

**ESSENTIALS OF HINDUISM
IN THE LIGHT OF SAIVA SIDDHANTA**

HINDUISM

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND DOCTRINE OF THE HINDU RELIGION

By R. S. NOL

MAHARAJA

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ESSENTIALS
OF
HINDUISM

IN THE LIGHT OF
ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

BY

S. ŚABĀRATNA MUDALIYĀR

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HINDUISM

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PREFACE.

THE religious activity that has been revived since some time past in India and Ceylon has inspired into the minds of a large section of the enlightened Hindu Community a desire to inform themselves of the doctrines of their religion. Although there is a large stock of religious literature in our native languages—especially in Sanscrit and Tamil—they afford no attraction to our present generation, their ideas and tastes having been largely saturated with Western influence. There are of course English translations of many of the Hindu sacred Books, but these translations are generally by strangers who have not the instinct to convey the import of the originals correctly; and the translations, again, cannot be of any great help to us as they are of originals that cannot afford any systematic idea of the religion in a concise form. Such ideas are only imparted by the Siddhanta school of the Hindu religion, and it is a great pity that this school is at present almost an unknown factor to our Western critics and even to a large portion of the Hindu community. It has therefore been my desire to place before the public in the English language a succinct account of the Hindu religion as propounded by the Siddhanta School, and in a form suited to modern tastes. The following pages were therefore written by me during my leisure hours, and I now present them to the public in a book form.

Hinduism is a vast field for religious research, and there is a large number of questions that deserve our careful study. Although I call this book "Essentials of Hindusim" I will not

undertake to say that it treats of the various important problems solved by the Hindu religion, nor can I say that even the subject treated herein are dealt with in all their important bearings. The main object is to explain, as far as I can, such of the Hindu doctrines as are discussed at the present day, and that too, to such an extent as is necessary to remove the misconception formed of them in certain quarters.

Religion is a spiritual problem brought out in the material plane, and it must necessarily have an inner as well as an outer aspect. I must confess at once that I am not at all competent to enter into the inner aspect of the religion which can only be explained by one who has had sufficient realization of spiritual secrets. I confine my observations to the outer aspect of the religion, referring, when necessary, to the existence of its inner aspect. I must put it in plain language that this book is not intended for advanced religious students, but chiefly for people in the secular plane who carry along with them various erroneous ideas of their religion, evidently as a result of the random criticisms made by the propagandists of Western religions. I was myself a sufferer at one time under these criticisms, and I therefore made it a point to inquire into their merits, and most of the facts disclosed in the following pages may be said to be the result of that inquiry. It has been my desire that the result of my inquiry should be made available to the public, especially at a time when there is an earnest demand for religious knowledge—and I may say that this book is now presented in that desire.

The idea was originally suggested to me by a friend of mine who wanted me to explain to the public, the doctrine of Transmigration from a Hindu standpoint. When writing on that subject, in compliance with the request of my friend, I had

to introduce various other doctrines of the Hindu religion, connected one way or other with the theory of Transmigration, and explain them as well in their proper places. When the book was nearly completed, I found that most of the essential doctrines of Hinduism in which our present generation are interested have been dealt with in the book, with the exception of a very few items. I therefore thought it best to deal with these items as well and call the book by the name of "Essentials of Hinduism".

I hope that this Book will be useful to many in having a correct idea of the doctrines of Hinduism, as explained by that religion.

JAFFNA,
10th July 1910.

S. S.

THE
ESSENTIALS OF HINDUISM
IN
THE LIGHT OF ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA.

FIRST PART.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL ASPECT OF HINDUISM.

What is Religion ?

THERE are various forms of religious faiths on the face of the earth, and they may be classified into two main heads—theistical and non-theistical. The former believe in the existence of a God, while the latter do not care to do so. In the opinion of the former, religion is our guide to God, while in that of the latter, it is our guide to get over our present state of ignorance.

I think a minute inquiry into the subject would disclose the fact that both the theories point, more or less, to the same end, but I do not propose here to enter into a disquisition of the subject. I will only say that we cannot get to God without removing our present state of ignorance, and that we cannot remove our present state of ignorance without the grace of God. We cannot depend only on our personal endeavours to get ourselves freed from our present state of ignorance, and the reasons are twofold. In the first place our exertions and

endeavours will be altogether impossible without the grace of God, and in the second place, our ignorance will not be dispelled unless the grace of God shines over us. A man groping in the dark requires a light to find his way out; and, ignorant as we are, we cannot be expected to help ourselves independent of any help from outside. It is true that our freedom from ignorance depends largely on our own exertion; but such exertion must invariably be guided by divine grace. Without such guidance, it will be absurd to expect final emancipation from ignorance, and when so emancipated, to continue in that state of emancipation. I will not, however, dilate long on this point, as my object is to satisfy enquirers who believe in the existence of God. I have already said that according to their view "Religion is our guide to God".

The Necessity of Religion.

Admitting the existence of God, the question arises whether a religion is necessary to reach Him. Before answering this question, we must ask ourselves another question—"Why should we reach God?" To enable us to answer this question we have to make some enquiry about:—

1. The nature of God,
2. The nature of ourselves and
3. The nature of our present condition.

(1) God is a Being beyond human comprehension. We gather from the Śāstras that He is spiritual in form. He is almighty, omnipresent, just, all-merciful and ever-blissful. He is the fountain of eternal heavenly happiness, and He is a goal from which there is no return, when once reached. He is always full of love towards the souls.

(2) Souls are themselves spiritual in form and in their pure state are fully capable of enjoying the eternal heavenly

happiness in the presence of the great God. They are, so to say, of the nature of crystal, ever ready to receive the reflection of the object before which they are placed.

(3) In their present state, they are merged in ignorance, covered up by the veil of *Pāśa*. They have therefore no idea of the exalted nature of God nor of the relation that exists between them and God. If they merge out of their present state of ignorance, they will find themselves in the presence of God and will be in the enjoyment of heavenly happiness.

Religion provides the necessary means to remove our ignorance and to enjoy heavenly happiness in the presence of God. The question may now be asked whether a religion is necessary to reach the presence of God.

We know that even in ordinary worldly matters, we are invariably in need of systematic instruction imparted by competent teachers on accepted text books. Can we then dispense with the services of a guide and depend on our personal endeavours for the securing of heavenly beatitude which is beyond the range of our practical knowledge in our present state of existence? A course of instruction on the subject is indispensable, and it is this instruction that is called our guide or religion. We may, without the help of a religion, try to conform ourselves to what are known as the moral and social laws of our country, but such a trial will not be of much avail. The moral laws themselves have to be explained to us and we must be instructed on the necessity of conforming ourselves to those laws. We cannot depend on mere self-help for such instruction; and even supposing that we do not require any help in the observance of our moral and social duties, heavenly beatitude or our salvation in its proper sense, cannot be secured without the help of an efficient guide. The

observance of moral rules is only a preliminary step necessary to qualify us for receiving instructions on the method of securing heavenly beatitude. Heavenly beatitude is a grand realization which it is not in our power to adequately describe, and it would be absurd on our part to attempt at securing it without a religion to guide us. Heaven is a mystic region of which we have not the remotest idea, and can we expect to reach that region with our human exertions? It is a region that cannot be identified by location, but we can only say, if at all we venture a description of it, that it is a stage in which we enjoy God. To attain that stage, we must be made to know God, feel God and realize God. That is our enjoyment of God—our enjoyment of heavenly blys. Such an enjoyment cannot be realized by us with our personal endeavours, groping as we are, in the labyrinth of intellectual darkness. We are covered, nay, twisted round in a very intricate manner, by a thick veil of material sheath; and inside that sheath we are again entwined by an equally intricate astral sheath, and there is a third sheath further inside which is the cause of the two outer sheaths. We have to be conducted through the labyrinths of these various sheaths and the numerous obstructions caused by them and led before the presence of God. We are like blind cripples at the bottom of a deep dark well, having no idea of the outside of the well, of the means or ways to get to it. We are, so to speak, deeply plunged into a thick mire of ignorance, our intellect being fully covered up by the darkness of worldly allurements, and not being possessed of any adequate idea of our present miserable condition, of our capability to enjoy the sublime heavenly happiness, and of the nature and source of that happiness, or of the means to secure it. Such as we are, we have certainly to receive sound and systematic

instruction to reach that goal, and such an instruction is what we call religion.

The Necessity for the Grace of God.

Is the grace of God necessary for our salvation? Cannot we, with our personal endeavours and without the grace of God work out our salvation? Such is the attitude of certain forms of religion among which I may say is Buddhism. It is therefore desirable that some light should be thrown on this important subject.

No action of ours can be said to be a merit in itself unless it is ordained by God. Of course all ordinations by God are based upon sound reasons, but the merit that accrues on account of conforming ourselves to such ordination is not so much on account of the action being good in itself—for actions are not rational factors to bring merit on us—as on account of the grace of God that alights on us as a result of our obeying the command of God. Actions may either be good or bad according to circumstances, and a decision on their gravity depends mainly on the authority that sanctions or prohibits them. Hence the necessity for laws. It is of course desirable that we should have a clear idea of the reason or reasons for doing any act, either of commission or omission, instead of blindly following it, but it is the authority that governs the act that constitutes a merit or demerit. If we go minutely into the subject, we will be able to see that the so called meritorious acts are ordained as such by God, and if not for that ordination, the acts in themselves have no virtue. God is pleased with us when we act in conformity with His ordination, and it is the pleasure of God that helps us in our spiritual advancement. Without the pleasure or grace of God, it would be altogether impossible to find our way into the region of heavenly

paradise, which we will not be able to see, and much less to approach, without the light of grace. It is only when we feel that our actions have pleased God, we realize the benefit of such actions, and it is this realization or light of grace that purifies our heart and renders it gradually fit for the enjoyment of heavenly bliss. Without the grace of God, we will be always in the dark, and we will not have the light to pursue the true path. In the absence of the grace of God, we are exposed to the perils of wordly evils into which our human weaknesses would always drive us; and there would be nothing to protect us from falling into them, at any time. It would therefore be a vain attempt to seek spiritual advancement without the grace of God.

Our actions, again, are only good, if they are Godly—connected with God—and have in them the grace of God. And what is the secret of an action being considered good? It is that God likes it. He is goodness itself. He is all-good, all-just and all-merciful: He is the fountain of all that is good, just and merciful. Without Him there is no goodness, no justice, no mercy: and we cannot do anything good outside the sphere of God and if we attempt to do good without a thought of God, it would be something like rejecting the essence and eating the waste substance of a fruit—or uttering words without caring for the meaning. Our actions (good actions) will not bear the fruits expected of them unless they are done with the idea that they are Godly; We obey the laws of Government, not because they are good in themselves, but because they have been ordered by Government. It is only this idea on our part that will make us loyal and secure for us an estimation in Government circle; and it is this estimation that will help us in that circle.

When we do any good act, we must do it in the name of God. Even in worshipping Him, we must do it in His name *i. e.*, we must do it in the faith that we have been ordained and prompted by Him to do so. The religion says “அவனருளாலே அவன்ருள்வணங்கி”, “Worshipping His feet through His grace”. The grace of God must always be prominent in our view, without which any act of ours will be mere blank or chaff, and will be of no avail to us. It is this grace that gives life to our actions and renders them meritorious. So that the Grace of God is very essential for our spiritual advancement, and such grace cannot be expected without an idea of God and true love to His feet. The religion says again: “அரனடிக் கண்பிலாதார் புண்ணியம் பாவமாகும்”, “Even the meritorious actions of men who have no love to the feet of God will be considered sins”.

Heaven is but the fulness of the grace of God and it would be idle to get to that heaven without caring for God's grace.

There is no one who does not like to get rid of the worldly turmoils and enjoy eternal happiness; still how many are able to do that? We see clearly in our experience that man is too weak to reach that perfection, and he cannot do so without the grace of God. It is only the grace of God that will keep us up and keep us in that position without slipping down again.

To state the case in a precise form, the impurity or evil tendency that sticks to a man requires a powerful factor of an opposite nature to neutralize its influence. It may be said that it is a darkness that requires the light of sublime good to counteract its effects. The grace of God is that light and it is therefore the only cure for that darkness. This Light of Grace can only be said to reflect on a soul when that soul enjoys or feels the Grace. The grace of God is no doubt resplendent at all

times and all places but it is only when the soul feels it, and when there is a mutual feeling between God and soul, that is to say when God delights the soul, and the soul delights God, the soul may be said to be reflected by Grace and be benefitted thereby. It is in consideration of this mutual love, the religion compares the relation between God and soul in the released state to that that exists between a husband and wife and this is why the pleasure that is enjoyed by a man and woman is supposed to be emblematical of the heavenly bliss. We know the enjoyment in this world is called சித்தின்பம் (small pleasure) when the enjoyment in heaven is called பேரின்பம் (great pleasure). The enjoyment depends much on the mutual feeling, and it is that enjoyment with intense love towards each other that would create in the soul a real and sincere fondness for God; and when this fondness is created, the light of grace reflects on him and the darkness of evil that stuck to him is rendered altogether ineffective and the soul is said to enjoy the bliss of realization.

Any amount of our merits will not be able to counteract our evil tendency—such merits being inanimate in themselves and not possessed of any power or prowess to affect the seed of evil that is inherent in us. Rational beings as we are, we are not possessed of any capacity to overpower our evil tendency and it is idle to expect such capacity in our actions. The seed of evil that exists in us can only be neutralized by the skill of a rational agent who is possessed of the necessary capacity to do so—and this agent is the grace of God without which our evil potentiality can in no way be affected. Our actions are said to be possessed of merits, because those actions have in their train the grace of God. The Grace of God is vouchsafed for us when we do certain deeds and hence the merit of “meritorious”

deeds. The Grace of God is the vitality of our merit which would otherwise be as powerless as a law without some one to administer it. It must be observed again that it is not possible with us to do any meritorious act without the grace of God. We do merit impelled by the grace of God, and the good we do add gradually to our capacity to enjoy that Grace until at last we are enabled to enjoy the same to the fullest possible extent.

Love to God.

It is not enough that in doing any action we do it in the name of God ; or that we do it because it was ordained by God. We must do it with love to God—with real piety to God. It is this love that is the sure and unmistakable portal to the grace of God. It is this love that takes us into close union with God; and it is this union that renders us fully reflected by the Grace of God and gives us eternal happiness. We only enjoy the grace of God when it reflects on us, and this reflection is rendered possible when there is love in us. The more we love Him, the more we enjoy Him. God is love and His form is one of pure love—a love that does not look for any ultimate reward—and we must be reflected by the Grace of that Love. The reflection of that grace is rendered possible and feasible when we assume a form more or less similar to that Love—and this is the secret why we should not only love God, but at the same time observe the various laws of ethics because His form is not only one of love, but a store-house of all ethics combined together—all that is good and kind. According to the Hindu theory love to God must be cultivated for love's sake and not for the sake of any reward, that being the form of the great God.

“ அன்புஞ் சிவமு மிரண்டுடென்ப ரறிவிலார்

அன்பே சிவமாவ தாரு மறிகிலார்

அன்பே சிவமாவ தாரு மறிந்தபின்

அன்பே சிவமா யமர்ந்திருந் தாரே.”

“The ignorant call Love and Śiva two different objects. No one knows that Love and Śiva are both the same. If one knows that Love is Śiva, one will abide in grace in the form of Love and Śiva ”

In fact the advaita union with God is effected with this love, and love is the key to the gate of God's grace.

True Religion

The necessity of a religion and that of the grace of God and of our love to Him being admitted, it would naturally follow that the great God who is ever loving us would have given us a religion to enable us to approach Him. That religion would no doubt guide us to the proper goal, if it is correctly understood and duly acted upon; and that is the religion that should be known as the true religion. But how are we to find out that religion? There are many religions in the world and every one of them asserts itself to be the true religion. It is of course a very difficult task to single out the true religion out of the several religions that we have before us, and I therefore propose to say a few words on the subject of “True Religion” under this section.

I will, in the first place, ask “What is true religion?” True religion, I may say, is the religion that helps us in discovering the truth. And what is the truth? God is the only truth which has an independent existence of its own, and the religion that enables us to see this God is the true religion. How are we to “see” God? We cannot see Him with our physical eyes nor can we even know Him by our mind. Our “seeing” God is only our realizing Him by our experience or enjoyment. God is an incomprehensible Being whom our

futile intellect or intelligence can scarcely understand, but we are quite capable of enjoying Him. His incomprehensible nature is itself a source of our enjoyment of Him.

And how is He to be enjoyed? This enjoyment, it may be said, is our real salvation. To enjoy God, in the true sense, we must in the first place, know ourselves; for without knowing our own nature, we will not be able to prepare ourselves for the enjoyment that we expect. We must have again a full idea of our present condition—of the cause of that condition, and of the means of removing that condition. We should also have a sufficient idea of God, so far as our power of understanding will permit. Our enjoyment of God will not be possible without an idea of the nature of God—at least so much of His nature as is necessary for our enjoyment. These various ideas must all be by practical experience or realization, and no book knowledge or theoretical knowledge will be of any service to us; and this knowledge or realization is our real enjoyment. A knowledge of the theory may help us in the realization, but it is not the actual realization which is altogether different from theoretical knowledge.

The Hindu religion instructs us very minutely on the different points above referred to by throwing abundant light on the three entities of Pati (God), Paśu (Soul), and Pāśa (Bondage); and the means, the religion adopts for the purpose of realization, are exhaustive and elaborate.

The stage of realization is far and very far away from us on account of our present condition and the religion is fully alive to this state of ours. It fully recognizes the fact that our ignorance is so deep, that our intellect is so perverted, that we are totally indifferent, if not averse, to spiritual aggrandizement and are wholly immersed in wordly pleasures and secular

enjoyments. The religion therefore tries in the first place to create in us a religious tendency, and avails itself of every opportunity to drag us by degrees into the spiritual plane; it may be found to administer religion in tiny doses mixed up with secular enjoyments and worldly pleasures, in proportion to our advancement and in a manner suited to our tastes, habits and manners. All our moral duties, the various rites and ceremonies that we have to perform in matters secular, and even our prayers to God for worldly advancement may be said to have been instituted with this object of creating in us a religious leaning. Although almost all the religions of the world are agreed that we must observe the moral laws and religious duties, yet very few of them seem to realize the fact that these several observances are intended for the purpose of creating in us a desire for religion as a preliminary step to spiritual advancement. But according to the Hindu religion, all these observances are but preliminaries, intended to prepare the soil for the reception of the seed of spirituality, such a preparation being essentially necessary for the subsequent realization.

This preliminary step of spiritual desire could, of course, be secured by any religion, whatever its form or creed may be; but there being a material difference in the forms adopted by the various religions, there should necessarily be a corresponding difference in the results also. But a desire for spirituality is sure to be effected by all religions, more or less, provided the rules laid down by them are followed by their respective followers with sincere faith. Faith is an important factor in the matter of religion, and so long as there is this faith in man, he is sure to be benefitted by any religion to the extent of the efficacy of the rules laid down by that religion. The Hindu

religion may be found to uphold this magnanimous view and to speak in clear terms that no religion should be despised and that it is Lord Paramaśiva who rewards the followers of the different faiths according to their respective merits. Such a liberal and tolerant view of the question is an evident sign of the true religion, as that religion is fully alive to the impossibility of a man acting against his conscience and faith, and to the absurdity of expecting people to do impossibilities. Faith depends fully on circumstances over which man has no control ; and without this faith, it is not possible with men to follow one religion in preference to another. A tolerant spirit is therefore essential for all right thinking men, and we know that it is this spirit of religious toleration that has marked the modern national greatness. But it is a pity to find that this magnanimous spirit of tolerance is entirely absent in certain forms of modern religions—which no doubt betrays their weakness. The Hindu religion fully allows this and says :—

“யாதெநு தெய்வங் கொண்டார் அத்தெய்வமறிது யங்கே
மாதெநு பாகனூதாம் வருவர்”.

“Whichever God you may worship, in the form of that God will Lord Śiva appear (and bestow His grace).”

When the follower of a certain faith has acquired sufficient religious tastes and merits, he will be led up to higher forms of religion and ultimately to the true religion from which he will be enabled to secure final salvation.

It must be observed again that a taste for religion is not enough in itself for the cultivation of spirituality. Any desire on our part to get to the spiritual arena will not be able to make a bold stand before the storm of worldly desires that are furiously raging in the atmosphere where we are now placed. We have a worse enemy again in our mental restlessness and

flirtation which will not permit the concentration of our mind on God. It is not possible under these circumstances to jump up to religion proper with any amount of religious taste in us. We can only approach religion by degrees and we require several steps or gradations by means of which we could reach to religion. The necessity for such steps would be fully recognised by the true religion as it must clearly see the wide gulf that exists between humanity and spirituality and the impracticability of the former to approach the latter without gradual steps. The Hindu religion therefore provides the grades of Sariyai, Kiriya, Yogam and Jñānam for approaching Śiva. The devotee may be found to sing:—

“விரும்புஞ் சரியை முதன் மேய்ஞான நான்கும்

அரும்புமலர் காய்கனி போலன்றோ பராபரமே”.

“Oh Lord! Are not the four paths of Sariyai etc., like bud, flower, green fruit and ripe fruit?”

The most important object for the securing of which religion is mainly intended is Realization. Religion should make her followers realize the truth, and this is the chief characteristic of the true religion. The sole object of Hinduism is this, while most of the modern religions seem to have no idea of it. The importance of the subject requires some elucidation of it, and I shall now proceed to say a few words on the subject, although I must admit that it is a subject beyond description.

Realization.

Every enjoyment is a realization; and heavenly enjoyment is itself a realization. Realization is more to be experienced than described and it is more so in the spiritual plane; and as such it will be idle on my part to attempt a description of such realization particularly so, when I cannot boast of any religious realization. Although I cannot undertake to give a description

of realization as the importance of the subject deserves, I must submit for the consideration of all lovers of religion that too much stress cannot be placed upon its value as a religious factor, that being the only means of fully satisfying inquirers after religious truths. Religious problems are more or less in the spiritual plane into which our sense organs or *indriyas* cannot penetrate, and in which we have to depend on experience alone for arriving at any truth; and no doubt such experience will be the more satisfactory means of convincing us of truths.

Our vision of things, according to Hindu ideas is as follows:—

1. *Indriyakkāṭchi* (vision by senses),
2. *Manadukkāṭchi* (vision by mind),
3. *Yogakkāṭchi* (vision by yoga) and
4. *Jñānakkāṭchi* (vision by *jñānam*).

1. *Indriyakkāṭchi* is confined to the physical plane, the vision being wholly through our senses.

2. *Manadukkāṭchi* is a vision of things through our intellect, and this vision is largely dependent on the vision obtained through our senses.

3. *Yogakkāṭchi* is a vision obtained by yogic practices—by controlling our psychic energies and by communing with God by concentrating our mind.

4. *Jñānakkāṭchi* is pure wisdom or vision of things by actual realization, and this is the most satisfactory method of arriving at truths. This is called the vision in silence (*சொல்லாமை*) which will not bear description.

There are many problems of religious philosophy which cannot be solved by any knowledge obtained through our senses or intellect or even by the control of our psychic energies. A solution of these problems is only possible by personal

experience, and once this experience or realization is achieved, there is an end of all doubts. There cannot certainly be any doubt when one realizes a truth and feels it for himself. Knowing is entirely different from realizing, and when a truth is realized, there need be no further enquiry or investigation into the subject. I may know that sugar is sweet, but I may never have tasted it. But when I taste it and realize the truth for myself, I need no further proof and I am quite convinced of the taste. Most of the religious truths are of similar nature, and they can only be verified by realization. The scope of religion is vast and extensive, and it covers spheres which our physical capacities cannot reach at all. This should not prevent us from making religious enquiries and satisfying us so far as our futile capabilities can; but in matters transcending our intellectual power it is realization that could help us in the solution of any problem.

Heavenly enjoyment is the highest realization that we expect, and it is a great pity that this aspect of the question is not receiving the serious consideration it deserves, and people expect to attain heaven without preparing themselves for such realization. Modern religions seem to have the least idea of this essential and important fact, while the *summum bonum* of Śaivism may be said to be this realization. There is the true religion, and all the rest is mere beating about the bush. It is this realization that is referred to by Saint Māṇikkavāṇagar in the following words: “உரை யுணர்வி றந்துரின் றுணர்வ தோருணர்வு”, “An experience realized losing words and thoughts”.

Faith.

Realization depends to a large extent on faith. It is not possible to realize spiritual truths without following the rules laid down by religion with strong faith. Faith is one of the

most important factors of religion, and blessed certainly are those who have a strong faith in their religion. I should think that ignorant old women who have a large stock of this faith in themselves are far more gifted than the intelligent and talented B. A's and M. A's whose education and intelligence only increase their doubts and suspicions. Education in a secular sense is no doubt a great barrier to religious faith and realization, and the Hindu devotee has therefore very aptly said, "கல்லாதபேர்களே நல்லவர்கள் நல்லவர்கள்" "The un-educated are indeed good, very good", and he further adds: "வெல்லாமல் எவரையும் வெருட்டிவிட வகைவந்த வித்தை எனமுத்திதருமோ" "Will education that enables one to overcome his rival secure him heaven?"

Education without religious training is hardly of any use to man, and it is religious training that is of material help to the cultivation of religious faith which would ultimately lead to spiritual realization. It is a great pity that the real value of faith is greatly misunderstood by many of the so-called educated people of modern times, and that in their opinion faith is another word for superstition. But if they could take a little trouble over the matter and supplement their secular education with a bit of religious knowledge, they would be able to see clearly that faith is a legitimate acquirement necessary for spiritual advancement, and that it is incumbent on every man to cultivate it as a part of his moral duty. A truly educated man will be able to see for himself the nature and value of religion, the necessity of faith and the duty of man to cherish and cultivate faith in his religion. Man is bound to place his faith on any theory when he finds sufficient reason to do so, and these reasons fully depend on the knowledge that he obtains of the theory. This knowledge, again, depends on his

personal observations and inductions as well as on other sources which, according to his natural conditions, are his intellectual feeders. A man born into a family which believes in a certain creed, is bound to believe himself in that creed, as according to his natural condition, he has to draw his knowledge from that family. Once this faith sets in, by whatever cause it may be, it must be carefully guarded and nursed, especially in such an important subject as religion. With faith in his religion properly guarded and nursed, and with love to God which such faith is sure to produce, man may fairly expect to attain realization which is the ultimate end of man's life in this world.

It must, however, be understood that this faith should not be allowed to silence the voice of reason. Faith should of course be cherished and nursed but not beyond its legitimate limit. Man is not to place his faith on any theory without sufficient reason, and in fact it is not possible with men to place their faith on any question without satisfactory reasons. Faith cannot be created or moulded as we desire, but it fully depends on reasons and circumstances strong enough to produce a conviction; and these reasons and circumstances may either be facts gleaned by one's own personal observations and investigations or knowledge communicated to him by his instructors and teachers, as I have already said. It is a serious mistake, again, to stick to a faith in spite of satisfactory reasons to the contrary, and it is such a faith that is very correctly called blind faith; I know that the propagandists of modern religions rely upon such a misuse of faith, and perhaps this accounts for the attack made against faith by the educated people of the day. Faith should not be allowed to override reason, nor should a false pride for reason override faith. We should always submit to reason, but at the same time the value and necessity

of faith should not be lost sight of. Our faith should be properly guarded against semblances of reason. If there are reasons strong enough to destroy our faith, such reasons can only be accepted after sufficient enquiry equal to the importance and value of faith.

Variety of Religions.

Although God has given us a religion as a guide to what we may call His kingdom, the tenets of that religion cannot be said to have been correctly understood by all alike owing to their Karmic effects and standard of enlightenment. Men are of different tastes and different degrees of intelligence, and this difference multiplies by leaps and bounds as time advances, so that, although it may be said that the religion given by God was accepted and rightly acted upon at the time it was given, yet in course of time, people seem to have put different constructions on the tenets and doctrines of that religion to suit their own taste and understanding, and it is not to be wondered at that the original religion was materially altered and mutilated by scheming sectarians to answer their own purposes. Such alterations and mutilations made from time to time must have put different garbs on the same religion, and in course of a further advance of time, the difference between the original religion and the various garbs put on it subsequently must have been rendered so great as to affect even the main principles; and the state of things would have been made still worse when people migrated to distant regions and cultivated their religions there. This accounts for the variety of religions, and I am sure that the history of man and of the different forms of religion that cropped up from time to time would fully bear me out in this inference.

Whatever may be the difference between religions, it is possible to trace some identical truths underlying them all, and this is an evident sign that they all emanated from a common source. It will not be denied that the various religions would benefit their respective adherents to the extent of the truths possessed by each of them. Apart from the truths embodied in a religion, its efficacy depends to a great extent on the faith placed on it by its adherents. A religion may be false, but if its adherents believe it to be true, and act up to its tenets conscientiously, the great God who is fully aware of their sincerity and anxiety is sure to reward them to the extent of their faith on what they believed to be true; and to this should be added the merits of following the truths embodied in each religion. The Hindu religion therefore tolerates every form of religious faith as a necessary evil, and according to that religion, the various forms of religious faiths are formulated by Śiva Sakti (divine grace) to suit the people of different grades. The main object of every religion is worship to God; and this worship will no doubt be accepted by Him, whatever its form may be, provided such worship is made in good faith. But the final salvation is only to be expected through the true religion to which the followers of alien faiths will be gradually led as a result of the merits acquired by them in their respective faiths.

The Siddhānta School of the Hindu faith classifies the different religions of the world under four main heads in reference to their relation to the true religion. They are:—

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Outermost | } Heterodox, |
| 2. Outer | |
| 3. Inner | } Orthodox. |
| 4. Innermost | |

The religions that would not accept at all the Hindu revelations of Vēdas or Āgamas are called outermost (purap-purach-chamaiyams) religions.

Those that accept the Vēdas and reject the Āgamas are called outer (purach-chamaiyams) religions.

The religions that accept both the revelations and believe in the existence of some additional revelations are called inner (agap-purach-chamaiyams) religions.

Those that believe only in the two kinds of revelations, but put different interpretations on the texts are called innermost (ugach-chamaiyams) religions.

The Śaiva Siddhāntam stands above all these religious forms.

The Six systems of Indian Philosophy.

The six systems of Indian Philosophy in which Oriental scholars are greatly interested at present belong to the class of religions known as "*purach-chamaiyams*" or "outer religions" according to the classification referred to in the preceding section.

The six systems, it must be observed, fully accept the authority of the Vēdas, although they put their own constructions on various passages of the Vēdic texts, to suit their own line of thought. Whatever may be the relative value of their interpretations, one thing is quite plain—that the Vēdic revelations were held in great veneration by the various thinkers of the time. They were so much enamoured with the sanctity and sublimity of the Vēdic revelations that they held every word and every syllable of them in sacred veneration. They would even deny the superiority of the Vēdic Deities, but they would not reject the Vēdas or any portion of them, although their views were different from the views of others who had

their own interpretation of the Vêdic texts. When they had occasion to differ from others, they put their own construction on the texts and formulated their own system of philosophy.*

The philosophies so promulgated were six in number and there is some discrepancy in the lists of these schools as prepared by European scholars and as compiled by the Sanskrit scholars of South India. According to the European list, the six schools are as follows :—

1. Vêdānta by Vyāsa.
2. Pūrva-mimāmsa by Jayamuni.
3. Śāṅkhya by Kapila.
4. Yōga by Patañjali.
5. Vaiśeṣhika by Kaṇāda.
6. Nyāya by Gautama.

The South Indian Sanskrit scholars make up the list as follows :—

1. Tarka, comprising of
 - (a). Vaiśeṣhika by Kaṇāda and
 - (b). Nyāya by Gautama or Akshapāta.

* The founders of these schools had no doubt a far better idea of the Vêdic texts and a keener insight into their import than our modern critics, who would do well to note the great reverence in which the texts were held by those able and erudite thinkers, before condemning certain Vêdic passages as babblings and meaningless forms. It would be interesting to quote in this connexion the following words of Prof: Max Muller who at one time laboured under a similar misunderstanding of certain Vêdic passages :—

“ I know from my own experience how often what seemed to me for a long time unnecessary, nay absurd, disclosed after a time, a far deeper meaning than I should have ever expected—*The Six Systems of Indian philosophy*, p. 360.

2. Mimāṃsa by Jaymini.
3. Ekātmavāda (or Vēdānta as it is now known) by Vyāsa
comparing of
 - (a) Māyavāda,
 - (b) Bārakaryavāda,
 - (c) Kṛita Brahmvāda and
 - (d) Śabda Brahmvāda,
4. Śāṅkhya by Kapila.
5. Yōga by Patañjali.
6. Pāñcharātra or Vaiṣṇava by Vāsudēva.

Although these schools have each its distinct features, yet they have a good deal of common ground; and according to Vijñāna Bikshu one of the commentators on the Śāṅkhya sūtras and others of his way of thinking, all these six schools are but gradatory steps to the ultimate truth. The logic enunciated in the *Tarka*, the reasonings adopted in the Mimāṃsa, the *Satkāryavāda* of the Śāṅkhya, and several other subjects of importance are accepted alike by all the schools and they are fully consistent with the Siddhānta philosophy itself. According to the Siddhānta philosophy, these various systems are confined to different spheres of knowledge governed by different Tattvas or principles of the cosmic evolution, and the adherents of the different systems will be rewarded in the planes by which they are affected.

The schools represent different phases of thought, as I have already said, and I will give below a brief outline of the main principles peculiar to each of them :—

1. Tarka.

(a) *Vaiśeṣika*. This classifies and differentiates the *Padārthas* or entities of the world and inculcates a formula to find out the true nature of the souls. According to this school,

when the soul discovers its true nature, it ceases from all actions and lies dormant like a stone, and such a state is the final emancipation.

(b) *Nyāya*. This school differs slightly from *Vaiśeṣika* in the method of finding out the truth.

2. Mīmāṃsaka.

This school believes in the efficacy of the Vedic rites, and ignores altogether the Divinity of any Personal God.

3. Ekātmavāda.

(a) *Māyāvāda*. According to this school *Brahm* (or the supreme God) is the only reality, all the rest being illusions caused by *Māyā*. Knowing self to be *Brahm* is the final beatitude.

(b) *Bārakaryavāda*. This school inculcates the theory of *Parīṇāma* or change, maintaining that by such a change God has become all the material and spiritual world.

(c) *Kṛita Brahmavāda*. This school emphasizes that self is *Brahm* and that knowing it as such, with an understanding that it sports in various ways in the different objects of the world, is *mukti* or final salvation.

(d) *Śabda Brahmavāda*. According to this philosophy, *Brahm* which is the cause of all forms, will be of the form of sound at the dissolution of the universe and that on account of *avichchai* (nescience) it expands as the material and spiritual world.

4. Sāṅkhya.

This school believes in the existence of *Puruṣas* or souls but not in the existence of God. According to this philosophy, the souls belong to the highest or the twenty-fifth plane or *Tattva*, all the other *Tattvas* being below that plane and belonging to the material world. The soul, in reality, is not

affected by any pain or pleasure, but what appears as such is only the result of misunderstanding.

5. Yōgam.

This school places God on the twenty-sixth *Tattva*, and maintains that He is different from the souls. This school lays great stress on the efficacy of *Yōga i. e.*, control over the mind by practising the art of concentration.

6. Pāñcharātram.

The followers of this philosophy contend that Vāsudēva who is the twenty-fifth *Tattva* or plane is the supreme God, and that the whole world—material as well as spiritual—is his *Parināma* or variation of form. They attach more importance to their own revelation known as *Pāñcharātram* than to the Vedas.

Of the six schools above outlined, the Vedānta, or Ekānma-vāda, as it is known by the Siddhāntins, is very much admired by the oriental scholars of the West. The following passages quoted from the writings of Prof. Max Muller, embodying as one of them does, the opinion of another eminent savant Schopenhauer, will clearly show the high estimation in which the philosophy has been held in the West:—

"..... The Vedānta philosophy, a system in which human speculation seems to me to have reached its very acme." (*The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, preface p. 5).

"At the same time, I make no secret that all my life I have been very fond of the Vedānta. Nay, I can fully agree with Schopenhauer and quite understand when he said—'In the whole world there is no study except that of the original (of the Upanishats) so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Oupnekhat (Persian translation of the Upanishats). It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death'".

“Schopenhauer was the last man to write at random or to allow himself to go into ecstasies over so-called mystic and inarticulate thought. And I am neither afraid nor ashamed to say that I share his enthusiasm for the *Vedānta* and feel indebted to it for much that has been helpful to me in my passage through life”. (*The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* p. 193).

I must observe in this connection that genuine Vedānta philosophy is not in any way at variance with the Siddhānta philosophy, but on the other hand, the one may be said to be exactly identical with the other—the only difference being that the Siddhānta philosophy is more explicit and direct than the Vedānta philosophy. In fact, the Vedānta Sūtras which form the basic foundation of the Vedānta philosophy are fully accepted by the Siddhāntins and they have their own commentary on them by Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha-Śivāchārya who lived long before Śaṅkarāchārya. The various branches of this School owe their existence to the different interpretations put on the original Sūtras, which in their true sense are not opposed to the views of the Siddhānta philosophy. The intimate union or *advaita* relation that exists between God and Soul, the entire dependence of the latter on the former, so much so, that the soul cannot assert itself as a separate factor in the presence of the great God, and the utter inability of the soul to move without being moved by God have all combined together and made the *Ekānmavādins* to rush into an abrupt but erroneous conclusion that there is nothing besides God; while the Siddhānta philosophy goes into the question very subtly and establishes the existence of souls, maintaining at the same time their *advaita* relation with God and their full dependence on Him, discriminating the difference between the two entities with wonderful nicety and minuteness.

Hinduism.

There are in India various forms of religion, and among them could be mentioned alien faiths such as Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism and even Mohammedanism and Christianity. It would be absurd to call all these religions by the same name of Hinduism; and I do not think it possible to call even the indigenous religions of India by the same name of Hinduism. The word "Hinduism" seems evidently to have been intended to mean the religions that acknowledge the Vedas as their revelations. But I should think that even this is a great mistake. There are various forms of religions in India that acknowledge the divine origin of the Vedas, and they cannot all be treated as one and the same religion.

However, I am concerned only with Śaivism or "Śaiva Siddhāntam," as it is generally called—a faith, I may say, very common in South India and Ceylon; and I will confine my remarks to that form of the Hindu faith.

Śaiva Siddhāntam.

"Siddhāntam" literally means "established truth" as distinguished from the other forms of religions which are called "Pūrvapakṣham" or "refuted theories". Although the Siddhānta form of the Hindu religion is not very much known in Western circles—or at least it has not received as much consideration in Western hands as its importance requires—it is neither a new idea nor less significant one than the other religious forms of India. It has, chiefly for its basis, the Āgamas, while it fully and freely admits the authority of the Vedas. It selects out the intrinsically religious portions of the Vedas and explains their true meaning and enlarges upon them as propounded by the Āgamas.

Nilakanṭha who lived long anterior to Śaṅkara wrote his Siddhānta commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras of Vyāsa, and the numerous temples and other institutions spread all over South India would speak in unmistakable terms of the popularity which the system wielded in ancient days. The Tamils, more than the other races of India, seem to have paid great attention to the importance of this system, and the various works in that language bearing on this subject would fully bear this out. As Tamils are considered to have been among the original inhabitants of India, long before the Āryan settlement, it will not be wrong to suppose that the Siddhānta cult was the original faith of India. The few Europeans who had the opportunity of gleaning some idea of the philosophy seem to have been very much struck by its depth and soundness* and there is no doubt that many intricate problems of religion are found fully threshed out, systematically discussed, and satisfactorily solved therein to the great delight of seekers after truth. I hope that the time is come for the study of the philosophy in Western circles, and the excellence of the philosophy will then be fully admired and appreciated by the world at large.

I know that Siddhānta is at times contrasted with Vedānta, and there is a highly mistaken notion in some quarters that the two philosophies are opposed to each other. This is a serious blunder. Vedānta is the philosophy of the Vedas while Siddhānta is the philosophy of the Āgamas. Āgamas are only commentaries on the Vedas, and the philosophy deduced

* Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope, M.A., D.D. writes as follows in the appendix to his *Tiruvāṇṇagāṁ* :—"The Śaiva Siddhānta System is the most elaborated, influential and undoubtedly the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India"—P. LXXIV.

from the one cannot be said to be opposed to the philosophy deduced from the other. The Siddhānta philosophy is the true exposition of the Vedānta philosophy which is rather wide in its meaning and abstract in its sense. Siddhānta is the real key to the Vedānta.

The sage says:—

வேத மொடாகம மெய்யா மிறைவனூல்

ஒதும் பொதுவுஞ் சிறப்புமென் றன்னுக்

நாத னுரையவை நாடிவிரண் டுந்தம்

பேத மதென்பர் பெரியோர்க் கபேதமே.

“The Vedas and Āgamas are true revelations from God. One is general and the other Special. These words of God if inquired into will be found to be two forms of conclusions. They say that they are different; but to the great they are not so”.

Siddhānta Paramparai.

It is indeed very much to be regretted that the substantial merits of the Siddhānta philosophy have not been brought to light at the present time as their importance deserves. The very fact of the philosophy not being known in Western circles is put forward as a reason to contend that it is comparatively of a late origin. But according to the philosophy itself, it is as old as the other Indian Philosophies, if not older than they as the following account of its *Paramparai* or lineage would clearly show:—

At the commencement of the cosmic evolution, started after the main dissolution, known as *Mahāśaṅkaram*, the Vedas and Āgamas issued out of *Kuḍilai* or *Praṇava*, first in the form of *Nāda*, then in that of *Biṇḍu* and then in that of *akshara*. They then took the forms of words and phrases and proceeded out of the faces of Śiva—the four Vedas out of the four

side-faces, and the Āgamas out of the top face. The Vēdas were revealed to Brahma through Aṇṇḍa-Dēva, and the Āgamas to ten Mahēśvaras and eighteen Rudras—those revealed to the Mahēśvaras being known as Śiva-Bhēda and those revealed to the Rudras being known as Rudra-Bhēda. As an Āgama was revealed to each of the above twenty-eight recipients, there were twenty-eight Āgamas which were then revealed collectively to Aṇṇḍa-Dēva who conveyed them to Śrīkaṇṭha who in his turn revealed them to Nāṇḍi Dēva.

Nāṇḍi-Dēva having laid before Śrīkaṇṭha certain points on which he had his own doubt, Śrīkaṇṭha cleared such doubts, and in order to make the point clearer still, he instructed Nāṇḍi on Śivajñānabōdha which was enunciated in twelve chapters in one of the Āgamas known by the name of Raurava.

This Śivajñānabōdha which is the cream of the Śaivāgamas, was taught by Nāṇḍi Dēva to his disciple Sanatkumāra, by him to Sattyajñāna-Darśigal, by him to Parñjōti-Muni and by him to Meykaṇḍan.

Meykaṇḍa-Dēvar translated the same into Tamil with a short commentary and instructed his disciple Aruṇṇḍi on the same. Aruṇṇḍi imparted instructions on the same to Maṇai-Jñāna-sambaṇḍa and he to Umāpatiśivārchārya. This is known as the lineage of the Tamil Siddhānta philosophy.

The four last mentioned viz: Meykaṇḍa-Dēva, Aruṇṇḍi-śivāchāryar, Maṇai-jñānasambaṇḍar and Umāpatiśivāchāryar, are known as Saṇṭāna-Kuṇavars or the linear instructors who founded the Tamil Church which is now represented by the Tiruvāvaḍuturai Ādinam. This Ādinam or Maṭh is more than 600 years old as would be quite evident from the list of Tambirāns who presided over this institution from the time it was formally established by Namaśivāya-Deśikar. This

establishment traces its connection to Mount Kailāśa, as its philosophy was originally inculcated by Śrikanṭha, and handed down to the Ādinam by a line of inspired preceptors. There are several other similar establishments in South India that represent the Siddhānta School, and it is said that such institutions existed at one time in Northern India too. In fact two out of the fourteen treatises in Tamil on the Siddhānta philosophy are ascribed to a sage called Uyyavaṇḍa-Dēvar who is said to have come from the North. The philosophy in Tamil has a very rich stock of literature of which Śivajñānabōdham by Meykaṇḍa-Dēvar takes the fore front. This is one of the fourteen Tamil treatises above referred to and these fourteen treatises are held in the Light of Inspired Writings. There are several other important works in Tamil on the Siddhānta philosophy and I fervently hope that the time is not far when these excellent works will be unearthed and brought to light.

The Tamil Śivajñānabōdham is said to be more than 650 years old and Umāpatiśivāchāryar who was the fourth in succession to the author of Śivajñānabōdham gives the date of his work *Sankalpanirākaraṇa* ās 1235 of Sālivāhana-Śakābda which takes us nearly 600 years back.

Although it is not possible to fix an exact date for the origin of the Sanskrit literature of the philosophy and its fundamental authority, viz., the Āgamas, yet there is ample room to infer that they belong to a very antique period. The Āgamas are referred to in the *Purāṇas* and the *Smṛitis* and as well in the ancient Tamil sacred writings such as *Tēvāram*, *Tiruvāçagam*, *Tirumantiram*, etc., which no doubt belong to a very ancient period. Śri Nilakanṭhaśivāchārya was a contemporary of Śaṅkarāchārya's preceptor Govinda-Yogi, and he (Nilakanṭha) wrote his Śaiva or Siddhānta-Bhashya on Vedānta-Sūtras long

before Śaṅkarācārya wrote his Bhāṣya on the same. It is therefore quite evident that Siddhānta philosophy and its literature were already in existence, and were acknowledged as an important branch of Indian thought long before the time of Śaṅkarācārya. The Āgamic literature was widely known during the time of Rāma, and the Rev. Mr. Hoisington, the first translator into English of the Tamil Śivajñānabōdham seems to think that the Āgamas should be assigned a date much earlier than 1000 B. C. In the opinion of M. Barth "the Vēdic writings chance upon them (Āgamas) and, as it were, go along side of them during the very period of their formation". This opinion, I am sure will be shared by all who have a clear idea of the one with the help of the other and realize their true meanings.

Main features of the Siddhānta Philosophy.

I will now proceed to outline a few of the salient points of the philosophy.

The Śavia Siddhānta postulates the existence of three *padārthas* or entities:—

1. *Pati* or God.
2. *Paśu* or soul and
3. *Pāśam* or the Bondage of souls (origin of evil). All the three *padārthas* are eternal.

1. *Pati* or God is, in its nature, beyond the grasp of *pāśam*, or in fact, His nature is such as He will not be affected by *pāśam*. He is pure and perfect, just and gracious, almighty and omnipresent etc., etc., as explained elsewhere. (See p. 2.)

2. *Paśu* or soul is the recipient of the grace of God. He is encased in Mala or *pāśa* from eternity; and hence he is ignorant, subject to illusion, pain and sorrow, and his condition is therefore wretched and miserable.

3. *Pāśam* is the bondage of souls and is of three kinds :—

(a) *Ānavam*, (b) *Māyai* and (c) *Kanmam*.

(a) *Ānavam* is the source of the soul's ignorance and arrogance.

(b) *Māyai* is the seed of the material universe, and it has the power of illumining the intellectual power of man to a certain extent when worked up by the *Pati*, in the material plane.

(c) *Kanmam* is the accumulation of the merits and demerits acquired by the souls, and is the cause of their experience and enjoyment.

The bondage of the souls by these three *malams* is a condition of the soul from eternity, and not caused at any certain time. It is, so to speak, an abnormal condition of the soul, and it is of various degrees in the different souls, and hence the variety in their actions and propensities.

The Relation between Pati, Pašu and Pāśam.

The soul or *Pašu* got its name from *Pāśam*—the meaning of the name being that which is bound—bound by *mala*. The relation between *Pašu* and *Pāśam* is so close and intimate that it is not possible to see the one separately from the other. The two *Padārthas* being so intimately assimilated, the influence of *Pāśam* over *Pašu* could be easily imagined. The union, however, is not indissoluble. The soul will be released from the bondage, when it experiences the grace of God—that is, to say, before the light of grace, the *Pāśa* will be rendered entirely powerless, and the soul will be enabled to see God and be reflected by the grace of God, the veil of *Pāśa* that concealed the grace of God to the view of the soul having been removed. When fully reflected by the grace of God, the soul may be said to enjoy the heavenly bliss.

When the soul gets itself freed from the hold of *Pāśa*, it assimilates itself with God in the same manner as it lay assimilated with *Pāśa* in the *Petta-Nilai* or the mala condition, and becomes one with God, losing its individuality—and this relation is called “Advaitam” or unity in duality.

The relation, however, is not a new state of things. Even in the Mala condition or *Petta Nilai*, the relation is the same but the soul is unable to realize that condition owing to its mala bondage. In the *Petta Nilai* itself, the soul is in the bosom of Mala, and both are in the bosom of God, and are dependent on Him; and it is therefore the *Śāstras* say that the soul is not capable of any action without God.

The Personal God.

God, in His genuine sublime state, is beyond description. He has no form, no name, no fixed place, no action and no attributes whatever wherewith we can comprehend Him with our limited knowledge. Qualifications like forms and names are the properties of a limited being that is subject to change and hence to decay. God is an infinite Being of whom it is not possible to conceive any thing like change or decay, and the Hindu scriptures therefore say that He is “Nirguṇa”: that is to say that He is beyond the sphere and influence of the three Guṇa powers of *Sātvika*, *Rājasa* and *Tāmasa*, which are factors of limitation. We however find that there are various energies that fall within the sphere of these Guṇa powers and that are necessarily to be traced to a Divine Source. These energies, affecting as they do, limited factors, must, as a matter of course, fall into the guṇa sphere; and the religion explains that these several energies are animations or activities that transpire in His grand presence. The activities are attributed to the Grace of God which

assumes certain forms and shapes susceptible of perception by the intellect of souls. These forms and shapes are known as different apparitions of personal forms of the impersonal God, and they are of different capacities suited to the requirements of the different souls. The chief apparitions observed in the evolution of the cosmic universe are nine in number :—*Śivam*, *Śakti*, *Bindu*, *Nādam*, *Sadāśivam*, *Maheśvaram*, *Rudra*, *Vishṇu* and *Brahma*—each one being subtler and more comprehensive than the one next below it. Each one emanates from the one above it, while the last one is an emanation from *Śuddha Śivam* or the impersonal *Para Brahmam*. In fact all these manifestations shew themselves out in the grand presence of *Śuddha Śivam*, which is impersonal and beyond description; *Rudra* is the manifestation that controls the activities in the *Tattvam* or cosmic principle to which we belong; and this form of *Rudra* itself assumes various other shapes such as *Vināyaka*, *Subrahmaṇya*, *Birabhadra*, *Bhairava* etc., for the purpose of helping us in securing Divine Grace.

Action of God.

God has no like or dislike, and as such, He cannot be said to have any action or will; still the movement of the universe is attributed to Him, and the *Śruti* explains that the movement only takes place in His presence or that His presence influences the other entities to action. This influence of God is therefore called His action and it is of five kinds :—(1) *Srīṣṭi* or creation, (2) *Stiti* or preservation, (3) *Saṅkāram* or dissolution, (4) *Tirōbhavam* or obscuration and (5) *Anugraham* or bestowal of grace.

The soul lies in an unconscious state wrapped up by the veil of *pāśa*, although it is quite capable of enjoying the heavenly beatitude, if released from the bondage and restored to its pure state. Such a release is only possible if the soul experiences

the light of grace, and this experience can only be secured by the soul by its own exertions. But how could the soul exert itself when it lies in a dormant state enwrapped by Pāśa ?

The gracious God therefore calls them to creation and gives them (1) Tanu or body, (2) Karaṇam or sense organs, (3) Bhuvanam or world and (4) Bhōgam or enjoyment, out of the Māyā they are clad in and urges them on to action ; so that they may be enabled to act, and as a result of such action, feel little by little the grace of God, and with the help of these small graces, to rise up gradually in their level, and to finally get released from the bondage of Mala, and see the good God in His full splendour and enjoy Him eternally.

When the souls are put to action, they do good and bad deeds according to the degrees of the bondage of mala each soul is encased in ; and it is only when they do good deeds, they are able to experience the grace of God, while in the case of bad deeds, their vision of God is rendered still feebler. In order to encourage them in their good deeds, and discourage their bad deeds, they are rewarded both in this world and in the regions higher up for their good deeds, and punished here and in the hells below for their bad actions. They are thus made to eat the fruits of their deeds, a portion of which is invariably reserved to shape their destiny in the next birth. The souls are thus called to birth over and over again, till they attain the final stage. In the course of these births, they are given different forms of existence, of which there are said to be eighty four lacs—and the march of the souls through these various forms is what is known by transmigration. When the souls become tired of births, they are given a rest at the end of a kalpa, and they are called to birth again, put to action, and rewarded therefor till at last they are enabled to realize the

true state of things and become one with God and enjoy the heavenly bliss.

Among the various forms of existence that souls are called to, the human form is the best fitted to experience divine grace, and the duties imposed on man with that object, are therefore varied and multifarious. He is taught God whenever and wherever possible. In the first place, the pure form of God is impressed in his mind in the shape of a series of ethics and morals, and God is constantly brought before his view by various religious duties imposed on him in every walk of his life, from birth to death. These duties may even be said to extend beyond his death and previous to his birth, if we may take to account the duties that are enjoined on man to be performed on account of departed souls and those that are to be performed on the conception of children and during their state of embryo. These duties are intended to create in man a yearning for God or a religious turn of mind, and when this object is achieved, he has to go through a course of religious training by following the gradatory steps of (1) *Sariyai*, (2) *Kiriyai*, (3) *Yōgam* and (4) *Jñānam*, one after the other, and when the last stage of *Jñānam* is attained, he may be said to be finally freed from the hold of *Pāṣam* and become fully qualified for the enjoyment of eternal heaven.

Panchakrittiya or the five Actions of God.

In order to enable the souls to go through the various processes required for the removal of Mala and to enjoy the eternal beatitude when finally released from their bondage, there are five kinds of action performed by Lord Śiva, and these five forms of His action, known by the name of *Pañchakrittiyas* (five acts) are therefore said to be eternal. The question may be asked that, if the souls are finally released,

as they are expected to be, some day or other, should not the *Pañchakrittiyas* cease. The answer to that question can only be in the negative. The *Pañchakrittiyas* are necessary not only for the removal of our mala, but for our enjoyment of heavenly bliss as well. The souls are dependent on God in the *Muktitasai* too as they are in the *Pettatasai* and they will not be able to enjoy the heavenly bliss without the help of God. This help of God is the *Pañchakrittiya* in heaven, and experts will be able to explain the five subtle forms of these actions as they obtain in heaven. God being immutable in His nature, He cannot be said to have a will in the performance of any of his actions from time to time. If that were so, He will Himself be subject to change and hence to decay. The Hindu religion therefore lays it down that in the strict sense of the word, God has no action, but that the whole universe moves in His presence. That is to say, just as in the presence of the sun, one flower expands, another closes, a third drops its petals etc., according to their respective condition and maturity. So in the presence of the Great God the various souls are affected in different ways according to their respective capacity and maturity, although the grace of God is the same all over; and these different forms of the same grace, as they operate in different souls, are called the *Pañchakrittiya* of God. The self same Grace, while it affects the souls in heaven, enables them to enjoy eternal bliss, and this is *Pañchakrittiya* in heaven; so that, the action of God is the same all over, but its effects assume different forms according to the requirements of the souls. The same theory applies to His different Śakti principles as well. The Śakti is one and the same, but it assumes different shapes suited to the requirements of the different souls and is called by different

names. These Śaktis work either directly or through agencies that are deputed to perform certain functions. Of the five actions of Pañchakritya, Sṛishti (Creation), Stiti (Preservation) and Saṅkāram (Destruction) are performed by God through Brahma, Viṣṇu and Rudra respectively, while the other two actions, viz., Tirobhāvam (obscuriation) and Anugraham (Bestowal of Grace) are performed by Him in the forms of Maheśvara and Sadāśiva.

Creation.

Creation is the bringing into existence of the various means necessary for the living of souls, such as Tanu (body), Karaṇam (senses), Bhuvanam (regions) and Bhōgam (enjoyments). These several forms of the material world are produced from Māyā by the great God in accordance to the effects of Karma performed by the different souls. Māyā is very subtle in its form and is the seed of all the material world. It is one of the three bondages of the soul and is possessed of a capacity to produce all the material phenomena when worked by a skilful hand. The Great God produces out of it all that is necessary for our life and living.

Creation, according to some of the modern religions, is bringing the world into existence out of nothing (*ex nihilo*): this, I should think, is against the principle of all philosophy and science. To produce something out of nothing or to reduce something to nothing is an impossibility, if not an absurdity, in itself; and God cannot be said to have done this impossibility or absurdity. It is true that God is omnipotent or almighty, but omnipotence cannot make an impossibility a possibility or an absurdity a congruity. Because God is omnipotent, He cannot be said to be able to enclose a space with two straight lines—and this will in no way militate

against His omnipotent power—omnipotence being the potency of doing all possible things.

Something and *nothing* are two opposites of which one cannot be said to be able to produce the other owing to their natural condition. It is the absence of something that is nothing, and it is the absence of nothing that is something. How could then the one produce the other? 0 is the absence of any quantity and 1 is the presence of some quantity. Could we make 0 out of 1 or 1 out of 0 by any mathematical process whatever? Certainly not. It would thus be very clear, that in the same manner, creation of the world out of nothing is an impossibility and absurdity. I know it is argued at times, as a plea in support of this absurd theory, that God did not create the world out of nothing, but that He created it at a time when there was nothing. This is a mere play of words. The question is "Did God create the world out of anything?" If the reply is "No" then it amounts to the same thing as creating out of nothing—which is the absurdity pointed out. If God did not make use of any primordial element for the creation of the world, that would mean that he created the world out of nothing—and this is an absurdity which we cannot ascribe to any, and much less to God.

Creation according to Hindu ideas is only applicable to the material world or *Jadaś* and it is more or less a form of evolution out of *Māyā*. Creation does not apply at all to souls or *chits* which exist from eternity. Their endowment with *Tanū*, *Karāṇam*, *Bhuvanam* and *Bhōgam* is what is known as creation or *Sṛishti*,

Preservation.

The objects created have to be maintained till such time as they are required to serve the purpose for which they were

created, and the function of so preserving them is what is known as *Stiti* or Preservation.

Destruction.

Destruction or *Saṅkāram* is the function of involving the forms once created and maintained into their original element. This is an important change of state for the souls encased in different bodies, such a change being one of the necessary formulæ required for the exhaustion of *mala*. The souls undergo changes of state as often as their Karma require, but they are given a complete rest once in a *Kalpa* and this is called the *Mahāsaṅkāra* or the great Destruction.

Obscuration.

