and self-controlled. He has mastery over the six enemies. He honours others and does not care for honour from others.

When passion (Rati) in Krishna deepens it is called Prem (love). This is the permanent form of Bhakti in Krishna. From taste (Ruchi) comes strong inclination (Asakti) which generates the sprout of passion for Krishna. When this emotion deepens, it becomes Prem. That devotee who has developed Prem always communes with Lord Krishna. No mundane sorrow or affliction can perturb his mind. He has no attraction for earthly objects. He has no fear. He never cares for material success. He intensely longs for union with Lord Krishna. He never takes delight in singing Lord Krishna's names.

When the permanent emotion (Bhav) is mingled with Ras, it is changed into Vibhava, Anubhava, Satwika, Vyabhi-chari, just as curd when being mixed with black sugar,

black pepper and camphor becomes a thing of extreme deliciousness named *Rasal*. *Vibhava* is of two kinds : *Alamban*, which is kindled by Krishna, etc. (2) *Uddipan*, by the notes of His flute, etc. *Anubhava* is stimulated by smile, dance and song. Stupor and other sensations are included in *Satwika anubhava*. *Vabhuchari* is of 33 kinds, such as delight, rapture, etc.

Ras is of five kinds—*santi*, *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya* and *madhur*. In the *Santa ras*, *Rati* advances to the stage of *prem*; in the *Dasya* to *Rag*; *Sakhya* and *Vatsalya* attain to the limit of *Anurag*.

The supreme healer in this iron age is *Sankirtan* of the Name. It is equivalent to the Vedic sacrifice. The true sacrificer is rewarded with Krishna's feet. *Sankirtan* enables you to conquer sin and the world. It creates purity of soul, all kinds of *bhakti*. It is not restricted to a particular place or time. It works everywhere. It bears the name of *Sarva-sakti* (omnipotent).

Hari's name should always be chanted by him, who must be humbler than a blade of grass (which is trodden upon); who is more patient, forbearing and charitable than a tree (which does not cry out even when it is cut down, and which does not beg for water even when scorched to death, but on the contrary, offers its treasure to whosoever seeks it, bears the sun and rain itself but protects those who take shelter under it from rain and sunshine); who however worthy of esteem should, instead of claiming respect of himself, give respect to all (from a sense of God's immanency in all beings). He who thus takes Krishna's name gets Krishna's "Prem."

III

Just as the sun has its light and the fire its heat, so the Supreme God, Krishna, has naturally His energies or *Shaktis*, which are mysterious and incomprehensible. These energies are of three kinds, viz, *Chit-Sakti*, *Jiva-Sakti* and *Maya-Sakti*. They are also called *Antaranga*, *Tatastha* and *Bahiranga* respectively.

Jiva sakti is called *Tatastha* because it occupies an intermediate place between *Chit-sakti* and *Maya-sakti*. Jiva is the eternal servant of God. He bears the same relation to God as the sun's rays bear to the sun and as a spark bears to the mass of fire, from which it flits out. The ray, although it radiates from the sun and is part and parcel of the sun is not the sun, so also Jiva, who is partly similar to God in respect of his spirituality or *Chaitanya* and partly dissimilar on account of his animal nature and susceptibility to the influence of *Maya* is not God Himself.

Jiva, illumined and infatuated by *Maya*, can naturally have no knowledge of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna has, therefore, out of His infinite mercy created the Vedas and reveals Himself to Jiva through the medium of scriptures, Guru and intuition. Then He is convinced that Lord Krishna is His Lord and saviour.

Love of Krishna is the highest thing worth attaining. *Bhakti* is the means of attainment. *Krishna-prema* is indeed the highest achievement of life. This *Prema* makes the devotees serve Krishna in a selfless spirit and enjoy the *Rasa* or sweetness of the Lord. *Bhakti* is the only means of attaining Krishna and is therefore spoken of as *Avidhya* or means. Just as wealth gives comforts and with the enjoyment of comforts all worldly miseries disappear of their own accord, so also *Bhakti* generates *Krishna-prema* and with the enjoyment of *Prema* the cycle of births and deaths comes to an end. Escape from the effects of privations and the stoppage of rebirths are not, however, the fruits of *Prema*. *Beatitude* or *Moksha* is *Prema's* handmaid. Therefore this *Krishna-prema* is regarded as the supreme attainment.

The Supreme Lord Krishna manifests Himself as Brahman to Jnans, as *Param Atma* to Yogis and as *Bhagawan* full of all glories, all beauties and all sweetness and all attributes to *Bhaktas*. Lord Krishna is the Soul of all souls and the Lord of all that is. A *Bhakta* only has full knowledge of the Supreme Personal God with all His divine attributes. Krishna's form is unique. He assumes endless forms. All these forms are divided into three classes, viz., *Swayam-rupa*, *Tadekatma-rupa* and *Avesta-rupa*.

Chit-Sakti created Vaikuntha. There is only pure Sattva in Vaikuntha. Maya has no access here. Kala cannot execute its destructive power.

Matsya, Kurma, Narasimha, Vamana, Varaha, Rama, Krishna, etc., are Lila-avatars. There are Gunavataras and Manvantaravataras. The four Sanakas, Narada, Prithu, Parasurama, Brahma, Sesha in Vaikuntha and Ananta who supports the earth are the chief Avestavataras of the major type who have direct power from God. In Sanakas Jnana-Sakti, in Narada, Bhakti Sakti, in Brahma creating Sakti, in Ananta the earth-supporting Sakti, in Sesha, God-serving Sakti, in Prithu, the power of preserving people, in Parasurama the power of destroying the wicked prevailed

SAIVA SIDDHANTA PHILOSOPHY

I

(The Saiva Siddhanta system is the distilled essence of Vedanta. It prevailed in Southern India even before the Christian era. Tinnevely and Madura are the centres of Saiva Siddhanta school. Saivites elaborated a distinctive philosophy called the Saiva Siddhanta about the eleventh century A.D. Even now Saivism is a very popular creed in South India. It is a rival school of Vaishnavism.

Tirumular's work Tirumanthiram is the foundation upon which the later structure of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy was built. The twenty-eight Saiva Agamas, the hymns of the Saiva saints form the chief sources of southern Saivism.

In the books which treat of Saivism there is a reference to four schools, viz., Nakulisa-pasupata, the Saiva, the Pratybhijna and the Rasesvara.

Saiva Siddhanta is the philosophy of Southern Saivism. It owes its origin to no single author. It is midway between Sankara's Advaita and Ramanuja's Vishistadvaita. Its literature consists chiefly of (i) the twenty-eight Saivite Agamas, (ii) the collection of Saivite hymns known as Tirumurai* (iii) the collection of the lives of the Saivite saints

*Compiled by Nambi Andar Nambi, which includes Tirumandiram of Tirumular, the Tevaram of Appar, Sundarar and Sambandar and the Tiruvachakam of Manickavachakar.

known as Periyapurānam (iv) Meykandar's Sivajnanabodham, (v) Arulnandi's Sivajnanasiddhiar, and (vi) the works of Umapati.

The central doctrine of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy is that Siva is the Supreme reality and that the Jiva or the individual Soul is of the same essence as Siva, but not identical. Pati (God), Pasu (Soul) and Pasa (the bonds) and the thirty-six Tattwas or principles, which constitute the world are all real.

Lord Siva is the Supreme Reality. He is infinite consciousness. He is eternal, changeless, formless, independent, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, one without a second, beginningless, causeless, taintless, self-existent, ever free, ever pure and perfect. He is not limited by time. He is infinite bliss and infinite intelligence.

Lord Siva pervades the whole world by His Sakti. He works through His Sakti. Sakti is conscious energy of Lord Siva. She is the very body of Lord Siva. The potter is the first cause for the pot. The stick and the wheel are the instrumental causes. The clay is the material cause of the pot. Similarly Lord Siva is the first cause of the world. Sakti is the instrumental cause. Maya is the material cause.

The one which has neither wish nor had
 Lord Siva is the God of love. His grace is Infinite, His love is Infinite. He is the saviour and Guru. He is engaged in freeing the souls from the thralldom of matter. He assumes the form of a Guru out of His intense love for mankind. He wishes that all should know Him and attain the blissful Siva Pada. He watches the activities of the individual souls and helps them in their onward march.

The five activities of the Lord (Pancha-Krtvas) are Srishti (creation), Sthithi (preservation), Sambhava (destruction), Tirobhava (veiling) and Anugraha (grace). These, separately considered are the activities of Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Maheswara and Sadasiva.

II

Lord Siva is the material cause of the world through His Sakti. He is the instrumental cause in His own nature.

He is pure consciousness but matter is pure unconsciousness. Sakti is the intermediate link between the two.)

The Supreme reality is called Siva. He is free from defects; the all-doer, the all-knower. He liberates the individual souls from their fetters or bonds.

In the Saiva Siddhanta there are thirty-six Tattvas. The Pancha Kanchukas or the fivefold envelop, viz., Niyati (order), Kala (time), Raga (interest), Vidya (knowledge), Bela (power) are above the Purusha. Maya, Suddha Vidya Iswara Sadasiva Sakti and Siva are above Kala. Sadasiva, Ishwara and Suddha Vidya constitute Vidya Tattvas. The other thirty-two form the Atma Tattvas. Siva Tattva is a class by itself.

(Maya evolves into the subtle principles and then into the gross. The individual soul experiences pleasure and pain through Avidya.) Siva Tattva is the basis of all consciousness and action. It is undifferentiated (Niskala Suddhamaya). The Sakti of Siva starts her activity. Then Siva becomes the experiencer. Then he is called Sadasiva, known also by the name Sadakhya, who is not really separate from Siva. The Suddhamaya becomes active. Then Siva, the experiencer becomes the Ruler. He is then Ishwara, who is not really separate from Sadasiva. Suddhavidya is the cause of true knowledge.

