

HINDU RELIGION

BY

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G.C.I.E., C.B.E.,

BOBBILI.

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191

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In asking me to translate his Telugu work on "Hindu Religion," the Maharaja expressed a desire that my rendering should be literal. But the ideas that find an eloquent expression in a popular vernacular lose much of their suasive charm when so presented in the garb of a foreign tongue. As a rapid and comprehensive survey of the Hindu Religion in its varied aspects, an English translation of the Maharaja's work, will however, it is hoped, advance the critical appreciation of the rational basis of religious ideas in India.

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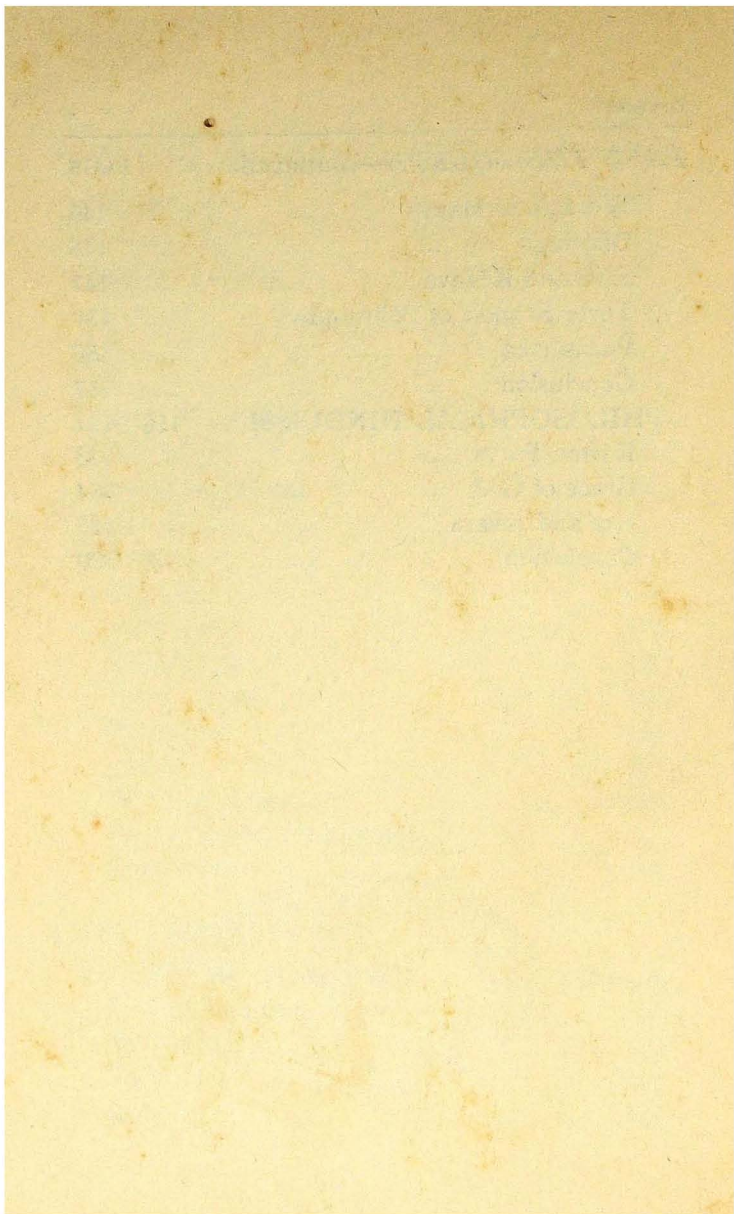
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FOREWORD*

Many among Hindus believe in a multiplicity of gods and consequently worship them in a variety of ways ; even those who believe that there is only one God worship Him in more ways than one. Apart from the variety of beliefs and of modes of worship prevailing among Hindus all their actions are in some way or other connected with their religion. From the belief of those ignorant people who worship as God lumps of clay or pieces of wood to that of sages who said that God could not be described or even conceived, all the different kinds of beliefs go under the name of Hinduism. It is not therefore easy to say what it is. Not only the Smṛitīs composed by sages and Sūtrās, but also those religious works which are later compositions were written far long ago. They therefore furnish information only about the beliefs, customs and usages which existed in ancient times and are silent as to how they changed or in what form they are at present. There are a few books written by western scholars about Hinduism ; but as their

* This foreword is by K. Ramanujachariar, M.A., Principal, Maharaja's College, Vizianagaram.

authors are foreigners, several defects are noticeable in them. I do not know if there are any books on Hinduism, as it is understood in a comprehensive sense in other Indian vernaculars ; but so far as Telugu is concerned I am not aware of any. The Maharajah of Bobbili who has shown his extensive knowledge of books on Hinduism by his critical examination of works like " Mahābhārata " and " Rāmāyaṇa " offering such explanations on subjects mentioned in them as would be acceptable not only to Hindu Pandits capable of understanding things in a rational way, but also to occidental scholars, has now supplied the want of a suitable book on Hindu Religion. If a careful examination is made of the conclusions arrived at by him on the subjects treated in the book, it will have to be admitted that he has expressed his opinions impartially after a study of many religious books and with the help of Pandits.

The Maharajah has treated Hinduism under five different heads: (1) modes of worship, (2) observances, (3) customs, (4) popular Hindu religion (5) true Hindu religion. The first part treats of how in different times people worshipped different deities in the belief that each of them was the Omnipotent God. Not only in former times, but also at present, there are many who worship one or the other of the five elements. Hindus worship not only Śiva

and Kēśava in the belief that they are the Lords of the Universe, their wives Kālī and Lakṣmī, rulers of the eight different quarters of heavens, heavenly bodies such as the sun, but also village deities like Yellamma and Pōlēramma. What he says about the worship of these village deities appears to be sensible. While discussing the worship of village goddesses, he remarks that Pōlēramma means the protectress of boundaries and that Yellamma means protectress of places within the boundaries. The etymological meaning of the names shows the origin of the goddesses. Similarly the Maharajah's explanation of words like Sahasrākṣa (thousand eyed) understood figuratively and his allegorical interpretations of legends like that of Tārā and Śaśānka are interesting.

The second part which treats of observances shows his wide knowledge of books relating to the subject. His interpretations of Saturday, of the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of Āṣāḍha when the Creator is supposed to go to sleep and of Mahāśivarātrī, the day previous to the New Moon day in Māgha are intelligent.

Hindus often waste their money and suffer physical discomfort by performing certain ceremonies in the belief that they can obtain what they wish for and give up what they ought to do. The

Maharajah says that it is folly to think of accomplishing things by observances instead of trying to obtain what they desire by the adoption of necessary means. This must be acceptable to those who are capable of seriously considering the matter.

The third part treats of customs. What the Maharajah says about gifts, enjoyment, oaths, promises and the like should be read carefully. I believe that our people will be benefited, if they read what he says about irrational beliefs. There are men who are doing great harm in many ways to themselves as well as others by acting without judgment, believing in judicial astrology, palmistry, omens and dreams. Faith in such things is found not only among people who have not received English education, but also in some of those who after taking University degrees are able to distinguish themselves in various ways. Sometimes educated men act like ignorant people by their inability to use right methods of enquiry, in spite of their knowledge of Physical Science. Study of books which ought to give them a correct view of things does not seem to benefit them. That is the reason why people continue to believe in omens and judicial astrology. The Maharajah shows that faith in such things is erroneous.

The fourth part treats of popular Hinduism. Having misunderstood words like *Caṭurbhuja*,

Caṭurmukha, Trilocana, modern writers have invented stories to support their wrong interpretations. These stories are embodied in Purāṇas and those that read them as well as those that hear them read take them literally. That is why ridiculous ideas are entertained about Hindu Trinity alike by uncritical Pandits and common men. That the Maharajah correctly understands them will be admitted by those who are able to appreciate critical methods of interpretation. Similarly, as people are unable to see the esoteric meaning of stories written about S'rī Kṛiṣṇa, they blindly accept the Purāṇic accounts that he did certain things which would be regarded as objectionable, if they were done by common people, though they believe that he is an incarnation of God. Some of the old writers on the subject stated that these stories should be interpreted differently ; still their esoteric meaning is not known to many, as they are read only by a small number, being full of Vēdāntic or metaphysical discussions.

The Maharajah has briefly explained the causes of the rise of Buddhism in ancient times in India and subsequently how from time to time religions like Āḍvaīta, Visishtāḍvaīta and Ḍvaīta have arisen and spread. We know that, like other things in the world, religions also change from time to time and disappear,—new religions taking their place.

The learned know how the character of a religion depends upon the knowledge, intelligence and conduct of those who practise it. Without understanding this, many think that there should be only one religion, that theirs is the best of religions and that they will be doing immense good to the world by spreading it. Those who have read histories of different countries know what harm such men have done by working persistently for the spread of their own religion.

True Hinduism is discussed in the last part of the book. It deals with such topics as difference between God and soul, divine mercy, recollection of previous births, result of deeds of previous birth or births yet to be experienced, destiny and human exertion. Some of these subjects have not been clearly explained, though learned men in many countries have been discussing them for thousands of years. As Science has been advancing, people's knowledge of the greatness of God and the wonders of Creation has been growing and new doubts have arisen about matters referred to above. Therefore, these things appear to be beyond the power of human intellect to comprehend. The views of the Maharajah about them are in harmony with those of the foremost leaders among Hindu theologians and supported by arguments which show how deeply he has thought about them with a view to know the truth.

It is not easy to write a book on Hinduism. In writing one on such a difficult subject, the Maharajah shows his extensive knowledge of not only *Srutīs*, *Smṛitīs*, *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsās*, but also of different kinds of customs, manners, religious observances of Hindus and other things connected with them. He further shows his desire to know the truth trying to explain, as he does, the real meaning of things which appear to be contradictory and his capacity to bring to light what is hidden in some of the stories of the *Purāṇas* which seem to be strange, unbelievable and almost inconceivable. I believe that Telugu people will never forget the service which the Maharajah has rendered to the country by writing such a unique book in the Telugu language, though he could not have had much spare time to think about religious matters, incessantly troubled, as he must have been, by cares of the administration, being the head of the Bobbili Samasthanam well-known among the Samasthanams in Southern India.

INTRODUCTION.

What is the real character of Hinduism? As a religion, is it homogeneous or heterogeneous? For some time past I have been studying this question from the standpoints of the several systems of the Hindu religion, with a view to a rationalistic inquiry. The variety in worship, usages and observances detracts from the quality of oneness in religion. The sacred writings of the Āryan people are the productions of several ages, intended for the propagation of particular doctrines, as they were taught from time to time by the founders of the several schools of theology and philosophy. They differ materially in their advocacy, practically on every question, be it what it may, food, truth, action, conduct or sacrifice. It requires the discrimination, whenever occasion arises, of a sound observer to evolve a rule of guidance out of such conflicting statements. It is the purpose of the accompanying pages to attempt a reasonable solution of such inconsistent ideas and I shall consider this purpose

accomplished, if my readers would accept my conclusions, wherever they are logical, without seeking in vain for a uniformity of teaching in the diverse texts of the original writings. It is but natural that whenever on a matter of worship, usage or observance, our sacred works differ in their views or explanations, the sincerity of our religious belief becomes shaken. As time advanced, men grew wiser and the results of their religious investigations were from time to time embodied in writing for transmission to successive generations. The progress of investigation went on until the days of the three schools of Vēḍānta Philosophy. The means of final beatitude described in their philosophical works is a wonderful monument of religious research, worthy of universal admiration. Other religions have been called after their founders. Christianity is named after Christ, Mahomedanism after Mahomed, Buddhism after Buddha and Jainism after Jina. Our religion has not been the work of any particular prophet and it is therefore called after the country's name. Our ancestors were tolerant of other faiths and without

openly avowing the merit or demerit of the current religious notions or usages, either their own or of others, they advanced in the propagation of progressive methods in religion, for otherwise they feared they would have no followers. We have therefore to consider the Hindu religion as a combination of heterogeneous beliefs. The objects of worship extend from the elements and inanimate objects to Ś'iva and Kēś'ava. But a common name, Hinduism, has been adopted, because, whatever may be the individual convictions in the greatness of particular deities, Ś'iva and Kēś'ava are, for all Hindus, the general objects of adoration. I propose therefore to inquire into the merits of the several forms of worship by a historical survey of those institutions and to lay before my readers the results of such inquiry for an easy understanding of the real principles of Hinduism in its practical and philosophical aspects. May the Lord of All guide me in my endeavour !

PART THE FIRST.

WORSHIP.

Religion, wrote Max Müller, is incapable of definition ; it is the meeting point between the ancient and the modern, the young and the old, the civilized and the uncivilized. Without disregarding this description as the expression of a foreign philosopher, it is incumbent on us to consider it in its application to our religion. In his *Origin and Progress of Religion*, Max Müller gave Hinduism an archaic importance.

Among Hindus, the objects of worship vary from the elements, planets and inanimate objects to the images of Śiva and Kēśava ; there is a belief that all these objects of worship have their respective presiding deities, though, what those deities are, it is impossible to define or describe. It may be thought that we must believe in these deities because the Vēdas and other sacred writings adore them and that it would be heresy to demand their ocular demonstration. We shall speak of these deities later on. The tenets of the three schools of Vēdānta philosophy are no better.

Sankara fancied the Supreme Being as alone, without name, form or motion. Rāmānuja preached an abode and a form and described the Supreme Being as presiding at Vāikuṇṭha. Maḍhvācārya accepted the latter description. For want of agreement or definiteness, therefore, in the conception of God, Hinduism is, in common with other religions, incapable of definition.

Our ancestors considered the rural deities as superior to Śiva and Kēśava and their later followers, as on a par with them. In our estimation the latter are superior. To the aged, Śiva and Kēśava are mostly the sole objects of devotion, while to the young, the distinction in the belief is yet undeveloped and their idea of God comprehends a wider sphere. The civilized classes adopt a refined form of worship, while the uncivilized follow the methods of bygone ages without discrimination. But with all this difference, we are all Hindus and Hinduism is therefore likewise a meeting point of divergent views.

There are three stages in the progress of religion : faith, progress of faith and confirmation of faith.

Religion emanates in the organs of perception and is confirmed by better investigation. The eye helps the seeing of visible objects ; the skin helps the feeling of heat or cold ; the ear helps the hearing of sounds. Religion is almost coeval with human creation. In the beginning man worshipped objects of wonder that were within his reach ; then such objects as could only be partly seen or handled ; later still, such objects as could only be seen, but not be reached. Thus came in order, small stones, rivers and mountains and lastly the sun and the moon. The worship of these several objects was based on the belief of a divine force inherent in them. Far later dawned the conception of deities of invisible forms. By the days of the Ṛig Vēḍa, the worship of Indra and other deities was an established fact and whatever deity was invoked it was considered the Ḍaiva (*lit.* an object of resplendence). The Vēḍas, say the Nyāya Sūtras,* are tainted with three faults : untruth, inconsistency and redundancy.

* तदप्रामाण्यं अनृतव्याघातपुनरुक्तदोषेभ्यः, II-i-59.

During the three stages of worship aforesaid, all that was invisible was considered divine. Every object has its energy and without an object, energy is imperceptible. It is in the progress of investigation into the forces of the several species of creation, that man attained to the belief in a Supreme Being. It is for us therefore to recognise that God allots to every creature a definite natural force which is so far limited and that man must lead a life of virtue on pain of divine displeasure.

The creation of mankind passed three stages: *Ṭāmasa*, *Rājasa* and *Sāṭvika*. *Ṭāmasa* meant a dark complexion or an extreme ignorance. *Rājasa* denoted a red complexion or a warlike tendency. *Sāṭvika* signified a white complexion or a superior humility. The first class roamed over woods and hills, lived upon roots and fruits, and were overawed by the manifestations of physical phenomena. The second class attempted to fight against such phenomena and mistook their natural subsidence for their own superior power of opposition. The third class bestowed a thought of reflection on the probable origin of such phenomena. During these

three stages the objects of worship progressed from whatever was bright and wonderful to trees, caves, hills and rivers and later on to the sun, the moon and other planets. From a nomad life they began to settle at fixed spots, with fences and walls for their protection. Then followed cultivation, with allotments of fields and boundaries. Villages were thus formed by tribal groups and the institution of the village deity has continued in India to this day. Such are, for instance, Pōlēramma, Ellamma (*lit.* the goddess of fields, the goddess of boundaries). These are Telugu names and there are corresponding terms in the different languages of India. These were female divinities and a husband was easily fancied and that is Pōtarāju. The real origin of epidemics, such as small-pox and cholera was not perceived, that in fact they spread by contagion, but they were supposed to be the result of the displeasure of rural deities, for they appeared generally in some villages and not in others. To avoid such epidemics, therefore, annual festivals were instituted for their propitiation and by offering the lives of animals in sacrifice, men

sought to save their own. These festivals and sacrifices continue to this day.

Words preceded the science of grammar and their grammatical gender remained, as it was, unaltered by later grammarians. Whenever the name was feminine, later generations invented a corresponding masculine to serve as a spouse and thence came the several tales of their marriage and progeny. *Nadī*, for instance, is feminine in gender and all rivers are therefore conceived to be of the womankind. Rivers empty themselves into the ocean. The term *Samudra* being masculine in gender, the ocean has been described as the husband of rivers.

At times they fancied the presidency of deities in household articles, tools and weapons and began to worship them. From the resulting changes of physical phenomena, they thought of devils and demons and commenced their adoration, long before the village deities came to be recognised.

EARTH.

The general belief that everything in the world had a presiding deity soon engendered the idea

of a great divinity in the earth, which gave its denizens, food, shelter and cômfort. Balls of mud became the objects of worship, as representing the earth's divinity. Gradually the shapeless balls of mud gave place to earthen images of Vināyaka, Liᅅgam and Sakti. So they call the Liᅅgam at Conjeeveram, the Pārthiva (*lit.* earthen) Liᅅgam.

WATER.

Earth gives us all articles of food. Water is likewise a necessity and so they began to worship water in the form of tanks and rivers. It is common, even among us, to throw off fruits, saffron, clothes, etc., in the course of flooded rivers, on the belief that these rivers are a species of female deities. There is likewise an illusion among the rural population, that unless these rivers are propitiated, the floods would increase and wash away the adjoining villages.

FIRE.

Fire destroys everything. From the spectacle of wild conflagrations arose the belief in the divinity of fire. For the preparation of palatable food fire was a daily requisite and so they ranked it with

earth and water in their adoration. We often see our ladies decorating the lighted lamp and making their obeisance to it at sunset. There is likewise the practice of incessant burning of lamps in temples and elsewhere too on occasions. Fire-worship is common among many religions. Among the Parsis, the fire has been kept up for generations without extinction. To them, fire and ocean are the principal objects of worship. Among the Roman Catholic Christians, the churches maintain perpetual lights beside the images of worship and their votaries offer presents of candles for use at service. It is still the prevailing custom at Jerusalem to light the sacred fire on the Saturday previous to the Easter week and pilgrims kindle their candles from that fire as a matter of devotion. Among the Mahomedans, a big fire is set up for the days of the Mohurram, around which they dance with prayers and at times some walk across the fire with the Pir images in their hands.

AIR.

Like earth, water and fire, air is a necessity of life and so came its worship. The force of wind

often affected the showers of rain and caused perceptible changes in temperature, and with its power of devastation air was considered a deity even superior to other elements.

SKY.

The element of *Ākāśa* is not a necessary requisite of life. But the belief that the sky was holding up the planets and the stars secure in their proper position created the idea of a religious reverence towards it, for the people could not then understand that the sun and other planets kept their places by the force of mutual gravitation. The appearance of clouds and the showers of rain were attributed to the munificence of this divinity.

The worship of the five elements continued for a long time. By the period of the *Ṛig Vēḍa*, water, fire and air came to be the objects of particular invocation and adoration, and they were in turn treated as identical with the Supreme Being, according to the purpose to which such worship was directed. The *Vēḍas* contain passages in praise of several deities, the elements, the sun, the moon, *Indra*, *Yama*, *Viśvakarma* and *Prajāpati*. The sun was

worshipped as the giver of light and heat, the moon as the delightful light of the night, Indra as the lord of the rains, Yama as the god of death, Visvakarma, as the architect of the world and Prajapati* as the creator of mankind.

The belief in these latter divinities originated in the attempt to solve the question of the creation and destruction of the animate and inanimate world, for the elements could apparently have no capacity for such creation or destruction. They saw the rains falling only at intervals, irregular in duration and quantity. They reasoned that the sky could not therefore be the donor of the rains and imagined Indra, as the lord of the firmament. They saw mankind dying before them from causes imperceptible, and they therefore predicated the existence of Yama, the god of death. The monsoons set in from the east and Indra was therefore taken to be the lord of the rains of the eastern direction. Corresponding to this, they conceived the thought of a separate lord of the western quarter and him they called Varuṇa. The logical

* Prajapati was not identical with Brahma, the first of the Triad.

sequence was the creation of similar rulers for the northern and the southern quarters. To the advancing Āryans the south was hotter and more unbearable and so they connected that direction with Yama, the god of death. The comparative affluence of the northern regions gave rise to the idea of their ruler, as Kubēra, the lord of wealth.

Some time after the period of the Ṛig Vēḍa, religious ideas had advanced and at the head of the divine pantheon were soon placed the Triad, Brahma, Viṣṇu and Mahēs'vara. The Triad were considered the supreme lords of creation, preservation and destruction and their worship attracted the foremost attention. For a fuller review of the functions of the Triad, we shall defer our discussion to a later chapter.

The elements are objects of no animation. It may be said that inanimate as they are, they may have their presiding deities. But such deities, if they do exist, are not all-powerful and must therefore be of a minor grade. Ideas have progressed and those elements that were treated in the archaic age as the Supreme Deities have lost their merit

in the eye of modern generations. But there is no material object in creation that is not made up of one or some of these elements, so that we are bound to infer and admit the existence of a superior lord of creation, the Greatest of the Great.

THE SUN.

The Sun as a deity transcends the five elements. With a chariot drawn by seven horses, he starts from the eastern ocean in the morning and reaches the western ocean in the evening. So the Vēḍās declare and so we worship him. Now the followers of the Sūrya Siḍḍhānta agree with foreign astronomers in the view that the Sun has no motion, neither rises nor sets and if at all there is any motion, the solar disc revolves in its own place around a fixed centre. The Sun is only a sphere like other planets, but there is the heat and light which he transmits to the inferior spheres around. Thus the stories of the chariot and horses and of his birth and offspring have become myths. He is, we believe, the seat of God because he is the most resplendent in the visible creation. The idea of the divine spirit implies the predominance of a

certain energy in the solar orb. Therefore according to the saying in the Gīṭa, "Whatever is of glory, etc.,*" he becomes adorable. But how can the Divine Being that exists everywhere, that is omnipresent, reside in the Sun or anywhere in a fixed place? God made the Sun, the greatest of all spheres, to give us heat and light and so to preserve the health of mankind and to him our devotion is due.

THE MOON.