Obscuration or *Tirōbhāvam* is the allurements of souls into secular pleasures and enjoyment. The real cause of this allurements is the *mala* that binds the souls, and when it is stirred up by God and the soul influenced thereby, the act is known as the *Tirōbhāva* of God. Neither the souls nor the *mala* that binds them are capable of independent action, and the necessary stimulus has therefore to be given by God. The function of stimulating in man the influence of *Pāśa* is itself an act of grace, the object being to exhaust the *Pāśa* of its venom in due course. If not for this grace, the stock of *mala* that sticks to the soul will always be in tact and will render the condition of the soul miserable for ever. God therefore stirs it up and weakens it gradually until its virus is finally extinguished.

Bestowal of Grace.

Anugraha or bestowal of grace is the Divine mercy shewn in relieving the souls of their bondage. This mercy may be said to be of two kinds—general and special. The mercy of God is always at work on the souls and the four actions of God above referred to, are all the outcome of His mercy—and these

may therefore be said to be of a general nature. When, as a result of this general form of mercy, the soul is enabled to enjoy the special favor of God, either by seeing the light of grace and getting relieved of a portion or the whole of its bondage, or by enjoying any pleasure in the secular plane, as prompted by his craving, he is said to be in the enjoyment of the special grace of God. The enjoyment of secular pleasures themselves contribute indirectly to the decrease in the stock of mala that is in the soul; and helped by these different forms of grace, he is led ultimately to the final stage, where he is wholly relieved of the bondage and enabled to realize the advaita relation. This is the Anugraha proper that keeps us in eternal heavenly happiness.

Actions of Souls.

Souls are dependent beings on God, and they are not therefore capable of doing any action independently. Every action they do is with the help, or at the prompting of God, but the souls, in their present condition do not realize that fact to any extent. Their intelligence being clouded by the illusory Pāśa, they father every action done by them, without realizing for a moment, that dependent as they are, they cannot act of their own accord—that they cannot move without being moved by God. So long as such a state of things continues—so long as they think that they act independently—such actions are made to reflect on them back and convey to them their respective results, with a view to educate them on the merits and demerits of such actions, and by means of such education to guide them gradually to the path of realization. Once they realize the actual state of things, they are not held responsible for any action and they are enabled to see God and the true relation that exists between Him and them

and enjoy eternal happiness. This realization helps them to lose their individuality, to merge in God and become one with God in Advaita union.

Scope of Individual Actions.

Although, as a secret of secrets, all our actions are to be traced to *Śiva Śakti* or influence of God, yet, so long as we do not realize that fact, but consider ourselves, as the sole or independent agents of our actions, they are brought home to us and are rewarded for. Actions are indispensable to us in our present stage, as they serve us as the best means for the removal of our ignorance, both directly and indirectly. When God puts us to action for this purpose, He moves us exactly in the same manner as we would move if we were capable of moving independently; so that the reward given to us in respect of any such action cannot be said in any way unmerited. It may, however, be pleaded as an excuse that we are not responsible for our actions; but the responsibility could be found to exist in our will—because our will is at work and urges us on to action, screening from our view the influence of God, we are treated in the same light as we understand matters and are dealt with accordingly. It is, of course, true that our will itself is energized by God, but the direction our will takes is entirely based on our own capacity; God only puts us to action, because we cannot act without his help; and the stimulus given to us by God is exactly in proportion to our own capacity—and this capacity is the cause of our responsibility. It is this capacity that urges us to father what we call our actions and mistake such actions as our own, creating in us a will and desire at the same time for the performance of such actions and making us to ignore the fact altogether that we are incapable of any action without being energized by God;

and so long as this mistaken idea and wrongful desire exist in us, we are made to learn by results the relative value of the actions for which we so much desire, until at last we realize the actual state of things. When we realize that we have no action of our own, our responsibility ceases; and any action done by us has no effect in itself, until this truth is realized, we have in us the desire for actions, and this desire has to be removed by making us eat the fruits of those actions. It must be observed again that even supposing, for the sake of argument, that we are not responsible for our actions, the act of God in prompting us to do such actions can in no way be found fault with, as it is only a means of purifying us, by making us realize the value of actions.

Good and Bad Actions.

It would thus be seen that the primary cause of our actions is our own *avidyā* or ignorance, and if there were no *avidyā* in us, there would have been no necessity for God to stimulate us to action, nor would we have any desire for such action. Action on our part is rendered necessary with a view to exhaust the stock of ignorance inherent in us. Actions sprout out of the seed of ignorance which is gradually weakened and exhausted, not only by the process of its constant sprouting but also by the remedies administered in the shape of rewards for such actions. Actions are of two kinds good and bad. The good actions develop the *Sātvika* quality in man and renders him fit to enjoy the light of grace which has a wonderful effect on the mala power or *avidyā* of man. The bad actions themselves when rewarded therefor, largely contribute towards the decrease of the stock of the *Tāmata* quality inherent in man, and weakens the mala power ultimately.

When the *sātvika* quality is fully developed, man will be enabled to cultivate a desire to seek after truth and ultimately to see the futility of actions in general. When he attains such a stage, the divine grace will shine profusely over him, and in the light of that grace he will give up all actions and realize the final beatitude of heavenly bliss.

CHAPTER II.

HINDU IDEA OF GOD.

The Existence of God and His Attributes.

அவன் அவள் அதுவெனும் அவை மூவின மையின்

தோற்றிய திதியே யொடுங்கி மலத்துளதாம்

அந்தமாகி என்மனார் புலவர்.

That is how the Śaiva Śiddhānta opens its philosophy. The meaning of the text in short is as follows :—

“As the universe differentiated as he, she and it undergoes the three changes of origin, development and decay, it is an entity created by an efficient cause. It undergoes resolution. It is again reproduced on account of its connexion with mala. Hara, therefore, is the first cause of the universe.”

I do not propose to enter into a discussion here as regards the existence of God, but I will only point out that the existence of God is made clear even to a lay mind from the universe itself. It does not require any religious acumen or spiritual realization to investigate into the causation of the universe, and I am sure that if a proper investigation is made on the lines laid down in the text the conclusion would be irresistible that there is a God who is responsible for the “he, she and it” of the universe and for their “origin, development and decay.”

This, however, is an external evidence which, no doubt, we are bound to accept under the existing order of things that guide us in our routine of life. But there is the internal evidence which, I should think, is the strongest proof we can have in support of theory. I mean the evidence of *Mahāns* who have realized God in their heart of hearts who have seen Him

and enjoyed Him directly and spiritually and who have shewn ample signs of their having so seen and enjoyed the great God. Their evidence, I may say, is far superior to our logical disquisitions and intellectual achievements and I have no doubt but that we could see God more clearly and vividly through the immortal sayings of the Saints like Māṇikkavāṇagar, Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar, Paṭṭinattadigaḷ, Tāyumanavar, Aruṇakiriyaṇ and a host of others, than through any amount of our logical reasonings and philosophical inquiries. Though none of us—bond-slaves as we are to the demon of Material craving—can boast of anything like spiritual realization, yet the trifle that we may have had once in a way in the shape of Divine influence would, I think, be enough to convince us of the existence of God who permeates the whole world and yet transcends our intellectual grasp.

The existence of God is, however, an admitted truism with the vast majority of mankind, and it would therefore be the natural desire of every sensible man to know something of God. It must be said at once that it is not possible with our limited knowledge to have any thing like a concise idea of God whose nature is beyond the grasp of our intellect. This, however, is no reason why we should not endeavour to know Him at least so far as our intelligence would permit. It cannot be argued that we cannot have any idea of Him, because without knowing something of Him, it is not possible with us to believe in His existence. Although God is beyond the grasp of our intellect, still we know that there is such a God, because we have come to know something of Him. It behoves us, therefore, to acquaint ourselves of Him so far as we can—and the only means at our disposal to acquire any knowledge of God is the material world around us.

If we proceed on an enquiry about God with the means at our disposal, I am sure we will be convinced of the following truths, although these truths themselves cannot be said to be wholly within the reach of our grasp ; because they are truths that extend beyond the range of limitation and we cannot therefore pretend to have a full idea of them. However, we are in a position to have some idea of them, inferential from facts gleaned in the material plane, and this idea would materially help us in acquiring a knowledge of God to the extent of our capacity. The truths we could be convinced of are :—

1. *That God is Almighty*—Because He is the author of all the phenomena that we see in the universe.
2. *That He is Omniscient*.—Because, without having a knowledge of all things, it is not possible to create them all.
3. *That He is Omnipresent*—Because if He is confined to certain places He will be limited and will be finite.
4. *That He is Infinite*—Because if He is finite, He must have a beginning and must have been created by some one.
5. *That He is Unlimited*—Because if He is limited, He will be subject to decay as all limited objects are.
6. *That He is Absolute*—Because if He is dependent on others, He cannot be a free agent.
7. *That He is Merciful*—Because we see His mercy extending to all living objects without looking for any reward.
8. *That He is Just*—We see it in our experience that justice is administered sooner or later under His dominion.
9. *That He is Immutable*—If He is mutable, He will be subject to the influence of time and consequently to decay.
10. *That He is Perfect*—If He is imperfect He will be erring, and if He is erring, He will be subject to sin and sorrow as any one of us.

The Siddhānta philosophy finds the following attributes to be the chief characteristics of God :—

(1) தன்வயத்தனாதல்—Self-existence or Absoluteness, (2) தூயவுடம்பினனாதல்—Being Immaculate, (3) இயற்கையுணர்வினனாதல்—Intuitive wisdom, (4) முற்றுமுணர்நதல்—Omniscience, (5) இயல்பாகவே பாசங்களினிங்குதல்—Natural freedom from imperfections, (6) பொருளுடைமை—Unlimited mercy, (7). முடிவிலாற்றலுடைமை—Omnipotence, (8) வரம்பிலின்பமுடைமை—Infinite happiness.

The religion calls God at times, by the name of “Nirguṇa” (one without quality), and this has induced some people to argue that no attribute can be brought home to God. This is a mistake. By “Nirguṇa” the religion only means that God has none of the *Māyavic* guṇas known as *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamās* which are within the range of limitation, and this will not go to shew that God is possessed of no attribute whatever—which would ultimately mean that God is a nonentity.

As I have already said, it would certainly be preposterous on our part, with our limited knowledge, to attempt at a definition of God; but at any rate, a definition, though imperfect it may be, is necessary to enable us to understand God to the best of our capacity. The few hints given above will, I believe, throw some light on the subject.

• • • His influence on the Universe.

I have already shewn that immutability is one of the attributes of God and the question may be asked that if God is immutable, how could the various actions of creation, preservation, dissolution etc., that take place from time to time, be attributed to Him.

The Siddhānta doctrine on the subject is that God neither wills nor thinks as we do. He is one sublime glow of blissful intelligence in whose presence the various actions necessary for

the movement of the universe take place, just in the same way as in the presence of the Sun one flower expands another closes etc., etc. Even then, it is not to be understood that the actions that take place in the Divine presence disclose any sign of inconsistency. Although the actions may differ in their forms, yet the object is the same. The object is the salvation of the souls, and the means adopted for the purpose may be varied and diverse, according to the condition and capacity of the souls. Another question of equal importance—I mean the existence of evil in the presence of God—may crop up in this connexion; but I reserve it to be treated under the chapter on the “Origin of Evil”. I will only say that even evils cannot be said to exist independent of God; their existence being a necessity—as they themselves serve some good purpose in their own way—they cannot be said to reflect any discredit on the presence of God. Every incident—good and bad, small and great—is to be traced to the influence of the divine presence, and even the personal forms of God are the outcome of His gracious Presence, as I have explained in the previous Chapter. In the presence of the Great God, the whole universe expands and contracts as circumstances require. I may say, He is the central figure around whom is the whole universe, every corner of which receives its due share of the Divine influence. In the matter of the various religions themselves, there is no doubt they have the impression of the influence of God; but the farther they are from God the lesser will they exhibit signs of His Grace. His Grace will be most intensely felt in the religion immediately close to Him, and we call that religion as the religion given by God.

The Monotheistic View of Hinduism and its tolerant Spirit.

The question now arises whether the God of whom we have been trying to acquire some idea is one or more than one.

I am sure that there can be no two opinion on the subject so far as the Hindu religion is concerned. "Ekam Evādvitīyam"* is one of the well-known passages of the Vēdas and it proclaims without any doubt whatever that "There is only one God without a second." Several similar passages may be quoted from the Vēdas in support of the monotheistic view of Hinduism, and I would draw the attention of the reader to the following two extracts from the Rīg Vēda quoted by Prof. Max Muller in his "Six Systems of Indian Philosophy" pp. 41.

Ekam Sat Viprat bahuda vadanti, Agnim, Yamam, Mataris vānam ahuh. (The sages call that one in many ways, they call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvam).

Anitavātam svadhaya tat'ekam, tasmāt ha anyat na parah kim kana asa. (The one breathed breathless by itself, other than it, there, nothing since has been).

The following passage from the ruby like *Tiruvāṇḍāgam* of the ancient Tamil Saint Māṇikkavāṇḍar will, I feel sure, place the matter beyond all manner of doubt :

புற்றில்வாழ்வுமஞ்சேன்பொய்யுந்தம்மெய்யுமஞ்சேன்
கற்றைவாரசுடையெம்மண்ணல்கண்ணுதல்பா தநண்ணி
மற்றுமேரிருதய்வந்தன்னை யுண்டெனநினைந்தெம்பெம்மாற்
தற்றிலாதுவரைக்கண்டாலம் மநாமஞ்சுமாநே.

† "Not the sleek snake in anthill coil'd I dread ;

Nor feigned truths of men of lies—

As we in sooth, feel fear at sight of those

Who have not learnt the lofty one

* Mr. J. M. Nallasvāmi Pillai has made us familiar with the more ancient text from Yajur Vēda and repeated in the Śvētāśvatara Upaniṣat namely 'Ekamēva Rudrō nadvitīyā Tasthē'.

† Dr. Pope's Translation of *Tiruvāṇḍāgam* p. 282.

To know ; who near the foot of the Brow eyed—

Our Lord crown'd with the braided-lock—

Yet think there's other God. When these unlearned we see

Ah me ! we feel no dread like this ! ”

It would be quite apparent from the above that Hinduism is very strong in its monotheistic views and that it would be a gross misrepresentation to charge it with any poly-theistic ideas.

In providing for the spiritual wants of man, the Hindu religion may be found to prescribe adoration to beings that are high up in spiritual advancement, and this has misled strangers to mistake Hinduism for Polytheism. An explanation on this subject seems therefore necessary.

That Hinduism is purely monotheistic in its views would be quite apparent to any one who has even a superficial knowledge of the Hindu revelations and Śāstras. It is, therefore, very curious to find that Hindu religion is charged with acknowledging thirty-three crores of Gods. This charge, it must be said, is typical of the misrepresentations that are generally made of that religion by people who have no idea of the religion or whose object in trying to have any idea of the religion is to find fault with it.

The word “ gods ” used in the Hindu Śāstras is greatly misunderstood or misinterpreted. It carries with it a meaning totally different from what is meant by “ Supreme Being ” and it refers to a certain class of souls who are more or less identified with celestial beings. They are, no doubt, superior to ordinary men, but are themselves subject to the laws of nature as any other mortal creature. If the gods of the Hindu Śāstras are to be treated in the light of supreme beings, the Lords of the English Parliament may themselves be treated likewise,

and the charge of Polytheism can be brought home to the English nation.

Nowhere in the Hindu religion could we find any mention that these gods are independent beings outside the realm and control of the Supreme Lord ; but passages can be quoted from almost every Śāstra that these beings are all subject to His authority and control, and are, like any of us, subject to birth and death, pleasure and pain, gain and loss.

It cannot, however, be denied that these gods are exalted beings entitled to adoration by the souls below them, but such adoration cannot raise them to the level of the Supreme Being. The adoration paid to them is not on account of them personally, but on account of the functions performed by them :

God is the fountain head of all that is good, and from whatever source we may derive any benefit, such benefit should ultimately be traced to God—a theory that is closely connected with the Hindu doctrine of seeing God in everything. When we see God in any object, it is our duty to venerate that object to the extent to which we see God in that object ; and the veneration paid to that object is therefore a veneration to God and not to the object through which we see God.

The grace of God is generally bestowed on us through certain mediums, not only because we are not sufficiently advanced to receive such grace directly from God, but the mediums are themselves in a much higher level of spiritual advancement and are entrusted with certain functions in the working of the universe, as a reward for their merits. These mediums are therefore venerated to the extent of the functions performed by them, and this veneration, in its strict sense, is only a veneration to the great God by whom they were deputed to perform their respective functions. Just as a king

deputes his authority to the various officers under him for the administration of Government, God deposes His authority to beings equal to the task, and has the different functions of the cosmic energy performed by them—and such distribution of work serves us at the same time a very useful purpose. It enables us to see clearly and distinctly the different forms of grace bestowed on us by God, in the shape of the different functions of the cosmic energy, which we will not be able to fully realize, if all of them were concentrated in one place.

We adore and venerate God because He is good, and this goodness has therefore to be adored and venerated wherever it is found, and such a veneration will ultimately be a veneration to the fountain-head from which that good originally proceeded.

It is, again, a natural instinct in man to be attached not only to people who are dear to him, but also to those who are connected with those that are so dear. God is no doubt dear to us, and if we are really attached to Him, we will certainly have some attachment to those that are devoted to Him and who, on that account, are liked and loved by God—and such an attachment, no doubt, contributes largely to the nursing of the love which we cherish towards God. If, in consequence of such an attachment, we love and esteem those that are devoted to God and on whom the grace of God is made manifest, surely we ought not to be charged with the worship of many gods.

The Hindu Śāstras find the necessity of our veneration to objects through which the grace of God is made manifest to us and they therefore provide for such veneration; and it is a pity that this spirit of the religion is mistaken for polytheism.

And what is still worse—the religion in its very liberal and tolerant spirit lays it down that the worship performed in

different ways by the followers of the different religious sects will all be accepted by the true God as a worship made to Him—and this spirit of the religion has itself been misconstrued and interpreted in the light of polytheism. Hinduism does not at all propound the theory that every object worshipped as God by the different religious sects is a God in itself. The Hindu theory is that whatever object is worshipped as God, such worship is accepted by the true God through the medium of the object that is directly worshipped. Here we could clearly see the magnanimous and the tolerant spirit of the Hindu religion. The object of man is to worship the true God; but in his ignorance, he is unable to fix upon the true God, and he mistakes a mortal or an imaginary being for the immortal true God. God knows that the object of the man is to worship Him and He therefore accepts the worship, although it is performed in a wrong place; and leads him ultimately to the true path. If a child, in its ignorance, mistakes a wrong person for its mother and cries to that wrong person for food, will the real mother be annoyed at it and refuse to give the child the necessary food? She knows that the cry was directed to or intended for her, but that on account of a mistake committed through ignorance, it was misdirected. She would, therefore, be very forward to respond to the call and to clear the mistake committed by the child; and if she finds it not practicable to respond to the call directly, she will certainly do so through the person whom the child mistook for her and will endeavour to make her known ultimately to the child—and such a procedure will not establish the theory that the mother encourages the child to believe in two mothers.

The tolerant spirit of the Hindu religion is mistaken again in another direction, and it is contended that, if all the religions

would lead us to God, they must all have been given by God, and no religion can claim superiority over the rest, nor can any one religion be considered the only true religion. Religions, whatever their different doctrines may be, should certainly be considered to have all been given by God to meet the needs of the people in different stages; and it is on this ground, the Hindu religion calls the Goddess Pārvati as the mother that fosters religions. At any rate, it is not possible to argue that these religions came into existence against the will and pleasure of God, as such an argument cannot possibly be maintained. Religions must all have sprung up with the sanction of the Divine Will in order to suit the different stages of advancement that man has attained, the final salvation however being confined to the true religion while the other religions are only considered as stepping stones to the true religion.

The Advaita Doctrine mistaken for Pantheism.

In elucidating the relation between God and the other entities, the Hindu Śāstras introduce the theory of Advaita and expound it at length. This theory has been greatly mistaken for pantheism, and the question has been asked, if the whole universe is God, why should He submit Himself to transmigration in the form of a soul. I therefore propose to offer a few remarks on this subject.

God is an absolute Being, while all entities other than God are dependent on God. The dependence is so full and these entities are so wholly absorbed in God, that it is not possible to separate them from God and predicate of them an existence. If not for this dependence, it will not be possible to justify the interference of God in matters connected with the other entities, and a closer enquiry into the subject will disclose the pertinent fact that this dependence

of the world on God is the basic foundation of many of the divine attributes.

The Hindu Śāstras propound that although God is beyond the comprehension of the human intellect, He is the fountain-head or the be-all and end-all of all entities that constitute the universe, and that He is still entirely different from this universe or *jagat*. The relation between God and the *jagat* is called by the Śāstras as *Advaita* which means "non-dual", but it will be clearly seen that the Śāstras take particular care not to call these entities same as God. Though the relation is non-dual, there is yet much difference between the two, and this difference is compared to that between body and soul. In the same manner, as soul gives life to the body, so God gives life to the souls. In the same manner, as the body is the vehicle of the soul, so is soul the vehicle of God. In the same manner, as without soul there could be no body, so there cannot be any soul, or any other entity without God. In the same manner as life and soul are inseparable (in their united state), so God and soul are inseparable, one from the other. In the same manner, as no body can exhibit itself without a soul, so no soul can exhibit itself without God. The Śāstras may again be found to assert that, in the same way as the letter A is present in some form or other in all other letters, so is the great God present in all the entities. That is to say, there is no action—either active or passive—to the other entities without God, and in fact, if not for God, their very existence itself could not be predicated.

The realization of this truth is the highest end of religion, and it is our ignorance that conceals from our view this truth. When this truth is realized, we will find that we have no action of our own, and that we are wholly dependent on God. That is

to say, we will lose ourselves, and be merged in, and fully reflected upon by God ; so that there could be no visible sign of any psychological element in the union. This is what is known as becoming God, or becoming one with God ; and it is a misunderstanding of this union that has very unfortunately given rise to the sect called "Māyāvādins" or "Idealists" whose dogma is that, every thing that constitutes the *jagat* or Universe is God, and that, there is no second thing but God. And we may even say, that it is this union with God, obtained by losing the self, that was originally meant by the Buddhistic theory of annihilation or "Nirvāṇa", but in course of time, the original meaning seems to have been lost, and quite a different construction has now been put on it.

It is true that, when united to God, and the soul loses itself, it is not only absorbed in God, but becomes one like God, His qualities reflecting fully on the crystal-like soul, and no second object presenting itself to the view of the soul except God ; but, still God is God, and soul is soul, and there is a difference between the two, God being the granter, and the soul the receiver of the eternal happiness in heaven.

The Śāstras compare the position of the soul in heaven to a person possessed by a ghost ; so that the two objects are identified, one with the other, by their union, although, they are two distinct objects ; and it is this union that is expressed by the *advaitā* relation. The pantheistic view of the Hindu religion is, therefore, a serious mistake committed out of the ignorance of the real meaning of the *advaita* relation.

The Vēdānta philosophy expounds the relation between God and soul in different ways, in order to explain the different aspects of the question, some of which are misconstrued by the sect of Indian thinkers, known as "Māyāvādins" or "Idealists".

They seem to labour under a misconception that, God being absolute, there could be no other object but God. They do not seem to realize, for a moment, the fact that, if all the objects seen in the universe are God, it would not be possible to account for the imperfections and the consequent woes and throes that are abundantly found therein. That God is absolute, does not preclude the existence of other objects that are dependent on Him. Absoluteness cannot be said to mean—at any rate, in this case—the absence of any other existence but that of God. In fact, the existence of other entities is very essential in this case, as otherwise, God cannot be of any use, and as such He cannot be good, perfect or infinite. The existence of God is said to be absolute, because it is not conditioned, in any way, by any other existence—that God is not, in any way handicapped in His free movement by any other object. Absoluteness must also be said to imply the absence of any other object, as independent and as perfect as God; but this will not go to deny the existence of beings that are dependent on God and that are wholly within the realm of His control and perfection. The idealists commit a serious blunder by contending it as an argument that, if there are other objects besides God, He cannot be said to exist in the space occupied by those objects, and as such He cannot be said to be a perfect Being. This is a fatal mistake. This argument can only hold good in the case of objects that have a material form, and as such, that have dimensions, but will not apply to spiritual beings like God who does not require any space to occupy.

I know that, when pressed by arguments that cannot be assailed, the Māyāvādins have recourse to the theory of illusion and say that all the phenomena that we see are but illusions that have no real existence. I must say, that this theory itself is an illusion. When they contend that, the whole universe is

an illusion, their theory must necessarily imply the existence of some objects that are so deluded. God cannot surely be supposed to be subject to any delusion, and as such, there should be other objects than God to be deluded. There cannot be any illusion without an object to be deluded. It is a pity that the theory of illusion introduced into the Hindu Scriptures, with a view to explain the transitory nature of worldly pleasures and their illusive character in deceiving the souls, have been entirely mistaken and misused by the idealists!

The real solution of the difficult problem of the relation between God and soul, may be found well worked out by the Siddhānta philosophy. That philosophy postulates how the two entities—God and soul—are different, and how they are linked together so closely that it would not be possible to see the one separate from the other. The relation is therefore called *advaita* (not two), but it is never known as *êkam* (or one and the same). The philosophy is indeed deservedly admired by all deep thinkers for the very subtle yet substantial difference it points out between the existences of God and soul, maintaining, at the same time, their close union or non-separation. It is the realization of this relation, by losing one's 'I'ness and 'my'ness that is real salvation—and let this relation be not mistaken for the ill conceived pantheism.

Forms assumed by God.

God has neither form nor shape, nor is He otherwise within the reach of our intellect. We have, however, to be benefitted by having some idea of God, and His manifestation is, therefore, rendered necessary. The manifestation of His energy or His influence over the intelligent and non-intelligent world, at large, is rendered further necessary to put the universe in motion in the interests of the souls. The Divine Grace has, therefore, to

assume certain form or forms, and according to the theory of Śaiva Siddhānta, there are several of such forms which God is said to have assumed. Nine of these forms are held to be particularly important, as they represent the forms assumed by God at certain important stages of the cosmic evolution. They are:—Śivam, Śakti, Nādam, Bīṇḍu, Sadāśivam, Mahēśvara, Rudra, Brahma and Viṣṇu. The first four of the above are said to be invisible forms, and the last four visible, while the middle one, Sadāśivam is said to be quasi visible, or visible as well as invisible.

Siva Linga.

It is this form of Sadāśiva or Sādakhya, as it is known in its undeveloped state, that is represented as Śiva-Liṅga in all temples dedicated to Śiva, and worshipped with great veneration. It is the primordial form in which God manifests Himself, with something of a visible body out of *Praṇava*, and, in fact, it is *Praṇava* itself, combining in it the subtle forms of Nādam and Bīṇḍu, the former being represented by a line and the latter by an arc. Śiva-Liṅga is the subtlest material form which God assumed long before He took to Himself any gross shape, such as the one He assumed at Mount Kailāsa. It consists of the principles of Śivam and Śakti—the two rudimental *tattvams* from which the whole universe sprung up—and it is, therefore, considered the germ of all seen and unseen world.

An audacious attempt has been made, at certain quarters, to put upon the form of Liṅga an unauthorized and uncharitable construction, and the audacity has been rendered bolder still, by putting into the mouth of the religion an explanation in support of that construction. Liṅga is alleged to represent the *Phallus* or the generative organ of Śiva, and an explanation is

thrust into the mouth of the religion that, Liṅga-worship was introduced with a view to venerate the creative power of God. I can only say that, the construction put on the Liṅga-worship is as unfounded as the explanation volunteered.

The word "Liṅga" comes from the root "Lika" which means "to paint" or "to shape" and the word has ultimately been applied to any thing that "forms" or "shapes"; it has gradually become one of the names of God who shapes the world, and the word has thus been made to denote any form assumed by God or any image that represents such form. Not only the Śāḍakhya form that is now represented by the Śiva-Liṅga, but every form assumed by Śiva, such as the twenty-five Mahēśvara forms, are known as Liṅgas; but the name is mostly used to denote the Śāḍakhya form of Śiva-Liṅga, as it is the most important form under which Śiva is worshipped.

The absurdity of the construction put on the Liṅga-form by the enemies of Śaivism would be quite apparent to any one from the mere fact, that in many temples, the Liṅga represents the face of Śiva, and the face could be seen sculptured on the Liṅga in such temples. Liṅga being the primordial subtle form assumed by God long before He assumed any gross or material form, it would be a misnomer to call that Liṅga as one of the limbs of the form assumed by God much later in the process of evolution.

The word *Liṅga*, in its widest sense, has become a name for the generative organ too, and this seems to have led the critics to draw, out of their fertile imagination, a story that has neither any foundation nor authority.

Other forms assumed by Śiva.

Besides the Śāḍakhya form of Liṅga, there are several other forms assumed by Śiva, grosser and less subtle in their nature,

such as the developed form of Sadaśiva, the still apparent form of Maheśvara, the further apparent form of Rudra etc., etc., including the *Muhūrtams* known as *Viṇāyaka*, *Subrahmaṇya*, *Bairava*, *Vira Bhadra*, etc., etc. It must be understood, however, that none of these forms are produced out of Māyā, the seed of the phenomenal world, but that they are all His unalloyed grace transformed into a shape for the benefit of the souls. According to the Siddhānta Philosophy the various limbs of God Śiva are His Grace; all acts that proceed from His form are Grace: His disposition is Grace: His Residence and Enjoyments are themselves Grace.

உருவருள், குணங்களோடி முணர்வருளுவிறோன்றுங்
கருமமுமருள் நின்றன் கரசுணாதிசாங்கந்
தருமருளபாங்கமெல்லாந் தானருடனக்கொன்றி
யருளுருவியிருக்கென்றே யாக்கினனசிந்தனன்றே

His Śakti being Itself His grace, It has been often said that He takes His form out of that Śakti; and His grace being abundantly manifest in Maṅtras, the Maṅtras themselves are referred to as His form in some of the scriptures.

Hideous and Monstrous forms.

Among the forms assumed by God, is one with five heads, another with six heads, a third with an elephant-head, a fourth with a garland of skulls round the neck and besmeared with ashes, a fifth with a dreadful look etc., etc., and these forms are supposed to be too hideous to be suited for our worship. Certainly, any thing that is strange to our view will, in a way, be hideous to our idea; and I do not think that, this is a sufficient ground to reject any thing and every thing that is strange to our view. The important characteristics or attributes of God, such as His infinity, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience etc., are incomprehensible and entirely strange to our limited view, and

is the God Who is possessed of these attributes to be condemned by us as hideous and monstrous! It is necessary that in the forms assumed by God, there should be something strange and extraordinary to our view, in order to impress on our mind the difference that exists between Him and the souls; and in the case of the form assumed by Lord Śiva, it may be found that it is full of meaning and replete with sound spiritual instructions. The five-heads represent the five maṇtras into which the original Praṇava expanded for evolving the jagat: the elephant head represents the Praṇava itself which is the seed of the whole cosmos: the six-heads represent the combination of the Praṇava and the five maṇtras above alluded to: the garland of skulls signifies the potent fact that Śiva alone is eternal, while such magnates such as Viṣṇu, Brahma etc., are subject to death and decay, their skulls and bones contributing to the garland round His neck: the ashes besmeared over His body shew that Śiva alone remains after every thing is reduced to ashes which are found besmeared over His body while He performs the dance of Samhāra at *Paraveli*, the cremation ground of the whole universe: the snakes, coiled round his waist, represent the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti or Māyā, out of which the visible world is produced*. The furious form was assumed at one time to kill certain monstrous demons who were oppressing the celestial beings, challenging all mortals; and that form is worshipped in commemoration of the act of grace performed by Śiva. There are various other forms assumed by God Śiva, and among such forms special mention should be made of the form with which He is known to preside at Mount Kailāsa, that being the official form, as it were, assumed by Him to bestow

* There are other meanings as well for the wearing of the garland of skulls and the serpents, and for the smearing of ashes over His body.

His grace on the souls in the *Tattvām* to which we belong. That form is gracious, and attractive to our view and it is that form that we have to meditate upon, when we supplicate His grace.

His Consort or Feminine Form

There is no difference, at all between God and His Śakti, the latter being only the property of the former—like fire and heat. Still a difference has been brought out with a view to impress on the minds of the souls the importance of the Divine grace; and quite agreeably to the taste and tendency of the human souls, that Śakti has assumed a feminine form, under the style of Divine Mother, so that people who seek after Divine Grace may seek it from their Eternal Mother who is full of maternal affection towards the souls.

Lord Śiva, again, is the grand preceptor of all souls, in matters temporal as well as spiritual, and in order to impart them an object-lesson in the matter of *Illachchiramam* or married life, He has taken to Him a consort in the person of His own Grace, giving such Grace a Feminine form, so that the souls may imitate Him in their life in this world. This may be said to be one of His acts of *Tirōpavam* or obscuration, as He thereby excites the *Ichchā* or desire of the mala-stricken soul with a view to make the soul enjoy its desire and exhaust it ultimately.

Although the Grace of God is but one and the same all over, yet that Grace takes different forms according to the requirements of the varied stages or *Pakuvams* of the different souls, and hence there are different forms of Śakti known as *Ādiśakti*, *Parāśakti*, *Ichchāśakti*, *Kriyāśakti*, *Umai*, *Manonmani Durgai*, *Kālī*, &c., &c.

Sports of Śiva.

The forms that Śiva assumes and the actions that He does in such forms are intended to benefit the souls in the *Bhaṇḍa* or *mala* condition, while in the *Mukti* or liberated condition it is His genuine spiritual form that benefits them wholly and exclusively. It must, however, be understood that neither in His actions nor in the forms that He assumes to benefit us in our *Bhaṇḍa* condition. He is in the least affected by *Māyā* which is the seed of all impurities and imperfections. So that it will be idle, if not absurd, to attribute to His form or to any of His actions, any impure motive or imperfection that is to be traced to the influence of *Māyā*. But, placed as we are in the *Māyāvic* plane, our intelligence will not be able to interpret His actions and forms in their true light; and this is an imperfection on our own part and can in no way be attributed to the Divine form or action.

The Dārūkāvana Incident.

I will, as an instance, quote the sport performed by Lord Śiva at Dārūkāvanam. Śiva is said to have repaired to the *Āsrama* called *Dārūkāvana* where there were several *Rishis* greatly renowned for their austerity and religious conduct, with their wives who were equally noted for their austerity and chastity. Śiva proceeded to the *Āsrama* in the form of a nude mendicant, and was accompanied by Viṣṇu who followed Him in the form of a *Mohini*—an attractive damsel. The *Rishis* who saw the *Mohini* fell in love with her and lost their religious level, and so were their wives when they saw the nude mendicant. To all outward appearance, it is a great anomaly! But we should not decide things merely from external appearance, especially so in this case, because we know for a certainty that Lord Śiva is too far away from the influence of *Māyā* to be

actuated by any corrupt motive. What the motive was could be clearly seen if we go into the question and study the whole case.

The Rishis of *Dārukāvanam* were no doubt highly esteemed for their austerity and penance and they were on a very high plane of religious life. They were, however, labouring under a very serious misapprehension that they were independent beings, and that God Śiva had nothing to do with them. Their idea was that their own moral conduct and religious career could not be shaken by any one, and that with their high principle of domestic life and practice of the Vedic rites and ceremonies, they were able to do any thing and every thing, while there was no necessity for them to seek the help of Śiva whom they considered as a being much inferior to them.*

Śiva, therefore, wanted to impress on them the futility of their theory, and with a view to bring them to their proper senses and convince them of their own weakness, and of the indispensability of Divine Grace to get into the higher regions of spirituality, assumed the shape of a nude mendicant and walked along the road where the wives of the Rishis were collected, asking Vishṇu to captivate the Rishis in the form of a *Mohini*. This was done, and the object was at once realized. Neither the Rishis, nor their wives, were able to maintain their much boasted self-control and chastity. As soon as the Rishis' wives saw the nude mendicant, they were carried away by a strong current of carnal desire, and they followed the mendicant begging Him for His love; and so were the Rishis when they saw the *Mohini*. Lord Śiva wanted to convince them their own mistake in as strong a manner as possible, and at the same

* This was the doctrine of the Pūrva Mīmāṃsa school of ancient India or Sabda Brahmavādins.

time, as suited to their *Pakkuvam*, and there is no doubt but that the course adopted by Him convinced the Rishis and their wives of their folly and brought them to their senses.

Sports of Lord Subramanya.

Lord Subramanya is no other than Lord Śiva Himself, the difference being only a slight variation in the form assumed by Him. His six faces represent the five faces of Śiva plus the face of *Vināyaka* or the *Pranava*. His two *Śaktis* represent the *Ichchā-śakti* and *Kriyā-śakti* of Śiva. His Vel (Javelin) represents the trident of Śiva, &c., &c. His form and actions are resplendent with grace which is accessible to the high and the low alike. On account of his Profuse grace, He is considered to be the chief God of the *Kali* era, and He is considered to be the friend and the lord of the ignorant hill-tribes. The Vedic literature may be found to refer to him as the God of war, but the grand profusion of His grace and His spiritual sublimity may be found elaborately treated in the Āgamas and Purāṇas, especially in the *Skānda Purāṇa* among the latter. As I shall shew in the chapter on Hindu scriptures, Vedas are concerned more with the material interests of the souls than with their spiritual advancement; and this is the reason why they touch on the warlike spirit of Lord Subramanya and are silent on His spiritual excellence. Lord Subramanya's sports with the Giant called *Sūra* are full of spiritual lore. The three brothers *Thārugaṇ*, *Singan* and *Sūraṇ* represent the three kinds of Mala known as *Āṇavam*, *Māyā* and *Karma* and His killing them with His *Jñānaśakti* (or Vel) represents His killing the three kinds of mala with pure jñānam. His sports in marrying one of His consorts *Vallīnāyaki* is replete with rich esoteric meaning, and it would profit one immensely to remove the veil of materiality that covers His

sports and understand and realize the spiritual significance embedded therein.

Vaḷḷināyaki represents the soul entangled in the snare of senses, and these senses are represented by the *Vēḍars* (hunters, among whom Vaḷḷināyaki was brought up. When she attains maturity or *Pakkuvam*, the Lord of the soul, or her husband in reality, hankers after her and with great anxiety and emotion recovers her from the clutches of the *Vēḍars*, killing them in a battle. This is typical of the method that God adopts in recovering the souls from the mire of material allurements and of the immense love that He cherishes towards the souls, and the anxiety that he has in taking them over to Him. It is one of the salient features of the Hindu religion to compare the soul and God to wife and husband, and the fully advanced and highly cultured Māṇickavāṇagar has brought out this fact forcibly and prominently in His immortal *Tiruchirrambalak-kovaiyār*.

CHAPTER III.

SOULS.

Their Existence and Condition.

The religion opens its discourse on souls as well, by proving in the first place their existence. The proof has been summarised by St. Meykaṇḍān in the following words :

உளது இலதென்றவின் எனதுடலென்றவின்

ஐம்புலன் ஒதிக்கம் அறிதலின் கண்படில்

உண்டவினையின்மையின் உணர்த்த உணர்த்தலின்

மாயாவியந்திரதனுவினுள் ஆன்மா.

[(1) Because there is a subject that denies the existence of souls ; (2) Because there is a subject that claims the body as its own ; (3) Because there is a subject that knows through the five senses ; (4) Because there is a subject that knows in the state of dream ; (5) Because in the state of sleep, although the *Prāṇavāyu* (the Vital air) is at work, the body is inactive and there is no experience of pleasure or pain ; (6) Because there is a subject that receives enlightenment when instructed ; (7) Because the various constituents of our body only contribute towards the illumination of our intellect ; it has to be concluded that there is a soul in our body quite independent of our physical embodiment.]

The above is only an indication of the lines on which the *Siddhānta* philosophy establishes the existence of the souls ; and I think it not necessary to go further into the subject, as at present, the existence of souls is an admitted fact.

Although the souls are spiritual in form, yet in their normal condition, they lie stupefied by the effects of *Āṇava mala*,

without exhibiting any sign of intelligence. Souls, as they are, are subject to three forms of bondage—*Ānava*, *Māyā* and *Karma*; and they are of three different classes according to the number of bondages they are subject to:—

1. *Viññākalar*—those with one mala,
2. *Praṇayakalar*—those with two mala, and
3. *Sakalar*—those with three malas.

Although they are merged in ignorance on account of this bondage, yet they are fully capable of enjoying the heavenly beatitude if they are released of the bondage and enabled to feel the presence of God. Their nature in fact is such that, they become of the nature of the object to which they are attached and placed as they are at present under the influence of *Mala*, they are pervaded by the qualities of *Mala* and are as ignorant and corrupt as those qualities: if they are placed under the influence of Divine Grace, they will be as pure and blissful as that grace.

Their release from the bondage of *mala* and their realization of the grace of God depend largely on their own exertions which are altogether impossible in their normal condition of dormancy. The great God therefore gives them a body out of *māyā* and furnish them with the organs of sensation, with the result that their intelligence is stirred up and they begin to know and act. The bodies and sense organs so furnished are themselves of different kinds, suited to the condition and capacity of the souls; and the various forms which the souls are made to assume from time to time according to their *Karma*, are classified into seven main heads, viz:—gods, men, quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, aquatic animals, and stationary beings such as vegetables &c. The regions that are required for the habitation of these various souls are themselves of various kinds, and they are

themselves brought by the great God out of *Māyā*, suited to the capacity of the respective souls. In the case of souls that are free from the fetters of *Māyā*, their various requirements are met out of *Sudda māyā* which is not possessed of any of the evil effects of *Asuddha māyā* that contributes its quota of baneful influence on the souls that are subject to the triple bondage.

Every physical form furnished to a soul consists of two portions *Sthūla* and *Sūkshma*—or gross and subtle—the subtle or *Sūkshma* portion being the chief instrument for illumining the intelligence of the soul. With the double coating so furnished, the soul undergoes five *avastās* or stages known as *Jāgra*, *Svapna*, *Sushupti*, *Turyam* and *Turyātītam*. It will be highly interesting and useful to have a clear knowledge of these *avastās* in order to have a correct view of the activities of the soul. These five *avastās*, it must be understood, belong to the main stage known as *sakala avastā* or living stage. There are two other main *avastās* known as *Kēvalam* and *Suttam*—the dormant condition and the pure condition of the souls respectively. The Siddhānta philosophy explains the various major and minor *avastās* of the soul exhaustively and elaborately, and the religious student would do well to acquaint himself with the details of these various *avastās* if he is really anxious to have a clear understanding of the capacity and condition of the souls. These several *avastās* are intended by the great God for the gradual purification of the souls to enable them ultimately to enjoy the eternal beatitude.

Souls are Eternal.

The process of purification was not adopted by God at a certain epoch in time ; it is existing from eternity and this will mean that the souls themselves exist from eternity, not having

been created at any time. The questions has therefore been asked at certain quarters whether self-existence is not an exclusive attribute of God.

I fail to see the rationality of this question. Why should self-existence be an exclusive attribute of God? Self-existence does not constitute absolute existence, and according to the Hindu philosophy, although souls are supposed to exist from eternity, they are not said to exist independently. They are always dependent upon God, and such a dependent existence from eternity is what is known by self-existence in the case of souls; and this existence cannot be said in any way to militate against any of the attributes of God.

If it could be argued that an existence without beginning should be one of the exclusive attributes of God, it might be argued with equal force that an existence without end should itself be an exclusive attribute of God. But when the souls are considered immortal, as they are supposed to be, by the different religious sects of the present day, I cannot see any reason why they cannot be said to have had no beginning, especially so, as such a view of the question is the more reasonable and equitable. For, if the souls were said to have been created by God at a certain time, the question would naturally arise, why the souls were so created. Was it to benefit God Himself or others? It cannot be said either. Because God does not stand in need of any benefit; and so long as there should not be any other self-existent being except God, according to the present line of argument, there cannot be any others whom the creation of souls could benefit.

And again if the souls are supposed to have been created by God at a certain time, another question of a more serious nature would arise. Why were the souls created in such an

imperfect and weak state as they are found to be at present? We know that all our worries and troubles are due to our imperfection, or what we may rightly call our ignorance and evil tendency; and if we were created at any time, the Creator, no doubt, is responsible for such imperfection and ignorance. Our free will could not be an excuse for this state of things, because the free will itself owes its existence to the Creator, and its tendency to seek things good or bad cannot therefore be attributed to any other source.

The conclusion therefore is that the souls were not created but are self-existent from eternity, side by side with God. It may be said in this connexion that along with the soul may be found to exist from eternity, the veil of ignorance that clouds the soul, which is known by the name of *Āṇava Mala* in the Hindu *Siddhānta* Philosophy, which postulates that the three "Padārthas" or entities called *Pathi* (God) *Paśu* (Soul) and *Pāśa* (Bondage) are eternal.

All living objects have Souls.

The process of purification according to the Hindu theory, is not confined to the human form alone, but extends to every form of life that is found on earth and elsewhere. A soul may be said to take any form of life in accordance with its previous Karma, after it has exhausted the major portion of such Karma either in any of the heavens* above or hells below. A soul may take the form of a man, a beast, a vegetable or any other living object according to the nature and gravity of its previous Karma, and so exhaust its inherent original Mala along with its acquired Karma Mala. These different forms of life are ren-

* It must be observed that the heavens here referred to do not refer to the final beatitude from which there is no return—these are only places of enjoyment and are known by the name of "Pada Mukti" (பத முக்தி).

dered necessary, because the Karmas done by the souls are themselves different in their nature, and the different phases of the original Mala itself require different methods of exhaustion. The great God, therefore, in His sublime wisdom, planned the scheme of submitting the souls to different kinds of life at different stages, in order to exhaust their Mala power.

But the materialistic tendency of modern religions has prompted their adherents to put the question whether creatures other than human beings have souls. They might as well espouse the cause of their first cousins the open materialists, and ask the question if man has a soul. They will not, however, do this; and my task of replying them is, therefore rendered very easy.

If man should be considered to be possessed of soul, we fail to see any reason why an exception should be taken in the case of other living beings. It is true that there is not as much of intelligence in other beings as there is in man, but I do not think that this is a reason to conclude that living beings other than man have no souls. The intellectual capacity of man is not the same all over, and this will not go to show that there is less quantity of soul in the case of men who are poor in intellect than in the case of others. And again it cannot be said that living beings other than men are possessed of no intelligence at all, as there is a good deal of it in several creatures, some of which disclose quite startling proofs of intelligence. The sagacity of elephants, dogs, cats and several birds is at times greatly admired, and it would compare very favourably with the intelligence observed in some of our barbarous brethren. Such a state of things is an undoubted proof of the existence of souls in those animals. Modern science has disclosed the fact that intelligence is found even in plants and creepers, but our

friends who try to deprive them of their souls will argue that such an intelligence is only an instinctive power. This, I should say, is only a play in words. What is instinct after all? It is itself intelligence as found in the lower order of living beings. Instinct is not possible without intelligence and intelligence is not possible without spirit or soul. Because it is found in the lower order, we will not be justified in calling instinct a mere effect of matter with no influence at all of soul. If this be possible, we may call the intelligence found in man also an instinct, and argue that it is itself an effect of matter. But as intelligence cannot proceed from matter, it is evident that where there is intelligence, there is the spiritual form of soul; and as this intelligence is found in some form or other in all living objects, the conclusion is inevitable that there is soul in such living beings. There are, of course, different degrees of intelligence in the different living beings, and this is due to the difference in the development attained by the different souls and in the instrumental causes such as the physical features and mental faculties with which the intelligence is stirred up. It must be observed that in taking different bodies, the intellectual capacity of the soul is stimulated to the extent of the sense organs and mental faculties appertaining to such bodies; according to the Hindu philosophy the soul, as it is, is clouded by the thick mist of *Āṇava Mala* and in this state it has no sign of intelligence in it, but lies fully dormant or stupified as a block of stone or a log of wood. The Lord, therefore, gives it the *Sthūla* and *Sūkshma* bodies out of the *Māyā Mala* and stimulates its inherent intelligence whereby it is enabled to exercise its intellectual faculty, and it betakes itself to action according to the degree of the *Mala* bondage it is subject to.

We have again to observe that life is not possible without

souls. Take the life of man ; when the soul departs from the body, the life itself is extinct ; and this is a strong testimony in favour of the assumption that life is only possible when there is a union of body and soul ; and as such, it readily follows that all living beings or beings in which there is life must have a soul that is subject to transmigration in the various bodies that it takes in succession.

CHAPTER IV.

EVIL AND ITS ORIGIN.

Origin of Sin.

The existence of sin in this world needs no proof and the question has therefore to be asked seriously and sincerely "whence is this sin"? It is a full yadmitted truism that there can be no effect without a cause, and it would therefore follow as a matter of course that there should be a cause for our sins themselves, and every earnest inquirer will be anxious to know what this cause is.

Sin is an impure act and this act must necessarily proceed from a germ of impurity that exists in us. In the absence of such a germ, it is not possible to account for the emanation of any impure act from the souls; for if the souls were pure in their nature, and if there were no germs of impurity in them, they cannot be said to be capable of doing any impure act.

Free will cannot be said to be the cause of our sinful acts, as this will itself should have the influence of some other factor for the inclination it has for wrongful deeds. It may be said that man is strong enough to resist any temptation, but he does not exercise the faculty of such resistance. This omission on his part to exercise the faculty of resistance is evidently due to his weakness or to his leaning towards wrongful pleasure, and this weakness or leaning should be attributed to some cause or other that exists in the man. If there were no such cause, man would be considered fully pure and he would have no temptation at all for doing any wrongful act, but on the other hand, he would have an innate hatred to acts

impure. But as we find that man has not only no hatred towards wrongful pleasures, but is greatly inclined towards them, it has necessarily to be inferred that there is some germ of impurity in him.

The original sin said to have been committed by our so-called first parents cannot be expected to satisfactorily account for the sins that we commit, for various reasons.

In the first place, how did the first parents happen to commit the original sin, if there were no germ of impurity in them? It is not enough to say that they were deceived by Satan, inasmuch as it is not possible for an impure being to deceive a pure soul. If at all Satan deceived our first parents, there should have been some weakness in them for the deception practised by Satan to have a successful effect on them. If there was any such weakness, it is not possible to maintain that they were created pure, but it would be quite evident that there was some element of impurity in them which made them fall a victim to the deception practised by Satan.

Secondly, how is the impurity of Satan to be accounted for? Satan is said to be a fallen angel, and the question would naturally arise "What made the angel fall?" It must certainly have been on account of the stock of impurity that existed in the angel.

Thirdly, how could an angel fall from heaven? Heaven is a place which is totally free from the effects of impurity, and an angel in heaven cannot possibly be affected by anything like impurity.

Fourthly, angels are pure beings, and it is therefore that they are placed in the exalted position they are put in. How could any impure idea affect such pure beings? If at all they could be said to have a fall from their exalted position, there is

every prospect of the souls in heaven falling down again and again, and such a heaven cannot be said to be permanent or eternal in any sense of the word.

Fifthly, pure souls have always the grace of God by their side and they are therefore considered immensely stronger than impure souls. How could it be said then that impure souls such as fallen Angels or Satans deceived our first parents, if they were actually pure and hallowed in their form ?

Sixthly, how could the original sin committed by our first parents account for the evil tendency that was generally found in them ? The sin was only the effect of that tendency, and how could an effect be considered its cause ? And again, how could the original sin committed by our first parents get into the constitution of their nature ?

Seventhly, how could the sins committed by our first parents be transmitted to us who had no share in the commission of those sins ? It may be possible to trace some relation between ourselves and our first parents physically ; but I do not think it possible to trace any such relation between our souls : and I fail to understand how the sins committed by our first parents be made to affect our souls ?

Eighthly, even granting for the sake of argument that there is some affinity between our souls and those of our first parents, will it not be considered a piece of injustice to thrust us into the bosom of those sinful beings and make us inherit their sinful nature and expose ourselves to the risk of eternal damnation ?

Ninthly, if, as is alleged, the first parents were created pure and holy, it is but natural to expect that we would ourselves be created equally pure and holy. But why, on the contrary, should we be ushered into this world quite impure and unholy by making us inherit the sins of our first parents ?

It would thus appear that the origin of sin could not be said to have been inherited by us from our fore-fathers or that we were allured into it by Satan. Nor could it be said that it suddenly alighted on us from some unknown source.

Pašu.

The origin or germ of sin according to the Hindu theory exists along with us from eternity, and from the fact that it enwraps us in a very subtle form, it is called "Pāša" or bondage, and it is to remove this bondage we are subjected to the process of transmigration.

It must however be observed that this germ of impurity cannot be considered to constitute a natural property of the soul, as in that case, it would not be possible to remove the nature of an object without destroying the object itself. As we find that in many cases this germ of impurity is gradually removed, the inference can easily be drawn that this germ is not in any way identical with the soul, but that it is a factor entirely distinct from it, exercising however a good deal of influence over it by its close union—a union that renders it extremely difficult to discriminate one from the other, and which is therefore compared to the *advaita* relation that exists between the soul and God.

This germ of impurity which is found to exist in man is of various kinds, and the Hindu Śāstras classify them under three sub-heads—Āṇavam, Māyā, and Karma—and the functions of each of these kinds are explained at length in those Śāstras.

This element of impurity being very subtle in its nature, it is at times mistaken for the evil nature of the soul. This is a great mistake. The nature of the soul, in its true state, is entirely free from evil, and it may be found to possess another

feature to assume to itself the nature of the object that is reflected on it. When Pāṣa is reflected on it, it assumes to itself the nature of Pāṣa, and when the grace of God is reflected, it assumes the nature of that grace. The process of transmigration leads the soul gradually to the full reflection of the grace of God, and when this stage is attained, the final goal may be said to have been reached.

Origin of Pāṣa.

If Pāṣa is the cause of sin and its attendant evils, the question may reasonably be asked "Whence is this Pāṣa?" Pāṣa was not created, by any one, nor did that emanate from any source at any time. If we take the cosmic world and scrutinize it minutely, we could find that in the first place there is a God Who is the cause of all the phenomena found therein; we could again find that there are numberless souls who are affected by such phenomena; and thirdly we could find that there is a primordial element which is the material cause of all matter and force that are found at the bottom of all phenomena. This primordial element is called *Pāṣa*, because it is in close conjunction with souls (*Paṣu*), and the Hindu religion therefore postulates that the three entities *viz*: Pati (God), *Paṣu* (souls) and *Pāṣam* (Bondage) are eternal. If we take the *Pāṣam* again and scrutinize it, we could find that it is itself of three kinds;—*āṇava*, the veil of ignorance that clouds the intellectual capacity of souls, *Māyā*, the seed of all material world, and Karma the cause of difference in the material phenomena. It would thus be clear that the origin of Pāṣa or the source of what are called evils, cannot be traced to any cause, but that it exists from eternity. It must however be pointed out that evil itself serves a useful purpose—it being necessary to a certain extent to enable the souls to realize the intrinsic value of heavenly

bliss which is fully devoid of all evils. In fact the heavenly bliss consists largely in the immunity from evils, and the value of this immunity can only be gauged by the souls, if they have an idea of evil. It must be borne in mind that good is only possible when there is evil, and that if there were no evil, there cannot be any good, chiefly in the case of imperfect beings, such as the souls are, who can only form ideas relatively. The goodness of God can only be relished by them, when they see the evil of Pāṣa, and hence the necessity for this evil; and it must be observed at the same time, that any thing that serves us directly or indirectly to enjoy a sublime eternal good in the long run, cannot be called an evil in the real sense of the word, although for the time being, it may look like an evil, in the natural order of things.

This Pāṣa, or what we call evil, does not bind all the souls equally—its bondage being of various degrees according to the capacity of the different souls; and there is therefore a corresponding difference in the actions of the souls themselves. The difference in their capacity can only be said to exist in their adaptability or *Pakkuvam* to receive the impression of grace speedily or tardily; but when they are finally released from their respective bondage, they will all be able to enjoy the heavenly bliss equally. Even this very diversity in their capacity is a necessity in order to enable them to understand the value of their unity or *advaita* relation with God and to enjoy the benefit of that union.

The capacity of the souls, or their imperfection, as we may call it, can in no way be considered to be in conflict with the goodness of God. For, in the first place, God is not responsible for this capacity, and in the second place, it is indispensable in the natural order of things; and I shall shew presently

that such a state of thing is fully consistent with the goodness of God.

The Existence of God is a natural order of things for which no one could be held responsible ; the existence of God would imply that He is perfect, absolute, infinite, almighty, omniscient, good, just, merciful etc. If the existence of such a God is conceded, it would be necessary to concede the existence of souls as well, as otherwise all His actions would be useless. He would Himself be of little or no use—and as such He cannot be called good, perfect, infinite or absolute.

The existence of souls again would imply that they are imperfect, dependant and capable of being benefitted by the goodness of God. If the existence of God and souls are thus conceded, it would be necessary to concede the existence of mala or Pāṣa, which is the cause of the souls' ignorance and that of the material world around us. So that the existence of God, which is inevitable in the natural order of things, would imply in itself the existence of souls and that of mala with its attendant evil. To expect the absence of this evil would amount to expecting the souls to be as perfect as God, which would be an absurdity and incongruity ; for, to expect in the first place God to be a perfect and absolute being, and then to contend that souls should themselves be perfect would be a contradiction in terms.

It would thus appear that the goodness of God is in perfect harmony with the imperfections of the souls, and these imperfections must necessarily imply the existence of Pāṣa the indispensability and utility of which under the existing state of things, I have already explained.

The souls, in their nature, are imperfect beings, and they are therefore found clouded by the veil of Pāṣa, the removal of

which serves them ultimately as a cure for their imperfection. We call a thing good or bad from the motive or result. In the case of Pāśa, it is not possible to assign any bad motive because it exists from eternity, and when we look to the result, it really serves a good purpose, as in the long run it enables the soul when released, to realize the heavenly beatitude. We can only call it a real evil, if it continues without termination, as in the case of an eternal hell.

Congruity or consistency is itself an attribute of the Divine presence, and the absence of evil in the natural order of things is an incongruity in itself which we cannot expect to find in the presence of God. When we find that in the natural order of things the evil or the seed of evil that we complain of is a necessity, and that, at the same time, it serves a good purpose in the long run, it cannot be said in any way to conflict with the goodness that we should expect in the presence of God.

CHAPTER V.

SALVATION.

What is Salvation?

The object of God in submitting the souls to the process of purification is their ultimate salvation, which is indeed the most important question which every man should have a clear idea of. We see people talking too much of salvation now-a-days, but it is a great pity that they do not care to have a correct idea of salvation. Let us for a moment think seriously on the subject and ask ourselves the question "What is salvation?"

Salvation is not a mere liberation from the effects of the sins committed by us, as many people suppose it to be. Even if we are granted a free pardon of our sins, we cannot be said to have been saved in the true sense of the word. A pardon of our sins is not capable of removing from us our inherent tendency to commit further sins, and so long as there is this tendency in us, we cannot be said to have been saved.