He works through His Sakti which is conscious energy which is the very body of God. It is the cause of the difference of the functions of Siva. Sakti is the reflex of Siva. It has no independent existence. He assumes this form out of His great love for mankind. Siva wishes that all should know Him.

III

The world undergoes evolution for the benefit of souls. The whole process of creation is for the sake of the salvation of souls. The world is real and eternal. The world of matter and souls forms the body of the Lord.

Sakti is not the material cause of the universe, because she is of the nature of consciousness (Chaitanya). The Saiva Siddhanta analyses the universe into thirty-six Tattvas or

principles, as against the twenty-five of the Sankhya. Maya is the material cause of the world. The thirty-six Tattvas arise from it. Suddha Maya is Maya in its primal state. From it arise the five pure principles called Siva-tattva, Sakti-tattva, Sadasiva-tattva, Ishwara-tattva and Suddhavidya tattva. Siva functions through these five pure principles.

IV

Souls (pasu) are by nature infinite, all-pervading, eternal and all-knowing like Lord Siva (Pati). Yet they think that they are finite, limited and little knowing, ignorant, temporary. This is due to their bonds (pasa), Anava, Karma and Maya which are called the three Malas or impurities. Anava is the impurity which makes the all-pervading Jiva think itself to be atomic (anu). It produces the erroneous notion of finiteness. The second impurity or bond is Karma. The soul acts in certain ways on account of its limitation and does good and evil actions. Karma brings about the conjunction of the soul with its body. The results of the Karma have to be worked out in the world. There should be worlds and bodies in order to experience the fruits of actions and acquire knowledge. These are provided by Maya, the third mala or bond. Maya is the material cause of the world. The soul gets experience and limited knowledge through Maya.

The Siddhantins divide Jivas or Pasus into three orders viz., Vijnana Kalas, Pralaya Kalas and Sakalas. Vijnana Kalas have only the Anava mala (egoism). Maya and Karma have been resolved. Pralayakalas are those who are free from Maya alone in the stage of Pralaya. Sakalas have all the malas, Anava, Karma and Maya. The malas affect only the Jivas and not Siva. Those who are freed from the malas or impurities attain Sivata or nature of Siva. They are Siddhas or perfected beings.

V

You must free yourself from the three bonds if you want to attain salvation. You must annihilate Maya, which is the root of all sins. You must destroy all karmas which produce rebirth. You must remove the erroneous notion of a finite self.

(The soul learns by long experience that this Samsara is full of pains and transitory and that he can attain eternal bliss and immortality only by attaining Sivatva or nature of Siva, or God-realisation. He develops vairagya (dispassion) and viveka (discrimination between the real and unreal, permanent, and the impermanent).

The three bonds can only be removed through rigorous tapas and proper discipline, the help of a Guru and above all, by the grace of Lord Siva. Charya (observance), Kriya (rites) and Yoga (Yama, Niyama) constitute the discipline. When the aspirant practises in right earnest Charya, Kriya and Yoga, he obtains the grace of Lord Siva. Then the Lord instructs the Soul, reveals Himself and illumines him. Then the soul realises its nature as Siva.

Discipline and grace culminate in Jnana. Jnana is the supreme means of salvation or the attainment of the final beatitude. Karma and other means are only subsidiary to it. They are only auxiliaries.

The attainment of Sivatva or Siva-nature does not mean complete merging of the soul in Siva. The liberated soul does not lose its individuality. It continues to exist as soul in God. Sivatva is the realisation of an identity of essence in spite of difference. The soul attains the nature of Siva or God, but it is not itself Siva or God.)

SAKTI YOGA PHILOSOPHY

I.

The power or active aspect of the immanent God is Sakti. Sakti is the embodiment of power. She is the supporter of the vast universe. She is the supreme Power by which the world is upheld. She is the Universal Mother. She is Durga, Kali, Chandī, Chamundi, Tripurasundarī, Rajeswarī. There is no difference between God and His Sakti, just as there is no difference between fire and its burning power.

He who worships Sakti, that is God in Mother form, as the supreme Power which creates, sustains and withdraws the universe, is a Sakta. All women are the forms of Divine Mother.

Siva is the unchanging consciousness. Sakti is His changing Power which appears as mind and matter. Sakti-vada or Saktadarshana is a form of monism or Advaitavada.

A Sakta does Sadhana which helps the union of Siva and Sakti through the awakening of the forces within the body. He becomes a Siddha in the Sadhana when he is able to awaken Kundalini and pierce the six chakras. This is to be done in a perfect practical way under the guidance of a Guru who has become perfect. The Sakti must be awakened by Dhyana, Bhava, Japa and Mantra Sakti. The Mother, the embodiment of the fifty letters is present in the various letters in the different chakras. When the chords of a musical instrument are struck harmoniously, fine music is produced. Even so, when the chords of the letters are struck in their order, the Mother who moves in the six chakras and who is the very Self of the letters awakens Herself. The Sadhak attains Siddhi easily when She is roused. It is difficult to say when and how she shows Herself and to what Sadhaka. Sadhana means unfolding, rousing up or awakening of power of Sakti. Mode of Sadhana depends upon the tendencies and capacities of the Sadhaka.

Sakti may be termed as that by which we live and have our being in this universe. In this world all the wants of the child are provided by the Mother. The child's growth, development and sustenance are looked after by the Mother. Even so all the necessities of life and its activities in this world and the energy needed for it depends upon Sakti or the universal Mother.

No one can free himself from the thralldom of mind and matter without Mother's grace. The fetters of Maya are too hard to break. If you worship Her as the great Mother you can very easily go beyond Prakriti through Her benign grace and blessings. She will remove all obstacles in the path and lead you safely into the illimitable domain of eternal Bliss and make you absolutely free. When She is pleased and bestows Her blessings on you, then alone you can free yourself from the bondage of this formidable Samsara.

The first syllable which a child or a quadruped utters is the name of the beloved Mother. Is there any child who does not owe its all to the affection and love of its Mother ?

It is the Mother who protects you, consoles you, cheers you and nurses you. She is your friend, philosopher, preceptor and guide throughout your life. Human mother is a manifestation of the Universal Mother.

(The supreme Lord is represented as Siva and His power is represented as His wife, Sakti, Durga or Kali. Just as the husband and wife look after the well-being of the family, so also Lord Siva and His Sakti are engaged in looking after the affairs of this world.

Radha, Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati and Savitri are the five primary forms of Prakriti or Devi. Durga destroyed Madhu and Kaitabha through Vishnu. As Mahalakshmi she destroyed the Asura Mahisha and as Saraswati she destroyed Sumbha and Nisumbha with their companions Dhumralochana, Chanda, Munda and Raktabija.

When Vishnu and Mahadeva destroyed various Asuras the power of Devi was behind them. Devi took Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra and gave them necessary Sakti to proceed with the work of creation, preservation and destruction. She is at the centre of the life of the universe. She is in the Muladhara Chakra in our bodies. She vitalizes the body through the Sushumna. She vitalizes the universe from the summit of Mount Meru.)

In this system of Sakti philosophy Siva is omnipresent, impersonal, inactive. He is pure consciousness. Sakti is dynamic. Siva and Sakti are related as Prakasa and Vimarsa. Sakti or Vimarsa is the power that is latent in the pure consciousness. Vimarsa gives rise to the world of distinctions. Siva is chit. Sakti is Chidrupini. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva do their functions of creation, preservation and destruction in obedience to Sakti. Sakti is endowed with Ichchha (will) Jnana (knowledge) and Kriya (action). Siva and Sakti are one. Sakti Tattva and Siva Tattva are inseparable. Siva is always with Sakti. There are thirty-six tattvas in Sakti philosophy. Sakti is in Sakti Tattva, Nada is in Sadakhya Tattva, and Bindu is in Iswara Tattva. The creative aspect of the supreme Siva is called Siva Tattva. Siva Tattva is the first creative movement. Sakti Tattva is the will of Siva. It is the seed and womb of the entire world.

The first manifestation is called the Sadakhya or Sadasiva Tattva. In this Tattva there is the beginning of formation of ideas. There is Nada Sakti in this Tattva. Next comes Iswara Tattva. This Tattva is called Bindu. The fourth Tattva is Vidya or Suddhavidya. Then Prakriti modifies into the Tattvas of the mind, senses and the matter which constitutes the world.

Nada, Bindu are all names for different aspects of Sakti, Nada is really Siva Sakti. Siva has two aspects. In one aspect He is the supreme changeless One, who is Satchudananda. This is Para Samvit. In the other aspect He changes as the world. The cause of the change is Siva Tattva. This Siva Tattva and Sakti Tattva are inseparable. Sakti Tattva is the first dynamic aspect of Brahman.

Nishkala Siva is Nirguna Siva. He is not connected with the creative Sakti. Maya or Prakriti is within the womb of the Sakti. Maya is the matrix of the world. Maya is potential in the state of dissolution. She is dynamic in creation. Maya evolves into several material elements and other physical parts of all sentient creatures under the direction of Sakti. There are thirty-six Tattvas in Sakti philosophy. In Shakti philosophy we have Brahman, Nada, Sakti, Bindu and Suddhamaya. In Saiva Siddhanta philosophy we have Siva, Sakti, Sadakhya and the Suddhamaya. The rest of the evolution in Sakti philosophy is same as in Saiva Siddhanta philosophy.

Knowledge of the Sakti leads to salvation. "Sakti Gyanam vina devi nirvanam naiva jayate"—O Devi without the knowledge of Sakti Mukti cannot be attained. (Iswara says to Devi). The Jiva or the individual soul thinks, when he is under the influence of Maya, that he is the doer and the enjoyer and identifies himself with the body. Through the grace of Sakti and through sadhana or self-culture the individual soul frees himself from all fetters and attains spiritual insight and merges himself in the Supreme.