The Moon is lighted by the effulgence of the Sun and the lunar hemisphere that is visible to us increases in the bright half and decreases in the dark half of every month, owing to the motions of the earth and the Moon. On the full-moon day the entire lunar hemisphere is seen brightened by the sun. On the new-moon day no part of the lighted lunar orb is visible. Otherwise the Moon has no expansion or diminution. It is a common saying

* यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसंभवम् ॥

"Whatever thing (there is) of glory, of splendour, or of power, know all that to be produced from portions of my energy." X, 41.

that the price of grain rises or falls according as the ends of the lunar arc are high or low on the first day after the new moon. This is another illusion. If we compare the lunar arc in two different years at the same periods, the shape is found to be constant. Tales told of the Moon are many. All are but myths: his education under Jupiter, his adultery with Tārā, the birth of Mercury from this union, the war between the moon and the Jupiter, and his waxing and waning at the curse of Dakṣa. We believe that the lunar sphere is also the abode of the Pitṛis (the manes). We shall speak of this in the third part. In fact the Moon has been created to light the earth at nights and to promote the growth of the vegetable kingdom. The brighter parts of the Moon are water and the dimmer are hills. As dark spots these dimmer parts were the subject of various fancies among the ancients.

INDRA.

Indra is said to be the lord of heaven and the rains. The people of the west coast regard Varuṇa as the lord of the rains. The belief in this lordship is not therefore uniform and there cannot be two

deities for the same function. There is no need to believe in gods of rain, for rains are caused by various physical phenomena. Inḍra is represented as the vanquisher of Vṛiṭra. Some say that *Vṛiṭra* denotes drought and when Inḍra as the god of rain destroys it, the tale of conquest of Vṛiṭra is an allegory, while Drought as the greatest evil is an *Asura* (a demon) by personification.

Among his several names, there is the appellation *Sahasrākṣa*, with an indecent story about it. He was cursed by Gauṭama for adultery with his wife Ahalyā and the work of the curse was the appearance of a thousand disgraceful marks on his body, which would however appear to the world as a thousand eyes. *Sahasrākṣa* means 'thousand-eyed' and the name only signifies that Inḍra, the lord of the gods, displays the remarkable alacrity of a person with a thousand-fold vision. Is it possible that the lord of the gods would seduce the consort of one of the seven great Rīṣis or that that consort would submit to such seduction? We cannot divine the origin of these tales of illicit relations between Inḍra and Ahalyā or Chandra and Tārā.

It cannot be that they teach the lesson that sexual passion is insurmountable, for false tales of vilification are a heinous sin. Divine beings cannot be low as men in passion and far from teaching a lesson of ethics, these tales are only the creatures of wicked authors—nay, the Scripture quoted to justify acts of incest and immorality!

VIS'VAKARMA.

The ancients saw that their dwellings were the work of man and on this analogy they imagined the existence of Vis'vakarma—the architect of the world—for the creation of hills, caves, rivers and the like. They could not perceive that the world was evolved gradually at the will of the Supreme Being.

PRAJĀPAṬI.

For the creation of the inanimate world they premised the existence of Vis'vakarma and so for the animate world they believed in Prajāpaṭi. The work of Prajāpaṭi ended with creation and the rest was left to the elements, the sun, the moon, Inḍra and so on.

YAMA.

Yama imposes death, but has a further duty. He examines the relative degrees of virtue and vice in every individual, sends the virtuous to heaven and assigns to the wicked their proper places in hell. For every man God has ordained the experiences of good or evil according to his action (or fate) and a particular deity like Yama for the purpose is therefore a superfluity.

We have now spoken of the deities named and adored in the Ṛig Vēḍa. When later on it was discovered that these deities were not all-powerful the wise men of yore began the worship of Brahma, Viṣṇu and Mahēśvara, as the lords of evolution, preservation and involution, at the head of the pantheon. Brahma sprang from the lotus in the navel of Nārāyaṇa. Brahma is the creator, Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu, the preserver, and Mahēśvara, the destroyer, of all universe. Brahma has his consort Sarasvatī, his vehicle the Hamsa (swan), and his abode at Saṭyalōka. Viṣṇu has his consort Lakṣmī, his vehicle the Garuda (eagle), * and his abode at

* Strictly a mythical being with a human frame and an eagle head.

Vaikuṅtha. Mahēśvara has his consort Pārvaṭī, his vehicle the Rīṣabha (bull) and his abode at Kailāsa. These are the general ideas of Hindu theology. To some, Vaikuṅtha is the seat of salvation and to others, Kailāsa. Brahma has been called the father of many sons, for apparently it was thought that every species of creation must have a special officer and such officers were the sons of Brahma.

AVATĀRA.

The Avatāras (Incarnations) of Viṣṇu are variously said to be ten, twenty-one and twenty-four. The subject has been dealt with more fully in my criticism on the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. In his narration to Saunaka in the Bhāgavata, Sūta refers to twenty-one incarnations :

- (1) Brahma, (2) Yagna-Varāha, (3) Nāraḍa, (4) Nara Nārāyaṇa, (5) Kapila, (6) Ḍattātrēya, (7) Suyagna, (8) Rīṣabha, (9) Pṛiṭhu, (10) Maṭsya, (11) Kūrma, (12) Ḍhanwantari, (13) Mōhinī, (14) Nṛisimha, (15) Vāmana, (16) Paras'urāma, (17) Vyāsa, (18) Rāma, (19) Balarāma, (20) Kṛiṣṇa and (21) Buḍḍha.

Again in the same work the incarnations are related as twenty-four by Brahma to Nāraḍa :

(1) Yagna-Varāha, (2) Suyagna, (3) Kapila, (4) Ḍaṭṭāṭrēya, (5) Kumāra, (6) Nara Nārāyaṇa, (7) D'hruva, (8) Pṛiṭhu, (9) Rīṣabha, (10) Hayagrīva, (11) Maṭ'sya, (12) Kūrma, (13) Nṛisimha, (14) Hari, (15) Vāmana, (16) Hamsa, (17) Manvaṅ'ara, (18) Ḍhanvaṅtari, (19) Paras'urāma, (20) Rāma, (21) Kṛiṣṇa, (22) Vyāsa, (23) Buḍḍha and (24) Kalki.

These lists differ essentially in number, nature and sequence. By common acceptance the incarnations are only ten and they are Maṭ'sya, Kūrma, etc. In speaking of the various objects of worship, divine, human or inanimate, S'rī Kṛiṣṇa, in the Gītā, bade Arjuna believe the existence of his own divine essence in all that is grand or glorious :

“ Whatever thing (there is) of glory, of splendour or of power, know all that to be produced from portions of my energy ” *

It is common to speak of men of extraordinary greatness as superhuman or imbued with the divine element. The list of twenty-one omits Kalki and the list of twenty-four omits Balarāma.

* यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसंभवम् ॥ X. 41.

On this principle, the author of the Bhāgavaṭa first named twenty-one personages, but on later recollection increased the number to twenty-four, apparently without regard to the prior enumeration.

Of the ten incarnations, Maṭsya (fish) is related as the earliest. Fish is aquatic and therefore this incarnation must have been at the earliest stage of creation. Water was evolved first, then came the earth, the animal and the vegetable kingdoms. Later followed the Rājasic and Ṭāmasic creations. It might therefore be observed that before the creation of mankind, an advent of God had no occasion. But Gītā says :—

“For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, and for the preservation of virtue I am born age after age.”*

The Supreme Being might have incarnated in different forms at the several stages of the evolution of the world ; as a *fish* when the world was all water ; as a *tortoise*, when the earth was miry ; as a *boar* when hills and woods grew on earth ; as a

* परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृतां !
धर्मसंरक्षणार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥ IV, 8.

man-lion when the Ṭāmasic and Rājasic beings began their havoc; as a *dwarf* when the Sāṭvic creation commenced. The sages of old must have relied on these lines of the Gīṭā when they predicated this order in incarnation. Vāmana was short in stature, for the Sāṭvic were shorter than the Rājasic or the Ṭāmasic. Virtue overcomes vice and as an illustration, Vāmana is said to have subdued Bali by persuasive conversation.

Nṛisimha means 'the best of men.' Some were misled by this name and fancied a mixed form of man and lion. They created the tale of the destruction of the demon Hiraṇya Kaśipu and the rescue of Prahlāḍa under this incarnation. This is only a myth, for if a great ruler like Hiraṇya Kaśipu had ever existed, some tradition of the locality must have come down to us, but we have none. The story, however, has its lessons; merit of devotion from the conduct of Prahlāḍa, certain retribution for vice from the end of his father and the display of divine energy for the succour of devotees from the act of Nṛisimha. But in India there is a sincere belief in the story of this

incarnation and images with a lion's face are worshipped in many shrines all over our land.

We hear that Śankara and Rāmānuja worshipped this image and vanquished their foes. The name, *Nṛisimha*, indicates only the display of divine heroism. Rāma and Kṛiṣṇa conquered their enemies by their valour, so that the worship of Rāma and Kṛiṣṇa in their heroic attitude would mean the worship of Nṛisimha.

We worship the Sālagrāma stones* (black ammonite) under the names of these various incarnations, Maṭṣya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nṛisimha. For when we once grant that the Sālagrāma stone is a form of Viṣṇu himself, the distinction in names follows from the variety in shape. If the incarnations themselves had never existed, why should these stones be still adored under their names?

Of incarnations, there are two kinds mentioned in our writings, *Āves'a* or possessive and *Ams'a* or derivative (that is, by possession or by elemental derivation). Possessive incarnation is where the divine energy becomes transfused for the occasion

* Found in the Gandaki river in Nepal.

in an individual for the accomplishment of a particular object (or when the individual becomes possessed with the divine frenzy). So was Paras'urāma. Derivative or elemental incarnation is where the divine element continues from advent to extinction. Such were Rāma and Kṛiṣṇa.

BUDDHA.

Buddha taught the Buddhist creed. His followers were staunch worshippers of his relics. S'ankara brought them back to the Hindu fold by declaring Buddha to be an incarnation of Viṣṇu—this is the theory of some western orientalist. Verily did the lord of the universe delude mankind by the inculcation of atheistic doctrines with a view to their refutation !

Besides proclaiming Buddha as an incarnation of Viṣṇu with the object of putting down atheism, S'ankara taught the worship of the five deities and as an ascetic too, himself followed the same observance. He was thus able to bring under a common faith several sects, who till then had their own particular deity of adoration.

Buddha did not deal with the existence of God. He saw his countrymen blind with the belief that

sacrifice and ritual were the sure means for all ends, with no virtue in action. He therefore taught that righteous conduct alone could lead to salvation and explained it as of eight categories :

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| (1) Righteous thought. | (5) Honest life. |
| (2) Righteous resolution. | (6) Honest endeavour. |
| (3) Truthful word. | (7) Real understanding |
| (4) Truthful conduct. | (8) Sincere reflection. |

Without righteous conduct, worship is of no avail. These are general concepts worthy of universal acceptance irrespective of religious differences.

We need not think of the Kalki advent, which is yet to come. Of these incarnations, therefore, Rāma and Kṛiṣṇa appear to me to accord with reason and reality.

MANMATHA.

Manmaṭha is the son of Nārāyaṇa. He generates passion among lovers. The Purāṇas relate a story that he was burnt to ashes by the wrath of S'iva, when he attempted to distract him from his penance into a passionate love for Pārvaṭī. He is believed to do his duty still without a form. Can we imagine that one born of the Lord of All would resort to the low work of engendering passion between

man and woman without discrimination of creed, form, time or position? It may be said that to foster affection between a married couple it is no wrong but there his agency is superfluous, for marriage is intended for sexual gratification. The story of Manmaṭha appears to be a Purāṇic legend. I believe, however, there is a solution. Nārāyaṇa first evinced (created) the desire (Kāma) for creation and then proceeded with the process of creation. The word *Kāma* is masculine in gender and it was easily personified as the son of Nārāyaṇa. This led to the later conception of Kāma's agency in the generation of sexual passion as a means of procreation. Passion or desire is shapeless, and hence came the fancy that Kāma had a form until it was destroyed by Śiva. In this originated the legend of 'Burning of Kāma.'

ĪSVARA.

Īsvara's first wife was Saṭī, daughter of Ḍakṣa. Incensed at the disregard shown by her father to her husband at a sacrifice, she gave up her corporeal frame.* Re-born as Pārvaṭī, she became

* There are two versions of this story slightly differing from each other, in the Mahābhārata and the Bhāgavata. *Vide* Muir, O. S. T., iv. 378 ff.

his wife again by the merit of her devotion. In Northern India she is known by various names :

Ḍurgā, Ḍaśabhujā, Singavāhinī, Maḥiṣāsura-
marḍinī, Jagadādhārī, Kālī, Mukṭakēśī, Ṭārā,
Chinnamastakā, Jagadgaurī, Praṭyangirā,
Annapūrṇā, Gaṇēśajanani, Kṛiṣṇāṅkiṭōras.

The Bhāgavata adds some other names :

Ḍurgā, Bhadrakālī, Vāiṣṇavī, Kumudā,
Caṇḍikā, Kṛiṣṇā, Māḍhavī, Kanyakā, Māyā,
Nārāyaṇī, Isnā, Sāraḍā, Ambikā.

These several names also represent, they say, the different incarnations of Pārvaṭī. The Sākṭēyas believe that she delights in sacrifices and all abhorrent forms of worship. It is ridiculous to conceive the consort of one of the Supreme Triad taking delight in meat or drink. These modes of adoration were obviously devised by people accustomed to such practices of animal food and drink, as plausible scripture to sanction such vice and to encourage the world in the same path of evil. Brahma, Viṣṇu and Mahēśvara carry on the work of creation, preservation and destruction by *Sakti* (power or energy). This power or energy was fancied as a

distinct entity of superior force. Being feminine in the gender of its appellation, it was personified into a goddess transcending the dignity of the Triad and grew to be the object of great adoration. Instead of taking *Sakti* or power as superior, why can we not take the Triad as superior, in whom that power is inherent? For energy is useless without the agent to exert power.

Gangā is the second consort of Īśvara. She has also been described as the wife of King Śaṅtanu, and elsewhere as the wife of the ocean. How can an inanimate river be a wedded wife, or how could Īśvara marry the wife of Śaṅtanu and the ocean? Gangā rises in the Himālayas and the word is of the feminine gender. Gangā was thus fancied as the daughter of the Himālayas and like Pārvaṭī classed as the wife of Īśvara.

Īśvara has also an appellation *Harihara*. Once Lakṣmī irritated Pārvaṭī by calling Viṣṇu greater than Īśvara and to appease her anger Viṣṇu united himself with Śiva's form and convinced them that they were equal. So says the Skāṇḍa Purāṇa. Īśvara is also named *Ardhanārīśvara* (Īśvara with

a half-female form). At the suggestion of Īsvara, Viṣṇu assumed the form of an all-captivating goddess to divert the attention of the demons at the distribution of nectar after the churning of the ocean. Īsvara was enamoured of this form and the consequence of an embrace was the combination of the half forms of man and woman. Hence came the name Arḍhanārīśvara. Is it possible that Lakṣmi and Pārvaṭī were really ignorant of the identity or otherwise of Harī and Hara or that Īsvara would have lost his equanimity at that all-captivating form, which Viṣṇu had but to assume at his own instance? No, these stories are only intended to convey the idea that Harī and Hara are equal or identical.

GAṆAPATĪ.

Gaṇapaṭī is generally known as the elder son of S'iva and Pārvaṭī, but tales of his origin are various. The Paḍma Purāṇa describes him as the actual child of their union. The Brahma Vāivarṭa Purāṇa has two stories. Pārvaṭī observed the vow of Panyāka for the propitiation of Viṣṇu and Gaṇapaṭī was then born. The aspect of Saturn severed the head but it flew up to heaven and there re-united

with the substance of Viṣṇu, of whom it formed a part. Thereupon Viṣṇu took off the head of an elephant asleep then on the banks of the Bhadrā and clapped it on to the headless trunk. The second story varies a little. The head was lost by the curse of Kās'yapa. Viṣṇu substituted the head of Indra's elephant and gave Indra another in its stead. The loss of Indra's elephant is connected with a curse of Ḍurvāsas. The Maṭsya Purāṇa says that Pārvaṭī made an image with her floury unguents and gave life to it. The Śiva Purāṇa has a different story. After giving life to an ordinary human toy Pārvaṭī placed him at the gate to prevent intrusion. When refused entrance Śiva cut off the head of this guard, but to please his wife he substituted the first head that was available and this happened to be an elephant's. The Skanda Purāṇa has its own account too. During the twilight that intervened between the Ḍvāpara and Kali ages a visit to Sōmēs'vara at Sōmanāth admitted every visitor into heaven. Heaven could not hold this extraordinary influx of men and Indra with his gods sought the protection of Śiva. Śiva could not revoke his

promise to Sōma and directed them to supplicate Pārvaṭī. They then invoked Pārvaṭī. She gently rubbed her body and there came out a wondrous being with four arms and an elephant's head, Gaṇapaṭi. He enticed mankind to give up visits to Sōmanāth by allurements of offspring and wealth and the pilgrimage to Sōmanāth mostly ceased. In the Gaṇanāthābhyuḍaya, Viṣṇu is said to have ordained that all worship offered to him for the attainment of particular ends should thenceforward be devoted to Gaṇapaṭi, and Brahma and the various gods bestowed on him several similar gifts. From this it appears that, before the introduction of the worship of Gaṇapaṭi, the worship of Viṣṇu alone prevailed. In the Gaṇapaṭi Upaniṣaḍ he is identified with the Triad and the eternal spirit.

From these stories, it is impossible to ascertain the real origin of Gaṇapaṭi. If he had been the natural offspring of Śiva and Pārvaṭī, the narrative of his birth must be uniform. There is a belief in the existence of Gaṇas in Kailāsa and the thought of a leader for them, Gaṇapaṭi, was natural. Śiva was the lord of Kailāsa and it was only an easy

step to call Gaṇapaṭi, the son of Śiva. With the progress of polytheism, Gaṇapaṭi came to be regarded likewise as the Supreme Being.

During the epoch of earthen images, Gaṇapaṭi worship must have commenced. Probably owing to the sudden loss of the head of the image in some prominent shrine, the Arcaka must have replaced it by the head of an elephant's image close by. In rural temples we see to this day, images of elephants, horses and birds painted in colours. On the day of Vināyaka Caṭurṭhī, earthen images of Gaṇapaṭi are made for the worship of the day. This must therefore be the only plausible explanation for the unnatural form of Gaṇapaṭi. How else could a human trunk have an elephant's head? Man's head is erect, elephant's head looks downward. Why could not Nārāyaṇa and other gods refit the severed head or replace the lost head by a natural one? Gaṇapaṭi appears to be a mythical deity. The stories of his birth and greatness must have been the creation of different writers to suit their fancies and they attributed the origin of Gaṇapaṭi, to Viṣṇu or Īśvara, according as they were the followers of Viṣṇu or Īśvara.

To ward off impediments, Gaṇapaṭi is first worshipped at every ceremonial. Among the Vaiṣṇavas, the worship of Viṣvaksēna is substituted for that of Gaṇapaṭi. Viṣvaksēna is the leader of the forces in Vaikuṅṭha, as Gaṇapaṭi is in Kailāsa. What business have these generals with obstacles to actions in this world? The authors of Gaṇapaṭi worship knew its scant merit and though they sanctioned it to please the ignorant populace, they began the rituals with the utterances of names of the Triad or Kēśava, etc., before proceeding to the worship of Gaṇapaṭi. It is therefore clear that to their minds the Triad were the superior objects of adoration.

Among the Vaiṣṇavas likewise, the ancient name of Vighnēsvara could not be given up and had to be imbedded indirectly in their invocation to Viṣvaksēna, as a being to whom Vighnēsvara and others are subordinates. Otherwise Vighnēsvara of Kailāsa could never be a subordinate of Viṣvaksēna of Vaikuntha.

Invocations of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa or Pārvaṭī and Īsvara would be the only reasonable acts of

devotion, for these deities can as well, if propitiated, prevent all obstacles to the attainment of our objects. It may also be proper that ancillary to the worship of Viṣṇu or Śiva in any shrine, their respective generals Viṣvaksēna or Vighnēs'vara receive our adoration.

KUMĀRASWĀMI.

Various stories are likewise told of Kumāraswāmi. The Rāmāyaṇa makes him the son of Agni. The Mahābhārata has the account that Śiva paid him honour by calling him Agni Rudra, and he was thence known as the son of Rudra. It is elsewhere said that the goddess Svāhā visited Agni in the form of the wives of the six great Ṛṣis except Arundhaṭī (wife of Vasiṣṭha) and deposited the sperm obtained from Agni in a golden reservoir from which, when worshipped by the gods, sprang Kārṭikēya with six heads, twelve eyes, arms and feet and a neck and a belly. There is another tale of the entrance of Śiva and Pārvaṭī into Agni and Svāhā and the birth of Kārṭikēya from their union. The Rāmāyaṇa relates a story in another context, that Parvaṭī uttered a curse against birth of children to the gods, but the sperm of Śiva had

already manifested. Agni and Vāyu concealed the sperm in the Ganges, and that produced the deity. The Śīva Purāṇa has a reference. Afraid of Ṭāraka's penance, the gods complained to Brahma. Brahma could not refuse a boon to Ṭāraka but related to them the marriage of Śīva and Pārvaṭī. The gods approached Śīva for the generation of a son who should destroy Ṭāraka. It took some time for the birth of Kumāraswāmi. At the request of the gods Agni received the sperm from Śīva, but unable to bear it, let it drop in the Ganges, and on the banks of the river arose the boy, Kārtikēya. Six royal queens had come there for a bath and when all offered their breasts, the boy assumed six faces and received nurture from all. There is yet another story. Śīva once threw the sparks of fire from his eye into the Śaravaṇa lake and thence were born six children, who were nursed by the wives of six sages. At one time Pārvaṭī affectionately embraced them and their bodies became one.

These stories are so various and we cannot say whether Kārtikēya was born as one or as six,

whether he was the son of Svāhā, Agni or both, Śiva, Pārvaṭī or both, or of the Ganges alone. If according to the prevailing belief, he is the son of Śiva, he cannot be a servant of Indra in the inferior region of Svarga, while he ought rightly to hold a position of importance beside his father at Kailāsa. It was a wrong notion that because Ganapaṭī, the elder son of Śiva, was the lord of the Pramaṭha Gaṇas, Kāṛṭikēya, the younger, must hold a similar position of the generalissimo of the armies of the gods, though in a different region.

In describing the progress of worship through these several stages, I have followed our religious writings, and likewise *The Origin and Progress of Religion* by Max Müller and *Hindu Mythology* by Wilkinson.

Of these objects of worship many are inanimate, some imaginary and some fictitious. It needs no saying how objects, inanimate or fictitious, deserve no adoration. With the conception of the Triad, as the Supreme Lords of All, what room can further be for a miscellany of deities, with an allotment of individual functions?