It is a fact generally admitted that human nature has a craving to what we call the fleeting pleasures of this transient world, and that this craving has invariably been the cause of all our woes and throes. So long as we are possessed of this craving, we are exposed to its evil consequences; and it is the overcoming of this craving that may be called true salvation. It is only then we may be said to have been saved, once for all from the dangers that await us.

The secret of this craving is our ignorance in that we do not realize the actual state of things. We do not realize our

true position and our relation to God. We do not realize the instability and the undesirability of wordly pleasures, nor do we realize our capabilities and the prospects that we have of eternal happiness. Had we realized them, we would not have been allured by the seeming pleasures of this fleeting world.

This ignorance is attributed by the Hindu philosophy to the bondage of Avidyā or Mala, and it is the liberation from this Mala that could be called true salvation.

So long as we are blinded by this ignorance; we are not fit for the enjoyment of heavenly bliss. In fact, we will not be able to enjoy heaven in this our ignorant state. Ignorant as we are, we are not in a position to realize the sublimity and grandeur of the Divine Grace, nor are we able to realize our own position; without which realization, it is not possible to realize the intrinsic value of the grace of God, which is an essential factor in the enjoyment of heaven. We are always hankering after the evil pleasures of this fleeting world which are great obstacles to the enjoyment of heavenly bliss. Purity of heart is an important element for the enjoyment of heaven, and in our present ignorant state, our heart cannot be said to be pure and perfect for the reflection therein of the great God.

It is the getting rid of this state of our ignorance that is said to be *Mukti* or liberation which is the salvation we are all in need of.

Let us again consider our intellectual capacity. We are of course all intelligent beings, but how is our intelligence stimulated? It is through our organs and senses which are wholly dependent on our physical frame. If not for this body, it will not be possible with us in our present state to exhibit any intelligence whatever—and this fact could be verified by our dormant state, when we are asleep, or when we are in a state

of unconsciousness as when we are subject to a swoon—and this evidently shows that our intellectual capacity is clouded by some veil or other. We cannot expect to have in heaven a material frame like our present body wherewith our intelligence could be stimulated ; for our enjoyment in heaven is wholly spiritual and no material connection could therefore be of any avail there. Hence it is very essential that the veil that covers our intellectual faculty should be removed before we can be said to be fit for the enjoyment of heaven, and it is the removal of this veil that may be said to be the real salvation.

Heaven is not a place as the earth on which we live nor its enjoyment such as we could enjoy with our physical frame. Heaven may be said to be a stage wherein we are enabled to realize the sublime grace of God, which as our Śāstras say, is beyond description. It is the attaining of this stage that may rightly be called salvation and we cannot expect to secure this salvation by procuring a mere pardon of sins or by resting our belief in this or that form of the personality of God.

There is an immense gulf between our present state and the state we have to attain for the enjoyment of the supreme heavenly bliss. We have in the first place to cleanse ourselves of our inherent ignorance and our evil tendencies attendant thereon. We have to realize our sole dependence on the mighty power of the Almighty God. Our self or personality must be lost to us, and we must be merged into the Divine Grace which we should be in the enjoyment of, with no efforts of our own. The Siddhānta philosophy dwells at length in elucidating our situation in *Mukti*, and the same philosophy with all its elaborate explanation of our position there and of the means that we have to employ for the securing of the same, openly confesses that a description of the genuine *Mukti* is

beyond human capacity. It therefore very succinctly puts forward that heavenly bliss is more to be realized than described; and as such it will be idle, if not absurd, on my part to attempt at a description of the same in these pages; but my object in putting before the reader the few hints given above is only to enable him to have some idea of salvation, so that he may be in a position to see for himself what the real means of salvation should be.

I have already explained that human tendency is greatly inclined towards the evil pleasures of this world and that human intellect is clouded by a thick veil of ignorance. We are therefore given a body and roused to action, whereby we are enabled to exhaust gradually the seed of our evil tendency and ignorance. When given the body, we are prompted by our inherent tendency and we do actions, either good or bad, and are rewarded therefor—a good reward for good actions and a bad reward for bad actions. This reward causes a decrease in the stock of our evil tendency and adds to the stock of our good tendency. So that in course of time, our evil tendency is finally exhausted and the good tendency is fully developed. This process of our development creates in us at the same time a desire for spiritual advancement, and we begin to work in that direction, whereby we are gradually enabled to work out the removal of our ignorance, or as we would call it our Mala bondage. And—to sum up briefly—when the removal of this ignorance is complete, we are said to be fit subjects for the enjoyment of the heavenly bliss.

As all this process would take a very long, or, to be more correct, an unlimited space of time; as we have to reap our rewards in spheres quite different from the earth on which we are now placed; as we have to take various forms of bodies in

order to exhaust the various forces of our Karma and the various forms of our ignorance; as we are occasionally in need of rest from the great stress of our activities when subject to actions and experiences; we are called to life over and over, until at last, we attain the final stage and render ourselves fit for the heavenly beatitude. This process of our being called to life again and again is what is known by transmigration, and it will thus be seen that this process of transmigration is indispensable for our salvation.

I know that the question has very often been asked by strangers who are not conversant with the Hindu doctrine that if the object of transmigration is to exhaust the stock of our Mala, how is it that, instead of working out our Mala power, we are made to add to it by our bad Karmas. My answer is that the bad Karmas are only the result of the working out of our inherent Mala with the object of exhausting it. When the fruits of Karma are eaten, not only do the Karmas themselves disappear, but there is a decrease in the stock of the original Mala itself. As I have explained in another place, this is somewhat similar to the treatment of a disease by stirring up the bad blood in a patient and exhausting it ultimately.

Heaven.

Heaven must necessarily form an important factor of religion; but our modern religions do not seem to feel the necessity of paying any attention to the subject. They do not seem to have any idea of heaven, and if they have any, it seems to be a greatly mistaken one, as they take it for a local region where there is a good deal of physical enjoyment in store for us. In fact, they do not trouble themselves with any inquiry as to the nature of heaven, but they only say that unless we are saved we cannot attain heaven, and rest satisfied there.

Ancient religions were much concerned with the question of heaven and, as a result, they held different views on the subject, each view being supported by its own reasons and arguments. According to the Hindu theory, heaven is of two kinds—*Patamukti* and *Paramukti*. *Patamukti* consists of different regions where souls are located as a reward for the meritorious deeds done by them in this world and where they enjoy the pleasures peculiar to such regions for fixed times. The pleasures of such regions are enjoyed with a physical frame suited to such regions. But *Paramukti*, the heaven proper, is not a place that can be located. The pleasures of this heaven cannot be enjoyed with the aid of any physical form ; they have to be enjoyed by us spiritually—the pleasures consisting in the enjoyment that we have of the spiritual God Whom it is not possible to enjoy physically. This Heaven is eternal, being wholly independent of any material connexion that is subject to change or decay ; while *Patamukti* is only temporary, however long its duration may be. *Patamukti* is besides of various kinds, while *Paramukti* is invariably uniform in its nature. Souls are of different grades and their actions are of different types : the reward therefore should themselves be of different kinds, and hence the necessity for the different forms of *Patamukti* or local heavens. These heavens are presided over by different gods or magnates such as Indra, Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra etc., etc., and in each of these heavens there are four forms of enjoyment :—viz, *Sālōkam* (residing in the same heaven), *Sāmīpam* (residing in the presence of the Deity), *Sārūpam* (assuming the form of the Deity) and *Sāyujyam* (becoming assimilated with the Deity). These several forms of local heavens are tentative to the securing of the genuine heaven of *Paramukti*. The local heavens are

intended as encouragements to people to pursue a meritorious course which is sure to create in them ultimately a spiritual tendency and lead them on to the grand realization of *Paramukti*—and this is salvation in its real sense: because when it is obtained once, there is an end of all further trouble. Obtaining *Patamukti* or local heavens cannot be called salvation, as they cannot finally relieve us of our misery and unhappiness.

Hell.

Hell is wholly in the material plane and is itself of various kinds of which there are 28 crores according to the Hindu doctrine. Different forms of Hell are rendered necessary to punish the different types of sinners, and the object of the punishment is to exhaust the effects of sins that accumulate around the soul that committed such sins, the punishment at the same time, having a deterrent effect on the souls from committing further sins. The pain which a soul undergoes in hell would no doubt create a counter action in his mind and would produce a certain amount of dread or aversion to sinful acts; and this counter action would go a long way to affect the stock of mala power that sticks to him. God being just and merciful, the punishment that He inflicts on us is avowedly with the object of benefitting us, and this object will be altogether defeated if we are to be punished eternally. The injustice and utter worthlessness of eternal hell will be pointed out in the next section, as it is a subject that deserves separate consideration.

I would, however, like to point out here that although hell is very much to be dreaded, an escape from the tortures of hell cannot be called salvation. Any immunity from the punishment in hell would not be able to secure for man his release from his ignorant state, and much less would any fear for hell be able to

produce that result. Fear itself is a passion of our mind, or one of the products of our ignorance, and this cannot remove the main source of that ignorance. Immunity from the pangs of hell can be secured by means of meritorious deeds or by refraining from sinful acts. These would not themselves be able to release us from our ignorance which is the cause of all our woes and throes. So that, escape from the punishment in hell can in no way be considered our salvation. A culprit who committed a crime may be mortally afraid of prison life, and may by some means or other manage to escape incarceration; but he cannot be said to be altogether free from the sufferings of prison life so long as the criminal element that is inherent in him is not removed, and much less can he be considered a fit subject to enjoy the respect and regard of the palace that is reserved for folks who have no criminal tendency in them. This applies with greater force to the question of salvation. Till the germ of *avidyā* lies imbedded in man, no amount of fear for hell, and no escape from the sufferings of hell can be said to have secured to him the real salvation. *Avidyā* is only removed by the enjoyment of Divine grace and it is this enjoyment that can be said to be the real and genuine salvation.

Eternal Hell.

If the theory of Transmigration is rejected, the only other alternative we have to accept is that of Eternal Hell. Is this a rational theory? Is it in the first place justifiable to punish the souls eternally for the sins committed by them during a limited period in this world? When our actions are limited, their effects themselves should be limited. But if they happen to be unlimited and out of all proportions, the agent who submits us to such effects must be condemned as an unjust and unmerciful being whom we cannot adore as our creator and benefactor.

Some of the advocates of the theory of eternal hell seem to think that our sins, being actions against the unlimited God, are themselves unlimited in their quality, and the punishment therefore should itself be unlimited and therefore eternal.

It cannot be maintained at all that our sins are actions against God; because it is not in our power to do things against God, *i.e.* to do things by which any of His interests will be at stake. By committing sins we can only be said to work against our own interests, and as such, against us. The several commands and precepts given to us by God are all in our own interests, and they cannot therefore be said to be in any way unlimited in their gravity or importance. These commands are besides of various grades of importance according to their nature and necessity, and it is therefore absurd to say that they are unlimited in their character, or that they are actions against the unlimited God.

Another form of justification put forward in favour of the theory of eternal hell is that it serves as a threat to prevent people from committing sins. Surely it is no divine justice to threaten people with cruel and unjust punishments; and no moral code will sanction the deviation from the path of justice for the sake of threats; and if threats are found to be associated with cruelty and injustice, they would even lose their value as threats. Although it is very desirable that the use of obscene language should be prevented in a country, the government of that country will not be justified in imposing capital punishment for such an offence with the object of threatening the people against the use of such language. Eternal punishment again, is inflicted on those with whom the threats proved to be of no avail, and with these people the punishment is not only cruel and unjust, but also useless as a threat. It may be said

to be of some use to the people on whom the threat acts successfully. But what about the rest? In their case, the threat is not only useless, but cruel and unjust. It is again not a justifiable policy to punish one man for the sake of benefitting another. Punishments are intended in the interests of those that are punished; but if in the case of eternal punishment, the people that are benefitted are those that are frightened by the threat, and not those that are actually punished, the punishment cannot but be called an anomaly! When the eternal punishment was decreed, God knew very well that it would not be of any avail to many—and still He decreed it, because it would benefit some! Are we to believe that in order to benefit these some, He will torture the many eternally in hell? God, again, cannot be said to have decreed eternal punishment, although unjust and cruel it may be, in the hope that it would serve as an effectual threat, and carry it out again, when it fails—although useless it may be simply for the sake of keeping His word?

What about, again, the myriads of cases in which the threat is no threat at all? There are millions of people who do not at all believe in the theory of eternal punishment and there were thousands of millions of people who died without having any knowledge of eternal hell. Could it be said to have been a threat in any sense of the word with these people? Is it not then entirely useless and cruel to inflict eternal punishment on these several millions of people!!

Let us again consider the object of the punishment. Punishment is generally given with the object of correcting the wrong doer; but this object is entirely absent in the case of eternal punishment. If a man is to suffer eternally in hell, where is the chance for him to correct himself?

It is true that punishments also serve the purpose of being a lesson to the public ; but, it must be remembered that this is only an after effect which can in no way apply to eternal punishment, as its after effects can benefit none. By the time the sinners are cast into eternal hell, all the rest will be in the enjoyment of eternal heaven, and there will be none left to take a lesson from the eternal punishment inflicted on the sinners.

But the punishment may be said to benefit the public as a threat—I have said enough of the punishment in its aspect as a threat, and it is needless for me to go any further into the subject. I will only say that the major portion of the utility of any punishment lies in its influence or effect on the wrong doer, and when this chief object is wanting in a punishment, such punishment will necessarily be marked down as cruel and unjust.

It is true that in cases of capital punishment, it cannot be said to benefit the sufferer. This is perhaps one of the reasons why capital punishment is condemned by writers on ethics. Whatever this may be, capital punishment is a human invention which cannot be compared to a divine punishment. Because man is not able to invent a punishment which can correct the offender and at the same time meet the ends of justice, he is obliged to have recourse to a form of punishment which, in his opinion, will meet the more important of the two objects. This cannot be said of God. The chief object of God in punishing an offender is the interest of that man. Otherwise He will be considered to punish one man in the interest of others—which is highly unjustifiable. That the punishment should serve as a lesson to the public is only a secondary object in the case of divine punishment ; because it cannot be said in the case of God that with a view to facilitate His own work of giving

a lesson to the public, He had recourse to a punishment which would be of no avail to the person on whom the punishment is inflicted.

It may be said again that eternal punishment meets the ends of justice. I have shown already that the punishment is altogether inconsistent with divine justice. I may point out here that justice is not a factor that is in any way opposed to mercy, both being components of the same divine goodness. But in the case of eternal hell, mercy is a total blank, the sufferers being shown no mercy at all, and the punishment cannot therefore be called divine justice. But on the other hand, the punishment being out of all proportion, it must necessarily be branded as cruel and unjust.

It must be observed that justice is considered as a divine attribute not because of its mere name, but because it has for its object some substantial good, in the absence of which, it has no value at all, nor can it be called divine justice in any sense of the word. In the case of eternal punishment, no benefit can be said to accrue thereby to any one, nor the non-infliction of that punishment can be said to entail any loss to any body. It is not therefore possible at all to see any justification in eternal punishment.

Another plea that is generally urged in justification of eternal hell is that man having been offered eternal bliss as a reward for his merits, it is but reasonable that he should be awarded eternal hell for his demerits. I will not enter into the justification of the reward of eternal bliss for the merits that we acquire during our short span of life. But I will only refer the readers to what I have said on the subject of salvation and ask them to judge for themselves whether eternal happiness could be secured by the so-called merits of faith and repentance,

acquired—it may be—even in a moment at the point of death. But the question for our consideration at present is whether eternal hell is an equitable punishment for the demerits that may befall to our lot in this transitory world. Because God offers eternal happiness for our merits, He cannot be justified in torturing us in eternal hell for the demerits acquired by us. The offers should each be tested on its own merits and neither of them can be justified by the other. No amount of liberality can justify a single act of cruelty.

Punishment in purgatory is no doubt a far more satisfactory form of chastising the souls and removing their sins than eternal hell; but the usefulness of the punishment is only partial in that it is confined to venial sins; and the existence of purgatory, again, does in no way repudiate the theory of eternal hell. If it is considered desirable to remove venial sins, the desirability is more so in the case of mortal sins. If the necessity of removing our sins is admitted, means for removing the several kinds of sins should be adopted, and no exception should be taken to the general rule. Mortal sins cannot be considered beyond pardon or removal, because it is said that there is ample opportunity of a pardon and removal of these sins while we are on this earth. Because we pass on to another state of life, it cannot be argued that the mortal sins assume a degree of *virus* too hard to be removed. If a purgatory is provided for the removal of venial sins, why should not another form of chastisement be provided for the removal of mortal sins as well? The absence of such a form of punishment is no reason to subject the souls to the unjust and cruel form of eternal punishment.

Realization is Real Salvation.

Salvation can only be said to exist in enjoying the Grace of God, by realizing the true state of things. A man who does

not see the true state of things is intellectually blind, and he will not be able to see the Grace of God, and much less to enjoy it (See p. 14). It is only when he realizes the sterling facts that he has no independent existence of his own, that he has no action independent of God, that the whole world is in *advaita* relation with God, that every phenomenon that he sees is but the display of Divine Grace—and merges in that grace, losing his self, in the form of pure love—he can be said to have realized the truth—the Grace of God—and it is this that is salvation in its real sense.

Hinduism provides a systematic course for this realization through the four paths of *Charyā*, *Kriyā*, *Yōga* and *Jñāna* and these paths uplift a man gradually to the final stage of realization.

Charyā.

In the first grade of *Charyā*, a man places himself in the external service of God, and this service creates in his mind a yearning for spiritual advancement—this yearning being fostered and nursed day by day by the physical work that he performs in the name of God. The man is, so to say, taken to close quarters towards God, the idea of God being very prominent in his mind, and his mental plane being largely influenced by the physical service that he performs. In this stage, he may be said to be in the precincts of God, though not in His presence.

Kriyā.

When the man receives a sufficient religious training by observing the rules of *Charyā*, he is rendered fit to approach God closer still, and he observes the rules of *Kriyā* by which he is enabled to render direct services to God, or, in other words, he is enabled to officiate in the presence of God.

Although the service in this grade itself is of a physical nature, his mental faculties have a large share in this service.

Yōga.

The discipline that he receives in the *Kriyā* stage creates in his mind a desire and aptitude to reach God still closer, and he therefore takes himself to the path of Yōga where he is enabled to commune with God in his mental plane. Here he controls his mind, subdues his mental flirtations (*Vṛittis*) and concentrates the mind on God. *Yōgam*, literally means union—union with God in the mental plane—and by this union, he assimilates himself with God, the union being so intimate. The practice of Yōga discloses the connecting link between matter and spirit, and enables the practitioner to get over the influence of matter and commune with God spiritually. The man who successfully practices *Yōga* gains mastery over a large sphere of the material plane and has his capacity of vision and intelligence enormously augmented.

Jñāna.

In the Jñāna stage, he transcends even the mental plane, gets over all the Māyāvic influence, becomes one glow of intelligence (*chittam*), realizes all truths, loses his self and merges into the grandeur of God, his individuality being no more visible.

This Jñāna is the true realization and it is not a mere book knowledge or a heresay knowledge. It is an illumination of one's intelligence which he realizes by personal experience. This realization is not within the reach of all except those who are fully matured and fitted by their *Pakkuvam* for the enjoyment of the bliss. The subject who is fit for this realization will have the least inclination for things secular, and he will be fully absorbed in a strong yearning for the Grace of God and

will, so to speak, be mad after God. There is a good deal of mystery surrounding this stage. With all his intense love and yearning for God, the subject requires a *Guru*, a proper guide, to initiate him in the mystery of realization and to lead him along the path.

Daśakāryam.

When the subject proceeds along this path, he has to realize, one after the other, ten main experiences which are known by the name of *Daśakāryam*. (Ten achievements). They are:—

1. Tattvarūpam (தத்துவரூபம்).
2. Tattva Darśanam (தத்துவ தரிசனம்).
3. Tattvaśuddhi (தத்துவ சுத்தி).
4. Ātmarūpam (ஆன்ம ரூபம்).
5. Ātma Darśanam (ஆன்ம தரிசனம்).
6. Ātmaśuddhi (ஆன்ம சுத்தி).
7. Pararūpam (பரரூபம்).
8. Para Darśanam (பரதரிசனம்).
9. Para Yōgam (பரயோகம்).
10. Parabhōgam (பரபோகம்).

1. He has in the first place to realize that the whole *Jagat* or world is apart from himself, and must acquire by experience a true knowledge of the nature and functions of the various *Tattvas* or elementary principles of which the *Jagat* is composed.

2. He must realize the source of these *Tattvas*; he must realize the truth that they are only *Jadas* or irrational objects and that they are capable of being comprehended by his own knowledge.

3. He must transcend the plane of limitation produced by means of these *Tattvas*. He must transcend all their influence. He must realize their instability and get himself alienated from them.

4. He must loose all ideas of his own self and of the influence of Pāṣa. He must extricate himself from the hold of Pāṣa. He must realize how his intelligence is stimulated and how that intelligence is helped by grace.

5. His actions should not appear to his view : He should loose his *I*-ness and *My*-ness, and his original idea of limitation must go out of him.

6. He must realize that his actions are due to the influence of Pāṣa and he should merge in Śiva.

7. He must realize that Śiva is the cause of all the differentiated forms of the universe, and that in due time He causes the realization itself.

8. He must realize Śiva everywhere.

9. He must realize the different forms of Divine grace in their true light and become assimilated with that grace.

10. He must realize the sublime pleasure which Śiva bestows on him by resigning himself into His fulness.

The above is a faint outline of realization which can only be explained by an adept Guru or religious preceptor to whose qualifications, I have the least preterice. It is this realization that can be called salvation in its true sense, as such realization, if once secured, will keep the subject eternally in the enjoyment of heavenly bliss, and will never allow him again to slip out of it and drop into the mire of worldly sorrows.

Bhāvana.

One of the chief means provided for realization is "Bhāvana" *i.e.* the practice of identifying self with Śiva. The object of this Bhāvana is two fold,—first, to loose the self, and then the second, to merge in God. By this Bhāvana or practice of identification, the self becomes like God, and is rendered fully fit for the reflexion of Grace. This is rendered feasible by the translucent

nature of the soul in that it becomes one with whatever it is attached to or associated with (அது அதுவாந்தன்மை); and otherwise all salvation will be impossible.

Religious Mysticism and Initiation into the same.

Things that are concealed to our ordinary view, things that baffle our ordinary understanding and things that have to be grappled with after a series of successful training and practice are said to be mysteries or secrets. There is no doubt that there is a good deal of such secrets in the field of religion. Religion is a subject that embodies a good many secrets, because it explores our path to a mystic region, and because the means it adopts for such exploration are entirely different from any measures that we adopt in our worldly life. Although it may not be necessary for us to observe any mysticism in the lower grades of religious life, we have necessarily to do so when we get into religion proper, and enter into regions quite unknown and perplexing to us. It is very necessary that, in that region, we are guided by a competent Religious Preceptor or *Guru*. Most of our experiences in that region are beyond description, and they have only to be realized and verified—and this adds to the mystic character of those experiences. And, again, subjects who are not sufficiently mature for the proper understanding of the intricacies involved in that region, and for the observances of the rules laid down for the purpose will find the whole region a mass of confusion and, no doubt, it will appear to such people as a myth too difficult to form any idea of.

It is very essential in their own interest itself that the secrets of these mysteries are not laid open to such people, as otherwise they will make a misuse of them and seek their own ruin. The services of a *Guru* or Divine Preceptor are highly essential in this region; and when a disciple is fully mature for

the instructions and practices that appertain to this region, he will be initiated by such a *Guru* in the mysteries of this region according to his (disciple's) *Pakuvam* or standard of advancement: and this initiation or *Jñāna Dikshā*, as we call it, is considered to be the most important epoch in the life of that disciple.

Easy Means of Salvation.

The means of salvation as propounded by Hinduism are supposed to be too elaborate and intricate to be observed, while those laid down by modern religions such as Christianity etc., are said to be very simple and easy. It must be observed that the question is not one of feasibility, but of efficacy. I have already explained what salvation is and how difficult it is to secure it. The means to secure such an abstruse, but grand state of existence should naturally be elaborate and intricate and they cannot therefore be condemned on that account.

It is true that placing one's faith in Christ and repenting for the sins committed are certainly much easier methods than divesting one of all his evil and impure tendencies, his creating a true and sincere love to God, his losing the self and merging into the Divine form; but the question is whether the former methods are capable of securing to us eternal happiness in the presence of God. We have seen several people who had their faith in Christ and who very often repented for the sins committed by them, fall again and again into the snares of their evil tendencies; and it is not therefore possible to argue that once a man places his faith in Christ and repents for his sins, the seed of evil that lies innate in him will be removed. When this is not removed, he cannot be held a fit subject for the enjoyment of heavenly bliss.

The argument may be urged that the seed of evil will not have any effect in the presence of the Divine Lord wherein we

will be ushered by the remission of our sins, as a result of the faith we place in Christ and of our repentance for sins. This is a sad mistake which people who have no idea of religion in its true sense generally fall into. God is not a material object, nor His presence a material plane wherein we expect to enjoy the eternal happiness. He is spiritual in form, and we have to enjoy Him spiritually. His spiritual form will not be available to us unless we are pure, or unless the seed of evil that exists in us is removed; that is to say—we cannot be said to be in His spiritual presence until we are enabled to feel that presence by the removal of our evil tendency or our ignorance, as we may rightly call it. The argument, therefore, that in His presence the seed of our ignorance will have no effect cannot hold good, and as such, the feasibility urged on behalf of the Christian method of salvation must necessarily fail.

It has again to be observed that even the removal of our sins cannot be expected by a simple faith in the Divine grace or by our regretting for the sins committed by us. Faith and repentance depend chiefly on the mood in which our mind may be at a certain time, and this mood of our mind cannot be said in any way to be permanent or lasting. We have very often seen people whom circumstances forced to place their implicit faith in God and to repent for their misdeeds; but in course of a short time, the circumstances changed and they fell back into their old method of doing and thinking. It cannot be said that in these instances, which, I think, are not uncommon, the sins had been removed by faith and repentance. A criminal may place his implicit faith on the mercy of the sovereign and may sincerely repent for the offence committed by him. Would the king be justified in granting him a free pardon without submitting him to the punishment decreed to him by the law of the

country? It is in consideration of these and other facts, it has been laid down by the Hindu religion that the fruit of every deed must, as a rule, be eaten by the doer.

Faith and repentance, again, will only be of any avail, according to the Christian theory, if they exist at the point of death. A man may be quite unconscious at the point of death, or his mental state may be such as not to be in a fit state to think of the next world, or he may meet with a sudden or unexpected death. Faith and repentance are not possible in these circumstances at the point of death, and are the people who die under these circumstances to be doomed to eternal hell? If such a condition is insisted on, salvation, according to the Christian theory would be more a chance work than one within the power of man to attain.

It cannot, however, be denied that sincere piety and faith in God accompanied by a genuine repentance for the sins committed by us have their own merits. They go a long way to mitigate our punishment, provided that the effect of our faith and repentance are of a permanent character, or are equal in their effect to the reaction brought on us by the punishment prescribed for the sins committed by us. The Hindu Śāstras abound in stories where such faith and repentance were of real value, and I will quote one of them here for the edification of the reader:—

“Once upon a time, on the advent of an auspicious hour, several thousands of people had a bath in the Ganges and were returning home in large crowds. This aroused the curiosity of the Goddess *Pārvati* who approached Her Consort *Śiva* and asked Him if all those people were to be saved. *Śiva* had a smile over the pertinent question, and instead of giving His Consort a direct reply, asked Her to assume the form of an old decrepit

Brāhamin woman, full of sores and itches in Her body, and He assumed the form of an old wretched Brāhmin at the point of death. They both went to the road along which the pilgrims were passing, and the Lord lay Himself down in the open sun by the side of the road, covered with a rag, the Goddess sitting by His side and crying for help. As instructed by Her Lord, She addressed the pilgrims and cried "will any of you, if free from sin, help my husband up and place him under a shade"? Nobody cared to answer Her call, but they excused themselves by saying that they could not consider themselves free from sin. But there was a single exception in the case of a man of a low caste. This man had been the murderer of his mother, and the sin having weighed very heavily on his mind, he sincerely repented for his act, and with a strong faith in the efficacy of the holy water, had a bath therein along with others and was returning home. The cry of the old woman having fallen into his ears, he thought within himself as follows:—'The old woman wants that her husband should be helped by some one free from sin. It is true that I murdered my mother; but that sin has already been removed by my bath in the Ganges. I will therefore help him,' and he helped Him accordingly, and went his way. The divine personages disappeared at once, and Śiva addressing His Consort said:—'My Beloved, the one that helped me is the one that is saved but not the rest.'

This story is full of meaning in various ways and it is a strong proof of the efficacy and utility of faith and repentance, according to the Hindu dogmas.

It will thus be seen that faith and repentance are not unknown factors in the Hindu dogmas; but they are fully recognized therein; and furthermore, in order to secure them

firm and make them permanent and lasting, they are wedded to various rites and ceremonies which have their own meaning and use. It must however be understood that all these rites and ceremonies, accompanied as they should necessarily be, by faith and repentance, are intended for the remission of our sins and not for the securing of eternal beatitude or final salvation, the passport to which is pure *Jñānam* and *Jñānam* alone of which I have given some idea in the previous pages.

If, however, it is argued that some object is necessary to place our faith on, through which the remission of our sins is vouchsafed, I may say that the Hindu religion provides a good many of them, as I have already stated, in the shape of sacred ashes, sacred waters, sacred beads, sacred shrines, the thousand and odd sacred *līlās* of Śiva etc., etc., and the Purāṇas may be found to abound with stories of many persons who were saved from the evil effects of their sins through these means.

CHAPTER VI.

WORSHIP.

What is Worship?

Worship is our devotional service to God for the purpose of securing His grace. If we go into the question minutely, it will be found that worship is taking us as near to God as possible, for the reflection of His grace on us. Although this may be said to be the ultimate object of all religions, yet the forms adopted by them to secure this object are at broad variance with each other.

The forms adapted by some religions tax only our thoughts, or thoughts and words combined together; while others tax our thoughts, words and deeds. The Hindu religion taxes the three, and in the case of people less advanced in spirituality, it taxes them more in deeds than in words or thoughts. The attention of man to any subject is drawn more effectively by deeds than by words or thoughts; and this is particularly so in the case of people who have not a sufficient mental training or a control over their mind. The Hindu religion therefore prescribes different methods of worship to suit different grades of people, and the lower the people are in the rung of spirituality, the more rites and ceremonies are imposed on them, or they are taxed more in deeds and words, than in thoughts. Of course, it is by his thoughts, man has to reach God; but the general trend of his mind and its fickle ways will not permit him to direct it effectively towards an immaterial Being like God, and he is therefore enjoined to perform this duty through physical exercises of words and deeds. Man, again, is a social

being, fond of public functions and enjoyments in company with his fellow people, and institutions on these lines are necessary in the case of religion also to render it attractive and interesting. Numerous festivals—local and periodical—have been instituted by the Hindu religion for this purpose. Various rites and ceremonies are attached to secular functions with the object of giving them a religious coloring, and of reminding man of religion even in the enjoyment of secular pleasure. Temples, *Pūjās*, and Festivals are instituted to enable man to enjoy religion socially and individually, and various rites involving deeds and words are enjoined on him in his daily duties, so that he may be compelled to perform worship in some form or other in his own way.

Vedic Worship.

The Vedic worship may be said to be very general in its character. It is suited to the different forms of religions that accept the Vedas as their common revelation, and it is intended mainly for the people in the secular plane. It meets the requirements of the people of the stamp of aboriginal tribes or primitive men. The main object of Vedic worship is to create a religious desire, and as such, it is directed more in the secular plane than in religion proper, although it is not fully devoid of instructions on the latter. The instructions intended by the Vedic worship on religion proper is rather general and concise, detailed and systematic instructions on the subject being delegated to the *Āgamas*.

The Vedas, in the first place, prescribe worship to God wherever His grace is exhibited to human understanding. The grace of God is seen evidently in the various forms of nature such as Sun, Moon, Fire, Water, Thunder etc.; and worship to God through these natural phenomena are enjoined by the

Vedas in a manner agreeable to, and appreciable by, men of ordinary intelligence. Vedic worship is mainly intended for secular gains and is chiefly in the form of *yajñas* and sacrifices suited to the taste of man in his undeveloped state.

Religious duties are enjoined on men in connection with every social function and in every walk of human life; and distinct forms of worship and religious duties are enjoined to be daily performed by each of the four *Varuṇas* and the four *Āśramas*, according to their standard of advancement. In addition to these various forms of ordinary duties, there are several forms of special worship and religious functions that have to be carried out on special days and occasions—and when all these various duties help the man up and create in him a yearning for spirituality, he could find ample food in the Upanishats; and the knowledge of *Brahma vidyā* therein explained would be found fully expounded in the *Āgamas*.

Sacrifice.

Sacrifice is an important feature of the Vedic worship and it is symbolical in its significance as most of the various forms of worship are. Sacrifice is intended to represent the killing of the Self or *ahaṅkāra* (I-ness) which is offered to appease the Deity invoked in *yajñas* in token of the submission and resignation which the performer tenders to such Deity. In the Vedic age, animals were considered to be the fittest objects of sacrifice, as in that age religious emblems required some striking features of semblance to the objects represented owing to the ignorance and simplicity of the people. Sacrifice was intended to represent the killing of the animal portion (*Paśutvam*) of man and hence the substitution of animals for that portion. If the subject of sacrifice is further inquired into, it will be found that it represents not only the animal portion or *paśutvam*

of man in general, but that certain forms of psychic powers are represented by certain animals. Human sacrifice (*Purushamēdam*) appears to have been intended to represent the *Paśutvam* or animality in general, while Horse sacrifice (*Aśvamēdam*) was intended to represent the killing of the breathing principle in man—breath or *Prāṇa* (*Vasi*) being a synonym for Horse. Cow sacrifice (*Gōmēdam*) represents the killing of human nature—*Gō* (*Paśu*) being another name for soul; and goat sacrifice represents the killing of the mind, as mind is generally compared to a goat—(“ துள்ளுமறி ”) the leaping goat. And there is another side of the question that deserves consideration in this connection.

The mystic *mantrams* that are uttered and the Vedic rites that are performed at sacrifices are considered to be of such merit that the animals sacrificed would have a substantial reward in the region to which they are transferred; it is a condition essentially important at sacrifices that only such priests as are capable of so advancing the interests of the animals sacrificed, or who are able to restore them to life when sacrificed are the fit persons to officiate at sacrifices. This, however, was a state of things in the primitive age—when there was more of faith than reason. When people became advanced and enlightened, sacrifice took other forms, and certain varieties of fruits, vegetables, cocoanuts and rice balls were substituted for animals. In the refined stage in which temple worship has been brought into prominence, sacrifices are made in the shape of rice balls, and an edifice called *Bali-piṭam* is invariably constructed as part of every temple for this purpose. It may be noticed again, that in temples where annual festivals are carried on, *yajñas* or *yāgams* are invariably performed according to Vedic rites, and sacrifices

are offered there in the shape of rice balls and cocoanuts, and *yajña śālais* or halls for this purpose will be found attached to every temple in a corner set apart for this purpose.*

Somapanam.

Abstinence from intoxicants is one of the cardinal rules of the Hindu faith ; yet an intoxicant beverage extracted from the *soma* plant may be found to have been used at *yajñas*. This is an instance which would clearly support the view that I have expressed in several places of this book that the Hindu religion gives a religious license to several practices in the secular plane with a view to take man ultimately to the side of spirituality. Lovers of intoxicants themselves are given an opportunity to satisfy their craving for liquor even in their religious practices. Liquor is offered as an oblation representing the human spirit of merriment, and is then allowed to be taken by the parties who make the offering, in the light of a sacrament. That is to say, the use of liquor is allowed, when sanctified by religion and the secular aspect of the drink is altered and modified. The religion says in one place :—

* The following passage from the *Saṁhitā Brahmana* will throw some light on this subject :—“ At first, namely, the gods offered up a man as a victim. When he was offered up, the sacrificial essence went out of him. It entered into the horse. They offered up the horse. When it was offered, the sacrificial essence went out of it. It entered into the ox, when it was offered, the sacrificial essence went out of it. It entered into a sheep. They offered up the sheep. When it was offered up, the sacrificial essence went out of it. It entered into a goat. They offered up the goat. When it was offered the sacrificial essence went out of it. It entered into the earth. They searched for it by digging. They found it in shape of these two substances, the rice and the barley : therefore even now they obtain those two by digging ; and as much efficacy as all those sacrificial animal victims would have for him ; so much efficacy has this oblation (of rice etc.) for him who knows this”.

கள்ளுமூனு நீ விரும்பினால் மகங்கள் செய்காமத்தின் விருப்பானால்
கொள்ளும் பெண்டொடு கலவிசெய்.

"If you are fond of beverage and meat perform *yajñas*—
If you are given to amorous lust, enjoy with your wife duly
married."

Of course, any worldly pleasure, including carnal appetite,
is an obstacle in the way to spiritual achievement ; but some
of the pleasures being necessary evils, which it is not possible
to check altogether, the religion sanctions them under certain
conditions giving them a religious colouring.

Evils whose results cannot be avoided at all are of course
strictly and unconditionally prohibited by religion ; but in the
case of evils whose effects are only felt under certain conditions,
the religion is rather lenient, and finding that a total prohibition
of such evils would lead to a state of things in which nobody
would care for religion, it has found it necessary to sanction
them under certain conditions and restrictions which lend them
a religious appearance, and remove from them the secular
venom they are otherwise possessed of—the main object being
cooperation with humanity to a certain extent with a view to
win them ultimately to the side of spirituality.

Āgamic worship.

Although provision is made in the Vedic worship for final
salvation, that provision can only be said to deal with the
question in a rather summary way which is not sufficiently
effective in the case of all classes of men. The main object of
Vedic worship is to serve a large sphere of men in the secular
plane, and to create in them a religious tendency by guiding
them in the proper course in that plane. It is with this object,
it embodies a good deal of mystical secrets which are wholly in
the region of *māyā* ; the seed of secularity. But a systematic

training in religion proper is provided for by the Āgamas which have their own methods of dealing with the secular side as well. Unlike the Vēdas, the Āgamas narrow their sphere to the fully qualified subjects who are sufficiently ripe to seek direct salvation; and their discipline in the secular plane is formulated with a view to serve to a large extent the procedure laid down for the subsequent spiritual realization. Āgamas take into full consideration the two sides of human yearning, and the influence of the one over the other, and they therefore go into the subject directly and build their own structure over the foundation laid down by the Vedas, and provide gradatory steps for the securing of the heavenly beatitude. They define the four paths of (1) *Charyā*, (2) *Kryā*, (3) *Yōga* and (4) *Jñāna*; they detail the duties of the three kinds of religious preceptors, viz. (1) *Pirākāchārya*, (2) *Bōdhakāchārya* and (3) *Muktitāchārya* and the conduct of the three kinds of religious scholars:—(1) *Samayi*, (2) *Putra*, and (3) *Sādhaka* are specified therein; they formulate again the four kinds of initiations or “*Dikṣhas*” viz. (1) *Samaya* (2) *Viśeṣa*, (3) *Nirvāṇa* and (4) *Asarya*; and elaborate and exhaustive rules are laid down by them for the (1) construction and consecration of temples, (2) the daily *pūjas* and other ceremonies connected therewith, (3) the periodical festivals and other functions therein carried out &c., and special lessons on the philosophy of religion and the final stage of realization are given with exactness and precision.

Every one of the multifarious rites and ceremonies ordained by the Āgamas is replete with occult meanings, and the meanings of the rituals connected with *pūjas* and festivals would be found highly instructive. The idea of God-head is brought constantly before the view of man by the many daily duties imposed on him, and that idea is made further prominent

by the establishment of temples in each village. The idea is made stronger and stronger every day by the daily *pūjas* and periodical festivals carried on in such temples. Human understanding being quite incapable of having any conception of an impersonal God, He is not only represented in a personal form, but that form is again represented in an image and through the medium of that image, He is supposed to live in our midst in the temples constructed for the purpose, and we are made to serve, revere and worship Him at such temples, and we are given the opportunity and facility of devoting our time, labour and wealth in the service of God in those temples. *Pūjas* are performed in temples from three to six times a day, and every time the *Pūja* is performed, the temple bells remind the villagers of God and of the devotional service performed to Him in the name of the village. Daily offerings are made to God at each temple in the shape of rice, cake, fruit &c., not to appease His hunger in a physical sense, but to appease the hunger that He has for removing our human weakness (*Paśutvam*). The several ceremonies of ablutions, anointments, burning of incenses, ringing of bells, sounding of music &c., are all intended to represent some spiritual truths which would be of immense use later in our spiritual growth. The temples and the various ceremonies ordained to be performed therein give us ample opportunity to cultivate our love to God in our own way and to court His friendship and grace as we would do with, any of our neighbours or friends.

There is no doubt that these temples have been exceedingly successful as effective means to kindle in the hearts of man true piety and love to God, if one could judge from the immense crowd of people that attend these temples for Divine service, and from the devotion and solemnity observed by them there.

It is however very unfortunate that some undesirable practices have slowly got into these temples, which it is the duty of every earnest Hindu to endeavour to discountenance and remove. I refer to the nefarious practice of what is known as the *nautch* dance allowed in these temples, and one could find here a glaring instance of the woeful result of corruption? In olden times, devotees—both males and females—used to dance in temples in their religious ecstasy, and the dance by females was no doubt an exponent of singular piety and love. It had therefore found its way into the programme of services that had to be performed in temples on special occasions; but alas! It has now degenerated into the present form of nautch dance! Just the opposite of what was originally intended!! The practice seems to have received encouragement during mediæval times and it is high time that it is stamped out.

Image Worship.

Image worship is one of the important institutions of Hinduism intended for the salvation of man, and it is much to be regretted that this form of worship is condemned by modern theologians in their ignorance of the principle underlying it. I think that it is desirable, therefore, to say a few words on that subject.

The sources through which man acquires knowledge are his senses, if not for which he cannot be said to be in possession of any knowledge whatever. In fact no conception of idea is possible without senses, and no knowledge is possible without ideas. Such being the knowledge acquiring capacity of man, how is he to have an idea of God whom he has never seen or felt by any of his senses? As I have already said, our mind is only capable of forming an idea, if helped by some sense perception or other—either immediate or ultimate. And when the mind

is directed towards God, the idea that is formed therein must naturally be something analogous to an impression made in our mind on some previous occasion by a sense perception: This idea, based as it is, on sense perception cannot be an impression of the infinite God, because, in the first place, it is beyond the capacity of our mind to receive any impression of an infinite object, and in the second place an infinite object cannot be comprehended by sense perception. The idea, therefore, that can possibly be formed in our mind cannot be called an idea of the true God; but it can only be said to be an idea of a substitute—and a very inaccurate and insufficient substitute—for the infinite God. And this is nothing short of image-worship. There cannot be much difference between this form of worship and the image-worship prescribed by the Hindu religion—the only difference being that the one is ideal, while the other is material—the principle being the same in both cases.

So long as we are in our present stage in which we look to our senses for our ideas and knowledge, it is indispensable that this form of worship is followed, as otherwise we cannot perform any worship at all. If an ideal image can be substituted for the infinite God, the question would naturally arise whether there is any harm in having a material or visual image instead of an ideal image, and rendering our worship stronger and more effective.

We all know the fleeting nature of our mind and the difficulty it experiences in grasping objects, even best known to it, when unaided by sense perception. We further know that our task is rendered still more difficult when the object to be grasped is an abstract one, not directly known to our sense perception; and the difficulty will doubtless be unsurmountable

when the object to be grasped is not only abstract, but infinite and incomprehensible as the great God is.

It must also be observed that when we think of any object, our mind has to rest on some form or other—either real or imaginary—representing that object, and it is then alone, the action of our mind can be said to be a thought on that object.

It is again a fact borne out by human experience that the impression in our mind of any object is rendered immensely stronger when that object is within the grasp of our sense perception, than when it is left to our mental vision alone, unaided by any of our senses.

It is in consideration of these facts, resulting as they do from the frailty of the human mind, that the Hindu religion prescribes the form of image worship, so that we may, with the help of our senses, direct our attention to the images, and through the images, to God. The images serve us not only as a means to arrest our sense of vision and concentrate our attention but also to intensify that attention by enabling us to employ our other senses as well in the service of God through those images. It is a matter of vital importance that our communion with God should be as strong and fervent as possible.

There may possibly be a time when we will be able to have communion with God in His spiritual form, but in our present state of development, it is very essential that we have some material form or other through which our mind may be enabled to reach the spiritual God.

It is a pity that the principle of image worship is greatly misunderstood by its critics. Images are never worshipped as images, but only as symbols representing God. Image worshippers are not such dunces as to mistake an image God,

but they only direct their worship, through the images to God whose shape or form the images represent. Images are only substitutes for the forms that God assumed at times, and they are symbolically used as the body of God for the time being. The substitution or symbolization is known in Tamil as பாவனை (Bhāvanā) which I regret I am unable to render into appropriate English. An image is neither God nor His real form, but it is only symbolized as the temporary body of God, wherewith we can think of Him.

We know that in talking to a man we only address the spiritual or the psychical side of the man and not his body or the physical side, although it is the latter that is the object of our perception at the time. That is to say, we address his spiritual form through the medium of his body. The principle is exactly the same in the case of image worship. In addressing the image or in having communion with it, we only use it as a means to fix our attention on the spirit of God that pervades or permeates the image, or that is latent in it.

The symbolization or the substitution of an image for the shape of God is accompanied with various rites and ceremonies, coupled with prayers and invocations, and the procedure has been greatly misunderstood, the question having been often asked whether the priests who perform these ceremonies are able to impart divine life to the images. The priests are not to be considered to have any command over the Deity, or to have the power of giving divine life to the images. Their action consists only in symbolizing the image and in invoking the grace of God to abide there.

The real shape of God is itself of a symbolic character—the various members of His body representing various forms of His grace—and these forms of His grace are inspired by

invocations and prayers into the corresponding members of the image which is thus symbolized and treated as the body of God for the time being. God in His unlimited mercy towards the souls, assumes the image, as His temporary or symbolic body in response to the invocations, prayers and ceremonies performed thereat.

It must be understood that symbolization is an important factor in the Hindu religion to direct the attention of man to God. The universe itself is a symbol of God. Every creature, down to the minutest atom, is symbolic of God. Man can see in his body a fully developed symbol of the form of God. In short, the ultimate object of the Hindu religion is to make man symbolize himself as God and become one with Him. And we could see this symbolization being largely made use of by us in our daily life. We represent our ideas by sounds, and the sounds again by forms known as characters or letters. We represent several ideas by motions and gestures; and we could see that we use our own body to represent our soul, in that we identify the souls with their respective bodies. It is this very general practice of symbolization that is availed of in the case of image worship also, and there is no doubt that this serves a very useful purpose.

The practice of symbolization for religious purposes may be clearly seen in the Christian rite of sacrament; and it may be found to exist, in some form or other, in almost all the religions of the world. The Catholic Church fully admits the utility and the necessity of the practice of image worship, but, curiously enough, that Church seems to contend at times, that images are used by them only to remind them of the form of God. I confess that I am unable to follow this contention. They bow to the images; they carry them

in procession, and they revere and respect them. We cannot persuade ourselves to believe that all these are only signs of remembrance.

If, however, images are said to be placed in churches for the purpose of reminding the worshippers of the material form of God, and if that form can be said to remind them of His spiritual form at the same time, is it wrong to adore Him in those images which bring before the view of the worshippers both the material and spiritual forms of God? God being omnipresent, He is certainly in the image itself, and so long as that image represents the material form of God, why should not the image be utilized as an object where we have both the material and spiritual forms of God in one place? particularly so when such a use serves us the very good purpose of enabling us to concentrate our attention which would otherwise be scattered and driven in different directions during the time of our communion with God?

The object of image worship is nothing but worship to God; and if in their anxiety to render this worship effective and fervent, men adopt certain measures, suited to their capacity and intelligence, will the great God be displeased with that? Will He not, on the contrary, be highly pleased with them, whatever may be the means with which such worship is performed?

It is very curious that in deprecating image-worship, the critics use the argument that idols can neither see, hear, nor speak! It is a pity that they do not realize the fact that symbolization is a symbolization and not a reality, and that symbolization cannot effect any change in the natural order of things! If such a change is effected, the images should become the real forms of God, while in fact they remain symbols or substitutes

answering the purposes for which they are intended. The Hindu Śāstras state that the presence or pervasion of God in these images is like ghee in the curd, while His presence elsewhere is like ghee in the milk.

Popular Worship.

This is the form of worship found among the ignorant masses. Āgamic worship is an improvement on the general Vedic worship which, in its corrupt or degenerated form, may be said to be what we call "Popular worship." The Vedic worship, when followed by ignorant people, would no doubt have received additions and alterations from time to time according to the taste and fancy of the people, and in course of time, such changes would have slid into certain wild forms that are now known as "Devil worship", "Fetish worship", "Hero worship" &c. The religious fervour kindled in the heart of ignorant men, when not properly guided by the rules of religion laid down for the purpose, carry the people beyond fixed limits, and the result is some monstrous form of worship. Between the religious love on one side, and the desire for worldly pleasures on the other, man struggles hard, and at last, shapes the one on which he has less interest to suit the other for which he takes a greater fancy. People of unrefined habits, such as the Hill tribes or Jungle races are, have their own wants and their own forms of pleasures and enjoyments, which, no doubt, largely influence their religion and religious creed, and such influence cannot be attributed to the genuine religion.

The people however have their own attraction to these changes which are no doubt better than no religion.

Popular worship is generally at great variance with genuine worship, and this is a state of things common to all religions. Even among Christians, with the huge amount of

expenditure incurred by them in safe-guarding the interests of their religion, there is a striking contrast between the religion of the Missionaries and the religion of the ignorant masses. Popular form of worship in any religion is a necessary evil, and it cannot be taken as a criterion to decide the merits of that religion in its pure form.

Corrupted form of worship may be observed among ignorant Hindus in their brutal practice of offering animal sacrifices &c., which are very much opposed to the spirit of the true religion; and this is owing to their standard of refinement and social life which have a large bearing on their religious career. Pure form of worship is much against their taste and religion cannot be held responsible for this taste.

It must however be understood that even popular forms of worship are not without their own merits, if performed with sincere faith and religious zeal.

The primary object of religion is, as I have often said, to cultivate religious fervour, and when in this fervour, a man adopts a mode of worship in his own way and exults thereby in his devotion to God, that worship is sure to be accepted by God, whatever its form may be. The life of the hunter-saint, Kāṇṇappar is a strong testimony in support of this fact. Forms of worship without a religious sanction, but adopted at the impulse of sincere piety are called "Bhaktimārga", "paths of piety" and these "Bhaktimārga" have no definite forms to take. The less enlightened a man is the more readily would God respond to his prayer, provided it is accompanied with sincere love. God Subramanya, the beloved son of God Śiva, is supposed to be the God of the Jungle tribes called *Vedars*, and the Purāṇas relate a good many stories of His sports among them, because of their sincerity and simplicity. Although religion

provides rules for the cultivation of love, God will not reject any love obtained otherwise, however desirable it may be to be abided by the rules of religion. Love is love and God is Love!

Mental Worship or Yoga.

Although we cultivate our devotion to God, in various ways, the most acceptable form of worship is our approaching Him by our heart, concentrating our whole attention on him and serving Him in the mental plane—all physical forms of our worship being tentative to this form of worship. Our heart is the best exponent of our feeling, and the best way of expressing or cultivating our feeling towards any object that is precious to us, is to devote our whole heart in a thought over that object. It is our daily experience that the more we love and caress an object the more we think of it and keep it prominently in our mental view: Our Lord the Great God being the dearest of all the objects to which we are attached, it necessarily follows that we will have to place Him as closely and intimately in our mind as we can, and serve Him in our mental plane—any service in our mental plane being in the mean-time more genuine and real than any physical service. But we know that we have a very obnoxious enemy in the fickle and fleeting nature of our mind which would throw considerable difficulties in our way of concentrating our attention on God, and render it almost next to impossibility to fix our uninterrupted attention on God even for a few seconds. The mind is not only fickle and fleeting in its nature, but it has a great many door-ways open to it, in the shape of our senses and sense organs, to hop about, and a slight communication through any of these openings is more than enough to set it on in its fleeting movement, however hard we may try to control it and

confine it to a certain point. People who have endeavoured to fix their attention on God would have fully realized the difficulty they have to surmount in this direction, and the Hindu religious student deploras very bitterly the truant nature of his mind which he compares to a monkey or a goat for its unsteadiness and fickleness. We know that people who have a religious spirit about them seek lonely places for their communion with God, and the reason is quite apparent. They want a place where their mind will have the least opportunity to stray out through the senses, and where they can successfully direct it towards God. But the Hindu—no doubt the highly religious man in the world—has studied the question in its various aspects, and has worked out a science to control his mind—and this science is what is known as *Yōga*. *Yōga* is a scientific process which enables the practitioner to martial and discipline his mind, to exercise a full control over it, to concentrate it on God and commune with Him without any interruption. The communion with God sought by the *Yōga* system is not such a communion as we have in ordinary conversation with any of our fellow beings, but a strong, intimate absorption in Him; and this absorption is generally known as a trance or vision, where the subject is enabled to have a view of all things in their true colour, owing to his intimate connection with the fountain head of all nature. The process prescribed for the practice of *Yōga* is indeed very irksome and tedious, and as a preliminary step to the practice, we must conform ourselves very strictly to the rules of morals. There is a good deal in the place selected for the practice, as no doubt the atmosphere and surroundings of the place contribute largely to the success of the practice. Much depends again on the posture the subject assumes at the time of the practice, as the posture helps him materially in the

operation. There are eight means specially provided for carrying out the practice, and these eight means should be carefully and considerately observed in the practice of *Yōga*. They are:—

1. *Yāma*—non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence and non-receiving of gifts.
2. *Niyama*—cleanliness, contentment, mortification, study and self surrender to God.
3. *Āsana*—posture.
4. *Prāṇāyāma*—regulating the breath.
5. *Pratyākāra*—restraining the senses.
6. *Dhāraṇa*—concentration.
7. *Dhyāna*—meditation, and
8. *Samādhi*—super-consciousness.

There is a good deal of connection between our mind and body, and it is a well-known fact that our body exercises a strong influence over our mind. The science of *yōga*, therefore prescribes various physical practices which will ultimately help us in martialling and disciplining our mind, and in exercising a control over its movements or *vrittis*. Just like various other Hindu formulæ, the aims and objects of which are not known at all to our modern critics, and which are therefore attacked by them the *yōga* practices themselves are condemned and ridiculed by them as superstitious practices, although their beneficial results have been proved in many instances even in our own time. Apart from the highest object of *samādhi*, which the *yōga* system aims at, there are many other intermediate miraculous results achieved through the system, even in the material plane, in our march to the ultimate goal. The concentration of our mind on God and our control over the *vrittis* or waves of the mind, enable us to get into a

region where we gain a sort of mastery over nature and her several laws to a very appreciable extent, and help us to overcome the influence which those laws of nature exert over us. A *yōgi* is enabled to release himself from the clutches of nature, and his vision of things is largely augmented, as he is in a position, by the practice of *yōga*, to identify and assimilate himself with the grace of God; and by his close union with It, to be so much infused with that Grace that he is enabled to enjoy an extended sphere of vision. We have heard of many miraculous feats performed by *yōgic* students who are supposed to exercise a sort of control over elements and laws of nature. The following extract from the writings of Sir Monier Williams, a staunch Christian as he was, would I believe, amply convince any unbiassed mind of the efficacy of the yoga system:—

Indian wisdom pp. 94. 95. 96.

"The variety and intensity of the forms of austerity practised by such Yogis in India would appear to surpass all credibility were they not sufficiently attested by trustworthy evidence. A few illustrations may not be out of place here or at least may be instructive, especially as bearing upon an interesting field of enquiry, viz., first, how is it that faith in a false system can operate with sufficient force upon a Hindu to impel him to submit voluntarily to almost incredible restraints mortifications of the flesh, and physical tortures? and secondly, how is it that an amount of physical endurance may be exhibited by an apparently weakly and emaciated Asiatic, which would be impossible in a European, the climate and the diet in the one case tending to debilitate, in the other to invigorate?

"In the *Śakuntala* (Act VII verse 175) there is a description of an ascetic engaged in yoga, whose condition of fixed trance and immovable impassiveness have lasted so long that

ants had thrown up a mound as high as his waist without being disturbed, and birds had built their nest in the long clotted tresses of his tangled hair. This may be thought a mere flight of poetical fancy, but a Mohammeden traveller, whose narrative is quoted by Mr. Mill (British India I. 355) once actually saw a man in India standing motionless with his face turned towards the sun. The same traveller, having occasion to revisit the same spot sixteen years afterwards, found the very same man in the very same attitude. Such men have been known to fix their gaze on the sun's disc till sight has been extinguished. This is paralleled by a particular form of austerity described in Manu VI. 23 where mention is made of *Pañch-tapasi*, a yōgi who, during the three hottest months (April, May and June) sits between four blazing fires placed towards the four quarters, with burning sun over his head to form a fifth. In fact a yogi was actually seen not long ago (Mill's India I. 353) seated between four such fires on a quadrangular stage. He stood on one leg gazing at the sun while these fires were lighted at the four corners. Then placing himself upright on his head, with his feet elevated in the air, he remained for three hours in that position. He then seated himself cross-legged and continued bearing the raging heat of the sun, above his head and the fires which surrounded him till the end of the day, occasionally adding combustibles with his own hands to increase the flames.

"Again in the 'Asiatic monthly Journal' for March 1829, an account is given of a Brahmin who, with no other apparatus than a low stool, a hollow bamboo, and a kind of crutch, poised himself apparently in the Air, about four feet from the ground, for forty minutes. This actually took place before the Governor of Madras. Nor does there appear to be any limit

to the various forms of austerity practised by Hindu devotees. We read of some who acquire the power of remaining under water for a space of time quite incredible ; of others who bury themselves up to the neck in the ground, or even below it leaving only a little hole through which to breathe ; of others who keep their fists clenched for years till the nails grow through the back of their hands ; of others who hold one or both arms aloft till they become immovably fixed in that position and withered to bones ; of others who roll their bodies for thousands of miles to some place of pilgrimage ; of others who sleep on beds of iron spikes. One man was seen at Benares (described in the Asiatic Researches Vol. V. p. 49) who was alleged to have used such a bed for thirty five years....."

"Of course all these mortifications are explicable by their connection with the fancied attainment of extraordinary sanctity and supernatural powers."