There is in Reality nothing but the one Self. The experienced is nothing but the experiencer. Brahman appears as the world through the mirror of mind or Maya. An object is nothing but the one Self appearing through Maya as non-

self to Itself as subject. Triputi (or the knower, knowledge, knowable) vanishes in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Supreme Siva or Brahman alone exists.

In the Kenopanishad it is said that the gods became puffed up with a victory over the Asuras. They wrongly took the success to be the result of their own valour and powers. The Lord wanted to teach them a lesson. He appeared before them in the form of a Yaksha a huge form, the beginning and end of which were not visible. The Devas wanted to find out the identity of this form and sent Agni for this purpose. The Yaksha asked Agni, "What is thy name and power?" Agni replied, "I am Agni (Jatavedas). I can burn up the whole universe in a minute." The Yaksha placed before Agni a dry blade of grass and asked him to burn it. Agni was not able to burn it. He ran away from the Yaksha in shame. The gods then sent Vayu to enquire who he was. Vayu approached the Yaksha. The Yaksha asked the Vayu "Who are you? What is your power?" Vayu replied, "I am wind-god. I can blow the whole world in a minute." The Yaksha then placed a blade of grass before Vayu and challenged him to blow it away. Vayu could not make it move an inch from its place. He too left the place in shame. Last of all came Indra himself. When Indra reached the place he found that the Yaksha had vanished.

Then Uma appeared before Indra and revealed to him the real identity of the Yaksha. She said to Indra: "It is the power of the Divine Mother and not that of the gods that crowned the gods with victory. It is the Sakti of Uma or Haimavati, sister of Krishna that is the source of the strength of all the gods." Sakti is the great Teacher of Gyana. She sheds wisdom on Her devotees.

May you all obtain the grace of Sakti or the universal Mother and enjoy the supreme bliss of final emancipation!

SAKTI YOGA PHILOSOPHY

II.

Sakti is Chidroopini. She is pure, blissful Consciousness. She is the Mother of Nature. She is Nature Itself. She is the Power of Lord Siva or Brahman. She runs this world-show. She maintains the sportive play or Lila of the Lord.

She is a Jagat Janani, Creator of the world, Mahishasuramardini, destroyer of Mahishasura, Bhrantinasini (destroyer of the illusion or Avidya), and Daridryanashini (destroyer of poverty).

Devi is Sakti of Lord Siva. She is Jada Sakti and Chit Sakti. Sakti is Prakriti, Maya, Mahamaya, Sri Vidya. Sakti is Brahman itself. She is Lalita, Kundalini, Rajeswari and Tripurasundari, Sakti Parvati. Sakti manifested to Lord Siva in the ten forms as the Dasa Maha Vidya, viz., Kali, Bagalamukhi, Chinnamasta, Bhuvaneshwari, Matangi, Shodasi, Dhoomavati, Tripurasundari, Tara and Bhairavi.

Worship of Sakti or Saktism is one of the oldest and most widespread religions in the world. Everybody in this world wants power, loves to possess power. He is elated by power. He wants to domineer over others through power. War is the outcome of greed for power. Scientists are followers of Saktism. He who wishes to develop will-power and a charming personality is a follower of Saktism. In reality, every man in this world is a follower of Saktism.

Scientists say now that everything is energy only and that energy is the physical ultimate of all forms of matter. The followers of the Sakti school of philosophy have said the same thing long ago. They further say that this energy is only limited manifestation of the Infinite Supreme Power or Maha Sakti.

Sakti is always with Siva. They are inseparable like fire and heat. Sakti evolves Nada and Nada Bindu. The world is manifestation of Sakti. Suddha Maya is Chit Sakti. Prakriti is Jada Sakti. Nada, Bindu and the rest are only names for different aspects of Sakti.

The countless universe are only dust of divine Mother's holy feet. Her glory is ineffable. Her splendour is indescribable. Her greatness is unfathomable. She showers Her grace on Her sincere devotees. She leads the individual Soul from chakra to chakra, from planet to planet and unites him with Lord Siva in the Sahasrara.

The body is Sakti. The needs of the body are the needs of Sakti. When man enjoys it is Sakti who enjoys through Him. His eyes, ears, hands and feet are here. She sees

through his eyes, works through his hands, and hears through his ears. Body, mind, Prana, egoism, intellect, organs and all the other functions are Her manifestations.

Saktism speaks of Personal and the Impersonal aspects of Godhead. Brahma is Nishkala or without Prakriti and Sakala or with Prakriti. The Vedantins speak of Nirupadhika Brahman (pure Nirguna Brahma without Maya) and Sopadhika Brahma (with Upadhi or Maya) or Saguna Brahman. It is all the same. Names only are different. It is a play of words or Sabda Jalam. People fight on words only and carry on lingual warfare hair splitting, logical chopping and intellectual gymnastics. In reality the essence is One. Clay only is Truth. All modifications such as pot, etc., are in name only. In Nirguna Brahma Sakti is potential where as in Saguna Brahma Sakti is dynamic.

{ The basis of Saktism is the Veda. Saktism upholds that the only source and authority (pramana) regarding transcendental or supersensual matters such as the nature of Brahman, etc., is Veda. Saktism is only Vedanta. The Saktas have the same spiritual experiences as that of a Vedantin.

The Devi-Sookta of the Rig-Veda, the Sri Sookta, Durga Sookta, Bhoo Sookta and Neela Sookta, and the specific Sakta Upanishads such as Tripurasundari Upanishad, Sitanishad, Devi Upanishad, Saubhyagya Upanishad, Saraswati Upanishad, Bhavanopanishad, Bahvrachopanishad, etc., all emphatically declare the Mother aspect of God. The Kena Upanishad also speaks of Uma Hemavati who imparted wisdom of the self to Indra and the Devas.

{ Divine Mother is everywhere triple. She is endowed with the three Gunas, viz., Sattwa, Raja, Tamas. She manifests as Will (Ichchha Sakti) Action (Kriya Sakti) and Knowledge (Jnana Sakti). She is Brahma Sakti (Saraswati) in conjunction with Brahma, Vishnu Sakti (Lakshmi) in conjunction with Lord Vishnu, Siva Sakti (Gouri) in conjunction with Lord Siva. Hence she is called Tripurasundari.)

The abode of Tripurasundari, the Divine Mother is called Sri Nagara this magnificent abode is surrounded by twenty-

five ramparts which represent the twenty-five Tattwas. The resplendant Chintamani Palace is in the middle. The Divine Mother sits in the Bindu Peetha in Sri Chakra in that wonderful palace. There is a similar abode for Her in the body of man also. The whole world is Her body. Mountains are Her bones. Rivers are Her veins. Ocean is Her bladder. Sun, moon are Her eyes. Wind is Her breath. Agni is Her mouth.

The Sakta enjoys Bhukti (enjoyment in the world) and Mukti (liberation from all worlds). Siva is an embodiment of Bliss and Knowledge. Siva Himself appears in the form of man with a life of pleasure and pain. If you remember this point always, dualism, all hatred, jealousy and pride will vanish. You must consider every human function as worship or a religious act. Answering calls of nature, micturition, talking, eating, walking seeing hearing—all become worship of Lord, if you develop the right attitude. It is Siva who works in and through man. Where then is egoism and individuality? All human actions are divine actions. One universal life throbs in the heart of all, sees in the eyes of all, works in the hands of all and hears in the ears of all. What a magnanimous experience it is, if one can feel this by crushing this little "I". The old Samskaras, the old vasanas, the old habits of thinking stand in the way of your realizing this Experience whole.

The aspirant thinks that the world is identical with the divine Mother. He moves about thinking his own form to be the form of the divine Mother and thus beholds oneness everywhere. He also feels that the Divine Mother is identical with Brahman.

The advanced sadhak feels "I am the Devi and the Devi is in Me." He worships himself as Devi instead of adoring any external object. He says "Saham" "I am She (Devi)."

Saktism is not mere theory or philosophy. It prescribes systematic Sadhana of Yoga, regular discipline according to the temperament, capacity and degree of evolution of the Sadhak. It helps the aspirant to arouse the Kundalini and unite Her with Lord Siva, and to enjoy the supreme bliss or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. When Kundalini sleeps man is awake

to the world. He has objective consciousness. When She awakes, he sleeps. He loses all consciousness of the world and becomes one with the Lord. In Samadhi the body is maintained by the nectar which flows from the union of Siva and Sakti in Sahasrara.

Guru is indispensable for the practice of Sakti Yoga Sadhana. He initiates the aspirant and transmits the divine Sakti.

Physical contact with a female is gross Maithuna. This is due to Pasu bhav or animal attraction or brutal instinct. Mother Kundalini Sakti unites with Lord Siva in Sahasrara during Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This is real Maithuna or blissful union. This is due to divya bhava or divine disposition. You must rise from Pasu bhava to divya bhava, through sat-sang, service of Guru, renunciation and dispassion, discrimination, Japa and meditation.

Worship of the divine Mother, intense faith and perfect devotion and self-surrender will help you to attain Her grace. Through Her grace alone you can attain knowledge of the Imperishable.

Glory to Sri Tripurasundari, the world Mother, who is also RAJARAJESWARI and LALITA DEVI. May their blessings be upon you all!

CHAPTER VIII

THE FOUR PATHS

(The four main spiritual paths for God-realisation are Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. Karma Yoga is suitable for a man of active temperament; Bhakti Yoga for a man of devotional temperament; Raja Yoga for a man of mystic temperament, Jnana Yoga for a man of rational and philosophical temperament, or enquiry.

Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga or Kundalini Yoga, Lambhika Yoga, Hata Yoga are other yogas. Yoga means union with God. The practice of Yoga leads to communion with the Lord. Whatever may be the starting point, the end reached is the same.)

Karma Yoga is the way of selfless service. The selfless worker is called the Karma-Yogin. Bhakti Yoga is the path of exclusive devotion to the Lord. He who seeks union through love or devotion is called the Bhakti-Yogin. Raja Yoga is the way of self-restraint. He who seeks to have union with the Lord through mysticism is called the Raja Yogin. Jnana Yoga is the path of wisdom. He who seeks to unite himself with the Supreme Self through philosophy and enquiry is called the Jnana-Yogin.

Man is a strange complex mixture of will, feeling and thought. He wills to possess the objects of his desires. He has emotion and so he feels. He has reason and so he thinks and ratiocinates. In some, the emotional element may preponderate, while in some others the rational element may dominate. Just as will, feeling and thought are not distinct and separate, so also work, devotion and knowledge are not exclusive of one another.

Some maintain that the practice of Karma Yoga alone is the only means for salvation. Some others hold that devotion to the Lord is the only way to release. Some believe that the path of wisdom is the sole way to attain the final

beatitude. There are still others, who hold that all the three paths are equally efficacious to bring about perfection and freedom.

(The Yoga of synthesis is the most suitable and potent form of Sadhana. In the mind there are three defects, viz., mala or impurity, vikshēp or tossing, avarana or veil. The impurity should be removed by the practice of Karma Yoga. The tossing should be removed by worship or Upasana. The veil should be torn down by the practice of Jnana Yoga. Then only is Self-realisation possible. If you want to see your face clearly in a mirror, you must remove the dirt in the mirror, keep it steady and remove the covering also. You can see your face clearly in the bottom of the lake only if the turbidity is moved, if the water that is agitated by the wind is rendered still and if the moss that is lying on the surface is removed. So too is the case with Self-realisation.)

The Yoga of Synthesis alone will bring about integral development. The Yoga of Synthesis alone will develop the head, heart and hand, and lead one to perfection. To become harmoniously balanced in all directions is the ideal of religion. This can be achieved by the practice of the Yoga of Synthesis.

To behold the One Self in all beings is Jnana, wisdom; to love the Self is Bhakti, devotion; to serve the Self is Karma, action. When the Jnana Yogi attains wisdom he is endowed with devotion and selfless activity. Karma Yoga is for him a spontaneous expression of his spiritual nature, as he sees the One Self in all. When the devotee attains perfection in devotion, he is possessed of wisdom and activity. For him also Karma Yoga is a spontaneous expression of his divine nature, as he beholds the one Lord everywhere. The Karma Yogi attains wisdom and devotion when his actions are wholly selfless. 'The three paths are in fact one, in which the three different temperaments emphasise one or other of its inseparable constituents. Yoga supplies the method by which the Self can be seen, loved and served.'

KARMA YOGA

Karma Yōgā is the path of action. It is the path of disinterested service. It is the way that leads to the

attainment of God through selfless work. It is the Yoga of renunciation of the fruits of actions.

(Karma Yoga teaches us how to work for work's sake unattached, and how to utilise to the best advantage the greater part of our energies. "Duty for duty's sake" is the motto of a Karma Yogin. Work is worship for the practitioners of Karma Yoga. Every work is turned into an offering unto the Lord. The Karma Yogin is not bound by the Karmas as he consecrates the fruits of his actions to the Lord. "Yogah karmasu kausalam"—'Yoga is skill in action'. .

Generally a work brings as its effect or fruit either pleasure or pain. Each work adds a link to our bondage of Samsara and brings repeated births. This is the inexorable Law of Karma. But through the practice of Karma Yoga the effects of karmas can be wiped out. Karma becomes barren. The same work when done with the right mental attitude, right spirit and right will through Yoga, without attachment and expectation of fruits, without the idea of agency or doership, with a mind balanced in success and failure (*Samatvam Yoga uchyate*), does not add a link to our bondage. On the contrary, it purifies our heart and helps us to attain salvation through the descent of divine light or dawn of wisdom.

Every act produces a double effect. It gives its fruits either in pleasure or pain and also affects your character, or moulds your mind. If you perform charitable acts or merciful deeds, you will develop a noble character and will reap a rich harvest of happiness herein and hereafter.

Every man should do his duties in accordance with his own Varna and Ashrama, caste and station in life. There is no benefit in abandoning one's own work in preference to another's work.

A rigid moral discipline and control of sense is indispensable for the practice of Karma Yoga. *Brahmacharya* is indeed essential. Cultivation of virtues such as tolerance, adaptability, sympathy, mercy, equal vision, balance of mind, cosmic love, patience, perseverance, humility, generosity, nobility, self-restraint, control of anger, non-violence, truthfulness, moderation in eating, drinking and sleeping, simple living, endurance is very necessary.

Some people think that Karma Yoga is an inferior type of Yoga. They think that carrying water, cleansing plates, serving food to the poor, sweeping the floor are menial works. This is a sad mistake. They have not understood the technique and glory of Karma Yoga. Lord Krishna, the Lord of the three worlds, acted the part of a charioteer of Arjuna. He also acted the part of a cowherd.)

BHAKTI YOGA

Bhakti is intense love of God. Bhakti Yoga is the path of devotion. It appeals to the majority of mankind. "Love for love's sake is the motto or formula of a Bhakti-Yogin. God is an embodiment of love. You will have to attain Him by loving Him. God can be realised only by means of a love as ardent and all-absorbing as the conjugal passion. Love for God must be gradually cultivated.

He who loves God has neither wants nor sorrows. He does not hate any being or object. He never takes delight in sensual objects. He includes every one in the warm embrace of his love.

Vasana or worldly desires and Trishnas or cravings are enemies of devotion. So long as there is any trace of desire in your mind for sensual objects you cannot have an intense longing for God.

Love of God and the rapturous ecstasy enjoyed by fellowship with God cannot be adequately described in words. It is as if a dumb man who had tasted some palatable food and could not speak about it. It could be revealed only to the chosen few. He who has once experienced love will see that alone, hear that alone and speak of that alone, because he constantly thinks of that alone.

Bhakti is of two kinds, viz., higher bhakti or Para-Bhakti and lower Bhakti or ritualistic Bhakti. Ritualistic worship is Vaidhi or gauni bhakti. It is formal bhakti. Vaidi Bhakti is the lower type of devotion depending on external aids. It is lower Bhakti. The mind becomes purer and purer. The aspirant gradually develops love for God through ritualistic worship. He who does ritualistic worship, rings bells, adores

a Pratika (symbol) or pratima, does pooja, arti, etc., with flowers, sandal paste, burns incense, and waves light before the image, offers Naivedya or food for God, etc.

Mukhya bhakti or para-bhakti is advanced type of devotion. It is higher Bhakti. It transcends all convention. A devotee of this type knows no rule. He does not perform any external worship. He beholds his Lord everywhere, in every object. His heart is saturated with love for God. The whole world is Brindavan for him. His state is ineffable. He attains the acme of the bliss. He radiates love, purity and joy wherever he goes and inspires all who come in contact with him.

‘Santa Bhav, Dasva Bhav, Sakhya Bhav, Vatsalya Bhav, Kanta Bhav, and Madhurya Bhav are the six kinds of attributes of devotees or Bhavas towards God. The Bhavas differ in type and intensity of feeling. The different Bhavas are arranged in order of their intensity. Dhruva and Prahlad had the feeling of a child to its parents. This is Santa Bhav. In dasya Bhav the devotee behaves like a servant. His Lord is his Master. Hanuman is an ideal servant of God. In Sakhya Bhav there is a sense of equality. Arjuna and Kuchela had this Bhav. In Vatsalya Bhav the devotee looks upon the Lord as his own child. Yasoda had this bhav for Sri Krishna. Kausalya had this Bhav for Sri Rama. Kanta bhav is the love of the wife to the husband. Sita and Rukmani had this bhav. The culmination is reached in Madhurya bhav. The lover and the Beloved become one through the intensity of love. Radha and Mira had this type of love.’

Bhakti Yoga is the chief of sciences. He is wealthy indeed who has love for the Lord. There is no sorrow other than lack of devotion to the Lord. There is no right course except love of the devotees of the Lord. The name, qualities and lilas of the Lord are the chief things to be remembered. The lotus feet of the Lord are the chief objects of meditation. The devotee drinks the nectar of prem or divine love.

In Madhurya Bhav there is the closest relationship between the devotee and the Lord. There is no sensuality in Kanta and Madhurya bhavs. There is no tinge of carnality in them. Passionate people cannot understand these two bhavas as their minds are saturated with passion and lower sexual

appetite. Sufistic saints also have the Bhav of lover and the Beloved, Madhurya Bhava. Gita Govinda written by Jeya Deva is full of Madhurya Rasa. The language of love which the mystic uses cannot be comprehended by worldly persons. Only Gopis, Radha, Mira, Tukaram, Naradha, Hafiz, can understand this language.

Atma Nivedan is total, ungrudging, absolute, self-surrender to the Lord. It is the highest rung in the ladder of Nava-vidha bhakti. Atma-nivedan is prapthi or sarana-gathi. The devotee becomes one with the Lord through prapthi. He obtains the divine grace or Prasada.

There are no distinction of caste, creed, family, colour or race among the devotees. 'God does not look into these things. He looks to the purity of heart of the devotees. Any one can become a devotee of the Lord. Nanda, an untouchable; Rai Das, a chamar; Kannappa, a hunter; Sena a barber; Kabir, a Moslem weaver; Sabari, a bhilui; were all devotees of the Lord and great saints. Kannappa, an illiterate barbarian who poured water from his mouth on the linga, who offered swine's flesh became the best among the bhaktas. The Vaishnava Alvars of South India and the Nayanars of Saivism of South India were from different classes of society.