The Triad are supreme and are worshipped throughout India as the lords of creation, preservation and destruction. We believe in heaven and hell with Indra and Yama as their lords and they rank next to the Triad in our pantheon of gods.

PART THE SECOND.

OBSERVANCES.

Acts ordained by the Śrutiṣ and the Smṛitiṣ are of three kinds : perpetual, occasional (or incidental) and optional. Perpetual acts are duties, prescribed for daily observance, such as Sandhyāvandana, Hōma, Piṭri Tarpaṇa, etc. Occasional are those that are incidental to particular occurrences, such as annual ceremonies, Ekādaṣi vows, etc. A neglect of these acts is sinful. Optional are those that are done for the attainment of particular objects. These are various, often unseemly and expensive.

Optional observances are seen in four forms as acts of duty, on occasions of festivity, during visits to temples, or for particular ends. They had their origin at different times, in different places and for different creeds. On return from pilgrimages, some people adopt new observances as a mark of superior austerity and gradually these practices multiply themselves. We have, therefore, to test their merit before adoption. The acts that we

perform must have a Śaṣṭraic sanction or be meant for divine propitiation. They do not necessarily bear fruit in this life itself. Offspring, learning, wealth and health are mostly the result of past actions in prior lives. But man's present endeavours cannot go in vain. He who craves wealth must attempt an honest and prudent acquisition. He who desires progeny must preserve the health of himself and his spouse. He who seeks learning must pass through an attentive course of study and improve his knowledge by imparting it to others. He who wants authority must qualify himself for it by education and good character. Unaided by human effort, observances cannot by themselves help the attainment of ends, and without such effort they lead only to loss of health and wealth.

Observances refer either to the day of the week (*Vāsara*) or to the day of fortnight (*Ṭiṭhi*). On occasions of the conjunction of these days with particular planets or constellations, the Śaṣṭras enjoin special offerings or ceremonies. These occur more often in the Ḍakṣiṇāyana. It is however scarcely perceived that these special observances

are but the creations of wealth-seeking priests, for all auspicious acts like Upanayana or Vivāha are performed in the Uṭṭarāyaṇa and the Dakṣiṇayana was originally without any engagements.*

WEEKLY OBSERVANCES.

SUNDAY.

This is the day of the Sun and the vow is therefore for his propitiation. In the progress of the quest of God the Sun was for some time regarded as the Supreme Being, as the most resplendent of the visible world. Before Śankara introduced the worship of the five deities this vow was being observed apart. Now that we have seen that the Sun is not the Supreme Being and not even his abode, there is no more need for the Sunday observances. Some perform prostrations to the Sun for the sake of health. Prostrations are a regular exercise and necessarily make a man strong and healthy. Sun's light is a good restorative and if aided by fresh air,

* Uṭṭarāyaṇa represents the winter or northern solstice and Dakṣiṇāyana, the summer or southern solstice. The solstice is the time of the year at which, owing to the annual revolution of the earth, the sun is at its greatest distance north or south from the equator and appears to turn back and this generally happens at mid-winter or mid-summer, about the 22nd December and the 21st June of every year.

exercise and medicine, a patient easily improves. But there is no meaning in the performance of prostrations by a proxy. Some ladies refrain from food on cloudy days until the Sun becomes visible, and does this mean that on those days the Sun never dawned ?

MONDAY.

This vow lasts for fourteen years and is meant to propitiate Umā and Mahēśvara. On Mondays Śaivite temples have a special worship. Some observe a fast at nights, but on Mondays of the Kārtika month the fast lasts until the worship of Mahēśvara in the evening. Monday has been considered the day agreeable to Śiva on the belief that the lunar arc adorns his forehead. On the day after the new moon the lunar arc lies near the sun, too thin to be visible. In fact the lunar arc does not rest on Śiva and cannot rest. Some say that Sōma is an appellation of Śiva and Sōmavāra (Monday) is Śiva's day. This is not correct, for the days of the week are named after the planets.

TUESDAY.

This is intended for the pleasure of Mars. In Śrāvaṇa there is the Mangala Gōurivraṭa. This vow must have originated among the Śaivites in imitation of the Friday vow observed by the Vaiṣṇavites in this month. Rural deities are considered the incarnations of Pārvaṭī and their festivals fall invariably on Tuesdays, rarely on Wednesdays. Some say that Tuesday is the day of Bhāirava.

WEDNESDAY.

This is not observed in our parts.

THURSDAY.

In the month of Mārgaśīras the vow is observed for the pleasure of Lakṣmī. In some places Thursday is called the Lakṣmī-Vāram.

FRIDAY.

Śukra (Venus) is also called Bhārgava. There is a Purāṇic story that Lakṣmī is the daughter of Bhṛigu. Friday has therefore been dedicated to her and besides a special worship of Lakṣmī on all Fridays our ladies observe a vow on Fridays of the Śrāvaṇa month.

SATURDAY.

The worship of Saturn is not in vogue and yet Saturday is considered to be the special day for Śrī Vēṅkatēśa. The belief is that the worship of this deity removes the ills caused by Saturn's influence. If planets can really do us good or evil, their attitude is once for all determined by their position at the time of birth (nativity). It is wrong otherwise to ascribe to them eternal good or evil. A worship of Śiva by Śaivites and of Viṣṇu by Vaiṣṇavites in their own shrines should suffice to ward off the planetary evil. There is therefore no reason to connect Śrī Vēṅkatēśa with Saturn's influences. This worship had in fact a different origin. The idol of Śrī Vēṅkatēśa was originally of the form of Kumāraswāmi and was later on transformed into the image of Viṣṇu in the days of Rāmānuja. On the night of Friday, before retirement, Rāmānuja left the materials of worship in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* and when on the morning of Saturday, the sealed doors were opened, the deity revealed himself in the garb of Viṣṇu. He has

been so worshipped to this day. The day on which this new form was revealed was a Saturday and became naturally a memorial day.

Of these several vows, those of Sunday, Monday and Friday appear to be the more ancient and that of Saturday dates from the time of Rāmānuja. Seeing no particular distinction in these four week days, other vows were likewise created later on for the rest. The belief in the Sun as the Supreme Being or the relation of Śiva with Sōmavāra has no foundation. The vow of Friday may be regarded, for we see the worship of Lakṣmi regularly conducted in all Viṣṇu temples on that day and particularly so on the days of the Vara Lakṣmī Vraṭam in the Srāvaṇa month. The vow of Saturday may be observed in the Tirupati hills or in temples where the image of Vēṅkatēśvara is consecrated. But there is no need for us to follow these vows from day to day without discrimination.

THE TĪTHI OBSERVANCES.

It has been laid down that a neglect of the perpetual and the occasional duties entails a penalty. But the same penalty has been predicated for failure

to observe several vows, though their main object has relation only to definite desires or festive pleasures. It is not all observances that are incumbent on everyone, as is for instance the Ēkāḍaṣī vow. Of these many are meant to propitiate Viṣṇu and in them the worship of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa is ordained. Rāmānuja has deprecated the worship of every deity save Nārāyaṇa. For fear therefore that the Vaiṣṇavas, as the followers of Rāmānuja, might give up sundry observances, the priests appear to have introduced the worship of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa in the programme of the ritual and yet only a few of these are observed by the orthodox section.

CHĀITRA.

S'UKLA-PRATIPAD.

This is the first day of the year, the New Year's Day. It is an occasion of universal rejoicing. Flags are hoisted ; the year's merits are related ; oil baths are taken ; and tender leaves of margosa are eaten. In some temples the Vasanta-Navarātri (*lit.* nine nights of spring) festival commences. The Dēvī Navarātri is well-known in the Ās'vayuja month. In the Himālayan regions the temples

of *Ḍēvī* (goddess) are covered with snow and are incapable of approach during the period *Bhāḍra-ṣaḍa-Māgha*, and the festival of *Chāiṭra* came into vogue in those parts instead of *Ās'vayuja*. There seems to be no reason to repeat the celebration of *Navarātri* in the spring, that is, twice in the year, in other parts of the country.

S'RĪ RĀMA NAVAMĪ.

This is the birth-day of *S'rī Rāma* and a day of universal festivity. The *Smārṭas* observe a fast without any meaning. The *Vaiṣṇavas*, in all these festive observances, have a sumptuous dinner at their conclusion. As a day of rejoicing, it will be appropriate to worship *S'rī Rāma* and to enjoy the celebrations ; fast is no good.

VĀIS'ĀKHA.

AKṢAYA TRITĪYA.

On this day the images are besmeared with fresh sandal in all *Vaiṣṇava* shrines.

S'UKLA CATURDASĪ.

This is the day of the *Narasimha Jayanti*, the anniversary of the *Narasimha* incarnation. A religious vow is observed with a day-fast. We

have seen how the story of this incarnation is itself a myth and it follows that this observance is unnecessary.

ĀSHĀDHA.

KARKATAKA SANKRĀNTI.

This is the day of the vernal equinox. It is considered as important as the Makara-Sankrānti (autumnal equinox). Many persons perform ceremonies or offer oblations to the manes, so that they ought to give up similar ceremonies at the commencement of every month and on the new-moon days in Dakṣināyana. Otherwise there appears no special efficacy in the beginning of the particular month of Karkataka.

S'UKLA DVITĪYĀ.

On this day there are Raṭhōṭsavams (car festivals) in Viṣṇu temples. At Jagannath the festival is regarded as of special importance.

S'UKLA-ĒKĀDASĪ.

This is named the S'ayana-Ēkādasī or the Ēkādasī of Repose. It is believed that on this day Viṣṇu retires to rest in the Kṣīrābḍhi (milky ocean),

adjusts himself in his bed on the Śukla-Ekādaśī of Bhādrapada and wakes up on the Śukla-Ēkādaśī of Kārtika. The creator of Brahma sleeps for four months in a human year. The idea seems to be absurd, when we consider that a whole human year makes a divine day, and four thousand human ages constitute the half of a day (the day time) for Brahma under the Purāṇic calculations. In the courses of big rivers like the Ganges, the temples in the islands (*lankas*) become submerged and unfit for visits in seasons of flood from the middle of Āshādhā to the end of Āsvayuja. So the residents of such islands close the temples on Āshādhā Śukla Ēkādaśī and when they go back after the floods recede about the same day in Kārtika, they resume their worship. This cessation in worship for four months has been described as a period of sleep for Viṣṇu. Likewise in the Himālayan regions, the temples, at Baḍari for instance, are covered with snow and worship is impossible for six months in the year. The real idea is lost and imagination creates the story of repose.

The Ēkāḍasī days of these months have therefore no merit in particular. Probably for the residents of such islands, these days may be of importance. But the Ēkāḍasī of Bhāḍrapaḍa, the day of adjustment in bed, is the greatest absurdity.

YYĀSA PŪRNIMĀ

During the four months of the rainy season touring is inconvenient and ascetics generally choose a comfortable locality for the observance of the Chāṭurmāsya Dīkṣā. People in the neighbourhood attend to their needs and with a greater devotion on the days of the full moon. As the author of the Brahma-Sūtras, Vyāsa is a special object of adoration on these Pūrṇimā days.

S'RĀVAṆA

On the full moon day the twice-born classes renew their sacred strings and perform some Vēdic ceremonies. On the Kṛṣṇa Astamī, there is the birthday of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, celebrated with all eclat. This corresponds to Śrī Rāma Navamī.

BHĀDRAPADA

SUDDHA CAṬURTHĪ

On this day earthen images of Vināyaka are consecrated and worshipped. They are preserved for a day, or at times for nine days, and then dissolved. In Part I of this book, I have shown how the worship of Vināyaka has no purpose.

RIṢI PAṆCAMĪ

This is the name given to the Suddha Paṅcamī of this month. Old ladies observe a vow and worship the Ṛṣis. I see no reasonable foundation for this observance.

VĀMANA JAYANTĪ

On the Suddha Dvādasī day, Vāmana is worshipped. The Vāmana incarnation has already been dealt with and this worship has therefore no utility.

MAHĀLAYA PAKṢAM

From the dark first day to the new moon day lasts the Mahālaya fortnight. Oblations of sesamum and water are offered every day and on the day of the father's death, the manes, paternal and maternal, and

those so called by courtesy, are treated to oblations of food. Unlike the anniversary ceremonies, the offerings extend to various persons other than the direct ancestors in the paternal and the maternal lines and hence comes the name Mahālaya (*lit.* great assemblage). They say that this fortnight is the manes' delight. The signs of the Zodiac, beginning with Mēṣa (Aries) are fixed, moving or double-natured, one after another in order; so that Miṭhunam (Gemini), Kanyā (Vīrgo), Ḍhanus (Sagittarius) and Mīnam (Piscus) are of a double nature. The time of the entrance of the sun into these four signs is the *Ṣadas'iti* (*lit.* eighty-six) or a meritorious occasion. Every sign has thirty degrees. From the beginning of Ṭulā (Libra) to 26 degrees in Ḍhanus there are 86 degrees. Similarly till 22 degrees of Mīnam and 18 degrees of Miṭhunam, the intervals are the same. There will therefore remain 16 degrees in Kanyā. If we take away $344 (4 \times 86)$ from 360, the number of days in the year, 16 will remain and these represent the 16 degrees of Kanyā aforesaid. Every degree makes a day, the sixteen days represented by the 16 degrees are

mentioned in the *Kālacandrikā* and other writings as propitiative to the manes. There is no foundation for the classification of the Zodiacal signs as of triple nature or their division by intervals of 86 degrees. Until 16 days in the *Kanyā* pass away it would generally be *Āsvayuja Suddha* and not *Bhādrapaḍa*. Besides, the fifteen days of the fortnight do not tally with this number, nor is there any astronomical significance in the choice of this period. We have therefore to seek for the real origin elsewhere. *Bhādrapaḍa* is supposed to be an inauspicious month. The rains make it more inconvenient to wander about for a living. There are no observances prescribed for the dark fortnight of this month and it seems therefore an imposture of the priesthood to call this period propitious to the manes.

ĀSVAYUJA

NAVA-RĀTRĪ

For nine days from the *Suddha Pratipad*, the *Sāstras* prescribe the worship of *Lakṣmī*, *Dēvī* and *Sarasvatī*. For the *Sākṭas*, *Sakti* is the Supreme

Being, the fountain of all benevolence. And|latterly the worship of Śakti has spread wide on a belief that by her blessing victory is assured. On a proper consideration, however, it appears that Sarasvatī may be worshipped for learning, Lakṣmī for wealth and Dēvī for conquest, so that in the absence of such particular desires, this worship becomes unnecessary.

The worship of Sarasvatī does not in practice last for nine days. It begins in Mūlā and ends in Śravaṇa. Lakṣmī is invariably worshipped in all households as well as in Vāiṣṇava temples, while Pārvatī, as identical with or equal to Dēvī, is worshipped in Sāiva shrines. In Śakti temples, they have only the worship of Dēvī in the lower fashion.

MAHĀ-NAYAMĪ.

On this day all artisans worship their tools, in the belief that a deity presides over them, and in many cases, with animal sacrifices. This idea cannot now be appreciated, but it may be proper to substitute the worship of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa or Pārvatī-Paramēśvara with a prayer for the prosperity of their arts.

VIJAYA DAŚAMĪ.

In ancient times, this was the day for the mobilization of armies in expeditions. But a relic of this practice is now preserved in the processions of caparisoned elephants and the holding of Durbars in several Samsthanams. This is believed to be the day of Rāma's overthrow of Rāvaṇa and in north Hindustan, a festival celebrating Rāma's victory commences in Bhāḍrapaḍa and concludes on the Vijaya Daśamī day.

NARAKA CAṬURDAŚĪ.

A worship in a prescribed form performed on this day is believed to save us from hell. They call this the anniversary of the killing of Narakā-sura by Kṛiṣṇa.

DĪPĀVALI AMĀVĀŚYA.

There is general illumination on this day and in many places accompanied by fire-works. In some Provinces, in Guzarat for instance, the beginning of the new year becomes the occasion for the New-Year's Day festivities. The fire-works are generally made of sulphur and are useful in dispelling the mist and clearing the atmosphere, especially so because the Dīpāvali comes after the rains.

KĀRTIKA.

During this month there is the *Abhiṣēkam* (bath) of Śiva performed every day or at least every Monday. This is only a counterpart of the Śayana-Ēkāḍasī. Owing to the floods in the Lanka regions of big rivers, like the Ganges, the worship in Śiva temples is suspended and when the rains cease in the Kārṭika month, the ablutions that ought to have been performed in such interval are offered throughout the month. This meaning is missed and the general belief that the Kārṭika month is propitious to Śiva has introduced the practice of the daily *Abhisēkam* everywhere.

Lights are hung up in the sky, for the supposed pleasure of Ḍamōḍara. In the Northern Provinces, this is the season of harvest and these lights were probably meant to guard against thieves and to this practice the modern usage may be traced. Or it may be purely a matter of diversion, for in autumnal nights the sky is clear and these lights put up at once in several places present a delightful spectacle.

NĀGULA CAVITI.

Formerly the class of agriculturists, named Nāgas, used to sprinkle milk on the dens of serpents to avoid the danger of their bite; but the practice has now extended to all. How is it possible to avoid the danger of reptiles, venomous by nature, by offering some milk at these holes?

KŚĪRĀBDHĪ DVĀDASĪ.

About sunset on this Dvādaśī day, it is usual with some ladies to worship the Tulasī plant. The Tulasī plant is a herb of healthy fragrance and when grown in front of the courtyard of a house helps to purify the air around. Its leaves are therefore used profusely in garlands and in offerings in Viṣṇu temples and the practice appears commendable. These plants do not live for more than a year and so their annual worship came into vogue. They generally dry up about the end of Ās'wayuja. The Dvādaśī in this month has been particularly chosen, because the worship recommences in flooded regions on the Dvādaśī day after the lapse of the rainy season and the plantation is renewed for the coming year.

KĀRTIKA SNANĀM.

During this month, people finish their baths before sunrise as an observance. There is always a general ordinance for early baths and a special direction for this period of the month seems to be superfluous. Garden dinners are arranged in this month, for with the cessation of the rains and under the shade of dense foliage, the gatherings afford a pleasant excursion.

PŪRNIMĀ.

This is a day of feast among cultivators, for the harvests are then over and the crops are gathered home for the year. In some parts, however, the season varies.

MĀRGASĪRṢĀ.**SUBRAHMAṆYA ṢAṢṬHĪ.**

This is of a modern origin. Formerly there was perchance the worship of Kumāraswāmi or Subrahmaṇya, but by mistaking Subrahmaṇya to mean a serpent, Serpent-worship has now become the rule.

PUSYA.

MUKKŌTI ĒKĀDAS'Ī.

This falls generally in the Puṣya and rarely in the Mārgas'īrṣa. This is the Śuddha Ēkādasī of the month of Ḍhanus. The efficacy of this month or of this Ēkādasī is not referred to in the Ḍharma Sāṣṭras. It is an observance of the southern countries, for then in the northern parts the season is very cold. It must have had its origin at Śrīrangam, where the festival is of special grandeur and the idol passes through a particular doorway denominated the Celestial Gate. It is described in the Śrīrangamāhāṭmya and some of the Viśistādvaiṭa works that three crores (or thirty-three crores) of gods pass this Celestial Gate on that day for the worship of God. The Rig Vēḍa mentions only three gods, Agni on earth, Vāyu all around, and Sūrya in the firmament. The Vēḍas elsewhere refer to thirty-three gods on occasions of laudations of Agni. The addition of hundreds, thousands, lakhs and crores has really no meaning and indicates only an exaggeration. The thirty-three gods have

therefore expanded into as many crores, and the Vēḍas do not refer to them by names.

MAKARA SANKRĀNTI.

This is the day of the northern solstice and marks the beginning of the Uṭṭarāyaṇa, but in fact the actual solstice falls about twenty days earlier. But astronomers say that at some time in the past they must have been coeval. This may be a proper occasion for manal ceremonies for those that do not perform the anniversary ceremonies of their parents, but for others all months are equal and this solstice has no superior merit. Nor is there any authority for these monthly ceremonies and to these I shall advert again in a later chapter.

MĀGHA

RATHASAPTAMĪ.

At the time of the northern solstice, the sun's chariot is supposed to turn towards us, the inhabitants of the eastern hemisphere, and the day is therefore named Raṭhasaptamī. There is no necessity for any offerings to the Piṭris on this day.

BHĪSMA ĒKĀDASĪ.

Bhīṣma, the great warrior of the Mahābhārata, kept up his animation till the northern solstice and gave up his life on this Ēkādaśī day. So this is regarded as of particular importance, though in fact there appears otherwise to be no higher merit in it.

MAHĀ SIVARĀTRĪ.

The story goes that, at the churning of the ocean, Īśvara lost his senses by swallowing the poison and was restored by incessant baths. The tale of the churning is itself a myth and the idea of the Supreme Lord being affected by the virulence of the poison is a greater absurdity. In the Himālayan regions there are many Lingams in temples in the open woods covered up with snow during a half year and worship is impossible owing to the icy barriers for a half year. By the new-moon day in Māgha the snow melts and the worship is resumed, and preliminary to the regular resumption of worship the Lingams have to be washed for a whole day of all the extraneous accretions. From this spread the usage of such baths in all Śiva temples throughout the country.

Connected with the story of the churning of the ocean is the appellation *Nilakantha*. *Īs'vara* would not allow the poison to go down his throat, for fear of destroying the worlds within him, and by its scorching heat his neck became black, thereby making him *Nilakantha* (*lit.* dark-necked). In fact the name had a different origin. The heights of the *Himālayan* peaks are still white with snow, when the icy slopes begin to melt and reveal the blue surface within. These regions are beyond human approach and the grandeur of the white peaks coupled with the blue slopes, presenting the appearance of *Lingas*, must have led to the fancy of the blue-necked *S'iva*.

So was the appellation *Gangādhara*. The snow on these cliffs rarely melts and the eternal collection of water in the form of snow was the origin of the fancy of *Gangādhara*, the bearer of the Ganges. The long columns of snow, ever running at such heights, came to be described as the *Ākāśa Gangā* (Celestial Ganges), for in early times the real nature of the snow line was not known.

PHĀLGUNA.

PŪRNIMĀ.

In the northern country, they sprinkle saffron on each other and spend the day in sport. They have the lunar year and this therefore marks the end of the year for them. The spring festival begins on the next day, as the New Year's Day. In some Viṣṇu temples in the southern country, they have the *Dōlōṭsavam* (cradle festival).

AMĀVĀSYA.

This is called the new Amāvāsyā. For us it cannot be new, because our months end with the new moon, though it may be to those for whom the months end with the full moon.

ĒKĀDASĪ.

The Ēkādaśī (or the eleventh day) in every Pakṣa (or fortnight) is described in our Purāṇas as of special sanctity. This is the day of Viṣṇu and so it was that Bhīṣma waited for its approach to give up his life. House-holders have a single meal and ascetics and widows observe a fast; this is the ordinance for the day. Abstinence from

food once in a fortnight is conducive to health. A fast for ascetics and widows tends to weaken the sense of passion. A fast for all householders has no meaning.