The above extract is no doubt full of Christian prejudice, but still it embodies a good deal of facts in support of the theory that *yōgins* gain a mastery over nature ; and the extract carries much weight, as it is from a Christian writer. I may write volumes of facts in support of the theory, but I am unable to do so for want of space. I will however quote the following passage from Professor Banerjee (Dialogues pp. 69, 70) extracted by Sir Monier Williams in connection with his above remarks :—

"The *yōgi* may not see or hear what passes around—he may be insensible to external impressions, but he has intuition of things which his neighbours cannot see or hear. He becomes so busyant, or rather so sublimated by his *yōga*, that gravitation, or as Bāskarāchārya calls it, the attractive power of the Earth, has no influence on him. He can walk and ascend in

the sky as if he were suspended under a balloon; He can by this intuitive process inform himself of the mysteries of astronomy and anatomy, of all things, in fact that may be found in any of the different worlds. He may call to recollection the events of a previous life. He may understand the language of the brute creation. He may obtain an insight into the past and future. He may discern the thoughts of others. He may himself vanish at pleasure, and, if he choose to do so, enter into his neighbour's body and take possession of his living skin."

Although it is possible to have a control over nature and perform various miraculous deeds by the practice of *yōga*, the genuine religious student would not care for them, his object being to soar higher up and get into the region of *Jñāna* by which he may be enabled to loose himself—his I-ness and my-ness—and enjoy the eternal happiness of *Mukti*. *Yoga* is only intended as a stepping stone to *Jñāna*, and the *yōgins* who indulge in the enjoyment of miraculous powers are condemned in strong language by the *Jñānis*. In fact, *yōga* itself is of two kinds—*Karmā yōga* and *Jñāna yōga*—and it is *Karma yōga* that is generally resorted to for miraculous powers, while *Jñāna yōga* is the aim of real religious students.

God-less Yoga.

There are a class of thinkers in whose opinion the concentration of mind on God is not necessary for practising *yōga*, nor is it in any way expedient even to acknowledge the existence of God. They think that the concentration of mind on one's own self, or the mere controlling the *vṛittis* or the waves of the mind, even without fixing it on any particular object, will enable the man to gain mastery over nature and to have a vision of the whole nature. Although the theory is absurd in itself, it

clearly shews how the *yōga* system was popularly accepted at one time even by unbelievers in God. The result of the *yōga* practice was so palpable that it was accepted and acted upon even by godless people, and our modern critics would do well to take a note of this.

It is true that we may be able to derive some benefit by exercising a control over our mind, and by disciplining it to be fixed on a certain object, or to be bereft of its *vr̥ittis*; but it is not possible by such control or discipline to gain any mastery over the whole universe, or to be possessed of any universal illumination without having God, the fountain head of such universe, as the object of our *yōga*. In our present embodied state, we are under the clutches of *Māyā*, the mother of nature, and even when we exert ourselves in the direction of controlling our mind, we do so with the help of that *Māyā* or with some of her various products. We cannot therefore expect to get over that *Māyā*, labouring as we do in the plane of that *Māyā*, and utilizing as we should, one or other of the faculties furnished by that *Māyā*, as an indispensable implement for such labour. If we fix our attention on an object which is beyond the range of *Māyā*, and which is possessed of the potentiality to neutralize the influence of *Māyā*, that object is sure to attract us to itself and release us from the clutches of *Māyā*. It will therefore be very clear that no *yōga* practice without God as the object of meditation will be of any intrinsic value with us. It is not possible, again, to have a clear view of nature in its entirety simply by controlling our mind, unless it be that we are by nature perfect beings whose perfection is affected by what are known as our *chitta vr̥ittis*. This cannot be postulated as a fact, because it is not our mind that is responsible for our imperfection which is wholly due to the

influence of the *āṇava mala* we are dominated by. We see that our mind helps us in discriminating things, and that even when we exercise our mind and other organs of discrimination, our intelligence is clouded by something else—and this something is what we call *āṇava*—and as such, we cannot be said to be able to see nature in her true light by simply centralizing the *vr̥ttis* of our mind. It is true that our power of vision of an object will be greatly enhanced by concentrating our attention on that object; but this will only be to the extent of the normal capacity of our intelligence as clouded by the *āṇava mala*, and not beyond that. It may even be conceded that the normal capacity of our intelligence is handicapped to a certain extent by the *vr̥ttis* of our mind, and that a check over such *vr̥ttis* will enable us to see things in a better light—and this is what the karma yōgins make much of. But this cannot be called the aim of yōga proper—*Jñāna Yōga*—by which and by which alone, we may be enabled to gain full mastery over nature and a perfect vision of things in their true light, by assimilating and identifying ourselves with God in our meditation, and by such assimilation and identification with the fountain head of the Universe, getting profusely infused with the grace of God, so much so that we are released from the shackles of *āṇava*, *māyā* and *karma* that obscure our view, and are enabled to see things in their true light. Mind is only an instrument given to us to illumine our intelligence which is clouded by the *Āṇava mala*, and the illumination that we receive either through that mind or through any of the other organs furnished out of *Māyā* is not by removing the veil of *Āṇava* that obscures our power of vision, but it is along with the bondage of that *Āṇava*, the illumination being the effect of the awakening dose administered to us to stir up our intelligence to a slight extent, when we are

still under the influence of *āṇava*. Our mind cannot therefore exhibit to us any thing like a perfect vision of things, although its defects are mended by yogic practices, so long as the darkness of *āṇava* lies innate in us. Our mind again is a product of *Māyā* which is itself an obstruction to a perfect vision of things, and it is therefore quite impossible to attain any perfection of vision by simply improving our mind. The mind should be lost, the Veil of *āṇava* should be removed—and such a state cannot be attained by a mere *karma yōga*, without the reflection on us of Divine grace, which being an object beyond the planes of *āṇava* and *māyā*, is the only means to recover us from the trammels of those bondages.

The futility of Godless *Yōga* may be pointed out in another way. There are three factors indispensable for any perception viz:—the perceiver, the perception and the object perceived (காண்பான், காட்சி, காட்சிப்பொருள்). The perception is wholly dependent on the perceiver and the object perceived. The perception is always to the extent of the capacity of perception that exists in the perceiver and to the stock of information available in the object perceived. The *Yōga* perception itself depends wholly on the intellectual capacity of the *yōgin* and in the information available on the object perceived. What is the capacity of the *yōgin* in the first place? We see that his capacity, as it is, is entirely governed by his inner and outer organs. (அகக்கரணம் and புறக்கரணம்). If he is bereft of these organs, he has no intelligence at all, or if he has any, such intelligence is of little or no avail without those organs. So that it is very clear that our intelligence is obscured by some object, whatever its name may be, and that the organs given to us only illumine our intelligence to a very limited extent. Limited as they are in their power of illumination, they cannot be expected to give

us any unlimited vision, or to possess any potentiality to remove altogether the veil of ignorance that obstructs our view, however we may try to improve them or to mend their defects. In the absence of any endeavour on our part to remove the original veil that obstructs our intelligence, we cannot be said to be possessed of that capacity as will enable us to have a perfect vision of the *Jagat*, unlimited as its aspects are.

Now again, as regards the part that the object of our perception takes in illumining our intellect there is indeed a good deal in it. The illumination of our intellect lies wholly in the information that we receive through the various objects of our perception, any one of which cannot be expected to afford us all the information that we could gather from the rest. So that, by concentrating our attention on a particular object of nature, as the god-less *Yōgin* would have it, it would not be possible to be fully informed, of the whole universe which consists of objects that are unlimited in number and that are at broad variance with each other. It is only by concentrating our mind on an object that stands as the basic centre of the whole nature, we may be enlightened of the whole universe; and it is therefore the *Siddhānta* doctrine lays it down that the *yōgin* should concentrate his attention on God in order to attain the state of *Jnānam* or perfect wisdom. It has also to be observed in this connection that the concentration of our mind on nothing, or simply centralizing its *vr̥ittis* is an impossibility in itself, because the nature of the mind is such that it requires some object to hang upon, and so long as we are subject to the influence of the mental plane, we must require an object to fix our mind on—and its *vr̥ittis* cannot possibly be curbed unless it is directed to a certain object and made to stand firm therein. This is based on the soul's nature of not being able to exist

without a support (பற்றுக் கோடின்றி நில்லாமை). It must be either attached to the world or to God. If it wants to get rid of its worldly attachment, it must take hold of God, otherwise it will slip back into the world, however much one may try. There would of course be a time when we lose our mind and stand as one glow of intelligence, but this is far beyond the *māyāvic* sphere and not in the material plane, where we make use of our mind in our contemplation or meditation.

The practice of concentration of our mind on any fixed object not only serves us as a medium to convey to us any knowledge that we can possibly get through that object, but also renders ourselves largely influenced by the nature of the object that we meditate upon, and effects a material change in our own condition—and this object, the most important object aimed at by *yōga*, cannot be secured unless we have God as the object of our meditation—such a result being based on the *soul's* அது அதுவாதற் றன்மை—becoming one with whatever it is attached to or associated with.

Worship to departed Souls.

Hindus do not dismiss altogether out of their mind the departed souls as soon as they are removed from this world. The deceased are always remembered by the surviving, and an annual ceremoney called *srāddha* is performed in their name, besides various other special rites and ceremonies, such as *anthieshti*, and the like, that are carried out at appointed times after the death. These rites and ceremonies are not to be construed in the light of worship to such departed souls, but they are performed with a view to help them in their life beyond. Although the fate of every man is decided by his own actions, yet, so long as man is wedded to his kith and kin and maintains a common interest along with them, he is entitled to be

benefitted by their actions to the extent to which his interests on their behalf extended and no further. The *Śrāddhas* are not intended to render any substantial relief to the departed souls, but they do render them some relief, though of a minor character, in proportion to the interests such souls had in common with the surviving persons by reason of consanguinity and the like.

There are people, however, who, in their attachment to those that were near and dear to them, venerate and worship them after their death. The religion only allows such practice in the case of people who had shewn signs of spiritual advancement when they were alive. There is no religious sanction of such worship in the case of other people, and any worship to ordinary people after their death, must necessarily be said to be a superstitious practice. I am not however prepared to attack it as a sacriligious act, as the main object of such worship is to venerate certain good qualities found in deceased persons, and as all good qualities form part and parcel of God's great goodness.

CHAPTER VII. RELIGIOUS CONDUCT.

Morals.

All worship to God must invariably be accompanied by a strict compliance with the moral precepts laid down by religion. In fact, the observance of moral duties forms part and parcel of our worship to God, and according to the Śaivite creed, such observance is supposed to be represented by the flower that we use in performing our *pūjā* (worship) to Śiva. The moral duties imposed on us contribute largely to our mental purity or *Chittha Śuddhi* which is very essential for our communion with God—the main Object of worship. Moral precepts are generally common to almost all the religions of the world, and it is one of the important rules of Hinduism that before one observes the special rules of his religion, he must fully conform himself to the general rules of moral duties. These general rules are laid down at length in the Hindu revelations and are largely elaborated by the *Purāṇas* and *Smṛitis*. There are, besides, several other works exclusively devoted to the expounding of ethics of which there are a great many in Tamil. The immortal work of the Saint *Tiruvalluvar*—the sacred *Kuraḷ*—is a grand treatise on ethics, and it is wholly intended for the guidance of the people in the secular plane. There are several other well-known works such as ஏலாதி, ஆசாரக்கோவை, அறப்பள்ளிசூர்தகம், திரிகடுகம், வெற்றிவேற்கை, நீதிநெறி விளக்கம், இன்னொநாற்பது, இனியவை நாற்பது, நான்மணிக்கடிகை, etc., etc., which expound ethical problems; and the school series of the renowned poetess and saint *Auvaiyār*, viz., ஆத்திருடி, கொன்றைவேந்தன், நல்வழி, நன்னெறி, வாக்குண்டாம், etc., etc., impress

upon the young mind the importance of morals and moral duties—all these ethical rules being wholly founded on the Hindu scriptures.

Paṭṭinattadigaḷ, a Tamil saint of great renown, summarizes these morals very beautifully in one of his songs :—

“கொல்லாமற் கொன்றதைத் தின்னும்ற் கோள்களவு,
கல்லாமற் கைதுவரோ டிணங்காமற் கனவிலும் பொய்
சொல்லாமற் சொற்களைக் கேளாமற் றேகையர் மாயையிலே
செல்லாமற் செல்வந்தருவாய் சிதம்பர தேசிகனே.”

(Oh my Lord preceptor of Chidambaram! grant me thy grace not to kill, not to eat anything that is killed, not to learn guile or theft, not to associate with evil minded people, not to speak a lie even in my dream, not to be enticed by the charm of women).

Yet the Hindu religion is represented as a religion without any morals to teach, or that it is indifferent on that subject! The numerous *Purāṇas*, *Upa-purāṇas* and *Itihāsas* are full of moral codes, and their main object is to teach morals by means of stories and anecdotes. The *Smṛitis* define these morals in a systematic form and prescribe the punishments that await the people who commit the various forms of sins, and the forms of atonement to be adopted in the case of such sins as could be atoned. The *Āgamas* describe very minutely the good deeds men are bound to do and the bad deeds they are bound to shun, and they detail the methods in which the doers of the respective acts will be rewarded in this world, and in the heavens and hells beyond; and how the effects of such deeds will pursue the respective souls in their long course of transmigration, and influence their destiny. I will quote again from the sublime songs of the Tamil sage *Paṭṭinattadigaḷ* and draw the attention of the reader to the brevity in which the various sins are summarized therein :

“சொல்லால்வருங் குற்றஞ், சிந்தனையால் வருந்தோடஞ்,செய்த
பொல்லாத தீவினை, பார்வையிற் பாவங்கள், புண்ணியதூல்
அல்லாத கேள்வியைக் கேட்டிடுந் தீங்குகளாபவுமற்
மெல்லாப்பிழையும் பொறுத்தருள்வாய் கச்சியேகம்பனே.”

[The faults that I commit by my mouth, (words), the evils that accrue by my mind (thoughts), the sins that I commit by my acts (deeds), the mischiefs that I commit by my eyes (sight), the wrongs that I do by listening to other than virtuous sayings (hearing), and all other faults of mine, may Thou forgive, O Lord *Ekāmbara* of *Kāñchi*.]

The life of *Harichandra* would speak volumes in favour of the Hindu idea of truth, and the life of *Rāmā* would speak in unmistakable terms of what a Hindu thinks of his duty to his parents.

Merits and demerits and their respective rewards are again fully detailed in the Tamil Sacred Books such as சிவதருமோத்தரம், திருமந்திரம், காகிதாண்டம், சூதசங்கிதை, வாபுசங்கிதை, காருடபுராணம், etc., etc., where they may be found arranged in a systematic order and treated with great care and precision. *Śiva Darmottaram* a Tamil translation of one of the *Śaiva Āgamas*, deals with the question of merits in the following manner in one of the quartrains of the chapter devoted to that subject :

அயிங்விதை, பொறையே, மெய்மையறைதலே, அரிமநானே
உயர்ந்த வாதரவே, உள்ள மொடிக்கலே, கொடிக்கைதானே,
வியந்த வர்ச்சனையே, மெய்யுன் வெறுத்துறுதவமே, என்று
நயந்த பாவனையே என்னத் தசமிவை நன்றுநாளும்.

[1. Feeling mercy, 2. Exercising patience, 3. Speaking truth, 4. Fearing evils, 5. Loving good deeds, 6. Self-control, 7. Giving alms, 8. Praying to God, 9. Devotion to God, 10. Communion with God—these ten are meritorious deeds].

The meritorious or good deeds are called “*Puṇṇyam*”, while the bad deeds or demerits are called “*Pāpam*”. I know of no

appropriate terms in English expressing these two ideas, and yet the Hindus who distinguish between the two even in their ordinary home life and expound them in their sacred books at great length are said to have no idea of morals !

In dealing with the sinful acts or "Pāpam", the Hindu *Sāstras* go into them very minutely and submit them to various classifications. In the first place they divide them into:—(1) தூலம்—Gross, (2) சூக்குமம்—Subtle, (3) சூக்குமதரம்—Subtlest.

They again classify the sins into:—(1) மனத்தாற்செய்யப்படுவன—Sins of thought, (2) வாக்காற்செய்யப்படுவன—Sins of word, (3) காயத்தாற்செய்யப்படுவன—Sins of deed.

Another classification is:—(1) மகாபாதகம்—Heinous Sins, (2) அதிபாதகம்—Serious sins, (3) உபபாதகம்—Subordinate sins, (4) துல்லியபாதகம்—Light sins; and a still further classification is made in regard to the different phases of our mental propensity in doing evil deeds: (1) காமம்—Lust, (2) குரோதம்—Anger, (3) மதம்—Pride, (4) லோபம்—Parsimony, (5) மோகம்—Avarice, (6) மாச்சரியம்—Envy.

The main sins, however, are put forward in plain language as: (1) கொலை—Killing, (2) களவு—Stealing, (3) கள்—Use of intoxicants, (4) காமம்—Indulging in lusts, (5) குருநிந்தை—Despising Preceptors.

It would be found that these five forms of sins are very comprehensive in their meanings: uttering falsehood could be covered by களவு, disrespect to parents by குருநிந்தை etc., etc.

It would no doubt take one by surprise that in the face of such clear and elaborate elucidation of morals by the Hindu religion, that religion is represented to be indifferent to moral duties.

It would be well in this connection to enter into the question of morals rather analytically, and ask ourselves the question why morals should be imposed as a duty. If the subject is in-

quired into with the modern spirit of investigation by putting the question "why?" at every point, we could find that the thread of reasoning is at last traced to the main principle that every moral is productive of some good, and that is the reason why we are bound to observe the rules of morality.

If we proceed in our investigation, and ask ourselves the questions "why should these duties be considered good?" and "why should we do things good?" there can be but one conclusion, viz., that they are good because God likes them—He being good in His nature—and because we must, as far as we can, imitate His nature for the reflection of His grace on us, that reflection being only possible when we assume a form similar to the one from which that grace proceeds. We could find here a good deal of the *Śaiva-Siddhānta* Philosophy of becoming one like God, and one with God. Then again all beings exist in Him and any act which is done towards a fellow creature is an act done towards Him.

If the subject is investigated more closely, it will be found that all moral precepts are symbolical of one or the other of the Divine forms or attributes. Take for instance truth. Truth is enjoined on us as a moral duty to remind us of the form of God. God is truth—*sat*—and the only true Being. Take again justice. We are enjoined to do justice, because God is just and His form is one of pure justice. Take again sympathy towards fellow creatures. God is merciful, and His form is one of pure mercy and love, and this is why we have been enjoined to cultivate this sympathy and love towards our fellow beings. If we go on investigating into these morals minutely, I think we could clearly find that they exhibit to us the form of God and that we are enjoined to observe them strictly in order to become like God, and prepare ourselves for the reflection of His Grace on us.

Rites and Ceremonies.

It is a fact admitted by all that the craving of man is always towards worldly pleasures, and a thought of the next world occurs to him but rarely. The Hindu religion, therefore enters into these worldly pleasures and regulates them in such a manner as to give them a religious sanction, with the object of dragging man gradually on to its side, and creating in him an inclination to seek after truth. It is an important feature of Hinduism that in every walk of life—whether social, political, industrial, agricultural, or commercial—or in fact, in the several business transactions of man, so long as he is in this world, there is some connection or other with religion, and this connection may appear to a stranger as very trivial in its effect; but when taken as a whole, the object will be quite apparent, and there could be no doubt but that the connection contributes largely to the winning of the heart of man, little by little, to the side of religion, in a manner agreeable to him, more or less on the lines of the *Kindergarten* system of education.

The generality of men are in a very low plane of spiritual advancement; and they cannot be expected to control their mind, and direct their mental faculties in their devotion to God. It is therefore very necessary that their attention to religion must be attracted by means suited to them, and such means, should necessarily be of a physical character such as rites and ceremonies. These rites and ceremonies are said to form the first two steps (*Charyā* and *Kriyā*) in the ladder of salvation, while the steps higher up (*Yogam* and *Jñānam*) are for those who have already been benefitted by the first two steps. These rites and ceremonies, if carefully investigated into, will be found to be emblematical of various philosophical truths and psychic disciplines that may be of great use in the latter stages of *Yogam* and *Jñānam*, and they

therefore serve not only as a means to attract man to the side of religion, but at the same time to impart a preliminary instruction on the higher stages.

As an encouragement to observe and practise these rites and ceremonies, man is offered special grace as a reward for such observance and practice, and in order to further enable him to secure the grace of God from his own level, this grace of God or the Divine Sakti, as we may call it, is implanted in several material objects such as:—*Mūrti* (Divine form), *Stalam* (Divine abode), *Tīrtam* (Divine water), *Guru* (Priest), *Līngam* (Holy image), *Saṅgamam* (Devotees), *Vibhūti* (Sacred ashes), *Rudrākṣham* (Holy beads) etc., and even in certain times and events, which are consequently considered sacred, and which are fully described in the *Śāstras*, with the reason why they should be considered so sacred. People who avail themselves of the sanctity of these objects and who seek the grace of God through these means are so much encouraged by the realization of their desires and the removal of their sins that they are ultimately led in the path of seeking the eternal beauty which is the final goal of religion.

We may even say that it is to facilitate the seeking of the divine grace by man in his present primitive state, that God assumed a form and shape and occupies a home and abode, just as any of us, and opens so many ways suited to the different stages of human advancement. It must, however, be understood, that in availing ourselves of any of these various methods of seeking Divine grace, we must do so with genuine faith without which our formal observance of these rites and ceremonies will not be of much avail.

But in dwelling on the efficacy of these rites and ceremonies, we know that reference has been made in some Purāṇas to

instances where such rites and ceremonies produced their salutary results, even when they were performed unawares: and this requires some explanation. The act being a meritorious one in itself, the merit connected with it should accrue to the person who does it whether it is done consciously, or unconsciously, just in the same manner as a medicine will have its own effect whether it is taken by a person with or without his knowledge. But in the case of an unconscious act, it is true that there is no seeking or faith on the part of the doer, but these factors should be traced in the previous *Karmas* of the persons benefited. We must understand that there is a close connection between our body and mind, and any action in the physical plane must naturally affect our mental plane, and through that plane the psychic plane or soul. The Hindu *Śāstras* could be found to classify our acts of merits and demerits into what are known as conscious acts (புத்திபூர்வம்) and unconscious acts (அபுத்திபூர்வம்).

If we observe the nature and propensity of man in general, we could see that rites and ceremonies are indispensable to him in his present state of advancement to cultivate anything like a religious taste. Is it possible to conceive that the merciful God gave us a free will and left us alone to work out our salvation without providing sufficient suitable means that will lead us to the path of salvation, although it was well known to Him that without some such means, we will not be able to be benefitted by our free will alone? It may be said that if we will only govern our free will with the light of our conscience, we could be easily saved. The question is whether we are actually so able in our present state of depravity. Let the answer be found in our experience, instead of indulging in theories. There is no one who does not wish to be saved. Still how many of us try to be saved by governing our free will? I may admit that salvation is possible with

the scanty means placed at our disposal, but the question is whether it is probable in the majority of the cases. An answer may be safely given by the result of our experience.

We have heard of an argument from certain quarters that heaven is a reward for actual merits, and these merits consist in overcoming our evil tendencies with the means placed at our disposal. This can only be said of one who is indifferent of our welfare, but not of God who is all-merciful and ever ready to do anything for our salvation. A schoolmaster who is anxious to have all his students pass an examination will not confine himself to the giving of the usual lessons and leave the rest to the merits of the boys. He will, and he must, adopt such measures as are suited to the capacities of the different boys and help them as far as possible to pass the examination. Are we to understand that God will not do this, but will leave the souls to the mercy of their free will?

Vegetarianism.

Vegetarianism is one of the essential dogmas of Hinduism, and it has for its basis the doctrine propounded elsewhere that all living beings have souls. To kill or torture a being that has a soul is not only cruel and inhuman, but a direct violation of the ordination of God. We have no right to take the life of a fellow being which has as much right to live in this world as any of us. Benevolence to fellow beings is one of the cardinal doctrines of Hinduism, and that religion may therefore be found to preach a crusade against taking animal life. The sin is rendered more heinous when it is committed in self-interest, *i.e.*, with the object of feeding fat on the flesh of the animals slaughtered.

Vegetables themselves have, of course, souls according to the Hindu doctrine, but their sense of feeling being far inferior to that of animals, it cannot be said that the former are subjected to any

appreciable suffering by killing them ; nor can it be said that they are as much profited by living in this world as the latter. It must again be observed that a vegetarian need not necessarily take away the life of a vegetable being—what is required for his food being only a portion of it, which could be easily detached without taking away the life of the object. The gravity of the sin may be found to be still reduced, when we consider the feasibility of propagating vegetable lives, while in the case of animal lives it is quite the reverse. It cannot, however, be denied that the taking away of the life of a vegetable being, or even the severing of certain portions of it without depriving it of its life, is a sin in itself, although of a very minor degree. This is because our *Karma* is such, that even for diving a life in this wretched world we are obliged to commit a sin, one way or the other. It is a necessary evil ; but the necessity could be no excuse for choosing the worst of it, while there is ample opportunity to choose the least of it ; and if a choice is made of the least of it, the necessity or indispensability of doing the evil will go a long way in mitigating the punishment decreed for it. In fact the religion provides ample means in our daily life for the expiation of the sins committed in taking away vegetable lives or in causing pain to vegetable beings—while no such expiation is provided for the taking away of animal life, evidently because it cannot be considered a necessity for maintaining our body, such maintenance being amply provided for in the vegetable kingdom.

It has been put forward as an argument in favour of the necessity of killing animals that there are regions where vegetables cannot grow, and cannot therefore be available for human consumption. I do not consider this argument sufficiently strong. Even admitting for the sake of argument that there are regions where vegetables cannot grow at all, they can very well be

imported into such regions from the tropics where they grow in abundance, or the human beings in such regions could do well to migrate to places where they can find a suitable food supply instead of sticking to places where they would be compelled to kill their fellow beings for the purpose of keeping their body and soul together.

Another argument put forward in favour of flesh eating is that nature has intended man to live on flesh. I need not trouble myself to refute this theory; as it has been fully exploded by modern scientific investigations.

A third argument set up in support of animal food is that it is more nutritious and healthier than vegetable food, and that it will be highly detrimental to the physical development of man to deny him animal food. This is another hallucination under which meat-eaters generally suffer. Modern science has made it clear that vegetable diet is immensely superior to meat, both as regards health and nutrition, and I will refer the readers to the various books and booklets published by the vegetarian societies of America and England on the subject, demonstrating by facts and figures the comparative advantages of the one over the other. The following passages from the work of an eminent writer on the subject (*Human Physiology* by J. L. Nicholas M. D.) will, I believe, bear reproduction:—

“The natural food of man is abundantly furnished in the vegetable kingdom. Three fourths of the human race live on grains, fruits, bulbs, tubers, and the leaves and stalks of plants. Wheat, rice, Indian corn, rye, oats, barley, sago, tapioca, arrow-root, potatoes, yams, onions, cabbages, breadfruit, plantains, are the great staples of food of man. Add to these grapes, apples, pears, peaches, plums, limes, melons, berries &c., and we have a variety of the most healthful and delicious articles of

food abundant for all our needs. To these provisions of a bountiful nature, we have added the milk of cows, goats, camels, sheep and in some cases of mares and asses with butter and cheese.

"Can we naturally go further? Ought we to deprive any animal of life that we may feed fat upon its body.?..... When we come to the warm red-blooded animals, the birds and beasts which seem to be more nearly related to us, we may well doubt of our right to deprive them of life and eat their flesh for food. I have already expressed the opinion that man is naturally a fruit eating animal and that he finds his most natural and most healthful food in the vegetable kingdom, that though the use of fish and flesh may be justifiable as a necessity (sic) it is not the original or best food of man, and that the most perfect health and therefore the highest use and enjoyment of life may be obtained on a purely vegetable diet; and when a mixed diet is used I can have no doubt that the smaller the quantity of flesh and the larger the proportion of fruit and vegetable substances, the better will be the health of the great majority of persons."

"The food should be pure, free from all deceased and deceasing matters. We can never be sure of the healthfulness of the animal whose flesh we are eating; with grains and fruits we have a much greater security. And all flesh must contain waste matter not yet cast out"

It is contended by a certain section of the non-Hindu community that the prohibition of animal food is only a later introduction into the religion of the Hindus, while in the earlier books of that religion, such as the Vedas, animal food may be found to have been fully sanctioned. This, I must say, is a sad mistake,—and one of the many evils that result by the reading and interpretation of the religious literature of one nation, by another nation entirely

strange and foreign to it, without some one to guide them. The *Vedic* literature may be found to have been largely supplemented by several subsequent *Śāstras* such as *Smṛitis*, *Purāṇas*, *Itihāsas*, etc., and these supplementary *Śāstras* may be found to speak in unmistakable terms of the prohibition of animal food by the Hindu religion. These supplementary *Śāstras* were compiled by authors who were best competent to do the work and who were fully aware of the correct sense and import of the original *Vedic* literature, and whose works have been tacitly admitted by all the adherents of the religion as works fully consistent with the *Vedic* revelations. There is therefore no reason to suspect that the prohibition of animal food is only a later introduction or in any way opposed to the sense of the *Vedic* doctrine. Passages could be found in the *Vedas* themselves in support of the doctrine, though not in a direct form. As an instance, the *Śaṭapātha Brahmana* of the *Rig Veda* may be found to describe how animals revenge in a future state of life injuries and death inflicted on them by man in this life; and there are several other passages in the *Mantra* and *Upniṣat* portions of the *Vedas* that strongly support the theory. If the prohibition of taking animal life is opposed to the sense of the *Vedas*, surely the theory could not have been accepted alike by the different schools of the Hindu Philosophy and religion, which are at variance with each other on several other important points. It is true that animal food or rather animal sacrifice is provided for in the *Vedas*, but this does not go to show that meat is sanctioned by the *Vedas* as an ordinary diet.

Medical works may be found to prescribe certain forms of poisons and certain forms of diet for certain ailments and this will not go to show that such poisons and diets were articles of ordinary food with the people of the time at which those medical works were

written. The object for which animal food, or more correctly, animal sacrifice, was sanctioned by the *Vedas* must first be ascertained before passing an opinion on the sanction so given. *Vedas* cannot be treated in the light of a history or of an account of the general life of the ancient Āryans of India. They can only be said to represent the religious life of the people of the ancient *Āryavārtha*, and that too, in a certain direction—in the performance of *Yajñas* in order to secure secular advancements. It is a serious mistake to give this portion of the *Vedic* literature a general character, dismissing altogether from consideration the particular object for which such portions were intended. Killing of animals and the eating of their flesh are only provided in the *Vedas* for sacrificial purposes, and it would be worth while to have a careful perusal of those passages and form a correct idea of the nature and necessity of these sacrifices and of the rites and ceremonies performed thereat. The *Vedic Mantras* and rites are considered so effectual in themselves, that the souls of the animals offered in sacrifice are purified and despatched at once to some form of heaven or other, while the performers of the sacrifice are given some form of grace or other in a secular plane. This grace is compared to the fee a tutor gets in return for the instruction that he imparts to his pupil; as the instruction imparted by the teacher is much more valuable than the fee he gets, so, in the case of sacrifices, the animals offered are far more profited than the parties who perform the sacrifice, and the killing of animals in these cases is therefore justified and sanctioned. It is not for me to propound here the principles on which animal sacrifice is based, but I will only say that the sanction given in the *Vedas* to kill animals for sacrificial purposes, and that too not applicable to this *Kaliyuga*, cannot be taken at all for a sanction to the eating of meat as a general article of food.

It must be observed in this connection that these are but side issues which will in no way affect the main question. The main question remains a bold fact that killing and eating of animals is a sinful act. This fact is admitted on all sides, as otherwise our societies to prevent cruelty to animals, and our sermons and lectures on humanity etc., will all be a meaningless farce. The Hindu religion therefore very properly protests against this sinful act.

SECOND PART.

CHAPTER VIII. TRANSMIGRATION.

The antiquity of the theory and its general aspects.

The doctrine of Transmigration is neither a new theory, nor is it peculiar to India alone. History tells us that the belief in the doctrine was shared by the ancient Egyptians, Americans, Jews and some of the Catholic Fathers themselves; and in the philosophic world we see that the Gnostics and that Neo-Platonists, the Germans and Italians were earnest advocates of the theory. Traces of a belief in the doctrine may be found in the New Testament itself. But the belief seems to have faded out of the European mind during the dark ages, and to-day it is being viewed in the light of a novel or strange doctrine. I would, however, submit that even in modern times, the doctrine seems to have been instinctively accepted by some of the best known thinkers and poets of the West as the following quotations will clearly shew:—

Goethe:—

“The soul of man is like the water.
From Heaven it cometh, to Heaven it mounteth.
And thence at once it must back to Earth,
For ever changing.”

Wordsworth:—

“Our birth is but a sleep and forgetting.
The soul that riseth with us our life's star
Hath had elsewhere its sifting
And cometh from afar.”

Dryden :—

“Souls cannot die : They leave a former home
And in new bodies dwell and from them roam.”

Longfellow :—

“Mysterious change
From birth to death, from death to birth
From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth.”

Tennyson :—

“Well were it not a pleasant thing
To fall asleep with all one's friends
So pass with all our social ties
To silence from the path of men :
And every hundred years to rise
And learn the world and sleep again.”

The general trend, however, of modern ideas in the West is against the doctrine, and what is worse, it is now looked down as a gross superstition, if not as the outcome of some frenzied mind.

The doctrine of transmigration may appear strange to the Western mind ; but this is no reason that it should be looked down as a wild imagination. The improbability of a doctrine of the kind being suggested by an uncultured mind renders it pretty clear that it should have been the result of an intelligent philosophic inquiry at some time or other, if not of a divine inspiration communicated through a *Sādu*. Whatever it may be, I will proceed.

We are all agreed on the existence of a God, and we are therefore forced into the inevitable conclusion that every phenomenon in the universe is the result of the will of Providence, directly or indirectly. I will for the present confine myself to the phenomenon of human creation and make some inquiry about it. Though according to the tenets of certain religions we cannot question the why or the wherefore of this creation, we find from the

duty imposed on man that the chief object of his sojourn in this world is to secure eternal happiness in the presence of the great God. Let us pause for a moment and consider the nature of man and the exalted position which he has been enjoined to secure. There is indeed an immense gulf between the two, and it is quite apparent that the chances given to the former to secure the latter are very poor. If it is the will of Providence that man should secure heaven, and that he should do so by his personal endeavours, it would be evident that in many cases, if not in all, man is not capable of securing this end in this his one life—and that he should therefore be given some more chances to run the race, and this would mean that he should be called to life more than once; and this is what we call Transmigration. We therefore clearly see that, apart from the consideration of other questions, the propriety of the Transmigration theory could well be maintained when we consider the object for which man has been placed in this world and his natural inability to secure that object at one stroke. Even common mortals on earth give their fellow creatures not less than three chances to make a trial, and it is absurd to think that the all merciful God has given us but one chance to secure an object which is extremely difficult to obtain and which is far beyond our ordinary reach.

Reasons in support of Transmigration.

Human life abounds with many puzzling problems which cannot possibly be solved in any other way than by introducing the doctrine of Transmigration. Our modern scientists may try how hard soever they may, to explain these mysteries, but they are obliged to stop at a certain stage beyond which they are unable to proceed. Their researches being confined to the material plane, any attempt on their part at a solution of these problems cannot be expected to produce any satisfactory result;

and such a result can only be arrived at by introducing the theory of Transmigration.

We are all believers in the existence of God who, we further believe, is just, merciful and omnipotent. How are we then to account for the varied differences which we abundantly see in the creation of the great God? Take for instance the creation of man. Men differ from one another not only in their intellectual and mental faculties but also in their physical features and the conditions in which they are placed.

I. INTELLECTUAL DIFFERENCE.

The intellectual capacity of man is not of the same standard all over the world and there is a marked difference in this respect at all times and in all places. We see sages and wise men, we see fools and dunces, and we see men of mediocre intellect. We see people who toil hard to expand their intellectual possession but with no tangible result. There are others who, with but an ordinary exertion on their part, turn out intellectual giants and become objects of public admiration. This is certainly due to the intellectual power each man is endowed with, and this requires a satisfactory explanation in justification of divine justice. Intellectual endowments contribute not a little to the enjoyment of man both in this world and in the one expected; and we see no reason why there should be such a difference in the intellectual power of men, unless it be that such difference is due to their own action in a previous state of existence.

The law of heredity cannot afford a satisfactory explanation of this difference, since we find instances where dunces are born to highly intelligent men and *vice versa*. And even supposing that we could find an explanation of the difference in the law of heredity, this will in no way justify the action of God who is responsible for our heredity itself.

2. TEMPERAMENTAL DIFFERENCE.

We see again people who are bent upon doing evil to others and who will not scruple to do anything that may constitute a sin. There are others who will not swerve from the path of rectitude and with whom sin is always an object of dread. How can this be accounted for? It is true that man is given a free will; and it is equally true that along with this free will he is given a mind inclined either towards good or towards evil, or in other words, a weak mind that may be allured by the temptations of the world, or a strong mind that could make a bold stand before them. It is this mind that invariably guides one's will, and I cannot see why the just and merciful God gave one man a weak mind which I should say is a passport to hell, and a strong mind to another?

3. MENTAL DIFFERENCE.

Now again there are people who suffer from unsound mind while others have no defect whatever in their mental faculties. The state of one's mind goes a long way to decide his destiny both in this world and in the next, and I cannot see how the destiny of the people with an unsound mind is to be decided, particularly in the next world. We have seen their destiny in this world, and their pitiable state demands a satisfactory explanation.

4. PHYSICAL DIFFERENCE.

We see again people who suffer from various physical defects. We see some blind, some deaf, some lame, some subject to several of these defects combined together, while others enjoy the blessing of physical perfection. There are again people who, much oftener than others, are subject to various ailments and are objects of public sympathy and pity, while the rest enjoy a more or less covetable healthy life. Surely there must be some substantial reason for these manifold differences which cannot be

explained by physical causes, since these causes themselves owe their existence to the great God.

5. SOCIAL DIFFERENCE.

When we look at the positions in which men are placed, we see the difference greater still. We see one a king, another a subject ; one a master, another a servant ; one a landlord, another a tenant ; one a priest, another a disciple ; one rich, another poor ; one living in a mansion, another in a hut ; one clad in rich apparel, another in rags ; one driving a pair, another crawling in the street. Are these differences intended simply for the sake of curiosity ?

6. DIFFERENCE IN BIRTH RIGHT.

We see again one being born in a royal family becomes entitled to hold the sceptre one day ; another being born the son of a peasant is doomed to toil hard in the open sun to earn his bread. We see one being born the son of a drunkard inherits his father's vicious habits, and is fated to work out his own ruin ; another, inheriting the habits of his virtuous father, is sure to be a blessing to the community to which he belongs. We see one being born the son of an atheist is forced by natural causes to be an atheist himself, while another being born the son of a Christian or a Hindu believes in the existence of the great Creator and enjoys the benefits of such belief. These differences, so widely at variance with one another, cannot be without some sound reason, and what this reason is what we all should endeavour to know. It cannot be that these differences exist without the knowledge of the great God, or that God, our eternal Benefactor and Protector, is indifferent about them.

7. DIFFERENCE IN TIMES.

Take again the different periods in which men are posted. The lot of some are cast into a time when there is either a social or a political revolution, during which the life and property of

man can in no way be considered safe, when there is little or no civilization and the consequent comforts of human life, when there is a general pestilence or famine, or when there is a tyrannical rule under which the people are oppressed. Others have the good fortune of enjoying the benefits of an excellent government, of peaceful and harmonious surroundings, of a civilization that renders human life an actual blessing; of a time of health and plenty, free from epidemics and famine. These are not the seekings of men whose lot are cast into these periods; and could we say that the divine Providence who called to life different people at these different periods did so without some valid reasons?

• • 8. DIFFERENCE IN CLIMES.

The same argument may hold good in respect of the nativity of the various peoples. Some are cast in places where the climatic influences, the nature of the soil, the form of government, the standard of civilization, the social habits of the people—all contribute to the happiness of man, while there are others whose case is quite the reverse. People are in no way responsible for their birth places, and the great God who put them into their respective countries would have done so only as a return for their actions in a previous state of life.

• • 9. DIFFERENCE IN AGE.

Now again, look at the ages of men—some die before they are born; some live but a few minutes after their birth; some a few days; some a few weeks; some a few months; some a few years; while others live to a good ripe old age. What is the secret of all this? Surely this is a state of things into which every sensible man must make it a point to inquire.

• • 10. ACCIDENTS.

Some meet with accidents over which they have no control and which at times prove fatal to them. Some are inflicted with

frequent family calamities which depress them, and not unfrequently lead them to an early grave; while there are others who enjoy a more or less perfect immunity from such accidents and troubles. Are these again without a sufficient reason?

11. RACIAL DIFFERENCES.

There is again the racial difference. Can we say that the comforts and pleasures of an Englishman and a Negro, or those of an Aryan and a Veda, of those of an American and a Kaffir are all of the same standard? If not, what is the reason of such difference? Surely we are not responsible for our birth into a certain race in preference to another; and as this reason cannot be found outside our own merits, the conclusion is inevitable that we had a previous existence.

12. SEXUAL DIFFERENCES.

Can we say again that the pleasure and pain which the two sexes—male and female—experience are of the same magnitude, either in quality or in quantity? The independence and freedom which the males enjoy, the physical strength, vigour and health which nature has endowed them with, cannot be compared to the dependence and subjection of the females and their physical weakness and liability to sickness, especially in connection with their pregnancy and confinement. Can we say that the great Creator was partial towards the males?

13. PRODIGIES.

We have heard of prodigies such as a child being able to read and write before the horn-book was put into its hands and working sums and problems too hard for its age, and even narrating events that took place long before its birth. This clearly shows that the child had a previous training which developed its intellectual capacities, and that the prodigious occurrence is the result of such a development.

14. THE EXISTENCE OF SOULS IMPLIES TRANSMIGRATION.

The theory of Transmigration is again fully borne out by the eternity of the soul, this eternity being not only an eternity forward, but an eternity backward as well. If, the existence of souls during the eternity backward is admitted, it would clearly follow that they were experiencing a series of previous states of life, as otherwise the necessity of bringing them to life only just now may very rightly be questioned. If, however, it is argued that the souls had no eternity backward but have been created just now for the first time, we will be confronted with various objections. In the first place what necessity was there for the great God to create us, and to plunge us into the miseries of this wretched world, and again to torture us in eternal hell? This is undoubtedly a serious question that will be asked by any sane being; and what is the reply that can possibly be vouchsafed to this very pertinent question? It is not enough to say that such a question should not be asked by us; for so long as there is sense in us, we have every right to ask this question. Suppose we have been summoned by a higher authority to appear at a certain place, have we not the right to ask him the reason why we have been so summoned? A knowledge of this reason is highly essential to regulate our duty and to secure the object for which we have been called. Rational beings as we are, it is our duty to satisfy our faculty of reasoning, and we are not expected to believe in any theory without sufficient proof of its truth or correctness, especially so, when our common sense tells us that that theory is not working of our belief. Why should God create us is an all important question, and if the question is properly investigated, we will not fail to see that God would not have created us, if at all He created us, for the sake of His own benefit, or even for that of others. If He is said to have called us into existence in our

own interests; it would be absurd on the very face of it as the story of a bachelor mourning for his wife. The theory of creation of souls will not therefore stand for a moment, and their existence from eternity must hence be admitted and accepted. If they did exist prior to our present life, it would clearly follow that they should have been submitted to previous states of life.

15. OUR EMBODIMENT IMPLIES TRANSMIGRATION.

Take again our body—our body of flesh and bones. This body is a fruitful source of great many evils which we are powerless to get over. Hunger and thirst, illness and lust are evils inherent in us, due certainly to the nature of our body, and these are the main sources of the sins that are being daily committed by us. Why should the great God give us such a body and place us open to so many temptations? We must certainly have done something to merit such a body, or the standard of our advancement must be such that we are considered unfit to have a better coating. In either case, a previous existence is clearly implied and this very strongly supports the theory of Transmigration.

I will not multiply the reasons in support of this theory any further, but I feel sure that the reasons stated above will clearly convince any unprejudiced mind that the varied differences which we see in the human creation, and which can in no way be attributed to human influence, are the result of the will of Providence, and this will being far above any suspicion of partiality or indifference, it would clearly follow that these differences were decreed by the great God in return for the actions of the respective souls in a previous existence; and that the actions in our present existence will be rewarded in the same way in our next. And when this conclusion is admitted, the theory of Transmigration may be said to have been well established.

CHAPTER IX.

TRANSMIGRATION, (*Continued*).

Alleged Reconciliations refuted.

Various attempts have been made at reconciling the inequalities which we find in this world with Divine justice ; but such reconciliations, if properly tested, will not, I am sure, hold good for a single moment.

I. DIFFERENCES APPARENT BUT NOT REAL.

As a first attempt, it has been put forward, that the inequality among human beings is only a seeming difference, while in fact there is no difference in the aggregate—the net result in every case, after blancing pleasure against pain, being more or less the same. This, I should say, is neither true nor correct. The human experience of pleasure and pain is so diverse and varied in this benighted world that we may classify the people of the different grades of experience into three main heads :—(1) People who experience more of pleasure than of pain. (2) People who experience more of pain than of pleasure. (3) People who experience pleasure and pain equally. How can we then say that the net result of human experience is the same all over ? We could instance the lives of several of our own friends and kinsmen whose whole career in this world was one of continuous misery and troubles, while there are others whose lives may be said to have been one of unmixed happiness, perhaps with a few unimportant breaks.

Can we compare the life of a happy prince—his pleasures minus his pains—to that of a beggar in rags, crawling from door to door, for a morsel of food ? Can we compare the life of

a sturdy robust man in the best of health to that of a miserable wretch who suffers from an incurable malady that renders his life an actual burden to him? Can we compare the lives of men who enjoy perfection in their physical features to those of the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame and the cripple? Can it be said with any amount of accuracy that the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the healthy and the sick, the foolish and the wise, the master and the slave, the king and the subject, all enjoy the same amount or the same proportion of pleasure and pain? Can we say that a centenarian and a child that lives but a few minutes, both enjoy equal amount of pleasure and pain? Can we, in the words of one of our poets, compare the life of a palanquin bearer to that of the inmate of the palanquin?

The answer is an emphatic "No". How can we then say that in the experience of men, pleasure and pain are all over the world of the same ratio or of the same results? While this cannot be admitted, is it not absurd to say that there is no difference in the aggregate experience of each human being?

Now let us for the sake of argument grant that it is so. Can such an arrangement be justified? Figures of the same ratio or of the same difference can be calculated *ad infinitum* arithmetically. Can it be said that experiences to the extent of all these figures are all equal in the aggregate? Can we hold with any amount of accuracy that there is no difference between the experience of a man who has tenfold of pleasure and one of pain and that of another who has one hundredfold of pleasure and ten of pain? Or that a man whose pleasure and pain are ten to nine and another whose experiences are one hundred to ninety nine enjoy the world equally? Can a man who has a thousand rupees income and a hundred of

debt, and another who has a hundred rupees income and ten of debt be said to have the same experience either in quality or in quantity? Surely not. There is a vast difference between the lives of the people of these different grades, and such a difference must necessarily needs a satisfactory explanation; and we can not say that these differences were introduced by the great God for the sake of His amusement or without any reason.

.2. DIFFERENCES ARE EQUALIZED.

It is again argued that every advantage has its own disadvantage and that every disadvantage has its own advantage; and there is not therefore much difference between advantages and disadvantages. It is true that advantages and disadvantages are mixed up, but this will not go to show that there is no difference between them. An advantage and its attendant disadvantage are taken as a whole and considered as an advantage; and so is a disadvantage with its attendant advantage. It is therefore idle to say that there is no difference between what we call an advantage and a disadvantage. If this is actually so, people would not, and could not, care for advantages and they need not exert themselves to keep out of or get over disadvantages. A king may be said to have more cares than an ordinary beggar in the street, but when such cares are balanced against the pleasures of a palace, and when it is considered that his cares themselves are in a way an indirect or an ultimate source of pleasure to the king, the result cannot be said at all to be equal to that of an ordinary beggar's life. We find again much difference between the lives of the different kings themselves. We find the life of one king a happy episode in the annals of history, while that of another is a long list of miserable drudgery; and this difference needs further explanation.

It should also be borne in mind that there are certain pleasures for the purpose of enjoying which we have to endure a certain amount of pain. This should not be treated as pain in the strict sense of the word, as this is only a preliminary step to the enjoyment of the ensuing pleasure.

3. DEFECTS HELP RELIGIOUS DEVOTION.

It is further argued that the poor and the deformed have more chances to think of God and of thus securing heavenly bliss. Is this in the first place true? Let us not indulge in theories. Let us look at the practical side of the question. Can we say that the blind and the dumb, the deaf and the cripple, the poor and the sick, are more religious than the others? Suppose we take the statistics of the religious people in the world. Can we find among them more of the poor and the deformed than of the rich and the healthy? Decidedly not. It is therefore simply idle to invent such imaginary justifications.

Let us, for the sake of argument grant that it is so. Is this justifiable? If in a temporary state of existence, as in this transitory world, one is given a few comforts and another is given in lieu thereof better chances of securing eternal happiness, can we say that this is an impartial and equitable arrangement?

4. SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION OF DIFFERENCES.

The differences that we see in this world are explained on a scientific basis and are attributed to our surroundings and our relation to our fellow creatures. The law of heredity is much availed of in this explanation and it is contended that, placed as we are in the midst of certain causes, we cannot escape the inevitable results. Surely I do not deny the theory of cause and effect, but the question I ask is why should we be placed under such conditions or causes. The order of nature is

nothing but the plan designed by God to work the universe, and if that plan is found to cause a variety of inequality and incongruity among the creatures of God, surely the designer and not the design is to be held responsible for such a state of things.

5. THE POOR ARE HAPPIER THAN THE RICH.

The poor, it is again argued, are very happy, while the rich experience the reverse. A king is supposed to have more cares than an ordinary subject whose life is therefore preferred to that of a king. I will only ask whether this argument is put forward with any amount of seriousness. I greatly doubt it, and I should characterise this as a fancy theory introduced to meet an argument that is irresistible in itself. If there is anything like seriousness in this argument, surely the arguers at least should prefer to be poor rather than exerting themselves to be rich, and they should preach a crusade against the acceptance of the crown by members of the royal family, and should lecture on the advantages of remaining a subject. Will any one dare do this? Surely not, unless it be that he is prepared to be marked down as mad.

It is true that the rich and those in authority have a good deal of worry and trouble, but along with these troubles they have advantages that will greatly outweigh those troubles; and this is the secret why people prefer to be rich and to be in power, though they are perfectly aware of the troubles that will be associated with the positions they aspire to.

6. DIFFERENCE IS OUR OWN SEEKING.

It is also urged that the differences in the circumstances of men are due to their own individual exertions and not to any superhuman cause. Let me observe in the first place that this contention cannot be applied to cases where people are found in affluent circumstances by their birth right, and to other

differences over which they have no control—I mean differences in their physical features etc. So that, this argument, even if it could be maintained, will hardly be of much avail against the doctrine of Transmigration in general.

I am prepared to admit that self exertion contributes much to better a man's condition, but not without the grace of God. I could instance myriads of cases where self exertion was an utter failure, while with no exertion on their part, so to speak, people have been found in covetable positions. It cannot therefore be argued that adversity and prosperity are people's own seeking. Whatever may be a man's exertion, he cannot expect to realize his object without the grace of God. Exertion can only be said to be a means through which we obtain the grace of God, and not the direct way to success.

Furthermore, how is it that some people are in a position to exert themselves, while others are not placed in such a position? It is true that each man is given a free will, but along with this free will he is given a tendency or inclination to exert himself or to be idle. We also find at times that some people are given an opportunity to work, while others are not given this opportunity. We again find that some, by chance or luck, work in the right direction to success, while others work in a wrong direction. This clearly shows that Providence has been favouring some and not the rest, a fact that cannot be reconciled with Divine Justice except by the theories of Karma and Transmigration.

7. DIFFERENCE IS A NECESSARY EVIL.

It is again argued that if all men are placed in the same position, it will not be possible to work the world at large. Surely it is not an impossibility with God Who cannot be said to have had recourse to what seems to us an injustice for the

purpose of facilitating His own work. And this argument, it must be observed again, cannot be applied to physical differences, as such differences are not in any way necessary to work this wretched world. Evidently all these are laboured reconciliations that will not stand a proper test.

8. DIFFERENCE IMPARTS A USEFUL LESSON.

The difference that we see in the creation of God is said to be a lesson to many. It may be a lesson to many, but at the expense of the sufferers. Could we subject one to hardship and sufferings for the purpose of teaching a lesson to another? Could such a teaching be considered a lesson in the strict sense of the word? Be it a lesson or otherwise, why should one man be made to suffer in preference to another, if he has not done something to merit that suffering?

9. DIFFERENCE IS INTENDED AS A TEST.

The disadvantages which certain people are put to, are intended, it is argued, as a test, and it is said that if the sufferers, will only withstand the trial, they will be the better rewarded in the world expected. I cannot see any justification in this explanation. I cannot in the first place see any reason why the test should be applied to a few and not to all. And could a better reward be awarded to one so tested, in preference to another not tested, and who cannot therefore be pronounced to be inferior to the other in any way? As I have already said, these are explanations with no forethought, but only invented in the anxiety to say something in mitigation of the apparent injustice that cannot be gainsaid in any way.

10. THE DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD WILL BE MADE GOOD IN THE NEXT.

Another reconciliation is that the difference in the experience of men in this world will be made good in the next.

I cannot see how this can be effected. Our experience in this world is only for a limited period, while in the next it extends to an indefinite and infinite period. How is it possible to make good a limited difference by an unlimited experience? Simply because a man has enjoyed more of pleasure than of pain in this transitory world for a limited period, will it be considered a sufficient reason to inflict on him a corresponding amount of pain in the world expected for ever and ever? If this is considered Divine justice, surely every man would and should long for more of pain in this world so that he may enjoy a corresponding pleasure eternally in the next world! Why should such a privilege, I again ask, be given only to some and denied to the rest? Do we not see a grosser injustice here?

This explanation would again imply that there is difference in the heavenly enjoyment itself. Heaven is not a physical plane as the earth on which we live, but it is a state which we attain at a certain stage of our spiritual advancement and where the source of our enjoyment is the fullness of God. We cannot therefore expect any diversity in our enjoyment in heaven, otherwise God Himself will be considered subject to change, and therefore to mutability and decay.

II. THE DIFFERENCE IS A DIVINE MYSTERY.

As a last attempt at reconciling these varieties, it is urged that Divine mysteries are beyond our comprehension and that we cannot question the acts of God.

This explanation, of course, is very easy enough. It is so easy that by having recourse to it, any religious theory, however absurd it may be, can be maintained, and all religious enquiries and controversies must end here. But it must be pointed out that man is not a block of wood or a piece of stone without any reasoning power in him. He is a rational being

endowed with the faculty of discerning right from wrong, and the very fact of his being endowed with such a faculty conclusively shows that he must exercise this faculty to the fullest possible extent; and if in so exercising this faculty, it is clearly seen that a certain act is not justifiable, he cannot for a moment conclude it otherwise, or pretend to believe that the question is beyond his comprehension, simply because the action is attributed to God. It is quite true that we cannot attribute to God anything like injustice, and it therefore behoves us to decide that such an act cannot have proceeded from the all merciful and just God.

I do not deny that some mysteries are beyond human comprehension; but I am not prepared to call the inequality, which I speak of, a Divine mystery that cannot be solved by human understanding. Intended, as it is, in the interest of human beings, this inequality cannot be said to be beyond the range of human knowledge.

It is true again that ability to solve problems even in the human plane is not in the possession of all. But this is no reason to overlook absurdities. When an absurdity presents itself to our view, we must in the first place go into the question and see if its nature is such as to baffle our understanding. If we are satisfied on this point, we could of course be justified in passing it off as beyond our comprehension; if not, we should not hesitate to declare it an absurdity; and if again we have reason to believe that the question is not one beyond the range of our knowledge, we should then endeavour to investigate its *pros* and *cons* and try to arrive at a solution. But if we are convinced that we have not made a sufficient investigation of the subject, or that we are not adequately advanced to grasp the question,

we would certainly be justified in declaring that we are not competent to pronounce an opinion on the subject. In the absence of any of these conditions, it would be preposterous to pass off a glaring absurdity either as a Divine mystery or as otherwise beyond the reach of our comprehension, especially so when the question has been fully threshed out as in the present case, and the result remains unimpeached.



CHAPTER X.

TRANSMIGRATION (*Continued*).

Objections met.

The inequality which we abundantly see in this world is satisfactorily explained by the Hindu religion which maintains that all these differences are the result of our Karma in a previous state of existence. The doctrine of Karma has been ably and elaborately expounded of late, and it may be said to have been received with general acceptance almost all over the enlightened world; and I may even say that it is the theory of Karma that has brought out so many admirers of the Hindu religion, and the enthusiastic revival of our ancient faith is greatly due to the beauty of the Karma theory having been brought into prominence. As the theory of Transmigration is closely wedded to that of Karma, I believe that a few words on the doctrine of Karma will not be considered out of place.

Karma.

Karma literally means action—action of thoughts, words or deeds. And these actions are either good or bad according to their nature and gravity, and they produce certain results which are themselves good or bad as the actions are. Every action may be said to produce two results—one immediate or direct, and the other distant or indirect. The direct result is the one to which the action has been the direct cause: and the indirect result is the one to which the direct result above referred to has been the cause. The direct result generally affects others, while the indirect result affects the doer of the action. In the case of a farmer who tills his field, the direct result is the fertilizing of his

plantation and the indirect result is the enjoyment of a good crop. In the case of a clerk who engages himself in making a copy of a certain document, the direct result is the copy so made, and the indirect result is the remuneration that he gets. This indirect result is therefore called the fruit of his action, and it is this fruit that is referred to in the Karma theory.

If we observe nature a little minutely, we will not fail to see that every action produces a corresponding result sooner or later, and this result is therefore called the fruit of such action. We have unmistakeably seen that good acts always produce good results and bad acts bad results. It may be that in some instances the actions do not bear fruit immediately; but the fact has been fully borne out in myriads of cases, so much so, that it is considered a fully established principle. Man always draws a lesson from general experience, and this general experience of the whole human race has strongly established the fact that our actions produce certain results according to their nature and gravity.

It must also be observed that it is a fact generally admitted on scientific principle that every action produces a certain result, and that every result is produced by a certain cause. If this rule is applied to human experience, we must necessarily conclude that our experience in this life is to be traced to some cause or other anterior to such experience, and if such a cause could not be found in our present life, it must necessarily be traced to a previous state of our existence. Likewise, our actions in our present life must produce certain results, and if such results cannot be seen to accrue in this life, they must be awaited in a future state of existence. So that, the Karma theory may be found to be an iron rule of nature which it is not possible to avert and which, if clearly understood, will indispensably launch us into the theory of Transmigration.