God reveals Himself to His devotees in a variety of ways. He assumes the very form which the devotee has chosen for his worship. If you worship Him as Lord Hari with four hands, He will come to you as Hari. If you adore Him as Siva, He will give you darshan as Siva. If you worship Him as Mother Durga or Kali, He will come to you as Durga or Kali. If you worship Him as Lord Rama, Lord Krishna or Lord Dattatreya, He will come to you as Rama, Krishna or Dattatreya. If you worship Him as Christ or Allah, He will come to you as Christ or Allah.

RAJA YOGA

Now I shall tell you something about Raja Yoga. Raja Yoga is the path that leads to union with the Lord through self-restraint and control of mind. Raja Yoga teaches how

to control the senses and the vrittis or thought-waves that arise from the mind, how to develop concentration and how to commune with God. There is physical discipline in Hata Yoga whereas in Raja Yoga there is discipline of the mind.

In a worldly man the rays of the mind are scattered in various directions. His mind is jumping like a monkey. It is ever restless. He thinks of money, wife, children, property, houses, etc. His mind is ever engaged in earning money and possessing objects of his desires. He has not a bit of concentration. He cannot look within and introspect. His mind is full of outgoing tendencies.

Without concentration you cannot have success in any walk of life or spiritual pursuits.) A cook can prepare things efficiently if he has concentration. If there is no concentration he spoils the preparations. A surgeon in the operation theatre needs perfect concentration. The Captain of a Steamer must possess a great deal of concentration. A tailor, a carpenter, a mason, a blacksmith, a cobbler, an engineer, a professor or a barrister, a student, all must possess concentration. Then only they can have success in their profession. "All great souls all master-minds who have done great work in this world had perfect concentration.)

How powerful is the search-light! When the sun's rays are concentrated through a lens, they can burn cotton. Even so when the dissipated rays of the mind are collected you can work wonders. You can know all the secrets of nature, through the powerful search-light of mind.

A scientist sits in his laboratory, concentrates all the powers of his mind and brings them into one focus and throws them on his objects of research and investigation. He gets all knowledge about the elements, etc. The whole hidden knowledge of nature is revealed unto him like the Amalaka fruit in the palm of his hand. The astronomer does the same thing. He concentrates on the stars and planets through his telescope and attains knowledge of the stars. Radio, Wireless telegraphy, Television, Gramophone, Telephone, Steam engine, etc., are all things invented through deep concentration.

The Yogi concentrates on the chakras, mind, sun, stars, elements and attains superhuman knowledge. He obtains mastery over the elements. The power of concentration is the only key to open the treasure-house of knowledge.

Concentration cannot come within a week or a month. It takes some time. Regularity in the practice of concentration is of paramount importance. Brahmacharya, cool and congenial place, company of saints, sattwic diet, are all auxiliaries in concentration.

Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are the eight limbs of Raja Yoga. Yama and Niyama constitute the ethical discipline which purifies the heart. Yama consists of Ahimsa (non-injury), Satyam (truthfulness), Brahmacharya (celibacy), Asteya (non-stealing) and Aparigraha (non-receiving of gifts conducive to luxury). All virtues are rooted in Ahimsa. He who is established in Yama, Niyama, will have quick progress in the practice of Yoga.

Niyama is observance. It comprises Saucha (internal and external purity), Santosh (contentment), Tapas (austerity), Swadhyaya (study of scriptures and repetition of Mantra), and Ishwarapranidhana (self-surrender to God).

Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara are preliminary accessories to Yoga. Asana is steady pose. Pranayama is regulation of breath. This produces serenity and steadiness of mind, and good health. Pratyahara is abstraction or withdrawal of the senses from their objects. Then only you can look within and can have introvision.

Dharana is concentration of the mind on any object or Chakra within or Ishta Devata or tutelary deity. Then comes meditation or an unceasing flow of ideas connected with one object. This leads to Samadhi. The meditation and the meditated become one. All the Vrittis or waves of the mind subsides. The mind ceases functioning. All the Samskaras, impressions and Vasanas (tendencies and subtle desires) are burnt in toto. The yogi is freed from births and deaths. He attains Kaivalya or independence.

Siddhis manifest when the yogi advances in his yogic practices. These Siddhis or supernatural powers such as

clairvoyance, clairauidience, etc., are all obstacles in his path. He should shun them ruthlessly and march forward direct to his goal, viz., Asampragnata or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Real spirituality has nothing to do with these powers, which are byproducts of concentration. He who runs after these Siddhis is a big worldly man or big householder. He gets a downfall. }

JNANA YOGA

{Jnana Yoga is the path of Knowledge. Moksha is attained through Knowledge of Brahman. Release is achieved through realisation of the identity of the individual Soul with the Supreme Soul or Brahman. The cause for bondage and suffering is Avidya or Ignorance. The little Jiva foolishly imagines on account of ignorance that he is separate from Brahman. Avidya acts as a veil or screen and prevents the Jiva from knowing his real, divine nature. Knowledge of Brahman or Brahma Jnana removes this veil and makes the Jiva rest in his own Sat-Chit-Ananda Swaroopa. }

The Jnana Yogi realises that Brahman is the life of his life, the soul of his soul. He feels and knows that God is his own Self. He realises that he is one with the Eternal through spiritual insight or intuition (aparoksha anubhuti or divine perception) but not through mere study of books or dogmas or theories. Religion is realisation for him now. It is not mere talk. He plunges himself in the deep recesses of his heart through constant, and intense meditation (nidhidhyasan) and gets the wonderful pearl of Atma, a wonderful treasure much more valuable than all the wealth of the world.

There are two birds on the same tree. One is perched at the top and the other below. The bird which is sitting on the top is perfectly serene, silent, majestic at all times. It is ever blissful. The other bird which is perching on the lower branches eats the sweet and bitter fruits by turns. It dances in joy sometimes. It is miserable at other times. It rejoices now and weeps after some time. Sometimes it tastes an extremely bitter fruit, and gets disgusted. It looks up and beholds the other wonderful bird with golden plumage which is ever blissful. It also wishes to become

like the bird with golden plumage but soon forgets everything. Again it begins to eat the sweet and bitter fruits. It eats another fruit that is exceedingly bitter and feels very miserable. It again tries to become like the upper bird. Gradually it abandons eating the fruits and becomes serene and blissful like the upper bird. The upper bird is God or Brahman. The lower bird is Jiva or the individual soul who reaps the fruits of his Karmas, viz., pleasure and pain. He gets knocks and blows in the battle of life. He rises up and again falls down as the senses drag him down. Gradually he develops Vairagya (dispassion) and discrimination, turns his mind towards God, practises meditation, attains self-realisation and enjoys the eternal bliss of Brahman.

(Jnana is not mere intellectual knowledge. It is not hearing or acknowledging. It is not mere intellectual assent. It is direct realisation of oneness or unity with the Supreme Being. It is Para Vidya. Intellectual conviction alone will not lead you to Brahma Gyana.

The student of Jnana Yoga first equips himself with the four means, viz., discrimination (vivek), dispassion (vairagya), six-fold virtues (shad sampat), viz., Sama (tranquility), Dama (restraint), Uparathi (satiety, renunciation), Titiksha (endurance), Samadhan (concentration) and Mumukshatwa (strong yearning for liberation). Then he hears the srutis by sitting at the lotus feet of a Guru, who is not only learned in the sacred scripture (srotريا), but is also one, himself well-established in Brahman (Brahma-nistha). Afterwards the Student practises Manana (reflection). Manana completely dispels all doubts. Then he practises deep meditation on Brahman and attains Brahma-Sakshatkar. He becomes a Jivan-muktha or liberated sage. He is released even while he is in this body.

CHAPTER IX

HINDU SECTS

I. VAISHNAVAS

Hinduism is extremely Catholic, liberal, tolerant and elastic. This is the wonderful feature of Hinduism. Hinduism permits the greatest freedom in matters of faith and worship. A foreigner is struck with astonishment when he hears about the diverse sects and creeds of Hinduism. But these varieties are really an ornament to Hinduism. They are not certainly its defects. There are various types of minds and temperaments. So there should be various faiths also. This is but natural. This is the cardinal tenet of Hinduism. There is room in Hinduism for all types of souls from the highest to the lowest for their growth and evolution. The Rig Veda declares : "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti" Truth is One. Sages call it by various names. The Upanishads say "Just as cows which are of various colours give the same white milk, so also all the different paths lead to the same goal." Lord Krishna says in His Gita : "However men approach Me, so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine, O Partha !" (chap. IV-11).

The term 'Hinduism' is most elastic. It includes a number of sects and cults, allied but different in many important points. It is more a League of Religions than a single religion with a definite creed. It is rather difficult to answer the question "What is Hinduism ?" Hinduism has within it all the features of a universal religion. It is a fellowship of faiths. It is also a federation of philosophies.

All Sanatan Dharmists, Arya Samajists, Deva Samajists, Jains, Sikhs, Brahmo Samajists are all Hindus only.)

The Hindus are divided into three great classes, viz., Vaishnavas who worship Lord Vishnu, Saivas who worship Lord Shiva ; and Saktas who adore "Devi" (Mother aspect of the Lord).

