

*"That Art Thou."*

*Chhandogya-upanishad.*

"This so solid seeming world, after all, is but an air-image over Me, the only reality; and nature with its thousand-fold productions and destruction, but the reflex of our inward force, the phantasy of our dream."—*Carlyle.*

---

---

## THE LIGHT OF THE EAST.

---

---

VOL I.]

DECEMBER, 1892.

[No. 4.

### *Sree Krishna.*

**T**HO the greatest spiritual figure that has ever appeared in the religious drama of the world, to Him who is looked up to as the guiding star by about two hundred millions of human beings, to Him whose praise was sung by Kapila, Shuka, Vyasa and Sankaracharya in various melodious hymns, to the characterless being whose character has become an anomaly in the eyes of the modern moralist, to the One and the All, we salute. If Buddha and Christ be regarded as physical incarnations of morality, it is degradation to call Khrisna the ideal moral man. "Moral" is a relative term and to apply it to the Supreme being is the height of folly. If one wishes to see the very physical incarnation of the Vedanta Philosophy he must place Khrisna before his eyes. Khrisna is unique, and to compare him with Buddha or Christ would be to compare things which *can not* be compared at all. When we deny that Khrisna was a "moral" being, our readers should at once understand that no comparison can at all be instituted between Him and other great religious reformers. Like the spot in the moon, the attribute "moral" would be a stain on Sree Khrisna. Moral and immoral are like the positive and negative poles of a magnet and Sree Khrisna is the neutral centre.

Moral and immoral are like the, centripetal and centrifugal forces, and Khrisna is the equilibrium. True it is that Rama was the very incarnation of virtue, yet he is not universally acknowledged in India as the Supreme Being. The spiritual history of this country is full of great saints, reformers and world-renowned moralists ; and it is a strange fact that this spiritual galaxy have placed the feet of Sree Khrisna over their heads with one accord. The orthodox Christian missionary is puzzled. He can not understand, how could Sankaracharya and Suka Deva, the staunchest moralists the world has ever seen, make Khrisna the be-all and end-all of their existence ? As it is impossible for the unpurified mind to understand the Vedanta system, so it is equally impossible for it to understand the *characterless* Khrisna ! To our mind virtue and vice being relative terms can never be applied to one who is regarded as the Supreme Being. The being who is equal in virtue as well as in vice is to us a grander being than the extremely virtuous man. One whose mental equilibrium remains intact in every action which the human mind is capable of imagining is the grandest being in the universe. The great Karmic Law can never affect that being who acts without *sungum* or attraction. To teach this great lesson practically Khrisna came to the world ; and to teach this great lesson *practically* he treated Vice and Virtue alike. In every line of the Bhagabat Gita is stamped this great lesson, and the whole of Khrisna's *mayavic* life is an embodiment of this teaching. Action committed without *attraction* is neither virtuous nor vicious and *such* action is termed *Lila* in Sanskrit. Such action is the corner-stone of the highest Rajyoga, as is stated in Sloka 18. Chapter IV. of the Gita. Of course such action is not possible for one who is the unwilling slave of his past *Karma* ; but this is natural for one who is regarded as the very incarnation of the Supreme Being. Conceive a man who is trying his utmost to fly from vice to its opposite pole virtue, imagine also a being to whom heat and cold, virtue and vice are the same ; and you will find that the latter is *infinitely* superior to the former. The one is the infinite, the other is the finite, the one is the absolute the other is the relative. To try to compare the one with the other is impossible. Judged from the above point of view, Khrisna is unique among the greatest religious teachers and reformers of the world. He is like the moon around whom cluster like so many stars, Buddha and Sankracharya, Christ and Chytania. As the teachings of Gita are unique in their philosophical depth so is Khrisna, surrounded as he is by transcendental majesty. For this reason, Khrisna is regarded as the *avatar* of *Mahavishnu*, not of *Vishnu* as is wrongly supposed. How could this impersonal *Mahavishnu* become an *avatar* ? To explain this clearly

would lead us to the very root of occult doctrines which no student of occult philosophy is allowed to reveal; suffice it to say that Mahavishnu is consciousness *per se* and *it* should not be confounded with Vishnu, one of the sacred triad of Hindu Philosophy. It is impossible for the ordinary man to understand the consciousness of the incarnation of *Mahavishnu* and pass judgment on the actions of one who is beyond the duality of relative existence. We the inhabitants of this little globe, chained by the shackles of Karma, occupy a plane of consciousness rather insignificant compared with the consciousness of the beings of other mighty chains which light up the unfathomable space. It is almost sure that there are millions of beings in the universe superior to us. Their pleasures are of a far higher order than ours. What is attractive to us may be loathsome to them. If this be the case, we can not understand how can Mahavishnu take pleasure in sensual pleasures,—the pleasures of an ass? Let us for a moment imagine that Khrisna was a man and that he had no connection whatever with Mahavishnu. We are bound in this case to accept every statement regarding Khrisna, if we accept the love stories regarding him. For it would be sheer injustice to take one portion of his life and reject others. We find, then, that Khrisna comes in the world adorned with *four hands*, two of which disappear just after his birth; when a mere infant he kills the giants *Putana* and *Trinaburta*. A few months after he kills *Butsasur*, *Bukasur*, and *Aghasur*. Some time after in order to convince *Brahma* of his divine incarnation he transforms himself into a host of little children at the same moment of time (Vide Bhagabat Sec. 10. Chapter 13.) The extinction of the fearful serpent *Kalia* as well as the killing of several *Danavas* follow in rapid succession. The love affairs connected with Khrisna's life took place between the ages eight and twelve! A child of nine years making love with sixteen hundred damsels! Before his sixteenth year he leaves his native city *Brindabun* and the whole of the great epic *Mahavarata* fails to record a single sigh of Sree Khrisna for his companions of *Brindabun*. The manhood of Khrisna is familiar to our readers through the epic *Mahavarata*. In the very midst of fighting he shows *Arjuna* his *Biswa-rupa* (universal form) and propounds the grand doctrines of the Bhagabat Gita. Khrisna is never known to shed a tear even at the extinction of his whole family which was partly brought about by himself. When the time of Nirvana was at hand, Khrisna retired into a solitary jungle and immersed himself in *yoga* sleep. Thus the greatest figure in the world's history passed away.

Our learned orientalisists are apt to laugh at miracles. Science, they say, has destroyed the very foundation of miracles. According to them

the miracles of Jesus and of Khrisna are pure myths. But what do you know of Nature's infinite laws, wise ones of the earth? What do you know of matter beyond the simple laws of some chemical action? How do you know that miracles are opposed to the higher laws of nature. The gross materialist who preaches a philosophy "for dogs and not for men" to use an expression of Carlyle, has become so inflated with self-conceit that he is sometimes apt to regard himself omniscient as regards the laws of nature. Does he not know that miracles are a synonym for the *higher laws* of Nature? We fully believe that the great founder of Christianity did perform miracles every second of his career; and those miracles were nothing else than the higher laws of nature of which the materialist is completely ignorant. It is sheer presumption for an insignificant inhabitant of this insignificant globe to pass judgment on the great Lights of the world,—a Jesus or a Khrisna, a Buddha or a Sankaracharja. The spiritual influence of these great reformers is felt by the whole of mankind and these materialists are being reduced to their kindred dust in silent oblivion!

It may be asked, what was the mission of Khrisna? The object of all the great religious teachers of the world is to place before the world the moral figure of the ideal man. But Khrisna never preached to the masses; he shines in the *Mahavarjata* as its chief political figure. The Gita itself was at first intended for his favourite disciple Arjuna. What part then, did Khrisna play in the moral history of the world? The answer to these questions is given in Sloka 8, Chapter IV of the Gita. There he distinctly points out that he becomes incarnated in various *yugas* to punish the evil-doers and to protect the virtuous. The Supreme Being here teaches plain morality and *Bhukti* as Jesus, and there He propounds the grand doctrines of rebirth and *Karma* as Khrisna; he appears like the avenging law of Nemesis and again as the very embodiment of humility and virtue. To the Hindu the Supreme Being has infinite aspects; to the orthodox Christian he has only one!

A clear comprehension of the principle which underlies the *Karmic* law will enable us to understand Sree Khrisna fully. An action is neither good nor bad if it is committed without *Sungum* or attraction. Such action being equivalent to the action of an inanimate being is not subject to moral law. Khrisna plainly states in Gita that it is not He but the great moral law which punishes or rewards the doings of an individual; action and reaction apply to the moral as well as to the physical law, and it is simply *attraction* which leads one through embodiment after embodiment; all actions of Khrisna's life were entirely free from attraction. Like the infinite space He remained unaffected to the last either

by good or by evil. He did not come to the world as a reformer, His object was simply to punish the evil-doers and to set an example to the world ; also to draw after him as many souls as possible to Nirvana. For this reason He made himself the idol of all the inhabitants of his native city. The old men of his time used to love him as their son, His associates used to love him as their dearest friend, and the damsels used to love Him as their lover. He tried to bind every one to him by the chains of attraction so that they may reach his sublime state in future. In the Bhagabat he says plainly to the young damsels of his native city that attraction towards him is sure to lead them ultimately to the sublime state. To open the way to *Mukti* to the virtuous, and to punish the evil-doers was, therefore, the sole mission of the incarnation known as Sree Khrisna.