I may also point out here that scientific research has established the fact that every action has a reaction, which, after a certain interval, reflects to the centre from which it originally proceeded. The Karma theory is perfectly in harmony with this truth. Our actions reflect on us after a certain interval, and this reflection is what we call the fruit of our Karma. The Buddhists are strong believers in the doctrine of Karma and we find in our *Purāṇas* that a certain sect of the Hindus of olden days called "*Mīmāṃsakas*" were so strong in this opinion that they did not even care for God, but had the strongest faith in Karma which, they believed, shaped their destiny.

Though such a view of the question may not be considered entirely wrong, I should characterize it as purely materialistic in that it is confined to the material plane. The argument is limited to the province of matter and force which are supposed to possess the power of producing certain results, as a sequence of certain actions. But I do not think it possible to maintain this theory, if the question is properly sifted. I cannot find any relation between cause and effect in the material plane. I mean, I cannot find in the cause, that is, in our action or Karma, sufficient element to produce the result it is supposed to bring. Take, for instance, the case of a murder. The action of murder does not contain in itself, independent of any other influence, the necessary requirements to produce upon the murderer the necessary result, say the result of being hanged. Such a state of things points to the existence of an intelligent Agent Who directs over us certain material forces to produce certain results in return for our actions.

There are again certain Karmas that bear immediate fruit, while there are others that take a long time to produce their results. The same action, when done by different people, is found to produce its result at different intervals. This difference

is mainly due to the non-exhaustion of the force of the previous Karmas of the different souls, and it is therefore very clear that to regulate the counter action or the fruit of our Karmas, an intelligent agent is required to be always at work; otherwise there will be a regular confusion by the force of one Karma clashing with that of another. It is therefore very clear that Karmas of themselves cannot be said to be capable of producing the results assigned to them; and the Hindu *Siddhānta* School therefore very aptly lays it down that the great God rewards our Karmas or actions. This rule of our God is so fixed and inviolable in itself that the agency is forgotten and the rule is considered the regulator of our destiny. In fact, this rule of God, is what we call nature, and nature is nothing but the design planned by the great God in His sublime wisdom for the salvation of souls. This design, it must be understood, is the best possible means available for the purpose, in consideration of our nature and capacity, and God invented this design in His unlimited mercy towards us, with the sole object of delivering us from the bondage of Māyā. Natural phenomena are again the outcome of Māyā, and this Māyā cannot work of itself without being worked by the almighty God; and it must always be borne in mind that the results which Māyā produces are entirely at the bidding of God, for Māyā does not possess in itself any fixed course for its results, and all that it produces depends on the skill of the Agent at whose hands it is worked. It is therefore quite apparent that the reflex motion of our Karmas can in no way be attributed to Māyā or to any other physical cause, independent of the interference or the will of the almighty God. If our Karma produces any result on us, it is because God has intended that, and He has laid it down as the law of His working the universe, and not because it is an order of nature with which God has nothing to do.

I am obliged to lay some stress on this point, because there is a tendency now a days to explain things scientifically and to confine our enquiry to the material plane. If questions of an intricate nature cannot be explained scientifically, they are rejected as untenable and groundless, and such was the reception once accorded to the theories of Karma and Transmigration by the Materialists. But Theosophists having explained the concord between these theories and science, they were readily accepted and approved. This, I should think, is a sad mistake. Any explanation of a question without a spiritual foundation is not worth the name, and I must, in this connection sound a note of warning that such an explanation, however satisfactory it may be for the present, will eventually lead us to blank materialism, as has been the case with Buddhism. The Theosophists whose main source of religious elucidation was Buddhism, have adopted the course of explaining the tenets of Oriental religions by expounding their consistency and harmony with modern science, which is purely materialistic; and such a course, though satisfactory it may be for a time, will not very much help the cause of Theism; but it may, I am afraid, go a long way to fortify the position of a certain sect of Materialists who do not require a spiritual element for the movement of the world at large, but think that the material world is quite enough to explain the mysteries that are found in it. If the theories of Karma and Transmigration can be established on the basis of simple material science, we can freely argue, as the Rishis of the olden *Tāru-kāvanam* did, that a God is not necessary for the origin, development or decay of the cosmos. It is not to be understood from this that I decry scientific explanations of religious problems; but what I wish to impress on the reader is the necessity of connecting such explanations with a spiritual element; as

otherwise the whole explanation will end in blank materialism. We will certainly be greatly delighted to find that our religious dogmas are in harmony with modern science; but we must make it a point always to find out the religious philosophy underlying the scientific truth. I mean we must trace the scientific truth to a spiritual agent, and see that without this agency, it is not possible to maintain the position in which science has placed us.

We are indeed highly pleased to find that the theories of Karma and Transmigration are proved to be two inviolable laws of nature; but we must, at the same time, understand that this nature is nothing but the plan which the great God has schemed for the working of the world at large; and when we find that our Karma brings on us a reflex motion, we must always have it very prominent in our view that such a nature was ordained to our actions by God with the object of reducing and finally removing the stock of Mala that is inherent in us. I have already shown that this reflex motion, or the fruit of our Karma, cannot be accounted for without the interference of Divine Will or Divine Energy; and it is therefore very clear that it is Providence that directs on us the results of our respective Karma with the object of purifying us, and of ultimately bestowing on us the heavenly bliss of eternal happiness. The theory of Karma was introduced by me into this subject to show that the differences which we see in this world, and on which I dwelt at length in Chapter VIII, are mainly due to our Karma in a previous state of existence; and this existence, if accepted, will conclusively prove the theory of Transmigration. I will now proceed to meet the objections raised against this theory.

Direct proof.

The first objection raised against the doctrine of Transmigration is that there is no direct evidence to prove the correctness of the theory.

I do not think that any direct evidence will be as strong and forcible as the indirect or negative evidence put forward in Chapter VIII. I have already shown that the justice of God cannot be maintained if the inequalities in His creation are not justified through the doctrine of Transmigration. If this is not a strong evidence, I do not know what else can be called a strong evidence.

Propositions are not always proved by direct evidence. Take the more important question of the existence of God. Have we any direct evidence to prove it? Is there any one who has seen God, or heard Him speak, or felt Him by any of his senses? No. How then do we believe in His existence? It is from the simple fact that if not for His existence, the phenomenon of the universe cannot be accounted for, we draw the inference that there is a God, and believe in His existence. Exactly in the same manner should the inference be drawn of the principle of Transmigration from the inequalities and varieties that we so abundantly observe in the creation of God.

I would however point out that the theory is not without some positive proofs. The prodigies of which we have amply heard, and to which I made some reference in Chapter VIII, clearly point to a previous existence in which the intellectual faculty of the soul had developed. Nature and science will unmistakeably show that such an expansion of knowledge as found in the case of a prodigious occurrence is quite incompatible with the existing order of things, and that the expansion is therefore due to a previous development attained in a previous state of existence.

Take again the case of an infant having dreams. Dreams are but visions of previous experiences, and if an infant of seven or eight days' age is observed to have dreams, is it not a positive proof in support of the theory of Transmigration ?

Positive proofs, however, are not quite necessary to support the theory of Transmigration, as the negative proof already adduced are sufficiently strong in themselves. I will therefore proceed to meet the objections raised against the theory.

Original Difference.

It is argued by the critics of our religion that if the difference in this our existence is the result of our Karma in a previous existence, the difference in that existence should have been the result of the Karma of an existence still previous, and the difference in that still previous existence should be attributed to the Karma of a further previous existence, and so on ; that if the cause of difference is thus traced, we must at any rate point to a first existence, how distant so ever it may be, where the difference should remain inexplicable : and as such, they think that there is very little use in bringing forward the theory of Karma to explain the inequality that is found in the creation of God.

This objection, I must say, would not have been raised, if the Hindu theory were correctly understood. According to the Hindu theory, there is not a first existence, so to call it. God is eternal, and so are the souls ; so that we cannot fix upon a beginning to either. In the presence of the eternal God, the eternal souls are subject to the law of birth, and they undergo the process, in conformity with their previous Karma. Every birth has of course a beginning, but the rotation or chain of births has no beginning, in the same way as God and souls have no beginning to their existence—and as such there could not be a first birth.

This would of course imply that there is always a difference in the Karma of souls, and this difference must necessarily need an explanation. The Karma of souls vary according to the degree of the Mala bondage they are enwrapped in, and this bondage is in different proportions in the case of different souls, and such a state of things is a natural order, and the great God in His unlimited mercy towards us, works out our Mala power by our own Karma which, or a portion of which, form the seed of our successive births. See Chapter IV.

Non-recollection of Previous Births.

Another objection is that we have no recollection of any previous existence. I will only say that this is a human weakness. We have not the slightest recollection of our infant life and a greater part of our after life as well. This is because our intellectual faculty is so feeble that it cannot retain any idea of our remote experiences, and this is doubly so when we change our physical coating and sense organs by our rebirths.

Punishment in Ignorance.

It is again argued that the punishment inflicted on an individual when he is ignorant of the cause of such punishment will not be of any avail. This may seemingly be true; but an insight into the religion in its philosophical aspect will answer the question once for all. The object of the punishment is not only to correct a man, but as well to remove the Karmas that accumulate around him. Karma may be said to be a force that accumulates around us as a sequence of our actions, and this force, unless removed from us, will lead us to further actions, equally bad as those for which a punishment is intended. The great God, therefore, removes our Karmic force by some counter force, which we call the fruits of our Karma, and this counter force is a sure remedy for the evil effects of our past actions. But

to know these past actions which mainly belong to a previous state of existence, is not within the power of man in his present state of ignorance ; and he cannot be expected to attain the state of having a clear view of the past, the present and the future, until after he becomes perfect by getting himself rid of the bondage of the *Ānava Mala* which conceals from his view the actual state of things.

It is, however to be noted that the cause of the punishments inflicted on us may best be learnt from the revelations or *Srutis* which detail the rewards for our various actions—and here we see an additional reason for the necessity of a revelation.

Non-completion of Salvation.

If the souls have been subject to the law of Transmigration from eternity, how is it that they have not yet attained heaven ? Insufficiency of time can in no way be pleaded in this case, there being no starting point to eternity ; and how could the final emancipation be looked upon at a later period, while it remains unrealized during the past unlimited period ?—Such is the nature of a further objection raised against the theory.

(a) THE OBJECTION IRRELAVENT.

I must in the first place point out that such questions could be asked not only now, but at any time or at any point of eternity however back in time it may be ; for take any point in eternity and you will have still an unlimited period behind it ; so that viewing the question in the light of this objection, there should be no time at which a soul has not attained emancipation—in other words there should have been no souls at any time with any bondage of Mala about them. This would again mean that no act of divine grace should have been exhibited at any time, since God being eternal, such an act should have been done “ long ago ”—and this “ long ago ” could be carried ever so far back

ad infinitum, and it would not be possible to post the act to any time of eternity—which would ultimately mean that no acts of divine grace should be exhibited at any time! Is this rational? Certainly not. I only put this forward simply to show the irrelevancy of the objections raised.

(b) THE NON-COMPLETION EXPLAINED.

Though we cannot venture a survey of the unlimited eternity with our limited knowledge, Hinduism offers a satisfactory clue to unravel the mystery. It is true that the time elapsed is unlimited, and it is equally true that the Śaktis or the powers of the *Mala* that bind us are themselves unlimited: so that an unlimited period would necessarily be required to remove the unlimited Śaktis of the *Mala*. It may be asked whether the eternity backward, which could be carried ever so much behind and which is unlimited in itself was not sufficient to remove the unlimited *Mala Śaktis*? I only say that both factors being unlimited, it is not for us with our limited knowledge to say which is greater than the other. But, if it is possible to contend that the time elapsed, or the eternity backward is greater than the *Mala Śaktis*, it is equally possible to argue that the *Mala Śaktis* themselves are greater than the backward eternity—for both are unlimited—and as such, it is quite possible that the *Mala Śaktis* could not have been finally removed yet; and this is the conclusion we can arrive at by an *a posteriori* reasoning; because, though we cannot, with our limited knowledge, compare two unlimited factors, yet as we find that the *Mala* powers have not been removed during the backward eternity, we cannot but conclude that the *Mala Śaktis* have been greater or more powerful than the backward eternity. But the *Mala* powers being stationary while time is ever growing, it is confidently expected that *Mala* would at one time be finally removed. But, so far, the

time has not sufficiently advanced to outweigh the unlimited but stationary Mala.

When once the character of unlimitedness is conceded to *Mala*, we could freely admit that it may be as powerful as, or more powerful than, another factor of a similar attribute. So that, it is quite possible to contend that Mala, an unlimited factor in itself, being more powerful than time, has not been removed yet finally ; but that on the other hand it, being stationary, it could be removed in the long run by the ever growing time ; but when this time will come it is not for us to say with our limited knowledge.

It must however be observed that Mala is losing its power gradually, and that the souls that had a lesser degree of bondage have already been freed from it finally ; and our religion says that the souls that attain *Mukti* at each cycle are numberless ; and even in the case of souls that have not attained heaven, the *Mala* that binds them is not in the same condition as it once was ; it is always undergoing a change—a change of course to the better—and it is therefore expected that it will finally be removed one day.

(c) EXHAUSTION OF MALA.

It may again be argued that if time and Mala are both unlimited, they must be equal in their power, and how can the one be excepted to remove the other ?

It must be pointed out here that it is not time that works out the removal of Mala—the removal being entirely the action of *Śiva-Śakti*. Time was introduced into the discussion, simply because the duration of the process was considered. It will be shown later on that time has no bearing whatever on the removal of *Mala*. However, as time is considered to have some connection with the removal of the *Mala* bondage, I think it expedient to say a few words on the subject.

It is of course true that time and Mala are both unlimited in their sphere ; but this will not go to show that they are both of equal capacity ; especially as the one is stationary, while the other is always growing. It must be observed that in the case of unlimited factors, we cannot, with our limited knowledge, take upon ourselves to compare any of them with the rest. We cannot say that any of them is greater or smaller than another or equal to it. To draw such a comparison will mean that these factors are within the reach of our comprehension which will be incompatible with the limited nature of our knowledge. It cannot, however, be argued that all factors that are beyond our comprehension are equal to one another. Difference is quite possible between unlimited factors as it is between limited factors ; but such difference can only be gauged by one who is competent to do so. With our limited knowledge we cannot draw any comparison between Mala and time, and we cannot therefore say that because they are unlimited in their scope they are equal to one another.

The possibility, however, of a difference between unlimited factors can be easily proved by an instance. Take for example time itself. Take the time from eternity up to date, and the time from eternity up to a hundred years back. Both are certainly unlimited ; still the time up to date is undoubtedly greater than the time a hundred years back. (We are enabled to gauge this difference because of a limited factor being introduced into the question.) It could similarly be shown that Mala, which is always stationary cannot be compared with time which always adds to its quantity ; but on the other hand, it is quite possible to maintain that time will one day be able to exceed the bounds of Mala, if it has not done so yet.

(d) EXHAUSTIBILITY OF THE MALA POWERS THOUGH UNLIMITED.

It is again argued that if the Śaktis of Mala are unlimited in their sphere, how could they be expected to be finally removed.

I am really unable to understand this objection. By "unlimited" it is not meant "inexhaustible" or "indestructible". An unlimited factor may be exhausted even in a minute, if an unlimited power equal to the task is at work over it. Here, not only an unlimited power—Śiva Śakti—works at it, but the removal is effected during an unlimited period; so that, there is no possible difficulty in seeing the unlimited powers of Mala removed at the proper time.

It may be asked that if the powers of Mala are finally overcome, there will be a limit to such power, and that how can the powers that have such a limitation be called unlimited?

A factor is called unlimited because it is beyond measurement—measurement by a limited standard; but an unlimited standard could very well measure it, and by being so measured, the unlimited sphere of the factor would in no way be affected.

It must also be observed that the limitation, or the exhaustion in the case of Mala is only a forward limitation—a limitation at the end; but it has no backward limitation or a limitation beginning. That it is unlimited is therefore fully established from the fact of its having no beginning, and this will not be affected by its having an end. A factor may be unlimited by either of its two sides. It is not necessary that it should be so by both sides.

The powers of Mala again are no doubt unlimited, but when the power of Śiva Śakti, which is infinitely more powerful than Mala, is at work over the latter, it must necessarily exhaust itself: that is to say, it must gradually decrease in quantity, become limited ultimately and exhausted finally.

(e) GRADUAL EXHAUSTION OF MALA.

"If Śiva Śakti is all-powerful, how is it that it has not removed the Mala all at once?" is another objection.

It is true that Śiva Śakti or divine grace is all-powerful or almighty ; but there seems to be a good deal of misunderstanding about this attribute of God. Because God is almighty, He cannot be expected to be able to do impossibilities. Impossible things must be taken in the light of non-entities, and they cannot therefore be counted among the "all" of which God is powerful. By saying that God is almighty, it is only meant that God is capable of doing all possible things and not impossible things. Impossibilities are not possibilities (or things that can be done) and God cannot Himself make one the other—a non-entity an entity.

Impossibilities may be said to be of two kinds, firstly those that cannot be done for want of adequate power, and secondly those that cannot be done at all on account of the natural order of things. There is nothing like an impossibility of the first kind with God ; but the second impossibility is an impossibility not only with men but with God Himself. Because God is almighty He cannot be expected to enclose a space with a straight line. Likewise the removal of Mala all at once, is an impossibility which God Himself cannot be expected to do. The removal of Mala can only be effected by degrees, according to the capacity of each soul to enjoy the grace of God, and this capacity being a natural condition, God Himself cannot be expected to undo this nature and work out an impossibility.

The Śiva Śakti or divine grace is available in abundance at all times and at all places ; but the question is whether souls are capable of being benefited by that grace. The solar light shines in its full blaze ; but can a blind man be benefited by that light ? The man should possess the faculty of vision ; he should open his eyes and he should let the light fall into his eyes ; and then and then alone can he be said to be able to be benefited by that light. The benefit he derives from the light will be in proportion to

the extent to which he opens his eyes and to the extent of the ocular power he possesses. Man must necessarily enjoy divine grace before he can be benefited by that grace; and the extent of this experience depends mainly on his natural condition. Divine grace may be said to be a remedy for the Mala bondage and this remedy can only benefit the patient if he will swallow it. To enable a man to enjoy or experience divine grace, there should be a certain amount of fitness in him, or in other words, a certain amount of mental purity (சித்த சுத்தி) without which, it will not be possible to enjoy or experience that grace. The divine grace that he enjoys, or the divine grace that benefits him, will be proportionate to the mental purity that he has obtained. How is this purity to be obtained? It is by his deeds, words and thoughts—by his actions or Karma. Whenever he does a pure action, his mind is purified to the extent of the quality and quantity of that action, and he is enabled to enjoy the divine grace to that extent; and the darkness of the Mala that enshrouds him is driven away to the extent of the grace that he was thus enabled to enjoy. It is mainly for this reason that the merciful God gives us a physical frame with which we are enabled to do actions and attain purity of mind, which ultimately renders us fit to enjoy the Śiva Śakti, and this Śakti or light of grace dispels our inherent darkness to the extent to which we have been able to enjoy that grace.

Our actions are of two kinds—good and bad—and bad actions themselves have their own use. They produce a reaction in us when we are rewarded by adequate punishment, and this punishment serves us to repent and to feel an aversion for bad acts, which means a decrease in the stock of the *Ānava* Mala that is inherent in us. So that by our own bad actions,

and the consequent punishment awarded, we are made to have an aversion for things bad; while by our good actions—and the rewards given therefor—we are made to like and seek *Punyaṃ* (good actions). The one serves us as a lever to keep us from falling down, and the other as a pulley to lift us higher in the plane of spiritual advancement. In either case our mind obtains a certain amount of purity by which we are enabled to taste the divine grace (அனுக்கிரக சக்தி) which, when once settled, dispels the darkness of *Ānava* Mala to the extent of the grace so settled in us, and prevents the Mala or portion of the Mala so dispelled from getting hold of us again. This process of the divine grace that is always at work over us is called the பஞ்ச கிருத்தியம் or the five divine actions, the sole object of which is to ripen our *Ānava* Mala with a view to finally remove it. What we call nature is itself a part of this *Pañcha Krittiya*; and it may be clearly seen that the great God in His unlimited mercy towards us has designed a process known by the name of nature—the best available means to remove our Mala—suited to our condition and capacity. By this process we are given a body and are put to action. These actions or *Karmas* are made to reflect on us and to produce certain results that may directly or indirectly tend to ripen or weaken the Mala power that enshrouds us, by enabling us to taste or enjoy the divine grace that is always ready to alight on us whenever we attain an amount of mental purity.

The mercy of God is quite apparent in the sublime order of nature designed by Him, and particularly in the light of His grace voluntarily alighting on us whenever we are fit to receive it, and removing the darkness of Mala that enshrouds us to the extent of the grace so alighting.

Here we may see two important facts worthy of our

serious consideration. The first is the mercy of the great God in general, always at work over us subjecting us to the cause of nature by which we are enabled to work out the removal of the Mala power. The second is the special grace of God that is exhibited in impressing His Śakti on us when we render ourselves fit for that impression. As this impression depends fully on our natural condition, the Śiva Śakti cannot be expected to remove our Mala except in proportion to the condition of our capacity or *Pakkuvam*.

This *Pakkuvam*, it must be observed, has to be attained by our self-exertion, and all our endeavours to attain that state must proceed from within us. The soul, no doubt, is guided by the Śiva Śakti in all its movements, but this guidance of the Śiva Śakti will benefit the soul only in proportion to its *Pakkuvam*.

(f) EXHAUSTIBILITY OF MALA POWERS, THOUGH ETERNAL.

How can the Mala be expected to have an end, if it had no beginning?—is a further objection.

It is of course a truism that things that have no beginning have no end. It will, however, be worth while to go into the question and find out the foundation on which this theory is based. Let us, in the first place, ask why things that have a beginning should have an end. It is because, as I have explained in another place, they are subject to the influence of time. They have a beginning, they are subject to growth and then to decay, and they should therefore have an end, as time has its own effect upon them and works on them a change every minute. But in the case of things that have no beginning, time has no influence on them, and it is therefore we say that they have no decay which is brought on by time. But there may be other causes that may tend to the decay of these

things, and if such causes are sufficiently powerful to bring on their decay, they must necessarily give in.

The question may be asked why such causes did not effect the decay until now, if they were existing from eternity. An answer to this question may be found under Section (b) preceding. In the case of factors that exist from eternity, it is not possible to gauge them with time, and the question, why any change or effect on them did not take place before any fixed time? is not applicable to them.

The only question for consideration is whether their nature is such as to admit of any change when a cause sufficiently powerful to effect, such a change is at work on them. In the case of Mala, though it has no beginning in itself, it has an antidote in the factor of Śiva Śakti, before which it must necessarily vanish. Darkness cannot stand before light, and when the light of Śiva Śakti shines as a result of our Karma, the darkness of Āvara Mala cannot but disappear.

Let it not, however, be understood from this that I am arguing against the admitted truism that something will never be reduced to nothing. I do not at all contend that Mala will ever be annihilated or reduced to nothing. I only say that before the light of Siva Śakti the darkness of Āvara Mala is rendered powerless and that it undergoes a change in its quality and helps us ultimately in the enjoyment of eternal happiness.

Even such a change in the original form of Mala may be argued as putting an end to that form which existed from eternity and it may be questioned how that form which had no beginning can come to an end. It is enough to point out that the form itself undergoes only a change or is rendered powerless; but it is in no way annihilated or reduced to nothing.

The nature of this Mala is such that it is capable of undergoing this change in the presence of the Śiva Śakti; and it can never be said to have remained in the same condition, because it has been undergoing a change from eternity. Mala, therefore though eternal, undergoes a change to the extent of the light thrown over the souls by Śiva Śakti until at last it fully resolves itself into a factor that helps the soul in the enjoyment of the heavenly bliss,—and in this state it is held fast by Śiva Śakti.

(g) EXHAUSTION OF MALA POWER CANNOT BE GAUGED BY TIME.

I must refer the readers to another reconciliation which I feel sure will amply satisfy them if they have a clear understanding of the Siddhānta theory of the cosmic evolution.

Time, according to Siddhānta theory, is one of the products or sub-divisions of Māyā, and it is therefore not possible to gauge that Māyā, and much less the more powerful Mala, by time. This Māyā itself is set to work with a view to remove the *Āṇava* Mala which is considered to be the seed of our ignorance and to be far more powerful than Māyā. The removal of these two major Malas—*Āṇava* and *Māyā*—cannot therefore be gauged with the minor product time, however unlimited it may be, since it is only a product of the less powerful Māyā, and limited as it is to a certain extent, when compared with the more powerful *Āṇava* and *Māyā*.

The release of the souls from the bondage of Mala is a question that is far beyond the range of Time. Time, besides, has no influence whatever on Mala, either directly or indirectly; and it is therefore absurd to seek any bearing of time over Mala. Mala, again, is a factor that has no beginning of its own to be influenced by time, and it is not conditioned by age, growth or decay as a result of such time. To speak in short, neither the Mala, nor the souls which it envelopes, nor the Śiva

Śakti that removes it, has any relation to time which, therefore, has no reference whatever to the final emancipation of the soul. All we can predicate of Mala is that it will be removed one day, but when that day will be, or within what period it will be removed, is a question that cannot be answered in the case of Mala, as it is a factor that is beyond the range of time.

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR SALVATION UNDER THE KARMA THEORY.

If every action of ours is invariably to bear its fruit, and if there is no condonement for an act once committed, it is argued, that there is little or no encouragement to seek the grace of God.

I may compare this argument to a stricture on an impartial but strict judge who would show no mercy to culprits. It will not, I believe, be denied that a strict judge does greater service to a country than a lenient, and therefore, a compassionate judge. Leniency means an indirect encouragement of evil acts, and it is equally so in the case of sins committed by us. Encouragement in the shape of a free pardon of our sins will no doubt tantamount to an encouragement of the commission of such sins; and it will therefore be far better to show no clemency at all than to encourage by such clemency the commission of further sins.

It must, however, be remarked here that the argument that Karma theory offers no encouragement to seek the grace of God is faulty in more than one way. In the first place, the grace of God has to be sought not only to remove our sins, but also to prevent us from committing further sins, to remove our inherent darkness of ignorance, to guide us in the path of rectitude, to cultivate in our heart a true love of God etc. Without these graces there is not the remotest chance of salvation even if our sins are removed; the grace of God has therefore to be sought

to secure these benefits, though it be supposed that there is no use of seeking it for the removal of our sins.

But I must observe that the contention that according to Hindu theory there is no chance of any pardon of our sins is equally faulty. Hindu doctrines provide ample means for the pardon of sins by *Prāyach-chittas* and penances. But the doctrine that the fruit of every Karma must be eaten by the doer is in reference to the reserve Karma that is invariably held back to shape our future destiny. It must also be borne in mind that pardon of sins according to the Hindu theory is not easily obtained, and the necessity for such a strict rule is quite apparent. Pardon cannot be expected unless there is a strong reaction in the mind of the sinner, by way of real and sincere repentance, sufficient to check the tendency that originally prompted him to commit the sin. In other words, no pardon could be expected under the Hindu religion unless a reaction equal in its results to the effects of a condign punishment sets forth in the heart of the sinner. With all these very strict rules, the Hindu religion still provides ample scope for the remission of our sins, and it is entirely wrong to say that there is no pardon according to the Hindu dogmas. The Purāṇas refer to thousands of cases where sins were pardoned without submitting the offender to the punishments prescribed therefor in the *Śrutis*.



CHAPTER XI.

FATE.

Transmigration of souls being regulated by predestination or fate, the two theories are closely wedded together, and I will now proceed to offer an explanation of the latter.

What is Fate?

Before entering into the question of fate, I think it necessary to warn the readers not to confound the Hindu theory of predestination with the Western idea of fate. The Hindu theory of predestination is only the order or law according to which the souls eat the fruits of their Karma: and this law is prescribed by Providence in accordance with the Karma of the respective souls. Karma is not possessed of any power in itself to direct its results towards the individual souls, and the law of fate has therefore to be prescribed by the great Providence.

It is a fact admitted by all believers in a creator, that God is the first cause of the whole universe, down to the minutest atom, and that "not a hair droppeth without His will". It is therefore apparent that whatever befalls a man is in conformity with the Divine will; and there cannot be any great difference between His will and what we call predestination or fate.

If any exception is taken to this rule, then the absolute control of God over His creation will be jeopardized, and He cannot be said to be the Protector of the souls under His care. God being just and merciful, it would be blasphemy to say that He is indifferent when anything happens to a man when he does not merit it. The rational conclusion would therefore be that every event that befalls a man is in accordance with the Divine will: and this is what we call predestination or fate.

The Influence of Fate on our Actions.

The question could then be asked whether this predestination would apply to the good and evil deeds of men; *i.e.* whether men act as preordained by God.

This question has to be viewed in two aspects—first in relation to our view of things in our present state of Mala-bondage or "*Pettanilai*" (பெத்தநிலை), and the second in relation to our view in our future liberated state or "*Muttinilai*" (முத்தநிலை).

Although it is the liberated state that represents the ultimate true state of things, yet, situated as we are in our present position of Mala-bondage, it is the aspect that relates to this state that will have to be considered here, as it is more essential than the other for our guidance at present. I will therefore deal with the question, first in regard to our present state of Mala-bondage, and will then offer a few hints on it in its aspects as regards the liberated stage or *Muttinilai*.

I may say that the law of fate, in its general acceptance, is only applicable to our experiences of pleasure and pain, and not to our actions. The history of a man may be divided into two sections—his actions and his experiences. His actions are always accompanied by what we call his free will, while his experiences may be said to be beyond the range of his free will. It is his experience that may be directly attributed to fate, while the actions done with his free will cannot find shelter under fate.

To have a correct idea of this difference, it will be necessary to have a clear understanding of the different stages of Karma and their respective functions as they are expounded in the Hindu *Śāstras*. Karma literally means action—action done with one's free will; and this action has three stages viz: *Ākāmia*, *Sañchita* and *Prārabdha*. Karma is called *Ākāmia* during the birth in

which the act is done ; when the fruit of the act is reserved to be fed in a future birth, it is called *Sanchita*; and when it is fed in a subsequent birth it is called *Prārabdha*. It is *Prārabdha* that governs our destinies, and its influence may be said to be confined only to our experiences of pleasure and pain, i.e., to factors over which our free will has no control—and it cannot be said to influence the *Ākāmia* deeds done with our free will.

It is of course true that our experiences are at times found to be the result of our current actions (*Ākāmia*), and it may therefore be possible to argue that these *Ākāmia* Karmas themselves are the result of our *Prārabdha* Karmas. It must be understood that our current actions or *Ākāmia* Karmas that precede our experiences cannot be said to be the chief cause of these experiences which are generally the result of our *Prārabdha* Karma. Take for instance the case of a thief who robs his neighbour of a large sum of money and enjoys high life with the money so robbed. This enjoyment cannot be said, in a religious point of view, to be the result of the robbery committed by him. This is evidently the result of some good Karma previously done, and the result of the robbery committed by the thief remains to be experienced by him later on. It cannot therefore be said that our current actions or *Ākāmia* Karmas are the cause of the experiences that follow such actions, except in cases where our *Ākāmia* Karmas bear immediate fruit. They are only instrumental in bringing on us the result of our *Prārabdha* Karmas, and cannot be said to be the main cause of those results. It may, however, be argued that if our experiences are predestined, the instrumental causes which bring about such experiences should themselves have been predestined. This does not necessarily follow. The great God Who knows things before-hand reserves Karmas and arranges theirs results in

such an order that they may be experienced by the respective souls at the instrumentality of certain *Ākāmia* deeds. The *Ākāmia* deeds need not therefore be said to be predestined. It is true that God knew that such a deed would be done by such a man at such a time, but this knowledge cannot be called predestination, inasmuch as the deed is done with the free will of the man. Predestination is the decree of God ordaining a certain experience of pleasure or pain to befall a man in return for a certain act previously done by him; and the *Ākāmia* deed of men cannot be called preordained in that sense.

Free Will.

It is very essential in this connection to demarcate between fate and free will. Though free will itself may be said, in a wide sense, to be under the control of God (of which I shall speak later on) it cannot be said to be the result of fate. In the case of fate, God may be said to act directly on the souls in accordance with their Karmas, while the souls have very little to do in the transaction which is wholly God's. But in the case of free will, the action belongs to the soul, while the influence of God in the matter is remote and indirect, and this influence cannot be said to have anything to do with fate, as that influence is solely based on the *Ānava* Mala that is inherent in the soul.

We know of people who argue, in the case of murder that the murderer was predestined to commit the murder. I can only say that the murdered man was predestined to meet with an unnatural death; but the murderer cannot plead as an excuse that he was predestined to commit the murder. The murderer had the exercise of his free will in the act, and the moment the element of free will is brought into play in any transaction, the question of fate disappears and is rendered unavailable as an

excuse. The whole range of human actions hinges on the question of free will, and man is held responsible for his actions, because his free will is at work there, whatever the ultimate cause of this free will may be. The Hindu Śāstras assert in unmistakable terms that the moment this free will or ego (தந்தோதம் as the Siddhānta school would call it) dies, the responsibility of man ceases and he is free from all actions and their effects.

The Hindu Śāstras lay it down again that souls are bound by three kinds of Mala—*Āṇava*, *Māyā* and *Karma*—and the functions of each of these Malas are clearly defined in the Āgamas. It may be said as a main outline that *Āṇava* is the cause of our ignorance, and ego, *Māyā* of our body and senses, and *Karma* of our experiences. So that *Karma* is only responsible for our experiences, while our actions are attributable to our *Āṇava* Mala. It is this *Āṇava* Mala that is the source of our ego; and because this ego prompts our actions and give us the stimulus to perform them we are held responsible for those actions.

I will not, however, deny that in our action there is some influence of our previous *Karma*. Such an influence could certainly be seen in the physical features and the mental faculties which are given to us according to our past *Karma*, and which, no doubt, have some effect on our actions, along with our inherent *Āṇava* Mala. It could also be said that a wish which we cherished in a previous birth becomes the father of our action in a succeeding birth; so that there is evidently some connection between our *Prārabdha* *Karma* and our present action, and this requires some explanation.

To enable us to form a correct idea of the Karmic influence over our actions, it will be necessary to analyze rather minutely the influence which each of our three Malas exercises over our

actions. Āṇava is the primary cause that excites us and gives us the spirit to perform a deed. Māyā helps us, with the physical features and the mental faculties, in the performance of the deed. Karma may be said to exist only in the enjoyment of the feeling which that action brings on us. When the time for the enjoyment comes, Āṇava exerts itself and Māyā helps it; so that Karma may be said to give the signal when Āṇava acts, helped by Māyā. The reward for our action is only to the extent of the part taken in the action by Āṇava and Māyā. It cannot be said that we are rewarded for the part taken in the matter by Karma.

The Hindu Śāstras compare Āṇava Mala to the bran, Māyā Mala to the husk and the Karma Mala to the germinating power of paddy. Karma Mala only gives the impetus to act, while the quality and gravity of the action are entirely due to Āṇava and Māyā. It may be observed here that Karma Mala is only availed of to adequately stir up the Āṇava and Māyā Malas with a view to exhaust them ultimately. It is only the standard by which God energises the souls.

Justification of Punishment.

The question may again be asked that if we act as energised by God, will it be justifiable to hold us responsible for such actions and punish us therefor. God can only be said to be responsible for putting us in motion, it being not possible for us to move without His help. But we are responsible for the course our actions take. Steam is the motive power that works the several pieces of the machinery in an engine; but the machinery, when propelled by steam, works each piece according to its own capacity.

To explain this in another form. Because we are dependent and cannot work without the aid of God, He energises us to act

according to our respective capacities, *i.e.*, he energises us in such a manner as we would act if we were independent, and makes us eat the fruits of such acts with the object of gradually exhausting the stock of Mala that is inherent in us. This however, is an aspect of the question, as would appear to those in the liberated stage.

Although we are energised by God in our actions, yet we are rewarded therefor, because the actions proceed from our will, and are fathered by us as our own. When we act in any direction, we do not do so in the belief that we are simply urged by God to work in that direction. In fact we have no idea of the will of God, but act as if our actions were entirely independent of any interference of God. Our will is in its full swing in our action, and it is this will that throws on us the responsibility of our actions. The Hindu Śāstras lay great stress on this will, and they loudly proclaim that this will is the source of all our woes and throes, and that when this will is subjugated, there is an end to all our troubles. Because we do not realise that we have no action of our own, and mistake, when energised by God, that we act independently, we are made to eat the fruit of such actions, with a view to teach us by practical means the merits and demerits of such actions, and ultimately to raise us in our moral standard and make us in due course realize our true position. The procedure may be compared to the treatment of a disease by a doctor who stimulates the bad blood in the body of his patient, and then cures the disease by applying suitable medicines.

Until the stage of Muktitasai (liberated state) is attained, God acts on the souls indirectly through their Karma and Will. God works the Karma which stimulates the *Ānava* and *Māyā* Malas, which in their turn excite the Will, and this Will rouses the soul. The soul, when roused by the will, does not look

behind and see the actual position of affairs, but mistakes the whole energy as its own, because it is blinded by the bondage of Mala that is inherent in it. As a further consequence of this bondage, it has its own likes and dislikes to the extent of the Mala power that pervades it; and a reaction is necessary to counteract these likes and dislikes,—or their fountain head the Mala power—and this accounts for the rewards the soul is given for its actions. These rewards have their salutary effect on the Mala bondage which is gradually weakened, and in due course exhausted of its *virus*. In the meantime the good deeds done by the soul elevate him to a higher level, and make him seek after truth—with the ultimate result that *Uṇmaiññānam* or pure wisdom dawns on him in due course. On the advent of this *Jñānam*, the *ego* dies and the soul has a clear vision of the actual state of things, and here its action or responsibility for action ceases altogether, and it is in the enjoyment of *Paramukti* or heavenly beatitude, realizing the truth it has no action of its own, the whole energy being stimulated by God.

The above is a meagre outline of what is meant by the action of God and the action of soul (சுவன் செயல் and சீவ செயல்). This will at the same time give the reader an idea of what we call free-will. It cannot be said in the strict sense of the word that man has a free-will, inasmuch as he is not an independent being. What is known by free-will is what man mistakes for his free-will when energised by God. This mistake will not be removed before we attain the *Muktitasai* or liberated stage; and until that, or so long as we are in the *Pettatasai*, (state of bondage) our actions will appear as our own, and we are bound to act as things appear to us. That is to say, so long as we are in the *Pettatasai*, and have the ego or free-will in us, we should exercise that free-will with the light of our knowledge and

conscience. The ultimate result will, of course, be according to the will of God or decree of destiny; but as we have no idea of either of these, and as we all aspire for certain results, we must exert ourselves in that direction, in the hope that the exertion itself is the will of God; for we know that it is through our exertion the will of God and our fated destinies befall us.

Necessity for our Exertion.

But it is an anamoly to keep quiet pleading it as an excuse that what is decreed will befall us whether we exert ourselves or not; because by pleading such an excuse, we presume that we are fated to keep quiet, while in fact we have no idea of our fate; and, again we know that keeping quiet is not the means through which our destinies befall us. As I have said before, our destinies generally befall us through our exertions, and when we aspire for any good end, we must exert ourselves in that direction in the hope that we are fated to secure that end. The ultimate result will prove to be our fate. It must be understood that it is the duty of every one to proceed in the line of action until he realizes that he has no action.

It will thus be very clear that so long as we are in the *Pettatasai*, we must exert ourselves when we are desirous of securing certain end and that we cannot keep quiet under the pretentious excuse that what is fated will befall us.

The Influence of Karma over our action explained.

One more point, and I have done. I have already explained that fate applies only to our experiences and not to our deeds, and that if it has anything to do with our deeds, it is only to the extent of the influence by which the *Ānava* and *Māyā Malas* are stirred up to action. The question may, however, be asked whether a bad Karma once committed can be utilized again to influence the subject to do another bad Karma directly or indirectly.

The object of reserving Karmas is to stir up the stock of *Ānava* and *Māyā Malas* that stick to the soul and exhaust them in due course. A bad Karma will rouse up the bad side of the *Ānava* and *Māyā Malas*, and a good Karma their good sides. Any how both sides of the *Malas* have to be roused; and this is done with the standard of the Karma previously done. The main object being to exhaust the Mala power finally, it will be seen that the influence which the Karma Mala exercises over *Ānava* and *Māyā* serves a very good purpose and the process cannot therefore be condemned in its real significance.

It has also to be observed that the past Karma of a man was itself the result of his own action, and if on account of that Karma, he is forced to commit a sin, he must take the result. We know by experience that the man who once commits a mischief has the tendency to repeat it again, or to do other acts of a similar nature. This is the influence which past Karma may be said to have on our current actions, and the means to exhaust this tendency is to stir it up to action and make the soul eat the fruit of such action until there is a reaction sufficient to counteract and overcome that tendency. This is the course laid down by fate and we are sure that such a course will commend itself to every right thinking man.

It is possible that, when stirred up to action by the influence of a past Karma, the man may lose his level and commit worse sins than the previous one. This is something like a man who goes up a hill, bending his way sometimes up and sometimes down—every step in the journey being an advance towards the top. The course contributes every minute to the final exhaustion of the Mala power inherent in the man, and when the exhaustion is completed, he may be said to have reached the goal.

CHAPTER XII.

SACRED BOOKS.

Hindu Sacred Books.

As I have said elsewhere, Hindus are taught religion in every walk of their life, and such a method of teaching has no doubt its own beneficial results. Hindus are noted for their religious turn of mind, and the amount of attention they pay to religion may be gauged, to a certain extent, from the objects that are considered sacred by them. They consider in the first place their temples, the images *therein*, and all the belongings *thereto* very sacred to them. They have again their sacred ashes and sacred beads. They have their sacred places, mountains, rivers, seas, lakes and tanks; they have their sacred fires; they have their sacred trees, plants, grasses and flowers; they have their sacred animals, birds, snakes and fishes; they have their sacred spirits and sacred men; they have their sacred seasons, months, days and hours; they have their sacred deeds and sacred words; and last, not the least, they have their many sacred books. As these books are the ultimate authority for every thing that is sacred to them, and in short, for their religion and religious culture, I think it necessary to throw some light on them.

The Hindu sacred books are a great many in number, and are of different descriptions. In the first place stand the *Śrutis* or revelations. These are the four Vedas and the twenty eight Āgamas. "Veda" means knowledge and "Āgama" means knowledge of the three entities.

Secondly, there are the six *Āngas*—the necessary preliminaries for the study of the Vedas.

Thirdly, there are the four *Upa-Vedas* and two hundred and seven *Upa-Āngamas* which are considered in the light of supplements to the original revelations.

Fourthly, there are the sixteen *Smritis* containing the rules and regulations of rituals.

Fifthly, *Purāṇas*—eighteen in number—explaining religious truths by means of stories which are more or less allegorical; there are in addition to these, eighteen *Upa-Purāṇas* or subsidiary *Purāṇas*.

Sixthly, *Itihāsas*—These are historic narrations of events that occurred in recent *yugas*, and they explain religion in the secular plane.

To these may be added various subsidiary *śāstras* more or less of a philosophic character, compiled from time to time by admittedly able and profound scholars and *sādhus*. Among these could be mentioned the treatises that expound the six systems of Indian philosophy, notably among them the *Vedānta* Philosophy of *Bhagavān Vyāsa*.

The authorship, or at least the compilation of most of these works is attributed to *Baghavān Vyāsa* and there seems to be a good deal of misunderstanding on this point. *Vyāsa* is a general name by which the compiler or reviser of these sacred books is known during every *yuga*. A competent hand is deputed by Providence to revise and arrange the scriptures during every *yuga*, when they get disfigured by long use during the previous *yuga*. There have been several *Vyāsas* who revised the Hindu scriptures from time to time.

The scriptures or sacred books above referred to are all in Sanskrit, and we have again in Tamil an equally rich store of

sacred writings which are more or less of greater importance and sanctity. The *Devārams* of the three canonised saints Appar, Sundarar and Sambhandar, and the *Tiruvāçagam* of Mānikkavāçagar are considered in the light of Tamiḷ Vedas, while the fourteen *Siddhānta* works are held in the light of *Āgamas*. There are again the fourteen *Paṇḍūra Śāstras* which may be compared to the *Upa-Āgamas*, while the *Tiru-Isaiṇṇāḇṇā*, *Tiruppallāṇḇṇā*, *Tirumantiram*, the forty separate works that form the Eleventh *Tirumurai*, *Periyapurāṇam* and the songs of Tāyumanavar may be treated in the light of *Upa-Vedas*. The Tamiḷ works from *Devāram* to *Periyapurāṇam* are codified into twelve *Tirumurais* or codes and are held very sacred by the Śaivites. We have again the Kuṛaḷ of the highly reputed sage and 'bard of universal man' Tiru-vaḷḷuvar. There are also several translations into Tamiḷ of the Sanskrit *Purāṇas*. There are also other original works such as *Śiva-Dharmottaram*, *Śaiva-Samayaneṇi*, *Tiruppugal*, *Kaṇḇaralan-kāram*, *Kaṇḇaramubūti* etc., which are all considered sacred and whose authors are supposed to have been inspired.

It will be very clear from the above that Hindu religious literature is abundantly rich and full, and it will no doubt take one by surprise when he finds that the Hindu religion is attacked in certain quarters as a religion without any scriptures in support of it.

And what is more curious and perplexing is that when the attention of the assailants is drawn to the facts above referred to, they turn round and find fault with the religion for having too many sacred writings. Religion is a vast field and I do not think that any amount of literature to explain the subject will be considered too much. The people of the world are of various grades and of different tastes with all of

whom the same book cannot be equally effective. Some would require religion to be taught to them in the shape of stories and anecdotes while there are others who should be taught religion by rites and ceremonies. There are still others who would require means to kindle their piety by means of emotional songs and prayers, while another set of people would require a philosophic elucidation of the religion. There are still a further set of people who would require instruction on the means of realization; and a further set of men would like to be satisfied on all these points. Although all these different grades of people have to attain the final beatitude through the same portico of *Jñānam* (realization of truth) they require different methods, according to their degree of advancement to get to that portico. There are different text books taught in a school according to the degree of advancement of the different classes of boys, and such text books are no doubt of tentative character. Even in the same class, pupils may be found to be of different grades of understanding and grasping power, and the same subject has to be taught to them in different ways. The necessity of such a course will be more apparent in the case of religious instruction, and hence the necessity for the large number of the Hindu sacred books.

Hindu Revelations.

These are the four Vedas and the twenty-eight Āgamas. They are words of God and are fully authoritative. The two kinds of Srutis are each divided into two main sub-heads—Karma Kāṇḍa and Jñāna Kāṇḍa—the former being a preparatory step to the latter. The Vedas are so deep and mystical in their meaning that different interpretations have been put on them by the different sects of religious denominations that accept them as the word of God; and they are therefore called

general or common revelations. The Āgamas are looked upon as keys or commentaries to the Vedas and are held as the special revelations of the Śaivite religion. The Āgamas are intended for those that are advanced in religious culture, while the Vedas are meant for a larger sphere of men who practise religion in different ways, according to their standard of understanding and intelligence. The due observance of Vedic rites will ultimately lead men to the path laid down by the Āgamas, from where they will be guided to salvation.

The Upanishat portion of the Vedas and the *Jñānakāṇḍa* of the Āgamas are exclusively philosophic in their teaching, and they may both be found to inculcate the same truth, if understood in their true light. It is a great mistake to suppose that they are in any way conflicting in their views, the coincidence of which has been fully explained and established by erudite pundits and advanced *savants*. The Advaita theory is one of the important points on which sectarians carry on a heated contest, but I should think that it is on points like that, the true meanings of the Vedic texts would be found correctly expounded by the Āgamas. The interpretation put on the Vedic texts on this subject by the sectarians called *Māyāvādins* or idealists is nothing short of pantheism pure and simple, while their true meaning of non-dualism and the very abstruse but substantial difference between God and soul are fully explained and defined by the Āgamas. The Vedas propound theories in a rather general manner with a view to benefit the different grades of men qualified to practise the Vedic rites according to their respective *Pakṣyam* or standard of maturity, while the Āgamas or *Siddhānta* (the True end) expound the true meanings of the Vedas in an unequivocal manner in order to explain the ultimate truth to subjects fully advanced in spirituality. It is not that

the Vedas mislead the non-*Pakkuvas* or hide any truths from their view, but their degree of advancement is such that they will not be able to realize the exact truths, so long as they remain in that stage. In short, the Vedic truths are understood in different lights by the followers of the six schools of Indian philosophy, according to their respective degrees of light and learning, and the Āgamas therefore explain the true meanings of the Vedas for the benefit of those that are fully matured for final salvation—so that the former is considered to be a supplement to the latter.

The Antiquity of the Vedas and their General Aspect.

It is a fact admitted by Hindus and non-Hindus alike that the Vedas are the oldest literature in the world, although the latter would not concede to them a period earlier than 1500 B.C. There is however every reason to suppose that the Vedic literature is very much older, and I would refer the reader to the sound arguments adduced by Mr. Tilak in his very interesting work called “Orion” in support of the antiquity of the Vedas. Mr. Tilak has proved satisfactorily that the Vedas cannot be assigned a date later than 4000 B.C., and he further points out the possibility of extending that date to 20,000 B.C. As the theory advanced in the book will be highly interesting to the readers I quote below the comment made in reviewing the book by the *Theosophist*, Madras:—

“Our thanks are due to the author for a copy of his interesting work. He has endeavoured to show that the traditions recorded in the Rig Veda unanimously point to a period not later than 4,000 B.C., his conclusions being arrived at by an efficient calculation of the astronomical position of the vernal equinox in the Orion or in other words, when the Dog Star commenced the equinoxial year.

"To arrive at this he has explained the coincidence of the Vedic legends with those of Iran and Greece, often quoting verbatim the Vedic text. His comparison, we are glad to say, is not based merely on mythological facts but on valid conclusions deduced from the Vedic texts, in every instance quoted verbatim. Proceeding on the lines of investigation adopted by Bentley, Colebrook and other wellknown writers on the subject, he proved that the antiquity of the Vedas may be safely carried as far back as 4,000 B. C.

"We hope further researches in this direction with the clue furnished by the author in page 85 will extend 4,000 years B.C. to 20,000 B.C.

"For if we suppose the *Mārgasirisha* full moon to be the new year's night in the sense that the vernal equinox occurred on that date, we must make the asterism of Aohyt coincide with the vernal equinox. This gives about 20,000 B. C. for the period when these positions could have been true."

Such a theory will not of course be pleasing to believers in the Bible according to which book, man was only created 4,000 years before Christ. But modern science has distinctly proved that the creation of man must be assigned a date much further back, and the following extract from one of the local newspapers will fully bear out this:—

"A fossil human skeleton was recently discovered in the department of the Dordogne at Ferrassie, five kilometers from Bugue, in a layer belonging to the lower middle posttertiary period which dates from at least 20,000 years ago. This is the second discovery of the kind that has been made in the 'central massive' of France within a year"—*The Ceylon Morning Leader* of 2nd November 1909.

Man must therefore be assigned a date much earlier than

4,000 B. C. which goes a long way in support of the theory advanced for the 'antiquity of the Vedas. But some of our Modernists are very reluctant to concede such a long antiquity to the Hindu Scripture; they are besides very fond of attacking the Vedas on various other grounds, although they are forced to admit that these sacred books contain many valuable truths and excellent morals. They charge the Vedas with several defects which may be summarised under the following four heads:—

1. That there are several passages which are mere babblings and repetitions,
2. That there are passages which are not consistent with one another,
3. That the Vedas conflict with modern science and
4. That they narrate stories revolting to moral feelings.

I do not pretend to be a Vedic scholar or one conversant with Sanskrit literature to go into these charges minutely; but I wish to point out their futility from an external view of the literature so far as I have heard and known of them from sources for which I have great respect.

The Vedic Babblings and Repetitions.

Vedas are quite mystic in their meaning and a good deal of importance is attached to every word, syllable and letter in the Vedic texts and to the order in which they are arranged. The very pronunciation of the words and syllables are guarded with extreme care, and one of the six Vedic *Angas* or supplements is devoted to this purpose. The texts have in many cases double meanings—one exoteric and the other esoteric—and these meanings are only deciphered by adepts. Such meanings when deciphered, would be found to be simply admirable and the order and position in which the words are placed

in the text to produce such meanings may well be said to be of a marvellous character. I am afraid that I will be marked down as a superstitious person if I say anything here of the miraculous effects the chanting of the Vedic texts are expected to produce; but I must inform the reader that such an effect, or charm as we may call it, is fully expected by Vedic experts, and this effect largely depends on the arrangement and order observed in the position of words and phrases, and in the number of times a syllable, word or phrase is repeated in the text. Their exoteric meanings may at times appear as amusing or puerile, but when the inner meaning is disclosed and the mystery unveiled, the merits of the Vedas will then be appreciated and admired. Of course these are secrets which will not be divulged for anything in the world to strangers like our critics, and it would be a simple waste of time on their part to break their head over these mysteries. I can only tell them not to venture an expression of opinion on matters of which they have no idea. The Vedas, it must be remembered, have another name "Maṛai" (மறை)—things hidden.

The efficacy of the Vedas in producing miraculous results has been fully accepted from time immemorial, and it would appear that even atheists had their belief in such efficacy. One of the ancient sects of atheists or agnostics known as "Mīmāṃsakas" who would not believe in the existence of a God or accept the divinity of Śiva or Viṣṇu, strongly believed in the efficacy of the Vedas and are said to have produced miraculous results by the practice of Vedic mantras and rites. Such is the character assigned to the Vedas, and I think that strangers who have no idea of the value of the Vedas as such, would be altogether incompetent to express an opinion in the matter.

It must, however, be pointed out in this connection that we can form a fair idea of the intelligence and enlightenment of the compilers or authors of the Vedas from the admittedly very sound and sensible passages that are largely found almost all over the literature. It is not possible to conceive for a moment that such eminent men who produced those passages gave expressions to childish babblings and useless repetitions, unless it be that they had their own purposes to serve. Take again the cases of the highly cultured pundits and *savants* who wrote elaborate commentaries on the Vedas and built huge structures of philosophy over them. It is clearly seen that these pundits and *savants* respected each word and syllable of the Vedas with great reverence and veneration, and such a state of things would have been altogether impossible if the objections now raised by the critics had any real foundation.

Inconsistencies.

The Vedas (and Purāṇas too) are charged with inconsistencies in that they narrate the same story in different ways in different places. I am sure that this objection is made in perfect ignorance of the nature of the Hindu Śāstras. Vedic and Purāṇic stories are not to be taken in the light of historical events. They are generally of a figurative character, intended to explain religion in an impressive manner. The figures may often be found not only mere figures of speech; but figures of action as well—that is to say actions intended to impart religious instruction in a figurative way. These actions or events repeat themselves during every *kalpa*, and there might be slight variations in the details of the actions when they recur during successive *kalpas*—and these variations would be found in the Śāstras themselves when

they narrate the same event as it occurred in different kalpas—and such variations should not be called inconsistencies.

Conflict with science.

This is a charge that is preferred against almost all the religions of the world, and I will not undertake to say that it has been satisfactorily explained by other religions; but I can boldly say that the Hindu religion fully explains the charge as the following facts would clearly establish:—

1. According to the Hindu theory, the creation of the universe is repeated at the beginning of every kalpa, and at the end of which the whole cosmos is dissolved into its first cause. Although the main principle of the creation is the same at all times, it cannot be said that the same order of details is observed during every kalpa. There might be some difference according to what is known as the collective karma of the souls intended to be benefited during each kalpa, and the Hindu scriptures may be found to state in plain terms that the creations of God are not exactly alike during every kalpa. The orders of nature and the physical features of the universe as referred to in the Vedas and Purāṇas are not to be taken to refer to the current order of things or to the creation of the present kalpa to which science is exclusively confined. The scriptures describe events that transpired during different kalpas and it is but right therefore that they should differ from science in many respects.

2. Taking again, the existing world itself, science predicates various manifold changes such as the *Atlantis* and the like that took place during antiquarian aeons and epochs. The Vedas and Purāṇas refer to the state of things at the commencement of the creation—or at any rate to the state of things long anterior to these changes—and they must therefore necessarily disagree with modern science.

3. Science, again, is not an infallible factor. We have heard of several conclusions drawn from scientific researches being subsequently found to be erroneous ; and it is not therefore possible to assert with confidence that conflict with science is a reflection on religion in all cases.

4. As I have already said, the Vedic and Purāṇic stories are mostly of a figurative character. The creation itself has a good deal of figure in it, and every object of creation has in itself a miniature form of the great God, and this is particularly so in the case of the human body. The mundane universe itself represents the form of God and there is therefore a good deal of similarity in the form of the universe and that of man ; and this is why scriptures enter into cosmic details with which they are not otherwise concerned. Not only the form of God, but several other religious truths may be found exhibited in the creation in a figurative or symbolic sense. I have very often remarked that religion always tries to impart religious instructions whenever it can possibly do so, and such an instruction is sought to be given in the matter of creation also. It therefore becomes necessary that a creation formulated to represent as nearly as possible religious truths should be referred to in the scriptures, and not the existing order of things evidently because they would not answer the description desired. Differences and variations are inevitable in the creations of different kalpas, owing to karmic inequalities—and this may account for the difference between the creations referred to in the scriptures and the existing world of which science speaks.

5. Apart from the figurative actions exhibited in the cosmic world, one could find figures and similes of speech largely availed of in the scriptural texts ; and such figures and similes should not be mistaken for facts conflicting with scientific

truths, which in many cases have been found to be concealed under those figures and similes. It may not be quite possible at times to distinguish between a figurative action and a figurative speech; but the difference would be apparent to one sufficiently acquainted with the general drift of the Hindu sacred writings. Figurative actions may be found elaborated in details, while figurative speech may not generally be so. But there are instances where the Hindu literature considers it a rhetorical beauty to enlarge on figures of speech too, and a correct judgment can only be arrived at by persons who have a competent knowledge of the Indian literature.

6. Modern science has revealed to us several cogent facts which go a long way in support of theories advanced by Hindu scriptures, especially as regards the cosmic evolution, the law of gravitation, the position and motion of planets &c; and I may even say that a close search into those hoary scriptures would disclose many items of modern discoveries lying imbedded there. The period assigned by modern science to the habitation of man on earth is more in conformity with the Hindu scriptures than with those of any of the modern religions. Some of the *Purāṇas* may be found to describe several natural phenomena quite in consonance with modern science. The range of knowledge which the Hindu scriptures exhibit of the science of astronomy would excite the admiration of any unprejudiced mind. The valuable scientific truths such as the law of gravitation etc., expounded in Hindu astronomical works which are founded on Hindu scriptures and which were written long before Sir Isaac Newton and other modern discoverers were born would amply testify to the familiarity of the Hindu scriptures with scientific truths. It would be grievously wrong, I think, to charge, without due consideration, literatures of such value

that they conflict with science. The Hindu scriptures show evident signs of having passed through a highly developed state of ancient civilization, and the charge of such ignominious ignorance as the critics now try to bring home to Hindu scriptures would be repugnant to the feelings of all reasonable men.