In the observances of this Ēkāḍasī vow, there is a small difference in the tenets of the three systems. Among Aḍvāiṭins, if Ḍvāḍasī continues for the next day, the vow is observed on that day and the dinner falls a day later. The Ḍvāḍasī dinner is only a concomitant of the Ēkāḍasī vow, so that this principle of the Aḍvāiṭins seems to be unreasonable. The Ḍvāitins and the Viśistāḍvāiṭins give up the Ēkāḍasī day, if it has a touch of Ḍasami also in the early hours and observe their vow on the Ḍvāḍasī day. It makes no sense to put off the annual ceremony to the next day. But it appears proper to choose the day wherein Ēkāḍasī sets in at sunrise, and in Vāisṇava shrines the Ṭiṭhi is reckoned from the prevalence of it at sunrise.

Among recent creations are several observances, such as the Lakṣavartī and the Saṭyanārāyaṇa Vraṭams. Rarely do people stop to consider the

object or the efficacy of these observances and the evil spreads fast through all sections of our population. They often originate in the blind belief that by their means particular ends can be realised or some general benefits attained even before our eyes close on the current period of existence. Otherwise they have no S'as'traic foundation or recommendation. The conditions of our lives are regulated by the fruits of actions, past and present, and to some extent probably by individual efforts. These observances are only a gradual incrustation to our religion, consequent on the contact of nations and the progress of the times. They cannot bring us any merit, save for loss of wealth and waste of toil, and ruin is certain when there is no discrimination.

S'ĀNTI-KARMA.

There are likewise several classes of ritual prescribed and performed by us for the propitiation of planets occupying inauspicious positions at the birth of a child, or at the puberty of a girl, or at particular periods of our lives. These are inventions of the priesthood for their own aggrandizement. They pick up some lines of the S'ruti's, where

the names of these planets are mentioned and repeat them in the course of the ritual as an invocation of propitiation. But in fact these Vēdic verses refer only to the sun and the moon and have rarely to do with the other planets, and even as they are, they belong to a very ancient age, the age of the Ṛig Vēḍā and cannot possibly have any influence on our modern needs.

PART THE THIRD.

USAGES.

We shall now go to usages. By this term I do not intend the endless differences in religious belief that characterise the several castes, sub-castes and philosophical sects. I do not speak of them, for there is little chance of uniformity or reconciliation. Nor do I propose here to determine the acceptability or otherwise of our usages, as I did in the chapters on worship and observances. I shall only examine the *rationalé* of such usages as are becoming current among us. There are a few however which cannot be accounted for. Some are explained on arithmetical principle. Many are meant for health and cleanliness. Others have a moral or a social end. When their rational foundation is understood, they will doubtless command a better attention and interest.

KĒS'AVA AND OTHER NAMES.

In every ceremony that we do, we often repeat the 24 names beginning with Kēs'ava. What is the significance of 24? The numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 are

the fundamental digits in calculation, for when added any two or three of them make 5—9 and all of them make 10. If multiplied, these digits result in a superior number, 24.

$$1 + 4 = 5$$

$$1 + 2 + 3 = 6$$

$$1 + 2 + 4 = 7$$

$$1 + 3 + 4 = 8$$

$$2 + 3 + 4 = 9$$

$$1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$$

$$1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 = 24$$

Hence the choice of this number for the series.

From the number of the Upaniṣads came the 108 names. Likewise came the 1,000 names, for *thousand* denotes an endless number. The 24 names are adopted by Hindus in general.

But some followers of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava sect use only twelve of them. They say that the caste marks are twelve in number and these names must therefore correspond to them. The explanation is not convincing. In the Ācamana process, there are twenty-four Nyāsas prescribed in the order of these twenty-four names. *Nyāsa* denotes the touching of

the different physical parts of the body followed by the pronunciation of these several names in order. There is no reason to adopt an arbitrary number 12 instead of the number 24 chosen on some mathematical principle. Of these twenty-four names, Sankarṣaṇa, Vāsudēva, Praḍyumna and Aniruḍḍha designate the Vyūhas. *Vyūha* primarily means a combination for strength or security and is also used to denominate special arrays of armies in the battle-field. These four names indicate the Supreme Being in his creative sphere, while the rest are His attributives in his more limited aspects. In the series of twelve, these four prominent names are for no reason omitted and what is more, the name of Srī Kṛiṣṇa, the last but not the least of all, finds no place in it. It is because of the importance of the number 24, that the Vēḍas prescribe 24 Mantras and the Smṛitis 24 movements in the process of Ācamana.

WEALTH.

Honest must be the acquisition of wealth. S'ukra prescribes the mode of expense ; of the earnings, a fifth ought to be laid by and the remainder utilised equally for charity, for personal comforts,

for family needs and for acts of dignity and fame. Nāraḍa ordains the saving of three-fourths or a half or at least a fourth of one's earnings. To lay by a fourth or a fifth of the income, it is incumbent on all, but the proportion laid down by Śukra appears quite commendable.

CHARITY.

The Smṛiṭis classify charity under four heads : daily, occasional, optional and permanent. Daily charity includes those acts of benevolence that we often do, such as gifts to the needy, to the poor and the decrepit. Occasional charity refers to acts of liberality on occasions of feasts, funerals or other ceremonials or on visits of pilgrimage to sacred shrines or resorts. Optional charity denotes all that we do in expectation of a specific return or appreciation in this life. Permanent charity embraces all munificence of a lasting form, such as tanks, gardens, schools, poor-houses, etc. This fourfold classification is good in itself but a division under two heads seems to be sufficient : what is done for the attainment of particular ends in this life and what is expended in the performance of duties enjoined by the sacred law. Charity is not always

laudable, unless it is bestowed on a deserving object, not on those who have enough to live upon and wander about begging to make more, and who, like the Jangams and Dāsiris, make a fortune out of a beggar's life.

ENJOYMENT.

S'ukra prescribed a fifth of one's earnings under this head. Enjoyment means a living in luxury suited to one's means and station in life and includes the company of friends and guests for pleasure. There is a real happiness in the regular performance of our daily duties, in bath, in dress, in food, in study and in society. A study of plants, or animals or the cultivation of the several arts may be a pleasant avocation. "God hath made all men to be happy," said an old philosopher, "and if any one feels otherwise, it is his own fault; if depressed by calamities, he divorces himself from the life of happiness ordained by God." Out of the four objects of life (*Puruṣārthas*), Kāma really means enjoyment.

CONDUCT.

Good conduct is a universal precept. By according others a respect above their rank, we only improve our merit, and rise in their estimation,

but by expecting a superior treatment for ourselves, we can never get above our deserts. Arrogance in others ought to be looked at as it deserves and in this matter the Englishman knows better than the Indian.

Conduct must be regulated by the needs of time, and place. In cold countries and in cold seasons thick clothes are worn for fear of bodily affection. Our S'astras declare a superior merit for charity bestowed with discrimination. Charity to a deserving object is laudable. Gifts during marriages and other auspicious occasions are a source of delight. Gifts on occasions of planetary combinations serve no purpose. Gifts ordained at particular places refer to resorts of pilgrimage and if not extravagant are commendable. Wealth, if devoted to worthy objects in one's own place, results in better good, for then the recipient will be one whose needs we see and not a stranger whose status we do not know. In many sacred places there are permanent charitable foundations, but they rarely work, except when the founder or his people pay a visit, and in practice go mostly to aggrandise the

local managers. It will be more beneficial to transplant them, as some wise men have done, to a locality where direct supervision is possible, and this course will ensure a proper assistance to known persons of worthy needs and a regular administration of the charitable institutions.

BATH.

Baths in wells, tanks and rivers are held to be in the ascending order of merit. Baths are enjoined for purity, cleanliness and health and when taken with care, impurities are washed away. There is otherwise no virtue in baths, though some Brahmins have a blind idea of sanctity by mere submersion in water. In well-baths, air gets into the capillary holes at intervals of exposure and is then injurious to health. If wells are accessible by flights of steps, the water soon gets impure. The case of tanks is almost similar, but owing to their vast expanse and the overflow of all stagnant water during the rainy season, they are better than wells. Baths in rivers are the best, for a flowing stream washes the body cleaner and by the pressure of its force removes pain and helps the better circulation of blood. In this respect the longer the river,

the greater is the force of the flood. Rivers that rise in the Himālayas, the Ganges for instance, advance in floods in summer owing to the melting snow and in that season baths are very beneficial. At Benares the Ganges takes a northerly course and is believed to possess a superior sanctity there. Rivers which from the position of their source flow in a southward course, when they become retrograde, go against nature, and this rarity attracts some attention. This is the general rule. The merits of a northerly turn are therefore attributed only to rivers that pass southward, and westerly only to rivers with an easterly course. Likewise at Srirangam the Cauvery is held sacred, for in the course of an eastward flow the river there turns westward. This is the foundation of the idea of sanctity in rivers at particular spots in their courses. On account of its long course, of its deep volume, of the sudden northward turn, and of the purity of water from the melting Himālayan snow, the Ganges at Benares is held in the highest esteem.

PUSKARA.

Corresponding to the course of the Jupiter through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, twelve

rivers have been chosen, with a year allotted to each in succession as of special merit called *Puṣkara-kāla* (*lit.* meritorious period), and during these years the several rivers become a special resort. What possible influence can Jupiter's passage in the zodiacal signs have on the merits of these rivers? The choice seems unaccountable. Other big rivers, the Mahānaḍī for instance, have been passed over and tributaries* have been preferred. Nor do they appear in order on a geographical consideration. Without a logical sequence and without a reasonable foundation, these Puṣkara baths must have been the creation of the priesthood for selfish ends. There is also a rule that in the years of such special sanctity, no marriages ought to be performed among the residents in the neighbourhood, for otherwise the officiating priests would apparently lose their benefits by their absence. Scarcely do people stop to think before they resort to these places in crowds without regard to expense or inconvenience. The one certain result of these congregations is the danger of epidemics, which

* A tributary is a river that merges itself in another river and does not empty itself into the ocean with its own stream.

spread fast through the districts passed on by the returning crowds on their way, for it is otherwise impossible to discern any merit in these bathing resorts in the so-called Puṣkara years.

TIME.

Among our countrymen the value of time is scarcely realised, for many waste their time in idleness. Within the short period of life, childhood and old age pass away in incapacity, and when we come of age, it is our duty to regulate our daily life and to conduct ourselves in pursuits of health, virtue and profit. Rise before the sun dawns. Do the morning ablutions. Attend to some useful business before dinner. Rest awhile after the meal. Then go on with your avocation for the day. Have an early supper, and retire to bed after an interval,* for it is not good to sleep immediately after food. The needs of health require a reasonable exercise in the morning and in the evening. Time is the greatest enemy of mankind, for it makes life moment by moment the shorter. By acts of merit, we must in this life seek the path of progress; to waste time is a sin.

* Not later than 11 P.M.

The lifetime of man falls in a fourfold division :—

1. Period of preparation.
2. Period of benefaction.
3. Period of spiritual endeavour.
4. Period of passive inaction.

The period of the first twenty-five years must be devoted to study and acquisition of knowledge. Between the ages of twenty-five and fifty, a man must follow his avocations of life with an honest purpose, save a portion of his earnings, and do his best to serve himself, his family and the society in general. The next period of twenty-five years must be directed towards the attainment of spiritual well-being. The last quarter covers the period between seventy-five and hundred years, but men are rare that live so long. This period is of extreme old age and man can only lead a life of incapacity and inaction. There are however some men of this age who use their time in philosophical contemplation.

WEALTH.

Wealth is the fortune of prior births, but capable of augmentation by individual effort. From its origin, wealth falls under six heads, by birth, by

adoption, by reversionary succession, by the find of mine or treasure, by gift, and by self-acquisition. Fortunes by birth and by adoption are almost identical. The heritage of a maternal grandfather is not commendable, for it happens on the extinction of his line. A treasure-trove is only a possibility. Wealth by gift is not much in public esteem. Acquisition by self-exertion is necessarily connected with the merit of past actions. Fortune is providential, but only he is really fortunate, who preserves it and augments it by self-exertion. Without the care of preservation, wealth decays day by day, be one's fortune what it may.

DUTIES.

Western scholars divide duties into two classes : to God and to Man. I would call them simply divine and human. Divine are such as are dictated by a natural instinct ; human are those that we impose on ourselves for our good. Of the first class are the duties of parents and their offspring, husband and wife, master and servant and the like. There are, besides, many other duties of this class, for instance, to help others in need or to

be kind to all the animate world. Human duties are enjoined by others or begun at one's own instance for some profitable end.

TRUTH.

This is a subject on which there has always been a wide difference of views and I am afraid I cannot deal with it adequately. Truth falls under three heads :—

1. Truth in thought.
2. Truth in word.
3. Truth in deed.

Of these, truth in word is impossible of definite limitations and is the most difficult of exposition. I shall deal with it later on.

TRUTH IN THOUGHT.

Believe in God and be sure He punisheth wrong. There is a common saying 'Who knows truth knows God', for God is Truth. Think not of evil or fraud and you will then be true in mind.

TRUTH IN DEED.

Neglect not your duties to man or God and you will then be true in deed. Be righteous everywhere at home, and in society, to friends and to strangers. Watch the ethics and the ends of your

association. Honest conduct will make you true in deed. To keep up one's word falls under this head.

TRUTH IN WORD.

Untruth is everywhere forbidden, in the Vēdas, in the Koran, in the Bible. But the rule has some practical exceptions. There is a story related by Śrī Kṛiṣṇa in the Mahābhāraṭa. In a hilly forest there lived a venerable hermit vowed to eternal truth. Chased by dacoits, a travelling party concealed themselves behind the hermitage, but when questioned by the dacoits the sage gave out the truth and the party was robbed. For this he was doomed to hell after death. So truth is at times unwelcome—nay, results in sin.

Śrī Kṛiṣṇa elsewhere says that there is no sin in an untruth on the following occasions—(1) to save a life ; (2) in connubial company ; (3) to bring about a marriage ; (4) to protect one's entire fortune from destruction ; (5) to succour a Brahmin. Under the guise of these privileged occasions, Hindus, mostly Brahmins, act falsely to the detriment of many without fear of sin or degradation. But these privileges have their reasonable limits. Saving a man's life

refers only to a case of innocence. In connubial intercourse the company is only playful and a lie is but an occasion for humour and never intended for any harm. When there is the risk of a wedding falling through by some untoward circumstance, it is not a sin to utter a lie to avoid it, for serious inconveniences are thereby saved. An untruth is likewise excusable to avoid a danger to the property of innocent persons at the hands of the wicked. The story of the hermit and the robbers is an apt illustration. It is ordained in the ancient codes that a loss of status in one's caste leads to degradation to the caste next below, but in the case of a Brahmin, he goes outside the pale of caste altogether. To prevent such a result in the case of a person, really innocent but forced to commit a degrading act under necessity, a lie is no sin.

Srī Kṛiṣṇa adds that it is not a sin to speak an untruth for the protection of cows. In ancient days the rearing of cattle was a State institution and so when they were in danger a lie was excused. We have for instance the Uṭṭara and Ḍakṣiṇa Gōgrahaṇam in the Virāta Parvan of the Mahābhārata.

Srī Kṛiṣṇa again says that there must be some means of distinguishing right from wrong ; anything, though ordinarily great and unknowable, may yet be understood at times by sound reasoning. It is said that the Vēḍas and the Sāstras comprehend every principle of morality. I shall not question this belief, but they cannot teach everything, they cannot be all-comprehensive. Morality is the same as ethics, virtue or truth. Rules of morality are laid down for the progress of mankind. But where such precepts are against reason their transgression entails no sin.

Bhīṣma explained the character of truth to Yudhisthira and placed it under thirteen heads :—

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Impartiality | 8. Renunciation |
| 2. Self-control | 9. Contemplation |
| 3. Absence of envy | 10. Magnanimity |
| 4. Forgiveness | 11. Fortitude |
| 5. Modesty | 12. Compassion |
| 6. Endurance | 13. Abstention from |
| 7. Freedom from
hatred | injury |

These are comprised in fact in the three-fold classification of truth in thought, word or deed. What

then are the real limits of truth? In mercantile relations untruth is common, and yet it is sinful, for others lose by it. At times we utter a lie with children or with the sick for their own good. In society, we often say 'not at home' when we cannot receive a visitor.

The result is this: Absolute truth is the rule, but on occasions of doubt, the evil and the good that result from speaking the truth must be relatively considered and that judgment is the proper guide in the choice of truth or untruth. A man who follows this principle can safely call himself truthful.

YOWS.

Vows, if religious, are generally harmless, but a reckless vow proves ruinous. Vows are private or public. So there is a story in the *Mahābhārata*. Arjuna took a private vow that if anyone asked him to give away his bow, he would kill him on the spot. Some time in the course of the war Yudhiṣṭhira was in camp expecting Karna's defeat, but was provoked at the word of Arjuna that Karna was still alive. In his impatience he asked Arjuna to hand his bow over to Kṛiṣṇa. Arjuna recollected his vow and unsheathed his

sword against Yudhiṣṭhira. Kṛiṣṇa intervened and averted a calamity. Again on hearing the news of his son Abhimanyu's death, Arjuna in open assembly avowed that before the next sunset he would kill Sainḍhava or give up his life. The enemy knew of this pledge and did his best to conceal Sainḍhava from the view of Arjuna. By providence, the sun was covered by the passing clouds and Sainḍhava, deluded into the thought of sunset, looked up from amidst the hostile host, when Arjuna's missile struck off the head by surprise. Vows are always dangerous and when necessary they must be open and on due deliberation.

PROMISES.

A vow is a solemn declaration that personally affects the man that makes it. A promise is usually made in response to a request and for another's benefit. If inconsiderate, a promise is as mischievous as a vow. Rāma promised the kingdom of Lanka to Vibhīṣaṇa on his approach for succour against Rāvaṇa. A difficulty was then felt: what could Rāma do if Rāvaṇa himself submitted and begged his forbearance? Rāma replied, it is said, that in that case he would let him have his own

kingdom of Ayōḍhya. Luckily it did not happen, but if it had so chanced, Rāma would have probably lost his dominions. Rāma was great and got through his word. But Śalya had a different end. He made an inconsiderate promise and joined the Kauravas to keep it up. Rash promises are common among us and lead only to loss of prestige and prospects. It is no dishonour to confess inability, for it is worse to pledge our word in vain.

PURCHASES.

Purchases are of three kinds : those that pay, those that do not pay and those that only cost us more. Of the first class are lands, Government Promissory Notes, Debentures, etc. Of the second class are gold, silver, precious stones, etc., and of the third class are horses, elephants, etc.

SUPERSTITIONS.

Superstition is a delusion, the result of a belief without reason. Stories are related in the Purāṇas which cannot all be understood as they are. It is however commonly said that they might be true. With a little inquiry into the context, their unreality will be apparent. They are imaginary illustrations of various doctrines therein set forth

and in most cases they relate to performances beyond human power and conception or to conferences of animals with man or of animals among themselves. There is no religion without some superstition, but in this country there are superstitions unconnected with religion.

AUSPICIOUS TIME.

I have dealt with this subject at length in my essay on Hindu Astronomy. In the days of the Mahābhārata War, they do not appear to have attached much importance to the theory of auspicious moment as propounded by our modern astrologers. They were then considering only the *Tāras* or lunar asterisms. Formerly there was some such belief current in the west, but it is now extinct, except perhaps an occasional differentiation in the merits of the days of the week. Friday is there looked upon as inauspicious for a new undertaking.

PROPHECY.

Questions are prophetically answered from imaginary data such as the position of the planets at the time or displacement of the surroundings. I

have often tested the merits of these prophecies but can perceive no reasonable foundation. They must have been devised as an easy means of livelihood, and as the Purāṇas make no mention of them they are doubtless a recent appendage to astrology.

PALMISTRY.

Palmistry is a science (rather a pseudo-science) that pretends to foretell the fortunes of men on an observation of the lines or marks in the palm of the hand and sometimes in other parts of the body. It is also practised in Europe. There is the science of Phrenology which deals only with the skull or the forehead. In the methods of reading the palm lines, however, there is a vast difference between India and Europe. When I went to England in 1893, I had the curiosity to offer myself to a Professor of Palmistry and Phrenology and in fact I have often-times tried to discover some real basis in these so-called sciences, all in vain. How can lines formed by the accidental folds of the skin have any meaning? The number and extent of these folds vary with the strength and corpulence of every individual. Palmists in India get up some

verses and repeat such as suit their subject, of whom in many cases they have either heard already or are able to judge from position and appearance.

Once a palmist came to Bobbili and was well talked of in the town. I wished to test him. I had a thick screen hung up across a doorway with a hole just wide enough to admit the palm. The palmist was seated in front of the screen, and I was in the room behind it. After allowing him to speak on a few cases, I asked a man of my size and complexion to introduce his hand. I did not forget to put on it my own finger-ring. The poor palmist was deceived and began to prophesy things that could not be dreamt of by the man whose palm was before him. Gypsies pretend to a knowledge of palmistry all over the world. They repeat some ill-composed poetry and in fact pay little heed to the lines on the hand. The description of Rāma by Hanūmān to Sītā is worth reading. Hanūman refers not only to the palm, but to the general physical formation. But commentators perceive in this description a reference to the principles of the Sāmuḍrika science.

CURSE.

In days of yore, say the Purāṇas, sages uttered curses (*Sāpam*) and these were effective. Probably such powers were then possessed by men of penance, but we see none in these days. Some are afraid of curses from beggars and give them more than they deserve. To please a beggar it is impossible and if he mutters a word of abuse, that can do no harm. Begging becomes a profession in most classes, and Brahmins above all make a fortune out of it. Byragis, Fakirs and some ascetics are of this type. Probably when a person is hurt without cause, a curse from him under such provocation may cause some unseen injury. We see sometimes the bad habit of cursing at every step and it displays only a low breeding.

OMENS.

Omens (*S'akunam*) are the main source of our superstitions. They are associated variously with the several castes, the different physical organs, and with particular birds and beasts. In short, the belief extends to everything that we see, hear or feel. On the appearance of an evil omen, the business is given up, whatever may be the necessity

or importance of it. Omens are mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa. Rāma was taken afar in pursuit of a deer and on his return evil omens foreboded a calamity to Siṭā. The omens there described are the reverse of our present beliefs. We associate good or evil with classes of men, birds or animals from their very nature, but Rāma only thought it inauspicious that animals or birds should cross his path from right to left. Probably the direction in which animals crossed one's path was in those days considered a precursor of good or evil. But in the omens that we now believe, there is very little reason or meaning. I am however certain of this, that these superstitions are the worst omens to retard the progress of civilization.

DREAMS.

Dreams and omens are alike in our belief. Dreams are caused by sleeplessness and this again is due to dyspepsia, brain-fag or physical exhaustion. When the constitution is out of order, these dreams are a medley of fanciful incongruities. How can dreams then forebode good or evil?