Those who are apt to consider the love stories connected with Sree Khrisna's life as an allegory may note the following:—Sree Khrisna represents the universal Atma within the seventh psychic centre situated in the crown of the head called *Sahasradala pudma* ; the melody of his flute is the mystic sound of the Pranava which the yogi hears during Samadhi. Brindabun with its thousand forests represents the human head with the *Sahasradala pudma*. The sixteen hundred petals of the *Manas Chakra*, a psychic centre situated just below the *Sahasradala*, represent the sixteen hundred damsels of Khrisna. The spiritual ambrosia called *Amrita* in yoga philosophy is Khrisna's love. *Radhica*, the chief beloved of Khrisna with her eight companions, represents the *Para Prakriti* (vide Gita VII, Sloka 5.) *Chundrabulli* another beloved of Khrisna with her eight companions represents the *Apara Prakriti* (vide Gita. Chapter VII, Sloka 4.) It should be remarked here that the very names of the eight companions of *Chundraballi* signify in Sanskrit the evil passions of the mind ; while the names of the eight companions of *Radhica* signify the virtuous attributes of man. This fact supports the theory that the love of Khrisna is an allegorical representation of the spiritual drama which is being acted daily in the *Sahasradala pudma*. Again if we look to the root of the word Khrisna we find that it is derived from the Sans. *Kri*, all, and *Na*, *Atma*, which mean the *Atma* of all.

Leaving the allegory aside and taking the record of Sree Khrisna's life as true we can not but place him in the front rank of those who are regarded by the unanimous voice of all mankind as the spiritual lights which lead men to salvation. All his actions were *Niskama* (without attraction) and he left his body in Samadhi. He is regarded by the greatest Rishis of this land as the *Purna Brahma*, the incarnation of the Absolute. If one likes to see the very embodiment of the Vedanta philo-

sophy, he will not be satisfied with Buddha or Sankara, with Rama or Christ, with Mahomet or Chytanis; only the spiritual grandeur of Sree Khrisna will shine before him like the absolute space from whose standpoint the million-fold curtain of Maya is non-existent.

## The Absolute and the Relative.

THE object of the present article is to establish on a scientific basis the existence of the Absolute. Human reason may not penetrate into the innermost depths of the Absolute, but it does not follow from this that it can not prove the existence of the same. The Absolute can not be conceived by the mind of man, because, as will be hereafter shewn, it is not related to the phenomenal world; so we can never have direct knowledge of the Absolute by pure reason alone; but we can arrive at it by the negation of all conceivable attributes of mind and matter. The Absolute, not being apart from the finite, can be cognized intuitively by the mind, though reason may fail to grasp its essence.

The doctrine that correlatives imply one another is placed beyond doubt by scientific thinkers. That the idea of centre can not exist apart from the idea of a circumference is evident. Here centre implies circumference and *vice versa*. In the same way, the idea of the finite is not apart from the idea of the infinite. The idea of the "infinite" has only a relative existence, the other term of the relation being "finite". The idea of the infinite is as much an object of thought as the finite. We may well imagine that space is not at all bounded, just as we can imagine that a circumference must have some limit. A word may be said here with regard to the identity of *thought* and *being*. When we try to imagine the infinite space, our mind becomes almost infinite for the time being; on the other hand, when we imagine a finite object our mind becomes finite.

It has been said before that the finite and the infinite imply each other. What do we mean when we say that the idea of the infinite can not exist without the idea of the finite? We mean simply that the finite is the basis or *substance* of the infinite and *vice versa*. Strictly speaking, we mean that the finite and the infinite are substantially the same. This idea of the substantial unity of mind and matter where thought and reason reach their vanishing point gives us a vague intuition of the Absolute; and a habitual prolongation of this attitude of consciousness by the processes of *yoga* can alone solve the mystery of the Absolute. The

Absolute is, therefore, neither finite nor infinite *alone*; nor is it apart from either of them. It is the idea of the substantial unity of the finite and the infinite when thought and reason reach their vanishing point.

If we do not admit the Absolute identity of the finite and the infinite, the knower and the known, mind and matter, let us see in what difficulty we are landed. We shall have to admit the existence of the *seen per se i. e.* apart from the *seer*; conversely, we shall have to admit the existence of the *seer as seer* apart from *seen*. In other words, we shall have to admit that color is seen and unseen, odour is smelt and unsmelt, sound is heard and unheard, taste is tasted and untasted, touch is touched and untouched at the *same moment* of time. This argument holds not only for man but for any being in the universe, however high or however low in the scale of evolution, in as much as we are concerned only with the *knower* and the *known*. We do not argue that the *knower* or the *known* will cease to exist *per se* in the absence of each other. All that we maintain is this that apart from the known the *knower* will be absolute and apart from the *knower* the known will be absolute.

The idealist derives everything from the mind. He posits mind as the cause of all material phenomena; *i. e.* he posits the sense of ego or I-ness before non-ego. How can the sense of ego or I-ness come in the absence of non-ego? The idealist is wrong, and his theory is against the common sense of mankind. The materialist, on the other hand, makes the non-ego the cause of the ego *i. e.* he conceives a state of thing which is inconceivable. While he posits matter before mind, he unconsciously places himself along with matter. What kind of matter is that which is unseen, unheard, and untouched? What kind of "known" is that of which no knower can be conscious in the universe? How could the sense of "I" (the only kind of consciousness the materialist is aware of) arise if not simultaneously with non-ego; the ego implies as its co-relative the non-ego. The materialist by positing ego after non-ego commits the same error as the idealist? If non-ego be the cause of ego, it must have at first come into existence and afterwards became conscious of non-ego. In other words, the sense of ego or I-ness can exist *per se*; which is not only against reason but also against common sense. Ego and non-ego not being the cause of each other must have arisen simultaneously, *i. e.* they are substantially the same. This substantial unity existing *per se* is the Absolute

The same remark applies to the sense of "interior" and "exterior." The idea of "interior" is the form in which the mind and its thoughts exist. The idea of the exterior is the form which makes objective existence possible. Interior implies exterior and *vice versa*. Interior

and exterior are substantially the same. And this "interior-exterior-full" Being is the Absolute of the Vedantist.

Let us see whether the arguments of atheism do not lead us towards the existence of the Absolute. Speculative atheism denies the existence of the Infinite and holds that the sum total of all existence is a limited quantity. Is it possible? Is it possible to conceive a finite object without conceiving it as one out of many? Is not a finite object related to some thing beyond itself? Is it possible to think that a finite object or a number of finite objects exhaust the universe of being? If the finite object of the atheist does not stand in relation to some other thing, then it does not occupy any definite place in space and is therefore Absolute.

As a centre can not exist without circumference nor the circumference can exist without the centre, so the finite can not exist without the infinite and *vice versa*. As the conception of the centre involves that of the circumference, so the conception of the Absolute involves the conception of the finite as well as of the infinite. The Absolute is neither finite nor infinite (as contrasted with finite) but it is something in which the finite and infinite are combined out of all relation. It is neither conscious nor unconscious but something which is the substantial unity of the conscious and the unconscious, *viz.*, it is transcendental consciousness. As the circumference, though not the centre, can never be thought apart from the centre, so the universe of attribute though not the Absolute, is never different from the Absolute.

That which is beyond relation, must be without attribute. Attribute implies mind or the Knower, but the absolute not being a knower, must be without the attributes of Good or Evil. As, according to science, sound does not exist in Nature *per se* but arises out of the relation which exists between the ear and the ethereal vibrations, so Good and Evil do not exist in the Absolute which is neither the knower alone nor the known alone. How can the Absolute love or hate when from its stand-point there is nothing else? How can it be proud or humble when it is neither great nor small? How can it have the sense of "I-ness" when it stands in relation to no-body? How can it have the sense of "Not-I-ness" when it is never "I"? For as darkness is related to light, so is non-egoism to egoism.

The absolute can neither have the sense of one nor of many, for, it stands in relation to nothing else. The one implies the many and *vice versa*. The sense of one is as much a result of duality as the sense of many.