7. I must, in this connection, submit for the calm consideration of all right thinking men another point which, I believe, would appeal to their conscience and common sense. It is true that all religions have their own revelations, but it is not possible with any religion to assert for a certainty that its revelation as it is, is exactly identical in form with the one originally given by God. It has been handed down to us through human agency and an influence of this agency should naturally be expected to be seen on it. Even the inspired agency through which the revelation was originally revealed, had its own human weakness and was heir to flesh and blood as any other mortal. The only difference was that the agency was so much advanced in spirituality that the truth appeared to him and he was the means of delivering it. The truth that so appeared was strictly on the religious plane and the inspiration that he received would certainly be confined to that plane. He cannot be said to have been inspired on secular questions—and there was no necessity for such an inspiration. Of course when the inspired religious truths were given expression to by him, he had his own way of giving such expression, and he clothed them in secular garbs, or mixed them up with secular subjects which had no share in the inspiration; and the secular subjects that were so mixed up with religious truths can only be said to have been up to the mark of the secular advancement attained by the agency who was the means of delivering the

inspired truths. It is but natural that if his standard of secular advancement was not sufficiently high, he might exhibit signs of weakness which will in no way militate against the religious truths revealed to him. Suppose an expert medical authority, in expounding, a medical theory, introduces a question of engineering, and suppose that he makes a mistake in that question. Surely his opinion on the medical theory will not be rejected because of his mistaken idea on the question of engineering. Similarly, if inspired writers are found to be wrong in a question that is outside the religious sphere, their religious opinion will not lose its value on that account. The inspired writers only look to God or identify themselves with God for information on the religious plane and it is only truths on that plane that would appear to them by the light of inspiration. It would not be worth their while to seek information on secular questions, nor would God be considered to guide them in such questions which are of little or no use to them for the purpose of salvation. When secular subjects are introduced, of their own accord, into religious sayings, prompted by their human tendency, they would merely follow the accepted theory of the day—and this should not be considered a reflection on the inspiration.

I may go a little further and say that even in the secular plane, the truths need not be said to have been unknown to them; but it is very probable that they followed the accepted theories of the day in order to expound religious questions in a language that might be acceptable and appreciated by the people of the time. We ought not to reject a revelation because it was not given at a time when the world was not sufficiently high up in secular advancement.

I have again to point out that the revelations have been

handed down to us from a hoary antiquity and it is not impossible that they were tampered with at some time or other during their long passage to us. There might possibly have been alterations or additions made by some crafty persons during the dark ages, and such alterations would very likely have contributed to the conflict of the revelations with science; such a conflict cannot reduce the value of the inspired writings nor could our faith on inspiration be shaken by such alterations. There may be alterations, but there is still our revelation covered up with the crust of alterations. Revelation is sacred to us and we will not be justified in rejecting it because it has been tampered with. The only course open to us under the circumstances is to err on the safe side and to accept and respect what is known as our revelation and to reject such portions of it as are found to be alterations on clear and satisfactory proof.

It would thus appear that any conflict between religion and science, if such a conflict exists at all, would in no way weaken the credibility of the religion or its revelation.

Reference in the Veds to Hindu doctrines.

Some of the essential doctrines of Hinduism are supposed to be quite strange to the Vedic revelations and it is argued that the doctrines of transmigration, image worship, caste system, the god-head of Śiva &c are not referred to in the Vedas. This opinion, coming as it does, from quarters that cannot be expected to have any idea of the trend of the Vedic literature must be taken for what it is worth. I have often said that the Vedic literature deals more with the practical side of the religion than with its theoretical side and it is not possible to expect therein any direct exposition of the religious doctrines. However, those who thoroughly understand the nature and drift

of the Vedic utterances would be able to see through them clearly and find that many of the Hindu doctrines are imbedded therein in an indirect form. The Upanishad portions of the Vedas may be seen to refer to these doctrines more directly than the other portions which would themselves be found pregnant with ideas saturated with these doctrines, if investigated closely. If this were not so, the doctrines would not have been accepted by the Hindu public who are very conservative in their ways and who will not be satisfied with any idea unless it is supported by Vedic texts. The place to seek for a direct exposition of the Hindu dogmas are the Śaiva Āgamas which deal elaborately with the theoretical or doctrinal side of the religion and amplifies the *Jñānakāṇḍa* of the Vedas. There are, however, various passages in the Vedas themselves in support of the main doctrines of Hinduism and I would submit the following for the edification of the readers so that they may not be deceived by the unwarranted opinions expressed on the subject by foreigners:—

I. TRANSMIGRATION.

1. Krishna Yajur Veda—Taittreya Āraṇyaka, 27th Anuvāha—"Just as wind drives away before it innumerable particles of dust, similarly the karmas of innumerable souls take them out of the earth and send them to heaven or some other place according to their merits and bring them down from heaven to this world of Karma".

"Again and again do not allow yourselves to take births and deaths. Again and again do not keep yourselves confined in this universe. Give up your connection with your body which gives you little bits of bliss only to make you more miserable".

2. Rig Veda, Aiyttreya Brāhmaṇa, 17th Adhyāya, 4th Kāṇḍa "When the soul takes its births as a man &c., this earth

becomes its abode. When it does works of merit, it goes to heaven only to come back to earth after some time”.

“The goddess of death is the cause of the birth of all souls which are made to be born by her according to their karmas”.

3. *Satapātha Brāhmaṇa* XI. 6. 11

“Animals and plants revenge in a future state of existence injuries and deaths inflicted on them by man in this life”.

4. *Atharvā Veda*, 13th Kāṇḍa, 2nd Sūkta, 2nd Amsa.

“*Rohita* who was noted for his penance got to the region of gods by his penance. He comes again into this world”.

5. Mantras of the Rig Veda commented on in the *Nilakaṇṭha Bāshya* :—

“Those souls go from this world like moon. Again they come to this world from there.”

6. See also *Kathopanishad*, verse 2 of Valli 2, verse 11 of Valli 4, verse 7 of Valli 5 and verse 4 of Valli 6.

7. See again *Kenopanishad*, verse 5 of Chapter 11.

8. *Prasnopanishad* verse 9 of Praśna 1, verse 4 of Praśna 5.

9. “There is a clear declaration of it (transmigration) in the *Āraṇyaka* of *Aiyttreya Brāhmaṇa*—Monier Williams.

2. CASTE DISTINCTION.

1. “We must not forget that in one of the hymns of the Rig Veda, Sūdras are distinctly said to have sprung from him like other castes”—*Vedānta Philosophy* by Max Muller, page 74.

2. “There are two cases at least in which Upanishads seem to speak of Sūdras as admitted to the wisdom of Vedānta, namely Gaṇasūri and Satyakama”—*Vedānta Philosophy* by Max Muller.

3. *Purusha Sūkta* of Rig Veda, Maṇḍala x. 90.

“The Brahmin was his mouth, the Kingly soldier was

made his arms, the husbandman his thighs, the servile Sūdra issued from his feet”

3. IMAGE-WORSHIP.

1. The principle of image worship may be found to have been extensively utilized during the Vedic period. Invoking deities and inviting them to preside at *Kumbas* and worshipping them there at *Yajñas* was a very common practice, and this practice was exactly identical with image-worship. It may be found even now that Vedic Mantra and rites are largely used in consecrating images. It is not therefore possible to contend that image worship is a post-Vedic practice.

2. Liṅga worship is referred to in the *Svetāśvatara Upanishad*—and this is image-worship pure and simple.

3. Appaya Dikshita quotes in his *Śivārkkamāṇi Dipika*, a passage from the R̥g Veda, 5th Maṇḍala, 3rd Sūkta, 3rd Mantra which supports the Liṅga worship, and which is expounded in the Parāśara Purāṇa to refer fully to Liṅga worship.

4. GOD-HEAD OF ŚIVA.

1. *Kaivalyopanishad*.

“*Umāsahāyaṃ Parameśvareṃ Prāpūṃ Trilosanam Nīlakaṇṭham Prasantaṃ*”.

2. *Athaṛvaśikōpanishad*.

“Śiva only is to be meditated upon, the rest being given up, as He is the one that grants final beatitude”.

“Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra and Indra were created. They cannot be the primary cause. Such cause is Sambu (another name for Śiva) who is the Lord of all wealth and who is the Lord of all. He is to be meditated in the centre of the heart-plane”.

3. *Pañchappṛāṇōpanishad*.

It is Iṣa (Śiva) that is to be known who is beyond the three

avastas of *jāgra* &c.: who is subtle, who has the name of *Brahm*, who is *Janakar* to all, who is *Paratattva* and *Prāṇa*".

4. *Prasna-jābūlopanishad*.

"Worshipping Śiva who is the only one possessed of the six divine attributes, who has no second, who is the meaning of the four kinds of speech, who is transcending *Brahma*, *Vishṇu* and *Rudra* and who is the One to be adored".

5. *Sarapoṇishad*.

"One must meditate *Brahma* who is the letter A, in the navel, *Vishṇu* who is the letter W in the heart, *Rudra* who is the letter M in the centre of the eyebrow, and *Sarveśvara* (Śiva) who is *Praṇava* in *Dvātasanta*".

6. *Rig Veda Samhitā*.

"*Vishṇu* in the form of a boar split the earth and penetrated through it for one thousand years. Anxious to find out the feet of Śiva, he praised Him saying "Thou art my mother, Thou art my father, Thou art those that are born with me, Thou art the oldest, Thou art the highest'. He who is able to know the value of this is the one that sees, who knows, who lords, and one that does his work. He who is able to know in this way, attains *Sāyujya*! attains *Sāyujya*!"

7. *Svetāśvataroṇishad*.

When they skin the ether and dress themselves therewith then they come to the end of grief without knowing Śiva.

8. It should be mentioned in this connection that Śiva is mentioned very frequently or more frequently in the Vedic texts than any other deities, not only under the name of Śiva but under the various other names by which He is known; and it is a fact that cannot be denied that no other deity is given the highest position as He is in the Vedas. Still He is represented not to have been mentioned in the Vedas!

5. Reference in the Vedas to Viṣṇu and other Deities.

The object of the Vedas is to praise the different Deities who perform one or the other of the several functions that really belong to the great God, but delegated to them by that God. In order to emphasise the importance of the functions, the functionaries are praised in the same light as the supreme God to whom the functions really belong: and such praises are known in the religious parlance as "*Upasāram*" or compliment. These functionaries, because they perform the functions of Śiva, can be called by names appertaining to the highest position of Śiva; but Śiva cannot be called by the names of these functionaries. Such abstruse differences would only be apparent to those who are well versed in the religion and in the trend of the religious literature. Deities such as Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Indra, Varuṇa &c., are praised, on account of the functions performed by them, in the light of the Supreme Lord to whom those functions belong, and at times, the names themselves of the Lord are availed of in praising them. In fact the names by which these functionaries are known are themselves the names of the Supreme Lord Śiva, and if one could go into the religion, he will find that not only the names of the Lord but His forms too are granted to these functionaries as a token of the grace bestowed on them. Of course when these names and forms refer to the Supreme Lord in some places, there is room for doubt and uncertainty, which those versed in the Vedic literature and its rites and ceremonies can easily clear.

Whatever may be the praises lavished on these functionaries, the Vedas clearly point out the Supreme Lord Śiva by some exclusive terms and phrases that could be applied to Him and Him alone, and by ascribing to Him functions that cannot be performed by any of these subordinate Deities. He alone is called

by the name of *Paśupati* (Lord of the souls), and it is distinctly stated that He alone is capable of granting the final beatitude.

The Moral Tone of the Hindu Scriptures.

The Hindu sacred books are again charged with offending at times the moral feelings of people by some of their stories and anecdotes. I must admit that there are passages in the Hindu Scriptures that are not quite pleasing to the ear; but this is a state of things that cannot be helped. Religious instructions cannot be imparted by moral stories alone. Meritorious deeds as well as sinful acts have both to be explained in order to expound their merits and demerits, and when these are illustrated in the lives of noted personages, it becomes necessary to narrate events as they actually happened and to describe as vividly as possible the mental activities and propensities of the heroes whose stories are narrated. I do not think that this method of instruction has anything in itself to be deprecated. When criminal offences of an immoral nature are enquired into in our courts of law, there is no reserve made on account of decency or decorum, as otherwise it will not be possible to find out the truth. We know again that it is not possible to observe decency and modesty in medical institutions where necessity would force the incumbents to enter into details as minutely as possible in order to find out the actual truths. The gravity of every action is decided from the motive, and we have to learn for ourselves the object for which stories are narrated in the scriptures and try to be benefited by them, instead of being led away by the external appearance of the stories.

It must be observed again that some allowance should be made to what we call poetical license. Poetry is intended to describe things graphically; and in making use of graphic descriptions, it becomes necessary to adopt a form that might

be understood and appreciated by the mass. The Indian literature has recourse to feminine delicacies in describing things; and this is mainly with the object of rendering the subject treated easily understood and appreciated by the mass. The introduction of feminine beauty into any subject has the charm of attraction, and subjects that may not otherwise be very much cared for are given this coating just in the same way as pills of a bitter taste are given a sugar coating. According to Hindu ideas the commerce between man and woman is symbolical of the relation between God and Soul, and this principle is largely availed of in the Indian poetical license. Due allowance should therefore be given to this license which depends to a large extent on the national tastes and habits peculiar to the Indian people. The essence and not the embellishment should be considered for our purpose. The embellishments may differ according to time and place.

The sciences of love and sociology were cultivated at one time in India to a great extent under the name of *Agapporūḥ* (அகப்பொருள்) or ideas in the mental plane, while arrangement of ideas in the physical plane was regulated by the science called *Purapporūḥ* (புறப்பொருள்). The rules laid down by the standard writers on these sciences were strictly observed by authors of classical and literary works, and a display of the knowledge of these sciences was considered to add greatly to the merits of Indian literature. All these various facts have to be taken into consideration before an opinion is passed on the tone of the Hindu scriptures; and the value they set on moral teachings and moral discipline, should also have a fair share of our attention.

Vedic revelations denied to Sūdras.

The major part of the Vedic literature is devoted to details connected with *Yāgas* which are mainly intended for the

advancement of secular interests. I will explain in the chapter on caste distinction why in the secular plane social distinction has invariably to be observed and why Sūdras are excluded from the use of Vedic revelations. The Vedas are too high in their standard of sanctity and mystical virtue to be handled by Sūdras whose mode of life and general habits are not suited at all for the observance of Vedic methods. Not only the efficacy of the Vedas will be inoperative if they are handled by unqualified persons, but they will also have an injurious effect on such persons if they break the rule laid down on the subject. The wants of the people of the lower grade are supplied by the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas* which are couched in languages suited to their standard of life without any mystic or *mantric* allusions.

Āgamas.

The Āgamas form an important portion of the Hindu revelations or *Śrutis* and they are twenty-eight in number :—(1) *Kāmika*, (2) *Yogaja*, (3) *Chintya*, (4) *Kareṇa*, (5) *Ajita*, (6) *Dipta*, (7) *Sūkshma*, (8) *Sāhasraka*, (9) *Amśumān*, (10) *Suprabheda*, (11) *Vijaya*, (12) *Niśvāsa*, (13) *Svayambuva*, (14) *Āgneyaka*, (15) *Vira*, (16) *Rourava*, (17) *Mākuṭa*, (18) *Vimala*, (19) *Chandrajñāna*, (20) *Mukabimba*, (21) *Prodgita*, (22) *Lalita*, (23) *Siddha*, (24) *Santāna*, (25) *Sarvokta*, (26) *Paramesvara*, (27) *Kiraṇa*, and (28) *Vātula*. There are besides 207 subsidiary Āgamas. The Āgamas form the backbone of the Hindu religion as they enter into the religion proper and elucidate it in its various aspects,—philosophical as well as ceremonial. It is a pity that this highly valuable religious literature of the Hindus has not caught the eye of the European savant, or if it has caught his sight at all, it was in a very imperfect and misleading manner—and the reason is obvious. The main source from which the western savant gathers his

information on India and Indian religion is chiefly North India where the religion is more or less *Vedic* or *Smritic*, and where there is at present no correct idea of the *Āgamas* or *Āgamic* literature, if there is any idea at all on the subject in that part of the continent. *Āgamas* are the real sources of the exquisite *Siddhānta* philosophy of which some interest seems to have been kindled of late, and of which South India may be said to be the full repository. The numerous gigantic temples of South India and the large number of monasteries and *maths* scattered all over that part of the country are exponents of the *Āgamic* faith that preponderates there, while the North Indian cult may almost be said to be confined to the *Vedic* form of worship; and what is worse, the little that is known there of the *Āgamas* is entirely of a misleading character. It is no wonder under the circumstances that the Western scholars whose glimpse of the *Āgamic* literature was from a North Indian source were altogether misled or misinformed. Like the six schools of the *Vedic* philosophy, the *Āgamic* philosophy has itself its own different schools—and they are themselves six in number—and these six schools of the *Āgamic* philosophy have their own *Āgamas* as well, in addition to the main 28 *Āgamas*. Out of the extra *Āgamas* belonging to these different schools, only such of them as are suited to the taste of the North Indian people seem to have found their way into that region, or seem to have received attention at their hands. The opinion of the West on *Āgamas* are based evidently on these spurious *Āgamas*, if one can judge from the opinions expressed by them on the subject. Their opinions are mainly applicable to the *Āgamas* of the *Vamists* or *Śāktas* who are devoted to the various *Śakti* principles of the supreme power—and these are the *Āgamas* that are generally known in North India under the name of *Tantras*.

The genuine Hindu Āgamas, or Śaiva Āgamas, as I may call them, are quite different from those spurious Āgamas, and it must be borne in mind that the genuine Āgamas are themselves as much inspired revelations as the *Vedas* are; and what is more important, they are considered to be possessed of special merit in the opinion of the followers of the Śaivite faith. They are to a large extent indispensable to the *Vedas*, in that they serve as key to the Vedic literature, and expound their real significance which could not be deciphered without the *Āgamas*. Their relative importance could be seen from the fact that the *Vedas* are said to have sprung up from the four side faces of Śiva, while the *Āgamas* are assigned his top face for their origin. When the four great sages, viz: *Sanakar*, *Sananthar*, *Sanātharar*, and *Sanatkumārar* approached Lord Śiva and complained to Him of the confusion created in their mind by the *Vedas*, He removed their confusion by teaching them the *Āgamas*. Their value is therefore quite apparent. The Pūrāṇic authors are experts both in the Vedic and Āgamic literature, and they give out in unmistakeable terms the merits of the *Āgamas*. Says the *Skānda Purāṇa*:—

தத்தமாந் நங்கணியூவிய சமயிகள் பலருங்

கத்துபுன் சொலை வினவினரவன் செயல்காணர்

சுத்தவாதுன முதலிய தந்திரத்தொகுதி

யுய்த்துணர்ந்திடு நீரரே யொருசிறிதவன் செயலுணர்வார்.

“Those who have heard the cavilling of the different religious systems that maintain their respective creeds will not be able to see His (Śiva's) action. It is only those that have studied the *Āgamas* such as *Vātula* &c., that will be able to know a bit of His acts”.

The *Āgamas* are in no way considered to be inconsistent with the *Vedas*, nor are they disclaimed by the adherents of

the true Vedic faith. The great sage Tirumūlar who is said to have lived for 3000 years and composed the mystic work known as *Tirumantiram*—and who should be assigned a date much earlier than the Christian era—gives out as his opinion that “Vedas and Āgamas are the true revelations given by God: the one being general, and the other specific; they are in no way different from one another; the great will find their agreement and concord”. The erudite *Nilakaṇṭha Śivāchāryar* in his commentary (*Bāshyam*) on the *Vedānta sūtras* says “that he sees no difference between the Vedas and Āgamas and that the Vedas are Śaiva Āgamas”. Eminent and acknowledged religious Scholars such as *Appaya Dikshita*, *Haradatta Śivāchārya*, *Śivajñānamuniwar* and a host of others have written elaborate treatises on the value and merits of the *Āgamas*, and on their concordance and harmony with the Vedas. As I have said elsewhere, the Vedas are very general in their mode of treating religion and are intended to serve a larger sphere of men than the *Āgamas* are expected to do—the latter being suited only to the select few who are fully advanced in their spiritual attainment. Religion is defined and expounded in the *Āgamas* directly and exhaustively, and, like the Vedas, the *Āgamas* themselves handle the subject in its two aspects—*Jñānakāṇḍa* and *Karma-kāṇḍa*. But in neither of these aspects, do the Vedas go deep, but they only give a rather succinct view of the religion—their object being to serve people of a certain grade of religious development which is not so high as to require special instructions. The main object of the Vedas is to advance secular interests, of course, with a view to bring the man indirectly to the path of religion; and they are therefore found to deal largely with *Yāgas* and other similar rites and ceremonies mostly in the secular plane; and the instructions they impart in the *Jñāna-*

kāṇḍa or religion proper, deal only with the general principles of the religion in a summary way, but enter neither into the details of the philosophy nor into the most important factor of realization. This is exhaustively and elaborately treated in the *Jñānakāṇḍa* of the *Āgamas* whose philosophy is therefore called *Siddhānta* or final end, while the philosophy of the Vedas is called *Vedānta*. Though there is no difference between the two in substance, yet the mode adopted by the *Āgamas* in expounding the philosophy is different from that adopted by the Vedas, which handle the subject rather generally, as I have said, while the *Āgamas* go deep into the subject specifically, and meet the yearning of those who are fully ripe for religious realization. In dealing with the *Karmakāṇḍa* of the religion, the *Āgamas* themselves deal with the secular plane, but their object in doing so is chiefly to safeguard the interests of religion proper, or in other words, to see that the spiritual interests of man are fully secured while he is indulging in secular enjoyment. The lower plane of the religion is regulated by the *Āgamas* by what are known as the paths of *Chariya* and *Kriya* while the course to be adapted in religion proper is expounded by them by the paths known as *Yoga* and *Jñānam*. In dealing with the secular side, they bring prominently before the view of man the immense spirituality that surrounds him and the different forms of Divine energies that are at work in that plane. These different forms of energies are known as the *Śaktis* of God, and many of them are represented in a feminine garb with a view to impress on the human mind their influence and effect. Some of the Schools of the *Āgamic* philosophy dilate largely on the influence and effect of these *Śakti* principles, and have written books in support of their own creed—such books being themselves known by the name of *Āgamas*. Some of these *Āgamas*

indulge largely in rituals on the lines of the Vedas, and this is perhaps the reason why they found their way into North India, where any idea of the Āgamas seems to have been based on these spurious works, while the genuine twenty-eight Āgamas are not known there. It is very much to be regretted that even such renowned religious workers as Svāmi Vivekānanda of North India had no training in these Āgamas which would have been of immense help to them in their work in Western countries.

The Āgamas may be found to treat with scientific accuracy the cosmic principle of the universe and deal exhaustively on the various *Tattvas* or elements, which form its basic foundation, tracing their source to *mantras* or the sound principles from which such *Tattvas* proceeded. The mystic influence which these *mantras* exert over the spirits that occupy and control the different *Tattvas* is dealt with at length, and the formulæ by means of which such *mantras* could influence the spirits are explained by diagrams or *Yantras*. If one could decipher these *Yantras* and understand the true import of the mystic *mantras* in their esoteric sense, he would then be able to admire and appreciate their value which no doubt would look like meaningless babbling and childish scribbling to strangers who have no idea whatever of them. They will certainly be perplexed and confused at the *mantra* literature as the Tamil proverb very aptly puts it. சிதம்பர சக்கரத்தை பேய் பார்த்தாற்போல்—“Like a devil looking at the *Chithambara Chakra*.”

The Āgamas again embody a good deal of information connected with the formation and construction of temples and their appurtenances, which are full of symbolical meanings, such meanings being fully explained in their proper places. The formation of the Golden temple at Chithambaram embodies a rich lore of mystical meaning, and one would do well to

investigate these secrets before he passes an unwarranted opinion on them. The *Āgamas* again prescribe various rites and ceremonies including *Mudras* (signs) &c., each and every one of which will be found to be replete with significance that will be of immense help to the religious student in his ascent towards the higher levels of *Yogam* and *Jñānam*. They deal with the details of the different kinds of *Dikshas* or initiations which are considered highly essential to religious students, and these details if inquired into will take one by surprise by their deep and highly significant meanings. A full *Āgama*, *Kāraṇam* by name, is devoted to the explanation of these rites and ceremonies, and every one of the other *Āgamas* may be found to inculcate highly valuable and essential doctrines. Their value is prominently brought forward in their exposition of the final stage of *Jñānam*, which I humbly confess, I am not in a position to give anything like an adequate description of. The true relation between God and soul, its present state of ignorance, the different stages or *avastās* it goes through in its present state, the gradations it has to pass through for reaching the final stage, the means it has to adopt for going through each gradation, the losing of the self and the realization of the *advaita* relation, the love that is necessary for securing this realization, the illumination of the Grace of God, the grand state of *Sāyujya* etc., are very exhaustively and minutely treated in the *Āgamas*. The twelve *Sūtras* of *Rourava Āgama* that treat of the subject in a wonderfully concise manner have been translated into Tamil and form the foundation of the exquisite *Siddhānta* Philosophy, that is expounded in that language and that has excited the admiration of European Scholars like the late Rev. G. U. Pope, Professor Max Muller and others. I fervently hope that the time is come for a research into the rich

lore of the *Āgamic* literature by the oriental students of Western Lands. The Language of the Āgamas is much purer and more refined than that of the Vedas, and it is therefore contended at certain quarters that the *Āgamic* literature is of a recent origin. The *Āgamas* being intended for those advanced in spirituality and in general refinement as well, the language in which they are couched, would no doubt be equal to their standard of advancement. And again, as the *Āgamas* deal with the higher branches of religion in a systematic and scientific method, they should necessarily have recourse to a pure form of language which would admit of no ambiguity or doubt. The language in which the respective *Srutis* are couched is, I think, a criterion to judge of the different grades of the people for whom they are intended, but not of the periods in which they were produced. There is no reason to believe that in the *Vedic* period there were no advanced religious students; while there is ample room to believe the contrary, if we could draw an inference from the language and context of the *Upanishats*. It must be observed that the Āgamas are found referred to in the *Purāṇas*, of which reference is made in the Vedas. It is not therefore possible to say which of these two *Srutis* is earlier than the other. They were both revealed by God and are therefore considered eternal; but during each *kalpa* they are revised by competent inspired authorities and there may be some difference in the time of their respective revision during any *kalpa*.

I know that it has been contended in support of the theory of the recent origin of the *Āgamas* that the art of writing was only introduced after the time of Aśoka, and that these religious literatures were only produced subsequent to that date. I do not think it possible to maintain this theory for the

Indians art of writing, as the following extract from the *Madras Mail* of 1894 would clearly shew:—

“Dr. Taylor supposes that the Indian alphabet was actually derived from the Arabic original, some thousand years before our era, or roughly speaking some three thousand years ago; and that consequently the Indians were acquainted with writing some four or five centuries before Buddha. This is an enormous advance on the Indo-Germanic theory which placed the beginning of Indian writing some centuries after Buddha.”

Apart from the above opinion of Dr. Taylor, I may point out that writing was already a known factor in India during the *Vedic* period. *Vedas* refer to *Aksharas* and *Yantras* in connection with the mystic influence of *Mantras*, and they also speak of the form and significance of the *Praṇava*. This would not have been possible if the art of writing was not known in those days. It is admitted, again by European scholars that the Hindus were highly advanced in the science of Astronomy as far back as 1400 B.C. It cannot be maintained that astronomical formulæ such as those connected with the signs of zodiac and the like could have been invented without any knowledge of writing. It is again admitted that the Hindus largely utilized the science of Algebra in their astronomical calculations and that Algebra is of purely a Hindu origin. Can it be said that such a science as Algebra could have been invented without any idea of the art of writing? Take again that wonderful Sanskrit Grammar of Pāṇini. This is assigned a date prior to Buddha, and I would ask impartial thinkers to say whether a grammar like that of Pāṇini could have been produced without any idea of the art of writing. It is for Scientists to say how many thousands of years a language should have been continuously cultivated before a grammar

like *Pāṇiniam* could be produced. I have heard it said by an eminent linguist that such a perfect Grammar as *Pāṇiniam* could not have been produced unless the language had been cultivated continuously for at least 15,000 years. Are we to understand that during these many thousands of years of continuous culture, Sanskrit was flourishing without any art of writing, and that Pāṇini's Grammar was produced at a time when the art of writing was unknown?*

Whatever may be the opinion of Western scholars on the subject, I would submit as my humble opinion that the art of writing was known to the Hindus long before the date now assigned to it, and that Śaiva Āgamas are among the ancient literature of the East. Their sublimity and superiority over the rest of the Indian literature have very unfortunately been hidden to Western scholars who would do well to dig into this invaluable treasure and let the world know of its intrinsic value. Āgamas are considered to be the cream of the Hindu religious literature, and a Tamil saying very aptly puts it that the *Vedas* should be treated in the light of a cow and the Āgamas in that of its milk.

“வேதம் பசு அதன்பால் மெய்யாகும்.”

Purāṇas.

Purāṇas are intended to illustrate in a practical form the theories put forward by the *Vedas* and Āgamas. They incul-

* I would refer the reader to the opinions expressed on the subject by such eminent men as Professors Wilson, Heeren and a host of others who think that the art of writing has been known to India from the earliest time and that Hindus possessed written books as early as 2800, B.C. Non-discovery of inscriptions of any period prior to the time of Aśoka is no reason to contend that writing was not known in India before that period. Non-discovery of any apparels of a certain period will not go to shew that the people of the period were naked.

cate religion in the form of stories and anecdotes and are made available to the high and low alike. The *Purāṇas* are also known by the name of *Pañchalakṣhaṇa* in that they treat of (1) The creation of the universe, (2) Its destruction, (3) The genealogy of the Gods and Patriarchs, (4) The reigns and periods of Manus and (5) The history of the solar and lunar dynasties. In treating these five subjects, they may be found to introduce into their pages the lives and doings of important personages who obtained power and prowess by their religious devotion, the merits and demerits obtained through good and bad actions, the value and efficacy of sacred places and shrines, the importance of morals and moral conducts, the merits of rites and ceremonies &c., and at the same time to inculcate the main doctrines of religion including the final stage of realization. The stories they narrate are rendered attractive by their figures and metaphors—and it is a peculiar characteristic of Indian literature to indulge in figurative language—and the reason is not far to seek.

Man is in the main a figurative creature. In the first place his name and form (*Nāma* and *rūpa*) represent his self: his thoughts represent his desires: his words represent his thoughts: his deeds represent his mind: his knowledge in general is acquired through antecedents or symbols of facts. Man's faculty of knowledge being limited in its nature, he requires limitation to grasp ideas. Figures and similes render limitation quite easy and impressive, and nature may therefore be found to largely requisition figurative and symbolic methods to illumine the intellect of man—and it is this method that is followed by the Hindu Scriptures themselves for imparting religious instruction to man.

Figures are so important to a Hindu that he considers the

universe itself to carry with it a figurative significance, while his body is supposed to represent a miniature universe. If the religion is investigated minutely, it will be found that the five actions of God (*Pañchakritya*) are representative of different forms of Divine Grace and that these actions are again symbolized by a physical dance in the golden hall of Chidambaram which again represents the heart of man. Such figurative methods, no doubt, profit immensely a seeker after truth.

Man is again made to see and feel God in his daily life by the various duties that are imposed on him which are in some form or other symbolical of certain religious principles. The scriptures not only give expression to actions performed by God in a figurative sense but themselves formulate figures of speech with a view to impress their teachings strongly on the minds of the readers. There is no doubt that this method of imparting religious instructions adopted by the *Purāṇas* has been attended with great success. The *Purāṇas* have been of immense use to the mass with whom philosophy, in its abstract form, will be of very little use. The *Purāṇic* stories have made such a strong impression on the general mass that it has created in them a religious zeal and fervour too strong to be shaken by the frailties of their mind; and when once this religious feeling is aroused in their heart, they will no doubt be led on higher and higher in their path to *mukti* and will be strongly posted in the spiritual plane with the help of other scriptures of a higher order.

Smritis.

Smritis are themselves considered an important section of the Hindu religious literature, although they are intended chiefly for those in the lower grade of the religion—the ritual plane. There are eighteen of them in number and they prescribe rules

for our daily life as well as for special rites and ceremonies. The duties of the four *Varṇas* and the four *Āśramas* are laid down therein in detail and they embody our laws—both ethical and political. The code of Manu has a very high reputation for the excellent morals and laws it inculcates. Sir Monier Williams, with all his Christian bias, speaks of the code as “one of the most remarkable books that the literature of the whole world can offer.”*

This code is assigned a date as far back as 1280 B. C. by Sir William Jones, while Mr. Elphinstone places it at 900 B.C. and Sir Monier Williams at 500 B.C. But according to the Hindu theory it belongs to a period of a still greater antiquity, the compiler thereof being Svayambhuva Manu, the first Manu of the present *kalpa*.

To the man in the secular plane *Smritis* are of great value as they instruct him in detail on the rules of his conduct in the various spheres of his life, quite consistently with the doctrines of the revealed *śrutis*—the Vedas and the Āgamas. If any *Smṛiti* or any rule prescribed by it conflicts with the inspired authorities, the former has to be rejected at once—and that is the sense of the *Smṛiti* itself.

Smritis are intended not only to regulate the conduct of man in the secular plane, but at the same time to guide him along the path opened by *Śrutis* which cannot be expected to enter into minor details, and these details are rendered the more and more necessary as the wants of man grow larger and larger.

[* Indian wisdom p, 204.]

CHAPTER XIII.

ASTROLOGY.

Astrology Defined.

Astrology is the "art of judging of the influences of stars upon human affairs and of foretelling events by their position and aspects." Although it is now supposed to be a superstitious practice, it is admitted to have been extensively cultivated during olden days and became the parent of Astronomy. There is no doubt that the Hindus, as a nation, have strong faith in Astrology from a very remote period, and that their faith has in no way relaxed in modern times, as in the case of some of the other nations of the world. The Hindus are therefore criticised and despised by the modern civilized world.

Belief in Astrology was very common among the ancient Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, and Romans. Ancient renowned authors, such as Plutarch and Pliny describe how largely the science of astrology was cultivated in Greece and Rome as far back as 600 B.C. We read in the Old Testament how Seth and Abraham believed in and practised this science; and in mediæval times we find eminent men such as Hippocrates, Aristotle, Socrates, Cicero, Pythagoras, Ptolemy, Cæsar, Claudius and a host of others, including Lord Bacon, were believers in Astrology. We read of a celebrated astrologer in England, Lilly by name, who flourished in the 17th century A.D. and whom King Charles I., is said to have consulted paying him the handsome fee of £1000. Richard I., wrote "Something on Astrology", and the Duke of Gloucester is said to have computed certain astrological tables in A.D., 1440. Poet Dryden

was a great believer in astrology, and many other eminent men of letters, such as poet Geoffrey Chaucer, Robert Recorde (the great Mathematician who introduced Algebra into England), Baron Napier, the great Kepler &c., were all believers in Astrology.

It is not possible to imagine for a moment that such a strong and wide-spread belief in Astrology, as was found to exist in almost all the countries of ancient civilization had no sufficient foundation for it. Astronomy, which is only a new name given to a section of the ancient science of astrology, and which in olden days was inseparable from the parent science, is admitted to be an exact science, even in modern days; and I cannot see how an exception could be taken in the case of Astrology. Astrology, according to Hindu ideas, is divided into three sections :—

1. *Gaṇithaskandam*,
2. *Saṅkithaskandam* and
3. *Jāthakaskandam*.

And it is the first section that treats of what is now known as Astronomy. We could easily guess what amount of observation and research was necessary to arrive at the perfection to which that section reached during those days; and it would naturally follow that the other sections themselves would have been based on an equal amount of observation and research, if not on a research of a higher order. The details connected with those researches are, of course, not available to us. This is so in various other branches of science such as Medicine, Law &c., and we will not be justified if we reject the fruits of a long and tedious labour of our forefathers, simply because the details of their labour are not available to us. Suppose that a few hundred years hence, the result of the labour

of our modern scientists is rejected by the people of that time for want of details, would their conduct be considered prudent or desirable? Even now, with all our spirit of inquiry and freedom of thought, can we say that we are in possession of all details connected with every department of our knowledge? It will be seen that we accept and act upon discoveries made by others, although we are not personally acquainted with the details that brought to light such discoveries. We are by nature so constituted as to depend on others for our information, and we could see much of this in our school-life. We depend on our teachers for explanations of words and idioms, and for processes adopted in mathematical solutions and calculations. The correctness of the instructions imparted to us by our teachers is simply taken by us for granted, and we do not in the least exercise our power of reasoning or spirit of inquiry before we accept as correct such instructions. Such a method of acquiring knowledge is not to be despised at all, that being fully consistent with human nature, and being indispensable in itself, in consideration of the imperfect nature of man and of his dependence on others for enlightenment. We inherit from our ancestors the wealth acquired by them; and that wealth consists not only in riches, but in knowledge as well. Can we refuse to accept the wealth of knowledge bequeathed to us by our ancestors, because we do not know the means with which that wealth was acquired by them? The law of gravitation is a theory that is accepted almost all over the world, and suppose that some thousands of years hence, the reasons that led to the discovery of this theory were lost to the people of those days, would they be justified in rejecting the theory, because they cannot say, how the theory was discovered? Even now, the reasons in support of the theory cannot be said to be known to

all who believe in it, or at least correctly understood by all; and would the people who have not a sufficient idea of the reasons be justified in rejecting the theory? Surely not. How can we then reject the science of Astrology which was discovered by our ancestors—who knows with what amount of labour and research?—and bequeathed to us as their legitimate heirs?

The science again is not without its own tests. The correctness of the science has been proved in thousands of cases, and, we read of Astrological predictions made even quite recently proving correct. Predictions under the science of Astrology may be said to have been verified in India and Ceylon almost daily by the vast number of Hindu and Buddhists and one has only to have an insight into the inner life of the Hindus and the Buddhists to have an idea how the science of Astrology is popularised and believed by them. There is not a single Hindu or Buddhist who has not a horoscope, and there is not a single undertaking of the people in the various walks of their life that is started without consulting Astrology. Such a belief in the science, and such a reputation of its value from time immemorial would not have been possible if the science had no real merit in it. It will be a Herculean task to quote individual instances where Astrological predictions proved wonderfully correct in India and Ceylon. But we read of many such predictions made in the West proving correct; and this, I presume, will be accepted by the modern critics themselves. William Lilly predicted in 1651 of the "Great Plague" and the "Fire of London," and the predictions having proved exactly correct, he was summoned before the House of Commons in October 1666 and was examined by that august assembly. The same events were predicted by the French Astrologer Nostradamus in the following words:—"The blood of the just

spilt in London requires that it be burnt by fire in sixty-six". He was so exact that he even fixed the time. The records of the Ottoman Emphire and the history of Mohamadanism abound with instances of the predictive art which appears to have attained great excellence among them. It was predicted of Osman I, that "he should be the brightest sun of the East and his posterity should reign over seven climates". The death of Mourad II, was predicted by a dervish who met him while hunting in the jungle just three days before his death. The death of Salem I, was predicted nine years before it took place, and in the reign of Salem II, an Arabian Astrologer foretold a succession of calamities by excessive rain. The death of Mohamed III, was predicted fifty-six days previous to the event. It may be observed in this connection that even the birth of Jesus Christ was marked by the appearance of a Star.

I may say that even so recently as 1890, the following events predicted by the famous astrologer Zadkiel proved literally correct:—the flight of the Emperor of Brazil, the suppression of slave trade in Africa, the epidemic of influenza in England, the epidemic in Spain, the impediments to the rising of the Nile, and several other similar facts. It is, I think, a well known fact that an Indian Astrologer predicted very correctly in 1900 the serious illness of the late His Majesty, King Edward VII, of England before his coronation.

Surely all these numerous incidents cannot be called chances or strange coincidences, and there should be some substantial principle at the bottom to work out these wonderful results. It is a fact too bold to be refuted that out of the horoscopes computed invariably on the birth of every Hindu child, a vast majority of them prove to be correct in the main, not to speak of the minute exactness which mark some of them. There may be

mistakes now and then,—and mistakes are common occurrences in every department of science and art which will not weaken their validity. If we can judge of things from results, we have ample room to be convinced of the merits of Astrology: and it is not therefore possible to assign any satisfactory reason for the science being discredited in modern times. We know that the Hindu Pharmacopœia, though very rich in its contents, is still wanting in the scientific section—or in the section that deals with the subject explaining details. The science cannot be said to have been discredited on that account, but on the other hand, it is largely availed of in improving the modern European medical science. I cannot see why the science of Astrology, which is more or less on the same footing, should be discredited and despised. The real basis upon which the science of Astrology is founded may either be a material or spiritual one, and it may be that we are not in a position to form any correct idea of the subject; but the correctness of the science stands verified by results, and it is much to be regretted that, even then, such an useful and interesting science, instead of receiving every encouragement as its importance deserves, is ignored and rejected summarily.

It may be observed that the tendency of modern Europe is generally to hanker after things new and novel, and to despise things old, however useful they may be. When a child is born, the Westerners commemorate the event by observing the birth-day every year; but when a man dies, however renowned he may be, he is not thought of any more. But the practice in the East is quite the reverse. The death of a man is commemorated every year by the *Śrāddha* ceremonies performed on his account, while no such commemoration can be said to be had on account of any birth.

There is ample reason to believe that the science of Astrology was cultivated extensively in the West during olden days, and I should think that it is the religion of the New Testament that is responsible for the overthrow of the science, as it is with the advent of this religion, a tendency towards blank materialism has been found to prevail to a large extent. The materialism was so thick that even scientific truths, not supported by ocular proofs, such as the rotundity of the earth, its diurnal and annual motions etc., were discredited and rejected at one time. The material tendency of the time, or the tendency to believe only in things actually seen was so great and so strong that the people who advanced the scientific theories above referred to were punished most brutally. It is no wonder that a time when such a material tendency was predominant, the ancient science of astrology was itself rejected and thrown out. We know, to what serious extent, the tendency developed itself subsequently and helped the dissemination of atheistic ideas quite recently—which, if not for the manifold services rendered by the Theosophical and other religious societies, would have ruined the whole human race. It is the duty of every right thinking person not to be deceived by the false pride of independence, but to realize the bold fact that he is dependent on others to a large extent for his living and moving in this world, and that he should not disclaim without sufficient and satisfactory reason any knowledge bequeathed to him by his ancestors, especially such knowledge as bearing on spirituality which would have cost immense time and labour, and the test of which depends mainly on actual experience—an experience gained by conforming to the rules laid down on the subject. Astrology is no doubt such a knowledge the rejection of which would be a preposterous and suicidal act, especially

so, when the soundness of the science is proved in thousands of cases.

Astrology as a Science.

Science is the result of experiments, observations and inferences, and Astrology itself is a similar result. The observations and experiences of generations of ancient people coupled with those of our own time could clearly shew that the science of Astrology is founded upon a substantial basis. A patient inquiry into the subject would, I feel sure, convince any unprejudiced mind of the *rationale* of the science even at the very start, and would induce seekers after truth to push on their inquiry further and further until they are led to the basis upon which the science is founded.

It is an admitted truism that the position and movement of heavenly bodies cause changes and fluctuations of times such as mornings and evenings, days and nights, weeks and *pakshas*, months and seasons, years and cycles, epochs and eras etc., which produce various changes on our Earth—these changes having been found to affect the atmosphere around the Earth; its physical features such as lands, waters, mountains etc.; the circulation of blood in organic beings; every organic and inorganic beings in general; the condition of patients etc. The influence of the moon over oceans, lunatics, sick-people and on women in regulating their menstrual course is admitted by science, and the enormous effect which the sun has over the vegetable and animal kingdoms of our earth has been fully accepted by all scientists. The following passage quoted from "Martyn's History of the British colonies" will fully bear out what I have said of the influence of the Moon, and will, I presume, convince the reader of the important function which it performs in guiding the destiny of the inhabitants of the Earth.

“In considering the climate of tropical countries, the influence of the Moon seems to be entirely overlooked; and, surely, if the tides of the vast ocean are raised from their fathomless bed by lunar power, it is not much to assert that the tides of the atmosphere are liable to a similar influence; this much is certain, that in the low land of the tropical countries, no attentive observer will fail to witness the power exercised by the Moon over the seasons and also above animal and vegetable nature. As regards the latter, it may be said that there are certainly thirteen springs and thirteen autumns in Demerara in the year, for so many times does the sap of trees ascend to the branches and descend to the roots. For instance, *Wallaba* (a resinous tree, common in the Demerara woods, somewhat resembling Mahogany), if cut down in the dark a few days before the New Moon, is one of the most durable woods in the world for house building posts &c.;* in that state, attempt to split it, and with the utmost difficulty, it would be riven in the most jagged and unequal manner that can be imagined. Cut down another *Wallaba* (growing within a few yards of the former) at the full Moon, and the tree can be easily split into the finest smooth shingles of any desired thickness or into staves for making caskets; but in this state, applied to house building purposes, it speedily decays. Again, bamboos, as thick as a man's arm, are sometimes used for paling &c.; if cut at the dark Moon, they will invariably endure for ten or twelve years; if at full Moon, they will be rotten in two or three years; thus it is with most, if not all, of the forest trees. Of the effects of Moon on animal life, very many instances could be cited. I have seen, in Africa, newly littered young perish in a few hours at the

* The villagers of the jungle districts of Ceylon are very particular in felling certain trees on certain days of the dark half of the Moon.

mother's side, if exposed to the rays of the full Moon; fish become rapidly putrid, and meat if left incurable or unpreservable by salt; the mariner heedlessly sleeping on the deck becoming afflicted with *nyctopia* or night blindness; at times the face is hideously swollen, if exposed during sleep, to the Moon's rays; the maniac's paroxysms renewed with fearful vigour at the full and change; and the cold, damp chill of the ague supervening on the ascendancy of this mild yet powerful luminary. Let her influence over this earth be studied; it is more powerful than is generally known."

Here is another extract from the *New Astrological Bulletina* of America in support of the 'Tali-manic effects of the moon over the Vegetable World':—"To prove the wonderful occult power which 'the empress of the night' possesses over the vegetable creation, proceed as follows:

Take any given quantity of common peas, and divide the same into four parts, keeping them separate. Then, on any spot of ground at all fit for vegetation, when the season approaches for sowing them, sow the contents of the first parcel on the first or second day of the new Moon. The second parcel sow near the same spot on the first or second day of the second quarter; the third parcel sow on the second or third day before the full moon; and lastly, sow the fourth parcel on the second or third day before the full Moon is out. Now the first parcel, sown under the new Moon, will grow very fast, blossom most beautifully, but will not bear fruit. The second will blossom and bear very little. The third parcel will not only blossom beautifully, but will bear fruit in abundance, and the fourth and last parcel will scarcely rise from the ground! Likewise all fruit trees set at the new Moon blossom, but never bear fruit; while all others set three days before the full bear abundantly.

And in pruning trees the same effect takes place, for a tree pruned at the new Moon will shoot forth branches, but unbearable, and if pruned at the full, they will be prolific.

This curious experiment has been tried by the Murcurii and several other philosophers; it at once decides the Moon to possess the most powerful influence over sublunary affairs, and whether relative to the animal or vegetable creation, or to the world at large, still is this influence perceptible to every searcher after Nature's secrets, and the discovery thereof will repay the curious inquirer."

Not only the Sun and Moon, but all the planets and luminaries of the heaven contribute largely to various changes in the Earth by their relative position to it, and by their periodical motions and changes which affect to a considerable degree the atmosphere, the solar light and heat, the law of gravitation and other natural phenomena by which the earth is influenced. These influences have an immense bearing on the vegetable kingdom, not to speak of their effect on the other kingdoms as well. The influence exerted on the vegetable kingdom alone is enough to guide the fate of man to an appreciably large extent. This influence has a direct bearing on agriculture, manufacture, trade, food supply, health and many other important items of political economy such as capital, labour, wages &c., and on the consequent laws and regulations of Government that will be rendered necessary thereby. We know how highly important it is, in the matter of agriculture to consult times and seasons, as in the words of Solomon "there is a time for every thing and a season for every purpose under the heavens; there is a time to sow, and a time to reap; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted &c." It would appear from Virgil and Horace that the people

of ancient days largely availed themselves of Astrology in the matter of agriculture, and the Hindus are found to do so even now. The breeding of live stock is an important factor in agriculture as well as in food supply and trade. Periodical changes have an immense influence on animals and animal breeding, and I should think that the rural population of almost every country have a better idea of the subject in a practical manner than any of our so called educated men.

It is known again that the position and movements of heavenly bodies forebode famines and pestilences, earthquakes and cyclones, and even national wars and other calamities which have often been predicted and proved to be correct even very recently. The following passage from the pen of a critic, Sir David Breuster, who at one time characterized Astrology as an "Airy structure" and a "mental aberration" will I think bear quotation in this connection :—

"In more advanced stages of society, the opinion that stars have an influence over terrestrial things must appear to be confirmed by observations which are not quite so visionary. Certain appearances in the heavens being associated with *corresponding changes* in the seasons were supposed to be the efficient causes or the invariable signs of these changes. The variations in the temperature and gravity of the atmosphere, the ebbing and flowing of the sea, and the fertility of the Earth were very early ascribed to the influence of Sun and Moon; and why should the planetary bodies be excluded from a share of the same dominion? or why may we not conceive that their influence is as great over the bodies and minds, the actions and fortunes of men, as the rule of the greater lights is over the vast kingdoms of the ocean, the air and the earth? Nay, is it not conceivable that these apparently miniature luminaries, whose

number defy human calculation, may have been appointed to regulate the destinies of the numberless individuals who inhabit the Earth? To each it is possible that a particular star has been appointed as the guide of his conduct and the arbiter of his fate; and might not this opinion seem to be strengthened by the consideration that as many of them have no apparent connection with the great changes, it may be their exclusive province to preside over the incidents which occur in the minute proportion of the world? We shall here take notice only of another opinion still less unphilosophical which might have a tendency to confirm the belief that the stars exercise a certain degree of influence over the moral world. All men have observed that the bodily constitution is sensibly affected by the modifications of the atmosphere; all men of reflection know also that the states of the body and that of the mind are intimately connected. If the heavenly bodies have an influence on the atmosphere, why not affect the human body? and, why they may not through the intervention of the body, affect the disposition and passions of the mind? Is it not very generally believed that climate has great efficacy in forming the human character, and if a few degrees of the thermometer are capable of accounting for the varieties of intellectual capacity, for the strength or weakness of passion, for the liveliness or defect of imagination, for the activity or torpor of all the faculties, is it irrational to conclude that these varieties are to be ascribed to influences from the celestial regions? Is it not possible also that other modifications of the air besides temperature, gravity, dryness or moisture may descend from the different parts of the solar system? What we call light is an influence of the Sun, without which the organ of vision would be useless. Is it not possible that influences from some other parts of the system

may be necessary to enable us to hear, to smell and to taste ; to reason, to remember, to love and to desire ? These influences, indeed, are not perceptible to sense, nor are they deducible from any general principle ; but they are not inconsistent with analogy. We suggest these ideas are not altogether destitute of plausibility ; and we think that we have observed something resembling them in the writings of some of the ancients who believed in the two kinds of influence—the one immediate and the other remote ; the one discoverable by the senses, the other eluding the most inquisitive observations.”

Experts in agriculture will be able to tell in more or less exact terms what the prospects of a certain seed would be if planted on a certain season. It will likewise be quite possible to tell the fate of a man borne on a certain period from the position of the planets at the time of his birth. According to the Hindu theory, human body is considered to be a miniature solar system, and there is therefore a close relation between that system and the body of man ; and when there is a change in the solar system, a corresponding change in the human body is also observed. If we prosecute the inquiry further and proceed into regions higher up, we will be able to find that the planets are each represented or governed by a spiritual agency whose regions the planets represent, and who have been ordained by God to regulate the destiny of man and other creatures on the Earth. Sun is the most powerful of these agencies, and hence he is respected and revered at times as the representative of God. We know of what paramount importance he is to the creatures in this world even physically, inasmuch as heat and light of which he is the sole repository, are the life and soul, as we may call them, of all the living beings in this world. Just imagine for a moment the condition of the living beings in

this Earth if there were no such object as the sun. Could vision be possible and could the very existence itself of any living being be conceived if there were no sun?—and yet we have the impudence to say that heavenly bodies have no influence on man nor on the other living beings of the Earth! Just add to these physical influences, the spiritual influence of the planetary agents, and we may be enabled to have a clear view of the correctness and value of the science of Astrology. The immensity of the heavenly bodies and their different positions from time to time would no doubt create a great confusion and complication in calculating their combined effect, and the science of Astrology therefore reduces their various influences to a system and helps man in forming an idea of his present, past and the future through the influence of celestial bodies.

It is not to be understood that the material world which we see around us is a blank materiality without any spiritual influence on it. There is immense spirituality at the back of all matter, and the difference in the several forms of matter is to be traced to a corresponding difference in the spirit that is behind it—or in other words, the different material forms are represented or governed by different forms of spirituality. There is so much of spirituality underlying every material form, that, in *certain* material forms, their different limbs or constituent parts are supposed to be pervaded by different forms of spirituality. Every material form, either in the mineral, vegetable or animal kingdom is under the influence of some spiritual form or other, and this is why in certain religious ceremonies performed by the Hindus, certain kinds of minerals, vegetables, grains or animals are preferred to others. According to Hindu ideas, there are certain grains, metals, and precious stones that are peculiar to certain deities, and planetary

agents, the reason being that these articles bear an affinity to the spiritual agents to whom they relate. It could thus be seen that the material world is placed under a deal of spiritual influence, a very large proportion of which is contributed from the starry heaven. This would be no wonder if we pause for a moment and consider for a while rather seriously the amount of the material influence exerted over us from different directions—from the earth, from the water, from the air, from the fire and from the various commixures of those several elements put together. When our physical frame is exposed to these various material influences, is it any wonder that our spiritual form itself is subject to an equal amount of spiritual influence? And again, what is matter? Matter is not a rational object that is capable of exercising different forms of influence over us. If the question is sifted a bit minutely, we could clearly see that the influence of matter should be traced to some spiritual agency. A careful study of the Hindu religious literature would disclose the fact that several forms of material forces such as attraction, gravitation, cohesion &c., are represented by different forms of spirituality known by the names of *Kundalini*, *Āvaranam*, *Parai* &c., and this means there is no materiality without spirituality.

What we call the material influence could itself be found to be of two forms—one gross and the other subtle—the subtle influence not being discernible by all alike. Some of the modern discoveries such as electricity, magnetism &c., may be said to be of the latter kind, and this subtle influence of matter has been at times made use of by designing people to deceive the ignorant mass, as if such influence was directly from a spiritual source. But there is a good deal of genuine spiritual influence behind every material form, and that influence has been found

to be very powerful in the case of the heavenly bodies, as was closely observed by the people of ancient days for ages and aeons—the result of such observations being known as the science of Astrology.

But to the present generation of the West, all spirituality is a scare-crow, and I should think that it is a Providential dispensation that they have not been scared away by the spirituality of God. What is very strange in their behaviour is that although the science of Astrology has been extensively practised from time immemorial, although there are even now ample practical proofs of its correctness, although there are abundant signs of its sound and substantial basis, still they will not even give a patient consideration to that time honoured science, but reject it summarily, as it were a dangerous snare thrown over them by some black devil. I must say in the words of that great Professor and Sanskrit scholar Max Muller that “so great is the ignorance which confounds a science requiring the highest education with that of the ordinary gipsy fortune teller”. It is indeed a false pride that refuses to recognise the intellectual greatness of the ancients and the fruits of their intellectual labour. “Preemptuous judgment is the besetting intellectual vice of the time we live in”, as very aptly said by Faraday. “There is in these days a craze for discovery” says Mr. R. Old who adds that “anyone who impartially compares the learning of the ancient Aryans, Persians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Chinese or Greeks with the science of the day will find out that, for the most part, only new names have been discovered.” Perhaps the science of Astrology may appear some time hence under the garb of a new name, and it is quite possible that, even then, the wisdom of our fore-fathers will not be acknowledged. The conduct of the

critics of our day is highly reprehensible in that they reject the science of astrology even without a critical examination. "I can", to quote Mr. Old again "confidently affirm that no man ever took up the study of Astrology for the purpose of exposing its errors without falling a hopeless convert to its paramount truth." Picus Mirandula is said to have written twelve books against Astrology, because Lucius Ballantine and others predicted from his horoscope that he would die in his thirty third year. He had, however to admit on his death bed that he was "dying at the predicted time," disproving thereby all what he had written. Similar instances may be quoted by scores, still our critics are dogmatic. It is a great pity that in their anxiety to find fault with everything old, they discredit and reject valuable truths.

What is still worse in their conduct is that although they are forced at times to acknowledge the merits of Astrology, they are very reluctant to accept it as a science. In the Medical Press and Circular for June 1890, "it is admitted that we owe to the Astrology of Galen and Hyppocrates some of the leading principles in the science of Medicine. It is conceded that the doctrine of 'critical days' in sickness is founded upon the motion of the Moon and its aspects, and conjunction with planets; also that the various temperaments such as jovial, saturnine, martial, and mercurial are named after the planets; that chronic diseases are attributed to saturn (Sani) called by the greeks *kronos*, the father of time; that lunacy is attributable to *luna* the moon; that the physiological month is a lunar one; that up to the seventeenth century, Astrology was studied as a part of the Medical art, and that in many instances students were examined in that subject."

Antiquity of the Hindu Astrology and its Agreement with Modern Science.

Although Hindus are attacked for their Astrology and Astrological belief, yet the critics are very reluctant to assign to the science a Hindu Origin. They think that the science must have been borrowed by the Hindus from the Chaldeans or Greeks, forgetting the fact that Astrological calculations are referred to in the Vedas, the oldest literature of the world, and that the names of all Astrological Deities are mentioned there. It is, however, gratifying to find that there are impartial writers as well; and the following quotation from Mr. Bayly will clearly show where to trace for the origin of Astrology:—

“Hence foreign epochs were either unknown or useless to the Hindus.....every thing proves.....that these Zodiacal figures have been transmitted to the Greeks by the Chaldeans who got them from the Brahmins.”


In the opinion of the critics, Hindu Astronomy,—or astrology, as they would prefer to call it—could be assigned a date as back as 1300 B.C. and this is no doubt a great concession on their part. But there is ample room to carry this date much further back, as pointed out by Mr. Tilak and other able writers.