The Vaishnavas are usually distinguished into four principal Sāṃpradāyas or sects. Of these the most ancient is the Sri Sāṃpradāya founded by Ramanuja Acharya about the middle of the twelfth century. The followers of Ramanuja adore Vishnu and Lakshmi and their incarnations. They are called Ramanujas or Sri Sāṃpradāyis or Sri Vaishnavas. The teachers are Brahmins. The disciples may be of any caste. They all repeat the Ashtakshara Mantra, OM NAMO NARAYANAYA. They put on two white lines and a central red line on the forehead as the caste mark.†

. Vedantacharya, a follower of Ramanuja, made some reform in the Vaishnava faith. This gave rise to the formation of two antagonistic parties of Ramanujas, one called the northern school Vadagalai, the other the southern school, Tengalai. The Tenggais regard Prapathi as the only way to salvation. The Vadagalais think that it is only one of the ways. The Bhakta is like the young one of a monkey which has to exert itself and cling to its mother (markata-nyaya, monkey-theory) whereas, according to the southern school the Bhakta or devotee is like the kitten which is carried about by the cat without any effort on its part (marjara-nyaya-cat-hold theory). The northern school accept the Sanskrit Vedas. The southerners have compiled a Veda of their own called "4000 verses-Nalayira Prabandha" written in Tamil and hold to be older than the Sanskrit Vedas. Really their 4,000 verses are based on the Upanishad portion. In all their worship they repeat sections from their Tamil verses.

The Vadagalais regard Lakshmi as the consort of Vishnu, infinite, uncreated and equally to be adored as a means (upaya) for release. The Tenggais regard Lakshmi as a created female being, though divine. According to them She acts as a mediator or minister (purushakara) and not as an equal channel of release.

The two sets have different frontal marks. The Vadagalais make a simple white line curved like the letter U to represent the sole of the right foot of Lord Vishnu the source of the Ganges. They add a central red mark as a symbol of Lakshmi. The Tenggais make a white mark like the letter Y which represents both the feet of Lord Vishnu. They draw a white line half down the nose.

Both the sects brand the emblems of Vishnu, the discus and the conch, on their breasts, shoulders and arms.

The Tenggalaïs prohibit their widows from shaving their hair.

The usual surnames of the Ramanuja Brahmins are Aiyengar, Acharya, Charlu, Acharlu.

Ramanandis.—The followers of Ramanand are the Ramanandis. They are well-known in upper Hindustan. They are a branch of the Ramanuja sect. They offer their worship to Lord Rama, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman. Ramananda was a disciple of Ramanuja. He flourished at Benares about the beginning of the 14th century. His followers are numerous in Gangetic India. Their favourite work is the *Bhakti-mala*. Their Sectarian marks are like those of the Ramanujas. The Vairagis are the ascetics of the Ramanandis.

Vallabhacharis or Rudra Sampradayis.—The Vallabhacharyas form a very important sect in Bombay, Gujarat and Central India. Their founder was born in the forest Camparanya in 1479. He is regarded as an incarnation of Krishna. The Vallabhacharis worship Krishna, Bala Gopala. Their idol is one representing Krishna in his childhood till his twelfth year. The Gossains or teachers are family men. The eight daily ceremonials for God in the temples are Mangala, Sringara, Gwala, Raja Bhoga, Utthapan, Bhoga, Sandhya, Sayan.

The mark on the forehead consists of two red perpendicular lines meeting in a semicircle at the root of the nose and having a round spot of red between them. The necklace and rosary are made of the stalk of the Tulasi.

The great authority of the sect is the Bhagawa as explained in the Subodhini or commentary of Vallabhacharya. The members of the sect should visit Sri Nath Dwara at least once in their lives.

The Chaitanyas.—This sect is peculiar to Bengal and Orissa. The founder Chaitanya Maha Prabhu or Lord Gouranga was born in 1485. He was regarded as an

incarnation of Lord Krishna. He took Sannyas at the age of twenty-four. He went to Jagannath where he taught Vaishnava doctrines

The Chaitanyas worship Lord Krishna as the Supreme Being. All castes are admissible into the sect. The devotees constantly repeat the name of Lord Krishna.

Chaitanya's Charitamrith by Krishna Das is a most voluminous work. It contains anecdotes of Chaitanya and his principal disciples and the expositions of the doctrines of this sect. It is written in Bengali.

The Vaishnavas of this sect wear on the forehead two white perpendicular streaks of sandal or Gopichandan down the forehead uniting at the root of the nose and continuing to near the tip. They wear a close necklace of small tulasi beads of three strings.

The Nimbarkas.—The founder of this sect is Nimbarka or Nimbaditya. He was originally named Bhaskara Acharya. He is regarded as an incarnation of the Sun-God (Surya). The followers worship Krishna and Radha conjointly. Their chief scripture is Bhagavata Purana.

The followers have two perpendicular yellowish lines made by Gopichandana earth drawn from the root of the hair to the commencement of each eye-brow and there meeting in a curve. This represents the foot-print of Lord Vishnu.

The Nimbarkas or Nimavats are scattered throughout the whole of Upper India. They are very numerous about Mathura. They are also the most numerous of the Vaishnava sects in Bengal.

The Madhavas or Madhavacharyas.—They are Vaishnavas. They are known as Brahma Sampradayis. The founder of the sect is Madhavacharya, otherwise called Ananda-tirtha and Purna-Prajna. He was born in 1200. He was a great opponent of Sankaracharya's Advaita system of philosophy. He was an incarnation of Vayu or the wind-god. He erected and consecrated at Udupi the image of Lord Krishna.

The Gurus of the Madhava sect are Brahmanas and Sannyasis. The followers bear the impress of the symbols of Vishnu upon their breasts and shoulders. They are stamped with a hot iron. Their frontal mark consists of two perpendicular lines made with Gopichandan and joined at the root of the nose. They make a straight black line with a charcoal from incense offered to Krishna which terminates in a round mark made with turmeric.

The Madhwas are divided into two classes called the Vyasakuta and Dasakutas. They are found in Mysore.

Truthfulness, study of scriptures, generosity, kindness, faith, freedom from envy form the moral code of Madhwas. They give the Lord's names to their children (Namakaran) and mark the body with His symbols (Ankana). They should practise virtue in thought, word and deed (Bhajana).

Radha Vallabhis.—Radha Vallabhis worship Krishna as Radha Vallabha, the Lord or Lover of Radha. Hari Vans is the founder of this sect. Seva Sakhi Vani gives a detailed description of the notion of this sect, their traditions and observances.

Charan Dasis, Dadu Panthis, Hari Chandis, Kabir Panthis, Khakis, Maluk Dasis, Mira Bais, Madhavis, Raya Dasis, Senais, Sakhi Bhavas, Sadbma Panthis, are all Vaishnava sects.

II. SAIVITES

SAIVITES—Brahmins

The Saivite Brahmins of South India have their titles Ayer. They are called Smarthas. They all wear three horizontal lines of Bhasma or Vibhuti (holy ash) on their forehead. They all worship Lord Siva.

Smartha Brahmins of the South :

1. Vadamas : Vada

Chola Desa Vadamas.

Inji Vadamas.

2. Brihatcharanam : Mazhainattu Brihatcharanam.

Pazhamaneri Brihatcharanam.

Milaghu Brihatcharanam.

Kandramamkka Brihatcharanam.

3. Vathimars.
4. Ashtasahasram.
5. Choliyas (Otherwise called Pandimars and inhabitants of Tiruchendur).
6. Gurukkul: A sub-sect of Vadamas not recognised as one amongst them and whose duties are to worship at temples. They are also known by the name of Pattar in the southern districts of Madras. These are different from Archaks. Archaks belong to any of the above sub-sects and intermarry with persons of other professions, but not Gurukkal or Pattar. While Gurukkal is used only for Saivaites, Pattar and Archak are used for Vaishnavites also.

Malabar Brahmins (Saivites): Nambudri, Moose, Embranthri.

Bengali Brahmins (Saivites):

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. Chakravarti. | 4. Ganguli | 7. Bagchi. |
| 2. Chunder. | 5. Chowdhury | 8. Majumdar. |
| 3. Roy. | 6. Biswas. | 9. Bhattacharjee. |

Kanarese Brahmins (Saivites):

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Smartha. | 4. Shivalli. |
| 2. Haviga. | 5. Tantri. |
| 3. Kota. | 6. Kardi |
| | 7. Padhya. |

Telugu Smarthas: Muruknadu, Velanadu, Karanakammalu, Puduru Dravidies, Telahanyam, Konaseemadravidi, Arubela Niyogis.

Lingayats.—They are called Veera Saivites. They are found in Mysore and Karnatak. They wear on their neck a linga of Lord Siva put in a small silver box.

Akas Mukhis, Gudarās, Jangamas, Keralingis, Nakhis, Rukharas, Sukharas, Urdhabahus, Ukkaras are all Śaiva sects.

Dakshinis, Vamis, Kancheliyas, Kararis are all Sakta sects.

Non-Brahmins of South India are Naidu, Kamma Naidu. Chetty, Mudaliar, Gounder, Pillai, Nair, Nayanar, Reddy.

Ganapatyas, Saurapatas, Nanak Shahis of seven classes (*viz.*, Udastis, Ganjbakhshis, Ramrayis, Suthra Shahis, Govind Sinhis, Nirmalas, Nagas), Baba Lahis, Pran Nathis, Sadhu, Satnamis, Siva Narayanis are all other *miscellaneous* sects.

Arya Samaj.—The founder of this Samaj is Swami Dayanand Saraswati who was born in Kathiawar in 1824. The Arya Samaj is more of a social institution. It has Gurukuls, schools and pathshalas. The Suddhi Sabha is a proselytizing branch of the Samaj.

The Brahmo Samaj was founded originally by Raja Ram Mohan Roy early in the nineteenth century. Brahmo Samajists do not perform idol worship. Keshab Chandra Sen introduced some changes in 1860. There are now two branches within the Samaj, *viz.*, Adī Brahmo Samaj which hold to the tenets laid down by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj which is more modern and which follows Keshab Chandra Sen more nearly. This Samaj has followers in Bengal.