Intuition, perception, imagination, reasoning, and memory are the



five great faculties of our consciousness. By intuitive knowledge we mean *direct knowledge* prior to imagination, reasoning, and memory; in other words, intuitive knowledge furnishes the materials on which the other faculties of the mind are based. The sense of an external world is *intuitive* knowledge. I do not mean that the ideas of color, figure, distance &c. are given by intuition; all that I mean is that the sense of the something *external* to us is given by *intuition*; and no one can deny it. This knowledge is not derived from reasoning, memory, or imagination, but it is the basis of all of them. This sense of the external world is the fundamental knowledge on which the whole science of Physics is based, in other words, we may conclude that the scientists, whether consciously or unconsciously, have held that intuitive knowledge, must be granted as true from the standpoint of man. If it be held that this intuitive sense of the external world is not true, the whole fabric of modern science will fall. We may, therefore, infer from the above that the direct knowledge derived from intuition is true from the standpoint of every conscious being. The perception of colour, figure &c. though direct perception is sensual perception, while intuitive perception is of a hypersensual nature.

Let us see whether any other conception arises directly in our consciousness which is allied to the conception of an external world. Is there any conception which is not derived from the senses, imagination, reasoning or memory? It is the conception of a perfect being, which conception is not given in the intuition of something "external" as mentioned above, and which is not derived by reasoning, nor by the processes of combination, separation, amplification &c. which may be called imagination. The conception of a perfect being is original and intuitive and therefore true. Just as a plant with consciousness of a far inferior nature to the consciousness of man can not have the idea of an external something, so a man whose faculty of hypersensual perception is latent may not have the conception of a perfect being. But that this intuitive perception is universal no man will deny.

If we deny the truth of such hypersensual perception, let us see in what difficulty will it land us? To conceive a thing as non-existent is self-contradictory. Because in that case we mean that we can simultaneously *think of a thing which does not exist in thought*. And are we directly conscious of anything but ideas or thoughts? \*

The Absolute can not be the cause of anything for cause implies relation with the effect and effect implies relation with the cause. The Absolute Being can neither stand either as a cause or an effect to anything else.

The Absolute not being the cause, it is evident that the universe was never created. As far as we are aware the universe consists merely of "form" and "name." All other qualities vanish with the disappearance of form and name. It has been proved before that from the absolute standpoint the universe has no existence. Therefore, the human egos including all the varieties of form and name are phenomenal modes of the absolute. Just as the imaginary "serpent" is of the "rope" so is the "universe" of Brahma or of the Absolute. Time and Space, ego and non-ego, do not exist from the Absolute standpoint. But in the world of phenomena, they are true as related to each other. There is nothing finite *per se*.

The Universe is eternal, it being the mode of the Absolute Eternal. Egos, the phenomenal modes of the Absolute, are coming and going eternally in the Absolute. Ignorance perpetuates the phenomenal existence of the ego and the universe. Knowledge makes both of them Absolute. Millions of systems start into being as modes of the Absolute and millions disappear in no time.

As liquidity is not distinct from water, so these phenomenal universes are not distinct from the Absolute. As the "imagined serpent" is distinct as well as not distinct from the "rope," so is the universe *distinct* as well as *not distinct* from Brahma. From the Absolute standpoint the ego and the universe are *not*; from the relative standpoint they exist. While each of them is Absolute *per se*.

Modes or phenomena are as natural to the Absolute and liquidity to water, as motion to air, and so forth. It is as absurd to ask, "How the modes come into existence as to ask, "How the Absolute has come into existence." For the "mode" is co-eternal with the Absolute.

From the Absolute standpoint the world-process is neither true nor false. The conceptions of true and false belong to the world of phenomena and not to the world of noumena. The Absolute is neither true nor false and the world-process is natural to it as the wave is natural to the ocean. It is a mistake to suppose that from the standpoint of the Absolute the universe is "false;" on the other hand, from the standpoint of the Absolute the universe *as such* has no existence.

When the Vedanta says that the world-process is a "fiction" it simply means that duality is changeful when compared with the Absolute unity.

True and false have no doubt a relative existence in the world of relation. Here, the true is true *as such*, and the false is false *as such*. It is of no use arguing that there is no truth in the world of fiction. As long as the world of fiction exists all its laws are relatively true, and from the Absolute standpoint they are neither true nor false.

## A Study of Bhagabat Gita.

### CHAPTER III.

#### KARMA YOGA.

THE third chapter of Bhagabat Gita opens with Karma yōga. The word yōga is used in Gita in various senses. In this place Karma yōga means *doing work in such a manner as not to be affected by it from a spiritual point of view*. Karma includes thoughts as well as those physical actions which are the result of thoughts. (Cf. Sloka VI. Ch. III.) In the opening line the individual mind (Arjuna) asks the universal mind (Krishna) whether it is better to renounce Karma altogether or to do Karma. Arjuna commits a great mistake here; by Karma he understands physical Karma; and the following verses are simply a correction of this mistake.

The word Karma in this place includes three things: (I) Karma-Kanda, actions necessary to purify the mind; under this are included those religious injunctions which are intended to purify and lighten physical body. In short all those physical purifications which the Brahmin is enjoined to observe and which are foolishly considered superstition by our educated countrymen. Sankaracharya explains the word Karma in the above sense in many places of the Bhagabat Gita. (II) It includes thoughts of a sensual nature or thoughts directed towards an object of attachment. (III) It includes deliberate physical actions. There is a growing tendency among the recent commentators of Gita to exclude the first mentioned set of purificatory actions from the meaning of the word Karma. In other words Karma Kanda is considered useless as the stepping stone to Gnyan Kanda. No one can deny that the actions of our mind are partly dependent upon our physical body and that moderate fast etc. exert a great influence upon our passions. The mind unaided by physical purification can never extricate itself from the mazes of attraction. Hence the supreme importance of Karma Kanda.

In Sloka 3 he distinctly points out that the two grand paths of salvation are (1) Gnyanyoga, (2) Karma yōga. The above two paths are not to be considered different from each other. The latter is but a step to the former. A beautiful simile in Yoga Bashista says that Gnan and Karma are the two wings by which the bird (Jiva) attains Moksha. Krishna says that it is the nature of the mind to act; it is impossible to stop the actions of the mind altogether; all that can be done is to act without *sungum* or attachment (sloka 5.) It is of no use to stop physical

acts if the mind is internally active ; it is the mind which creates *Karma* and carries the *Jiva* from incarnation to incarnation. Physical actions of whatever kind if committed without attachment can not bring forth any result. Is a stone or wood responsible for its acts ? First learn by practice to act without attraction and *Gnan* (direct knowledge of self) will naturally follow ; from *Gnan*, *Mukti* will ensue (Sloka 12, Chapter II). In this chapter the monad who works for salvation through the world is held superior to the man who leaves the world ; because the latter works only for himself ; while the former becomes a guide to others. *Niskama* (attractionless) *Karma* in the world will gradually bring about certain stage in which desire will be uprooted and the monad will stand face to face before *Atma*. It must be clearly borne in mind that Sankaracharya in his *Bhasya* of the second chapter of the Gita states that *Karma* has nothing to do directly with *Mukti* ; *Karma* (*Niskama*) brings about the purification of the mind ; from this follows *Gnan* ; and from *Gnan* follows *Mukti*. Even *Niskama karma* is useless to the man who has attained *Gnan* (Sloka 17, Chapter III.)

In Sloka 27, Khrisna lays down the grand proposition that it is the mind and not the *Atma* which acts. The action of the mind is reflected on the *Atma* and the sense of egoism comes into existence. To express the above in philosophical vocabulary : the unconscious ideation of *Paramatma* produces Name and Form which comprise the phenomenal universe. The highest phenomenal existence is the universal "I" and the lowest form is matter. The "I" is the perceiver and matter is the perceived ; it is the perceived which acts according to its own laws ; the "I" is simply the neutral witness of its action. To think that the "I" is the actor is the root of *Karma*. To understand the above clearly one should bear in mind that according to Gita there are only three entities in *Karma* : (1) *Atma* (2) "I" (3) Mind. Matter (*i, e, name and form*) is equivalent to mind ; by matter is meant every form of matter either visible or invisible to us. One pole of relative existence is "I" (*Parush*) ; the other pole of relative existence is mind (*i, e, matter*) ; one pole is the Perceiver (*Gnata*), the other pole is the Perceived (*Gnaya*). Perception (*Gnan*) per se is *Brahma*,—Absolute consciousness. It may be noted here that Mr. Subha Row in his "Notes on Bhagabat gita" has stated that *Parabrahma* is beyond the Perceiver (*Gnata*), the Perceived (*Gnaya*), and Perception (*Gnan*). This is capable of being misunderstood. By Perception (*Gnan*) Subha Row means relative perception *i, e*, the perception in one state of consciousness as known to us. Perception (*Gnan*) per se is consciousness per se. It is absolute. The human monad should at first try to merge itself in the universal Perceiver (*Logos*) and from that standpoint to merge himself

in consciousness *per se*. Khrishna in Sloka 27 says that to take the "ego" as the actor instead of the mind is *Agnana, i, e*, absence of knowledge. This is the root of *Karma*. In the last line of this important Chapter Khrishna points out the nature of *Atma*. He says, "the essence of the physical body is the sense of perception. The essence of the senses is the mind. The essence of the mind is *Budhi*. The essence of the *Budhi* is *Atma* consciousness *per se*." *Atma* therefore, is the last residue of all abstraction.