It must be observed here that the calculations, made on the methods laid down by the Hindu Astrology, have been found to be quite correct in their results, such as eclipses, motions and positions of planets &c., and this is a strong proof of its agreement with modern science. There are several treatises on the science of Astrology, both in Sanskrit and in Tamil, and among them, special mention should be made of the Astrological Siddhāntas of which there are not less than twelve in number wherein could be found several natural phenomena explained on a scientific basis. It would take one by surprise

to find that their explanation of a great many subjects tallies exactly with modern science which dates only from 1450 A.D.; while the treatises above referred to are assigned a date as early as 1150 A.D. Among other things, the following theories could be found expounded in those Siddhāntas, and I leave it to the readers to form their own idea of the value of Hindu Astrology:—

1. That the earth is globular in form.
2. That it does not rest on any thing.
3. That its diameter is 1600 Yojanas (or 8000 miles).
4. That its circumference is 25,298 miles.
5. That day and night are caused by the earth rotating on its axis.
6. That the period of that rotation is 60 Nāligais (or 24 hours).
7. That the distance between the Earth and the Moon is 51,566 Yojanas (257,830 miles).
8. That the diameter of the Moon is 480 Yojanas (2400 miles).
9. That the length of a year is 365 days, 6 hours and 12 minutes.
10. That the atmosphere around the earth extends to 12 yojanas or 60 miles.
11. That the property of attraction is inherent in earth by which it attracts every unsupported heavy thing.
12. That the Moon is the eclipser of the Sun, &c.

One could clearly see from the above how exactly correct are these treatises and how extensively and carefully should have been the science cultivated in olden days. Is it possible under the circumstances to call astrology a superstitious dogma?




CHAPTER XIV.

SUPERSTITIONS.

• Ignorance is no Superstition.

• Religious practices are observed in some form or other by the followers of every religion who cannot all be expected to explain the meanings of such practices. Hindus themselves observe their own practices, but these practices are condemned as superstitions without any enquiry, apparently because they cannot be explained by the people who observe them. I do not think that such an abrupt conclusion would be drawn in any other department of human life, and this shows how lightly religious questions are tackled by the critics of modern times.

The instructions given to a patient by his Doctor are carefully, and I may even say blindly, followed, although the reasons for observing such instructions are not known to the patient or to his friends or relations. The observance of these instructions is never known as a superstitious practice, because of the inability of the patient to explain them; but in the case of religious practices, there is no hesitation on the part of our critics to condemn them as gross superstitions, even without any attempt at an investigation. The knowledge of man is limited, and, as I have very often pointed out, he cannot be expected to acquaint himself with the reasons of every theory that he believes in. He has in many cases to depend upon the evidence of others, and this is a class of evidence which he is bound to accept by a law of nature. A belief under such circumstances cannot be called a superstition, although I fully admit that belief in a theory that is proved to be unfounded is an abuse of our intelligence.



Several of the so called superstitious practices laid at the door of the Hindu nation, have been found on investigation to be replete with excellent ideals, and yet the prejudice against those practices remains unaffected. Image worship is one of the many practices on account of which Hindus are charged with supersition; and although ample explanation has been offered in support of that worship from time to time, there is not the least sign of the charge being withdrawn. Several other similar practices such as the smearing of "Sacred ashes," bathing in "Sacred waters" &c., have been fully and satisfactorily explained, but the charge of superstition remains all the same.

There are many practices observed by the Hindus in their domestic, agricultural, commercial and in almost every walk of life based upon sound and satisfactory reasons which the detractors would do well to learn for themselves, instead of indulging in random attacks. Apart from their religious value, many of those practices may be found to be possessed of great secular value as well, serving, as they do, to a great extent, the ends of sanitation and other useful purposes; and their connection with religion, no doubt, greatly ensures their observance. For instance, smearing of house floors with cow-dung, taking a bath after attending funerals, not touching the out-castes and several other similar practices may be found to be of great use in a sanitary point of view; but our critics would not give them any credit, at least, as forms of sanitary measures.

Prohibition of oil-baths on New Moon and Full Moon days, observing auspicious moments for performing important functions and ceremonies are practices based on the influence which the heavenly bodies exercise over our planet and its inhabitants: still they are condemned as barbarous customs!

Such practices as the observance of eye-blight and the like are based on the subtle relation that exists between matter and spirit and on the communication of the influence of spirit through mediums like sense perceptions &c. The detractors have never thought it worth their while to investigate into the secrets of these practices, at least as a matter of curiosity, but they take it as a foregone conclusion that these practices are nothing but meaningless formulæ.

Superstitious practices are again ascribed to Hindus in that they interpret in their own way certain unintelligible sounds such as the chirping of lizard &c., and in that they are very particular in the observance of omens and various other meaningless or meaning-not-known forms. I should think that there is a good deal in these ancient practices to engage the serious attention of unbiassed inquirers. I have repeatedly said that Hindus are a set of spiritually inclined people, and the idea of God is prominent in their view in every walk of life. They are therefore seen to read the will of God in every incident that befalls them—especially in incidents that happen accidentally or without any human effort. No accident can be said to befall man without the will of God, and the will of God cannot be without some meaning. The events that are now interpreted by Hindus are but a glimpse of the vast amount of the spiritual influence exerted over man through the material world; and if one could form at least a faint idea of the volume of spirituality that surrounds a man, and of the manner in which it affects him through the medium of matter, he could then be able to say that every movement in the material world has a significance, however trivial it may be. It is only a few items of the spiritual influence to which man is subject, that are now gleaned through what are known as omens and other incidents

—and this would, no doubt, excite the curiosity of a people whose knowledge is solely confined within the limits of the material plane.

There have been myriads of cases in which the interpretations put on omens and other similar incidents proved to be quite correct ; and in the face of such strong evidence, I cannot see how one could call these interpretations idle superstitions ! Human knowledge is based chiefly, if not wholly, on experience and when this experience tells us in clear terms that these incidents are significant of some future events, will it not be absurd to condemn the practice deciphering such incidents as superstitions ?

It is indeed a great pity that the view of our critics is so thickly choked up with the influence of the material world that they cannot see through it ; and, what is worse, in their anxiety to deify matter and to maintain their avowed policy of dismissing all spirituality out of consideration, they are found at times to have recourse to misrepresentations in order to support their charge of superstition laid against the Hindus. The Hindus are represented by them to hold that tiny insects like lizards are able to foretell future events, simply because their chirping and other signals are interpreted into certain meanings. This I should say, is a gross misrepresentation. It is true that Hindus interpret in their own way certain incidents that happen accidentally ; but they never ascribe to the sources from which such incidents proceed, any idea of the meanings put on them. A clock that strikes the hours is not supposed to know the time. There is certainly a good deal of superstition on the part of our critics in their anxiety to call every Hindu practice a superstition—and I have seen enough of it lately. They draw out of their fertile imagination as largely

as they could, and as an instance, I would draw the attention of the reader to a Catholic publication made recently in which the Hindu God *Śiva* is represented as the Chief of a Hill tribe and Lord *Subramanya* as a huntsman, while there is no foundation whatever for such a bald statement. Simply because the *Purāṇas* relate certain sports performed by *Śiva* and *Subramanya* in the form of huntsmen for the benefit of some of their devotees, our critics indulge in their frantic imagination, and ignore altogether the contexts of the numerous other passages of those *Purāṇas* which establish beyond all doubt the Divinity of the God-heads above referred to. Such is the superstition of our critics and their anxiety to bring home similar superstitions to the Hindus!

I will not, however, deny that there are among the practices observed by certain sections of the Hindu community rites and ceremonies that are not sanctioned by religion, but are dependant only on local customs—such as those observed generally in marriages and funerals—which differ from place to place. If inquired into, these practices themselves would be found to be founded upon some local tradition with a view to commemorate certain events, or to symbolize certain theories, and it will not be possible to call even these practices as superstitious forms. Religion, however, is not concerned in any way with these local customs and it cannot be held responsible for them.

It is quite possible again—and quite natural, too—that the practices peculiar to a nation, although founded originally on some substantial basis, might have undergone various changes by long usage in different places and at different times, owing to one of the commonest laws of nature. We find similar changes abundantly in the words of every language of the world, and in their meanings as well, and in fact, the origin of

the different families of languages may be traced to this cause. Words undergo material changes from time to time and place to place, and I do not know of any instance where such words, or the languages to which they belong, or the people who use them being condemned on that account. Although any custom that existed among a nation may have lost its original form, or its meaning forgotten or misunderstood, it would not be justifiable to condemn the custom as a superstition. It is, I think, incumbent on every liberal minded man to trace the origin of such custom and find out its genuine form and meaning, instead of condemning it at random, simply because the custom looks strange to his view, or its meaning is not understood by him. If every thing that is not understood by us is to be condemned as a superstition, we should be prepared to pass the same judgment on all languages that are not understood by us—and I am sure that no sane man will undertake to do this.

Different nations of the world have different customs, and the customs peculiar to one nation cannot certainly be understood by another nation. This is no reason why the customs of one nation should be condemned by every other nation. The best place to seek for an explanation of any custom is the community among which such custom prevails, and it is indeed a narrow minded policy to condemn the customs of a nation without sufficient inquiry simply because they look strange to us. The habits and manners of a European would surely be quite strange and curious to an Indian or Ceylonese peasant, and this is no reason for him to condemn those habits and manners without due inquiry.

Hindus are not a barbarous race whose objectionable practices it is necessary to weed out in order to improve their

social condition; they belong to a nation that enjoyed at one time the height of ancient civilization from which modern civilization has a great deal to learn. It is a great mistake to arrogate to ourselves that we are far superior to the ancients in our intelligence and enlightenment; or to presume that the ancients were an uncivilized race while we are highly cultured and refined. There is a tendency now-a-days to run down any thing and every thing that is ancient, because it is ancient, and no inquiry is thought necessary to pass an opinion on the matter. I am afraid that such a tendency would be productive of immense harm and may lead to some disastrous result sooner or later. It is quite possible that the ancients had their own undesirable habits, or that some of their habits have deteriorated and taken an undesirable shape. These are questions for patient inquiry and cannot be gratuitously admitted; and it must be borne in mind that no stranger could be considered competent to sit in judgment on the merits of the practices that prevails among any nation.

Sacred Ashes.

The chief religious emblem of the Śaivite creed is their "Sacred Ashes" and it is one of the essential doctrines of that creed that worshippers of Śiva should wear these ashes on their body, chiefly in their fore-head, in conformity with the rules laid down on the subject. We know that the different nations of the world have their respective insignia, and I know of no one calling the possession of such an insignia as a superstitious practice. But in the case of the emblem of the Śaivite creed, although it is full of meaning, the critics would not hesitate to call it a rank superstition.

I will explain here shortly the practice of wearing ashes for the edification of the critics as well as that of others who

run the risk of being prejudiced by violent criticisms. Sacred Ashes represent the Grace of God that illumines a soul on the removal therefrom of its inherent impurity of *mala*. Ashes, it must be understood, are produced by the burning of cow-dung in the sacred fire. Cow-dung is symbolical of the mala-power (*Paśu-malam*) in man—*Paśu* being a name for soul as well as for cow; and *malam* being a name for our ignorance (*Pāśa*) and cow-dung. When the *malam* that envelopes the soul is burnt by the fire of *Jñānam* or pure wisdom, the Grace of God shines forth, and this Grace is symbolized by the sacred ashes—white in colour. It is rubbed in our body to remind us of the Grace of God which we have to seek daily. There are several other reasons for the wearing of ashes, but I will not enter into them here, as it is for seekers after truth to find them out. I will only say that the preparation of these ashes is attended with a good deal of religious rites and ceremonies, which, coupled with the sanctity of the cows, add greatly to the importance of the “Sacred ashes”.*

Sacred Water.

There are particular waters that are Sacred to the Hindus, and a plunge in such waters is considered to be productive of great merits, including the removal of sins. This practice itself is attacked as a superstition in a summary fashion. Water is an element that purifies us of the dirt that accumulates around our physical form, and it is therefore made use of as a suitable emblem of the Divine Grace that

* For a fuller treatment about the significance &c., of the “Sacred Ashes” see the translations of “*Kālāgnirudropanishat*”—pages, 5, 6, Vol. XII, and “*Bhasmajābāla Upanishat*” pp. 513-521, Vol. XII; pp. 32-43, Vol. XIII, of the monthly journal *the Siddhānta Dipika*, published in Madras.

purifies us of our spiritual impurity. The Grace of God is supposed to abide specially in certain waters because of the spirituality that is predominant therein. As I have said elsewhere, there is spirituality at the back of every material object, and this spirituality is of various degrees and is proportionate to the advancement of the spiritual beings that preside therein. Material world, again, is symbolical of spiritual phenomena, and the virtues attached to the different forms of the material world differ according to the nature of the spiritual phenomena they represent. God impresses His special Grace on various objects in the material plane with a view to help man in his search after Grace in his own way. There are again various spots in this earth that are commemorative of the special Grace bestowed by God on some one or other of His numerous devotees, and these spots are considered as graceful spots, the Grace of God having manifested Itself therein, and that Grace having been vouchsafed by God to people who seek It there, as an appreciation of the devotion of the original *Bhakta*. Waters are considered sacred owing to any one or more of the reasons enumerated above. In the same way as there is a close relation between mind and body, so there is a close connection between spirit and matter. When the atmosphere of matter is heavily charged, as it were, with spiritual influence, there is no doubt that such matter will largely contribute towards spiritual advancement. The capacity of man is such as he could reach the material plane more easily than the spiritual region, and it is therefore very necessary that means for his recovery are placed on the plane which is easily accessible to him; and hence it is that the Śaivaite religion offers as many facilities as could possibly be done for his progress onwards.

Mantras.

Mantras are, generally, names of God, and as such they are undoubtedly virtuous in themselves. There are virtuous thoughts, virtuous words and virtuous deeds; and these various forms of virtues must produce virtuous results when resorted to by men. We deem it always a virtue to do a virtuous deed, and why should not the utterance of a virtuous word produce a similar result? Words are significant of their meanings and these meanings must have their own effects. We see clearly that deeds have their own meanings and their effects as well: why should not then words and thoughts have their own effects although such effects may be subtler in their results than those of deeds? We despise people who indulge in curses and execrations, and we praise those who use kind and affable words. Why should we make this distinction if words used by people do not have their own effects? *Mantras* are not only deep and comprehensive in their meanings, but signify the Grace of God which, no doubt, will exhibit Itself when sought for through the medium by which It is represented.

To go further into the subject of *Mantras*, sound, according to the Hindu theory, is at the bottom of all creation; and this sound, in its elementary form is of four kinds—*Sūkkumai*, *Raisanti*, *Mattimai* and *Vaiḥāri*, which again are to be traced to the primordial sound of *Pranava*. All mantras proceed from this main source, and from them the different forms of the material universe, or *Tattvams*, as we may call them, evolve. These *Tattvams* are the abodes of various forms of spirits, and their physical forms as well; so that, the *mantras* are, so to speak, the seed of the whole material world and the key to a large extent of the spiritual world itself. If one could master the *mantras*, he will be able to exercise a control

over the material world, and at the same time to have an easy access to the spirits that occupy the different regions of that world.

The effects of the *mantras* as such have been proved in thousands of cases and it is no superstition therefore to believe in the effects of such *mantras*.

Asowsams or unclean periods.

Certain periods of human life, such as those connected with the births or deaths of blood relations are considered to be unclean periods to the members of the family among whom such occurrences take place; and this is considered to be another form of superstition that obtains among the Hindus. We could find that such practices were ordained in the Old Testament too and I do not know whether the Bible itself has to answer the charge of superstition preferred on this account. It must be pointed out in this connection that the practice of observing unclean periods was in vogue among almost all the ancient nations of the world, and such a state of things would have been altogether impossible if the practice was not founded upon some satisfactory grounds. I will give below a few reasons in support of the practice as it obtains among the Hindus:—

1. Births and deaths are invariably associated with a large quantity of unclean matter or impurities of blood, and such impurities would naturally create a loathsome feeling especially in the minds of the people among whom such occurrences take place or in whom the same blood exists one way or the other. The period during which this mental state continues is therefore demarcated as an unclean period, and the people connected therewith are prohibited from taking part in any function that is considered sacred or holy.

2. The calamities of a death or the anxieties of a birth

would naturally disturb the mental equilibrium of the persons concerned and would cast a gloom and mental despondency over them which would render them unfit for any religious or public duty. This period of mental gloom is considered unclean or impure in the mental plane, and the persons affected thereby, *īṣṭ*, those in whom the same blood exists as that of the subject borne or dead, are prohibited from taking part in any function that requires a happy mood or calmness of mind. This rule of *asowsam*, it must be understood, applies only to persons in the secular plane, while a *jñāni* (who has given up all worldly concerns) has no *asowsam* to observe.

3. Another view of the question is sympathy with the subject borne or dead whose feelings would, no doubt, be seriously affected by the change of state that he undergoes; and the people in whom the same blood exists are made to sympathize with him for a certain period during which they are prohibited from taking part in any social or religious function, as a mark of such sympathy. The prohibition, it must be understood, applies only to social functions or to *quasi-religious* functions in the secular plane and not to any strictly spiritual exercises above the secular plane.

4. Births and deaths, again are two important items of evil which a man should try to avoid, and the gravity of this fact is placed prominently before the view of the persons who are in a position to realize it by reason of their consanguinity, and they are enjoined to consider the days connected with those evils as unclean days.

Cleanliness.

Cleanliness is a step to Godliness, and the Hindu religion lays great stress on the necessity of observing cleanly habits. External cleanliness contributes largely to internal cleanliness

or mental purity, our body having a great influence over our mind. We know by experience how our mind is rendered eminently fitted for communion with God and for other spiritual exercises when we are clean physically. According to the Hindu view, external cleanliness is symbolical of internal purity and is a preparatory step to the realization of *chitta suddhi* or mental purity. Hindus are therefore very particular in their clean habits, especially at times of religious services. No Hindu would attend a temple for worship without cleaning his body which he should invariably wash whenever he comes in contact with any unclean object. Too much stress cannot be laid on the necessity of forcing religion on man whenever and wherever it is possible to do so, and in however small a degree it may be. Religious exercises, however insignificant they may be, are sure to produce a substantial benefit in the aggregate, and cleanliness is not the least of them.

Mythology.

Mythology is the prehistoric story current among ancient nations ; but it is now given a fabulous character and is considered to be a store house of frensic ideas peculiar to the primitive people. Hindus are supposed to be fond of myths, and are therefore said to indulge largely in mythological legends.

I should certainly admit that there is a large stock of pre-historic events narrated in the Purāṇas, Ithihāsas and other sacred books of India. The Christian Bible itself contains several pre-historic stories, but I presume that they do not fall under the category of myths, because they are connected with the religion of the civilized nation of modern times ! Whatever the partiality may be, I should think that mythological accounts being the only record of prehistoric times, we could learn a good deal from them. The historic period is but an infinitesimal point in the

broad sheet of time and it can stand no comparison with the prehistoric period. We are exceedingly fond of the literature of the historic period, and we avail ourselves of every bit of it for the purpose of enriching our stock of knowledge. But though there is any amount of prehistoric literature, we do not care to be benefited by them to any extent, but on the contrary, we reject them summarily. I can assign no other reason for doing so, except that we are so much blinded by the material world that we are not able to see the spiritual lore that is stored up in those ancient literatures. Under the circumstances, our love of knowledge would appear rather queer to an impartial observer. We restrict our search for knowledge to the historic period, and reject the vast expanse of pre-historic period, simply because the historic period is suited to our material taste, while we have not the eyes to read the spiritual phenomena that are largely found in the literature of the pre-historic period. It would be idle to suppose that the vast literature of the pre-historic period was all drawn from some fertile imagination, and that it has no foundation to rest upon. The literature must have been founded on some truths at least, if not then it rests upon a solid rock of spiritual truth. We must endeavour to find out the truths upon which these stories are founded instead of rejecting them abruptly as worthless trash. We have now and again come across various scientific truths underlying these mystic stories, and if we study them closely, we may discover more valuable truths that would immensely benefit us both in the material and spiritual planes. Men of the pre-historic period were evidently far ahead of us in spiritual researches, and they had a more distinct and clearer view of the spiritual world than the people of the historic or materialistic period. The so-called mythological

accounts are but narrations of the achievements of those advanced in spirituality and of various other activities in the spiritual regions. This, I should think, is the reason why these hoary legends have been carefully preserved to us, while the exclusively materialistic accounts of the time, of which there should necessarily have been many, were not cared for. There was a time when the long epochs or *Manavantrās* and other cycles detailed in the Hindu *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas* were scorned and laughed at; but now we are beginning to appreciate their truths little by little. Many accounts of an extraordinary character, such as travelling in the air, quick communications between distant places, etc., referred to in those ancient literature, were rejected at one time as ridiculous exaggerations; but our balloons and airships, telegraphs and telephones have contributed largely to the confirmation of those accounts; and perhaps, in course of time, there may possibly be vast improvements and additions to our scientific discoveries, confirming the truths of many other accounts given in those antique literature. Who had ever expected that there would be such a contrivance as wireless telegraphy some fifty years ago? If any one had spoken to the people of that time of any means of communication like wireless telegraphy, he would have been most probably marked as a mad man! Mythology does not of course pretend to expound or explain any natural phenomena such as electricity or magnetism, but we could find ample references made therein to occurrences which would clearly indicate the uses such phenomena were made of. There are, however, various other references made in these antiquarian books that would not commend themselves to the credibility of our modern day materialists. They are still in their cradle of civilization, and they cannot certainly be expected to explore and unravel the mystic lore of

spirituality that is referred to therein under the name of *ashtamāsiddhi* and the like. We know how the quasi-spiritual practices such as mesmerism, clairvoyance, thought reading, thought transference &c., were viewed at one time, and how they are viewed at present. Reference to these practices made in the mythological accounts of India were considered at one time as wild dreams, but we know that these dreams have now turned out to be realities! and yet the prejudice against the ancient literature has not been removed to any appreciable extent! Mythological accounts not only describe various spiritual activities in the material plane, but they have their own peculiar method of describing such events. They indulge largely in figures and metaphors which have to be interpreted and understood in their true light.

The churning of the ocean by *Devas* and *Aśuras*, the swallowing up of the Sun and Moon by *Rāhu* and *Ketu*, the support of the Earth by *Ādisesha* are references in a metaphorical sense to certain activities in the spiritual world which had their corresponding effect on the material world. The churning of the ocean represent a certain spiritual activity as a result of which there were certain counter forces at work on the Earth, when the Moon was detached and blown out. The swallowing of the sun and Moon by *Rāhu* and *Ketu* refer to certain activities in the spiritual world, that are commemorated in the material plane by the solar and lunar eclipses. *Ādisesha* and *Ādikūrma* are the centripetal and centrifugal forces that support the earth in its position, or to put it more definitely, these forces are guided by the spiritual agents *Ādisesha* and *Ādikūrma*.

I would in this connection draw the attention of the reader to the following extract from one of the back numbers of the

Bombay *Theosophist* as regards the mythological account of churning the ocean:—

“A Glimpse through the corridors of time—Under the above title there appears in the ‘Nature’ the report of a lecture upon Astronomy by an eminent English philosopher (Lecture delivered at the Midland Institute, Birmingham, on October 24, 1881 by Prof: Robert S. Ball, L.L.D; F.R.S.)

“It is a lucid exposition of the physical changes that have been brought upon the Earth and her Satellite the Moon by their mutual attractions and through the agency of the tides. It is not our purpose to dwell upon the main features of Prof: Ball’s retrospective glance ‘through corridors of time’. We must, however, notice the fact, now mathematically demonstrated, that more than fifty millions of years have elapsed since the Moon, then a hot, plastic mass, was shot out of the substance of our equally hot and soft earth, by the Earth’s then frightful centrifugal force and dashed into space to take an orbit of revolution for itself. For, the time thus accorded to the life of our planet by science is far more in reconciliation with the Brahmanical cosmogony than with that of the Christians who have enjoyed so many jokes at its expense. It was once fashionable to jest at the ‘kalpas’ and ‘yugas’ of the Hindus; but nowadays, European Astronomers play with their millions of years as though each million was but a counter in a merry game of chance. At the time when the mass now comprising the Moon was wrenched out of the soft mass of the Earth, our globe was rotating on its axis with such tremendous rapidity that the day was not above three hours long—that is to say, it took only three hours for the Earth to turn from the Sun through the shadow we call night and back into the sun-light again. At that time the Soft-Moon, after it was torn away from

the Earth's side, and began its course as a separate revolving sphere, made a complete revolution around the Earth within three hours. A month was therefore but three hours long, whereas, now, as every one knows, it comprises 27 days. The Moon, at that time, was almost touching the Earth, whereas, now, it is at a distance of 240,000 miles. The primeval Earth was a fiery half-molten mass, where no organic life could exist, the atmosphere a dense mass of vapours in which all the present oceans of the earth were suspended as clouds. The sun rises and sets, but the day and night together only amounted to three hours. Almost touching her parent planet, the Moon revolves at equal speeds with her, as if—to use Prof: Ball's simile—'they were bound together by invincible bands'. The Moon was over the same locality, probably the part of the Earth from which it had been detached. But this propinquity of the two bodies could not last, and the centrifugal attraction preponderating, the Moon commenced its outward journey. As it receded, the period which it required for its journey round the Earth, increased also from three hours until it has increased to 656 hours. The rotation of the Earth was modified by the retreat of the Moon. Rotating at first in the same time as her satellite, the Earth, when the Moon had receded to a certain distance, made two rotations to one revolution of the Moon; then, at later periods, she makes three, four, five and so on up to twenty-nine rotations, while the Moon is making one revolution round the Earth. The Earth's rotation is getting always slower, and so is that of the Moon. At present, the month has diminished to 27 days, but as the speed of the Earth's rotation decreases, our month will grow shorter and shorter. As Prof: Ball puts it:—

'Further and further will the Moon retreat and more and

more slowly will the earth revolve..... In the dim future, many millions of years distant, the final stage will be approached. As this stage draws nigh, the rotation of the Earth will again approach to equality with the revolution of the Moon. From the present month of 27 days, we shall pass to a month of 26 days, of 25 days, and so on until eventually we shall reach a month of two days and lastly a month of one day. When this state has been attained the Earth will constantly turn the same region as the Moon..... Here you see that the first and last states of the Earth-Moon history in one sense identical..... In another way how different are the first stage and the last? At the beginning, the day and the month were both equal, and they were each for three hours. At the end, the day and the month will be again equal, but they will each be 1400 hours. In other words, the day is destined in the very remote future to become as long as 57 of our days,

“Or to express it according to the ancient cosmogony the Earth will have completed one of its minor cycles, with her offspring the Moon. And if the Student will now compare the above mathematically certain scientific theory of the evolution of the Moon from the half molten globe of the Earth, with the Hindu cosmogonical story of the churning of the ocean by the *Devas* and *Asuras*, using *Mahāmeru* as the churning stick, and the *Nāgā* or the great serpent as the twisting spring, and remember their getting the Moon among other things out of it, he will perhaps see light shining in what was perhaps a dark place before. If, as some say, the fabled gods and demons in constant opposition that are named as above, represent the opposing forces of nature, and the *Nāgā* is but the earthly symbol for the spiral of fire mist which modern astronomers see through their telescopes, and affirm to be the first beginning of the new globe that is to be

evolved out of the ether (Ākāśa); and the ocean stand not for our present seas, but for the jelly like molten mass of the entire globe; then the Hindu myth-makers do not seem quite so ignorant as their European critics may have fancied".

The Hindus, as a nation, have no doubt an instinctive yearning for spirituality, and they are therefore fond of mythological accounts which are rich in spiritual stories. Our modern critics would do well to benefit themselves by the large stock of information buried in the Mythological accounts, by endeavouring in the first place to acquaint themselves with the language and dialect of the ancient literature and then to get at the spiritual truth that is imbedded therein.

Self torture.

Man, in his devotion to God, not only follows the rules laid down by religion for the exercise of such devotion, but has recourse to other forms as well as may be suggested by his zeal and piety. Vows and penances therefore take different forms, though they may be said to be more or less on the lines laid down by religion. Fasting is one of the forms laid down by the Hindu religion, and it is intended not only as a denial of worldly pleasures, but as a means to concentrate our mind on God. Another view taken of fasting is infliction of pain on one's own self in the name of God, and this view is largely shared by men of mediocre intelligence in their religious zeal, who at times carry matters too far and even submit themselves to physical hurt in the name of God. Although such acts may be called religious fanaticism, yet they are the outcome of faith and religious ardour, and as such have much in themselves to be admired. It is however very desirable to confine one's self within the bounds of religion, and the followers of every creed must learn to abide by the rules laid down by their own

creed, instead of being driven away by their whims and caprices. Fighting against nature and inflicting bodily injuries against the spirit of religion is a fight against God, and such a fight cannot be considered as a means to please God.

Ghosts and Spirits.

Ghost stories are heard among all nations of the world, both ancient and modern; and still they are attacked as superstitious gossips by the critics of our day, especially so, when the stories emanate from a Hindu source. I may quote instances, by thousands, of ghost stories of quite recent times which it is not possible to reject as untrustworthy, and which must therefore be accepted as actual facts. The critics would not care at all to have a patient inquiry into the matter or to give any share of their attention to the importance of the phenomenon even as a matter of curiosity. It has become the fashion of modern civilization to reject these stories summarily, as if that civilization has placed it beyond all manner of doubt that the existence of ghosts and spirits is an impossibility. Such a spirit of the time must necessarily be attributed to the material tendency that predominates at present, and it is greatly to be feared that this spirit, if left unchecked, will seriously affect one day the belief in the existence of God as well. Ghosts are supposed to be spiritual beings just like human souls, and their existence cannot therefore be said to be either an impossibility or an improbability. But various phenomena which cannot be attributed to any other source having been observed from time to time, the existence of spirits cannot but be admitted as a matter of fact. The psychic or spiritual influence of one man over another has been abundantly observed even in modern times, and such influences are known as mesmerism, clairvoyance &c. If living souls are capable of exerting such

influences, why cannot departed souls or spirits that have no material embodiment exert a similar influence in their own way? I do not propose to discuss here the functions and capacities of spirits, but I will only draw the attention of the reader to the *rationale* or principle of the ghost story. Scientific discoveries are invariably made by observations, and such observations cannot be rejected as superstitions simply because they deal with spiritual phenomena. Inquiries instituted into the theory on a scientific basis in European and American countries have amply established the fact that there is a large amount of truth underlying ghost stories; but the spirit of modern civilization is to jeer at every thing spiritual and it would not permit our critics to open their eyes and to see for themselves the foundation on which ghost stories are actually based.

The limited space at my disposal would not permit me to quote instances of spirit activities which were witnessed and testified to by many trustworthy witnesses, but I will refer the reader to the publications made by the London Dialectical Society and by Professors and Inquirers who took a real interest in the matter and gave out their opinions and the results of their researches in an unbiassed manner. Ghost stories and ghost activities are almost of daily occurrence in India and Ceylon, and it would not be possible to say that these many strange phenomena are without any foundation at all. We have heard of ghosts appearing in some form or other in what are known as haunted houses; of household articles being moved from their respective places without any material force being brought to act upon them; of people under the influence of ghost foretelling future events and events that happen at distant regions, and even speaking languages of which they have no idea in their normal state; of things being brought

from distant quarters without any human agency &c., and these phenomena cannot be attributed at all to any cause in the material plane. The existence of spirits has therefore to be fully admitted and accepted, however reluctant we may feel to do so. It is true that there have been frauds and deceptions practised under the guise of these phenomena, and so there are frauds practised in connection with various material arts and exhibitions. A genuine coin is not to be rejected because of the existence of counterfeit coins, and a genuine theory is not to be rejected because of frauds committed in its name. There may, again, be failures in experiments, and such failures are not uncommon even in the material plane. These contingencies should not be counted at all as proofs against the theory which has to be examined on its own merits by general experiment.

It is of course possible to trace some of these phenomena to such *quasi* material causes as magnetism &c., but it may be seen that even in such cases there is a good deal of spiritual influence without which the phenomena cannot be accounted for. There are, however, various other phenomena which are exclusively spiritual and which would irresistibly prove the existence of spirits. To sneer at their existence would amount to a wilful ignoring of glaring facts.

According to the Hindu theory there is an immense spirituality around us, and in fact, the spiritual influence that affects us, though subtler in its nature, is much larger and more effective than the material influence we are subject to. The material world is always under the control and guidance of some spiritual agent or agents, and there are besides various other spirits that come in contact with us in their spiritual form. They are clad in a subtle body known as *Sukshma Sarira* and are capable of exerting their influence over us to

the extent of their nature and capacity. The means to approach these spirits and deal with them are reduced to a system by which we are enabled to perform various methods of what are generally known as magic arts. The knowledge under this head is imparted by the religion under the name of *Ashtakarmam* (eightfold methods) such as *Āgarshanam*, *Uchchādanam*, *Thampanam*, *Māranam* etc.—the efficacy of which has been clearly demonstrated by actual experiments.



CHAPTER XV.

CASTE SYSTEM.

Utility of Caste System.

Caste system is supposed to be an institution peculiar to India and it is found at times to be an object of severe attack at the hands of Western Missionaries. It is true that the institution is a great obstacle in their way of proselytism, but this is not a sufficient justification of the attack levelled at it. The opinion, on the subject, of Western laymen seems to differ very much with that of the Christian Missionaries, and the former seem to feel the utility of the caste system to an appreciable extent. But in the opinion of the Missionaries, caste system is the curse of India, and the various disadvantages under which the country suffers at present are attributed to that system. The critics do not seem to realize the fact that there was a time when these disadvantages were not known in India, though at that time, caste system was in its full swing in that great continent.

I do not mean to deny that the various ramifications of the caste system, as they now obtain in India, have their dark side as well—and it is no wonder that any institution, however elaborate and thoroughly worked out it may be, will have its own *pros* and *cons*, especially so, after it has been working, as in the case of the caste system, for thousands of years, with the inevitable result of the effect of time being impressed upon it. The question for consideration is the main principle of the system. Can it be said that the main principle of the system is faulty in itself?

I do not think it possible for a moment to deny the existence of diversity among human beings, as there is among the various other creatures that are found on the face of the earth. Such a diversity has been acknowledged by science which groups men into races and families, nations and creeds. The utility and desirability of such a grouping cannot be denied any more than the necessity of classifying the various objects of creation into genres and species. It is true that we are all children of the same father, or that we have all been created by the same God, but that does not go to show that there should be no difference among us. Even children of the same parents are found at times to differ widely on material points; and if, with the object of conserving their different ways, they are kept apart, so far as those ways are concerned, such a setting apart will not be considered ill-advised or inimical to the interests of the family.

We all know that the vast family of the great God—if we may so call the human beings—are of varied character and diverse tastes, and we know further that heredity plays a great part in this variety and difference. It is an admitted truism that character and taste are remitted from father to son, more as a rule than as an exception, and that among the various factors of nature, law of birth contributes largely to the formation of character and taste in man. Caste system only seeks to keep apart the different characters and tastes peculiar to different people by fixed lines of demarcation, and the necessity for such a demarcation is quite plain. For, if they are allowed to mix up promiscuously, the result would certainly be great chaos and confusion which would ultimately lead to the destruction of the whole fabric. Some arrangement by classification is therefore very essential for regulating the human society, and if one

would take the trouble of giving his serious thought to the problem, it would be found expedient to group the human beings under certain main heads :

1. First and foremost among them would be those that attend to spiritual wants.

2. Second in order would be those that attend to administrative measures and political wants.

3. Third in order would be those that attend to commercial pursuits and interchange of continental products.

4. The fourth place may be assigned to those that attend to agricultural pursuits.

5. Fifth in order would be those that are engaged in different industries, arts, manufacture &c.

The caste system only adopts a scheme more or less on these lines in order to regulate the human society. Instead of allowing the people of the different callings to be blended together, to the glorious confusion of the society at large, the caste system seeks to regulate them by division of labour and applies the rule of heredity to govern such regulation. The calling to which a man betakes himself has a great influence on his general demeanour and position in life, and our ancestors seem to have fully considered the various aspects of the case, and formulated the caste system which has a good deal in it to be admired and appreciated for the ingenuity and forethought displayed in the laying out of the system.

Classification by genuses and species of the various objects of creation is an arrangement fully consistent with the order of nature, and an attempt to find fault with such an arrangement would be nothing short of fighting with nature. Nature has laid down clear and distinct lines of demarcation between the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral kingdoms of the earth

and between the various genuses and species belonging to each kingdom. Similar lines of demarcation may be found to exist among human beings as well, in the shape of races and nations; and even among the members of the same nation or race, sub-divisions by grades and ranks according to social positions are not peculiar to India alone. Such distinctions could be found abundantly in European Societies as well, though they are not called by the name of caste. I will quote below what a European writer (T. L. Nicholas M.D.) says of societies in England.

"Everywhere in England, we find first, second and third class. They stand wide apart—farther in England than in any country in the world. Nowhere is there such pride of rank and riches, such exclusion, such inhumanity.

"The noble and the wealthy—those we call the gentry—may be kind, gracious, affable and condescending; but affability and condescension are in themselves the assertion of a rigid caste distinction. The members of the different social ranks cannot sit together, eat together, be educated together nor even confess themselves miserable sinners together. The children of the three social grades seldom intermingle. A boarding school for the daughters of the nobility and gentry cannot receive the most beautiful, the most talented, the most lovely and accomplished daughters of a wealthy and respectable tradesman; and no more can the daughters of an artisan hope to be educated with the young ladies of the grade above her. The lady who marries even a man of genius born in a lower rank than her seldom recovers her social position."

That is the state of society in England, and the same may be said of other European countries as well. I do not think there is much difference between this rank or social distinction

and the Indian caste. If at all there is any difference, such difference may be said to exist only in the details and not in the principle. Indians may be rigid in the observance of their caste rules while Europeans may be found to be rather lenient or lax. The strict observance of a rule once laid down is not an evil in itself, and the Indians cannot be condemned on that score. There may be exceptional cases where laxity of rules would be considered expedient, but it must be remembered that such cases are only exceptions which cannot be made a general rule; and that if they are so made, the result would be highly disastrous, and in this case, it may lead to the success of pretentious claims and prove greatly prejudicial to the interests of the society as a whole. The evils that may result out of laxity of caste rules would more than counterbalance the benefits, if any, that may accrue out of it. It is not therefore possible to find fault with the strict enforcement of caste rules. I may say that if not for this strictness, caste distinction would perhaps have been swept away from India long ago.

It must, however, be observed that exceptional cases where merits are admitted beyond doubt are duly acknowledged and respected in India irrespective of caste or creed. There have been several instances where men of inferior ranks, when found possessed of real merit were highly respected and even venerated by men of superior ranks. Viyāsar, Kāṇṇappar, Nandanār, Valluvar, Kambar and a great many others are standing monuments of such cases. But these are only exceptional cases and it will not be considered expedient or safe to break the rule because there are exceptions. The rule is a rule and it must be observed as a rule subject of course to golden exceptions.

Birth-Right.

When the sound basis upon which caste system rests is pointed out to the critics, they narrow their objection to birth-right and argue that caste system may be an useful institution, provided it is not reckoned by birth right.

This seems to me, in the first place, an attempt at ignoring the effects of a law of nature. Instincts and tastes are transmitted from father to son by an inviolable law of nature, and I cannot see why we should not avail ourselves of this law of nature in regulating our society. We know that for any profession a man betakes himself to, the important factor necessary is his taste for such profession, and that taste is a natural instinct contributed by birth-right. It should therefore be considered a wise arrangement if the various callings in this world are allotted among men according to their taste, and if that taste is judged by the natural law of birth-right.

We know that it is by birth-right the right of succession to the throne in all the empires and kingdoms of the Earth is regulated, and there is no doubt that this is a very satisfactory and safe method of solving one of our important social problems. We know again that it is by the same birth-right another of our important social problems, viz., inheritance of property, is regulated and governed; and it is not possible to understand why that birth-right cannot be utilized in regulating our society.

If all professions, are thrown open to all indiscriminately, be taken up by them at the bidding of their individual whims and caprices, the society will be a huge mass of confusion, and such a state of things will be highly detrimental to the progress of the society as a whole. A promiscuous choice of callings would lead to deadly competition which would be a danger in

itself. Division of labour is therefore very essential for the progress of any society, and caste system only seeks to regulate this division. There is no doubt that such a division could be best made according to the taste and capacity of individuals, and that the safest method of gauging this taste and capacity is by birth-right.

Although the various callings which people betake themselves to may be said to be in the interests of the society in general, they cannot all be said to be of equal importance. Their importance varies according to their demand and to the nature of work involved therein. The work of a cooly who breaks metals for roads and that of an Engineer who supervises the formation of such roads cannot be said to be of equal importance. This difference contributes to the gradation of our society, the various callings being allotted among men according to their taste and capacity. As a rule, taste and aptitude for the different callings assume the shape of an instinct and are transmitted from father to son as hereditary right which is availed of by the caste system for regulating the human society.

Surely, if our society is not governed by some such rule, one could easily picture to himself how confused and chaotic it would be. Every individual would endeavour to put forward his claims to a superior grade, and there would be endless dispute and wrangling on the subject in the society. Birth-right is an effective, and at the same time, an impartial *prima facie* evidence to decide one's fitness to any calling, and to the consequent grade of society that is to be assigned to him.

I must observe in this connection that it is a great mistake suppose, as our critics seems to think, that caste system works prejudicially against the interests of Agriculture and Art.

Agriculture has been held in very high esteem by all classes of people, and the ancient literature of India will amply bear this out; and the importance attached to Arts by the Indian nation can be easily gauged from its connection with Visva Karma, the celestial artist. It is true that in modern times these industries do not receive sufficient encouragement from those who enjoy high positions in life, and this is mainly due to want of sympathy and lack of public spirit, which, and not the caste system, are the drawbacks of our time. Caste system, allots the labour required for human life in this world among different clans, and renders these clans useful and helpful to each other, and makes it very clear that the most important duty of man is mutual help and promotion of public good. This main object of the system is entirely lost sight of, and public interest is now sacrificed at the altar of private interest. This is indeed menacing art and it should be promptly remedied by enforcing the caste rules in their true sense.

Although caste system is intended to regulate the secular side of human life, it is not without its connection with religion as well. As I have often said, Hindu religion enters into secular questions with the object of creating spirituality in man in his own way and of safe guarding his spiritual interests. In the matter of caste, religion endeavours to impress on the people the value of spirituality, by arranging the gradation of society according to the amount of spirituality that is engendered by the work allotted to the different sections. There is no doubt that the nature of the work a man does has a good deal of influence on his mind, and leads ultimately to results according to the nature of such work. We could clearly see the difference between the work of a nurse in a hospital and that of a butcher in a slaughter house. Religion therefore makes use of the

caste system to keep the people of the different callings apart from each other in order to prevent contamination and to conserve and nurse their spirituality in a manner suited to their own standard of advancement. Duties are imposed on the different sections according to their capacity and character and they are made to respect and regard each other according to the amount of spirituality involved in their respective work. This is the main object of religion in entering into the caste question, and we should not ignore this object in our anxiety to promote our material advancement. A man that figures in his own calling certainly deserves encouragement, but that encouragement cannot be carried outside the legitimate bounds of his own sphere. A butcher who may discover some scientific method of slaughtering animals may of course be encouraged within his own sphere, but he cannot on that account be raised to the pulpit and made to preach to a congregation. But if a man, whatever his caste may be, shows extraordinary signs of spirituality in him, the caste rules become at once a dead letter with him, and he is placed above all castes. It is therefore highly essential that we take particular care not to be blinded by our material craving and ignore the spiritual interest which the caste system is intended to safeguard in its religious aspect.

Our critics seem to think that the social position of a man should be decided by his position in life and not by his birth-right. I do not think that this would be a safe procedure. A horse may put in a good appearance externally, but we should not be deceived by the mere appearance of it. We should examine the animal, make enquiries about it, especially as regards the stock to which it belongs and satisfy ourselves about its soundness, before we strike a bargain. It is not the

affluent position in which a man is placed or the success in life that he enjoys that could be called a proper criterion to decide his position in society. A rogue may be in affluent circumstances from the spoils of his booty or a man who has no regard for character may turn out an expert in some art or other and be well off in his own way. I do not think that the positions in life in such cases would be a satisfactory guarantee for a corresponding position in society. Position in society must as a rule be guided by one's character, the nature of the work that he does for the community at large, and the standard of his natural greatness which depends mainly, if not wholly, on his birth-right.

It is all well and good to speak of equality of human beings. Not only could all men be said to be possessed of equal rights, but all animals may be said to have such rights—and this is no reason to treat all animals equally. As there are differences between the various species of animals, so there are disparities between the various grades of men. To ignore this bold fact and to argue that all men are equally gifted is only the sign of a primitive race just beginning to think of the rights and liberties of men. I am sure that when civilization progresses and passes through the various phases of social development, the necessity of observing social distinction and of recognizing such distinction by birth-right will be fully acknowledged. We cannot in our anxiety to promulgate the theory of equality of human beings, fight against nature and ignore the difference that is clearly manifested to us between the various grades of man, whose main characteristics, we see, are being conveyed from father to son as a birth-right. It is indeed a great pity to find that the material tendency of our modern generation has been waging a war

for some time past against the existence of God and that now their socialistic tendency prompts them to wage a war against nature. However we may try to inculcate the queer ideas of Socialism in our mistaken notion of liberty and freedom, we cannot resist the law of nature and its inevitable results. Not only are men made of different types which render gradations among them necessary and desirable, but their relation to each other is such that the merits of those in a superior position have to be tacitly acknowledged by those in the inferior grade, as otherwise there would be endless rupture and unpleasantness in the society which may eventually lead to a great confusion among them. It may be urged as an excuse that Societies in European countries get on well without caste system; but I must point out that it cannot be maintained as a matter of fact that there are no distinctions in European Societies. The line of demarcation between the various Societies in European Countries may not be so clear as it is among Indian Societies: and the explanation is that European societies are still in their incipient state, and when they develop, they must have distinct lines of demarcation, or they must collapse. European Societies, again, are built entirely on material lines, while in India the spiritual interests of the people had their due share of attention in the organization of their Society.

The fantastic idea of equality of human beings has of late grown out of dimensions, and it is even contended that there should be nothing like inheritance by heirs and successors, but that all wealth, by whomsoever acquired must be considered the common property of all human beings. The gist of the contention is that birth-right is only a chance or accident, and that this chance or accident should not give any one a right over any property in preference to others. The advocates

of this doctrine would do well to keep in their view in the first place, that the doctrine wholly ignores the effect of Divine influence over human affairs and that they do not realise for a moment that what we call chances and accidents are all governed by the law of Providence. If, however, the advocates are prepared to contend that there is nothing like Divine law, they might as well preach a crusade of pillage and plunder and make all rights subject to might. No law or justice could be maintained without acknowledging the existence of God, and the observance of any law or rule of justice will only be a farce, and any enforcement of such law or regulation will be an encroachment on the liberty of man according to their own way of thinking. I will not however enter into the questions of utilitarian theories or atheistic doctrines in this place.

But I must point out that the birth of every man, and his living up to any age in this world are themselves as much chancework as the birth-right of an heir to a legacy. I cannot see how these chanceworks will entitle people to a share in the wealth left behind by deceased men. If the element in birth-rights should be considered a valid ground to deprive a man of the wealth to which he is entitled in the natural order of things, surely the very man who earns his wealth either by his own exertions or by a smile of fortune, cannot himself enjoy such wealth as the circumstances that led to his acquiring the same must themselves be considered chances or accidents. If all chances are to be dismissed out of consideration in deciding the rights of people, we could easily imagine the state of our society under such circumstances. There cannot be any kings, any judges, any preserver of peace or any guardian to protect our interests! and no father or mother will be bound to take care of their

children! Why? They themselves chanced to be so in their position by some form of accident, and no accident can be allowed to exert its influence over us! And if according to this theory all men are allowed to have a share in the earnings and savings of the painstaking and industrious few, and their progeny are not allowed to have an exclusive right to such earnings—or in short, if no one is allowed to call any thing his own, surely we could scarcely find any one who would care to earn or save any thing: there would be no perseverance, no thrift, and the whole society will be a mass of idle, indolent, wretched lot, bent upon living on the earning of others instead of their own. You may frame laws and force them to work, but you will not be able to give them the mind to work.

And again what about intelligence, character, physical strength, health and such like things? They are themselves valuable wealth, and they are generally inherited from parents. How are progenies to be deprived of these inheritances, and how can public at large be made to have a share in them? And are people who are blest with these valuable assets to make no use of them, because they came across them by chance! Surely such ideas are only suited for a lunatic asylum! It must be understood that man is a creature of chances, and during his sojourn in this world, he has to meet with a series of chances—all of them being governed by the law of Providence. It is not possible to evade the influence of these chances and much less to disown their effects. It would certainly be a grand achievement if people are made to disown everything they possess, by losing their "I"ness and "My"ness and by making over everything they have in favour of humanity at large, in true brotherly love. But is such a thing possible in our present state? So

long as this is not possible--So long as we have our "I"ness and "My"ness with us, it is essential that the limit to which these "I"ness and "My"ness are to be carried is clearly defined; and when we do define this limit, we will find the indispensability of making use of our birth-right, and this birth-right will thus be found to be of great service in regulating the human society.

I must however point out in this connection that according to the Hindu theory of Caste System, it is not the right of birth alone that entitles a man to the privileges that appertain to his caste. He must, in addition to his birth-right, conform himself to the conduct and duties imposed on him as a member of that Caste. Otherwise he would loose his caste and will forfeit his claims to the right and privileges of his caste.

“மறப்பினுமோத்துக்கொளவாகும்பார்ப்பான்

பிறப்பொழுக்கங்குன்றக்கெடும்.”—Kural.

(Even if you forget your Vedas, you could learn them afterwards, but if you loose your character, your birth-right would be forfeited).

Superiority of Brahmins.

I know that Brahmins are held mainly responsible for the Indian Caste system which is supposed to be an institution invented by them to advance their own interests. I cannot see how such an inference could be maintained. The caste system does not give the Brahmins sovereignty over people or dominions, nor is the duty imposed on them less onerous than that imposed on other castes; but on the other hand, their duty as spiritual teachers could be found to be very heavy and irksome; and it is on account of the importance of the duty imposed on them, the other castes are required to respect and venerate them. Their whole time being fully absorbed in religious

duties with no spare moments at their disposal to attend to their secular wants, their maintenance and support have become a duty on the other castes who are reminded, by such duty, of the importance and value of the spiritual work entrusted to the Brahmins. There can be no doubt that of all the wants of man, the one that appertains to his soul is the most important one, and the class of men who minister to this want are, therefore, deservedly entitled to respect and support.

Birth-right, no doubt, renders professions hereditary, and this is considered detrimental to progress. But I think the case is otherwise. Distribution of professions among separate families amounts to a division of labour, as I have already said, and this will largely contribute to the development of the several professions, much better than when they are cast indiscriminately among all. In fact this may be found to have been the actual state of things in ancient India, when we consider the perfections which Medicine Architecture, Engineering and several fine arts had attained to at one time in that continent. Even in modern times, it may be observed on close examination of facts that the development which many of the fine arts have attained is due to the exertions and endeavours made by families who cultivated such arts for generations. The laws on the subject of patent are highly appreciated in civilized countries, and they are not for a moment considered detrimental to the development of any art; and I fail to see how a hereditary profession can be considered so.

I have reasons to believe that the objection against hereditary profession is intended mainly to attack the exclusive rights enjoyed by Brahmins to Vedic teachings and to spiritual callings. It is possible in European countries for any man to become a priest, while in India one of the primary quali-

fications for priest-craft is birth-right. It may be observed that this rule is not without satisfactory reasons. According to Hindu ideas, aptitude for religion and religious culture must be innate in a man and instinctive in his nature. One may take a fancy for religion rather whimsically; but, unless he has an in-born taste for the calling, the fancy will not in any way be permanent. Religious tastes are invariably the result of previous Karma, and they are transmitted from father to son; and it is only such natural tastes that can be depended upon for permanency. Religious callings being of vital importance to human beings, it is very essential that a man who betakes himself to that calling is possessed of the necessary qualifications. Religion and religious duties are sacred in themselves, and too much care cannot be taken in safeguarding the lines in which they are handled. They may be abused, trifled with or neglected if handled by men unsuited to the work; and the result will be disastrous not only to the people who take up the work, but to the community as well among whom the work is carried out. We know how dangerous it would be if surgical instruments are handled by men who have not the necessary training and knowledge; and in the case of religious practices the necessary training and knowledge should be supplemented by a natural instinct, without which, no knowledge or training can be said to be sufficiently strong for the due performance of such practices. As soil is the most important factor in the matter of cultivation, so in the matter of religious culture, it is of great importance that it is carried on in a soil that is well suited for it. The suitability of soil is a natural condition, and in this case it depends wholly on birth-right. And again, in the choice of subjects for religious duties, we largely require Divine help; and when such choice is made by birth-right, over which we

have no control, we may be said to have availed ourselves of the Divine Help to the best possible extent we can.

It must not be understood, however, that religious duties are the exclusive property of Brahmins, and that others have no such duty to perform, or any claim to perform such duty. Every man, whatever his caste may be, has his own religious duties; but in performing certain religious rites and ceremonies, he has to be guided by his *Prohita* or the family priest; and it must be understood that even this guidance is only required so long as the man is in the secular plane. When that plane is transcended and the man gets into religion proper, the Brahmin Priest ceases to do anything with him, and his religious practices are left to himself. In fact Brahmins are considered a priestly class for men in the secular plane—for men whose duties are regulated with due consideration to their secular wants and desires. But to the man who has given up the world, his priest or *Guru* is his *Jñānaguru* or Divine preceptor who may be of any caste or of no caste. Temples are intended to benefit people in the secular plane, being bound by the tie of Social relation. The *Pūjas* and other ceremonies in temples are therefore to be performed by Brahmins, and this is why those rites and ceremonies are known by the name of "*Parārtham*" (for others), while in the case of "*Ānmārtham*" (for one's own sake) authority is given to any man to perform such *Pūjas* and ceremonies, provided he has the necessary aptitude and earnestness. I think this will fully explain the scope of religious duties allotted to Brahmins.

I think it desirable in this connection to point out the pertinent fact that in India, State was never under the sway of the Church, as it was in the Western countries where people suffered considerably under the anamoly of the Church being at

the head of the State. In India the Church and the State were kept distinctly apart from each other from time immemorial, and the priestly class were never allowed to have anything to do with politics. Whatever respect and reverence might have been paid to the priestly class as ministers of religion, they had no concern at all with Government, and this would clearly shew the spirit with which the caste system was maintained in India. It would therefore be idle to contend that caste system was an invention of the Brahmins to promote their own interests.

Temple worship denied to Paraiyas.

There are certain classes of people who are prohibited from entering the temple precincts and who are not entitled to certain religious rites and ceremonies. This fact is made much of by our critics who question the justice of such prohibition and ask, rather vehemently, whether that class of people are not to be saved.

It is a well-known fact that Hinduism is the only religion that promises salvation to all; but at the same, the religion is fully alive to the great difficulty that one has to surmount in securing salvation. Salvation is not a cheap commodity as represented by modern religions: people have to follow a good deal of religious practices, and have to be elevated by degrees before they can secure final salvation. As I have said, temples are intended mainly in the interests of those that are in the secular plane, and the low caste people of that plane are too filthy in their habits and manners to be admitted into sacred places like temples. Temples are considered the abodes of God and are therefore treated sacred and holy; it is very essential that in order to impress on the minds of the worshippers the sanctity of temples, people of unclean habits should be kept away from their precincts—not only in order to teach the value

of cleanliness both to the clean and the unclean, but at the same time, to protect the clean from being contaminated by the unclean. The low caste people are addicted to certain objectionable practices involving heinous forms of sins, and their presence in a temple would go a long way to befoul the atmosphere and desecrate the sanctity of the premises—a state of things that is sure to have a highly prejudicial influence on the mass that attend the temple for worship. People of filthy habits are therefore prohibited from entering into the temple precincts and such a prohibition cannot be said in any way unreasonable. They have, however, their own method of worship from outside the temple, and if they conform themselves to the rules laid down for their caste, they will gradually be raised to higher levels and will ultimately be given the opportunity of acquiring better privileges. But as they are, they are suffering under certain defects, as a result of their previous karma, and they cannot expect to enjoy privileges to which they are not suited and are not entitled. There are people who suffer from natural defects in some form or other, and although such defects are very much to be pitied for, yet they cannot be helped. Not only the low caste people of the Hindu faith, but there are several others who labour under similar infirmities that disqualify them from enjoying a true worship. People who suffer from insanity, people who have not the chance of embracing the true religion, people who live in countries where there are no temples or churches—all these, I should say, suffer from natural defects that keep them entirely out of true worship to God. Such a state of things must certainly be attributed to the Divine will which, no doubt, is based upon some valid grounds such as the karma theory of the Hindus. I may say that in the case of the Hindu out-castes, it is in their

own interests as well, they are kept away from certain religious rites. If they are allowed to enjoy the rites to which they are not suited, they will abuse or misuse such rights and will seek their own ruin; and it is therefore expedient that such rites should be withheld from them until they become fit for the enjoyment of those rites.

Prohibition from Eating together.

Another objection raised against the caste system is that it prohibits people of different castes from eating together, and that as a result of such prohibition, people of certain castes observe very peculiar and eccentric ways in the matter of their food by refusing not only to eat in company of others but even in their sight. I fully admit that there is much truth in this, and I may also add that the people of high castes would not partake any food that is even touched by those of the low castes. I must point out in the first place that such a rule is highly beneficial in a sanitary point of view. It is a well-known fact that Hindus, as a nation, are noted for their clean habits, and this reputation could not have been maintained by them if not for these strict rules.

Man is a social creature and is very much liable to contract the habits and manners of one another, if brought into close contact. Of all the social ties between man and man, nothing could be said to be more conducive to bring them to close quarters as that of eating. It is also an admitted fact that human tendency is more on the side of degeneration than on that of elevation; that is to say, if a man of a higher order is associated with one of a lower order, the result of such association may fairly be expected to end in the degeneration of the higher man than in the elevation of the lower one. We know how the nefarious habit of drinking has been contracted by

thousands of total abstainers by joining lovers of alcohol at their table. A friend at a table is bound to be a friend everywhere—food being a factor that cements friendship easily and readily. Friendship and mutual feelings are generally represented by eating together and by exchanging food and food articles; and among Hindus, food is such an important sign of friendship that if a man takes at least a single meal at another man's house, there should not be any feeling of enmity between them during their life time. The Hindu idea of food carries with it something sacred in its import—food being our life sustainer—and in the taking of food, a kind of solemnity is invariably observed. The surroundings at the time contribute largely to this solemnity; and in a scientific point of view, the atmosphere round the table should be pure and untainted, as otherwise, it will have a highly prejudicial effect on the food, and ultimately on the person who takes the food, apart from the direct influence of contamination the atmosphere will have on his mind and body at a very important function of his daily life. It is of great importance, according to Hindu ideas—and I am sure that such ideas have the full support of Science—that at meal times our thoughts should be as pure as possible and should not be contaminated by alien influences, as any impurity or foreign influence contracted at that time is sure to be assimilated with our body and mind. The importance attached to this subject was so great that very strict rules were framed on the subject, preventing indiscriminate eating, and even eating foods that are touched or seen by men of objectionable castes. There are many things in the material world that contribute largely to spiritual advancement, and food may be said to be one of the foremost among them.