Jains.—The first founder of the sect was Parsvanatha. Its first active propagator was Mahavira. The Jains are found in great numbers on the western coast. They are divided into two principal sects (1) the Svetambaras, clothed in white garments, (2) the Digambaras "sky-clad" or "naked". The Jains do not admit the divine origin of the Vedas. They do not believe in any Supreme Deity. They pay reverence to holy men or saints who are styled Tirthankaras, who dwell in the heavenly abode, who, by long discipline, have raised themselves to divine perfection.

The images of one or more of these Tirthankaras are placed in every Jain temple.

The Jains are strict vegetarians. They attach great sanctity to life. They practise Ahimsa. Strict Jains strain water before drinking, sweep the ground with a brush before treading on it or before sitting, never eat or drink at night, or sometimes wear muslin before their mouths to prevent the risk of swallowing minute insects.

There are two classes of Jains, *viz.*, Sravakas who engage in secular occupations and Yatis or monks who lead an ascetic life.

Sikhs.—Sikhs are only Hindus. Obedience to Guru brings release from future birth. This is the firm conviction of Sikhs. Sikhs adopt the five "Kakas", *viz.*, the Kes (uncut hair), the Kach (short drawers), the Kara (iron bangle), the Kirpan (steel dagger), and the Kangha (small-tooth comb worn in the hair).

The Udasis are an ascetic order of the Nanakshahi Sikhs. Srichand, son of Guru Nanak, embraced Sannyasa. Udasis are his followers. Lakshmichand, son of Guru Nanak, led the life of a householder. Vedis are his followers. Nirmalas are ascetic followers of Guru Govind Singh.

The Akalis are brave warriors. The Akalis wear a distinctive dress of blue and a black turban.

The teachings of Guru Nanak are contained in the first book of the Adi Granth.

No Sikh smokes tobacco.

B. SADHUS AND SANNYASINS

Salutations unto the ancient Rishis, seers, saints, Paramahansa Sannyasins and Sadhus who are the repositories of Divine Knowledge and Wisdom, who guide the destiny of the world in the past, present and future.

Every religion has a band of anchorites who lead the life of seclusion and meditation. There are Bhikshus in Buddhism, Fakirs in Mohammadanism, Sufistic Fakirs in Sufism, Fathers and Reverends in Christianity. The glory of a religion will absolutely be lost if you remove these hermits or Sannyasins or those who lead a life of renunciation and divine contemplation. It is these people who maintain or preserve

the religions of the world. It is these people who give solace to the householders when they are in trouble and distress. They are the messengers of Atmic knowledge and heavenly peace. They are the harbingers of divine wisdom and peace. They are the disseminators of Adhyatmic science and Upanishadic revelations. They heal the sick, comfort the forlorn, nurse the bed-ridden. They bring hope to the hopeless, joy to the depressed, strength to the weak, courage to the timid by imparting the knowledge of the Vedanta, and the significance of "Tat Twam Asi" Mahavakya.

DASANAMA SANNYASINS.

Sanaka, Sanandan, Santat Kumar, Sanat Sujata were the four mind-born sons of Lord Brahma. They refused to enter the Pravritti Marga or worldly life and entered the Nivritti Marga or the path of renunciation. The four Kumaras were the pioneers in the path of Sannyasa. Sri Dattatreya also is the original Sannyasi. The Sannyasis of the present day are all descendants of the four Kumaras, Dattatreya and Sankara.

Sri Sankaracharya, the avatar of Lord Siva and the eminent exponent of Kevala Adwaita philosophy established four Mutts, one at Sringeri, another at Dwaraka, a third at Puri and a fourth at Joshi Mutt in the Himalayas, on the way to Bhadrinarayan.

Sri Sankara had four Sannyasi disciples, viz., Padmapada, Hastamalaka, Sureswara and Trotaka. Sureswaracharya was in charge of Sringeri Mutt; Padmapada was in charge of Puri Mutt; Hastamalaka was in charge of Dwaraka Mutt and Trotaka was in charge of Joshi Mutt.

The Sannyasis of Sringeri Mutt, the spiritual descendants of Sri Sankara and Sureswaracharya have three names, viz., Saraswati, Puri and Bharati. The Sannyasins of the Dwaraka Mutt have two names, viz., Tirtha and Ashrama. The Sannyasis of the Puri Mutt have two names, viz., Vana and Aranya. The Sannyasis of the Joshi Mutt have three names, namely, Giri, Parvatha and Sagara.

The Dasanamis worship Lord Siva and meditate on Nirguna Brahman. The Dandi Sannyasis who hold staff in their hands belong to the order of Sri Sankara. Paramahansa Sannyasis do not hold staff. They freely move about as itinerant monks. Avadhoots are naked Sannyasis. They do not keep anything with them.

The Sannyasins of Ramakrishna Mission belong to the order of Sri Sankara. They have the name Puri.

Then there are Akhada Sannyasis, viz., Niranjan Akhada and Jhooni Akhada. They belong to the order of Sri Sankara. They are Dasanamis. They are found in the United Provinces only.

Rikhikesh and Hardwar are colonies for Sannyasis. Benares also is the chief abode of Sannyasis.

SAIVITES.

In South India there are Tamil Sannyasis who belong to Kovilur Mutt and Dharmapuram Adheenam. They do not belong to Sri Sankara order. They are Saivites.

NAGAS.

Nagas are Saiva Sannyasis. They are in a naked state. They smear their bodies with ashes. They have beard and matted locks.

UDASIS.

Guru Nanak's order of ascetics are called Udasis. They correspond to Sannyasis and Vairagis. They are indifferent to the sensual pleasures of this world (Udaseenata). Hence they are called Udasis.

VAIRAGIS

Vairagi is one who is devoid of passion. Vairagis are Vaishnavas. They worship Lord Rama, Sita and Hanuman. They read Tulsidas Ramayan. The mendicant Vaishnavas

of the Ramanandi class are the Vairagis. This ascetic order was instituted by Sri Anand, the twelfth disciple of Ramanand.

RAM SANEHIS.

The founder of this order was Ramcharan who was born in the year 1718 in a village within the Jeypore State. The Ram Sanehi mendicants are of two classes, viz., the Videhis who are naked and the Mohinis who wear two pieces of cotton cloth dyed red in ochre. The Mutt is in Shahapur in Rajputana. The Rama Sanehi sect has the largest following in Mewar and Alwar. They are found also in Bombay, Gujerat, Surat, Poona, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Benares.

DADU PANTHIS.

This is one of the Vaishnava Cult. Dadu, the founder of this sect, was a disciple of one of the Kabir Panthi teachers. The followers worship Lord Rama.

Dadu was a cotton cleaner. He was born at Ahmedabad. He flourished about the year 1600. The Dadu Panthis are of three classes, viz., the Viraktas, who are bareheaded. They have one cloth and one water pot; the Nagas who carry arms, who are regarded as soldiers; the Vistar Dharis who do the avocations of ordinary life.

The Dadu Panthis are numerous in Marwar and Ajmer. Their chief place of worship is at Naraina which is near Sambhur and Jaipur. Passages from the Kabir writings are inserted in their religious scriptures.

KABIR PANTHIS.

Kabir Panthis are the followers of Kabir. They are numerous in all the Provinces of Upper and Central India. There are twelve branches. Kabir Chaura is at Benares. It is a big Mutt of Kabir Panthis. Dharmdas was the chief disciple of Kabir. The followers should have implicit devotion to the Gurus in thought, word and deed. They should practice truthfulness, mercy, non-injuring and seclusion. The followers of Kamal, the son of Kabir, practise Yoga.

GORAKNATH PANTHIS.

Goraknath was a contemporary of Kabir. He is regarded as the incarnation of Lord Siva. He calls himself as the son of Matsyendranath and grandson of Adinath. There is a temple of Goraknath at Gorakpur in the United Provinces. Bhartihari was the disciple of Goraknath.

Goraksha Sataka, Goraksha Kalpa, Goraksha Nama were written by Goraknath. They are in Sanskrit.

The followers of Goraknath are usually called Kanphatas because their ears are bored and rings are inserted in them at the time of their initiation. They worship Lord Siva.

NIMBARKYA AND RAMANUJA SAMPRADAYA.

There are Sadhus of Nimbarka Sampradaya. They are Vaishnavites. The Sannyasins of Sri Ramanuja Sampradaya wear orange coloured cloth, holy thread and tuft and tri-dand or three-staff. Their number is few only.

PARINAMI SECT.

Sri Pirannath is the founder of this sect. He was born in 1675 at Jamnagarh, District Rajkot in Kathiawar. He was the Diwan of Raja Jam Jasa. The followers should practise Ahimsa, Satyam, Daya. They study the sacred book Kul Jam Swarup or Atma Bodha in Hindi, which contains the teachings of Sri Pirannath. It contains 18000 Chaupais. They worship Bala Krishna, up to the age of 11 years 52 days.

The followers are found mostly in Punjab, Gujrat, Assam, Nepal and Bombay. There are two 'maths'—one at Jamnagarh and the other at Pamna.

CHAPTER X

HINDU MYTHOLOGY

Mythology is a part of every religion. Mythology is concretised philosophy. Mythology is the science which investigates myths or fables or legends founded on remote events, especially those made in the early period of a people's existence. Mythology inspires the readers through precepts and laudable examples and goads them to attain perfection, or the highest ideal. The abstract teachings and high subtle ideas are made highly interesting and impressive to the masses through the garb of stories, parables, legends, allegories and narratives. The sublime and abstract philosophical ideas and ideals of Hinduism are taken straight to the heart of the masses through impressive stories.

All religions have their own mythology. Mythology is slightly mixed up with a little history. It is difficult to make a fine distinction between history and mythology. If a Christian stands up and says "My prophet did such and such a marvellous thing", others will say "This is only a myth; our prophets did still more marvellous things, which are really historical".