## Buddha and Buddhism.

### II.

WHEN Buddha arrived at a safe distance from his father's kingdom, he alighted from his horse, cut his luxuriant hair with his own sword and exchanged his royal robes for the yellow garments of an ascetic.

His first halting-place was at Rajagriha (the modern Raj-gir). Rajagriha was the capital of Magadha, the seat of Bimbisara, one of the most powerful princes in the eastern valley of the Ganges. It was surrounded by hills and forests on all sides, in the seclusion of which ascetics might be seen engaged in studies and contemplation or in the practice of mortification and penance, their object being the solution of the problems of existence and inward peace for their restless souls. Here Gautama attached himself as a disciple to two Brahman teachers named Alara and Udraka and learnt from them all that Hindu philosophy had to teach about this world and the next. After studying the system for a time, when he felt that the thirst of his soul was still unsatisfied, he resolved to go apart and to work out alone and unassisted, the great problem that so deeply engaged his thoughts.

From Rajagriha, Buddha went to Uruvela, a forest near the site of the present temple of Buddha Gaya and there in company with five other ascetics, he began his celebrated sexennial fast and practised severest austerities to attain the peace of mind. This self mortification had its anticipated result. One day as he was walking up and down, lost in thought, he suddenly staggered and fell to the ground. His disciples thought that he was dead. But he recovered and gave up his devotion to penance and began to take regular food. At that time of his life, when he stood in need of sympathy and good will of men, his former disciples forsook him and went towards Benares.

Left alone in the world, he wandered towards the banks of the river Nairangan, partook of some delicious food served by a female devotee and sat himself under the famous Bodhi tree near Gya to complete the work begun and carried under so many disheartening circumstances. There under the shelter of that sacred tree he gave himself up to higher and higher forms of meditation (Dhyana.) In this he only conformed to the Hindu yoga, a method of attaining union with the deity. This was one of the three paths which in truth every Hindu of that period was allowed to chose, for their own enlightenment and salvation. First was the way of works (Karma-marga), that is to say of sacrifices, of ceremonials rites as enjoined in the Mantra and Brahman portion of the Veda. The second was the way of faith (Bhakti-marga) meaning by that term devotion to one or other of certain personal Gods. The third was the way of knowledge (Jnana-Marga) as dealt in the Vedanta.

Kumarila Bhatta, the great reformer of the mediaeval age was the follower of the first; Buddha and the great Sankara advocated the third. Sree Chaitanya was the living personification of the second.

But to resume the thread of our narrative. Buddha sat for a long time in contemplation and the scenes of his past life came before his mind. The learning he had acquired was of no use, the penances he had practised were in vain, he was left alone in the world by his disciples. "Would he now return to his happy home, to the arms of his loving wife, to his little child, now a sweet boy of six years, to his affectionate father and his loyal people? This was possible; but where would be the satisfaction? What would become of the mission to which he had devoted himself." Just at the time when his budding wisdom was about to burst into a full blown flower, Mar the destroyer and personification of carnal desire made desperate attempts to oppose his complete emancipation from error and disquietude, but all were in vain. Long he sat in contemplation until the doubts cleared away like mists in the morning and the religious side of his nature had won the victory. "Sitting under the Bo-tree he went through, successively purer and purer stages of abstraction of consciousness, until the sense of omniscient illumination came over him; in all piercing intuition he pressed on to apprehend the wanderings of spirits in the mazes of transmigration and to attain the knowledge of the sources whence flow the suffering of the world, and of the path which leads to the extinction of this suffering". In the first watch of night he gained a knowledge of his previous existences; in the second watch of all present states of being; in the third of the chain of causes and effects, at dawn he knew all things. He now became Buddha i, e, the Enlightened. He was then transfigured, his body assumed a god-

den color, his face glowed with the light of indwelling peace, and his eyes beamed with compassion and benevolence. The day light of truth now flashed before his eye. What was that truth which Buddha discovered? This was self culture and universal love, the essence of Buddhism. Let us now see how this internal self enlightenment first finds expression. It is said, the first words uttered by Gautama after the attainment of Buddhahood were to the following effect: "Through countless births have I wandered, seeking, but not discovering the maker of this my mortal dwelling house, and still again and again have birth and life and pain returned. But now at length art thou discovered, thou builder of this house (of flesh). No longer shalt thou rear a house for me. Rafters and beams are shattered and with destruction of desire deliverance from repeated life is gained at last. (Dhamapada) In the fifth chapter, 24, Sloka of the Bhagabat gita, it is said that the Yogi who is internally happy, internally at peace and internally illumined, attains extinction in Brahma. Professor Monier Williams considers that that the above is pure Buddhism if we only substitute "*cessation of individual existence*" for "*Brahmā*."

After attaining complete intelligence, Buddha sat cross-legged on the ground under the Bo-tree for seven days, absorbed in meditation and enjoying the bliss of emancipation. During the first watch of night he fixed his mind upon the chain of causation in direct and reverse order. "From Ignorance spring the *Samskaras* from the *Samskaras* spring Consciousness, from (finite) Consciousness, Name and Form, from Name and Form spring the six provinces (of the senses), from the six provinces spring Contact, from Contact springs Sensation, from Sensation springs Thirst (desire), from Thirst springs Attachment, from Attachment springs Existence, from existence springs Birth from Birth spring Old age and Death, grief and lamentation, suffering dejection and despair. Such according to Buddha was the origination of this whole mass suffering. Again by the destruction of Ignorance, which consists in the complete absence of lust, the *Samskāras* are destroyed, by the destruction of the *Samskaras* Consciousness is destroyed, by the destruction of Consciousness Name and-Form are destroyed, by the destruction of Name and-Form the six Provinces are destroyed, by the destruction of the six Provinces Contact is destroyed, by the destruction of Contact Sensation is destroyed, by the destruction of Sensation Thirst is destroyed, by the destruction of Thirst Attachment is destroyed by the destruction of Attachment Existence (Rebirth) is destroyed, by the destruction of Existence Birth is destroyed, by the destruction of Birth, Old age, and Death, grief lamentation, suffering, dejection, and despair are destroyed. Such was the cessation of the whole mass of suffering as discovered by Buddha (Mahāvāga).

After this success in life, a feeling of utter loneliness which is often the lot of the spiritual leaders of men, broke upon him, with such a force, that it seemed to him impossible to go to his fellow men, with a doctrine to them so abstruse and incomprehensible. At last the thought of mankind, and compassion for sentient beings, made Gautama resolve to proclaim his doctrine to the world.

Buddha thought of his old teachers Alara and Udraka, but they were then dead, so he walked to Benares to proclaim the truths to his five old disciples, who were prosecuting their bodily mortifications in the deer-park called *Isipatna*. (Modern Saranath.) On his way Buddha met an ascetic named Upaka, who said to him. "Your countenance<sup>\*</sup> friend, is serene, your complexion is pure and bright. In whose name, friend, have you retired from the world? Who is your teacher? Whose doctrine do you profess. Gautama replied "I am the all-subduer, the all-wise, the stainless, the highest teacher." Then the Brahman asked about the object of his mission to Benares. To this Buddha replied to the following effect:—

"I now desire to turn the wheel of the excellent Law,  
For this purpose I am going to the city of Benares  
To give light to those enshrouded in darkness  
And to open the gates of immortality to men."

Gautama entered the deer-park (Migadaya) at Benares in the cool of the evening, where five disciples were now living. And he preached to them his new doctrines.

"There are two extremes, O Bhikkhus, which the man who has given up the world ought not to follow, the habitual practice on the one hand of those things whose attraction depends upon the passions, and specially of sensuality, a low and pagan way, unworthy, unprofitable, and fit only for the worldly minded; and the habitual practice on the other hand of asceticism which is painful, unworthy, and unprofitable."

"There is a middle path, O Bhikkhus, avoiding these two extremes; discovered by the Tathāgata (Buddha), a path which opens the eyes and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to higher wisdom, to full enlightenment, to Nirvana" (Mahavaga.)

"In Benares, in the hermitage of Migadāya, the supreme wheel of the empire of Truth has been set on rolling by the blessed one, that wheel which not by any Sāman or Brāhman, not by any God, not by any Brahma or Mara, not any one in the universe, can ever be turned back."