PANCAPAKṢI.

There are others who carry with them a book called Pancapakṣi. The verses in it are of the same style as in works on planetary predictions. They are generally got up by rote, but particular passages are read out to suit the occasion or the individual. Such passages are picked up by an apparent calculation on some plausible process of arithmetic, but when I had occasion to examine a work of this class, I found it was after all a fraudulent manipulation.

DEVIL.

I have now described various superstitions which are apparently based on astrological considerations. There are yet other beliefs which have no basis at all. Muhūrṭam and Pras'na proceed on the current position and movement of stars and planets. Palmistry has the lines on the palm to work upon. Curse is the result of provocation. Dream suggests the result by itself. Omens are visible occurrences. But belief in a devil has no foundation—it is a belief in a thing which has no existence.

Let me then trace the origin of this belief. At the beginning of creation mankind appeared in three

stages, *Tāmasa* (black or foolish) *Rājasa* (red or turbulent) and *Sātvika* (white or peaceful). Then came the division into several classes, such as, *Vidyādhara*, *Kinnara*, etc. Later came the territorial names, such as *Rajputs*, *Bengalees*, etc. *Amarasimha* in his *Nāmalingānuśāsana* refers to those classes as celestial beings, apparently because during his time the classification had become obsolete. In modern colloquy, *Paisāca* is a synonym for devil, *Bhūṭa* for a major devil, *Rākṣasa* for a demon. These names applied to real human divisions in ancient days and among the illiterate masses of rural parts came to signify beings supernatural.

The organs of perception often deceive us and of these mostly the eye. Many a time, an expert at sport mistakes a bush or a rock for the object of his search but with some attention discovers the illusion. So when man's mind gets saturated with the idea of the devil from the variety of stories current around him, fancy engenders frightful visions in localities of darkness and loneliness. Fear overpowers the man and he runs off without a thought of a closer observation. The devil has no reality. It is but a delusion caused by

timidity and engendered by lack of discrimination.

We hear it said at times that the devil is sitting or pressing on the chest. This oppression or breathlessness is an abiding sense of discomfort or extreme uneasiness and is only the effect of an indigestible meal or of a cerebral irregularity. Hysteria affects persons of a nervous temperament and must be cured by medicine, but ignorance attributes it to devil's work. We often see many, who roam, as if possessed by a special god or goddess, through streets and this is only a means of livelihood or gratification of passion. For these frauds, sound flogging is a sure remedy.

INAUSPICIOUS THINGS.

It is said that particular houses, temples, trees or animals are unsuitable to particular individuals and their connection would bring bad luck to them. If a calamity happens soon after the construction of a house or the purchase of an animal, the happening is attributed to the house or the animal and the owner thinks them inauspicious in his case. This idea has far advanced and the worship of God himself is considered unlucky with some individuals.

CHARMS.

Charms (*Mantrams*) have no meaning or efficacy. A conjurer deceives the eye, but a charmer deludes the mind as well and robs men of their money. There is at least some dexterity in a conjurer's tricks, but in a charmer it is all fraud.

FRIENDSHIP.

Friends are of three classes :—

- I. Friends from childhood.
- II. Friends by neighbourhood.
- III. Friends by gratitude.

Friends from childhood are playmates and fellow-pupils and the like. Friends by neighbourhood include persons of common interest, such as enemies of one's enemies. Friends by gratitude are those whose friendship is acquired by acts of mutual kindness or benefit. In the last class, friendship is invariably permanent. Likewise enemies are of three classes :—

- I. Enemies by birth.
- II. Enemies by relation.
- III. Enemies by ingratitude.

Enemies by birth are often participators in the same heritage, and include undivided brothers and

kinsmen (*Jnāti*). Friends of one's enemies are enemies by relation. If a man seeks your secret without confiding his own, he is no friend. Angry altercation, inconsiderate loans and undue liberty with women often lead to a breach of friendship.

It is not necessary that friends should be alike in age, in tastes, in ability and in character. Friendship of youth is the simplest and the purest. Friendship by gratitude may be lasting, but friendship from childhood or neighbourhood is the best of all. The presence of a friend is a great consolation in times of difficulty or calamity. Life without friends is miserable, to possess a friend is a fortune.

LITIGATION.

Litigation ruins both the parties alike. It benefits only the lawyers and the middlemen. An amicable settlement is best whenever it is possible. The cost of litigation is saved and the money that either party gives up goes only to the other but not to fill the pockets of strangers.

ADULTERY.

Adultery is degrading, but it is believed that the company of professional prostitutes is not ^{so}Λ sinful. Christianity makes no distinction between man and

woman in adultery. When a married woman goes astray, says the Gīṭā, and the offspring of an adulterous intercourse cannot rightly be assigned to any particular Gōṭra, there is an intermixture of castes. Adultery is therefore censured. Man's part ends with the emission, but the woman carries the seed in her womb and conceives by it with all the contagion of the male's disease. Women are of three classes, lawfully married wives, others' wives and common women. Common women are dancing girls and women of the town who live in prostitution.

Re-marriage is forbidden to women, for the union with two husbands causes a confusion of Gōṭra and Pravara. This principle cannot apply apparently to virgin widows.

Marriage after puberty will to a large extent obviate the necessity for the re-marriage of widows. Among the ruling classes, Kṣātriyas or not, the practice prevails. There are tales of such marriages among Brahmins also in early times. While ninety per cent. of the Hindu population recognise the custom, there is no reason why the Brahmins of

our day should discard it. By the time they completed their studies they were old and their hair turned grey. Grown-up girls would not marry such husbands and hence girls of eight years were ordained. The age was fixed at eight because mortality is, as the census reports show, more frequent in children below that age. This appears to be the real origin of child-marriages among Brahmins. This is rarely perceived and parents in their avarice get their girls married when they are barely a few months old.

MARITAL RELATIONS.

Marriage customs vary widely in different countries. Generally speaking, marriage between persons not related by blood is commendable. The custom of marrying the paternal aunt's daughter is condemned, for the offspring of a brother and sister partake of the same blood. Among the lower castes sister's daughters are also married. This is worse, for children of brothers and sisters are to be treated as born of the same blood. Among Mahomedans, children of brothers do marry, apparently because their mothers are different and they are, as such, severed in blood. Among Christians also

we find some rare instances of marriage between cousins. But to us, Hindus, the institution of Gōṭras is an impediment and the marriage of agnate cousins is impossible. Our S'āstras regard this bar by relation of blood with great rigour and prohibit marriage till the seventh degree on the father's side and the fifth degree on the mother's side from the common ancestor. But the usage of prohibition by an imaginary relationship, called *vāvi** in the Telugu districts, seems to be unreasonable.

GOTRA AND PRAVARA.

Gōṭras among Brahmins are beyond number. Every Gōṭra has its Pravara Ṛiṣis from one to seven. When one among three Ṛiṣis appears in any two Pravaras, persons of such Pravaras cannot intermarry. But when one among five and two among seven tally, marriages are allowed.

Where the same name appears in the Gōṭra and the Pravara lists, opinions differ as to the identity. Some say that the Pravara Ṛiṣis are the

* *Vāvi* is a relationship imagined by sentiment or counted by a remote and distant equation, so that persons who would so style themselves brother and sister or uncle or nephew, etc., cannot intermarry.

three immediate ancestors of the Gōṭra Ṛiṣis. This would mean that no Gōṭra can have more than three Ṛiṣis in its Pravara. In fact however their number varies from one to seven and this explanation seems therefore to be untenable.

There is a rule that every Brahmin should perform sacrifices and absolve himself from the debt to the Dēvas. In the performance of such sacrifices in Brahmin families in ancient times, the officiating priests must have varied from one to seven and these priests came to be remembered as the Pravara-Ṛiṣis of the particular family. The same priests might have officiated in different families and this accounts for the same name appearing in different Pravaras. I think this is the probable explanation.

Some writers say that sacrifices were introduced into India after the Aryan immigration and the Aryans encouraged sacrifices because they were flesh-eaters themselves. In Northern India, salt and chillies are not liked and so the meat was fried in ghee. Later on the ingenuity of the priesthood introduced several reprehensible rituals.

Among the Kṣatriyas and the Vais'yas the Gōṭras of their respective Purōhiṭs are adopted. Among

the Suḍras, the distinction is based on the names of villages. Some have special family names, as Nāgala, Pidipala, etc., and do not regard the Gōṭra restriction in marriages. The usage of family names is not universal in India. Some prefix their father's name to their own. Others imitate the European practice and affix their family name. Family names generally appear to be the names of villages where the original ancestors lived, but occasionally represent the greatness of ancestors or the names of protectors.

The classification of Brahmins into various Nāḍus (*lit.* districts) or sub-sects was based on the localities of their abodes. These sub-sects have long since migrated from those local limits and are now seen living together in the same town or village, so that the distinction by Nāḍu is considered by many to be no longer necessary.

Among Brahmins some call themselves Raos or Rajus because of their sway by the Raos or the Rajus. The appellation Rao or Raju is unsuitable to Brahmins. Among Telagas, persons known with the suffix Reddi or Setti are descendants of maids.

RITU PERIOD.

Hindu physicians call the period between the fourth and the sixteenth day after menstruation, the *Ritu* period or the period of conception, though according to Western doctors conception is possible even during the three days preceding menstruation. For the four days of menstruation Hindu women are kept aloof as under pollution. This custom must have originated in the idea that so long as the discharge continues the seed cannot be retained and without abstinence for some time the sperm must be ineffective in impregnation. A violation of the seclusion has been called a grave sin, just to serve as a deterrent. Carnal knowledge of a woman during menstruation is injurious to health, for all the impurities of the woman's blood get into the man's system. It is an absurd belief that the sex of the child varies with the day of conception and to choose particular hours for the conception of male or female progeny is an instance of a greater folly.

Again the period of a girl's first menstruation is the occasion for a grand feast among us. These

festivities may have a meaning in the case of dancing girls, as an announcement for profit. With family girls, there is no sense in these feasts and the revelry ought to be limited to the private invitation of indispensable relatives.

GAURĪ PŪJA.

The worship of Gaurī is a universal observance, apparently because she, of all our goddesses, got a valuable husband by severe penance.

THE CYCLE OF YEARS.

The cycle of sixty years begins with Prabhava. The Purāṇas depict the sixty years as the sixty sons of Nāraḍa. The longest period of observation possible in a man's life cannot be more than sixty years. The four ages of Kṛiṭa, Tṛēṭa, Dvāpara and Kali have been computed at 432,000, 864,000, 1,296,000 and 1,728,000 years respectively and of these figures the number 60 is a convenient common divisor. I believe this was the meaning in the choice of the cycle of sixty years.

MONTHS.

Originally the standard was the lunar month. This standard was later on discovered to be wrong

and the computation fell short by a month every three years under the correlation with the course of seasons. This accounts for the intercalary month. Under the lunar system of reckoning, seasons vary according to the influence of the sun on earth and so the ecliptic was divided into twelve parts according to the change in the seasons as determined by practical observation. When this system of solar months was introduced, the Kārṭika month was current. Some adopted this Kārṭika month as Chaiṭra, the first month of the year and others reckoned Kārṭika itself as the beginning of the year. This accounts for the difference in the luni-solar reckoning in this country, for some calculate from Chaiṭra and others from Kārṭika. The solar month starts from the first point of the Aries which falls in the month of Chaiṭra. A year covers the period of a revolution of the earth round the sun. Under the lunar reckoning, a month consisted of thirty days and there were 360 days in the year. It is this that caused a variation from the actual occurrence of the seasons. Under the solar reckoning, the year was taken as 365 days. In modern astronomy 354 days,

22 Ghatīs and 2 Vighatīs make a year. Probably our system of monthly reckoning may have to be varied a little on the modern standards.

SEASONS.

Seasons have been classed as three, four or six according to the position and physical features of different countries. In this country, there are six: Vasantaṃ (Spring) Griṣmaṃ (Summer) Varṣaṃ (Rainy) S'araḍ (Autumn) Hēmaṅtaṃ (Dewy) S'isīraṃ (Winter). This classification suits best the provinces between the Gōḍāvarī and the Mahānaḍī. According to some, Vasantaṃ (Spring) begins on the first day of the bright half of Chaitra and according to others on the full moon day of Phālguna. The latter view appears to tally with our country. In cold countries, the seasons are four: Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. In countries near the Equator, there are only three: Summer, Rainy and Autumn. Seasons in short follow climatic variety.

AYANA.

There are two Ayanas, the north and the south. The northern Ayana (half-year) is free from rain and cold and has been therefore ordained for all

auspicious functions, marriages and the like, though there is a general exception in favour of acts due to exigencies of age or accidental happenings.

THE DAYS OF THE WEEK.

In Hindu astronomy, the order of the planets was taken as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury and Moon. The day was divided into 24 parts or *Hōrās*. Beginning from the Sun, as the lord of the planets, these were allotted in order to the different planets, as the rulers thereof, and in such allotment by sevens, three *Hōrās* will remain. The fourth *Hōrā* in this cycle will be the first of the next day for which the moon would be the lord. This division and result would be constant in the case of all multiples of seven added by three, *i.e.*, 10, 17, 24, 31, etc. Unless the dividend is constant, there is no scientific merit.

It may be said that the figure 24 alone represents the *Hōrās* and none other. My answer is that the figure 59 may as well be chosen, and it tallies with the number of *Ghatikas*, so that on the next morning the lord of the first *Ghatika* would be the Sun as well. I see no reason in the choice of the *Hōrās* in particular.

Week system.

Sun.

Mercury.

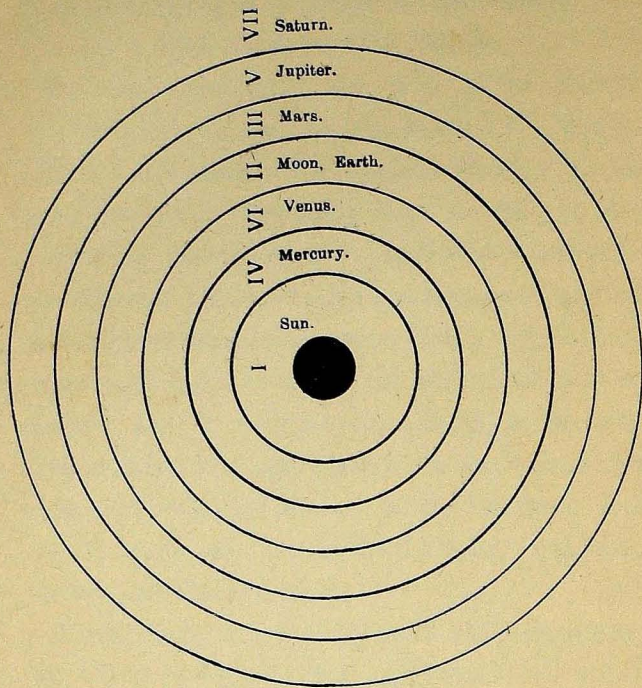
Venus.

Moon, Earth.

Mars.

Jupiter.

Saturn.



Hōrā system.

Saturn.

Jupiter.

Mars.

Sun.

Venus.

Mercury.

Moon.

The order of the planets fixed under the system of Hōrā calculation, as marginally printed, is neither real nor correct. Mercury is nearer to the Sun than Venus. On this footing, Wednesday and Friday will interchange their places.

The actual order of the planets in proximity to each other is noted in the margin. Around the Sun revolve the other planets and to him, as the lord of the planets the first day of the week is set apart. For us, the denizens of the earth, the planet that lights it at night commands our next consideration and to the moon therefore is allotted the second day of the week. Next come the planets near the earth and near the sun, Mars and Mercury and in a similar alternative order, we have a reasonable explanation of our system of week days and their names.

ASTRONOMY.

The Jyōtis-saṣṭra or the astral science as studied in India has three branches—Astronomy, Horoscopy and *Muhūrta* or the theory of auspicious time. The system generally followed is the Sūryasiḍḍhānta.

SŪRYA-SIDDHĀNTA.

This system of astronomy is of foreign origin. In ancient India, the moon and the twenty-seven lunar mansions that were visible to the naked eye were the essential factors in astral considerations. From these lunations came the system of the lunar months and the lunar year. The affinity of the moon and of the several lunar mansions was the sole basis in the choice of auspicious time (*muhūrta*) and of these, the consideration of the moon's position was the later.

Before the invention of the telescope, the moon was naturally looked upon as an important planet, because the ancients saw the lunar orb waxing and waning at regular intervals and exercising much influence on the vegetable kingdom. Of all the heavenly bodies the moon shares with the sun the more important functions in relation to the earth. The writers of the Sūrya-Siddhānta school reckoned the moon as second only to the sun and according to one writer the moon took precedence even of the sun.

Astronomers saw with surprise the planets revolving round the sun, and the moon round the earth, in the propless firmament regularly in their several orbits, attracting each other by gravitation, the successive variations in the seasons and the recurrence of the rains with the relative motions of the earth and the sun. They lost their belief in the archaic systems of Brahma and Sōma Siḍḍhāntas, in the ancient ideas that the earth was flat and rested on the eight Ḍiggajas (quarter-elephants) Varāha (bear) Āḍi Kūrma (primeval tortoise), Āḍi Sēṣa (the lord of serpents) or Kula Pārvaṭas (the leading mountains). They realised the influence of the astral sphere upon the evolution of life and time. They observed the positions of the planets at the birth of particular persons and reasoned from the attraction and gravitation of the planets that the stars in the horizon exercised influence on the nati- vities of their subjects for the forecast of their lives. In the course of such observations, by successive astronomers, of the sudden or alternating changes in the fortunes of men, they took into account the position of the planets, of their combination,

of their juxta-position and of their aspects in the several signs of the Zodiac. Later astrologers attributed the changes of fortune to changes in the planetary influences and allotted *Das'as*—varying periods of duration—to the several planets as their respective term of influence. Modern astrologers have progressed in their ingenuity and by a calculation of *Vidās'ās* (sub-periods) or *Sūkṣmaḍas'ās* (minute divisions) extended their prediction to the happenings of every day. Many works have been written on this footing. It may be that the planetary positions at birth can give a general idea of future events but they cannot continue to influence destinies for ever until death. If planets could influence our lives, there is then no purpose in God or in the merit of past actions. Astrologers deceive themselves and deceive others. The periods so allotted to the several planets are not the result of any mathematical calculation. They have been fixed by the guess-work of individual observers.

The accompanying table gives the number of years for the several planets according to different astrologers.

According to *Nakṣatra Jātaka* the order and period are—

Sun.	Moon.	Mars.	Rahu.	Jupiter.	Saturn.	Mars.	Ketu.	Venus.
6	10	7	18	16	19	17	7	20.

According to *Yoginī Jātaka*—

Moon.	Sun.	Mercury.	Mars.	Jupiter.	Saturn.	Venus.	Rahu.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8.

According to *Pindāyurḍāya and Srīpaṭi*—

Sun.	Moon.	Mars.	Mercury.	Jupiter.	Venus.	Saturn
19	25	15	12	15	21	20
20	1	2	9	18	20	50

respectively.

Of these four methods, the first differs both in order and duration; two consider only seven planets, one nine and the other eight. Nor is there any meaning in the choice of the order. Likewise do the authors differ in their observations and conclusions. These cannot lead to the same prediction, for the periods of influence must necessarily be different under the several systems of calculation.

It is deplorable that our astrologers should pretend forecasts of events without thought or discrimination. They do not rest there. They prevail on others to waste money on *Grahas'āṅṅi* or the

pacification of inauspicious planets. They depress us by predictions of ill-luck or calamity and this depression of spirits very often causes illness and death.

Many come to grief by reckless indifference caused by a reliance on predicted prosperity. They rely on *Rājayoga* (*lit.* royal combination, or 'Kingship')—auspicious combinations of planets—and ruin themselves by fruitless litigation. Others believe that their days are bad and refrain from all necessary occupation. Some waste money on pilgrimages and propitiatory rites; not that pilgrimages are objectionable, but a pilgrimage with the object of washing off a planetary evil is a meaningless waste of money without the benefits of an educative tour.

It is this mad faith in the delusive predictions of astrology that retards our progress. But the language of astrologers is couched in elegant verses of plausible import and when we read the forecast of a particular life for a period of four or five years, we feel that there is some coincidence with reality. So is the case with Erukala women (gypsies),

except that their prophecies are not in set verse but in a jumble of words. The so-called astrologers are mostly wanton dissemblers, though there are a few orthodox Brahmins with a sincere belief in the infallibility of their science. With my experience of astrologers and their predictions, I have no faith in the inferences drawn from the varying periods of planetary influences.

Once an astrologer came to me as he said from Kāsi with extracts from Bhṛigu Samhita of horoscopes of great persons of our parts. This work is reputed to be a record of all times, past, present and future of the life of the man it reads. I was at first impressed with the particulars the extracts gave of two or three lives I mentioned. The astrologer then brought to me the extracts on the lives of three members of my family from the Samhita and read out an impending calamity for them all in a few months. He suggested, with the approval of my state astrologer some propitiatory ceremonies with a gift of gold and this raised my suspicions. I set a watch on the astrologer's residence and I discovered by this piece of espionage that the

astrologer fabricated these horoscopes anew every night and manipulated an appearance of oldness for the paper with the help of oil and smoke. The next morning I made him confess the fraud, along with the implication of my own astrologer in its perpetration.

Once an astrologer's prediction failed and the event proved quite the reverse. I sent him a telegram that his prediction proved true, just to ridicule him. He now passes off the telegram as a testimonial and would not part with it for all my importunities.

A word more on Muhūrṭam or auspicious time. In ancient days the influence and affinity of the lunar mansions alone appear to have been considered; so we find it in the Purāṇas on the occasions of Rāma's coronation and Kṛiṣṇa's message. The references to the aspects and positions of the planets and the enunciation of various merits and faults are all the later creation of the Sūryasiḍḍhānta school. How can the choice of an auspicious hour change the course of destiny?

An undertaking depends for its success on the material and the equipment. For instance,

procreation is caused by strength and health in the couple and not by the merit of the hour of union. If planets exercise any influence over us, they must certainly affect all mankind equally and the good or evil must be shared by all. But we see at the hour appointed for a marriage as auspicious, many die and in some cases the calamity befalls the bride or the bridegroom. Very often too, astrologers are unable to foresee such mishaps to themselves and their girls suffer early widowhood in spite of their own foreseeing talents. The preference of Uṭṭarāyaṇa for feasts and special ceremonies seems reasonable, for the season is then agreeable. There may be some meaning in the consideration of the affinity to the lunar mansions. There are twenty-seven in number (*Nakṣatras* or constellations) and are divided into three nines, with good or evil tendencies in the order of their number from the constellation of individual nativity. No act of man can change the ordinations of providence but as a standard observed by great men like S'rī Kṛiṣṇa in ancient days we may accept the principle without discussion. Later astrologers of the Sūryasiḍḍhānta school ignored the influence of destiny

altogether and when they observed disastrous happenings even under the auspicious aspects of certain lunar mansions (stars), they concluded that these lunar mansions were by their very nature unsuitable for particular ceremonies. Predictions of rain or other climatic phenomena are based on a similar consideration of the planetary positions. I need hardly say that these prophecies are utterly valueless.