Brotherhood of Man.

Caste system is said to deprive man of his sympathy towards his fellow beings. It is said that, under the system, man has to keep himself aloof from the community to which he does not belong—he must not join them in their social functions—and instances are quoted where people of high castes would not help those of low castes even at times of danger, in the fear that they would be polluted.

Such a view is one of the many evils of the piecemeal knowledge obtained of religion and religious systems. Nothing could be farther from a Hindu than an idea like this. Sympathy towards fellow beings is one of the fundamental laws of Hinduism, and among all the duties imposed on man, *Jivakārūṇyam* or sympathy towards fellow beings may be found to stand in the forefront. The law of Vegetarianism is based wholly on this principle—sympathy according to Hindu doctrines being extended to all living beings, and not confined to man alone. Mutual help to one another—especially at times of danger—is a duty which cannot be excused under any pretence whatever, and religion lays it down clearly that the observance of caste rules should in no way be a bar to rendering such help—in fact, the importance of this duty is brought out so prominently that caste *acharas* are said to be not operative at times of danger such as a conflagration &c.

If people are found to take shelter under caste rules for any default of their duty, it is the people and not the caste system that should be held responsible for the default. Sinners and transgressors of Divine laws there are among the followers of every religion, and their sins and transgressions cannot be attributed to their religion. The Hindu *Puranas* and *Itihāsas* abound in stories where men of superior rank had even

sacrificed their lives for the sake of helping fellow beings—not only men, but even animals including unclean beasts. Yudishtra, one of the heroes of Maha Barata, is said to have carried in his arms a pariah dog which was stricken with sore and ulcers and found astray quite helpless, on his way to *Kailāsa*. The very large number of *choultries* and *chatrams* from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and the immense wealth they are endowed with, would speak loudly of the sympathetic spirit of the Indian people.

The general brother-hood of all living beings is laid great stress on by the Hindu 'Shastras, and a large proportion of them can be found devoted to inculcate and expound that theory. The Hindu religion is not lip-deep on this subject, as the modern religions are, but the formula laid down by that religion may be found to be very elaborate and exhaustive. Most of the details of man's daily duty—the charitable acts enjoined on him which are not less than 32 in number,—the mode and manner in which caste duties have to be performed—are all aimed at promoting universal brotherhood. According to Hindu Dogmas, every soul is an abode of God,

“எவ்வயிரும் புராபரன் சந்நிதியதாகும்”

and God is the soul of every soul

“உயிர்க்குயிரானான்”.

Need we any further proof in support of the universal brotherhood incalculated by Hinduism?

Although all living beings are to consider themselves children of the same parents in a general sense, they could be seen, when examined closely, to have their own difference in their standard of advancement—in their degree of enlightenment, in their habits and manners &c., &c. Such differences have to be carefully demarcated, as otherwise the progress of

the people will be greatly retarded. Their classification according to the degree of advancement has therefore been considered necessary, just in the same way as the boys of a school are grouped into different classes. It is true that the boys are all schoolmates in a general sense, but there is still a good deal of difference between schoolmates and classmates.

I must observe in this connection that the critics of the Indian caste system, who speak so loudly of the brotherhood of man, would do well to direct their attention to the different nations of the world, each of whom spend millions of pounds annually in their attempt to oust one another and launch themselves not infrequently into national wars in which valuable human lives are sacrificed by hundreds of thousands and millions. All these nations are children of the same God, and what is more striking, most of them follow the same creed. Still the leaders of this creed are seldom heard to raise a cry against their bretheren being at drawn daggers with one another; but on the other hand, they may be found to pray to God for success in the battle field to their own nation, no matter how many thousands of lives are massacred in the engagements. The idea of such people sympathising with the Hindus because of their caste system being a hindrance to universal brotherhood!

It strikes me that if the energy of the leaders of modern religions which is spent in attacking every thing Indian, is directed towards some better cause, such as the suppression of liquor traffic, they would confer a great boon not only on the Indian nationality, but on humanity at large. No doubt such an attempt on their part will materially affect their national wealth, but they must have the moral courage to attack a common enemy of mankind, even at the risk of losing a portion of their

national wealth, and they must endeavour to teach by example, rather than by percept, the virtue and value of temperance. They have a better and nobler cause here to be engaged in than in the matter of Indian Caste.

Widow Remarriage.

The caste system is again attacked because of its alleged prohibition of widow remarriage. I cannot see how the caste system can be held responsible for the prohibition of widow remarriage. It is not possible to trace any connection between the two, although I fully admit that remarriage of widows is against the spirit of Hinduism. The prohibition, however, being a Hindu dogma, I proceed to explain it.

I for one would gladly vote for the remarriage of widows, if the question were only considered from a secular point of view; but the religious side of the question cannot be overlooked, and it has to be considered in both of its aspects. Marriage cannot be said to be a purely secular institution with which religion is not concerned at all. It has a good deal of religious sanctity about it, and it is known as the sacred tie between man and woman. A minute examination of the question of marriage will, I believe, disclose the fact that it is intended more in the interests of woman than in that of man. Perhaps such a view will be looked upon as a novelty by some, at the outset, but I am sure, that with a little patience and calm deliberation, one would be able to realize the soundness of the view if he would consider for a moment the duty imposed on man to support his wife, the dependence of the wife on her husband for things secular and spiritual and her natural weakness, both of mind and body, to lead an independent life. The view, I may say, will be fully borne out if the question is considered from a Hindu stand point. Marriage is intended as

an emblem of the union which the soul is expected to have with God—the husband representing God and the wife the soul—and this, I should think, is the reason why a husband is allowed to have more than one wife, while the wife is strictly prohibited from having more than one husband. I have shewn elsewhere at some length that the object of Hinduism is to teach religion in every secular movement, and the object lesson the religion proposes to teach in the case of marriage is the relation between God and soul—and this is strongly borne out by the love a husband and wife are expected to cherish between themselves. It is the duty of the wife to serve and respect her husband, who is her Lord, all her life-time; and the importance of this duty is so great that she may not even serve her God; but her husband she must serve and adore. Says the great moral philosopher Thiruvalluvar :—

“தெய்வந் தொழாஅள் கொழுந் றொழுதெழுவாள்
பெய்யெனப் பெய்யு மழை”.

(She need not adore God; but if she will adore and serve her husband, at her bidding will the clouds shower forth rain).

The attachment of a wife to her husband is of a religious nature, and once she is wedded to a man, she must be dutiful and faithful to him, so long as there is life in her. This is the chastity expected of her. The husband may die, but he is still her husband and will not die out of her memory. Her duty during her lifetime is to love, adore, and be faithful to her husband, whether he is alive or dead, in the same manner as she would and she should love and adore her God eternally. This is the object lesson that religion endeavours to implant in the minds of women, and this object will be defeated if widow remarriage is allowed. Love is love whether the man is living or dead, and it cannot be withdrawn from one in favour of

another. If it can be withdrawn, the woman may as well withdraw her love from God and place it on another, and there would be nothing to prevent her from placing her love on more than one husband, even during the lifetime of her wedded consort.

There is no doubt that this golden rule of the Hindu system had one of the most beneficial effects on our Indian women of olden days, if we can judge things from the genuine, sincere and intense love they cherished towards their husbands. It was this love that inspired them to die on the same funeral pyre as that on which the dead bodies of their husbands were cremated. They could not for a moment bear the separation caused by the deaths of their husbands, and to them death along with their husbands was a great relief and consolation. This was what came to be known by the name *suttee*, and I will now say a few words on that subject, as the caste system is attacked on that account also.

Suttee.

It is a great mistake again to connect *suttee* with the Indian Caste System. It cannot be said that caste system has anything to do with *Suttee*, or that any other system connected with the Hindu faith gives any sanction to it. *Suttee* seems to have originated from the frantic love which some widows of ancient India cherished towards their husbands, and a repetition of the act in a few instances seems eventually to have grown into a practice. The religion is in no way responsible for this practice, but on the other hand, it may be found to prescribe rules for the observance of widow-hood—and these rules would have been altogether unnecessary if *Suttee* was intended by the religion. The practice may be found referred to in some of the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*, and such reference was

only intended to describe the State of things at the period they speak of, and to give expression to the sincerity and devotedness of the Indian wives of olden days. It must be observed that when any act assumes the shape of a custom in a society, the leaders of that society try to give it a religious appearance with a view to enforce and regulate it. Care must be taken not to mistake such a custom for a genuine religious doctrine. Considered in its various aspects, *Suttee* can only be said to have been a practice contracted in imitating certain voluntary act performed by some devoted wife and erroneously handed down to posterity as a religious practice.

Infant Marriage.

Another Indian practice for which caste system is held responsible is infant marriage. Infant marriage is no doubt a fruitful source of great many evils; but the religion cannot be held responsible for this objectionable practice. Religion only requires that marriage should be consummated in the case of females before they attain the age of puberty. In the case of males they have to go through the stage of *Brahmachariya* or Bachelorhood, before they enter into *Grihastam* or married life. *Brahmacharya* has to be observed until after a certain age, which could have the least pretension to infancy.

The rule as regards giving girls in marriage before they attain the age of puberty does not imply that they should be married in their infancy. In fact they should themselves pass through the stages of *Pethai* and *Pethumbai* before they become *Manikai* and render themselves fit for marriage. The infant marriage could thus be seen to be an anomaly against the true spirit of Hinduism; and the practice, I should think, is the result of some form of corruption. Perhaps an infant marriage was consummated at some remote period in order to

meet the wishes of some dying parents, and the novel procedure was copied by some lovers of curiosity in their fondling but misdirected affection towards their children. No doubt, a few instances like this led ultimately to the formation of a general practice which has now become a fashion. The fashion seems to have been greatly helped by the avaricious Brahmin priests of later times who made it a point to see their children married as early as possible with a view to entitle them to larger shares of temple revenues and priestly incomes for which marriage was a necessary qualification. The practice seems to have received a further impetus from the fear the people entertained of their maidens being polluted by the unscrupulous and arbitrary Chiefs and Rajas of the dark ages.

There is no doubt that this pernicious custom is wholly responsible for the very large number of young widows who bewail and bemoan their fate throughout the vast Indian peninsula, exposed as they are, to the temptations of demoralization. It is high time that some stringent measures are adapted to remove this evil from India. It should be the duty of every educated Hindu to exert himself in this direction and to remove the crust that has unfortunately stuck to the Indian society, evidently during its subjugation to foreign rules with no one to guide its destiny.

Remarriage of widows being strictly prohibited among Hindus, it is very essential that the number of widows in that society is reduced to the least possible minimum, and infant marriage which contributes largely to the increase in the number of these unfortunate widows should be removed once for all, from the face of India. It may be boldly asserted that this custom is not countenanced at all by religion; and the rules requiring girls to be given in marriage before they attain the age of

puberty should not be mistaken for such a countenance. That rule was evidently intended to have girls married before love sets in their heart, so that when it so sets in, the object of that love may be their own husbands and no others. It does not follow from this that marriage should be contracted in infancy—which is as bad in result, if not worse, as marriage after the prescribed period. We could have a fair idea of marriage in India of ancient times in the lives and histories of such renowned personages as Sita, Droupati, Damayanti, Sakuntala and a host of others, and we could clearly see from those lives and histories that there was no sign of infant marriage in those days. It is very much to be regretted that the Indians of the present day do not realise the fact that by infant marriage they are exposing their dear children to the risk of falling unfortunate victims to the woes of early widow-hood.

Growth of Nationality.

Caste is supposed to divide the people of India into various sects and to render the sympathies of the different sects confined to their respective spheres, impeding thereby the growth of nationality as a whole.

I should think that the case is the reverse. Caste, I think, brings in harmony and concord among a massive whole by arranging the various units into their respective sections, by promoting their respective functions, by dividing their labour, by rendering each section to be helpful and subservient to one another and at the same time by preventing in a systematic method any clash of interests of one section with those of another. A classification according to the capacities and capabilities of each unit contributes largely to the preservation of order and to the prevention of confusion in such a big society as the Indian nation, and I should think that the

arrangement helps materially the healthy growth of the national band. We know that the growth of our body is regulated by the different members and organs thereof doing their respective work, and we could easily guess how disastrous the result will be if these members and organs are so constituted as to do any and every function that is required for the growth of our body. Although the different members perform different functions, the various functions performed by all of them are in the aggregate for the use of the body as a whole. The importance of this common interest is of paramount importance to the Hindu Society, and such interest is known as "*Sādhāraṇadharmā*", notable among which being "*Jivakāruṇyam*" (sympathy towards fellow creatures) "*Deśabhīmānam*" (Patriotism or love of one's own country) and "*Samayābhīmānam*" (love of one's own religion). I may say that the social classification observed in India has had a very salutary effect on the Indian nation for thousands of years, and it is not possible to trace, in any of our ancient literature, any signs of discord or rupture among the Indian society at large, as a result of the caste system. There have been a few instances, quite recently, of petty disputes between some of the castes, and these evidently are to be attributed to the influence of foreign ideas and caste campaigns carried on by the enemies of the caste system. It is no wonder that in the absence of an authoritative body to administer the laws and regulations of the caste system, and in the face of the many-sided attacks to which the system is exposed at present, it suffers considerably both internally and externally.

There can be no doubt that if the excellent rules of the caste system are only understood in their true light, and administered impartially and equitably, they could, far from being a hindrance to the growth of nationality, contribute largely to

its expansion and free growth. It would be absurd to contend that any system of classification according to the various stages of differentiation in a society would impede the progress of that society. We know that the Christian society, as it stands at present, is divided into various sects and denominations; and still it is not possible to contend for a moment that such division in any way impedes the progress of Christianity, although the various sects created by that division are in conflict with one another on material points. I should think that the vast stride of progress which the Christian religion has made of late is mainly due to its division into various sects, each sect vieing with the rest to promote the common object. The Indian castes cannot be said in any way to be opposed to one another as the various denominations of the Christian religion are; and I cannot see why, as sister members of the same whole, they cannot promote the common object of the Indian nationality, provided their functions are carried out on the lines laid down, keeping always in view the main object for which they are intended.

Liberty and freedom to low castes.

The caste system is again charged with denial of liberty and freedom to low castes. I cannot exactly follow this charge. Is it meant that the caste system enforces slavery? If so, I can only say that this is a gross misrepresentation. There is no mention of slavery in any of the codes of Indian castes, nor is one man ever considered to be a property of another man. If people are allotted different duties according to their capacity, if the people so allotted are enjoined to administer to each other's wants, so far as it lies within the scope of their respective duties, if people are asked to respect one another according to their social position and the nature and importance of their respective functions—is such an arrangement to be considered a denial of

freedom or liberty to anyone? We know that in all civilized countries, laws are enacted prohibiting people from doing certain acts which are considered to constitute criminal offences in themselves or which are calculated to contribute towards the commission of criminal offences. Can it be said that these laws are denials of liberty and freedom to the people in general? We know again of the existence of what are known as statutory laws which render certain acts penal, although such acts have no criminal element in themselves. These laws are introduced in the interest of the community at large, and, I am sure, that no one who has any idea of politics would find fault with these laws as encroachments on public liberty or freedom. Suppose an ordinary man in the street arrogates to himself the powers and functions of a Judge, Magistrate or a Police officer. Would government tolerate such an act? Certainly not. Would it then be considered an interference with public liberty if the functions and duties of the different communities of a society are regulated by fixed rules and regulations. Would the Christian missionaries who speak so much of liberty and freedom tolerate any man to mount the pulpit and preach a sermon? Surely not. How could then an exception be taken in the matter of caste distinction alone, I cannot really see.

It is true that every man should be given his full liberty; but it would be a false or preposterous liberty if it would clash with the rights and privileges of others. The liberty that is enjoyed by every man must always be subject to the conservation and regulation of the interests of the society to which he belongs; and if the conservation and regulation of those interests would involve certain restrictions being placed on certain sections of the community, such restrictions cannot be condemned at all as denials of public liberty. It is not possible in any

society to treat alike—a King and a subject, a Master and a servant, a Teacher and a pupil, a Benefactor and a beggar. It is necessary to draw distinct lines of demarcation between the various grades of society and distinguish them by bold and tangible signs. If liberty is to be allowed for liberty's sake, there should be no laws, no moral rules, and no restrictions whatever—in fact there should be no government, no control, no check of any kind. Every man should be allowed to commit with impunity any crime as he pleases, and in the matter of marital alliance, there should be no law of marriage, and every man should be allowed to take as many wives as he can and dismiss them at his sweet will and pleasure; as otherwise it will be an interference with his freedom and liberty; and in the case of women, they should be allowed to live with any man they like, as their fancy would suggest to them from time to time. The state of society under such conditions could be better imagined than described.

Such was perhaps the state of human society in its primitive state, but with the dawn of civilization, political institutions and social regulations were gradually introduced, and restrictions began to be placed on societies in proportion to their degree of advancement. The Indian caste rules are similar regulations and they were framed by the sages and leaders of India at a time when the country was enjoying the benefits of civilization; and there can be no doubt that these regulations were framed with due consideration to the religious, social and political requirements of the people. We know that different laws prevail in different dominions, and I am sure that none of them would have been ushered into existence without some necessity. It will not therefore be justifiable to attack them at random without going into their history, and finding out, as far

as we can, the circumstances under which such laws were introduced. The caste regulations are found embodied in one of the best codes of ancient laws and they have worked successfully and satisfactorily for ages together, and have materially helped the vigorous growth of one of the biggest nations of the world during these long ages. They have boldly withstood several foreign invasions and inroads, and they may even be said to have made their marks on the foreign nations themselves who made such inroads. It would be absurd to attack an institution, because it does not suit the habits and manners of some of the modern nations who seem to have had no sufficient experience yet to correctly discriminate between individual liberty and social necessity.

The Hindus of ancient India seem to have had fully realized this difference and they were alive to the fact that if individual liberty is not confined within its legitimate bounds, social confusion would be the ultimate result. They had therefore gone into the question minutely, and defined the duties and functions appertaining to the various grades of the Indian Society by means of what is known as the caste system.

Prohibition of Sea-voyage.

Another charge preferred against the caste system is that it prohibits Sea-voyage. There is no doubt that, if this were true, it would go a long way against the commercial expansion of the country. But so far as any reliable information can be gathered on the subject from the Hindu Sacred Books, it can only be said, that prohibition from Sea-voyage is intended to the priestly class and not to the rest.

இரைகடலோடியுந் திரவியந்தேடு

"Acquire wealth even by crossing Seas," is a saying of the renowned female sage, *Yuvaiyār* who is an accepted authority

on all Indian questions. This saying of the sage would have been impossible, had Sea-voyage been generally prohibited. It is a duty imposed on the *Kshattriya* class to resist and fight enemies even across the Seas. Rāma, the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa crossed the Sea to Ceylon to fight his enemy Rāvaṇa; and Subramanya an incarnation of Lord Śiva in the first Yuga, fought the Giant Sura-Padma crossing over the Sea. We have again ample evidence to show that at a certain period of ancient civilization, there was commercial intercourse between India, Greece, Rome and other countries, and such a state of affairs would not have been possible if sea-voyages were prohibited among the Indians.

The prohibition placed on the Brahmin class is evidently on account of their religious duty, the nature of which would not permit them to undertake Sea-voyages. Their daily duty of oblation, prayers and *pūjās* which have to be performed three times a day, and the performance of which is imperative on them as a priestly class, cannot be performed on board a vessel; and one can easily understand why they were prohibited from venturing on Seas. Religious duties have again to be conserved and protected from being polluted by alien influences, and this is an additional reason why the Priestly class were prohibited from crossing seas and mixing up with *Mlechchas*, and exposing themselves to the risk of pollution. It is highly essential that in our anxiety for secular aggrandizements, we should not forget our spiritual interests.

Intermarriages.

Caste system is supposed to be against marriages between different communities. This may be true to some extent, but cannot be said to be absolutely true; for, the system tolerates a man taking a wife from among any caste lower than his.

as a general rule, the system prefers marriage alliances being confined to the same community, and the object is plain, and no doubt a desirable one. Such a rule would materially contribute towards the conservancy of the various societies in their pure untainted form, and would amply provide against friction and conflicts, as would otherwise ensue. We know by experience how unhappy certain families are because of marriages contracted outside their community. It is very essential that in a marriage, the bride and bridegroom should more or less have the same mode of thinking and acting, the same tastes and feelings and the same habits and manners. Otherwise the result of the union would be discord and disunion and ultimate misery. Harmony and concord in these respects can only be expected if both the spouses belong to the same clan, and the caste system therefore lays it down that marriages should, as far as possible, be confined to the same society. Intermarriages, again, are a fruitful source of multiplication of sub-castes or communal cliques which should be avoided as far as possible, especially in a country where there is a tendency to multiplication of clans. The offsprings begotten by intermarriages form themselves into new clans and help the multiplication of castes to a great extent, as their feelings and tastes differ materially from those of their parents and relations on several important points.

It is not a custom peculiar to India alone to select a spouse from among a good society. We know that Christian Missionaries themselves follow this rule. We further know how foreign alliances are looked down upon, and even resented in Western countries, and how a white woman who marries a black *kaffir* is treated in their society. It cannot be doubted that the restriction placed on intermarriages has its own advantages. We know the

importance of selecting a good soil and good seed in the matter of agriculture, and this importance cannot be overlooked in human culture. The law of nature acts as forcibly in the animal kingdom as it does in the vegetable kingdom, and the caste system seems to have taken all these facts into consideration when it laid down its rules on matrimony.

Marriage among close relations, no doubt, leads to degeneracy and disease, but the members of a society cannot all be said to be closely related to each other or to have the same blood in them all. I do not think that any one of the four main castes of India is too small for purposes of marriage alliances; even if that were so, the exception laid down for the purpose can be freely utilized.

I must, however, admit that the minor sub-divisions of caste that are peculiar to certain fixed localities and villages, and that are in no way sanctioned by the *śāstras* work in a direction entirely opposed to the true spirit of caste system, and are at times found highly prejudicial to the interests of the society. These minor sub-divisions are certainly to be discouraged and it is very desirable that a reform in this direction is effected as early as possible. As I have said elsewhere, a good deal of crust is found to have stuck to the Indian societies as a result of their working for a long time without an authoritative body to guide them, and it is very desirable that steps are taken by the leaders of our society for the removal of that crust; but in effecting any reform, care must be taken that the principle of the main caste system is safely protected.

Caste system as a Religious Institution.

Although the main object of religion is to secure salvation or heavenly beatitude, yet, in providing means to secure that end, it becomes necessary for religion to enter into the

secular plane as well. The attention of man is found wholly absorbed in secular interests, and there is no means of drawing his attention to religion except through those interests. Religion has therefore to enter into secularism—and the object is two fold—first to exercise some restriction on his over-indulgence in secular enjoyments, and the second to teach him religion through secular means. When man acquires a sufficient taste for religion by such teachings, it will then be time to instruct him on religion pure and proper. The religious instruction imparted by Hinduism may therefore be said to be of two kinds—secular religion and religion proper. *Charyā* and *Kriyā* may be said to belong to the former while *Yoga* and *Jñāna* belong to the latter. The Caste regulations belong to the former and they are intended to regulate certain secular questions which are in no way necessary in the plane of religion proper. In fact, the caste rules are not required at all by a man who breathes a pure religious atmosphere, but on the other hand they may be considered to be quite opposed to his views. When the man once gets over the secular plane and passes into the religious arena, he does not require any caste rules nor does he care to observe them. It is therefore a sad mistake to suppose that caste system is a religious institution. The Hindu religion may often be found to declare that a pure *Jñāni* has no caste. In fact, it is clearly laid down in one place that religion begins where caste ends—

“வருணநெறிசார் மதத்தம்மதமெய்ப்

பொருளுணர்வு டென்றுந்தீபற

பொன்னுததொன்றே யுந்தீபற”

(Caste ends where religion begins, and religion ends where realization begins.)

But in the secular plane caste regulations are essential

and the religion therefore helps us to regulate our society by fixed rules. The caste system, no doubt, has the sanction of religion, the object being to keep man within reasonable bounds while enjoying worldly pleasures.

Need for Reform.

Although I have dwelt at some length in defending the Indian caste system, I cannot, however, deny that the form in which it is found at present requires a good deal of brushing up. Like every other institution that has stood such a considerable length of time, the caste system itself betrays signs of many corruptions; there are, so to speak, layers of crusts, in some form or other found sticking to it. The sooner these crusts are removed, the better it will be for the Indian society. I refer particularly to the thousand and odd minor divisions of castes, most of which are peculiar to certain localities, with no religious authority to support them, but evidently introduced in the name of the caste system. This is the result of matters having been carried too far, and there is no doubt that these unauthorized mushrooms of petty castes are a fruitful source of many evils and are at times found to disturb the equilibrium of the general society. It will be clearly observed that if there is any clash among societies in India, it is among these minor divisions and not among the main divisions set apart by the *Śāstras*.

These sub-castes may, in many cases, be traced to inter-marriages among the main castes, and to the attempt on the part of the offsprings by such marriages to claim the privileges of superior castes. Such people will not, of course, be admitted into the superior caste, nor would they condescend to join the inferior one. They would form a sub-clan and hence the multiplicity of minor castes. The regulations laid on the subject by the *Śāstras* are not regarded in the heat of animosity, and the

result is enmity and dissension. It is no wonder that in the absence of an authoritative head to watch the working of the social laws, such a state of thing should exist in a society. It is the duty of the leaders of the Indian society to enforce the caste rules fairly and equitably and to regulate the society to its best advantage, not being influenced by selfish motives or selfish gains. This is a sacred duty incumbent on the leaders, and they must perform that duty judiciously and discreetly, and preserve to their country the benefits of one of the best institutions invented by their ancestors.

It is indeed a very deplorable state of things to find that private grudges and petty differences are brought to play in social functions and public questions, and that these grudges and differences themselves give rise very often to the formation of petty clans and sub-castes. The distinctions laid down by the *Śāstras* are quite enough to meet the natural demand, and any additions to those distinctions to satisfy our craving and curiosity will be doing more harm than good. These additions are often found to foster jealousy and enmity among the societies sanctioned by the *Śāstras*, and they serve no better purpose than splitting up a community into unnecessary dissentient sects—in direct opposition to the spirit of the main caste system.

Want of union and indifference to public good are certainly among the traits of the Indian society, as it exists at present, and these traits, I may say, are at the root of many of the evils that India suffers under. These traits are observed in the Indian not so much in his relation to the members of alien castes, as in his dealings with the people of his own caste. So that, it is not the caste system that is responsible for the evils that we now experience, but it is the want of union and the absence of public spirit that are truly responsible for those evils. The caste

system is so constituted as to render every grade of society helpful to the rest, so that each caste is to be considered a member of the whole Indian society. We could clearly see this spirit in the old *Chattirams* and other Charitable institutions founded in the interests of human beings in general all over India ; and it is a great pity that this spirit that characterized the philanthropy of our ancestors is almost absent in us. We have a duty to perform to ourselves, to those near and dear to us and to the country to which we belong. But at present, we are only concerned about ourselves, and perhaps, of our family, while our duty to our country may be said to be wholly out of our consideration. We live and die in self interest and selfish motives which cannot be attributed at all to the caste system. If we study the caste system in its true light, we could find that it is mainly intended for the advancement of the nation as a whole, and that it is one of its important features that we should be helpful to each other, as far as we can, and that the back-bone of the caste system is public good. The formation of the numerous sub-castes may be traced to some selfish motive or other, and it is evidently the result of a misuse of the otherwise highly beneficial caste system. Division of labour is certainly essential to the advancement of any society, and this is amply provided for in the *Śāstras*. Any further division to suit our whims and caprices is highly injurious to the community at large, and, as I have already said, these minor sub-divisions are the result of our disunion, selfish spirit and want of philanthropy. The main object of the caste system is entirely lost sight of and it is now used for a purpose just in the opposite direction. It is for the leaders of our society to restore the olden state of things and to utilize the caste system for ensuring the stability of our society as a whole, and for cementing the relation between individuals.

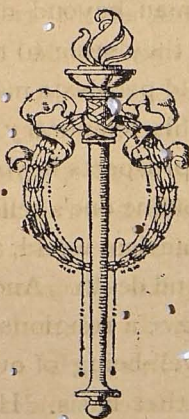
It must be understood that caste system is a very old institution, and that it has become so deep-rooted that it will not be possible at all to efface it from India. Any attempt to root out the system will only be an attempt at an impossibility, and no tangible result could be obtained by such attempt, except fretting the society to an undesirable extent. But a reform on the lines laid down by the *Śāstras* may fairly be expected to succeed and such a reform is all that is wanted. We may think that other nations are doing well without the caste system and that their progress is due to the absence of that system among them. This idea is a sad mistake. I have already shown that other nations themselves have their own caste system, though in a different garb. But the Indian nation cannot be compared with the other nations of the world who are more or less of a materialistic tendency and whose idea of religion is only formal or lip-deep. The Indians are sincere and earnest in the matter of religion, and the classification laid down by their caste system is more or less in accordance to the religious propensity that is found in the people. Caste system is therefore indispensable to them, and it will be found that their habits and manners, tastes and feelings are entirely different from those of the other nations whose ways are not suited at all to the Indians. I should observe in this connection that the aggrandizement of the other nations cannot be attributed to the absence of caste system among them, but it is chiefly owing to their public spirit and love of the motherland which they cultivate from day to day. It is this spirit that is woefully lacking in the Indian Nation, and it is this spirit that our leaders should endeavour to cultivate and foster among them.

It has become a fashion of the day among the educated classes of our community to attack the caste system in the light

of Western ideas, allured evidently by the material prosperity of the European Nations will not, however, act as they talk, nor will they take the trouble of studying the question in its entirety. If they will only take up the question in earnest and go into it as seriously as its importance deserves, they are sure to find that the real cause of the decline of the Indian Nation is their indifference to the interests of their fellow country men and to the absence of patriotic spirit. Indian people, as they are at present, have no idea of their duty to their country, and if we watch their ways closely, we will not fail to find that the only idea predominant in their view is self interest and self protection, and their mind may be said to be altogether blank as regards public good. Such a state of things cannot at all be attributed to the caste system which strongly impresses on the mind of the people the necessity of doing public good even at the risk of private interests. In fact, the caste system was intended to promote the interests of the Indian Nation as a whole, and this will be quite apparent from the fact that all the four castes mentioned in the *Śāstras* are said to have sprung up from the different limbs of the same individual—Brahma.* They are therefore to treat each other as bretheren, not forgetting at the same time the difference that exists among them. The lukewarm spirit that characterizes the Indian nation at present, as regards their duty to their country, is evidently the result of the oppression they suffered under the Native Rajas of the dark age, and subsequently under the foreign rules that immediately succeeded them, during which periods they had scarcely an opportunity to think of others. But such time has

* This is an allegorical representation of the mutual service and importance and explains the diversity in unity.

already passed, and we are now given full scope of cultivating our nationality under the benign British rule. The re-building of our nationality will be materially helped by the Indian caste system, if it is correctly understood and judiciously acted on. I may say that the Indian society, with a large stock of spiritual instinct about them, cannot be improved except on the lines of the caste system. Our leaders would therefore do well to improve the constitution of our society on the lines laid down by the caste system instead of running it down in a pure Western fashion, and evidently with a Western taste, which, I should say, is another cause of the decline of the Indian Nationality.



CHAPTER XVI.

RELIGIOUS INVESTIGATION.

Importance of Religious Knowledge.

Religion is no doubt the most important subject every sensible man has to engage his attention on ; and no amount of attention paid to that subject can be considered too much or unnecessary. It is to be regretted, however, that there are people in whose opinion, any attention paid to religion is a waste of time and labour ; they seem to think that the duty of man is only to work for the well-being of his fellow creatures. Any idea of the condition of man beyond death does not appear to strike them at all, nor do they seem to realize the weight of the serious thought that would perplex a man at his death-bed. The well-being of a man in this temporary world is mere nothing when compared with his prospects beyond death, and it will be the height of folly to confine one's self to the interests of his fellow creatures in this transient world, and ignore altogether his permanent interests beyond death. And again, the interests of man even in this world have a religious basis, and the necessity for our attention to the well-being of our fellow creatures could itself be found to rest on that basis. However we may hanker after secular pleasures and worldly enjoyments, it will not be possible to wipe off our mind the idea of God ; and so long as this idea lies engrafted in our mind, we cannot, and we will not, dissociate from our mind the influence of God on any question — be it secular or spiritual.

We know again that morals are highly essential for the welfare of man in this world, and that religion is the back-bone of morals. It is not possible to conceive of any moral with indifference to the Creator and to the religion given by Him. Morality will be at a great stake if religion is to be overlooked. Fear to God is highly necessary for the maintenance of peace and order among societies; and the state of a society with no feelings for their Creator can be better imagined than described. Religion should be cultivated side by side with secular advancement, the permanency of which will not otherwise be secure; so that religion is a factor that is essential for the advancement of secular interests themselves; and when its necessity as such is coupled with its paramount importance in a spiritual point of view, it will not be possible to ignore its value.

Difficulty of acquiring Religious Knowledge.

Religion, no doubt, is a subject that cannot be solved with any amount of scientific accuracy, as the factors connected therewith, viz, God and Soul, are beyond scientific research. This, however, is no reason to give up the subject as one in which no definite decision could be arrived at. Religion is too important a subject to be thrown out so summarily, and we must endeavour to acquire as much knowledge as possible with the means at our disposal. Religious truths are largely to be verified by realization, and this realization is materially helped by a correct and clear view of the doctrines of religion—and such a view is not possible without due investigation. It is true that religious controversies often lead to undesirable cavilling and harangue, but it must be understood that such a state of things is generally due to the spirit with which a controversy is carried on. Controversies should be carried on with a sincere and earnest desire to find out or explain truths, and not with the object of overcoming rivals in disputations.

Controversies carried on with the latter spirit very often deceive the combatants and their respective adherents, instead of helping them in any way. It must be observed in this connection, that the parties engaged in a controversy must be fully conversant with the subject of their controversy, as otherwise they would be led astray and be finally confused. Controversies between parties, who mistake themselves to be competent enough to handle a subject, while in fact, it is beyond the range of their knowledge, would do them immense harm; and in the matter of religion, their faith runs the risk of being unduly affected. It is to point out the danger of such controversies, that it has been very truly said by a Tamil Sage :

“ கல்லாத பேர்களை நல்லவர்க ணல்லவர்கள் ”

(The uneducated indeed are good ! very good !)

We know that literary education, unaided by religious training creates in our mind unnecessary doubts, which go a long way to affect our faith quite undesirably, and inflict on us a permanent harm. I may point out in this connection that the propagandists of modern religions, by attacking in a partisan spirit and without satisfactory grounds, the indigenous religions of our country, shake the faith of a large number of people quite undesirably—and this is a source of immense harm to the cause of religion in general.

The same may be said of persons engaged in religious investigations with a large stock of doubt in their mind, and their investigation assuming the shape of a critical examination. Such investigations often tend to widen the sphere of doubt which already exists in their mind, and shake their faith to a considerable extent. Such a state of things should be carefully avoided, as otherwise the result will be hazardous to their mental repose. Investigators into religious truths should not, in their anxiety to add to their knowledge, damage their faith, which, I should say is of much greater value than knowledge. They should carry on

their investigation in such a way as to keep clear of the evil effects of doubts which are sure to wreck their faith. If knowledge would in any way prove prejudicial to faith, without satisfactory grounds, ignorance is certainly to be preferred to such knowledge. Let me not be mis-understood to mean that ignorance is to be preferred to knowledge. Sages have expressed their appreciation of knowledge by calling their God as "the delicious fruit relished by the educated and enlightened" "கற்றவர் விழுங்குங் கற்பகக்கனி." The knowledge they refer to is the knowledge that helps to find out the truth in a serene, dispassionate manner, with due regard to the necessity and value of faith;—and that is knowledge in its real sense—a knowledge that enables us to put into practice what we have learnt in theory.

Conservancy of Faith.

Religious investigations should be carried on with religious reverence and with a real anxiety to find out the truth. Faith is a very important factor in the matter of religion, and this fact should be kept very prominently in our view, when we carry on any religious investigation. Believers in some form of religion or other as we are, we must take particular care that our faith is not unduly shaken; and we must always bear in mind, that even in our religious investigations, we have to be guided by the grace of God which depends greatly on our faith.

It is quite natural that when we have our faith in what we consider as true, we will have a certain amount of strong feeling or bias over such truth, and when that truth is considered sacred and holy, our feeling will be much more. Due allowance should certainly be given to such feeling, but this feeling itself should not be carried beyond its legitimate limits. Although we have our faith in a certain theory, and consider that theory as true and sacred, still when we find on unassailable grounds that the theory is faulty and

erroneous, our feelings should give in, and we should withdraw the faith we had in it. It must, however be understood that such a withdrawal of faith is not possible before a faith in the opposite direction—that the theory is faulty—sets in in our mind. Faith can neither be created in our mind nor removed therefrom as we will or like, but it depends on the circumstances that are placed around us. This is an instinctive trait peculiar to our nature. But it is quite possible that we may be deceived by false reasons and undue influences brought to bear on us by our surroundings; and we must not allow our faith to be shaken on such grounds. It is our duty to safeguard our faith to its legitimate limit, and we should therefore see that that faith is not affected at random on insufficient or plausible grounds. Religious truths are not quite easy of solution, and before we commence to relax our faith on any religious question, we should fully satisfy ourselves that we have made a sufficient investigation into the subject to warrant a decisive opinion in the matter. In fact, it is not possible with any right thinking mind to relax in its faith on any question, before such an investigation is made and a conviction created in it of the faulty character of the question. If at all we shew any signs of relaxation, in the absence of this condition, it will only be a show, but not a reality—it will be a feigning or pretext. But by persisting in such a pretext, we may deceive ourselves, and in course of time, we may actually lose our faith,—a state of things, greatly to be deplored in a moral point of view.

Origin of Faith.

Our faith, as I have already stated, is only possible on subjects which we believe to be true; and the truth of any question is exhibited to us through our knowledge—So that knowledge is the basic foundation of our faith. The knowledge that we possess may be said to depend mainly on three sources; viz:—

- (1). On our sense perceptions;

- (2). On instructions received from our parents and tutors ; and
- (3). On the exercise of our intellectual faculty—which may be said to depend on the above two.

So that the factors that contribute to our knowledge may be said to be *natural*, and *quasinatural*—(1) being natural *i.e.*, helping us to knowledge by natural means ; (3) being artificial or means that enlighten us when we exercise our intellectual faculties ; while (2) is partly natural and partly artificial—natural because we are so constituted as to receive our knowledge from other sources in the same way as we receive knowledge through our senses ; and artificial, because our faculties receive a certain amount of training under the instructions so imparted to us.

If we examine for a moment the natural side of (2), we will see that our parents and tutors—those among whom we are placed by nature in our young days, play an important part in imparting knowledge to us ; and it would be further seen that it is a nature inherent in us to receive instructions from them ; that is to say, we accept as truths what we are told by them, believe in such truths, and build up our faith on those truths. The knowledge imparted by them may be correct, or may not be correct—that does not matter. The knowledge is from a source which is by nature our knowledge-giver, and as such, we must, and we do, accept that knowledge as true and correct. This is human nature—and a nature indispensable to enlighten our intellect, in the position we are placed in. If we are deprived of our sense organs—say our eyes—we will be deprived of the power of vision and of the knowledge we obtain thereby. Similarly, if we are deprived of any of the other sources from which we derive our knowledge—say our parents and tutors—and whom nature has placed over us as our knowledge-givers—there can hardly be any difference between us and brutal beings.

Any knowledge that we obtain from any one of the three means above outlined, is to be utilized by us all along our lifetime, unless the falsity of such knowledge is satisfactorily proved. It might be that our knowledge-givers were not sufficiently enlightend or cultured to have been in possession of correct views or ideals—that was a contingency which we could not have helped. They happened to be our knowledge-givers, and we were so constituted by nature as to receive their instructions as true and correct. The knowledge we acquire by vision is through our eyes—the eyes may be defective; still we have to accept as true and correct what strikes our power of vision until we are convinced that the vision so conveyed to our mind is wrong. In the absence of any reason so to convince us, we have to follow—and we will follow—the dictates of our knowledge-givers; and it is not only a duty incumbent on us so to follow those dictates, but it is at the same time an order of nature. Likewise in the case of our *quasinatural* knowledge-givers, such as our parents and tutors are, we are bound to accept their instructions as true and correct, until and unless we are convinced of the contrary by sufficient reasons. We will not be justified if we reject such instructions on mere doubts and suspicions, or on account of the fact that our instructors were not enlightened people. I must also observe at the same time that it does not follow as an inevitable sequence that the knowledge that comes through uncultured people is all wrong and erroneous, and that we should therefore reject all such knowledge. Whether the people from whom we derived our knowledge were cultured or ignorant, they were our knowledge-givers, and we are therefore bound by an order of nature to accept and utilize the knowledge imparted by them. A rejection of that knowledge is only possible, as I have already said, when the falsity of that knowledge is conclusively proved. This is a natural constitution

and this should be kept prominently in our view when we prosecute any religious investigation.

Necessity of Safeguarding Faith.

The knowledge that we so obtain from these sources in the matter of religion is of great importance to us, concerning as it does, our well being, both in this world and in the next. The knowledge becomes a genuine truth with us, and its importance is so great that it creates in our mind a strong feeling of faith and zeal, which we are bound to protect from the evil effect of doubts and suspicions. We know the fickle nature of our mind and its susceptibility of being affected by sophistries and paradoxes, especially when it begins to doubt and starts on an enquiry. We know again the importance of faith and our duty to protect and safeguard it; and we also know that we are imperfect in our knowledge and that religious problems are generally very deep and intricate. These facts should be fully impressed in our mind when we start on any investigation.

We must again take particular care that we do not deceive ourselves by supposing that our faith has been shaken, while in fact it has not. It must be understood that faith is not a factor that could be easily shaken although it may be clouded for the time being by doubts and difficulties. Even in such cases, it will lie dormant in the heart of our hearts, and will suddenly burst out when we are in a serious mood, such as at a time of peril or danger. It is the absence of any inclination to be guided by our faith when we are really serious, that can be truly said to be a counteraction on our faith. Before the dawn of any feeling of such counteraction, it is highly probable that we will be deceived by imaginations and fancies—and this may lead to the relaxation of our duty to the object of our faith. We cannot therefore be too careful in safeguarding our faith. We must bear in mind that in the case of

religious investigation by persons who have already a faith, they are not only judges but counsels as well to defend the cause of their faith; and it must also be observed that the object of investigations by people who have a certain faith, is not so much to find out the truth (which they are already in possession of), as to inform themselves of the reasons in support of that truth.

Faith in the case of Converts and their Children.

We know that in the cases of converts—at least in the majority of such cases—their original faith lies concealed in the bosom of their hearts, unaffected by the pressure brought to bear upon them, their convictions not having been affected by such pressure. It would be far better to leave them alone, rather than forcing on them a new faith which, although they may pretend to accept for some reason or other, would not go so far as to replace their original faith. Their conscience would prick them most keenly if they attempt to relinquish their original faith without any satisfactory reasons which they do not generally find; and in fact, it would not be possible with them, seriously to relinquish their faith in the absence of satisfactory grounds, and if they pretend to discard that faith for some worldly concern or other, they must be said to be a very depraved lot of human beings. The case however, would be quite different with their children. The children, when instructed by their parents in the new faith, apparently with a show of seriousness, will accept such instructions as genuine and will build up their faith upon those instructions. The question therefore arises whether the children will be justified in retaining such faith, when they come to know latterly that their parents were not sincere in the instructions they imparted. I think it will not be out of place to go into an interesting question like this a bit minutely, as it, no doubt, forms an important subject of religious inquiry.

Faith is a factor which is largely, if not wholly, contributed by the environments into which we are placed and by the instinct inherent in us to imbibe what is dictated to us by our knowledge-givers. These knowledge-givers may be true or false, but we are led by the instinct inherent in us to accept the knowledge we derive from them as true and correct, and to build up our faith on that knowledge. When once this faith is formed in us—by whatever means it may be—it is a faith with us, and it can only be shaken when we are convinced on satisfactory grounds that the theory on which our faith is placed is faulty. Once a man is wedded to a faith, that faith cannot again be shaken, because there was some mistake in the mode adopted in wedding the faith. A woman is married to a man by some method or other, and once she is married, she must recognize him as her husband until she is convinced of his unworthiness to be her husband. Any flaw that she may discover subsequently in the method adopted for the consummation of the marriage can be no excuse to reject the husband. Faith is a strong conviction, and in the matter of religion, it is fortified by piety, love and zeal; and what is more, its formation is caused by a natural order over which we have no control. I say that we have no control over its formation, because it depends largely on the circumstances among which we are placed, on our natural instincts to imbibe instructions imparted to us in our young days, and on the trend of our mind to receive certain impressions when placed before certain circumstances. When once a faith is formed in us under these conditions, a feeling as regards the truth of the subject-matter of our faith gets a stronghold of our mind, and makes the faith too strong to be shaken by any mistake that we may discover in the preliminaries to the formation of that faith. The subject of our faith becomes a sterling truth with us, and it cannot be

controverted by any mistake that we may discover in the means through which we came at that truth. The only antidote to that truth is the discovery of its own unsoundness, and nothing short of that unsoundness will be able to shake our conviction of that truth.

I must point out again, that our faith does not depend on the veracity of our knowledge-givers, but on our inherent nature to imbibe whatever is taught by them. In fact their teaching is not to be regarded in the light of testimony in which case alone, we can go into the question of their veracity or reliability. The instruction they impart is an instruction in itself, and we are bound to accept it, build our faith on it, and retain and revere it, not because that it was imparted by our knowledge-givers, but because that it has become the object our faith in the ordinary course of nature.

Faith again, it must be remembered is matured and fortified by our dealings and transactions with those among whom that faith prevails, and by our own mental activities that result in consequence thereof. So that our faith cannot be said in any way to depend on the testimony of our original knowledge-givers alone, even if at all, it is to be considered as a testimony; and it is not therefore possible to give up a faith on account of any weakness that we may find in the individuals through whom that knowledge passed to us.

It will thus be seen that in prosecuting religious investigations, we must be very careful that our faith is not impaired in any way by plausible grounds; and, even when we find what appears to us as satisfactory and sufficient grounds, we must further consider whether we are competent enough to judge the question under consideration, and, whether, again, we have made a sufficient investigation to warrant a decisive opinion in the matter. It is only when we are satisfied on all these points, we can give up a faith which we once cherished, particularly so, in the matter of religion.

Religious Bias.

I have so far dwelt on the necessity of conserving our faith, and I must now say a few words on the necessity of keeping ourselves within the legitimate bounds of our faith. I have already said in the preceeding paragraph that when once a faith is formed in us, there would be created in our mind a strong feeling towards the object of that faith. I must admit that such a state of things is natural and reasonable. But this feeling has a tendency to turn out to be a strong bias, with its eyes blinded to all reasons and dictates of conscience, and it is not an uncommon thing that the voice of conscience is silenced by the force of such feelings. Even after the force of the argument against our faith is once accepted and admitted, and that argument remains uncontradicted or unabated in its force, the mind slowly reverts to its former track, influenced evidently by its long habit and its love for the old faith. It is also a weakness peculiar to our mind that, when the absurdity of our faith has been established on unassailable grounds, it tries to take refuge under some excuse or other, such as the "incomprehensibility of Divine mysteries" "the impropriety of questioning Divine acts" &c., &c., and feels very reluctant to part with the faith it once cherished. We should fortify our mind against such frailties, and train it to respect and revere reasons and to abide by them. It is of course no reason to give up our faith as soon as we suspect something wrong; it is no reason to give up our faith without sufficient and satisfactory inquiry, equal to the importance of that faith; it is no reason to give up our faith without listening to the voice of our conscience and honest feelings. We must give ample allowance for all these and many other reasonable claims on behalf of our faith; but when, after satisfying these claims, we find strong grounds against our faith, that faith cannot stand any longer; and we must direct our

mind to follow the course opened to us by reason, and we must train our mind not to depart from that course. If we will only keep our conscience clear and pure, we will, as a matter of course, be forced to give up our faith, when we are convinced of the plausibility of the theory to which our faith is wedded. But if we allow our feelings and emotions to curb down the voice of our conscience, we will surely find it difficult to get out of the track of our old faith, and even when we get out of it, we will often be tempted by our old habits to revert to it. We must therefore take great care that we are not unduly influenced by our bias and we must train our mind to follow the light of reason.

It is true that religious problems are at times found too deep to be solved by us ; but this is no reason why we should not exercise our intellectual faculty and endeavour to find out the truth for ourselves. There are intricate problems not only in the religious plane, but in the secular plane as well ; It we are to shelve every problem that sounds to our ears as unsound into the convenient corner of intricacy, and rest satisfied with whatever theory we hold, or with whatever theory that is presented to our view, there cannot be any possibility of finding out the truth, and every theory must be taken as true. The very fact that we are endowed with the faculty of reasoning clearly shows that we should exercise it to the fullest possible extent and be abided by the result. There are of course problems that cannot be solved as easily as others ; in such cases, we must expand the sphere of our investigation equal to the importance and intricacy of the problem, taking into consideration at the same time, our capacity and fitness to prosecute the enquiry. The argument that Divine mysteries are beyond our comprehension should not weigh much in our mind. Questions that concern our own interests cannot be called Divine mysteries in any sense of the

word, and our investigation into these questions cannot be said to be a dive into those mysteries. It is very essential that we should have a clear and correct understading of the questions concerning our own interests, in order to enable us to have a full and complete grasp of those interests and to work in the direction of being benefitted by them. For example, questions like the origin of sin, eternal hell, equality of creation etc., etc., cannot be called Divine mysteries, as these are questions intimately connected with our own sphere, and in fact, schemes planned by God in our own interests. We must have a clear idea of these questions, in order to enable us to understand God correctly, so far, at least, as our relation with Him is concerned, and make a true and sincere love towards Him. God does not expect us to have a blind and baseless faith in Him and in the measures adopted by Him in our interest, but on the contrary, we are expected to make a true and sincere love towards Him—which will not be possible without a clear knowledge of our own condition and of the measures adopted by God to rescue us from that condition. I do not mean to deny by this that there are questions in the religious plane that cannot be understood easily; but what I maintain is that any question that concerns us cannot be said to be a mystery beyond our grasp altogether, i.e., even when we endeavour to find out the truth and render ourselves equal to the task. It is our duty to inform ourselves of the various scope of religion, so that our faith in our religion and our love to God may be true and sincere.

It is of course not possible with all to have at once a clear understanding of all religious problems; and their belief in some of them at least, must depend on faith and testimony until after a certain stage. But no religious belief or faith of ours can be said to be intrinsically true and perfect in itself until we know the reasons that form the foundation of our religious

doctrines, and we base our faith on those reasons and create a really true love to God, knowing ourselves the reasons why we should so love Him. Our faith and belief again, though important factors in themselves, should not be allowed to override reasons unduly. When we are confronted with reasons, found out on sufficient enquiry, our faith should necessarily give in. The relative value of reasons, in the matter of religion, being an important factor in itself, it is our duty to find them out; and in order to find them out, it is very essential, that we should, as far as we can, investigate into religious questions, keeping in view at the same time the importance of faith and its legitimate scope.

Misuse of Investigation.

It is very much to be regretted that in entering into religious questions, around which there is no doubt a good deal of myth surrounding the competency of the person engaged in the investigation or the sufficiency of the inquiry made into the subject, is not taken into consideration at all; while in scientific researches, the final result depends mainly on these points. Followers of the different religious sects attack each other without having anything like a fair idea of the religions they attack, and believers in a certain faith begin to doubt the soundness of their own religious dogmas, without in the least paying any attention to the fact whether they are competent to solve the problems before them, or whether they have gone sufficiently into the subject to warrant a final decision in the matter. There are many religious questions that are very abstruse and subtle in their nature, and in several of them the solution has to be realized, than described. I will not, however, say that every difficult question is to be reserved for realization. An advanced religious scholar will be able to say from the nature of the question, whether it is one that could be solved by our own research or whether it should be

reserved for realization. It is very essential that we have the help of such a guide in our religious investigations in order to lead us in the correct path and enable us to verify truths by realization.

Necessity of Religious Conduct.

Religion has to be studied more by practice than by theory. This is so in every department of knowledge, and it is more so in the case of religion. It is a pity that this fact is left out of consideration altogether, and every man now wants to learn religion by the mere reading of books, and that too without some one to guide him.

The conduct of a man in conformity with the rules of his religion is essentially necessary to enable him to understand many of the principles of his religion, in the same way as it is necessary for a patient to abide by the instructions of his Doctor in order to realize the effects of his medicine. It is the practical lesson that one learns by a strict observance of the rules laid down by his religion, and not any superficial knowledge of its theories and principles, that contributes largely towards realization, and it is this realization which is the most tangible proof of many religious truths. To a man that practices religion, the theories of that religion are rendered quite easy of grasp, while a man who does not carry on any such practice will find it as hard to understand those theories, as a blind man will find it difficult to discriminate between colours. Religious practices give a man the instinct to understand religious problems, most of which may appear quite strange to him. Most of the professions we now follow such as Medicine, Law, Engineering &c., &c., are learnt by practical training, coupled of course with correct theoretical knowledge; and we could see that even in the scientific branches of chemistry, botany &c., practical lesson is largely

requisioned. The necessity for such a lesson would be found to be much more in the case of religious knowledge, as this knowledge relates to a plane much higher than the one to which material science belongs.

There are people who would not care for their religion—who would not think it worth while to attend temples or even attend to their daily religious duties—but who would like to be informed of religion, by reading books, or by conversing with people who are supposed to know something of religion. I may say that such people will never be able to realize their wish. To understand religion correctly, you must practice religion and your investigation into religious questions must invariably be accompanied by a religious spirit and religious conduct.

It is of course not possible with men to practice any religion before they place their faith on it. To these people, conscience is their religion; and if they will be guided by their conscience and keep prominent in their view the value and importance of religion and faith, they are sure to be led to a religion, although they may not have gone into the mysteries of the religion and satisfied themselves about those mysteries. If they are really anxious about religion, they will be able to find out on what points they should satisfy themselves in order to be convinced of the genuine character of a religion from its external aspects, and what points should be reserved to be solved with the aid of the religion itself. When a religion is selected, the inner truths of the religion have to be verified by a strict observance of the rules laid down by the religion. It would be absurd to wait to embrace a religion till after all its truths are verified—and this would look like the idea of a man who would not get into the water before he knows to swim.

Investigation to end in Realization.

Realization, no doubt, is the most satisfactory solution of a great many religious riddles; but it cannot be said to be within the reach of all. In our present state of material propensity, we have to satisfy our craving for information by patient researches, accompanied, of course, with as much religious conduct as we can pursue, keeping always in our view the scope of realization. In realization itself, we are not without our difficulty. Realization is possible in almost every religion in proportion to the faith we have in it, to our conduct in accordance with the rules therein laid down and to the standard of efficacy of those rules. But realizations of truths in the higher regions of spirituality is only possible in the true religion. It is not, however, possible with all men to demarcate between the higher and the lower regions of spirituality, and the duty of man is therefore to work conscientiously and diligently in his own sphere, having due regard to reason and faith—and he cannot be too careful to guard these two factors from clashing against each other. If he is earnest and sincere in his investigation, he will find himself materially helped by the saying of *sadhus* who had ample experience in the region of spirituality. And if he would be true to the conviction created in his mind during a serious and thoughtful inquiry, and if he is actuated by an earnest desire to find out the truth, he is sure to be elevated gradually, until he reaches the true religion—and in that religion, the highest stage—where he will be enabled to see things in their true light and verify their truths by actual realization.

கல்லாலின்புடையமர்ந்து நான்மறையா

றங்க முதற்கற்ற கேள்வி

வல்லார்க ணைவருக்கும் வாக்கிறந்த

பாக்கியமாய் மறைக்கப்பாலாய்

எல்லாமா யல்லதுமாயிருந்ததின

யிருந்தபடி யிருந்துகாட்டி

சொல்லாமற் சொன்னவரை நினையாம

னினைந்துபவத் தொடக்கைவெல்வாம்

Seated under the Rocky Banyan

To the four who were proficient

In the knowledge of the four Vedas,

Six angas etc., That Bliss indescribable,

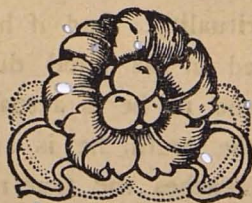
Beyond the reach of the Vedas,—

That that was all, and none of them,—

As It was, He taught without teaching

By His posture; Him we will think

Without thinking, and get rid of our birth.



ESSENTIALS OF HINDUISM.

ERRATA.

PAGE	LINE	FOR	READ
14	6	to	that
15	9	more	most
15	13 & 18	Manadukkatshi	Manadakkādchi
16	9	similar	a similar
17	19	opinion	opinion,
17	21	suppliment	supplement
17	29	reason	reasons
18	22	investigations	investigations,
19	13	advances,	advances ;
19	18	understanding,	understanding ;
24	6	Mimāmsaka	Mimāmsa
24	24	nuisance	nescience
31	13	Light	light
35	3	unpersonal	impersonal
35	5	books	souls
38	6	Pettatasai	Pettatasai,
38	12	his	His
"	19	maturity	maturity,
"	"	So	so
39	14	to	with
"	22	(<i>ex vihilo</i>):	(<i>ex nihilo</i>):—
"	24	nothing	nothing,
"	27	conquity	congruity
40	13	absence	absurd

PAGE	LINE	FOR	READ
41	21	exhact	exhaust
41	23	fact	tact
42	3	god	God
43	24	his	His
43	29	a will and desire at the same time	at the same time, a will and desire,
44	5	ceases ;	ceases,
"	6	itself,	itself ;
46	25	theory	the theory
46	26	hearts	hearts,
48	7	inferential	inferred
49	5	intentive	Intuitive
65	8	heat.	heat,
69	4	(hunters	(hunters)
69	7	recovers	and recovers
71	6	mala	malas
78	5	full yadmitted	fully admitted
81	5	Pasu	Pasa
100	21	(chittam)	(chittu)
116	25	grace	a grace
119	31	God	for God
120	26	giviug	giving
125	3	him	Him
128	26	weakly	weekly
130	29	busyant	buoyant
161	27	working	worthy
184	8	hand it,	hand,
186	19	beginning	at the beginning

202	17	it	that it
247	13	that	that at
253	15	states	state
272	6	IAZ	viz
274	21	then	that
280	26	physical	to physical
290	27	be	to be
291	30	suppose	to suppose
292	16	menacing	a menacing
"	"	art	evil
"	24	thing	think
303	23	ture	true
321	1	although	although the
"	2	community	community—
328	2	Nations	Nations. They