His five former disciples were soon converted to his religion and formed the first members of the order:

Buddha remained for sometime in the deer-park at Benares; there



he attempted to popularize his doctrine, and to preach to all, without exception, to men and women, to the high and low to the ignorant and wise alike. Among his disciples two were women. His first lay disciple was *Yasa*, who was afterwards one of Buddha's personal followers. Sometime afterwards Gautama, established an order of the female mendicants. Though he held the life of a mendicant to be necessary for rapid progress towards deliverance from that thirst, which is the cause of all sufferings, yet he highly honoured the believing house-holder.

After three months of his arrival in deer-park he called together all his disciples who were sixty in number and sent them to different directions to preach and to teach. "Go ye now, O Bhikkus, and wander for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of Gods and men. Preach, O Bhikkus, the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, glorious in the end, in the spirit, and in the letter, proclaim a consummate, perfect and pure life of holiness." (Mahavaga.)

When his monk missionaries had departed, Gautama himself went to Uruvela, there he achieved distinguished success by converting thirty rich young men and one thousand orthodox Brahmans led by the learned philosopher Kasyapa and his two brothers.

To them on a hill near Gya (Brahma-yoni) he preached his most celebrated fire sermon, seeing a conflagration on a neighbouring hill.

"Everything, O Monks, is burning. The eye is burning, visible things are burning. The sensation produced by contact with visible things is burning—burning with fire of lusts, enmity and delusion, with birth, decay, death, grief, lamentation, pain, dejection, and despair. The ear is burning; sounds are burning; the nose is burning, odours are burning; tastes are burning; the body is burning; objects of sense are burning. The mind is burning; thoughts are burning. All are burning with the fire of passions and lusts. Observing this, O Monks! a wise and noble disciple becomes weary of the eyes, weary of visible things, weary of the ear, weary of sounds, weary of odours, weary of tastes, weary of the body, weary of the mind. When free, he realizes that his object is accomplished, that he has lived a life of restraint and chastity, that re-birth is ended." (Mahavaga.)

Buddha and his followers next proceeded to Rajagriha, where they were most cordially received by the King Bimbisara, who with his numerous attendants, declared himself an adherent of Gautama. Thus Gautama went as an honoured guest to the palaces of the kings, and the whole population of the country, wherever he went, turned out to see the greatest

luminary of religion of holiness and love. The King Bimbisara made over a fire bamboo-grove (Veluvana) for the residence of Gautama and his followers.

Dr. Oldenburg depicts a very vivid picture of the daily life of Buddha. "He, as well as his disciples, rises early, when the light of dawn appears in the sky, and spends the early moments in spiritual exercises or in converse with his disciples, and then he proceeds with his companions towards the town. In the days when his reputation stood at its highest point and his name was named throughout India among the foremost names, one might day by day see that man before whom kings bowed themselves, alms-bowl in hand, through streets and alleys, from house to house, and without uttering any request, with down-cast look stand silently waiting until a morsel of food was thrown into his bowl.

Buddha's fame now extended throughout India. His old father Sadhodana now expressed a desire to see his son before he died. Gautama accordingly set out for Kapilavastu. The king took his son to the palace where all the members of the family came to greet him except his wife. "The deserted Yasodhara, with a wife's grief and a wife's pride, exclaimed, "If I am of any value in his eyes, he will himself come, I can welcome him better here" "Gautama understood this and went to her with two disciples with him. And when Yasadhara saw her lord and prince enter, a recluse with shaven head and yellow robes, her heart failed her, she flung herself to the ground, held his feet, and burst into tears. Then remembering the impassable gulf between them, she rose and stood aside. She listened to his new doctrines, and when subsequently, Gautama was induced to establish an order of female mendicants Yasodhara became one of the first Buddhist nuns." His son Rahula was converted and admitted into the order. Shortly afterwards his step-mother Maha Gautami, wife Yasadhara, and the Queen of Bimbisara joined him and were admitted into the order.

Throughout his long career Buddha was in the habit of travelling about, during the finest part of the year in preaching, but during the rains he remained in one place and devoted himself to the instruction of his followers. The principal places of his residence were at Sravasti in the monastery of Jetavana, Vulture-peak and Veluvana near Rajagriha, Baisaei, and several others.

About forty-five years now elapsed between the attainment of Buddhahood and his death. During that long period he continued teaching and itinerating with his disciples; he wandered through the Gangetic valley and preached piety and holy life to all alike without any distinction of caste. His pious life of benevolence and

broad principles of that highly cultured cosmopolitan religion were universally respected by every one, and when Buddha died at the age of eighty, Buddhism was already a mighty power in the land. When he felt that his death was drawing near he assembled his followers and addressed them to the following effect.

O Ananda, I am now grown old, and full of years, and my journey is drawing to its close ; I have reached eighty years, my sum of days and just as a worn out cart can only with much care be made to move along, so my body can only be kept going on with difficulty. It is only when I become plunged in meditation that my body is at ease. ~~In future be ye to yourselves your own light, your own refuge, seek no other refuge. Hold fast the truth as your lamp. Hold fast to the truth as your refuge; look not to any one but yourselves as a refuge~~ (Mahapariibban-sutta II. 32. 33.)

At the age of eighty at Kusinagar, a place about eighty miles to the east of Kapilavastu Buddha died.

It is now about 2500 years that Gautama Buddha has ceased to live, but still now more than a third of mankind owe their moral and religious ideas to this great reformer of antiquity, whose personality though imperfectly revealed in the existing biographies cannot but appear as one of the highest, holiest, the most beneficent in the history of thought. Whether he was an Atheist, Agnostic or a Vedantist it will be our duty to discuss in the subsequent articles. But this may be said without any fear of contradiction that nothing can give such a strength and firmness of mind, than a fountain of religion within. What gives greater strength, insight, poetry and culture than devotional life ? The noblest events, the grandest achievements the holiest lives and deaths have streamed into the world from an invisible fountain of religion.

Harita.

## The Ashtabakra Samhita.

OR

*The teachings of the Rishi Ashtabakra to his disciple  
the Rajarshi Janaka.*

### CHAPTER I.

I. Janaka says "Advise me, my Lord ! how *Gnan*, *Mukti* and *Bairagya* are to be attained."

Note. *Gnan* is the realization of the conception of the Absolute. All our knowledge of the material world is but *relative*. Material world includes

*matter, mind, intellect and egoism.* Whatever knowledge is conveyed by our internal and external senses and the consciousness of self are all relative, for they are necessarily restricted in *time, space, and individuality.* That which remains unchanged and unqualified in all circumstances, which is not limited in time or space, which has no individuality and is yet present in all alike in the sensible and the insensible beings, that constant unchangeable substance is above the relative world—whose consciousness pervades the eternal universe and yet he is unconscious, who is infinity itself and whose existence is the cause of this changeful creation. (2) *Mukti* is the final emancipation from the tie of *Karma.* The false and illusive phenomena of the Universe keep us back from knowing the one true substance,—substance, not in our conception of the term, but as denoting whatever was, is, and would be through infinity unchanged and unqualified while this mighty mirage of creation be passing through stages of existence and non-existence. Attachment to anything within this sphere of illusion is *Karma,* and is in consequence an impediment to *Mukti* (3) *Bairaggya* means the total dissolution of such attachment. The knowledge of the truth produces a *disaffection* to whatever is false and transient and is the first step towards final absolution. Of these three, *Mukti* is the end aimed at, and *Gnan* and *Bairaggya* are the two correlative means to that end. Absolute *Gnan* and absolute *Bairaggya* are terms synonymous with *Mukti.*

II. Ashtabakra in reply :— “ My son ! if thou seekest after that salvation, then free thyself from every attachment of the world as thou shrinkest from poison, and follow the paths of the immortal virtues of compassion and righteousness, benevolence, contentment and truth.

Note. The practice of these great virtues can alone sustain a man against the struggling forces of pleasure and pain in life, and is therefore the royal road to *Mukti.* The *Mumukshoo* must free himself from virtue and vice, he should be doing and at the same time not doing anything ; consequently, the injunction here given may at first seem to contradict that highest aim. But the practice of these virtues is designated as means to the final end, their effect is to enhance the *Satva Guna* in man and suppress the other two, the *Rajas* and the *Tamas.* They destroy a man's past *Karma,* and since no new *Karma* is added by the absence of *basana* or desire which is the outcome of *rajoguna,* the man is ultimately brought to the level of absolute non-concern.

III. “Thou art neither earth nor water nor fire nor air nor space. But know thyself, if inclined to seek deliverance,

to be apart from them and yet the perceiver of all their changes, for thy essence is one with the universal mind."