Kepler spoke of astronomy, says the *Encyclopædia Britannica* "as the wise mother and astrology as the foolish daughter" and added that the life of the daughter was essential to the life of the mother. This means that to the ordinary mankind the faith in astrology cannot vanish so long as astronomy exists or that though astronomy is a science of authority astrology has no reality.

We adhere to these beliefs and we only add to the number of our superstitions. Civilization, as we now have it, means only the adoption of the bad habits and not the good of the western nations. We do not emulate them in moral courage, in honesty of purpose or in the pursuit of health, but we easily imbibe the habit of gambling and drinking.

NEW MOON.

The worship of Piṭris (manes) is ordained for the new moon day. The moon and the sun then come together and Piṭris and Dēvas (manes and gods) can therefore be worshipped at the same time. We believe that the world of the manes is located in the lunar sphere. The ceremony is performed in the afternoon, for then the sun's power wanes and the offerings are supposed to get an easier passage to the manal region.

ECLIPSES.

During the solar eclipse the moon intervenes between the sun and the earth. In places where the eclipse is visible, the sun's light is obstructed and the manes can then be worshipped directly and without any impediment. During the lunar eclipse, the earth comes between the sun and the moon and the lunar orb is covered by the earth's shadow, so that the offerings then made reach the lunar plane without any obstruction.

An obeisance to an idol in a temple reaches the deity though crowds do stand between the devotee and the idol. In a royal court, respects paid to the

king are meant for him and not to those that are next before us. The sun is transcendent in this creation. The moon is an insignificant body, but a planet of the earth, so that all offerings made to the moon by the denizens of the world will reach only the sun, when his effulgence is powerful and even in nights the light of the sun does pervade the earth and the moon. During the lunar eclipse the sun's rays cannot reach the moon and offerings may then pass to the moon direct. The time fixed for the offerings is at the end of the eclipse lest people should present the offering before the eclipse is complete.

SANKRĀNTI.

The object of the ceremony on the new moon days has not been explained anywhere. Under the lunar system the manal ceremony was performed once a month and after the introduction of the solar months, the principle appears to have been copied and the beginning of the month was chosen for a similar offering.

The Makara-sankrānti (autumnal equinox) is generally regarded as an important day. The

occasion is prescribed for the performance of ceremonies by people who fail to perform the annual or the occasional ceremonies. For others it cannot therefore be of any importance.

TARPAṆAM.

Tarpanams (oblations of sesamum and water) are offered for Dēvas, Ṛiṣis and Piṭris. It is believed that these occupy the eastern, the northern and the southern quarters and oblations are offered to them in their respective directions. It appears therefore that when this practice began, the idea of the manal abode in the lunar world had not yet dawned.

The new moon and the annual ceremonies are performed by Brahmins *after* midday and by others *at* midday. For particulars the work called Sudhivilōcana may be referred to. On these days the night meal is forbidden, apparently because they have their dinner late in the day and that often heavy and sumptuous. But this reason is forgotten and the rule of a single meal is construed as universal. The real ground of the prohibition does not apply in the case of non-brahmin Hindus, for they have their dinner almost at their usual hour

at noon, and observe besides a vegetable diet, and this makes a night meal all the more necessary for them.

MAUDHYAM.

For Jupiter, 30 days and for Venus, 70 and 9 days eastward and westward after their respective setting,—these periods are said to be *Maudhya*. This term indicates that the planets are non-existent, that is, not visible. In fact during these days these planets are over our head in the day. There can therefore be no possible objection to the performance of any auspicious ceremonies in day time. The inauspiciousness of *Maudhya* is based on the invisibility of these planets in nights. When we see no similar fault in the absence of the sun and do perform all auspicious acts in nights there is no sensible foundation for the prohibition under this head.

VENUS AFRONT.

Jupiter and Venus are regarded as Brahmins and of these the latter as one-eyed. It has therefore been inferred that the appearance of an one-eyed Brahmin is inauspicious. Granting that S'ukra is a Brahmin, there is no authority for the idea that

he is blind in one eye. Even on the standard of omens, it would be wrong only to go in the direction against Venus and there appears to be no meaning in inferences of good or evil attached to journeys to the right or left of the rising Venus.

POLLUTION.

Pollution appears to be an ancient usage among us. The period varies with castes and with the proximity of relationship. Recent law-givers prescribed a uniform period of ten days, in fact as a rule of health. We have now for example similar regulations for passports and quarantine for the segregation of passengers arriving from areas affected with infectious diseases.

To avoid a variation according to the nature of the affliction of the deceased person and the possibility of a discussion and difference, the law-givers prescribed a definite rule of pollution. Inter-course with persons under pollution and visits to their houses are strictly prohibited. Pollution at birth may be an analogical inference from that at death, or may have originated in the idea that houses of confinement cannot generally be clean

and the infant cannot bear the handling of visitors during such period. It appears reasonable that we should refrain from visits to the house of death or to the apartment of confinement for a period of ten days or longer.

SHAVE.

To have a shave is the first step in neatness. A shave is ordained at the beginning of every *Dikṣa* (or the period of a determined act) and prohibited in the interval. Under ancient usage people had a shave once a week at the latest. It is not known when the rules were laid down for the choice of auspicious days for a shave, but even then a general exception was created in favour of Mondays and Wednesdays without regard to any other consideration. This exception implies a recommendation for a shave at least once in a week or ten days. Orthodoxy ignores these ideas and there are many who cannot discover a suitable day for months together and with grown-up tufts and beards they present an untidy appearance everywhere.

There is also a rule among Brahmins ordaining a small tuft of hair on the head. This ordinance must have had its origin in the circumstance that

Brahmins married generally in those days after the period of their studentship at a pretty old age of thirty years and more and that young girls might be deluded by the grace of a complete shave, for otherwise grey hair would be repugnant to their tastes. Long beard had its origin in cold countries, for it protects the throat and probably the chest from affections of cold. But there are many among us, and mostly all Muhammadans, that grow their beard and this often mars the facial expression.

Our ancient sages lived in the Himālayan regions, and from considerations of health and for scarcity of barbers, they must have preserved their beard. In ancient Europe soldiers had their beard but now there is no rule and many Europeans, and likewise Americans, have a complete shave, as Brahmins do.

There is also the custom among certain classes of Brahmins, of shaving the heads of widows. Some contend that this practice is not authorised by any rule of the Sāstras. A complete shave of the head is a mode of punishment and it seems unreasonable to inflict it on a woman who loses her husband through no fault of hers. This practice does not however obtain among certain classes of Brahmins

and among the Kshatriyas. The advocates do not see how a woman, who is forbidden the touch of any man other than her husband, can bear the touch or the handling of a barber.

If the object of this usage is to mar the appearance and so to discourage amorous ideas, then widows past the age of such propensities may be exempted. This usage has not in fact been found to be a useful means of checking tendencies to immorality. No consideration therefore appears to favour this practice and there is no useful purpose served in the shaving of the heads of these forlorn widows.

THE WORSHIP OF SANDALS.

The worship of sandals appears to be an ancient usage. When Bharata exhorted Rāma to go back to Ayōdhya and crown himself but Rāma would not transgress his plighted word to his father, he installed Rāma's sandals on the throne at Nandīgrāma and worshipped them until Rāma returned fourteen years later. The foot-prints of Rāma, engraved in gold, silver or copper, have always been adored in India and particularly in every house at Ayōdhya. After the advent of Kṛiṣṇa the worship of his

sandals was also adopted. The followers of the Maḍhva and Vallabha tenets mark their body with such footprints with sandal paste. Among Srī Vaisṇavas, the heads of various Mutts imprint their feet in colour on silk and their disciples apply the silk to their eyes, as sanctifying, on occasions of their daily ablutions.

THE BLUE COMPLEXION OF VIṢṆU.

The Supreme Lord has a white complexion in the Kṛiṭa age, red in the Ṭrēṭa, yellow in the Ḍvāpara, and blue in the Kali, so says the Bhāgavaṭa. There seems to be no reason for these changes of complexion. In other works he is variously described as of a white splendour, brighter than the sun or of an eternal blue complexion. This idea of colours seems to be a mere fancy. It may be that in the Ṭāmasa creation the people were dark in colour and they naturally imagined that Viṣṇu as Puruṣōṭṭama (the best of men) must be of a like complexion.

CONCLUSION.

Besides the usages that have been described, there are several others, which had their origin in objects of health, purity, social convention or

divine worship. Their original import has been forgotten and they have increased in number and complexity by the manifold developments of later generations. The multiplication of these usages has only tended to increase the troubles, to obscure their utility. Penalties of sin have been predicated for their non-observance, for otherwise the usages might not be cared for. Minor usages are very many and the limited scope of this work does not permit their enumeration.

PART THE FOURTH.

SECTION A.

PRACTICAL HINDUISM.

By the end of the first part of this work, we reached the stage in the description of the advancement of the divine idea when the Triad had come to be regarded as the supreme lords of the world. Brahma is the lord of evolution (or creation), Viṣṇu, of preservation, and Mahēśvara, of involution (or disintegration). Brahma has four faces. This is but a metaphorical expression of the sagacity and discrimination required of the Creator of a variety of beings in the world. For, otherwise, how could a body have four faces or in the absence of four such faces will there be no creation? Viṣṇu has four arms and to answer these arms, there are the four weapons. For one who could succour the world at a thought, weapons are no need. The description indicates only the extraordinary strength or the robust formation which often presents an appearance of the overlapping of a double shoulder. For a body

to have more than a couple of arms, it is impossible. So we hear, in the west, of a man with a double chin. Mahē'svara has three eyes. If the whole world might vanish at the desire of this lord, he must possess a fiery eye and so was the poetic fancy. But a forehead to put on three eyes, it is unnatural. It is sometimes said that the three eyes indicate the knowledge of the past, present and the future and this is a plausible interpretation.

Of the abodes of the Lords of the Triad, Vāikuntha and Kailāsa have been variously described. The idea is full of incongruities. It is only those that attain salvation that reach these abodes, and as they can never come back, who can tell us what such abodes are? It may be said that sages have a spiritual eye for perception and their vision is endless. This cannot be, for their purpose is only to attain that condition of salvation, and they cannot see it in anticipation. Let us see what this so-called omniscience is. The auspicious hour fixed by Vasiṣṭha for Rāma's coronation failed, and there was the banishment in its stead for a period of fourteen years. Among the sages that we regard

as all-knowing Vasiṣṭha is the foremost. If he did foresee a failure, he ought to have expressed it or attempted a precaution by an artful removal of Kaikēyi from Ayōdhya to her parents' home. The knowledge of sages has its limits. It is confined to the occasional powers of observation, by virtue of their Yōgic strength, of matters, past and present, relating to places and events with which they have been conversant. It cannot be all-pervasive. Such omniscience is owned by the Supreme Being himself who comprehends all spheres, all times and all matters, and cannot be shared by others. Some say that Vasiṣṭha knew the end and had no business in its revelation. When asked by Viḍura why he came on an errand, with an *a priori* consciousness of its failure, Śrī Kṛiṣṇa replied that all good acts must be attempted on pain of dereliction, and though they appeared to be unsuccessful for the occasion, they must have their merits in the long run. So Vasiṣṭha was wrong in resigning himself to the certain event without any attempt to avoid it. The better inference is that he did not foresee the result of the prospective coronation.

There is likewise an absurd myth to explain the absence of worship for Brahma. Some modern writers say that Brahma creates us according to the merits of our past action and after creation we have only to look to Viṣṇu and Mahē'svara for future progress.

HEAVEN AND HELL.

Because there are the two abodes of salvation, Vaikuṅtha and Kailāsa, it strikes us that there is no need for heaven and hell. Once my Sanskrit tutor Susarla Seetharamasastrī explained their existence as necessary for the enjoyment of those fruits of sin or merit for which the human body is unsuitable. For instance, when the punishment inflicted on a sinner is to tie him up to a red-hot iron pillar for years, he cannot live to bear it even for minutes with his human frame. So they say that for the suffering of such punishment, a hell there must be and for the enjoyment of long and incessant pleasure, a heaven must likewise exist. But still arises a doubt, can actions ever lead to such results? In the first part of this work, I have shown how the eastern quarter cannot belong to Indra, the lord of heaven, and how the southern quarter cannot be

referred to Yama, so that if we do believe in heaven and hell, we cannot determine their real location.

Some say that heaven and hell are eternal. According to them, the merits of all living souls are reviewed at the time of the Deluge, and as a result the meritorious are assigned to an eternal heaven, while the sinful are cast into an eternal hell once for all. This eternal heaven may tally with our Vairāṅkya or Kailāsa. But how can we imagine that the Lord of All would have designed an eternal hell, the Divine Being, who has wished well for all created beings, prescribed rules of conduct and conferred on us a freedom of action? For all believers in God, He is the fountain of mercy and He looks upon us as His children. This may mean again the absence of any relative distinction among the denizens of such heaven or hell, for between two persons possessing merits, for instance, of 51 and 99 or 100 per cent. (so in the case of sin), there would be no difference in the result. It may be thought that in cases of a greater proportion of merit, the Divine Being in his mercy pardons the sin, but where the proportion of sin is but a little higher than merit, for instance when 51 parts are

sin and 49 are merit, to ignore the forty-nine parts of merit and to consign the person to eternal hell appears illogical. It is common for masters to pardon faults, but never to overlook honest service. Or again when the proportions of merit and demerit are equal, say fifty parts each, which will be the abode assigned to such an individual? If we suppose that a re-birth is possible, the advocates of eternal hell or heaven do not admit a second birth at all. Therefore comes the thought that such eternity in heaven or hell can never be. We begin to doubt whether a heaven or hell is possible at all, even as we conceive, for in this world too there are some that enjoy and some that suffer from birth to death. Is not this the result of past action?

SRI RĀMA.

Of the divine incarnations, we have said that the greatest are Rāma and Kṛiṣṇa. Rāma was the son of Ḍasaraṭha. At the bidding of his father, he gave up his royal dominions and spent fourteen years of his life in the wild forests in the company of his consort Sīṭā and his brother Lakṣmaṇa. There Sīṭā was carried away by Rāvaṇa. By the alliance with Sugrīva, Rāma killed Vāli and with the army of

monkeys invaded Lanka, killed Rāvaṇa and crowned his brother Vibhīṣana in his stead. Returning to Ayōḍhya, he took charge of his ancestral sovereignty from Bharata, and after several years of virtuous rule, passed back to the abode of Viṣṇu. The history of Rāma is for us a lesson of morality, filial obedience, conjugal fidelity, fraternal affection, truthful conduct and just government.

It is said that this divine personage went wrong in killing Vāli from behind a tree. Let us consider how this great warrior, the Lord of All, could have hurt Vāli from a concealed position. The author of the Rāmāyaṇa believed that Vāli was a monkey and sought to justify it with a remark that it was permissible for kings to shoot and kill animals from a hidden rendezvous. Sugrīva and his followers the Vānaras were in fact no monkeys at all. It appears to me that the real explanation lies elsewhere. Rāma must have instructed Sugrīva to give battle to Vāli so that in the course of the fight he might himself intervene on the side of Sugrīva by virtue of his alliance, but perceiving that Sugrīva was suddenly overpowered and about to be killed, Rāma might have shot his arrow to

the surprise of Vāli and saved his friend from the predicament. Likewise we hear in the Mahābhāraṭa that Arjuna severed the hand of Bhūriśravas, as he was about to discharge a missile against the head of Sāṭyaki, just in time to save the latter. It is a precept of moral justice that to save the life of a friend a deed is justified, though otherwise it would be a turpitude. My readers will therefore take it that with Rāma no fault in fact lay.

S'RĪ KRĪṢṆA.

We often hear of wild imputations hurled against the life and character of Kṛiṣṇa. It is the pre-eminent duty of every impartial observer, be he a Hindu or not, to disregard everything that is against reason or virtue. The Purāṇas were not written at a time nor are they the productions of any one author. They treat of the history of the world from creation to extinction or at least to the end of the present Kali age. The Mahābhāraṭa was composed several centuries after the Great War. The Bhāgavaṭa and the Mahābhāraṭa begin as recapitulations of narratives told by ancient sages to King Parīkṣiṭ and King Janamējaya, the grandson and the great-grandson of Arjuna.

These recapitulations themselves might have taken a versified form at a day far later, not to speak of the several additions and interpolations in successive generations.

Among the several works, the life of Kṛiṣṇa is chiefly depicted in particular detail in the Bhāgavaṭa, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, the Mahābhārata and the Harivams'a. In the Bhāgavaṭa, the twelve chapters describe the greatness of Viṣṇu and among these the tenth chapter covers the life of Kṛiṣṇa. As a production of days far remote from the real sojourn of Kṛiṣṇa in this world, it is no wonder that it describes fanciful events, beyond the ken of human powers.

The Mahābhārata was not meant to describe the life of Kṛiṣṇa, except so far as it was connected with the history of the Pāṇdavas. We may therefore take it to be the most authentic version, but in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa and the Harivams'a the story of Kṛiṣṇa is the main theme. There are strong reasons for the belief that these works were composed long after Kṛiṣṇa had passed away. I shall add an illustration or two to prove the contradictions among

the Purāṇas themselves and the falsity of our ideas created by the Purāṇic narratives.

We hear of a tale that Kṛiṣṇa escaped death at the hands of Pūṭanā. The Bhāgavata describes Pūṭanā as a demon come from the aerial regions to kill Kṛiṣṇa. The Harivamśa makes Pūṭanā the wet nurse of Kamsa. But in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Pūṭanā is simply called the destroyer of children. A respected writer on medicine Suśrūta gives the name of Pūṭanā to a dangerous disease that affects children often fatally. The word *Pūṭanā* is feminine in its grammatical gender and the disease was therefore easily personified in poetic fancy as a demoness and as Kamsa's wet nurse sent to destroy Kṛiṣṇa. Behold then how these writers came to mistake a disease for a demon and a wet nurse. The idea was in fact an illusion, but in later times to support the illusion, stories were invented to give a reality to Pūṭanā.

We hear again of the story that Kṛiṣṇa warred against Kāliya, the king of serpents, and spared his life at the prayer of the serpent queens. The word *Nāga* is used to signify a serpent and this led these writers to fancy that Kāliya was in fact the

lord of serpents. They accordingly developed this illusion by a description of the serpent queens, on the standards of human organs, capacities and ornamentations. How could serpents possess the characteristics of the human race? The idea is absurd. The Nagas represented in truth a class of mankind that inhabited the forests in the vicinity of the Jumna river. Hence came the story that at the command of Kṛiṣṇa Kāliya vacated that territory. Again the night of Kṛiṣṇa's birth is described by some writers as a night of showers and darkness and by others as a night of peace and brightness. These wide differences in the description of the life of Kṛiṣṇa may not by themselves affect our readers, but to the great misfortune of the Hindu nation these writers have not only rendered themselves liable to the shameful and degrading sin of untruth, but displayed their serious lack of judgment and discrimination. Matters grew worse in the hands of the Telugu and Tamil translators. They walked fast in the path of such imagination and would not stop to think of a sensible inquiry. Their fancies manifested themselves according to their taste, ability and

inclination in exaggerated stories of Kṛiṣṇa's immorality in his relations with the fair sex of his age. I shall proceed to deal with some of these adverse ideas, which have unfortunately gained currency among us.

There is a description of Rāsa Krīdā or a circular dance on a full-moon night, wherein several young ladies became enamoured of Kṛiṣṇa and lost themselves in passion. Rāsa Krīdā is described fully in the Bhāgavata and incidentally in the Harivamsa and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. The Bhāgavata has two similar tales to note, the one of the illicit love of some Brahmin women at his seduction and the other of Kṛiṣṇa carrying off the clothes of young women, when they were engrossed in a sportive bath in a tank close by.

For an intelligent inquirer, these stories cannot stand a moment's belief. It is possible that these stories were the result of unconscious mistakes on the part of their writers. At the time of these events, Kṛiṣṇa was a lad of eleven years, and it is against nature that at that age any amorous propensities could have dawned at all. But some say he was not a boy of the ordinary human type,

but an incarnation of the Supreme Being. This suggestion makes the tale all the more abominable. For how could Srī Kṛṣṇa, the Primeval Being Incarnate, the Creator of the Universe, the Saviour, the Guiding Star of virtue, All-knowing, taintless and passionless, commit such acts of sin and vicious passion? The truth is otherwise. In days of yore, and sometimes now too, among the tribes of woods and hills, women moved with greater freedom in the company of men in sports, society or conversation. We now find it so among the western communities. But these writers could not appreciate the manners of such society and they placed a wrong interpretation on these communal dances. It is equally probable that some Brahmin women were delighted to see the pleasant appearance of the young boy among the cowherds, for to women children are by instinct dearer than to men, and need it be said in the case of the Supreme Being himself. Kṛṣṇa is accused of having carried off the clothes of women. He might have done so in his boyish way or probably to teach the shameless women a lesson that such baths with a naked frame in open tanks were an outrage to public

decency. There is still a stronger defence. We read, in the Sabhā Parva of the Mahābhārata, the curses levelled against Kṛiṣṇa by S'is'upāla, and amidst the endless charges, there is no reference to this sexual immorality, nor do we find any allusion to it in the later work, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa.

There is again a tale of a worse infamy connected with Rāḍhā. The name Rāḍhā is not referred to in the Bhāgavata, Harivams'a and Viṣṇu Purāṇa. It is a creation of the Brahma-Vaīvarṭa Purāṇa, a work which transcends all its predecessors in its absurdities. Rāḍhā is described as the wife of Kṛiṣṇa's maternal uncle, but disposed to an illicit love in his company. Some say that this tale is but the work of the poet's fancy. But I believe there is a veritable misapprehension at the foundation of this conception. In fact Rāḍhā is identical with Rukminī. Were it a mere poetic fancy, how is it accounted for, that the image of Rāḍhā is worshipped by the side of Kṛiṣṇa throughout India? Rukminī is an incarnation of Lakṣmī, and when the practice arose of worshipping the various male deities in conjunction with their respective consorts, the combinations of names came into vogue, such

as *Sītā-Rāma*, *Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa*, *Pārvaṭī-Paramēśvara* and the like. These conjunct names have a fluent expression. But the same facility of pronunciation is not felt in a combination of the names of *Rukminī* and *Kṛiṣṇa*, and otherwise too such a combination would offend against the grammatical rule of word-compounds.