The doctrine of Avatara of Hindus is a myth for the people of other religions. To worship a cow is superstition for the followers of other religions. The beautiful image or idol of Lord Krishna which captivates the hearts of the sincere devotees and inspires them to enter into Bhav Samadhi is horrible to look at for some other religionists. A Christian, a Jew and all others have their own various superstitions and myths. But these myths are really historical for them.

In every religion there are three parts, viz., philosophy, mythology and ritual. Philosophy is the essence of religion. It sets forth its basic principles or fundamental doctrines or tenets, the goal and the means of attaining it. Mythology explains and illustrates it by means of legendary lives of great men or of supernatural beings. Ritual is still more

concrete. It gives a still more concrete form to teach philosophy so that every one may understand it. Ritual consists of forms and ceremonies, etc.)

Puranas contain various myths. The cosmogonic myths of the Puranas are very interesting. A certain portion of Hindu mythology is even now presented to the public in the form of dramas during days of Hindu festivals. Thus the minds of the people are saturated with Hindu ideas and ideals and lifted to great spiritual heights.

There are great truths behind the ancient mythology of Hinduism. You cannot ignore a thing simply because it has a garb of mythology. Do not argue. Shut up your mouth. Keep your intellect at a respectable distance when you study mythology. Intellect is a hindrance. It will delude you. Give up arrogance, vanity. Cultivate love for imagery. Sit like a child and open your heart freely. You will comprehend the great truths revealed by mythology. You will penetrate into the hearts of the Rishis and sages who wrote the mythology. You will really enjoy mythology now.

You study Geography through maps. There is no real country or town in a map, but it helps you to know a great deal about the different countries. Similar is the case with myths. You can grasp the subtle philosophical truths through myths only.

(By studying mythology you will get several object lessons for moulding your character and leading an ideal divine life. The lives of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Bhishma, Nala, Harischandra, Lakshmana, Bharata, Hanuman, Yudhistira, Arjuna, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Radha, are sources of great spiritual inspiration for moulding your life, conduct and character. When you are in a dilemma, as to what to do during puzzling situations, when there is conflict of duties, you will get the exact solutions through study of mythology.)

Thus mythology has its own benefits and advantages. It stamps on the minds the subtle and abstract teachings of the Vedas, through instructive stories and illuminating discourses and paves the way for men to lead a divine life and attain perfection, freedom and immortality.)

CHAPTER XI.

PHILOSOPHY OF HINDU SYMBOLS

An image, a Sila or a Vighraha or Murti represents the form of the particular Lord who is invoked in it. A Linga represents Siva. It represents the secondless formless Brahman. The Sruti says, "Ekamevadwitiyam Brahma—the Brahman is one without a second." There is no duality here. A Lingam is shining and attractive to the eyes. It helps concentration. Ravana propitiated Siva and obtained boons by worshipping the Linga.

A Saligram is an idol of Vishnu. There are images of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Kartikeya, Ganesha, Hanuman, Dattatreya, Sita, Lakshmi, Parvati, Durga, Kali, Saraswati, etc., according to the taste of the particular devotee. The respective deity is invoked at the time of worship and Pooja is offered to the image. Though the image is worshipped the devotee feels the presence of the Lord in it and pours out his devotion unto it. Pictures of the Lord are also equally effective for worship. This is one of the primary means or methods by which one can develop devotion to the unseen God. Image worship is a very easy path. It denotes that the Lord is all-pervading, that He is present even in objects like stones, wooden pieces, clay and such other insignificant objects. The mind requires a support or prop in the beginning. It cannot have a conception of the Absolute in the initial stages. Image worship is not contrary to the view of Vedanta. It is rather a help.

Yajnopavita or the sacred thread is worn by the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas. Wearing the sacred thread is a very holy and sacred ceremony amongst the Hindus. Brahmin boys between the ages of 5 and 8 are invested with the sacred thread on a very auspicious day. By this ceremony he becomes fit for repetition of Gayatri. A Brahmin becomes a true Brahmin only after this ceremony, because "Janmana Jayate Sudra Karmana Jayate Dwija—By birth one is a Sudra, by Karma he becomes a Dwija or Brahmin." Upanayanam or thread ceremony is the second birth and hence the Brahmins are called Dwijas.

(The sacred thread or Yajnopavita consists of three threads. It denotes that one should be a Brahmachari in thought, word and deed. Each thread represents a Veda, viz., the Rik, Yajus and Sama. It represents also Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The knot in the middle represents the formless Brahman, the supreme principle. These represent also the Sattva, Rajas and Tamas of the Trigunatmiki Maya and the knot represents the Ishwara who controls Maya. Those who worship God at the three Sandhyas and repeat the Gayatri holding the Brahma knot of the sacred thread derive immense strength and power.) In days of yore, a Brahmana meditating upon the Gayatri holding the Brahma knot had the power to bless and curse others. The educated intelligentsia of the present day are quite ignorant of the power of the sacred thread and the performance of Sandhya. That is the reason why they have ignored it. The sacred thread is a great power for the Brahmin who leads a regulated life devoted to the worship of God. Kshatriyas and Vaishyas too acquire power and fame and wealth by the power of the sacred thread.

A householder at the time of marriage wears an additional sacred thread. A Brahmachari has only one. The additional thread at the time of marriage is intended for the well-being of the partner. The sacred thread should be on the body always. The custom of washing it after removing it from the body or sending it to the washerman is a wrong procedure. Some people are ashamed to wear the thread when they go to the office, they leave it at home. How ignorant they are!

Brahmins as well as the other castes grow Choti or Sikha, a tuft of hair. This tuft of hair was not so small in olden days, as seen in the present day. It covered the whole brain. They allowed the hair to grow. They never cut the tuft. It protects the brain from any sudden stroke and keeps it cool. The heat of the sun does not affect the head directly. Lack of this tuft has necessitated the use of umbrellas, etc.

The tuft is most scientific as well as religious. Any religious act should be performed after tying the tuft. Only the funeral and death anniversaries are performed with

tuft untied or with dishevelled hair. It is very inauspicious to remain with dishevelled hair. It is done only in times of great sorrow or calamity. It represents Asuric nature. Draupadi took an oath in the assembly of the Kurus when she was molested by Dussasana that she would remain with dishevelled hair until the enemies were properly revenged. Kaikeyi remained with dishevelled hair in her apartment with the object of getting two boons from Dasaratha which was detrimental to the interests of Rama, the favourite of Dasaratha. Auspicious acts are never undertaken with tuft untied. Nowadays very few people wear tuft and even women are neglecting this vital point in their feverish anxiety to copy the West. The Choti, Yajnopavita caste mark, etc., are the external symbols to show that you are a Hindu. Purity, self-restraint, non-violence, patience, love for one's fellow-beings, these are the internal marks of a Hindu.

Tilak is a mark of auspiciousness. It is put on the forehead with sandal paste, sacred ashes or Kumkum. The devotees of Siva apply the sacred ashes on the forehead, the devotees of Vishnu apply sandal paste and the worshippers of Devi or Shakti apply Kumkum—a red turmeric powder. The scriptures say, "A forehead without a Tilak, a woman without a husband, a Mantra, the meaning of which is not known while doing Japa, the head that does not bend before holy personages, a heart without mercy, a house without a well, a village without a temple, a country without a river, a society without a leader, wealth that is not given away in charity, a preceptor without a disciple, a country without justice, a king without an able minister, a woman not obedient to her husband, a well without water, a flower without smell, a soul devoid of holiness, a field without rains, an intellect without clearness, a disciple who does not consider his preceptor as God Himself, a body devoid of health, a custom (Achara) without purity, austerity devoid of fellow-feeling, speech in which truth is not the basis, a country without good people, work without wages, Sannyasa without renunciation, legs which have not performed pilgrimages, a disobedient lady, a determination unaided by Viveka or discrimination, a knife which is blunt, a cow which does not give milk, a spear without a point—all these are

worthy of condemnation. They exist for name's sake only. From this you can imagine the importance of Tilak.

Tilak is applied at the Ajna Chakra, the space between the two eyebrows. It has a very cooling effect. Application of sandal paste has great medicinal value apart from the spiritual influence. Application of sandal paste will nullify the heating effect when you concentrate and meditate at the Brumadhya. Tilak indicates the point at which the spiritual eye opens. Lord Siva has a third eye at the Bhru-madhya. When he opens the third eye the three worlds are destroyed. So also when the third eye of the Jiva is opened the three kinds of Tapas Adhyatmic, Adidaivic and Adibhautic are burnt to ashes. The three Karmas Sanchit, Prarabdha and Agami and also all the sins committed in the countless previous births are burnt. When you apply the Tilak you mentally imagine "I am the one non-dual Brahman free from all duality. May my eye of intuition open soon." You should remember this every time when you apply a Tilak.

There are various methods of applying Tilak. Saivites apply three horizontal lines with the sacred ashes. The Vaishnavites apply three vertical lines—Tripundra—in the forehead. Two lines are white and the middle one is red. When they apply Tilak, they say, "O Lord protect me from the evil effects of the Trigunatmiki Maya which has Sattva, Rajas and Tamas as its binding cords." The method of application only differs but the significance is the same in both the Vaishnavites and the Saivites.

Achamana is sipping water three times repeating the names of the Lord. Prokshan is sprinkling water over one's body for the sake of purity when a bath is not possible. This is for internal as well as external purity. While sipping water the following Mantra is repeated: "Achyutaya Namah—prostrations to the immutable Lord, Anantaya Namah—prostrations to the unlimited Lord, Govindaya Namah—prostrations to the Lord who is known by the name of Govinda." Then the various names of the Lord, Kesava Narayana, Madhava, Govinda, Vishnu, Madhusudana, Trivikrama, Vamana, Sreedhara, Hrishikesh, Padmanabha, Damodara are repeated touching the various parts of the body.