Note. Earth, water, fire, air, and space are the five elementary substances. Two forms or states are ascribed to the elements as representing the successive stages of evolution. The first stage is the purely elementary state in which *pure earth, pure water, pure fire, pure air and pure space* are supposed to have been in their subtle state of existence. Then followed the intermixture of these pure elements known as the process of *Panchikaranam* in Vedanta philosophy. By this process each of the five elements is supposed to be divided into halves and one-half of each again divided into four equal parts. Then the undivided half of each was mixed with an eighth of each of the rest. For example,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of earth  $+\frac{1}{8}$  of water  $+\frac{1}{8}$  of fire  $+\frac{1}{8}$  of air  $+\frac{1}{8}$  of space makes up the element earth in its secondary or *panchikrita* stage; and so on with the rest. From the elements in this *panchikrita* state the whole perceptible world was created, and the elements have not any more their pure original character. *Panchi-karan* can therefore be taken to be the consolidation of the finer elements into the state of their *perceptible* existence. The five original elements again, are successive links in the chain of creation. *Space* was the first in order, from space and its quality *sound* came *air* having the quality of *touch*. Space combined with air produces *fire* having its quality of *giving shape*. Fire with its two precedents gives rise to *water* having the attribute of *taste*. Finally, space, air, fire and water are all combined in *earth* having its distinguishing quality of *smell*. The elements together with their different qualities presuppose that there must be a *perceiver* possessed of the necessary faculties of perception, for without such perceiver it cannot be said that anything has a particular shape, size, color, taste or smell. And if we assume the existence of things *per se*, that is, when not perceived by any one, we must at the same time suppose them to have infinite qualities which is equivalent to no quality at all. This *infinity* is Brahma, who is neither *conscious* nor *unconscious* and yet present in both. The *perceiver* is the highest *Ahankar*, the universal mind or the sum total of all finite consciousness and is termed *Purusha* or Logos, and that which is perceived is the creation of the universal mind. The notion of a *perceiver* necessarily brings up a simultaneous notion of the *perceived*. There can be no perceiver unless there is something to perceive and similarly the converse is also the case. The universal mind is therefore both the perceiver and the perceived. The consciousness of self or *Ahankar* of the universal mind is the *Purusha* and the rest is termed *Prakriti*. Hence it is said that *Prakriti* and

Purusha are the two causes of creation, but neither of them can act alone. Before and after the chain of creation there exists only the Great *Chit-shakti* or the infinite consciousness of Brahma, in which there is neither *Prakriti* nor *Purusha* but both of them mingled in one. This is known as *Abyakta* or *Mula Prakriti*. It is now clear why it is said that the individual consciousness of self is one with the universal mind and is apart from the world of perception.

III. "If thou canst separate thyself from thy body and repose in thy pure higher consciousness, then presently thou shalt feel thyself unshackled by every tie and enjoy peace and happiness."

Note. Here the term "body" is used to mean not only the physical body but also the *mind*. In the *Yoga-Vasistha* it is said that the mind is the *true* body, and the physical body is merely a product of the mind, through which as medium the mind deals with the material world. The individual mind is the lower self. Leaving both the body and the mind there remains nothing but the higher universal consciousness.

IV. "Thou dost not belong to the Brahman or other castes, nor to any of the *asramas*, nor art thou capable of being perceived by the eye. Thou art free from everything, without any form, and the perceiver of the eternal universe. Therefore, be happy".

Note. The *asramas* are the *four* different states of life prescribed by the *Shastras* for the spiritual development of man. The *first* is *Brahmacharya* in which a man is required to study the Vedas and to put total check on his passions. The second is the *Garhyastha*, the state of the *Grihastha* or householder. In this state the student having finished his study as *Brahmachari* gets married and works for the maintenance of his wife and children. The *third* is known as *Banaprasthya*, or the state of the hermit who has abandoned his home and snatching himself from the ties of relation has taken shelter in the forest. The *fourth* and the last is *Vaiteya*, the state of a *Vikshajibi* or one who lives by begging alms and has no fixed place of residence. The distinctions of *caste* and *asrama* only regard the body and have no connection with the soul which is without any attribute.

V. "Virtue and vice, happiness and misery are the associations of thy mind, but have no connection with thee. Thou art neither the doer nor the enjoyer, but thou art always free."

Note. Virtue and vice, happiness and misery cannot affect the soul which is infinite and is therefore incapable of any qualification. What is virtue to one is the opposite to another; what is happiness in one's estimation is not so with another. These standards vary with individuality, time and place, and cannot therefore belong to that which remains the same through infinity. It is the mind, the instrument of *Ahankar*, which perceives these diversities, and is *affected* by their presence or absence.

VI. "Thou art the seer of all, and thou art through all times free in thy essence. Thou beholdest the seer otherwise than it is, and therein lies thy captivity".

Note. The seer or *Drashta* is the universal mind of the Logos, and the individual consciousness is but a finite particle of it. The difference between the Higher and the Lower states of consciousness is that the Higher Consciousness beholds the universal consciousness as one with itself, whereas the Lower state of mind recognises its own self as being limited by its *own body* and therefore apart from the rest of the sentient universe. The one *undivided* consciousness of the Logos or *Purusha* is alike reflected in all sentient beings, and it is the individual mind which forgetting its true and higher self is attached to the perishable body.

"VII. Thou art stung by the venomous black snake of *ahankar* that thyself art the doer. Drink of that ambrosial faith that thou art doing nothing and thereby obtain bliss."

Note. The soul is the perceiver but the doer of nothing. The physical body together with the mind as the chief is performing all actions and it is a mistake to attribute them to the neutral *atma*. This has been clearly expounded in the Bhagabat Gita Ch. XIII, Slokas 21-23. The greatest blunder is committed by identifying the *atma* with the *mind*. The *atma* is the universal soul, the spirit in all; the *mind* is the *ahankar* or self-hood in the physical boy. This mean and narrow idea of self is here compared to a venomous black snake.

## Philosophy of the Tantras.

In these degenerate days of the *Kali* age when the most sacred precepts of the Hindu *Shastras* are violated every moment of the day by the children of the soil, when the august grandeur of the Vedas has faded into simple songs of husbandmen, when the unrivalled philosophy of the

Upanishads are condemned as the works of a deteriorated brain, the offspring of an unprogressive and stagnant state of Society, when Western science and Western thought are the critics in the field of our ancient forefathers, it is not astonishing to behold the now-a-day enquirer of Hindu Shastras to have hitherto kept back indignantly from the mystic lore of the *Tantras*. Designed for the less philosophical brain of the posterior generations, the puny races of mankind abridged alike in size and temperament, the *Tantras* contain for the most part solid practical rules of *Karma-yoga*. *Hatha-yoga* with its eight millions and forty thousands of *asans*, its varieties of *Kumvaks*, *bandhas* and *mudras* and its strict injunctions which incapacitate the ordinary man of *Samsar-asram* to become its adept was wisely foreseen to be quite out of reach of the short-lived and far less persevering man of *Kali*. The mystic significance of the Vedas revealed only to the Rishis in their highest state of spiritual development was veiled from the masses even in the *Treta* and *Dwapara yugas* and the performance of the Vedic sacrifices and the chanting of those Vedic *hymns* were not the prescribed path even in those far off ages. This gradual moral and religious decrepitude of mankind in the course of time attended by their physical degeneration was the cause of a simultaneous modification of the original Vedic religion to suit the changing human nature and capacity, and the declension is thus well described in the opening chapter of the *Mahanirvan Tantra*: "In the *Krita* yuga the virtuous men pleased the gods and the *pitris* by the performance of sacrifices and other religious ceremonies as ordained by yourself. Their time was devoted to the study of the Vedas and to the observance of religious austerities; they had become heroic and powerful by their benevolence and charity; they were resolute and resembled the gods in their high thinking, and though mortals they had the privilege of frequenting the heavenly regions. In those times mankind as a whole was truthful, honest and righteous; then kings were true to their resolutions and strictly adhered to their duty of protecting the subjects; then men looked upon the wives of others as their mother, they loved others' children as their own, they looked upon the wealth of others as the stones of the street, and were engaged in the observance of their own duties and never deviated from the path of virtue. They never spoke untruth, nor committed any wrong by mistake, nor oppressed their neighbours. They stole nothing and entertained no evil intentions. Haughtiness and pride as well as passion and avarice were unknown to them, their heart was noble and constant contentment ruled therein. Then the clouds rained in time and the earth was richly adorned with all sorts of cereals and herbage; then the cows had sufficient milk and the trees had enough of