Among the thousand names of *Lakṣmī*, *Rāḍhā* is the only word of syllabic simplicity. So was adopted the combination *Rāḍhā-Kṛiṣṇa*, corresponding in its religious merit to the expression *Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa*. The name of *Rāḍhā* is not referred to in the *Bhāgavaṭa*, *Mahābhāraṭa* and the earlier writings, and the author of the *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa* must have, several centuries after the composition of these works and the consecration of these dual images, unfortunately mistaken her for the wife of *Kṛiṣṇa*'s maternal uncle of perhaps an identical name, in a delusion of mind already saturated with the vague stories of *Kṛiṣṇa*'s sports and immortality. To confirm his belief, the author went to the extent of declaring that the worship of *Rāḍhā* and *Kṛiṣṇa* was even superior to that of *Rukminī* and *Kṛiṣṇa*. It may be asked what is there to

identify Rāḍhā with Rukmiṇī? It is not unusual in the world's history that fanciful stories are created to explain circumstances, the very origin of which is lost in distant antiquity. I shall give my readers a typical illustration. In Jagannāth there are three idols worshipped under the names of Jagannātha, Subhaḍrā and Balarāma. It has been wrongly believed that these images are the real idolised bodies of Kṛiṣṇa, Subhaḍrā and Balarāma, who had their advent at Muttra. In Muttra Subhaḍrā was the sister of Kṛiṣṇa. At Jagannāth she is the wife of Jagannātha. This identification leads to an absurd idea that Kṛiṣṇa married his sister Subhaḍrā. A belief, more atrocious, we cannot imagine. We read from the Mahābhārata, that Balarāma and Arjuna visited this shrine at Jagannāth in their pilgrimages and worshipped the self-same images that we now see there, and this is sufficient to say that Jagannāth was a place of sanctity long before the birth of Kṛiṣṇa. The mistake is easily explained. It is common among us to name a male child after a male deity and a female child after the corresponding female deity: for instance, a brother and sister are often named, Rāma and Sītā. Now the folly

is easily seen, if we can imagine that the parents of Kṛiṣṇa called their two sons and a daughter after the names of the images at Jagannāth. So is it equally likely that the author of the Brahma-Vaī-varṭa Purāṇa invented the false story of Kṛiṣṇa's love to his maternal uncle's wife, by wrongly identifying Rāḍhā with another woman of the same name.

It is again said that Kṛiṣṇa married eight wives. But in the Mahābhārata, we hear only of three wives, Rukmiṇī, Saṭyabhāmā and Jāmbavaṭī. But the usages of those days might have compelled him to take more girls than one in marriage. Married or unmarried, it was incumbent on a prince, when invited to attend a Swayamvaram and if chosen by the bride there, to marry her. There was likewise the rule that when a conquered king offered his daughter or sister in marriage to the conqueror, he was bound to accept her for himself, or for his son or brother, though such an offer on the part of the vanquished was but optional. If then, for respect to these conventional usages, Kṛiṣṇa married a number of wives, this cannot certainly indicate any frivolity.

It has also been said that Kṛiṣṇa vanquished the demon Narakāśura and took a host of his women as his wives. This number is variously mentioned, from 1,600 to 16,100. This may be an exaggeration or a misapprehension. When the enemy is killed, his women naturally come under the protection of the conqueror and by a confusion of words such as Prabhu, Bhartā and Paṭi which may mean protector or husband, the later writers must have created the myth of a marriage with these ladies of the enemy's harem.

I have so far attempted to explain away the shameless and reckless charges of vice and immorality directed against that Great Being, whose teachings have been to Max Müller and other inquirers of the West an object of universal admiration.

Among our sacred works come in order the Vēḍas (including the Manṭras, the Brāhmanas, and the Upanishads), the Sūtras, the Purāṇas and the Smṛitis. Some writers say that about the period when the Sūtra literature came into vogue, and at the instance of Kṛiṣṇa, Vyāsa re-arranged the dispersed texts of the Vēḍas and composed the

Brahma Sūtras. Vyāsa is the reputed author of all the Purāṇas, but his name in fact must have been associated with them by the real authors, just to give them an air of sanctity and authority. Otherwise there is no reasonable explanation for the wide divergencies of history, theology, cosmogony or philosophy that the several Purāṇas present in their narratives. The Bhāgavaṭa says that the Purāṇas in their origin had only a six-fold reduction, and of these, on a test of style, simplicity is an index of antiquity. The stories narrated in the Purāṇas are of five kinds, didactic, laudatory, illustrative, argumentative and superstitious. It is folly to call them real history.

IMAGES.

Images are of four kinds. They are either self-manifest or consecrated by the Dēvas, the Siḍḍhas or the Mānavas. Among these, there is no distinction in merit, but Rāmānuja taught that an idol founded by oneself or one's ancestors was the best object of worship. This makes it clear that no purpose is really served by costly pilgrimages to particular spots, though in the course of travels it

is proper to visit the shrines in such parts and perform the necessary acts of devotion.

WORSHIP OF MANES.

Manal worship in one form or another is common to several religions. But the annual ceremony is purely a Hindu institution. Among some Christian Sovereigns there is the usage of a visit to the church for a special prayer on the anniversaries of the deaths of their ancestors. Among us it is a compulsory duty and can never be neglected. Of ceremonies to cognate kinsmen some may be dispensed with after the period of the funeral obsequies and others after the close of the first anniversary. There are however a few instances which, as in the case of parents, are performed throughout life, but it is reasonable to conclude them with a visit to Gaya. A visit to Gaya is obligatory on every Hindu in the interests of the spiritual welfare of his ancestors and it is not advisable to question its efficacy or authority.

OFFERINGS.

There are several modes in which food is offered to the Divine Being. In temples the method must have always been uniform, and it must therefore be

the best standard for observance. Some householders take their food after a formal offering to the Supreme Being, but on days of fast the omission of such offering has no meaning. There are others who offer the food in their plates before they begin their meal, and Lingayats do so to the small Lingams that they keep suspended in their necks. There are still others who carry their idols to the place of general food-service and offer the food served for them to such idols kept by their side. These practices have to be discouraged and the idea of offering the food as soon as it is ready and before it is distributed seems to be commendable.

In this connection it must be remarked that on occasions of funeral ceremonies, a general invitation for dinner is not commendable, though kinsmen that are affected by pollution may probably dine there during the period.

S'IVA AND KĒS'AVA.

I have in a prior chapter adverted to the reason for the absence of worship for Brahma. Between S'iva and KĒs'ava, some predicate a distinction and others an identity. For an orthodox Saiva or an orthodox Vaiṣṇava, S'iva and Viṣṇu are respectively

the supreme divinity. Early writers called Śiva and Viṣṇu equal and these with Brahma were but the three-fold manifestations of the one Supreme Being. Why should the Supreme Being convert himself to the form of the Triad at all? As He is, He can carry on the work of creation, preservation and annihilation. It appears to me that the three-fold form had its origin in the distinctions of worship. For those who deny the identity of Śiva and Viṣṇu, their relative superiority is a problem. The author of the Sankalpa-Sūryōḍaya gave an answer: "It is only Viṣṇu and no other deity that can grant us the eternal beatitude. It is He that can dispel the cloud of ignorance and enlighten the path of spiritual knowledge. Therefore it was that Vēḍavyāsa, the fountain of Vēḍic and Sāṣṭraic lore, proclaimed to all the learned world, 'True, true, I shout with my shoulders raised no lore greater than the Vēḍas, no divinity beyond Kēsava.' Again among the great men of yore, there were many who by the worship of Viṣṇu attained salvation and showed that means of salvation to their followers. Such were for instance Saunaka, Vyāsa, Manu, Bṛihaspaṭi, Śukra, Aṭri,

Vālmiki, Parāśara.” The Bhāghavata adds among such devotees, Prahlāḍa, Nārada, Ambariṣa, Arjuna, Vasiṣṭha and Vibhīṣaṇa. We know these were personages of acknowledged merit, and when they conceded that Viṣṇu was supreme, we have but to follow them. A better demonstration is impossible. A consideration of their respective vehicles leads to the same conclusion. Before the creation of this terrestrial sphere there was only the void atmosphere, and Viṣṇu had Garuda for his vehicle to waft him through the air. Then came the creation of the globe and the manifestation of Brahma for the purpose. For movements through the watery world, he had the Hamsa which floats on water. Later appeared the woods and hills and to suit such undulating country, Īśvara chose the Vṛiṣabha. This sequence shows Viṣṇu as transcending all creation. Again the appellation Nārāyaṇa says Paṇini can apply only to Viṣṇu and not to other deities, and this exclusive appellation denotes his supremacy. But this distinction is in fact unimportant. Śiva and Kēsava are mostly treated as equal and the usage of one’s family is the basis of the choice of either deity for daily adoration.

THE THREE SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY.

I shall now say a few words on the three Schools of Philosophy, which now rule the religious sentiments of the Hindu nation. It is not merely the force of the teacher's learning that creates a new religion and alters the tenets of an existing religion. Exigencies of time occasion the need for reformation, and this need, often caused by the discovery of latent defects in current religious beliefs, affords scope for the propagation of new religious or sectarian tenets. In the early history of the Hindus, fair conduct was undermined by blind beliefs in the Mantra religion and this gave room for the teachings of Buḍḍha. Later on Buddhism was discovered to have its vices, and the Aḍvaitic doctrine took its place. To expose the fallacies of this doctrine was the object of the Ḍvaita and Viśiṣṭaḍvaita philosophers. The interpretations of the same Vēḍic texts by the founders of these three sects of Vēḍānta philosophy are quite convincing as they are. Nor is there any material difference in the mode of divine worship or in the code of the observances recommended by such original founders. But their followers, animated by the low

ideas of sectarian bias, have introduced meaningless modifications.

These tenets of religion were not new. Let us therefore see why Śankara chose to propound with fervour the doctrine of Advaitism above every other consideration. Divine incarnations, royal ordinances and religious doctrines vary with time, place and people. During the days of the Pāṇḍava sovereignty and till the reign of Nanda, the Hindu religion followed the Vēdic doctrines as from the times of yore. Later on India became divided into numberless states or principalities, and through want of concert and increase of feuds, principles of polity and religion began to swerve from the original standard and the ingenuity of exposition displayed by the learned pandits of the several royal courts gave rise to differences in religious philosophy.

In the meantime about the year 500 B.C. Buḍḍha propounded the atheistic religion and by force of persuasion brought many into his fold and particularly the people of the country over which his father Siḍḍhōḍana held his sway. From day to day Buddhism advanced and flourished till the advent

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of Śankara about 787 A.D. During the long period of 1,257 years, the religion of Buddha spread itself to the countries of the East, and to-day it is the prevailing religion in Burmah, Japan, China and Ceylon. The teachings of Buddha were quite welcome, for he advocated the freedom from the onerous duties ordained by the Vēdic religion. The country soon adopted the revolutionary ideas, and the Vēdic religion lost its hold and would have gone into oblivion but for the timely advent of Śankara. He refuted the atheistic doctrine of natural evolution by the exposition of the Aḍvaitic philosophy. He revived the belief in the omnipotence of a Supreme Being by teaching the non-existence of all but that Being, the identity of the Individual with the Supreme Self and the barrier of ignorance for real knowledge. He proclaimed that the means of attaining true knowledge was the due observance of the several duties enjoined by the Vēdic texts and the gradual supersession of illusive ignorance. Moreover, while the contemplation of the unassociated Brahma is the essence of Aḍvaiṭa, Śankara considered that the worship of the associated Brahma was essential not only to a

householder but to an ascetic who has renounced all Karma. So it was that he succeeded in bringing back hosts of his countrymen into the ancient religion of India. Besides the Buddhists there were also sects devoted to the worship of the five deities and to reconcile them severally he accepted their combined worship as legitimate and as an example he set up four places of special worship for the adoration of the five deities. But his followers never understood his purpose, and deluded by the idea that they were themselves identical with the Supreme Being grew worse and neglecting all worship and all duty, went far lower down than the votaries of the Buddhistic religion. Some of them carried the principle of non-difference to an outrageous extent and observed no limit or distinction in the matter of wealth or women. Thus the Aḍvaiṭa doctrine was mis-interpreted and in the course of 229 years plunged the country into evil ways, far more dangerous than under the influence of Buḍḍha's teaching. At this juncture Rāmānuja was born in 1016 A.D. He restored the theistic religion. He taught that the Supreme Being exists in association with the Individual Souls, (*cit*) and

with Matter (*acit*) and that the Individual Souls are likewise eternal, for, as he said, the existence of the Supreme Being would be useless if *cit* (Individual Souls) and *acit* (Matter) did not exist in reality. He advocated the possibility of attainment of Vaikuntha, with the chance of a permanent abode there along with the Supreme Lord, by a regular observance of the prescribed methods of worship and devotion. He conceded such salvation for women and Śudras also and declared in favour of their eligibility to repeat and contemplate the sacred formula of the Ashtāksharī (*lit.* of eight syllables). He prescribed an easy method of divine worship, but advocated only the worship of Nārāyaṇa, for in the scheme of the worship of the five deities framed by Śankara or under the sacred Gīṭās acknowledged by the three schools of Vēḍāntism, Nārāyaṇa is regarded as the Supreme Being. It happens therefore that even the Aḍvaiṭa ascetics utter the name of Nārāyaṇa when we make our obeisance to them. As a logical exposition of religious ideas and as an easy means of attainment of the goal of salvation, the Viśiṣṭaḍvaiṭa School is rapidly gaining ground. About a century later—1117 A.D.—Maḍhvācharya

founded the school of Dvaita philosophy, which in most respects follows the views of Rāmānuja. Wherever his exposition differs, the varying conclusions are not commendable. His real fault lay in his treatment of the Purāṇas on a par with the Śruti and the Smṛiti in their authority. But the main object of these two schools was the same—the refutation of the fallacies of Advaita philosophy.

Śankara taught the identity of the Individual and the Supreme Souls, and so his followers called him an incarnation of Īśvara otherwise known as Śankara. Rāmānuja propounded the like eternity of the Individual and the Supreme Souls, and his followers made him an incarnation of Śeṣa, a permanent attendant in the Vaikuntha. Maḍhva declared a distinction not only in form but in the condition of salvation and spiritual happiness between the Individual and the Supreme Souls and likewise among the Individual Souls themselves, and his followers considered him an incarnation of Vāyu, the highest of the five elements concerned with our existence in the world. But as the great founders of the three main branches of Vēdānta philosophy, they must be held in universal esteem.

Of the five deities advocated by Sankara, we saw in the first part of this work how the worship of the Sun, the Sakti and Gaṇapaṭi had their origin, so that Siva and Kēsava alone remain to merit our adoration.

Puṇdra (or the caste mark) has among us, a variety of forms. Among the followers of Viṣṇu, the mark is supposed to represent his footprints. Other sects have other forms. These marks, irrespective of form, are an index of the Hindu religion, but to some strangers these are but an ornamentation. The so-called philosophers of the present day mostly teach the Aḍvaiṭa doctrine, and without being led away by their counsel it is incumbent on us to preserve the system of caste marks at least as a traditional usage.

PURUṢĀRTHA.

There are four Puruṣārthas, or objects of life : virtue, wealth, enjoyment, beatitude. Virtue consists in the abandonment of vice and the observance of prescribed duties. Wealth refers to the acquisition of money by honest means. Enjoyment means the utilisation of such wealth for lawful comfort and pleasure. Beatitude is attained by a consistent

devotion to the other three objects of life and to the gradual understanding of the Supreme Being.

CONCLUSION.

I shall now sum up the principles of righteous conduct. For boyhood, filial respect, careful study, reasonable exercise, regular bath and the observance of the religious usages of the family ; on attaining age, progress of learning, and good company ; on entering life, an honest acquisition of wealth, a moderate measure of enjoyment and means permitting, some useful travel, forgiveness, loyalty, devotion to duty, preservation of ancestral charities, worship of S'iva or Kēs'ava according to the hereditary usage of the family, and circumspection in business or social intercourse ; later in life, a gradual renunciation of carnal passions and worldly attractions, with a sincere belief in the Supreme Being as the Saviour of All; and lastly the cultivation of three-fold devotion, in deed, in word and in thought, or of perfect self-surrender to the Supreme Spirit, all this with a view to final liberation—these in short are the rules ordained by the Scriptures of Hinduism for practical application in our relations in this world.

SECTION B.

PHILOSOPHICAL HINDUISM.

The philosophical aspect of Hinduism requires for its understanding the association with a practical philosopher and a study of the Vēḍānta writings. But these writings vary widely in their expositions, and such practical philosophers are rare. I am afraid I cannot therefore properly deal with this subject; but intending this work for the guidance of householders in general, I shall make a brief reference.

Rarely do we hear of people that attained salvation through the life of a householder. The few stories that we hear are myths and must have been designed to serve but a didactic purpose. We come across people still with family, calling themselves Vēḍāntīns, with an air of extreme orthodoxy, but without the faintest idea of renunciation. They practise Vāyuḍhāraṇa (or holding of breath) which generally is ordained for bachelors of 20 or 25 before marriage or for aged men tired of the worldly

attractions. An indiscriminate practice of these methods, as our modern Vēḍāntins do, ends only in an injury to health. Yōga is meant for the prolongation of life and for the practice of concentration, so to enable man to contemplate the Supreme Spirit. If these so-called Vēḍāntins expect by the practice of breath-suppression to gain a fresh term of life, they never succeed. These are bad examples for us to follow. We have therefore to direct our endeavours towards the attainment of salvation by the cultivation of the sense of devotion to God through the ordained modes of worship or by the adoption of the course of the three-fold renunciation or self-surrender.

There are others who deny the existence of God. They would say that creation is the work of natural evolution. But this theory does not explain the manifold variations in the forms of creation, man, animal, reptile and the like or in the instinct, character and fortunes of the several creatures of the world, good, wicked, kind, cruel and so on. If nature makes the man, why should an offender be subjected to any censure or punishment at all, or what sin can there be in suicide, if prompted by

misery? It is sometimes said that there are chances as in a lottery in such natural evolution besides the influence of heredity, which are the cause of good or evil, but no man is then responsible for his actions, good or evil. It would therefore seem an untenable explanation that variety in creation is caused by nature or heredity.

It is the like theory of the Physicists that the world was never created and is never destroyed, for nature and its forces are eternal. For instance, a house is formed by the combination of a number of specific substances, but is never created in the sense of origination. When the house is destroyed, there is only a disintegration of the component substances and no annihilation. We give the same answer to this theory as before. You have also to see whether the house was the work of somebody or it was self-created in origin.

In the view of such theorists the code of morality is but a conventional means of convenience and happiness in society, and its observance cannot in any way lead to salvation or beatitude. It is no wonder that they say so, for their religion is that there is no God and that man is not responsible for

the propensities of his nature. Likewise is the theory answered that though there is God there is no eternity in Soul and the Soul comes into existence with the body and passes away with it.

Others say that the Soul is incapable of destruction and that the physical body is a temporary encumbrance of God's creation. They likewise consider that man is not a free agent and his deeds, good or evil, are prompted by God himself. This is unreasonable, for no one can answer for conduct not his own. It is equally wrong to say that all good is the result of God's blessing and all evil, of His displeasure, for that would mean an imputation of partiality to the Divine Being. The eternity of Soul is admitted by all, Christians, Muhammadans and Hindus. Buddhism keeps the Soul on until the day of annihilation for a final doom or absolution, so that the Buddhists too premise the long survival of Soul, though not its eternity.

There are others who believe that God exists and that Soul is eternal, but who would not concede the doctrine of re-births. This theory would suppose that our good or evil nature is the work of God himself. But such a supposition leads to an

inference of partiality or unkindness in Him, and frees the agent from liability for all his doings. This position cannot therefore be sustained. A child knows by instinct the difference between good and evil long before it is able to talk. This instinct precedes all conception of religion. It is this instinct that pious men steadily nourish and that develops later on into a belief in a Divine Being, who looks over our doings and who rewards good and punishes evil after death. Some say that such reward or punishment is adjudged long after death, at the time of the Deluge and that they take the form of eternal heaven or eternal hell according to the predominance of virtue or vice in individuals. I have already shown in the Third Part how the theory of an eternal heaven and hell cannot be supported.

If Fate ordains our misery or happiness we shall then have nothing to do with the result of our actions. There would be no purpose in heaven or hell with reference to individual actions, good or bad, at doomsday. It is but right to concede that the doer alone takes the effect of his acts; he enjoys the benefit or suffers the evil of his present

action in this life or in future life or lives. This may be illustrated by the analogy of the caterpillar, which when arrested and acted upon by a wasp undergoes numerous changes in its form without losing its life and finally becomes metamorphosed into a butterfly. It is likewise possible that the same Soul continues, though the frame changes. He who advances his well-being by the preservation of bodily health and by the observance of virtuous conduct, must be deemed successful in this world, far better than one who conquers a kingdom. A kingdom is transient, but Soul is eternal. Action must therefore be the pre-eminent object of our attention. I shall now proceed to summarise the important features of that Karma or action, which I have discussed in all detail in my work on the *Review of the Three-fold Action*.

KARMA-TRAYA.

Karma-ṭraya means the three-fold action, Āgāmi, Sancītam and Prārabḍham. The nature of Karma and its varieties has never been uniformly treated in our philosophical writings. In some cases action has been confounded with Fate and Effort. The Vēḍānta-Pancaḍasī finds three classes of Prārabḍha. The Giṭā has three kinds of actions, Karma (action

or feasance), Akarma (inaction or non-feasance) and Vikarma (mal-action or mal-feasance). Our professors are in confusion and have nothing definite to say. Calm men confess the absence of any clear exposition in our Sāstras, but the presumptuous have no answer, and do not therefore brook the question. There are others who, unable to give a solution concede the point and would fain end the controversy. The commentators of the three schools did not care to reconcile the conflicting theories, but went on propounding the results of their own particular conviction.

It may be asked why a subject so difficult of exposition should be taken up at all. I was unable to get a proper explanation from anyone that I consulted, and the hopeless contradictions in the treatment of the subject led me naturally to investigate the question. I propose a classification. You may take it if it is logical and does not contravene our sacred writings. Otherwise it will rank along with the classifications already in existence but I ought in my own interests to record the results of my inquiry, for I hope it may one day serve to advance future research.

Karma-*traya* (three-fold action) is *Āgāmi*, *Sanciṭa* and *Prārabḍha*. *Āgāmi* is that class of action, of which the fruits are to be enjoyed in the coming birth. *Sanciṭam* is the accumulated mass of action of prior births. *Prārabḍham* refers to the particular volume of past actions, the fruits of which have begun to be felt in the present life.

It is wrong to identify *Ḍaiva* (Fate) with past action or with the present enjoyment of its fruits. In the *Mahābhārata*, (*Ānusāsānika Parvan*) *Bhiṣma* identifies *Ḍaiva* with God himself and says that human effort is more important than Fate. In his narration to *Kausika*, *Ḍharmavyāḍha* gave importance to *Ḍaiva*, but as the story of *Ḍharmavyāḍha* is all a didactic myth, this view deserves no consideration.