fruits; then there was no premature death, no famine, no disease, but men were healthy, buoyant, vigorous and handsome; then women were true to their husbands and never broke their chastity; then the Brahmins, the Kshattrias, the Vaisyas and the Sudras never transgressed the laws binding on each class, but devoted to their own path of worship they have attained the region of bliss. *Krita* was succeeded by the *Treta* Yuga, and it gave signs of religious degradation. Men were no longer able to reach the goal by the performance of the Vedic rites, they were oppressed by anxiety, and neither able to perform the laborious and lengthy Vedic *Karmas* nor to abandon them for good they became sorely troubled at heart. Then at such a crisis it was yourself who out of compassion to the human race revealed the *Smriti Shastras* for their salvation, embodying therein the principles of the Vedic religion. *Treta* gave room to *Dwapara*, when the *Smritis* were abused, when virtue was equally balanced by vice and men became the prey of disease and ruin, it was then yourself who established the authority of the *Sanhitas* on earth. The end of *Dwapara* was followed by the sinful advent of *Kali*, the devourer of virtue and the usherer and instigator of all sorts of vice. In its reign the authority of the Vedas will die out,—how can the *Smritis* then hold ground in the memory of man? The fate of the various *Puranas* with their multitudes of historical narrations and the countless paths of worship which they preached, is also doomed. In this sinful age, men would naturally turn their back to all sorts of virtuous actions. Drowned in the sea of vice and puffed up with vanity and pride they would obey no laws. Wickedness, cruelty and deception, greediness and unruly passion will be their common characteristics. They will enjoy a short life full of disease and sorrow, will become deformed in body, effeminate and mean; will court intercourse with the lower classes and imbibe their vice. They will rob, oppress and calumniate their fellow brethren, and will not shrink from seducing their wives. They will be poor, mean and wretched and never escape the hands of pestilence and famine. Then the Brahmins will stand on the same level with the sudras; they will forsake their prescribed devotions and their avarice will persuade them to accept the priest-hood of the mean and degraded; they will be proud, vicious, illiterate and untruthful; they will sell their girls in marriage and make a show of holiness and devotion for cheating others; they will eat condemned food and even that which has been cooked by a Sudra, will serve the Sudras and will court intercourse with Sudra women; they will not hesitate to sacrifice the honor and chastity of their wives to the lower classes for the sake of money, will keep no restriction in their food and drink, will violate the sacred texts, and ill-treat the virtuous; they

will never think of talking that which is good, and the only sign of their Brahminism will be the wearing of the sacred thread."

Such a state of things as that described above has now already come to pass. The incapacity of the degenerated humanity to stick to the *Vedas*, the *Smritis* or the *Sanhitas* was truly foreseen and a new and easier path was chalked out in the Tantras to suit the dark-souled men of the *Kali* age. As the *Smritis* and the *Sanhitas* were nothing but modifications of the Vedic religion, these Tantras are likewise the offshoots of the same parent stock. In order to make the religion of the Tantras attractive and at the same time effective in a short time, the chief points kept sight of are the following:—

(1) The religion must not preach openly the highest philosophy of the Vedantic doctrines ;

(2) Instead of leaving it to the infatuated judgment of the commonalty the religion must authoritatively assert its predominance over all others as the easiest and shortest path to *Mukti* ;

(3) That *Faith* and its companion *Bhakti* or religious veneration should be the corner-stone of such a religion !

(4) There should be one *personal* god for the disciple, and although there may be mentioned numerous gods he is to know his own god as the fountain-head of his welfare and salvation ;

(5) The religion must promise the sure attainment of *definite powers* by the accomplishment of its prescribed *Karmas* ;

(6) There should be different deities with different modes of worship to suit the temperament of different individuals ;

(7) In order to inculcate faith and veneration the disciple must be initiated in the mystery by his *Guru* whose word will be the law to him ;

(8) Absolute *secrecy* in the mode of worship should be observed by the adept ;

(9) The religion will not clash against the social interests of the disciple.

A *Tantra* is known by the following distinguishing marks:—The description of the original Creation of Brahma as well as the subsequent creations of *Daksha*, *Marichi* and others ; the determination of *Mantras* for each particular deity ; the origin and image of each god ; the description of the *Tirthas* or sacred places ; the religious code for each of the four *Asramas* ; the signs of Brahminism and of the elementary substances ; the description of *Yantras* ; the origin of the *Kalpa* trees and of *ages* ; the narration of ancient histories, of the planetary system and the *Mundane Egg* ; the explanation of particular religious actions ; the distinction of purity and impurity ; the account of the different hells ;

the nature of *Shiva-chakra* ; the characteristics of male and female ; the duties of a king ; the religious character of each *Yugā* ; Usages and their esoteric explanations. These or some of these are the subjects dealt with in the *Tantras*. "As Vishnu is the chief of the gods, as the ocean is of the lakes, and the Ganges is of all rivers and the Himalaya of all mountains, as the *Aśvathā* is of all trees and Indra of the crowned heads, as Durga is of all goddesses and the Brahmin of the four classes, so of all the *Shastras* the *Tantras* are unsurpassed in their excellence."

But unfortunately this branch of our ancient mystic literature has through the dubious character of its false prophets become an object of abhorrence to the polished imagination of the present age. The *Tantric* deities such as *Kālī* or *Durga* are ascribed to a barbarous age, just as the collection of monstrous Fetishes of Andaman found in the Calcutta Museum, and their worshippers are stigmatized as *Kapalics* (those who eat and drink in the human skull) famous for wine drinking and witch-craft. To the superficial enquirer the *Tantric* worship is mysterious indeed, and even those who revere it and follow its tenets know very little of its esoteric explanations if they had not been initiated in its mysticism by an expert adept. It is authoritatively ordained that "those actions will be fruitful in the *Kālī* age which are performed in accordance with the principles of the *Tantras*, and Vedas and Sanhitas are now no better than harmless Snakes devoid of poison. Those who will dishonour the *Tantras* and follow other paths will never attain the goal ! Unpaid labor will be the fruit of such transgression !" Such being the injunction of the Supreme Being it is not to be hoped that the religious code now in force among the true *workers* in the field of Hinduism whether of the *Dvaita* or *Advaita* school will be anything but the *Tantras*. He who confines himself to mere study of *Shastric* literature may call himself whatever he likes and carve out for himself a new path of worship, but the instant he wants to penetrate into the practical side must surrender himself to all the formalities of *Tantric* initiation and follow the word of his *Guru* without the slightest hesitation. The Vedas and the *Smritis* had their own days, and now is the period of the *Tantras*. But what are the *Tantras* ? Are the doctrines preached in them opposed to those hoary predecessors ? Do they contradict in the slightest degree the philosophical conceptions of the *Upanishads* ? If not, wherein lies the difference ? Is there any rational exposition of the *Tantric* dogmas, and whether those expositions are to be found in the works themselves or have been cleverly got up by recent promulgators ? These questions will be briefly examined on the authority of some of the best and widely followed *Tantric* works. (To be continued.)

## Emerson and Theosophy.

---

THE literary world have recognised in Emerson, the poet, philosopher and mystic. His sublime teachings agree with those put forth by the Theosophical Society.

Occultism has been defined as "practical pantheism;" and that Emerson was a practical pantheist his writings again and again declare. He writes :—

"Of the Universal Mind each individual man is one more incarnation. It is a secret which every intellectual man quickly learns, that besides his privacy of power *as an individual*, there is a great public power on which he can draw, by unlocking, *at all risks*, his human doors, and suffering the ethereal tides to roll and circulate through him : then he is caught up in the life of the universe, his speech is thunder, his thought is law. The universal soul is alone the creator of the Useful and the Beautiful ; therefore, to make anything useful or Beautiful, *individual* (mind) must be submitted to the *Universal* Mind. There is but one Reason. The mind that made the world is not *one* mind but *the* mind. Every man is an inlet to the same, and to all of the same.\*

Regarding the boundless potency of man's spiritual nature he says:—

"Whoever has had experience of the moral sentiment cannot choose but believe in *unlimited* power. The boundaries of personal influence it is impossible to fix, as persons are organs of moral or supernatural force. We make and find ourselves on a stair, there are stairs below us which we seem to have ascended ; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upwards and out of sight."

That the doctrine of Re-incarnation, which has played such an important part in the Theosophical exegesis, was also familiar to Emerson, and received his adherence, we can easily show.

The feeling of eternalness is in the human heart, and Reincarnation is the necessary corollary to immortality. Emerson writes :—

"It is the secret of the world that all things *subsist* (the reader will note the words *existence* and *subsistence*) and do not die, but only *retire* from sight, and afterwards *return* (exist) again. Jesus is not dead ; he is very well alive : nor John nor Paul, nor Mahomed nor Aristotle ; at times we believe we have seen them all, and could easily tell the names under which they go."

Is this enough ? or is further testimony needed ? We can easily produce it. In another place, he writes :—

"Do not be deceived by dimples and curls. It tell you that baby is a thousand years old. The soul does not age with the body. On the borders of the grave the wise man looks forward with equal elasticity of mind or hope, and why not, after millions of years, on the verge of still newer existence? We are driven by instinct to live innumerable experiences, which are of no visible value, and which we may revolve through *many lives* before we shall assimilate or exhaust them."