Others think that *Āgāmi* denotes present action. The *Ḍēvi Bhāgavata* says:—

“The seers of old have said in the *Purāṇas* and the *Āgamas* that there are three species of action for all created beings in this life, *Sanciṭa*, *Prārabḍha* and *Vartamāna* ” *

* त्रिविधानीह कर्माणि संसारेऽत्र पुराविदः ।
 प्रवदन्तीह जीवानां पुराणेष्वगमेषु च ॥
 संचितानि च चीर्णानि प्रारब्धानि सुमध्यमे ।
 वर्तमानानि वामोरु त्रिविधानीह देहिनां ॥

and likewise in describing the courses of action,

“ Action, say the best of philosophers, has a three-fold course (history), Sancīta, Vartamāna and Prārabḍha.” *

I would therefore say that Vartamāna is the proper expression. The terms Ḍaiva and Pauruṣa have reference only to this species of action. At times the Purāṇas confound Ḍaiva with Prārabḍha. The Maṣya Purāṇa says :—

“ Know thou that it is one's own action accumulated in prior lives that is called Ḍaiva. So the wise say that Effort alone is meritorious ” †

and this practically identifies Ḍaiva with Pauruṣa, for the same action that was called Pauruṣa in the prior life is denominated Ḍaiva in the present birth. This identification is equally wrong.

Before proceeding on his message of negotiation, Kṛiṣṇa said to Arjuna :—

“ I shall do what best can be done by human effort, but fate is infallible ” ‡

* कर्मणस्तु त्रिधा प्रोक्ता गतिस्तत्त्वविदांवरैः ।

संचितं वर्तमानं च प्रारब्धमिति भेदतः ॥

† स्वमेवकर्मदैवारुख्यं विद्धि देहान्तरार्जितम् ।

तस्मात्पौरुषमेवेह श्रेष्ठमाहुर्मनाषिणः ॥

‡ अहं हि तत्करिष्यामि परं पुरुषकारतः ।

दैवं तु न मया शक्यं कर्म कर्तुं कथंचन ॥

(i.e., divine ordinance cannot be undone). This passage indicates that *Ḍaiva* and *Prārabḍha* are distinct. If *Ḍaiva* were identical with *Prārabḍha* it would only mean action already completed, and there is no meaning in *Kṛiṣṇa*'s plea of inability to do what was already done. *Ḍaiva* therefore refers rightly to the impulse or the help that the Almighty will render to the progress of His creatures. Where human effort is not potent enough to accomplish an end, there the will of God intervenes. Among Hindus it is a universal belief that within the limits of individual status all virtuous deeds do invoke the grace of God.

In the *Giṭā*, *Kṛiṣṇa* lays down five causes for every deed :—

The substratum, the agent likewise, the various sorts of organs, and the various and distinct movements and with these the deities, too, as the fifth ”*

that is, body, soul, senses, volition and God (God's will). The immediate purpose of *Kṛiṣṇa* was to

* अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधं ।

विविधा च पृथक्चेष्टा देवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥

XVIII, 14.

urge Arjuna on to battle and so he meant to convey that God's help is necessary for human effort. Pauruṣa is Pauruṣa's Karma, that is, human action or effort. This is abstract and requires the body, the soul and the senses for its operation.

Elsewhere Kṛiṣṇa classifies Karma into Karma (action), Akarma (omission) and Vikarma (misdeed)—and these after all refer only to Vartamāna (present action). In another place he says that in all deeds, just or otherwise, divine aid is indispensable:—

“ Whatever action, just or otherwise, a man performs with his body, speech and mind, these five are its causes.” *

Some interpret *Viparīta* as vicious, but it means only *reverse* or *opposite*. But how will God encourage vice? It is a common saying that God never helps the wicked.

Kṛiṣṇa taught Arjuna that duty is indispensable and induced him to fight again. When Arjuna thought that it was cruel to kill the teachers, relatives and friends assembled in battle and

* शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत् कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।

न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पंचैते तत्र ह्येतवः ॥

XVIII, 15.

became indifferent to war, Kṛiṣṇa induced him to fight and taught him that duties can never be transgressed. Such duties are either Sāṭvika or Rājasa. Sāṭvika must in this context denote acts free from cruelty. Rājasa deeds, like war, are the reverse, that is, acts tainted with cruelty. This then appears to have been the idea of Kṛiṣṇa, for, how can we expect a divine intervention for a vicious deed? He said :—

“ The lord, O Arjuna! is seated in the region of the hearts of all beings, turning round all beings (as though) mounted on a machine, by delusion.”*

The Almighty instals himself in the hearts of all intellectual beings endowed with a physical body and directs them by their nature in the performance of duties enjoined on them. Some take this to denote all acts in general, though the context refers only to acts enjoined by law. It is only in righteous pursuits that God prompts man, but to say that all that man does is directed by Himself, is wrong. Kṛiṣṇa importunes Arjuna to fight.

* ईश्वरस्सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

आमयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

Arjuna is on the path of action and not of renunciation. "In the performance of one's duties, God always helps and for you, Arjuna, fighting is a duty. If you refuse, your nature will force you to do it." So said Kṛiṣṇa. This then is the import of the following hemstitch of the Gīṭā :—

"If entertaining egotism, you think that you will not fight, vain is this resolution of yours. Nature will constrain you."*

Between Effort (human action) and Fate (divine grace) Effort is more valuable. But in the case of a man that renounces everything, he cares not for his present deeds and devoting himself to the path of knowledge falls back entirely on divine grace.

The Pancaḍasī classifies Prārabḍham under three heads, but this Prārabḍham cannot be the same as the one that has been classed with Āgāmi and Sancītam. For if the term Prārabḍham refers to the Prārabḍha Karma aforesaid, there is a chance of the non-existence of Āgāmi Karma at all. If a man's present action is dictated by Prārabḍha

* यद्यहंकारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।
मिथ्यैष वैवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥

Karma, his liability for sin or merit vanishes, nor will a stranger suffer the result of anything that he does to him. It is therefore impossible to identify, the Prārabḍha of the Pancaḍasī with the Prārabḍha in the three-fold classification.

Prārabḍha, as used in the Pancaḍasī, must mean only Karma that has begun in this life and ends with the attainment of knowledge.

Of Icchā, Anicchā, Parēcchā the second alone is Prārabḍha proper. Icchā refers to Āgāmi (future) or Vartamāna (present).

We may say that one enjoys or suffers on account of his Prārabḍha and Vartamāna, but at times a stranger's act is also the cause of pain or pleasure. That is Parēcchā Karma. If we call that Prārabḍha too, no taint or merit will then attach to such doer. Therefore, it must be conceded that the Pancaḍasī treats of all Karma, beginning from this life and ending with the dawn of knowledge.

Touches of past births influence actions in this life. They are sometimes confounded with Prārabḍha. Prārabḍha is something that cannot be escaped, but must be experienced, while the touches of past births can be counteracted by human effort,

though, if unopposed, they influence our activities in particular directions. Perhaps there may be some reason to include these instinctive touches under Sancīta but it is wrong to class them under Prārabḍha. My view is that these touches cannot come even under Sancīta. *Vāsana* denotes habit. Habits often enter into our mode of action, without any definite volition. We see a soldier moving with a measured step in his ordinary saunterings and so a musician manipulating his fingers without an instrument. So the learning or knowledge acquired in prior births shows its influence in the present life. But it is in the power of man to use or misuse that influence, and therein lies the merit of human effort in the path of virtue. I would therefore say that the influence (or consciousness) of past lives manifests itself in habit and cannot be classed as Prārabḍha.

ĀGĀMI KARMA.

Āgāmi is the present action, that is, the acts that we do in this life. The term may literally mean "what is to come." Some say that Āgāmi means what is to be experienced in future births, but such a wide definition would cover also the

results of Sancīta. I would therefore give it a restricted sense, to include all acts that we do in this life, the fruits of which remain to be enjoyed in this life or in the coming lives.

In every act enjoined by the sacred law or by family usage, the Divine Being is our prompter, but in unlawful or even neutral acts, he has no hand. Neutral acts are those the effects of which are realised at once and in this life. For instance, exercise gives a man strength, cleanliness makes him healthy. Besides employments that are either good or bad, there are some acts which without causing harm only promote our happiness. Such are, for instance, sexual pleasure (in the company of one's wife), rich dress, costly jewellery and dainty food. But there is no harm in abstaining from these special enjoyments. They are cases of neutral activities which do not involve any divine interference.

What is the need for Sancīta, as a class of Karma. A portion of our present deeds exhausts itself by fruition in this life itself, and what remains goes to the future births. This balance of unenjoyed action becomes Sancīta. Suppose, as the result of past

action, a soul is destined for pleasure or pain, for poverty or riches, throughout life. How can such incompatible conditions be experienced in the same life? Suppose again that the same soul is ordained to be a king, a Brahmin or a cultivator throughout life; how then is it possible for a man to enjoy all these results in the same life? *Sanciṭa Karma* is therefore indispensable. All actions that remain unrealised at the end of any particular life pass on as accumulation (*Sanciṭa*) for the future.

PRĀRABDHA KARMA.

Some say that everything that is suffered or enjoyed in this life is the result of *Prārabdha*. This cannot be, for human effort would then be in vain in this life, and for evil done by us or to us by others, there can be no sin nor liability. If *Haris'chandra* had to suffer all the misery at the hands of *Viśvāmitra* as a retribution for his past deeds, there would have been no taint of sin to the latter for his persecutions, but in fact he had to lose all the merit of his penance, to expiate the sin of such unkindness. So it is that a master punishes a servant for an imaginary fault, but on discovering his innocence gives him a present for solace. Again,

the various vows that we observe, the Ēkāḍasī fast for instance, for the attainment of merit, or the several acts that we do for the acquisition of virtue would, if referred purely to the influence of past action, be productive of no good in the future. I therefore say that all our present experience is not Prārabḍha; the latter is in fact the result of all past action, so far as it cannot be modified or averted by human effort in this life, and such are, for instance, life-long poverty, wealth, life-long health or disease, misery or happiness from progeny and the like. Natural science attributes to parentage, the health or disease of offspring. But where one acquires wealth, by gift, adoption or reversion or a child is born blind and yet of parents who are sound in health, or a man has offspring all female and no male, these are certainly cases that are beyond human power and must only be referred to the merits or demerits of prior births.

How can they who do not believe in prior births, explain this congenital blindness, or an unexpected gain in wealth or territory? Prārabḍha must be premised, for otherwise God becomes liable to the charge of partiality.

To recapitulate, *Āgāmi Karma* includes all acts that we do in this life, and that bear fruit in this life or in the coming lives. *Sanciṭa Karma* comprises all action of prior birth or births the fruits of which are left yet unenjoyed and so become accumulated as lives pass on. *Prārabḍha Karma* denotes all past action the effect of which has manifested itself, despite our present efforts in mitigation or counteraction.

All action ceases on the attainment of real knowledge and by such knowledge the individual frees himself from the temporal bondage and attains salvation. Our philosophers say that knowledge cannot affect *Prārabḍha*, but can annihilate only the *Vartamāna* and the *Sanciṭa Karma*. But it might as well be said that when *Prārabḍha* has not been annihilated, the necessary standard of knowledge has not been attained. For Śrī Kṛiṣṇa says :—

“As a fire well-kindled, O Arjuna ! reduces fuel to ashes, so the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes.” *

* यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निः भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञानाग्निस्सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥

In these lines the term *Karman* is all comprehensive and does not exclude Prārabḍha from the predication.

It has been said that even after the attainment of sound knowledge Prārabḍha continues for some time. The force of an arrow is given as an illustration. This simile only refers to the existence of the body for a time even after knowledge has been sufficiently attained, that is to say, that Prārabḍha lasts till the body remains.

Soon after the light of knowledge dawns, the senses of action and perception cease to work as a matter of course and how the life leaves the body, the philosopher ought to say. The certain means of dispelling this ignorance is to lead a life of virtue, to get over the six propensities, to subdue the senses, to believe in God and to worship Him with devotion and renunciation. Between devotion and renunciation, devotion is the harder. Devotion is the result of contemplation and penance. But renunciation can be gradually attained even by ordinary householders. Opinions vary on the relative merits of these two paths of knowledge.

But good conduct with faith in God is the principal means of salvation.

Senses are ten in number. Of these five are senses of action¹ and five, senses of perception.² The senses of action cannot operate without a volition. The senses of perception act individually by mental contact and by such contact our attention is directed to the objects of such perception. Of these, the skin and the nose are generally harmless, the ear and the tongue are on a par, but the eye is the foremost and leads us often into delusions and it is there that extreme circumspection is necessary. By subjugation of senses is meant the restriction of sensual enjoyment, the suppression of evil propensities and the promotion of renunciation.

There are the six evils, namely, Desire, Anger, Avarice or Covetousness, Ignorance, Intoxication and Jealousy—all born of human nature. The child first evinces a desire; if the desire is not fulfilled, it displays anger; when the object is in its hands it wants it for itself; even when the object

¹Mouth, hand, leg, loins and genitals.

²Touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste.

serves no purpose, it clings to it in ignorance ; priding itself on its exclusive possession, it feels intoxicated and when another child gets a similar object it becomes jealous. These qualities manifest themselves one after another as we grow in age. If we do get over these evils in the reverse order and direct our efforts to attain the favour of the Lord of All, there is the sure means of salvation. From avarice, ignorance, conceit and jealousy, the virtuous are free. Their anger is meant only for the good of those that offend. Among the learned, there are some that are arrogant, but in them superior learning is at least an excuse. Arrogance without the merit of learning deserves only a scorn. Even among birds and beasts, these vices, except jealousy, are occasionally seen, so that one that displays jealousy—a quality not common even among animals—must be taken to be the lowest of mankind.

Of people past the age of fifty, it is possible to understand their real nature on a simple test, without an inquiry into the details of their past career. Take any individual and ask “ Has the passion of anger waned in him ?” If it is on the increase he is but like common men ; if in decay, he must be

deemed to be a superior being. For when anger begins to go down, he must have already subdued, the passions of avarice, ignorance, pride and jealousy in the reverse order and to get over anger, it would be but a short step. Thenceforward he would follow a life of virtue and seek the path of salvation.

We shall next inquire into the preponderance of Soul. Does it exist in everything that is animate or in any section of it, or in man alone? Insects are found everywhere, on earth, in water, in the air, or under the ground. Their number cannot be estimated, even in a relative proportion. Many insects are self-propagated. Some creatures end themselves with birth. Some live but a few moments. It is on the analogy of these insects that the advocates of natural evolution argue likewise in the case of man, but we have shown that for human beings action is the main consideration. Probably there is a soul in birds and animals, for like men they have the desire for food and sleep, evince the sense of fear, and long for carnal pleasure. It is often said that in the animate creation

man alone has a soul and so it is that the murder of man is particularly penalised. But I would say that we are unfit to make this enquiry, so long as we are unable to know our own selves. We have, in short, only to note that Soul is without creation or destruction, growth or decline.

These ideas of the six-fold propensities, three-fold action, nature of soul, salvation through devotion and self-denial are the exclusive property of Hindu philosophy. But there is yet the charge levelled against our religion, that is, pantheism or the worship of many deities. I have dealt with the several deities in the first part of this work and by a historical study of the several species of worship, we saw that the different deities came to be worshipped with the exigencies of time and place, and when once in the quest of God the Triad was reached, the earlier deities need command no more reverence. Of the Triad, Brahma ceased to be worshipped and there are therefore but two divinities, Kēs'ava and S'iva. Ancient writings regard the Triad as of equal merit and say that they are but the manifestations of the one Supreme Being. The

belief that particular deities have particular powers and must so be worshipped for the attainment of particular ends, led them to allot several functions to the deities of the Triad, but in fact we look to Him and Him alone, the One Almighty, for all purposes of creation, preservation and annihilation.

The school of atheists denies the existence of God. Our ancient writings aver His omnipresence, but an ocular demonstration is an impossibility. Inference however may lead to a veritable certainty: For—

1. The universe has its limitations in time and place and for such universe a ruling spirit is indispensable.

2. The various relations of cause and effect discerned in creation necessarily pre-suppose a Prime Cause as an embodiment of knowledge.

3. The dictates of conscience lean towards the faith in a divine dictator.

4. History shows that the world has always believed in the existence of God and always worshipped Him in some form or other.

Such a Being ought to be known by the gradual progress of knowledge. But to prove the existence

of God beyond all criticism, no religion has found it possible. We say that the Supreme Being resides in Vaikuntha or Kailāsa. These higher worlds cannot possibly be what they are described to be. We cannot say what is to come off next in the future, what even the several countries of the visible world possess. How then can we make a premise in this matter? Those that have attained the final liberation do not come back to enlighten us. Our sacred writings differ widely in their description and narration. We see that of all creation, man is the being of highest perfection in form and intelligence, and so we imagine the Supreme Being as endowed with the ideal qualities of beauty, greatness and knowledge. To us the species of humanity seems the most perfect. What makes it impossible that some other worlds or spheres possess creatures of greater perfection? It is the basis of our religion that salvation denotes the attainment of His abode, "from whence there is no return" and it is for us to take it so and work up to that end, in the path of the great men that have lived before us from time immemorial.

THE GRACE OF GOD.

It is a tenet of Theism that God is all kindness. But God has no kindness, says a modern philosopher, and justice is his only consideration, for kindness is incompatible with the devastating visitations of rains, floods, earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. I do not say that such extraordinary disasters are caused by the influence of prior actions, as in that view, the question of God's grace does not arise at all and murderers and suicides will cease to have any responsibility. When a man is killed, the unenjoyed portion of his Karma is left over for realisation in the coming life. When he goes to fight, he goes prepared for death, but if he returns alive, he will continue to enjoy the Prārabḍha for the rest of his life. Similarly all those that meet with death at these general visitations will experience the unrealised portion of Prārabḍha in their future life, while those that escape will, like the soldier returning alive from battle, continue to realise it during the remainder of their lives. God does not and will not interfere with the effects, calamitous as they may be, of physical and natural

phenomena. If death is caused by such changes of phenomena, it is a happening by chance and God has no hand in it. Take for instance the case of a sportsman. He aims at a deer and that particular deer only, but at times the bullet passes further and kills a second animal. Did he intend to harm this second animal? So in the work of creation, the five elements undergo from time to time various physical changes, and such changes indirectly affect other beings that happen to be near.

Where is the kindness in God? He has given us discretion and tact. All our enjoyment or suffering is the result of our past action, and if we use the discretion and tact so conferred on us to good advantage, there is the certain means of salvation. This discretion and tact mean human effort. Capacity for effort cannot be the gift of a parent, of a master or of wealth. In this gift lies the manifestation of His kindness!

It is often asked, why should we lose all recollection of prior births, if in fact there were any? Forgetfulness is not a sufficient answer, for the oblivion is not partial but entire. Recollection is

the result of memory accumulated in the cerebral tissues of our physical frame and varies therefore with the strength of the growing age. Old age weakens the brain, and memory likewise fails. When the body becomes extinct the brain dies and with it its impressions. We are safe for want of such recollections ; for otherwise our ties of affection may extend beyond remedy and ruin the usefulness of our present life. Here again is an instance of God's kindness.

JĪVA AND ĪSVARA.

Between the Supreme Soul and the Individual Souls some predicate an identity and others a difference. Though this subject has already been to some extent discussed, let us examine the question again here. The theory that the Supreme Being transforms himself of his own accord into the Individual Souls cannot be maintained, for it would seem absurd that God should worship himself, though in a different form. If the Supreme and the Individual Souls were identical, why should there be any worship of the Supreme Being at all? Likewise, from the historical point of view,

it is the theory of difference that has received a wider acceptance everywhere. Among the Hindus, it is the Aḍvaiṭa school that teaches the doctrine of non-difference. And I have explained under what circumstances and with what objects in view Śān-kara came to advocate that theory of identity. New religions come into existence not as the result of the mighty force of any particular person's learning, but under circumstances peculiar to certain periods in the history of a people and for the express purpose of setting right the defects or errors in an existing religion. It is in accordance with this principle that the two schools of Rāmā-nuja and Maḍhva saw their advent to impede the growth of Aḍvaiṭa philosophy. To condemn these two again, no other theory has yet come into being in our country. Thus the distinction between the Supreme and the Individual Souls must be accepted. Yet who can answer these questions? Do Matter (Prakṛiti) and the Individual Souls (Jiva) possess reality inseparable from the Supreme Being? Or do these three entities have their existences apart? Or do any two of these three

continue united, the third standing by itself? The first question, answered in the affirmative, is in perfect harmony with the Brahma Sūtras. Max Müller, himself a foreigner by religion, says with an impartial mind that Rāmānuja's commentary on the Brahma Sūtras more closely follows the Sūtras than the commentary of Śāṅkara. At any rate the eternity of the three entities, the Supreme Soul, the Individual Souls and Matter is beyond all question. Now it is the duty of the Individual Souls to attain salvation by adoration to the Supreme Being, by good conduct, and by the renunciation of all desires except the attainment of the presence of the Almighty.

Different religions lay down different modes for the worship of God. It may be beyond our power to discover God's true form, but we must accept and worship images and other symbols for the purpose of concentration. It is said that before his death, Kṛiṣṇa ordained Uḍḍhava to make an image of himself, and to worship it. Rāma and Kṛiṣṇa, the incarnations of Viṣṇu, were on earth in the form of human beings. We should therefore worship God by adoring his images in the human form.

Let us now see how the worship of the Linga has come into vogue. Subsequent to the age when men worshipped lumps of clay and pieces of wood, and when the art of sculptural representation was still in its infancy, it was conjectured that this created Universe implied a Creator, and a cylindrical piece of smooth stone fixed vertically on a pedestal became the object of worship as representing the Supreme Being. When with the growth of religious ideas, people conceived the Triad or the Trimūrtis they might have included the Linga in the group under the name of Mahēśvara. Still later, when they thought of the worship of Viṣṇu and Śiva together, they took the Linga as a symbol of Śiva, and the pedestal as the symbol of Viṣṇu. But whatever might have been the origin of the Linga worship, the Linga is now understood to be a symbol of Mahēśvara. I would exhort all Hindus to look upon the Linga as Mahēśvara, and the idol or image, as Viṣṇu, and believing the two deities as identical, to worship the one or the other according to the usage of their families. In either case it may not be profitable to devote too

much time to such adoration. The loss of time may be detrimental to the achievement of several other laudable purposes.

It is wrong to consider that incessant worship will necessarily tend to the expiation of all sin, though such a belief is common among us. It is therefore incumbent on us to seek our salvation, by virtuous conduct and by the worship and contemplation of God at proper intervals, in the sincere belief that He punishes vice. I now close this subject and I must express my incompetence to deal with the methods of worship adopted by those great men, who have sought the path of knowledge by the conquest of the senses and the evil propensities.

CONCLUSION.

I have long thought it necessary that the main tenets of our religion should be expressed in easy language and embodied in a book under the name of 'Hindu Religion.' Seeing that readers of my papers on *Srī Kṛiṣṇa*, etc., and of my *Critique on the Rāmayaṇa and the Mahābhārata* have expressed their entire concurrence in my views, I took upon

myself the task of this compilation. Many learned pundits to whom the manuscript was read over desired that the book should soon have a wide circulation. I now offer my grateful adorations to the Lord of All for having brought my endeavour to a successful completion.

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