These sentences of Emerson are enough to fortify us in our adherence to the ideas of universal spirit, of re-birth.

The reader will now clearly perceive that what we, as Theosophists, believe is not something new and grotesque, but is altogether sane, and is what the "great teachers" have always taught, not those of antiquity only, but those whom our own century has honoured.

As regards Astrology and Alchemy, he says in his essay on "Beauty :--"

"Astrology interested us, for it tied man to the system. However rash, and however falsified by pretenders and traders in it, the hint was true and divine, the soul's avowal of its large relations, and that climate, country, remote natures, as well as near, are part of its biography."

"Chemistry takes to pieces, but it does not construct. Alchemy which sought to prolong life, to arm with power, was in the right direction."

Of Eastern and Aryan School of thought Emerson writes :—

"I think Hindu books the best gymnastics of the mind. All European libraries might almost be read without the swing of this gigantic arm being suspected. but these orientals deal with worlds and pebbles freely."

Amongst the class of books which are *the best*, Emerson mentions the Vedas, the *Zoroastrian Oracles*, the Upanishads, the laws of Manu, the Vishnu Purana, the Bhagwad Gita, the Wisdom of Mencius and Confucius, and Hermes Trismegistus.

Let us now learn what opinion this great mystic held on the modern Science :—

"The universe is the externization of the soul. Whatever the life is, that bursts into appearance around it. *Our Science is sensual and therefore superficial.* The earth and the heavenly bodies, physics and chemistry, we *sensually* treat, as if they were self-existent; but these are the retinue of that Being we have. The spurious prudence, making the *senses* final, is the god of sots and cowards;" this is a very plain and simple declaration of Emerson, which the candid reader should bear in mind.

Let us now see what Emerson thinks regarding human misery entailed by the struggle for existence :—

"We have violated law upon law until we stand amidst ruins. The disease and deformity around us certify the infraction of natural, intellectual and moral laws. War, plague, cholera, and famine, indicate a certain ferocity in nature, which, as it had its inlet by human crime, must have its outlet by human suffering."

Thus the Hindu is right after all when he believes Kaliyuga is the result of human depravity.

As regards the evolution and destiny of the lower kingdoms of nature, Emerson is in harmony with Indian cosmogony ; he says :—

"Plants are the young of the world. They grope ever upward towards consciousness ; *the trees are imperfect men*. The animal is the novice and probationer of a more advanced order. The men, though young, have tasted the first drop from the cup of thought."

Man's redemption is thus depicted by Emerson :—

"As when the summer comes from the South, the snow banks melt and the face of the earth becomes green before it, so shall the advancing spirit create its ornaments along its path, it shall draw beautiful faces, warm hearts, wise discourse, and heroic acts around its way, until evil is no more seen. The kingdom of man over nature, which cometh not with observation,—a dominion such as now is beyond his dream of God,—he shall enter without more wonder than the blind man feels who is gradually restored to perfect sight."

"A man is a god in ruins. When men are innocent, life shall be longer and we shall pass into the immortal as gently as we awake from dreams."

Let us remember that this glorious future can only dawn through human righteousness—rectitude always and forever. Whoever else wavers, let us stand fast, remembering that we are the visible representatives of the Eternal, and that by Rectitude alone the Universe is held together.

*Pauses.*

---

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Mr. N. D. Khandaloo, Judge of the Small Cause Court of Poona, finds fault with our translations of slokas 13 and 15 of the First Prashna of Prashna Upanishad (p. 20 of the Magazine.) The particular passage which he points out as revolting is the following :—"*It is religious austerity (Brahmacharya) to have at night sexual intercourse on the wife during her menstrual period.*" Sexual intercourse during the first three days of the menses only is certainly in our days "unanimously condemned." But the phrase *menstrual period* is a translation of the Sanskrit word *ritu*

which means a period of *sixteen* days commencing from the first day of the appearance of the menses, and it was not intended to signify by the application of that phrase the first three days only, the modern conception of *ritu*. In the Yajnavalkya Sanhita Chap. I, Sloka 79 we find that the period of *ritu* of women consists of *sixteen* nights of which the *first four* days and the *parva* days should be excluded, and sexual intercourse is further restricted to the even days of the period of *ritu*. Observing this rule, sexual intercourse on the remaining days of the *ritu* is said not to violate one's *Brahmacharya*. The *Sruti* of this passage of Prashna Upanishad does not even mention the word *ritu*. Translated literally it would be "*and at night Brahmacharya.*" Sri Sankaracharya in his Bhashya has added the word "*ritu,*" and certainly he did not by the non-mention of the first four days, the uneven days and the *parav* days mean that sexual intercourse on those days was in his view commendable. Sri Sankracharya understood that people will never understand him in any other sense than the truly *Shastric* one. The injunction of the *Shastra* to refrain from sexual intercourse on the excluded days was well known and observed in his time, and it is now in the enlightened days of the nineteenth century that the most palpable *Shastric* injunctions require a commentary. The five *Parva* days are the *Poornima*, the *Amabasya*, the *Ashtami* the *Ekadusi* and *Samkranti* (the full Moon, the new Moon, the 8th and the 11th days of the moon and the last day of each solar month respectively. Students of Hindu *Shastra* should in judging of one passage remember others, as it was not deemed necessary in the days of our venerable ancestors to furnish all the *Shastric* injunctions at every step.—A. C. M.

\* \* \*

The Lucifer for November records a very interesting hypnotic experiment by Col. Roche: "Perhaps the most startling are those of Dr. Luys, confirmatory of the "discovery" by Col. Roche that a hypnotize I person was sensitive to stimuli applied at a distance from the physical body. It may be remembered that some months ago Col. Roche stated that he had found that a person insensitive to stimuli applied directly to the surface of the body showed symptoms of pain if the air was pinched at a short distance from the body, so that coma of the physical frame might be accompanied by great sensitiveness to impressions made at a little distance on—what? This curious "exteriorization" as it was termed of sensibility aroused much curiosity, the *rationale* of the results obtained entirely escaping the experimenters, and Dr. Luys—the well-known scientist and author—has been conducting a series of experiments, designed to follow up the line of investigation initiated by Col. Roche."

We have received a copy of "Vegetarianism, pure and simple" by

Dr. Salzer, M. D., of Calcutta. In this pamphlet vegetarianism is defended on psychic principles and an attempt is made to shew that the various organs and tissues of animals and men have a subconscious mind of their own and that the habitual consumption of animal food by man, tends to infuse in him a sub-consciousness tainted with animalism, that is to say with those sub-conscious propensities constituting animal life. Apart from the question of wanton cruelty meat-eating is detrimental to the spiritual welfare of man. It is very cheering to find a European gentleman trying for years to propagate the noble principles of *Ahimsa Dharma*. The English-educated Hindus of Bengal should learn a lesson from him.

\* \* \*

Prof. Lombroso writes that he sees nothing inadmissible in the supposition that, with hysterical or hypnotic subjects the exciting of certain centres should produce a transmission of force. He admits that the external sensitiveness has left the body, without, however, being destroyed. In this assertion he is supported by Colonel de Rochas D'Aiglum. That gentleman, struck by the fact that the sensitiveness of a magnetized subject disappears from the skin has sought to discover to what place it is transported. He has, he says, found it all round at a very short distance from the body. The magnetized subject feels nothing when a person pinches him or her, but if any one pinches the air at a few centimetres from the skin, the subject feels pain.

\* \* \*

*Theosophical Shiftings*.—This is the name of a very interesting magazine published by the Theosophical Publishing Society, London. The current issue contains a very able paper read by Mr. O'Swald Murray before the Adelphi Lodge, T. S. on "Man's relation to the phenomenal world." The paper is a crushing blow to the unreasonable and inverted logic of the materialist which places matter before mind. *Existence*, it is argued, means *existence in consciousness*; apart from consciousness existence is unthinkable. Years ago Hume had decided this point; but philosophical truths require ventilation and magazines like the above are intended to put them in a popular garb. The persistence of individuality after death is defended by the Eastern theory of "Sukma Sharira" and on the whole the paper is a very able outline of what we may call "The Philosophy of Reason."

\* \* \*

*Acknowledgments*.—Theosophist (Madras.) Pauses (Bombay.) Theosophical Shiftings (London.) Path (New York.) Buddhist Ray (Santa Cruz.) Sanmarga Bodhini (Bellary.) Lucifer (London.) Modern Thought (Bombay.) Law Times (Madras.) Maharastra (Poona.) Journal of the Maha Bodhi Society (Calcutta.) Buddhist (Ceylon.)